

SUBMISSION RE: Short Term Rental Accommodation (STRA)

As it stands the STRA Government Framework allows unrestricted use of residential zoning for commercial use. Being a new Motel Owner/Operator, I find it hard to understand that anyone can provide STRA without having the same guidelines and regulations as a commercial operator. For a start our land component of our business is much more expensive as are our rates because of our Local Government Zoning. We must abide by numerous government guide lines and regulations as well as regular inspections. Where as a private residence does not. For example, our pool is classified as a public pool with all the associated regulations. We must test it each day, record all the readings and make sure it is kept within set parameters necessary for public health and safety. This is not happening in the non-commercial STRA market. We accept that there is a competitive market out there but, let us have a fair and equitable one. The so-called level playing field. These private STRA operators do affect our bottom line, they are undercutting the market because there is no regulation, hence no compliance expenses. Saying that any STRA will not be a form of Tourist or Visitor Accommodation is nonsensical, who and how is this going to be enforced and policed. All non-commercial STRA should need to be registered with their local authorities, and face the same compliance issues, inspections, fees and charges as their commercial equivalents.

The growth of the non-commercial STRA will change the population demographic of our area. There will be less long-term rental accommodation available and probably less housing for sale, for anyone wanting to become a permanent resident of our area. Where are all our business employees going to live? Letting the STRA Government framework continue as is, is to the detriment of our local community and our local commercial operators. There definitely needs to be some form of cap placed on the number of days a non-commercial STRA premises can be rented. A 90-day cap on the rental of a STRA non-commercial premises as proposed by the Byron Bay community would be a step in the right direction. This would in someway compensate for not having the same regulatory guide lines as the commercial operators. However, a system of registration, inspection and compliance would need to be enforced alongside any legislation regarding a set cap of the number of rental days allowed. How is any authority going to police whether The STRA users are not Tourists or Visitors?

The easiest and most uncomplicated way of controlling any STRA premises is to treat them as a commercial operation and regulate them as such.