

From: [Geoffrey Bonds](#)
To: [Committee, Economics & Industry Standing](#)
Subject: Inquiry into Short-Stay Accommodation: I support the right to home share in WA
Date: Thursday, 20 December 2018 11:14:47 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. Please accept this as a formal submission to the Inquiry into Short-Stay Accommodation.

Why do I host with Airbnb?

This year my wife and I visited our daughter and new born grandson in London. From October to March we have let our house out through AirBnB and the income we have derived from this has helped to pay for our holiday.

As pensioners we have limited income and the prospect of being able to increase our income occasionally through letting our house as a holiday let can make a significant difference to our lifestyle.

Letting out ones house is an alternative to hotel accommodation; it is not just competition as they would have you believe, but provision of different forms of accommodation giving guests a wider variety of places to stay, at alternative prices, possibly more suited to their individual circumstances and at a lot more locations. In our circumstance we were able to let out our whole house with the guests enjoying total privacy in and around the house and pool. Something hotels do not offer.

The idea of permitting AirBNB hosts to let their properties out for a minimum of 14 days is ludicrous as it is rare for anyone to go on holiday for more than 14 days. This is just another attempt by the AHA to force AirBNB hosts out of business.

Our house is located in a beachside suburb a long way from the CBD where accommodation is limited. The Local Council has a policy of encouraging tourism, however with commercial accommodation limited to just one resort, without private residences offering accommodation the prospect of this policy ever coming to fruition is limited.

Feedback from guests has been positive and very encouraging for us to continue hosting our property, possibly not long term, as we did this year, but a few weeks here and there throughout the year, when we decide to take a holiday elsewhere.

The Airbnb host community depends on hosting as an economic lifeline to help us pay the mortgage and the bills and as mentioned above improve the quality of life for pensioners. 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. 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

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Minister for Tourism

Minister for Planning
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Shadow Minister for Tourism
Shadow Minister for Planning

Regards,
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