



Submission to the Select Committee on the Short Stay Accommodation Sector

To the Secretary to the Committee

Via email: scshortstay@parliament.sa.gov.au

Introduction

Airbnb welcomes the opportunity to contribute a written submission to the South Australian Legislative Council's Short Stay Accommodation Inquiry, in addition to our appearance before the committee.

We note the terms of reference for the Inquiry and will respond to the different clauses as they relate to us, so we can help the committee members understand the footprint of Airbnb in South Australia and the multiple benefits it provides South Australian residents, businesses, and industry.

We were encouraged by the commentary from all committee members during the debate on the motion for this Inquiry, that the committee will be guided by evidence, data, and facts. As outlined in our submission below, we have ensured that data and evidence underpins all of our responses and recommendations.

Executive Summary

- Airbnb supports regulation for the short-stay accommodation which is fair and sustainable.
- Airbnb has worked with state governments in New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia, to help introduce mandatory registration schemes and codes of conduct, and is willing to work with South Australia to ensure best practice.
- Airbnb supports the ambitious visitor economy target set by the South Australian government - \$12.8 billion by 2030 - and the short-stay sector is critical to ensuring South Australia reaches this target.
- In the year to March 2023, guests on Airbnb spent a staggering \$711 million in South Australia, supporting 5,400 jobs and contributing \$645 million to Gross State Product.



- Short-term rentals are often more affordable and suited to family or group travel, with features such as kitchens and laundries not offered by traditional accommodation.
- Short-term rentals also provide much needed elasticity to the accommodation sector during major events. With South Australia marketing itself as the Festival State, it is critical that short-term rentals are protected, so that events like Womad, Cabaret, Liv Golf, and AFL Gather Round, can continue to be delivered and scaled.
- Regional and rural areas, including South Australia's world famous wine regions, are dependent on short-term rentals, with short-term rentals dispersing tourism to all regions of the state.
- Research by property experts, Urbis, has confirmed that short-term rentals are just over 1% of the housing stock in South Australia. Current housing pressures are the result of many legacy factors, with new supply the most effective lever to ease rental and housing pressures.
- Airbnb has made three headline recommendations to the Committee overseeing this Inquiry:
 - *Recommendation 1:* Implement a mandatory statewide registration scheme to ensure accurate data.
 - *Recommendation 2:* Link the registration scheme to a code of conduct, so that expectations are clear on guests, hosts, and platforms.
 - *Recommendation 3:* Establish an industry roundtable with all relevant stakeholders, to ensure clear and efficient communication channels between platforms and the State Government.

About Airbnb

Airbnb was born in 2007 when two hosts welcomed three guests to their San Francisco home, and has since grown to over 5 million hosts who have welcomed over 2 billion guest arrivals in almost every country across the globe. Every day, hosts offer unique stays and experiences that make it possible for guests to connect with communities in a more authentic way.



Airbnb and South Australia

Airbnb has a proud presence in South Australia, with our listings dotted across every region of the Festival State, ensuring that all regions can be open to tourism, and all residents can benefit from the sharing economy.

Airbnb hosts proudly unlock cities, towns, and rural areas, to domestic and international travellers, and are enthusiastic ambassadors for South Australia. South Australians like [Carly and Andrew](#), who on top of their regular jobs as a teacher (Carly), and paramedic (Andrew), have restored a retired Redhen train carriage on the Fleurieu Peninsula for all to enjoy. The creativity of this space, coupled with the warm hospitality from Carly and Andrew, led them to win the 'Best New Host' award at the [2024 Airbnb Host Awards](#).

Airbnb hosts, like Carly and Andrew, activate listings in South Australia's traditional tourism locations, but also beyond that, into new and emerging regions, and to locations which lack traditional accommodation options. Airbnb hosts can be found in locations as far west as Fowlers Bay (over 900km west from Adelaide), as far north as Coober Pedy (over 800km north from Adelaide), and everywhere in between.

Given the size and geographical diversity of South Australia, as well as the importance of agritourism and wine tourism, short-term rental accommodation (STRA) is a critical pillar in the accommodation offerings, as all travelers and their preferences are catered for in a bespoke and authentic way.

