Subject: Short-term Holiday Letting in NSW – Options Paper

Sirs,

I write to you with regard to the Options Paper on Short-term Holiday Letting (STHL) in NSW. Short-term holiday letting and the tourism industry in general is the major contributor to the economy of Kangaroo Valley and surrounding areas. Properties which provide STHLs vary from purposely built and Council approved properties through whole house lets of weekenders on 100acre properties to houses in the village and spare rooms in private houses or former dairies and workers cottages on working farms. The variety and rural/historic nature of properties available is a big drawcard for tourists both from city areas and overseas. Most people do not visit Kangaroo Valley to stay in a large hotel or motel.

It is acknowledged that there are some adverse effects associated with STHL, particularly in Sydney, where many of the properties being let are in apartment buildings managed by strata schemes. In such properties any increase in noise, waste or damage caused by the short term nature of a stay has a substantial impact on other, permanent residents of the building and the body corporate which has to repair any damage caused by wilful neglect or simple ignorance, as well as maintain common property such as pools which would have a higher rate of wear and tear due to the short term nature of the let.

However, in regional areas such as ours, the vast majority of STHLs are of separate Torrens title houses, where noise is less of an issue and all repairs and waste management are the responsibility of the owner.

Within Kangaroo Valley, the vast majority of accommodation available for STHL is managed either by an owner on site, or by a professional agent in Kangaroo Valley, who provide a comprehensive booking and guest service offering much greater accountability and a minimisation of any problems as well as early correction should any arise. They also provide advice with regard to insurance, fire and risk assessment requirements.

Taking into account the economic contribution to the NSW economy (estimated in the region of $15 million), the provision of a wide range of accommodation types for both domestic and overseas tourists, and the existing proper management of properties in rural areas, we ask that the Government steer towards options one and two when reviewing legislation with regard to Short Term Holiday Letting. To adopt an option involving Complying or Development Applications, while attractive at first sight, would place even further burden on Local Councils, who struggle to meet current demand in this area. Our own Shoalhaven City Council is well behind in processing DAs, (many taking more than 12 months!) as they cannot attract enough qualified staff to do the work.

Yours faithfully

Alison Baker
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