

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY STANDING COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 19 JUNE 2019**

SESSION ONE

Members

**Ms J.J. Shaw (Chair)
Mr S.K. L'Estrange (Deputy Chair)
Mr Y. Mubarakai
Mr S.J. Price
Mr D.T. Redman**

Hearing commenced at 9.21 am

Ms LISA KAZALAC

Acting Chief Executive Officer, Shelter WA, examined:

Dr KLAUDIA MIERSWA

Policy Officer, Shelter WA, examined:

Ms SAMANTHA JENKINSON

Executive Director, People with Disabilities WA, examined:

The CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for agreeing to appear today for a hearing for our inquiry into short-stay accommodation. My name is Jessica Shaw and I am the Chair of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. I would like to introduce the other members of the committee. To my right is Yaz Mubarakai, member for Jandakot. To my left is the Deputy Chair, Sean L'Estrange, member for Churchlands, and Stephen Price, member for Forrestfield. Terry Redman, the member for Warren–Blackwood, is running a little late. I advise that the proceedings of the committee's hearing will be broadcast live within Parliament House and via the internet. This broadcast may include documentation provided by you to assist the committee in its investigations. It is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of this committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Your evidence is protected by parliamentary privilege. However, this privilege does not apply to anything you might say outside of today's proceedings. Before we begin with our questions, do you have any questions about your attendance here today?

Ms Kazalac: No, I think we are okay.

The CHAIR: Would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms Kazalac: Yes, thank you. On behalf of our members, myself and my colleague Klaudia Mierswa, we would like to extend our thanks to you, Chair, Jessica Shaw, and the members of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee for the opportunity for Shelter WA to be here today and to share with you our position and concerns in relation to short-stay accommodation and housing issues more generally.

As you may know, Shelter WA is the independent peak body based in Perth that advocates for social and affordable housing and ending homelessness. Our vision is that all people living in WA have housing that enables them to thrive, and we bring together a strong coalition committed to diverse and affordable housing choice for everyone. We focus on housing for people on low to moderate incomes and groups that experience housing insecurity. We do this through research, policy development, engagement and advocacy to drive solutions to build an effective housing system. We all know that housing unlocks opportunities, enhances health and wellbeing, provides access to education and employment options, and it enables people to participate in life and community fully. We believe it is a basic human right and everybody has a right to call a place home.

There is clearly growth in the online shared economy for accommodation. As stated in our submission, data indicates that with over 8 100 listings, more than 5 800 hosts and annual growth rates between 50 and 100 per cent over the last three years, short-stay accommodation facilitated by platforms such as Airbnb is an evident reality in Western Australia's housing system now. It is interesting to note that as of 9 June 2019, the reiwa.com listing portal shows that there are just over

7 000 properties available for lease in the Perth metro area. It is interesting to take that into consideration with the listings on Airbnb. It is also important to note that in WA, approximately a third of properties are rented, a third are owned outright and a third are owned with a mortgage. That just sets the scene for the type of housing tenure we have.

There is evidence that these short-stay accommodation issues impact on affordability and can influence housing behaviours and beliefs in our community. From our submission, you would see that our position and recommended course of action is that we need to take a holistic approach to the regulation of the short-stay accommodation sector. Four key elements that we believe are the right way forward is the inclusion of a requirement for registration of short-stay accommodation listings to facilitate data collection and the size and breadth of the industry and facilitate compliance enforcement where necessary.

We believe that there need to be localised planning strategies to limit short-stay accommodation and ensure adequate affordable rental supply in areas with strong short-stay accommodation sectors and tourist appeal, such as Margaret River, Busselton and Dunsborough areas, to address the concentrated impact of short-stay accommodation in those areas. We also think there needs to be some integration of measures to limit commercial-style, short-stay accommodation within a broader, integrated housing policy. It is important to consider the housing continuum in its entirety. We acknowledge, as I just mentioned, that the fundamental nature of private housing is changing in our community quite significantly with a real shift and the tendency towards longer term rental accommodation. Finally, we think this is an area that needs ongoing research. Short-stay accommodation and its impact on housing and urban planning outcomes should be a focus of our community as the landscape for housing changes. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. You just said in your opening remarks that you would like to limit commercial-style, short-stay accommodation. Could you elaborate a little on what is the commercial-style accommodation that you would like to see some constraints placed around?

