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Submission to the Inquiry into Short-Stay Accommodation

We are an award winning 4.5-star boutique resort in Cable Beach, Broome. Our property consists of 8 strata-titled free-standing “pearler’s” style bungalows set in tropical gardens. My wife and I manage the property with the help of 2 casual staff members. We buy locally whenever possible and regularly use the services of local trades: electricians, plumbers, gardeners, tree loppers etc. Cocos Beach Bungalows has been operating here for 20 years and is threatened by the rampant growth of unregulated short-stay holiday accommodation.

There are currently 181 short-stay properties listed on AirBnB and Stayz in Broome, and they are having a severe impact on resorts and hotels like our own. The numbers of these unregulated properties continue to grow unchecked and they are operating without any of the regulations and imposts that we face. Many of these are whole houses or apartments without resident hosts and are liable to disturb the neighbours and other residents.

As a direct result of the growth in the number of unregulated short-stay properties we have had to hold our tariffs at the same rate for the past three years and it looks like we’ll need to for another year.

Broome has a differential rating system, which means that we are charged a higher rate as a GRV-tourism related property than a residential property. We pay 53% higher rates than the GRV-Residential property.

As an accommodation business we also face significant compliance costs, not faced by the unregulated properties. Costs such as public swimming pool charges and regulations, requiring payments to the Shire and being required to check pool chemical balance twice daily. Additionally, we are required to pay commercial rates for our water, electricity fire safety, insurance and sewage.

AirBnB and the like are a fact of life, but it is long past time that they should be regulated and face the same costs and requirements as the accommodation businesses they are competing with.

Regards

Terry & Angela Lewis

31/12/2018

