

**Submission  
No 167**

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

Name: Name Suppressed

Date Received: 9/11/2015

*Partially Confidential*

Dear Parliamentary Committee

We are an ordinary, average family in Sydney – i.e., 2 kids and 2 parents STRUGGLING with a huge Sydney mortgage. The size of the mortgage was suffocating and stressful.

We turned to sharing our home and using airbnb as hosts to help with the financial stress of paying the mortgage as well as paying quite high inner-city child care fees (at one point more than \$238 per day for both our kids). One of us was a general staffer at a university, while the other employed in the government sector. We both had Master Degrees, but not very high salaries ... not uncommon in Sydney ... so those fees took one whole salary to pay. We've also had periods of unemployment and redundancy and without our hosting, we would have gone under financially.

What did we decide to do facing the high costs of living in Sydney while living on fairly average salaries? We do LOVE living here so did not want to move.

The answer was to share our home to help ease the financial burden. So we chose to host in a studio that is located over the top of our garage, in our back-yard.

Having been a traditional landlord many years ago with long term tenants, I have found hosting short-term tenants is SO much easier and GENTLER on the neighbourhood. With short term tenants it is easier to keep noise down, and to carefully vet who is staying. It makes sense, right? You want to be very careful about who is staying in your own backyard or home, right? We have now been hosting in our studio for six years and we have not one complaint from any neighbours in six years! Our short term accommodation is tiny and not suitable for long-term tenants, but for short term purposes, it is perfect and meets travellers needs really well.

What has been the result of our short-term hosting decision?

Airbnb has transformed our life – and that is an understatement.

Hosting through airbnb has enriched our life financially, but moreover and wonderfully, it's been so enriching culturally. Our kids help us host and it has been inspiring for them. Not only have their social skills been developed through talking with people from such diverse nationalities and languages, but they have been inspired by meeting people from such diverse professions – from biennale sculptors and artists, heart-surgeons, engineers, fashion designers, documentary film makers, Italian business professors, Israeli scientists, yoga teachers or theatre producers. It has broadened their understanding of how it is possible to live in the world.

And, we now have friends we can visit in America, Italy, the UK, Canada, Japan or Switzerland! Just Extraordinary. Our 7-year old son has kicked a soccer ball around our tiny courtyard with people from more than 12 different countries! It's been a beautiful experience that we could not have imagined was possible.

Our local businesses also love our airbnb-hosting too! I direct our guests to local cafes, take-aways and businesses. I know that sometimes, my guests are eating breakfast in the local cafes every day they are here. It's wonderful for local businesses and my hosting clearly brings cash into our local economy and community.

I also love the people who use airbnb. We have meet people from all over the world and had important and enlightening conversations about values, differences between countries, We have explored both differences but also how much we have in common. It's brought an added diversity of experience in our lives, and into the lives of our children's that I know would not have been possible without airbnb and short-term hosting. It's been invaluable and enriching.

Importantly, we want to be responsible citizens. For example, we do pay our taxes and declare our hosting income. We also take great care to respect our neighbours and community. We therefore ask the any regulations that are developed:

\* Are not burdensome on hosts and those of us who home-share

\* Are relatively simple to comply with

\* Protect home-sharing and the sharing economy as it so valuable to families, smaller businesses, and the broader community

\* And include language and acknowledgement of us home-sharers that is distinctly different to what Bed-n-Breakfast do or the role of youth-hostels and other hostels. Home-sharing is radically different and we ask that the language and regulations acknowledge those important differences.

Thank you for taking the time to think deeply about something that such an important topic for our family. Without our hosting/home-sharing life in Sydney would be incredibly difficult for us financially and less rich culturally.