Ms Kazalac: There is definitely a place for short-stay accommodation portals and listing technology. We are certainly not averse to that. Our main concerns really come down to the fact that what we are starting to see, and it is happening across Australia in places like Tasmania and it has happened around the world—we do not have a problem with owner-occupier short-stay accommodation where you are letting out a room and things like that. But the issue is when we start to see that private investment properties that would normally be available for affordable rental in the private rental market are now starting to become less prevalent, so the supply and stock of private rental housing is shortening.

The most important thing we want to care about is the people at the lower income end who rely on the private rental housing market to seek accommodation that can be suitable for their needs. The compounding issue is that, obviously, from an economic standpoint, the first-round effect is the removal of stock from the system, but the second-round effect is that as stock declines there are price changes and price shifts. Whilst they are secondary impacts, based on that scenario we see the need for some type of light regulation around what constitutes short-stay accommodation and how that interacts with the commercial side of short-stay accommodation.

The CHAIR: We are going to have to make some recommendations about forms of accommodation. What do you consider to be non-commercial, short-stay accommodation and what is commercial? What tips it over the edge? Mums and dads buy an apartment in the city as an investment and choose to list it on a website. Is that commercial or what is it that makes it commercial in nature on your evidence?

Ms Kazalac: I think a commercial transaction is probably a good place to start. Understanding whether there is a commercial transaction taking place. We are concerned about the investment properties like you have just highlighted, Jessica, where normally that would be a rental property in the private market. If that is then engaging in commercial activity, then that is where the line needs to be drawn.

The CHAIR: Even private rental on the normal market is a commercial activity, if that is your definition. I am trying to get very clear, if you are talking about people who own 10 of these things in one building—I completely understand and empathise with your position. I am just trying to get very clear about the categorisation that you are putting these different properties into. A mum and dad who have bought a second house or an apartment in the city can choose to long-stay or short-stay it. Is your argument that short stay is a commercial activity that should be regulated and long-stay rentals should not be? Is that your position?

[9.30 am]

Ms Kazalac: The private rental market is regulated under the Residential Tenancies Act, so that is one element. I definitely think that, and I think it would be fair to say Klaudia as well, if I had a rental property and decided to short-stay it, that is something that should be considered a short-stay accommodation.

The CHAIR: And a commercial activity.

Ms Kazalac: Yes, and a commercial activity because I think the reality is that they are part of the competition now with what is defined as commercial, short-stay operators, which are hotels, B&Bs and the like. There is an argument there for the need for a level playing field in terms of economic and proper competition. If we made the call to be specific—if a mum and dad have two or three properties and they decide to short-stay because it is commercially more beneficial for them, then that is something that should be considered as part of a commercial short-stay definition.

The CHAIR: But you have no problem with a room in someone's house, like the hosted form of accommodation?

Dr Mierswa: I think there has to be a difference made between the hosted and the un-hosted accommodation. Shelter as such does not have an issue with the hosted short-stay accommodation where people are renting out a room in their house. The issue occurs when it is un-hosted. That is where a lot of troubles and problems occur. Technically, there is no difference in un-hosted accommodation that is on Airbnb and the commercial style of short-stay accommodation. The same legislative measures should apply to both of them.

The CHAIR: I will briefly pause because Ms Jenkinson has now joined us—welcome. I just have to read to you some procedural stuff to make sure that none of us gets into trouble. I advise that the proceedings of the committee's hearing will be broadcast live within Parliament House and via the internet. The broadcast may include documentation provided by you to assist the committee in its investigations. It is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of this committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Your evidence is protected by parliamentary privilege. However, this privilege does not apply to anything you might say outside of today's proceedings. Before we begin with our questions, do you have any questions about your attendance today?

Ms Jenkinson: No, that is fine.

The CHAIR: Can I invite you to make a short opening statement? We have had some opening questions, but it is probably a good point to make an opening statement and then we will throw it open.

Ms Jenkinson: Thank you. Firstly, we are very supportive of the submission by Shelter and we point out that the waiting list for public and social housing includes many, many people with disabilities on that, and not all disabilities are physical disabilities. Some of the specific issues that we have with the same distinction between someone hosting a room in their house for someone to stay in versus an investment property that is used for short-stay accommodation are actually more related to some of the physical and accessibility aspects of accommodation.

Our biggest concern is that it is actually really difficult for people with disabilities to get good holiday accommodation or short-stay accommodation that is accessible even with the current commercial and regulated sector because essentially the only point in time in which that compliance is checked is at the planning and building stage. Obviously, as building codes and standards have changed over time, we have got stock that is different depending on when it was done.

