

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Inquiry into short-stay accommodation- sub no. 196

From:

Sent: Tuesday, 19 February 2019 11:50 AM

To: Committee, Economics & Industry Standing

Subject: Inquiry into short-stay accommodation

Hi there,

As the owner of a registered holiday home in Denmark, WA, I see a lot of value from organizations such as HomeAway and Airbnb. People don't book through visitors centres very often – they're looking to book online. They like the fact that online sources give them greater insight into a property, particularly through reviews as well as word of mouth. As a property owner, these sites also provide protection against bad guests as we can look at review of these guests from other hosts.

However, I do think it's important that holiday homes are registered. We went through the process of receiving council approval for our property before we even considered letting it. This gave the local community an opportunity to have their say. Objections to holiday homes have to be valid (not a NIMBY response), but the vetting process is fair to the community and the property owner. As a registered property I also pay higher rates than local residents, which gives the council more funds (I'm not sure how ethical that is, but that's another matter).

Furthermore, I employ people – I have a cleaner and property manager; I also have a gardener who has kept our grounds beautiful for the nearly 10 years we've been in the market.

I do let my property through the local Visitors' Centre and they have first say on bookings (if a guest books through the Denmark Visitors Centre they can book directly without getting approval so long as those dates are available).

However, having more forums to advertise our property means the people we employ get more work, we get more bookings and the taxman gets more money – everyone wins. And properties such as ours bring more tourists to the area.

The fact is most people now don't want to stay in hotels or in B&Bs. They want privacy, they want to be able to cook meals and most importantly in our case, they want to be able to bring their family (including their dogs). Our property is known to attract quiet, respectful guests and I think through forums like Airbnb you're better able to vet your guests (we never allow schoolies but the only way we know what kind of guests we have is by vetting them). We cater for young families and for older people going on holiday with their much-loved pets. Furthermore, our property is on 1.5 acres so well away from neighbours.

We offer something hotels, motels and B&Bs don't. What we offer absolutely should be regulated according to local council guidelines. But stopping Airbnb and HomeAway would unfairly hurt good holiday home owners, it would mean less work for cleaners, property managers and gardeners, and it would attract fewer people to beautiful regions like the Great Southern.

I think using Airbnb in non-registered city accommodation is an entirely different issue and one I'm not really qualified to comment on. However, as a resident of Mount Pleasant, just a few streets from new apartment developments, I can see where short-term letting in apartments could become a serious local issue.

Kind regards,

Kim Ribbink