

From: [John Simmonds](#)
To: [Committee, Economics & Industry Standing](#)
Subject: Inquiry into Short-Stay Accommodation: I support the right to home share in WA
Date: Monday, 17 December 2018 11:30:39 AM

Dear Economics and Industry Standing Committee,

I strongly believe in the right of people to share their houses and apartments across Western Australia in a responsible and respectful way, without extreme regulations like caps and costly registration processes.

Operating in a rural part of the southwest where short-term accommodation is encouraged (my land title permits the building and operation of up to 5 chalets to a max of 10 bedrooms), Airbnb has been the most successful platform to market our accommodation offering. Guest feedback (from 8 different countries) has been unanimously enthusiastic). Keeping small farms operational in the current climate is difficult and every opportunity to bring in supplementary income is welcomed. With the success of the first listing, we have just started the planning process for a second cottage. All of our activities provide flow-on benefits to the local community, and bring domestic and overseas visitors to the region. The variety of accommodation offered in the short-term stay market is highly attractive to vacationers, providing experiences that are not available in traditional accommodation offerings. State government support for the short-term accommodation business provides a fast and effective way to boost tourism numbers into our rural regions.

Please accept this as a formal submission to the Inquiry into Short-Stay Accommodation.

Why do I host with Airbnb? [Here is my story]

The Airbnb host community depends on hosting as an economic lifeline to help us pay the mortgage and the bills. I also recommend my favourite cafes, restaurants and shops so small businesses get a boost from local tourism.

Addressing the terms of reference:

- The forms and regulatory status of short-stay accommodation providers in regional and metropolitan Western Australia, including existing powers available to local government authorities.

Currently there is a confusing patchwork of regulations across Western Australian local governments. Some Councils have clear, progressive laws that embrace home sharing, whilst others have complex and costly approvals processes and others have no policy framework at all. As a local host, this is generally confusing and it's concerning that some councils have threatened large fines against hosts who simply want to share their homes responsibly and respectfully. Just like there are already in South Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales, Western Australia also needs progressive rules and a clear, statewide regulatory framework to provide clarity and certainty for hosts to share their homes responsibly.

- The changing market and social dynamics in the short-stay accommodation sector.

Home sharing is helping to grow the visitor economy - creating economic opportunity for hosts, especially in times of financial need, and supporting jobs and small businesses in communities. The Airbnb host community depends on hosting as an economic lifeline to help us pay the mortgage and the bills. I recommend my favourite cafes, restaurants and

shops so small businesses outside the traditional tourist hot-spots get a boost from local tourism. According to a recent Deloitte Access Economics Report, Airbnb guests are now a significant driver of the tourism economy, with a total contribution to Western Australia's GSP of \$99.7 million in 2015-16, supporting over 780 jobs in addition to the activities of hosts. In one year, guests using Airbnb spent \$155.1 million in Western Australia.

- Issues in the short-stay accommodation sector, particularly associated with emerging business models utilising online booking platforms.

Online booking platforms such as Airbnb provide me with a trusted and secure online marketplace to list my spare space and help future-proof the Western Australia visitor economy. Online booking platforms allow ordinary Western Australians to share their homes with travellers from around the world, providing more choice in more locations for travellers. This is especially important for major events, with Airbnb hosts providing extra accommodation capacity for visitors during peak times, and for areas where there is little or no traditional accommodation available.

- Approaches within Australian and international jurisdictions to ensure the appropriate regulation of short-stay accommodation.

The planning frameworks in South Australia, Tasmania, and New South Wales are good model frameworks for the Committee to consider. A planning framework including restrictive and lower caps would have a negative impact on home sharing. A costly and cumbersome registration or licensing system, or a requirement to pay fees just to share your own home would have a negative impact. In South Australia there are no fees and no registration or licensing system, allowing the home sharing economy to thrive. Currently, in Tasmania, there is a simple, quick and cost effective self-assessment form, which is only required in limited circumstances - usually for holiday homes or weekenders only. To maximise participation in the sharing economy, any regulations should be clear and easy to understand and comply with, and also cost effective for hosts. To maximise participation in the sharing economy, any regulations should be clear and easy to understand and comply with, and also cost effective for hosts.

I encourage the Economics and Industry Standing Committee to follow the lead of South Australia, Tasmania, and New South Wales as well as other cities around the world, which have embraced home sharing and are reaping the rewards.

CC

Economics and Industry Standing Committee members

Premier

Minister for Tourism

Minister for Planning

Opposition Leader

Shadow Minister for Tourism

Shadow Minister for Planning

Regards,

John Simmonds

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