Bringing together this diverse range of South Australian hosts, is Airbnb's South Australian host club. This host club is consistently looking for ways to give back to the South Australian communities they operate in, and to build relationships with government and industry partners.

One example of this is through our Airbnb Community Fund, which will distribute \$100 million (USD) globally by 2030. This year, Adelaide's emergency and domestic violence centre, Catherine House, will receive \$63,000 AUD from the [Community Fund](#), which Airbnb and the South Australian host club are proud to have helped deliver.

South Australian hosts are proactive and passionate about helping tell South Australia's story and that they have a special place within their communities and within the tourism space. South Australian host club leader, Sarah Huang, who moved to Adelaide from Taiwan in 2010, also sits on the Airbnb Host Advisory Board¹. This board, which brings together 23 exceptional hosts from across the world, ensures that all levels of Airbnb are listening to our hosts and their communities. We are proud that Sarah, who is passionate about promoting South Australia to the world, has a voice on this global stage.

¹ "Host Advisory Board." *Airbnb*. <https://www.airbnb.com.au/e/hostadvisoryboardintl>



Airbnb and the South Australian Visitor Economy

The sharing economy has revolutionised the way everyday Australians can generate extra income. For Airbnb hosts, this is on top of the mental health benefits of hosting, where South Australian hosts build meaningful connections and relationships with people from all over Australia and the globe.

The overwhelming majority of Australian hosts (85%) share one home, helping to provide affordable accommodation options for guests, disperse travel to new destinations, and generate billions in economic activity for communities².

In a survey of Australian hosts on Airbnb, almost three-quarters (73%)³ said they plan to use the money earned from hosting to help cover the rising costs of living, and over a third (39%) said they host to make ends meet⁴. Airbnb hosts also employ frontline workers such as cleaners, gardeners, and maintenance workers - occupations which are now firmly embedded in the Airbnb ecosystem.

Besides the immediate economic benefits to South Australian hosts and the frontline workers they help employ, Airbnb provides a multiplier effect to the visitor economy in each state and territory. A study by Oxford Economics, analysing Airbnb data in the 12 months to March 2023, found that Airbnb contributed \$13.6-billion to Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), supported almost 95,000 Aussie jobs, and helped disperse tourism away from well-known urban centres into regional Australia⁵. For South Australia, Oxford Economics found that Airbnb guests spent \$710.6 million and supported 5,400 jobs including in brick and mortar businesses, such as restaurants, cafes, and tourism experiences.

Given the South Australian government's ambitious target, through its 2030 Tourism Strategy, to grow visitor spend to \$12.8bn by 2030,⁶ Airbnb guest spend will be a modest yet critical component of the state achieving this goal.

The South Australia 2030 Tourism Strategy has specifically identified the growth of accommodation options, particularly for group travellers, as an area for improvement, and one of its core pillars.

² Internal Airbnb data as at 1 January 2024.

³ Self-reported, based on 2,233 host responses to internal Airbnb 'Homes host' survey conducted between 28/2/23 - 28/4/24.

⁴ Self-reported, based on 3,122 host responses to internal Airbnb 'Homes host' survey conducted between 1/12/22 - 28/4/24.

⁵ "Oxford Economics report shows Airbnb's contribution to GDP and jobs in Australia." *Airbnb*. <https://news.airbnb.com/en-au/oxford-economics-report-shows-airbnbs-contribution-to-gdp-and-jobs/>

⁶ "South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030". *South Australian Tourism Commission*. https://tourism.sa.gov.au/media/txpncuwn/satc_tourism-plan-2030_final_aug2019.pdf



Pillar Two of the strategy, 'Experience and Supply Development,' specifically states:

*"Experience development also includes the ongoing improvements to South Australia's accommodation supply. South Australia falls behind our competitor states in quality accommodation options, and in being able to cater to larger groups. This is a particular challenge in our regions where travellers are increasingly expecting accommodation to include a strong experiential component. It is essential that accommodation operators deliver superior service and unique value-adds."*⁷

While this strategic objective can be applied to all forms of accommodation, the specific call out for better accommodation options for larger groups, is an aim that Airbnb can help the state realise, given a distinct advantage of our platform is the ability to facilitate group trips and travel, and that 80% of Airbnb travel is group travel⁸. Moreover, complementing the accommodation offerings on our platform, is our Experiences service, which helps connect travellers with local tourism operators and experiences, ensuring a more comprehensive experience for travelers, and that their spend stretches across more areas of the visitor economy.

