

16 January 2019

Ms Jessica Shaw MLA
Chair
Economics & Industry Standing Committee
WA Parliament
Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005

Dear Ms Shaw

Regulation of Short Stay Accommodation inquiry

My name is Julie Clayton and am currently a registered host of Airbnb.

In 2013 I was made redundant from my position as Marketing Manager of a global resources and infrastructure consultancy, RPS. Unfortunately, it was a forced redundancy following changes to the company structure. It was also at a time where there was a downturn in the local job market and I found myself without work for a significant number of months.

As a divorced woman in my early 50's, I was suddenly faced with the prospect of being unable to find work in my area of expertise and on a comparable salary scale and realised I needed to adjust my lifestyle and furthermore there was also a diminution of contributions to my superannuation, which is an ongoing issue given the years I was not working while raising my now adult children.

It was during this period of unemployment that I saw the opportunity to utilise my private home for hosting occasional travellers to help supplement my meagre income. The return from the enterprise has been modest and is supplemental to a part-time role I am currently employed in.

My circumstances were such that my adult children had left home, and I had the space available to share my home. I take great pride in my home which was designed in such a way to allow my privacy and that of my adult children, who at the time resided in the upper level of my home. The upper level of my home offers two full-sized bedrooms both with a full ensuite bathroom as well as a lounging area and perfect for hosting guests.

There is no doubt that there is changing market and social dynamic in the tourism sector. I have found it of great interest meeting travellers from overseas or out of state and a wonderful rewarding experience. Having the company is great and I am helping travellers and international tourists enjoy their time in this great city of Perth.

Most of the visitors that have shared my home tell me that finding affordable accommodation via the Airbnb platform factored in their decision to visit Perth. More and more travellers are seeking affordable accommodation and not all visitors to Perth and Western Australia can afford to stay in high-end accommodation. They have told me that they are looking for experiences that offer a warm welcome from locals who are also prepared to share local knowledge about their destinations. In this regard, I impart my knowledge of my local area and the greater city, so my guests can visit places they are unlikely to know or have information about. I have made it my mission to encourage the visitors who have stayed with me to support local cafes and small businesses within my locality of Doubleview.

The sense of community, support and respect from the Airbnb community has given me the confidence to open my home to strangers. I am grateful that Airbnb has given me the opportunity to feel like I am contributing to and supporting the local community and economy.

I value the time with my guests and to be able to learn about their different lifestyles and cultures of their countries.

I have made new friendships and now have the opportunity for accommodation in parts of the world that I would never have thought to travel to.

In closing, I am not opposed to fair regulation. It is my view that it is only fair that hosts are expected to ensure their homes provide a safe environment for guests.

Yours sincerely

Julie Clayton