



19 October 2016

## ACCOMMODATION INDUSTRY ISSUES SAFETY WARNING

The accommodation industry is warning the safety of domestic and international visitors could be compromised by proposed changes to the regulation of short-term letting in NSW.

Speaking on behalf of the industry following the release of the final report of the NSW Parliament inquiry into short-term holiday letting, the Accommodation Association of Australia said online platforms which facilitate residential premises being used for tourism accommodation must be properly regulated.

"While there should be less regulation for tourism accommodation businesses not more, the Accommodation Association supports tighter controls being introduced - and enforced - on tourism accommodation promoted through sharing economy platforms," said the Chief Executive Officer of the Accommodation Association of Australia, Richard Munro.

"Our industry takes particular exception to empty residential properties which are being used for tourism accommodation.

"There are apartment buildings or groups of properties with the same owner which are offering vacant residential premises as a direct alternative to traditional hotels and other tourism accommodation businesses.

"There must be a level-playing field for these 'quasi-hotels' and traditional tourism accommodation businesses.

"Any suggestion that quasi-hotels or other empty residential premises which are used for tourism accommodation should not have to comply with disability access standards and other regulatory measures, such as building fire safety requirements and having appropriate insurance in place - insurance for public places - must be rejected outright.

"Quasi-hotels are operating in NSW, including in Sydney's northern suburbs, which is a worrying, emerging trend and such operations will continue to flourish unless there is a regulatory clamp-down.

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"Quasi-hotels are a prime example of short-term rental accommodation being anything but a low-impact activity."

Mr Munro said the current level of investment in traditional tourism accommodation businesses is directly linked with the regulatory regime for the accommodation industry in Australia.

"Global online platforms which facilitate residential premises being used for tourism accommodation employ very few Australians, pay little or no tax in Australia and the premises they make their fortune from are, by and large, not subject to the same level of council rates as compliant tourism accommodation businesses," Mr Munro said.

"Given the reform process in NSW could influence government policy in other parts of Australia because other states and territories are still determining how to adapt to industry disruption, the Accommodation Association looks forward to working with the Baird Government to try to find a model which does not compromise tourism investment and enhances Australia's existing strong reputation as an international tourism destination."

**-ENDS-**

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