To then add into the mix a whole pile of properties that are essentially approved under the residential codes through local government that have no regulation whatsoever or need to comply with disability standards, is essentially narrowing down the availability of short-stay accommodation for people with disabilities, and there is a direct discrimination in terms of the economics from a consumer perspective.

The CHAIR: Can I tease that out a little? I was very interested in your submission. In fact, thank you both for your submissions. They were a very good read and certainly honing in on an issue that has come up repeatedly over the course of this inquiry. We certainly appreciate the work that went into providing the submissions. One of the things that your submission, Ms Jenkinson, discusses is the advertising of accessibility or the categorisation of accessibility on these platforms with respect to properties. I accept the need absolutely for accessible forms of accommodation, but I guess I am interested to tease out whether everybody who provides an Airbnb property should be required to make them have disabled access or be accessible, or is it around making sure that there is truth in advertising and that accessible features are made very clear so that you know that there are properties available that you can visit? I am trying to tease that out.

Ms Jenkinson: Yes, our position is that they should all be compliant and accessible, and that goes towards ideally the changes that we are hoping to see in the building codes generally, which are currently being pushed through. Although that is still a minimum standard and would not necessarily meet the same requirements that a hotel, for example, providing an accessible room requires, that would make a big difference and not just for people who might use a wheelchair like myself, but the whole retired holiday market. They are the people who have the money, so to speak.

Yes, our preference is that it would be all that are—I think we have put in our submission the same caveat that we view someone renting their spare bedroom occasionally is quite different to someone who is basically building an investment property for the purpose of providing short-stay accommodation. They are essentially doing the same as a hotel operator.

The CHAIR: Could you talk me through then a little more around the changes discussed with respect to the building code?

Ms Jenkinson: Yes. The changes to the building code are to apply a minimum standard to all new builds to meet a certain level of the liveability housing guidelines, which would include wider corridors, having a bathroom at the ground level, an accessible entry level and a bathroom that is accessible or modifiable at the ground level. There are some other minor things but essentially they are things which would probably add \$3 000 to \$4 000 to the cost of any new build, so it is not a huge amount. Because it is done at the build stage, it is easier to modify to get full access if required, but it provides a minimum access level for most people with physical disability, for mums with prams and for young people with their bicycles that they want to keep in the corridor et cetera.

Mr S.J. PRICE: I will going back to your point, Ms Kazalac, about the availability of non-commercial rental accommodation out there for people. I do not know the answer to this and I do not know if there is any information out there to support it, but are you aware of a decline in—considering the economic conditions around at the moment, albeit they are improving slowly, there may not be as many investment properties out there on the rental market as well. There may not be as many mums and dads who have that investment property that they have sought to purchase, because they cannot afford it these days. There may just be a decline as a result of the economic cycle as well.

Ms Kazalac: The market conditions, yes. I can try to answer that a little bit for you, Stephen. We did look at reiwa.com data to get a sense of: what is the current stock of private rentals out in the marketplace for people to rent? Certainly, with a former hat, when I used to work at REIWA at that time, three to four years ago, there were probably 10 000 rental properties on the market listed. Now they are down to 7 000 across the metro region. You could infer that there is some change because of market conditions or people are taking their rental properties off to look at other alternatives to increase return on investment.

There is no denying that the property market has been pretty tough for the last few years here in WA. To draw some conclusive evidence around that, I think that would be really hard to obtain. But we are certainly seeing that there are not as many affordable options in the marketplace, particularly for the very low to low income households. I think, Klaudia, we have some data around housing stress and things like that.

[9.40 am]

Dr Mierswa: Just to give more detail, the Productivity Commission in their report on government services last year pointed out that there are around 100 000 low-income private rental households in WA and out of these, already 60 000 are in rental stress. This points to the issue that low-income households have in accessing affordable housing.

The CHAIR: Can I tease that out a little? I take your point that, obviously, there are a lot of very low to low income households, but are they typically renting or looking to rent properties where the short-stay accommodation properties are? It would seem to me that a lot of these Airbnb households are actually luxury-type apartments in the CBD or large holiday homes down in Margaret River. They are not your suburban 3x2 in Midland, Ellenbrook or Forrestfield. They do not seem to me to be the type of housing stock that typically you would see low-to-middle income or very low to low income households renting anyway. Are you seeing this Airbnb versus long-term rental emerging in particular parts of Perth in the metropolitan area?

