

## SUBMISSION TO LA INQUIRY INTO SHORT-TERM HOLIDAY LETTING

1. As a Byron Shire councillor for 8.5 years I have dealt extensively with the problems attending to unregulated holiday letting in the Byron Shire. It has not been a rewarding experience. So I am encouraged that the State Government has finally decided to take the matter seriously after years of looking the other way.
2. As an activity that has offered substantial (generally tax-free) rewards for its practitioners there has been a powerful lobby directed at state government to preserve a status quo of legislative inaction. Probably the corporatisation of the industry through multinationals like AirBand B has finally forced someone's hand.
3. At council level we have had to deal with the social, planning, financial, risk and control issues attendant on the industry without the resources or the legal backing required.
4. Social – Unrestricted HL has had a severe negative impact on the amenity of residential areas and council has a totally inadequate capacity to provide any level of control. Self-management by the 'industry' can only be described as a bad joke. With approaching 35% of the housing stock of Byron Bay in the industry it has had the affect of restricting the population of local schools with the attendant reduction of subject options. It has also limited normal rental stock forcing local workers into long commutes.
5. Planning – We examined many ways that HL may be accommodated but always fell foul of vested interest and lack of legislative backing. Legitimate holiday establishments like B and Bs wer severely disadvantaged having to pay their way as businesses in contrast to the HL cowboys.
6. Financial – HL enjoys a free ride as far as paying their way, the council provides all the usual services with no recompense through rates or fees for the extra load such establishments placed on the systems.
7. Risk – HL houses do not carry appropriate insurance for the activities they undertake. We have had two HL houses burn down, fortunately without casualties so far.
8. Control – Impossible without strong planning regulations. Byron is currently introducing a planning instrument but it is still contraversial and will be easily contravened without strong legislative backing.

This is a very brief overview of the problem of HL in Byron but I am aware we are not alone in trying to deal with the unrestricted commercial interests drivin what is essentially an illegal trade.

Tom Tabart  
Former Byron Councillor

6 Mar 16