

# MANDURAH CARAVAN & TOURIST PARK

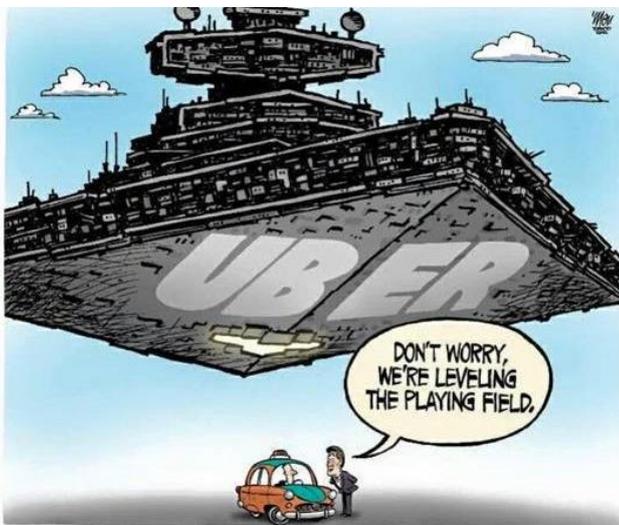
BNB Submission 172

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the WA Inquiry into the 'Unregulated Short Stay Accommodation Providers'.

As the owner/operator of the Mandurah Caravan and Tourist Park and Director of Experience Holiday Parks Pty Ltd, operating Experience Lancelin Holiday Park I am compelled to make a few comments surrounding this Inquiry.

Whilst our data and co-operation has been included in other submissions, I wish to make some general statements about how difficult it is to conduct a successful small business in WA, presently.

I begin by noting the recent 'tourism' figures, whereby WA is now in the worst position for inbound visitation, in fact lagging behind Tasmania. For a state that only a few years ago was punching well above its weight we have fallen on very difficult times and it is within this environment that the members of this Inquiry should examine the total unfairness of allowing unregulated markets to flourish in direct competition with existing established compliant businesses.



## Fundamentally we all want the 'same' level playing field.

Just as the Australian Taxi Industry has battled to have changes to the deficiency in the GST Act that allowed ride-sharing to slip through a legal loophole, and other regulatory noncompliance surrounding ride-sourcing services, we, as regulated Accommodation providers here in WA want a level playing field.

Regulatory hand-ups for AirBnb, and other unregulated providers prevents fair competition whilst the red tape and regulatory burden creates additional layers of costs for the Regulated Accommodation providers.

## Enough Said – Not Enough Done!

It is paramount that we, in accommodation apply patience as the fluidity of change is having an effect as we have seen 'HomeCamp' and some other such disruptions fall over in recent times. There is chatter around that eventually the disruptors will in turn be disrupted by other forms of resource sharing economies, but at what point do we purposefully draw a line for 'enough said and not enough done' to protect law abiding, tax paying employers who contribute greatly to the fabric of community in regional areas of WA.

As we know, Uber has been relatively successful in additional supply in cities around the world, causing a great deal of angst for those businesses who cannot compete on price, flexibility and convenience due to the over regulation to which they 'must' abide. Consistently, the regional areas are at far greater risk due

to this lack of competitive neutrality. State Governments should provide greater support to regionally based operators, in particular to those operators who responsibly employ and abide by regulation.

Should we be buoyed by the recent ACCC Review and investigation into competitive neutrality for parallel imports for the motor industry? Will the scope of reference be extended to deal with these matters as well?

### **The Burden of Being in Business**

Every month, there is another reason to recalibrate every aspect of a registered business to ensure current trends, rulings, local bylaws and legislative changes are kept at the forefront of operations.

Regulatory compliance is strangling the life out of small businesses.

*'This week, the Western Australian State Government announced an inquiry into underpayment of employees. This has been defined by the Government as systematic and deliberate underpayment of employee wages and entitlements. The inquiry, due to commence in February 2019, will include collecting evidence to determine if underpayment is occurring and if so, what impact it is having on employees and the wider community.*

*This is a timely reminder for all WA businesses to ensure that their employment arrangements, such as contracts of employment and policies and procedures are compliant with relevant State and Federal laws.'*  
(Chris Rodwell CEO CCIWA)

The State Government's announcement is a clean-up of illegal practices, which is undoubtedly very serious and necessary, but why stop there? Why allow unregulated industries to exist and underpay the young or vulnerable and apply illegal employment practices? Why not sweep wider and combat all types of business and all forms of employment?

### **Tourist Accommodation – Caravan Industry - Extinction is Nigh**

Nationally, the Caravan Industry contributes 19.02 billion in economic activity within Australia with 90% of such business activity in Regional areas. Employing over 53 000 the industry is still growing and remains the only tourism industry sector that has continually tracked in positive territory, since the GFC.

With manufacturing at its peak, and the fact that 85% of Australians have stayed in Caravan Parks and enjoyed the freedom of caravanning and camping, there is an Australia wide issue, that very few 'new' caravan parks are being built. Why is it so?

**COST** – as with many small businesses in certain sectors, compliance is killing this industry. 20 years ago, 10 years ago and even 5 years ago it was quicker, economical, and easier to operate a business – Now it is not so.

**COMPETITION** – although healthy – right throughout Australia, it is not a level playing field. When local governments, sporting clubs, farmers, consumers, in fact, anyone else except someone with a Caravan Park licence can set up a quasi-park on a greenfield site, without any form of compliance, or, minimum conditions, within environmental, social, legal and financial parameters something is dramatically wrong.

**DIGITAL DISRUPTORS** – such as AIRBNB, Staycations, Home Camps all threaten the industry just as Uber has disrupted the Taxi Industry. Unfortunately, there is very little a licensed operator can do to combat innovative technology because holders of a licence, are overregulated with their responsibility for delivering 24/7 service in opposition to a virulent non-compliant anti-competitive framework.

Whilst the above comments could be viewed as whinge about my specific industry and all the things that prohibit seamless business operations, I acknowledge our industry is in the same disarray as all other forms of Regulated Accommodation providers.

Therefore, the remit of this Inquiry should be to close the loopholes, clean up the unregulated 'holiday' market and develop minimum conditions that apply to all providers across the board.

As per Industry Recommendations:

- Properties conducting commercial activities must be registered as a business and regularly inspected for all matters of Local, State and Federal Government compliance.
- Compulsory public liability insurance
- Short stay accommodation must meet fire, safety, building and insurance requirements appropriate to all other accommodation providers.
- Properties with pools must meet public Environmental Health Regulations, including regular local government auditing
- Properties / businesses must pay commercial rates for Water, Power, Gas and Sewer, as the properties are acting as businesses, not residential properties
- Residential zones and long-term rentals must be protected.
- Online travel agents (OTA's) such as AirBnB should be held accountable, and responsible for the properties they list and share relevant data, such as property addresses, owner names and contact details with authorities.

*Kind Regards,  
Donna Cocking*



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