Dr Mierswa: I think it is definitely emerging in areas where there is a lot of tourist appeal. As you mentioned, Margaret River is one of them. The problem that could occur is what is called the “Venice effect” where the locals in a certain area have to move out of that area, potentially leaving their jobs and their community there because it is just not affordable to live there anymore. Similar things could happen in Margaret River, Busselton or Cottesloe. It is in areas with typically higher rents, but you have key workers in those areas, people in hospitality who live there as well, who need access to affordable housing.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: You just mentioned Cottesloe then. Are you talking about some of the lower valued accommodation in parts of Mosman Park and places like that?

Dr Mierswa: Yes, that is one of them.

Ms Jenkinson: I was a local government councillor for a little while at City of Stirling and we were seeing short-stay Airbnb accommodation coming through there in Scarborough, Gwelup, Karrinyup

and Balcatta, so, yes, there might be concentrations in those areas but it still is coming up in other areas. We certainly had times when there were people coming through requesting permits and stuff around businesses that were Airbnbs in just suburban Stirling. If they did not come to us for approval—and I am sure you have had submissions from WALGA—it is only if a neighbour complains, that the council would even know that it is a property there, because there is no other way you would know through planning permits or anything else. That is part of the issue. Unless you go and do your search on Airbnb to find out where they are, you do not actually know.

The CHAIR: Have you had any of your clientele come to you specifically to say that their tenancy has been terminated because they know that the property has been converted to short-stay accommodation?

Ms Kazalac: That is very hard to gauge, Jessica. To add to the conversation we were just having, the issue around accessing housing in key inner-city areas that are popular and tourist destinations, we have the issue here that we have 14 000 people on the wait list for social and public housing. There are 14 000 households that cannot access affordable housing to begin with, not to mention any latent demand that is out there in the community. When we think about some of these inner-city areas where you cannot access affordable rentals, then that creates issues for those households trying to access that type of rental property. It is not just in Margaret River. It is not just in Cottesloe. There can be issues around broader accessibility of housing to meet the community needs—their work requirements, study requirements and family requirements in terms of the size of properties. I think there is a risk that if we do not address the affordable rental component in our system of housing, then we are going to compound what that means for social outcomes.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: In your submissions, you have also mentioned the City of Fremantle and the implementation of the local act. I think they are pioneers in this space. We are discussing disparities and the affordability factor in the rental space. How close have you been in terms of really understanding the effects of the Local Government Act introduced in Fremantle and what the impacts have been? For me, Fremantle is a perfect case study to really look at affordability, density and as a tourist destination point. Could you just give us an understanding of where your observations have been with the City of Fremantle in addressing some of the concerns that you were just discussing?

Dr Mierswa: At the moment, there is no thorough detail available, but what we have heard from the City of Fremantle is that this law had a positive impact on complaints that were issued by neighbours that live in proximity to houses that were used for short-stay accommodation purely because of the fact that now, if there is a complaint, the law points out that it has to be an operator, or the contact details of an operator have to be on hand, and that person has to be contactable 24/7, so if an issue arises, that person can deal with it directly.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: What I am trying to get to here, Klaudia, and as we have seen in mainly every submission, is that this is a continuously evolving industry and it is creating—as time passes by, the disparity has just become more and more and I think in terms of regulation, it is getting blurrier. Have you got any plans to engage and take the City of Fremantle as a particular case study that you could make close observations with and work with to really understand and provide some concrete evidence moving forward? Have you got any such plans?

Ms Kazalac: We certainly look to progressive councils who take leadership positions like Fremantle has in this situation. We certainly think that is a great case study and I am sure WALGA will make comments to you in their hearing coming up. When you get a good case study, Yaz, yes, there should be an opportunity to create, research and collect data around that. We certainly will look to do that

sort of selection but I think that raises the point about a bit of light regulation so the data can be collected within a regulatory framework.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: That is the interesting point I am trying to raise here. Sam, you have been a councillor and so have I, so we have a bit of an understanding of how local governments really do work in that space. For me, this is quite important because in Fremantle's case, not only does the act provide certain measures in terms of providing compliance, but what they have also got is the ability for those short-term rental accommodations to register and then the registration provides a way for other people who live in the local area to be aware of the house next door being a short-term rental accommodation registered premises. To me, it is just perfect to understand how and where the city is going. I highly recommend that Shelter WA works closely with the City of Fremantle and I am sure to have you all as an interested party in this space because it is so new —

Ms Kazalac: It is new, and this is the issue.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: — and there is just no data. We have got these different snapshots from different bodies giving their perceptions in but, really, if you ask—I have been asking each and every one and I when I ask them: Are you affiliated? Are you working with a city or a strata body to ask them questions as well? The answer has been no.

