SUBMISSION

TO THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
FROM THE EXHIBITION AND EVENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA (EEAA)
RE FEEDBACK ON THE SHORT-TERM HOLIDAY LETTING IN NSW OPTIONS PAPER

BACKGROUND

The short-term holiday letting sector has experienced rapid growth in recent years, with the increasing popularity of online booking services such as Airbnb and Stayz. In response to this growth, recommendations have been made by the NSW Parliament Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning, to consider the role of regulation within the sector. The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has subsequently released an Options Paper on Short-term Holiday Letting in NSW to generate further discussion and to obtain feedback on the options explored.

The EEAA is providing this Submission in response to the Short-Term Holiday Letting Options Paper on behalf of the exhibition and event industry which relies on the availability of accommodation for use by the sector itself, and for the visitors and exhibitors their events aim to attract.

ABOUT EEAA

The Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) is the peak industry Association representing Organisers, Association Organisers, Venues and Suppliers within the exhibition and event sector. Airbnb is a Member of our Association and a supplier of valuable accommodation stock to the industry.

Awarded the inaugural Global Exhibitions Day Industry Impact Award in July 2017, EEAA has been recognised internationally by UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, and Exhibition World for having had the most positive impact supporting exhibitions as an industry.

The work of the Association and its Members is a testament to the Power of Exhibitions as a driver of the economy and in particular economic development, trade and export, employment, visitation and knowledge sharing.

A not-for-profit organisation, EEAA works to ensure industry growth by encouraging high industry standards, promoting the professionalism of EEAA Members and highlighting the unique business opportunities that exist through exhibitions. Read more about EEAA, our advocacy work or view the Power of Exhibitions video.
THE EXHIBITION AND EVENTS INDUSTRY

The exhibition and event sector is an important part of Australia’s business events sector which is an important driver of the Australian economy, contributing to trade and investment, innovation, jobs creation and visitation.

A 2015 Report released by Ernst & Young, *The Value of Business Events to Australia*, found that in 2013-2014, over 9.3 million people attended 2,157 exhibitions across Australia, with NSW accounting for 30%. These events directly generated:

- $3.1 billion in direct expenditure
- $1.5 billion in direct value added
- 21,000 direct jobs

Our Association also works with the Audited Media Association of Australia to verify event attendance data. In the latest report for the 2016/17 financial year, the top 30 audited exhibitions in Australia and New Zealand attracted 276,450 unique visitors. Sydney generated 86,288 unique visitors with 25.6% from interstate or overseas.

The NSW Government has a major stake in the business events sector. In December 2016, the new International Conventional Centre (ICC Sydney) opened its doors – already the venue has attracted 1 million visitors and has over 1,000 events in the pipeline. This venue and others around the city including Sydney Olympic Park, Sydney Showground, Australian Technology Park, ATC Randwick, Luna Park, Doltone House, The Star, The Concourse and Merivale are all important venues for hosting major trade and consumer expos and their associated conferences.

Around the country, other State Governments are also investing in upgrading facilities for our sector. These include the expansion of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, upgrading of the Cairns Convention Centre and the redevelopment of the Adelaide Convention Centre. There are also major upgrades to venues in Western Australia.

The exhibition and events industry is robust and has demonstrated its resilience in the face of tough economic conditions in recent years.

Our research shows visitation to events continues to grow and the sector remains important in terms of attracting visitors to NSW.

The exhibition and event industry continues to grow with new events regularly being created. This means more year-round international and interstate visitors who rely on a healthy stock of accommodation choices in both Sydney and across NSW.
FEEDBACK ON OPTIONS PAPER

It is important to ensure that any policies implemented maintain the economic and business benefits of Short-term Holiday Letting whilst managing the social and environmental impact.

Our Association advocates strongly that any reforms should not compromise the availability of accommodation stock for access by the exhibition and event sector.

The companies that use Short-term Holiday Letting within the Exhibition and Events industry is wide-ranging. They include the organiser companies who plan and produce the events, the exhibitors, staging companies, stand builders, and various other service providers as well as visitors to the events.

The presence of Airbnb and other Short-term Holiday Letting operators in the market has provided complementary stock and additional capacity during major event peak periods and has also allowed events to continue to grow.

Any reforms that create a barrier or deter potential Short-Term Holiday Letting operators from entering the market could have a detrimental effect on the industry and the visitor economy. In addition, any restrictions in relation to the length of stay permitted at Short-term Holiday Letting accommodation, would also have a negative impact on our members, who are regularly required to travel with their shows from one city to another for weeks at a time.

Feedback on options that create a barrier to entry:

A number of the options discussed in the paper, such as the options around strata law provisions, or requiring a license or registration from Short-Term Holiday Letting operators, would have an adverse effect on the availability of accommodation within NSW. This would create barriers to entry for hosts and deter potential Short-term Holiday Letting hosts from entering the market. It could also result in current hosts withdrawing from the market, thereby reducing available accommodation capacity. With the importance of the exhibition and event industry to the economy, it is also important that there are sufficient rooms to support the demand from visitors attending these events. It is also worth noting that there has been very limited new hotel development in Sydney in the last decade, making alternative accommodation providers such as Short-term Holiday Letting operators a valuable addition to the sector.

Feedback on the option of regulation through the planning system:

The options around regulation through the planning system, such as placing a limit or cap on the length of stay permitted or the number of bedrooms Short-term Holiday Letting accommodation could offer, would impact members of our industry who regularly travel with events around Australia. Many event teams are required on-site weeks prior to an event to set up, and after an event to pack it down. In these situations, a home-style environment is often more practical and preferable to staying in traditional hotel accommodation, and placing a limit or cap on the number of nights or the number of rooms could remove Short-term Holiday Letting as an option for these teams. These limits would also unfairly punish the large majority of Short-term Holiday Letting
operators who are acting responsibly within the market, in particular those hosts who use their primary residence for STHL, regardless of whether they are present or not.

Whilst the EEAA recognises there is a need to update the Short-term Holiday Letting policy to reflect the rapidly changing environment and to protect homeowners, landlords, and neighbours alike, there is also a need to ensure that the events sector can continue to flourish.

It is vitally important to maintain a healthy stock of accommodation options within NSW to facilitate the growing exhibition and event sector which continues to attract visitors from both interstate and internationally.

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