

## SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION ENQUIRY– PERSONAL SUBMISSION

I question the regular propensity to “regulate” entrepreneurship & self-reliance out of existence.

Individual’s freedom of choice, a free market economy and the ability to be personally self-sufficient is becoming extinct in Australia. What is not caused by economic mismanagement, is legislated.

Who really needs “*protection*” – the individual, the small property owner, mom and dad investors, self-funded retirees, struggling to make ends meet in this shocking W.A economy and the depressed property and rental market a lot “*Baby Boomers*” came to believe was solid, “*Bricks and mortar*” investment.

Or the big Hotel chains, Accommodation Corporations, and Holiday Rental groups who had it so good for such a long time, but failed to keep up with their customer’s changing needs?

These groups forget that they only exist to provide a service and what is demanded by the very fickle consumer. It is not a God given right to exist in perpetuity at the expense of alternative accommodation.

Obviously, these out of touch commercial establishments don’t have the pulse of the consumer. They just want their industry protected by imposing more rules on what they consider is competition from small, individual accommodation providers who rose to the occasion to meet what the public is currently wanting.

Their cry for a “Level Playing Field” is ridiculous. If you fail to stay relevant in your respective field. Get out or get over it.

The same goes for Bed and Breakfast establishments.

Patrons decide where they *prefer* to stay. The FREE market is the dictator of supply and demand – Not more bureaucratic regulations. Give us a break.

I take great umbrage at Mr Evan Hall (CEO Tourism Council), comment that “*short stay accommodation is blocking out long term tenants*”. In WA? In this economic climate? Get real. Perth is hardly on par with Barcelona or Paris when it comes to rental accommodation shortages and tourist demand.

I would love to be able to rent my property long term – I was told by my property managers there is “*very little current demand for long term furnished rentals*”.

What do I do? Sue someone for compensation? No. I need to be adaptable and innovative to survive.

I also fervently disagree that you need to live on the premises to let out rooms. Again - its limiting people’s choices, freedom of supply and demand and is discriminatory towards those of us who geared ourselves up to be self-sufficient in retirement, by providing what the free market is really wanting.

Another bureaucratic solution to move the goal posts and implement cures which will prove to be worse than the alleged initial “*problem*”.

This is reminiscent of the 1980s when the elite Architects group attempted to curb competition in their industry. Architects of the day all but ignored the residential market during the very lucrative commercial building boom. That vacuum was successfully taken up by para professionals, drafters and building designers. When the commercial sector got tuff, the Architects then sought to propose legislation to restrict the design of houses & buildings to “less than 200sqm” by “Non-Architects”. Thanks to a forward-thinking Premier of the time - they got a short thrift on the bases of anti-competitive practice, the impact on consumer choice and the net effect of hundreds of self-employed designers and their livelihoods.

The fact that this enquiry even got traction here in Western Australia during this tough economic climate, is due to the political pressure exerted by big business and vested interest groups not coping with real competition and not adapting to changing demographics.

I had planned to replace my professional income upon retirement with rental income and property improvement to become self-funded, rather than rely on the public purse. I sacrificed my home privacy to rent rooms to student lodgers, overseas migrants and the less fortunate in society, due to the demand for cheaper, affordable accommodation. A niche never able to be filled by Government Social Housing.

This was going well until the “*bottom fell out of the property market*”. Finance tightened. Values and rents slumped, leaving me with existing huge financial property debt. Not such a good retirement plan in your sixties. Particularly when your superannuation also gets eroded to “0” by dodgy “Life Insurance” premiums.

I experienced being a share renter and a tenant myself. I have been involved with lodgers since the early 1970s. Have rented out room by room both short term and long-term; run rental properties, privately and through property managers. I have even provided FREE accommodation to the genuine needy at times.

I am still receiving referrals from previous lodgers years later, for accommodation for their friends.

In my experience owners don't need more draconian, discriminatory, impeding regulations that dictate how a small, property owner should or should not use his legally acquired (and usually hard-earned) property.

There is a culture of maligning “*Landlords*”, “*Lessor*” and “*property Owners*”. This must change. As always, the 99% law abiding get over regulated -to control the 1% problematic. It is always the easy targets that cop the brunt of our law makers.

Complaints that “*short term*” guests “affect the local amenity” and “neighbourhood” is often sighted as the catalyst for more laws. But that is not the underlying cause. It's individual social and cultural behaviour.

Ironically, Airbnb's policy of Guest & Host public on line Reviews goes a long way to sort these issues.

Want to make real changes. Tackle these problems that have been and continue to be ignored by legislators. [This is also applicable to Hoteliers, Holiday accommodations and all short stay providers].

The recalcitrant individual “renter” posing as a “tenant” and “guest” that is disrespectful of other people's properties & the neighbours. [NB Genuine tenants and house guests are worth their weight in gold, they look after property and are deserving of a great deal of respect from property owners, for their livelihoods].

Inevitably it's the property owner who ends up 9/10, bearing all the costs from the behaviour of these minority “*Squatter*” rat bags. Too often these a.. holes move on to repeat their narcissistic behaviour on some other unsuspecting property owner or manager. They do not abide by the Residential Tenancy Act or any other regulations. They know exactly how to work the system and get away scot free. Dozens of anecdotal evidences bear this out. Follow up the numerous residential Court Orders that award costs to the Owner – but never get recouped. Its just too hard and there is no laws to back up for the owners.

The Tenant Data Base doesn't capture these individuals.

Our authoritarian culture to over protect “*individual rights and freedom*” above all else and tendency to override shear common sense is the real culprit here. But the cost burden is born by the property owner.

People who rent, lease or temporarily use another's property need to be personally made more accountable for their behaviour and actions. Having written, legal agreements, “House Rules” and local establishment regulations does not mean swat to these people.

The Residential Tenancy Act is already over protective of tenants and does little to protect the property owner's rights. Due to the successful campaigning of Social Groups, private property owners are treated by changes to the law, like “*social housing*” providers for the under privileged.

If the disruption, noise and nuisance caused by a small percentage of “rogues” is an issue – fix that. Don't use it as a reason to pile on more regulations on the property owner.

Current laws, Strata laws, insurance, building and local government regulations are inclusive of casual letting of rooms and short-term arrangements. Provided the property owner follows the Law, pays his rates and taxes and abides by Insurance conditions, what is the problem with that?

The recent changes to the archaic “Granny Flat” rule that allows “Non-family member” letting, was a welcome and prime example of a positive outcome that benefited consumers, property owners and helped stimulate a portion of the building industry. A win, win, win.