The CHAIR: It goes to your point about research, I think.

Ms Kazalac: Yes, it does. If we take Tasmania as an example, they have recently passed the Short Stay Accommodation Bill 2018. They have had a huge problem with short-stay accommodation and the use of platforms like Airbnb and they have gone down the registration pathway. I think our point that we made in the submission is that light-touch regulation around registration is really important and that is where the Fremantle example demonstrates the positive transparency you can gain from that as a community member but also as someone who wants to operate a short-stay accommodation property. We do not know the market. You cannot do economic regulation without understanding markets.

I think something that would be beneficial coming out of this inquiry is really getting a handle on what policies we can put in place that require some collection of data and evidence to ensure that we do not go down the path that has happened in Barcelona and Tasmania where people are actually being forced into potentially a risk of homelessness. Our system is already really broken and it is not able to meet the current demand and whilst that maybe a long-term vision, we do not actually want that to happen. We are at a point now where we can be a bit of a leader in how they approach it.

I think that being a bit bold as a committee in this area would be fantastic because we do not want to remove the platform. Technology is going to keep doing this to various different industries. We have seen it in real estate and we have seen it in various different guises—transport, for example. It is not a case of stopping things but it is about: how do we create a regulatory environment where there is transparency, there is understanding, things fit together and there is the right level and the right type of competition? If those structures are put in place, then we will not end up down here with massive social issues. Our concern is that if we can be on the front foot, why would we not be?

The CHAIR: It is such an interesting topic because there is some really potentially conflicting things in play here because if you were to say, "We need to do a research program", then who does the research? Because if we ask the government planning authority, their research will take a very particular bent on land use. If you ask the tourism agencies to have a look, they are going to be very pro getting a big pipeline of people coming into Western Australia. If this is seen as a way to grow the tourism pie, that is going to lend itself to another slant. If you ask the Department of

Communities to do it, having a look at affordable housing, again, you will get a very different set of questions and answers. Who does the research? What questions are you asking becomes a really material—it is why this has been such a fascinating element of this inquiry that, frankly, when we put the terms of reference together, I had not anticipated this coming through. Somebody mentioned it to me very early on and I was like, “Wow!” In fact, I was on ABC radio when we announced the inquiry and Geoff Hutchison said to me, “And of course there’s the affordable housing thing”, and I went, “Yes!” It is such an interesting point you raise.

Ms Kazalac: It is super interesting. To answer your question directly, Jessica, this needs a whole-of-government response. I guess we need to really identify what is the problem that we are trying to understand. I think with any research direction, we always want to focus on what is the problem that we are trying to understand and then design it. But it needs a whole-of-government response because there are planning issues, local government issues, certainly the Department of Communities’ housing issues, but, in addition, the Department of Communities looks after all the homelessness and other social justice issues. We would not be advising one agency to take care of this project. This would need to be something that the whole of government commits to understand in terms of what the impacts are or the potential impacts across our whole community could be.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: Can I quickly touch on something? Sam, in your submission, it is quite an interesting recommendation that you have, the second one, where you talk about short-stay accommodation with no host, and you have given it a cap for 100 days to meet the liveable housing core standards. Why the 100 days? Is it a trial that has happened in another part of the world where it has been successful? I just want to understand your thinking behind it. It is quite interesting from a regulatory perspective and I just want to hear from you your views on that recommendation. It is quite interesting.

Ms Jenkinson: School holidays. There is no rocket science about it. If someone is able to rent their place out for school holidays, that is fine, but if it is more than that, it is obviously more than just a school holiday thing. That is where the 100 days came from.

[9.50 am]

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: And are you aware of any other part of the world that has provided this recommendation?

Ms Jenkinson: Not in particular, because we were focused specifically on the research that was coming from, I think I mentioned it, the United States around the use of Airbnb there. But they did not have anything like that in there.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: I believe in your submission it does talk about the adverse effect of where the gap is, and it was just interesting how you came up with that recommendation.