Airbnb is an important partner for the South Australian Government in realising this visitor economy goal, particularly around improved group travel, given our strong experience in this space and our international brand recognition. The abovementioned figures from Oxford Economics further demonstrate the positive impact we are already having on the South Australian visitor economy.

Case Study: Simon and Kerry Mears, Limestone Coast

Simon and Kerry Mears started a local wine tour business in Coonawara eight years ago after giving up the hustle and bustle of Melbourne. They quickly became passionate about what the region has to offer and began hosting on Airbnb as a way to encourage tourism and ensure travellers are visiting Coonawara's best sights. Their goal is to create memorable experiences for their Airbnb guests while supporting local businesses, with the hopes that tourists will fall in love with the region just like they did almost a decade ago.

"Being an Airbnb host in Penola is more than just providing a place to stay, it's about sharing the heart of our region and helping visitors discover what makes our historic town so special. We've built strong relationships with local wineries, cafés, and small businesses, ensuring our guests don't just pass through, but truly experience the best of the region.

⁷ "South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030". *South Australian Tourism Commission*. https://tourism.sa.gov.au/media/txpncuwn/satc_tourism-plan-2030_final_aug2019.pdf

⁸ "Airbnb 2024 Summer Release Highlights." *Airbnb*. <https://news.airbnb.com/airbnb-2024-summer-release-highlights/>



“One of the most rewarding aspects of hosting an Airbnb is meeting people from all over the world, many of whom we’ve stayed in touch with, while some even invite us to stay at their own Airbnbs when we travel. When tourism thrives, it lifts the entire community up, creating opportunities, supporting local producers, and putting this incredible part of South Australia on the map.”

Airbnb and South Australia’s Major Events

“Major events are vital for the state, as they generate strong demand and record-breaking bookings for our tourism and hospitality industry. Beyond this, major events do a fantastic job of telling South Australia’s story through media and broadcast coverage, bringing communities together creating a wonderful sense of pride and contributing strongly to South Australia’s brand.”⁹ Hon. Zoe Bettison, South Australian Tourism Minister.

South Australia is leading the nation when it comes to its year round events calendar. Major events have become the cornerstone of the state’s visitor economy, drawing visitors domestically and internationally to events as diverse as Liv Golf, Womad, Adelaide Fringe, the Santos Tour Down Under and Tasting Australia. For many years South Australia’s official slogan has been ‘The Festival State,’ again demonstrating the importance the State places on delivering world renowned festivals and events.

The success and scaling up of these events is directly linked to accommodation capacity. Put simply, events won’t succeed or grow if visitors do not have a place to stay. This is where STRA again proves its importance to the visitor economy, as the ease in which STRA can be activated to meet demand, particularly in surge periods, enables the influx of visitors to an event, providing ample accommodation choice. This also keeps accommodation prices fairer during surge periods.

One of South Australia’s largest events, Womad, highlighted in its submission to the City of Adelaide’s 2024/25 Budget consultation, that 14% of attendees to Womad stayed in an Airbnb, with the average stay being 5.26 nights and the average spend per attendee being \$2,729.¹⁰

⁹ “A Budget to Boost Our Visitor Economy.” *South Australian Government*.

<https://www.premier.sa.gov.au/media-releases/news-archive/media-release84>

¹⁰ “Attachment C for Draft 2024/25 Business Plan Budget Consultation.” *City of Adelaide*.

<https://meetings.cityofadelaide.com.au/documents/s19726/Attachment%20C%20for%20Draft%20202425%20Business%20Plan%20Budget%20Consultation%20Close-out.pdf>



Additionally, search data from Airbnb for Q3 2024, found that two South Australian locations, North Adelaide and Langhorne Creek, surged into the top ten most searched Australian locations on the platform, for people looking to book stays in the summer period of 1 November - 31 December 2024. North Adelaide's proximity to Adelaide Oval which hosts cricket matches over this period, was the key reason for North Adelaide claiming the fourth position on the top ten list¹¹.

