

**Submission
No 144**

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

Name: Mr Timothy Swan
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I am an owner-occupier living in an apartment building in the CBD of Sydney. I am writing to provide the perspective of a resident who would like to be able to rent their apartment through sites like Airbnb or Stayz when they are out of Sydney for a genuine holiday, for example, over a long weekend or when on annual leave. This perspective is one I have seen little represented in discussions about short term letting.

I work full time in Sydney, and I do only a minimal amount of travel for work. My apartment is my sole residence, which means if I were to let it out while away, I would only be able to do so for a few weeks a year. It also means that if I were to choose to rent my apartment out on Airbnb or Stayz while I was away, I have a vested interest in ensuring that the people I rent my apartment to are going to be respectful of the fact that my apartment is my home. This by extension solves many of the concerns that people living in apartment blocks raise about apartments being rented to people who damages common property and frequently generate noise complaints.

Services like Stayz and Airbnb are a natural evolution and extension of the traditional house swap that people have been around for decades without any controversy. The key benefit they offer over a house swap is that they move from a pure barter system to a market based exchange. This means that participants do not have to find a party with an exactly opposite want to take advantage of the service. For example, if I wish to travel to say Los Angeles, I don't need to find someone from Los Angeles to house swap with if I use Airbnb or Stayz. Instead, I could rent my apartment to someone from say London, and in turn rent an apartment in Los Angeles (or even use the money for a hotel).

I have used Airbnb extensively in my own travels overseas and have found it a wonderful way to enrichen my travel experiences. I would like to be able to open my own home up to people who were interested in coming to Sydney and exploring our great city. I think it would be a shame if Sydney and New South Wales did not find a way to constructively develop a regulatory environment that worked with short term letting sites, rather than against them. I believe a State wide approach is required and preferable to leaving it to individual local governments.

I appreciate that there are some very serious and far reaching consequences involved with people who buy an apartment with the sole or dominant purpose of using it for short term letting, or people who permanently make a room in their apartment available for tourist accommodation. On those matters, I have no fixed views, but I appreciate that town planning and management can be difficult if real estate intended to be used as residential accommodation is being bought and used for permanent tourist accommodation. I also feel that I would probably not like to live in a building where there was a significant and persistent tourist presence in particular apartments that were solely used for short term tourist letting.

Yours sincerely

Tim Swan