

**ADEQUACY OF THE REGULATION OF SHORT-TERM
HOLIDAY LETTING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name Suppressed

Date Received: 3/11/2015

Partially Confidential

Thank you for looking into Airbnb. I am both a host and traveller, and would like to make you aware of the economic boost that hosting provides the local community.

My first experience with Airbnb was booking accommodation in New York. It is notoriously expensive to stay in Manhattan: by choosing Airbnb, I saved so much money on accommodation that my budgeted five nights became 12. This meant more money spent in the locally on food, galleries, clothing and gifts. This is also described by my guests in Sydney.

I decided to list my flat in Redfern. Redfern has become a very popular destination for international guests to Sydney due to its proximity to the city, developing restaurant and bar culture and excellent transport. As with my New York experience, guests often stay longer and are putting money into the local economy, redirecting it to an area which wouldn't be visited by guests staying in the CBD's major hotel chains – thereby spreading the wealth to other owner-operated businesses. I have developed strong relationships with local businesses who know that I am recommending guests to them. Guests frequently ask where to go for breakfast, what's a cheap-and-cheerful restaurant or a romantic stylish one or one which is child-friendly. As guests have their own kitchen and so can dine in, I also let them know where the local supermarket, bakers, butchers and greengrocers are.

My apartment is rented out in its entirety as many guests want their own space when holidaying as I do when I travel. I believe that this is a vital aspect of Airbnb which should be preserved. If there were restrictions placed on the number of nights rentable (as in the San Francisco model), I would have no option but to de-list. San Francisco adopted this due to its critical shortage of accommodation created by being a seven-mile by seven-mile peninsula. Sydney does not have this extreme situation, but the cost of owning here means that the extra income generated by Airbnb allows me to manage mortgage payments. (This was crucial in late 2013 when I lost my job and had to rely on the income to cover my mortgage until I gained a new position.) As there are apartments for rent in my building which have been vacant for some time, there is clearly not such a pressure on rentals in my area as to make my Airbnb listing a problem. Airbnb allows me to reduce my mortgage with the intent of being free of it when I retire (and hence being less reliant on a pension as the government is urging individuals to do).

I contribute significantly to the local economy, not only through the business I recommend but also to my cleaner and a laundromat who receive \$70 and \$25 respectively out of each booking. Linen is replaced every year, and my recent renovations cost \$21,000 which was spent on a designer, curtain maker, carpet and bamboo floorings, painting and wall paper, Australian artists, and craftsmen including art framers and a lamp maker.

Two important points to finish on: I pay tax on all my dealings – the apartment is positively geared. So as well as supporting local business I contribute to the county's tax base. Secondly, after 3.5 years, there has been no negative impact on the neighbours in my building. I ensure all guests will be respectful of both my home and my neighbours' peaceful enjoyment of their own.

I hope that the government can see the positive impact that Airbnb has on individuals, locals, the country, and the guests who come to see Sydney.

Yours sincerely,



I am a host for Airbnb based in Redfern. This is my second submission to the enquiry, and in it I would like to talk to you about some impacts that Airbnb has had on both my neighbourhood and myself. When I arrived in Australia from New Zealand in 1987, Redfern would not have been an area I would have walked through, much less bought in.

When I bought my apartment in 2009, the Redfern Riot was still in recent memory. So who would have thought that by 2012 when I joined Airbnb, it would turn out to be such a great area for visitors? Redfern works because of its proximity to the city and to Redfern Station. As such, I have had guests stay in my apartment from 49 different countries and every continent except Antarctica. The headline of my listing is 'Welcome to the United Nations of Redfern', and I mention every country that I have hosted: each time another country is represented I add them to the description.

I also note the types of people who stay – describing the amazing range of occupations (social workers, educators, a jewellery designer, professional acrobat, theologian, nurses, a film maker) – and also the total diversity of my guests from singles going around the world to retirees going around Australia, families with young children to same sex couples to groups of friends seeing Sydney for the first time. I proudly state that every major religion has been to stay, and that everyone is welcome here. I have had guests write to say that they have chosen my apartment based on the inclusivity on the description.

Being a host connects me to the world, and to cultures which I would not normally have much contact with. I have met people who speak English as a second language – either fluently or just the basics – or who do not speak English at all. I'm a gay atheist, and I have sat with Thai-American Christians who said grace as we shared a meal together. I have taken fundamentalist Christians from Malaysia to see the Redfern Hillsong Church.

Internationally, the world feels tenser than at any time since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Being able to open your home to guests from around the world is one small, very personal way that people in Sydney can foster meaningful contact between cultures. I presented at the first Airbnb conference in San Francisco last year, where I was asked what the most important thing I had learned after hosting three years. I said that being a host has reinforced my belief that people are basically good. I recalled a six week period in which I hosted a Muslim property developer from Dubai with his wife and daughter, followed by a Jewish psychiatrist and her husband, followed by a lesbian couple. On November 7, I will travel to Paris to give a speech about the concept of peace in the context of Airbnb.

By training I am a sociologist. My research areas are gender, sexuality and discrimination. I currently lecture in cultural diversity for a tertiary institution and the work that I do with Airbnb both as a host and an educator has been the most practical enactments of the research I have undertaken: it shows how effective positive social contact is at dispelling negative stereotypes about different cultural groups. Airbnb and the guests who come through my door reinforce the similarities that all people show, no matter how diverse their beliefs. It gives me a practical way of showing guests from around the world how open Australia is to them.

I hope that this information is useful in the context of seeing how important Airbnb is to aspects of Australia beyond the financial benefit to individuals and the broader community.

Best wishes,

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