For Langhorne Creek, a small town of just over 400 people outside of Adelaide, the surge in searches coincided with the annual Handpicked Festival. Handpicked offers South Australians the opportunity to listen to international artists, which previously has included John Butler, Missy Higgins, and Ball Park Music, amongst the vines of the picturesque Lake Breeze Wines Estate. Festivalgoers also get to eat and drink local produce while soaking in the festival. For a small and regional town like Langhorne Creek to deliver a festival of this size, they need local accommodation options, like Airbnb, and it is clear from the 2024 search data, that guests to this iconic South Australian festival want to stay in an Airbnb.

The Mayor of Alexandria Council, where Langhorne Creek is located, outlined the economic ripple effect that guests have when they stay in local accommodation before, during, and after Handpicked: "It's huge for local towns – everything is booked out when you have an event like that. A lot of these people will stay on for a few extra days or a half a week and really spend time exploring the region. It has a huge flow-on effect to local business and everyone wins."¹²

While STRA helps enable the success of major events anywhere in the state, it is rural and regional areas who particularly rely on STRA to ensure their annual festivals and events can run - and so that visitors stay longer and spend more. Many regions don't have large scale traditional accommodation options and STRA is the only, or predominant, option. This again demonstrates how STRA has embedded itself in the events ecosystem and is an undeniable consideration when Councils or event organisers are assessing the viability of an event.

For large scale international functions and events to be viable, STRA also needs to safely remain within the accommodation offerings. When Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Government were bidding for the 2032 Olympics, STRA was specifically included in the International Olympic Committee's Feasibility Study Report¹³, to ensure the bid could meet the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) accommodation thresholds, demonstrating again that STRA is an active consideration in feasibility assessments for large scale events.

¹¹ "Surprise results: SA's summer Airbnb hotspots." *Realestate.com.au*.

<https://www.realestate.com.au/news/surprise-results-sas-summer-airbnb-hotspots/>

¹² "Surprise results: SA's summer Airbnb hotspots." *Realestate.com.au*.

<https://www.realestate.com.au/news/surprise-results-sas-summer-airbnb-hotspots/>

¹³ "International Olympic Committee Feasibility Assessment - Olympic Games Brisbane" IOC.

<https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/Olympic-Games/Brisbane-2032/General/IOC-Feasibility-Assessment-Brisbane.pdf>



While South Australia is not bidding for the Olympics, the State Government has made it clear that they want to attract more national and international events and conferences. One such example is the world's leading climate change conference, COP31, which South Australia is currently trying to secure for November 2026. If successful in the bid for COP31 (or any other globally significant event), all accommodation options, including STRA, must be maintained, so South Australia's bids remain internationally competitive, and so potential assessors can see that the state has the accommodation elasticity to successfully deliver these events.

When these large-scale events are secured in South Australia's calendar, it is everyday South Australians who will receive a dividend from the event by hosting guests on STRA platforms. Everyday residents won't perceive major events as 'disrupters' but as events they have ownership in and a sense of pride over, if they are delivered a tangible benefit, which hosting can and does do. The economic opportunities from hosting during major events also means that everyday South Australians can use the additional income to pay their mortgage, bills, or spend on renovations. On top of spreading the economic benefits of these current and/or potential events, hosting also ensures that domestic and international guests are connected with a local host who provides a warm, hospitable, and unforgettable South Australian welcome while they are visiting. It is a win-win scenario for the guest and the host from an economic and relationship point of view.

Finally, while the current events locked into the South Australian events calendar are driving record visitation, it is clear that if the State Government were to add additional events, STRA would need to be safely secured in the accommodation mix, given how tight the accommodation market already is at these peak times. Data released on room occupancy during the 8 - 10 March 2025 long weekend showed that average room occupancy in Adelaide was sitting at 91%¹⁴, which is record breaking for South Australia. While this is incredibly positive news for the South Australian visitor economy and all the businesses that benefit from this record breaking visitation, it does demonstrate that this is the opportune time to retain and grow accommodation options, including STRA, so that events can continue to accommodate visitors.

If the select committee were to consider harsh or unworkable regulation on STRA hosts, that may hinder the ability to host, a knock on effect would be triggered, with major events and the guests to these events, paying the price.