Ms Jenkinson: I guess we are trying to find a compromise and be pragmatic, because the opportunity to rent a room out even for—there are actually some websites where you can actually find other wheelchair-accessible or disability-accessible accommodation elsewhere in the world and do house swaps and things like that, which is similar to Airbnb, but it is not usually investment properties; it is usually your own home that you are swapping during school holidays or things like that. So, that is where that came from, that idea that there is a difference between people who are doing something for a bit of extra money who might be renting the house out while they are on holiday, which is actually different to someone having an investment property, and a way of being able to quantify it.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: Sam, just very quickly, this study was experimented in the United States in 2017. Are you aware if the Rutgers School of Management had a follow-up study on their findings and if certain recommendations have been made and applied, and if that has been effective at all?

Ms Jenkinson: Not specifically. I know that Airbnb have hired someone and are trying to put accessibility data on their platforms. Our wish was always that even when there is the data, it is not necessarily correct. If you have a disability, essentially, you do not book anything without ringing up first and asking for specific details, because it is never correct, or it is not even there.

The CHAIR: So, what would be on a checklist? If there was a little menu on the website that you click and said, “I want accessibility”, what are the core features that you would like to see advertised that are of relevance to you?

Ms Jenkinson: We have actually just done some work with Shelter and REIWA on exactly that.

Ms Kazalac: That is why we are all laughing; sorry.

Ms Jenkinson: Some of it is around, generally, the access, bathroom access, but also—this is something which hotel accommodation has to do—whether there is actually a visual alarm system for someone who is deaf. So some of those are the extra things that people do not think about.

The CHAIR: Would you mind taking on notice, by way of supplementary submission, for us—maybe give us a little list that we could consider?

Ms Jenkinson: We have one handy.

The CHAIR: Brilliant. Excellent. Thank you. Samantha, you did speak in your submission about potential breaches of the Disability Discrimination Act. Could you just expand on that point for us a little, as well, how you considered this potentially breaches it?

Ms Jenkinson: Essentially, the Airbnb system—we are using Airbnb, but obviously there is more than just Airbnb—are providing a service of providing accommodation, and they are not making that service accessible to people with disabilities, whereas the regulated system of your normal B&Bs and whatever have to. So, if someone wanted to make a complaint, there is a likelihood that that would be a legitimate complaint under the Disability Discrimination Act in terms of accessible services.

The CHAIR: But they would argue that all they are doing is providing a platform, putting together the people who are providing the service with the people who seek the accommodation.

Ms Jenkinson: No. The complaint may be against the actual people who own the buildings, because they are the ones providing the service.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: Can I just touch on that? Sam, earlier you just mentioned about when the properties are advertised, in many cases you did say that it showcases as if it has got provisions in place for disability access but you have got to double and triple-check those details.

Ms Jenkinson: Would they also be discriminatory? Is that what you are —

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: No, not really. I just want to understand. What examples or what data do we have in terms of going on these platforms and getting what has been advertised as disability access, and then it has been proved to really not meet those provisions? Can you explain if those concerns have been raised with the online platform providers to say that that is false advertising or it has not provided the right outcomes as stipulated on the ad?

Ms Jenkinson: So, it is very difficult to find that sort of data, and people often do not make complaints because our system is a complaints-driven system. Unless somebody actually makes a complaint, it does not actually get addressed or noted anywhere. That is the way the DDA and the

Equal Opportunity Act work; they are complaints driven, so unless there is actually someone who has gone and done research on it, there is not actually any data apart from the data of the number of complaints that might be had. But in reality, I would be making a complaint every day about access if I had the time, but I do not. So, people just do not. You just do not go places.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Ms Jenkinson, have you noticed any increase in the availability of rooms with particular construction for disabled access because of people putting more and more of their holiday homes or homes up for Airbnb-type rental?

Ms Jenkinson: Look, it is hard to say. Anecdotally, I could say that there are some more that have come about, and we tend to hear about them because they will be advertised a little bit more because they are different and not the usual. I think part of the digital changes that are happening with things like Facebook and everything else, there is actually a lot more peer-to-peer and word of mouth being used. So, people know the properties that are the ones that are advertised as accessible; they will tend to go back to them rather than going to newer ones until that becomes into the word of mouth as well. So, it is difficult to say if there has actually been an increase or not, though.

The CHAIR: That is interesting. It is almost like a niche market that sort of emerges. We, unfortunately, are out of time today. Thank you very much.

I will proceed to close today's hearing and thank you for your evidence before the committee today. A transcript of this hearing will be emailed to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within seven days of the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added by these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. Thank you very much for coming in today.

Hearing concluded at 10.03 am