¹⁴ "Festival season drives record hotel occupancy in Adelaide." *South Australian Government*. <https://tourism.sa.gov.au/news-articles/festival-season-drives-record-hotel-occupancy-in-adelaide>



Case Study: Brigitta Ragg, Lockleys

Brigitta lists her own house on Airbnb when she is away due to volunteering, work commitments, or when on holidays herself. Brigitta’s main reason for hosting is to supplement her income.

“I am a dedicated volunteer of the Operation Flinders Foundation, where I work with at-risk youth in the Flinders Ranges, providing them with an opportunity to grow in confidence and develop a sense of purpose. In this endeavour, I spend between 4-6 weeks per year in the Flinders Ranges itself, while also participating in multiple weekend and school holiday camps. In order to do this, I need to take leave without pay from my regular job, costing me more than \$10,000 in lost wages per year. While I find great reward in the work that I do volunteering, it accounts for a significant strain on my finances.

“This is where short-term renting through Airbnb comes in. During those weeks where I am in the Flinders Ranges, I offer my (then vacant) house on Airbnb to supplement my income. While the money I make during these times does not completely cover my lost wages, it does make volunteering a more sustainable option for me. In this way, the benefits of being able to offer my house on a short-term basis go beyond that offered to me and my guests. It benefits the cleaner I employ, the local business I recommend to guests, and, ultimately, the disadvantaged youth I work with. Without the supplementary income of using my house as a short-term rental, I would have to significantly reduce the number of 'Exercises' I participate in with the Operation Flinders Foundation.”

STRA and the South Australian Housing Market

“Australia has a housing challenge. Housing affordability has declined, rental prices have risen sharply, and demand for social and affordable housing is increasing while stocks are diminishing. The National Housing Supply and Affordability Council reported 172,000 dwellings were finished in 2023, constituting the lowest annual number of completions in the past decade.” Addressing The Housing Crisis: Unlocking Local Government’s Contribution Report¹⁵.

Airbnb is increasingly associated with a housing crisis that we did not cause and cannot solve. Experts and economists agree the root cause of the affordable housing crisis is a shortage of supply to meet demand, and leading factors limiting supply are not related to Airbnb.

Whether it’s the Commonwealth’s National Housing Supply and Affordability Council¹⁶, the

¹⁵ “Addressing the Housing Crisis: Unlocking Local Government’s Contribution.” *Australian Local Government Association*. <https://alga.com.au/app/uploads/Addressing-the-Housing-Crisis-report.pdf>

¹⁶ “State of the Housing System 2024.” *National Housing Supply and Affordability Council*. <https://nhsac.gov.au/sites/nhsac.gov.au/files/2024-05/state-of-the-housing-system-2024.pdf>



Australian Local Government Association¹⁷, or leading property economists, such as JLL,¹⁸ experts involved in the current housing discussion are clear on what the leading causes and solutions are for this crisis - with STRA rarely, or ever, appearing in the top listed reasons for the current crisis.

Moreover, exacerbating the supply problem is a myriad of factors, including, high construction costs, supply chain pressures, construction company insolvencies, taxation and economic settings, population growth, and shifts in movements and housing preferences from Australians, particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19.

The Federal Housing Minister, Clare O'Neil, captured the root cause of the crisis Australia is facing during her address to the Australian Financial Review's Property Summit in September 2024¹⁹, by stating:

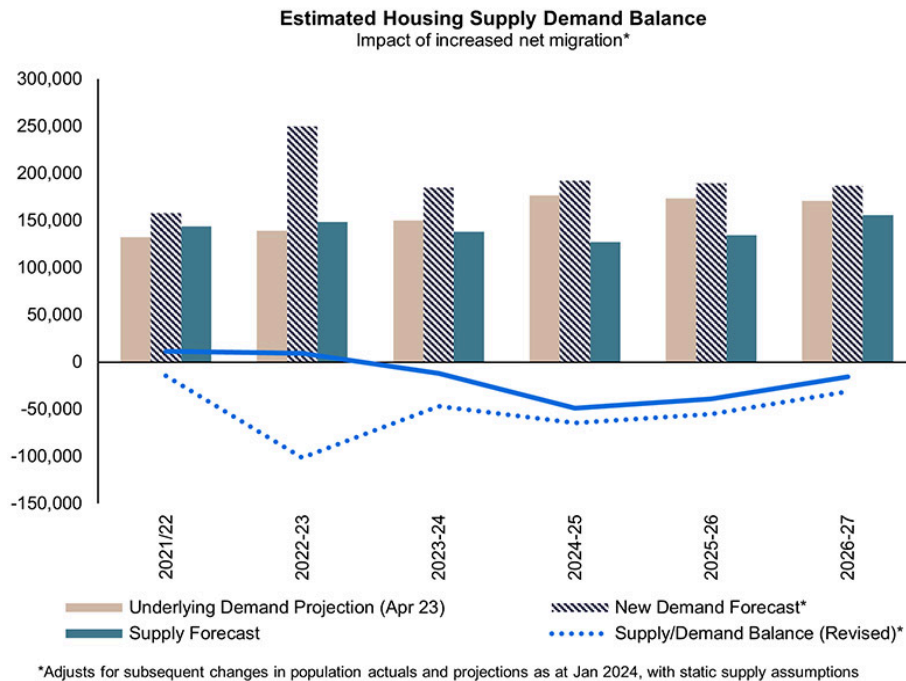
“Put simply, in Australia today, we do not have as much housing per person as countries we would compare ourselves to. Australia has among the least housing per person than comparable countries and is far below the OECD average. Less than France, less than the U.K., less than Canada. Fewer homes means less affordable housing, because the same number of buyers and renters are spread across fewer homes. It sounds trite - but what happens when we build more homes? Housing becomes more affordable. This is not just the law of supply and demand. It is what the experts tell us, and it's what happens in practice too.”

Leading property economists, JLL, laid out in clear terms the supply and demand disparity that is underpinning the current housing crisis in Australia, and being made more acute by a rising population:

¹⁷ “Addressing the Housing Crisis: Unlocking Local Government’s Contribution.” *Australian Local Government Association*. <https://alga.com.au/app/uploads/Addressing-the-Housing-Crisis-report.pdf>

¹⁸ “Australia’s housing shortage: demand outstripping supply.” *Jones Lang LaSalle*. <https://www.jll.com/en/trends-and-insights/research/australias-housing-shortage-demand-outstripping-supply>

¹⁹ “Minister O’Neil address at the AFR Property Summit.” *Department of Social Services*. <https://ministers.dss.gov.au/speeches/15981>



Source: JLL Australia: <https://www.jll.com.au/en/trends-and-insights/research/australias-housing-shortage-demand-outstripping-supply>

To specifically zoom into STRA’s relationship with the Australian housing market, Airbnb commissioned expert urban planning and consulting firm Urbis²⁰ to better understand the role of STRA in the Australian housing market.

Using Airbnb data up to December 2022, Urbis analysed six states around the country to examine the scale of impact. Looking at the presence of STRA in Australia, the report found:

- The total proportion of non-hosted²¹ STRA, short-term stays where the host is not physically present, varies substantially by location.
- Short-term rentals are typically 1 to 2 percent of the overall housing stock in each state.
- In 90% of all local government areas (LGAs), non-hosted STRA properties represent 5% or less of total dwelling stock.
- In locations with higher concentrations of STRA, they tend to be in areas that have significant tourism and seasonal economies.

²⁰ “Short-Term Rental Accommodation and Housing in Australia.” *Urbis*.

https://www.airbnb.com.au/e/ppap_au-housinganalysis

²¹ *non-hosted refers to short-term stays where the host is not physically present during the guest’s stay.



- No consistent relationship between the proportion of non-hosted STRA and vacancy rates for long-term rentals across the six capital cities in scope.
- No strong relationship between the proportion of non-hosted STRA and rental affordability.
- Only a weak relationship between the proportion of housing utilised as non-hosted STRA and the proportion of households in rental stress (lower income households that spend more than 30% of gross income on housing).
- Only a weak relationship between changes in the proportion of non-hosted STRA and changes in real rents.

For South Australia²² specifically, the research by Urbis found that:

- Currently, only 1.1% of dwellings in the state are utilised as non-hosted STRA with non-hosted STRA properties available for booking as STRA for more than six months accounting for just 0.2% of total dwellings.
- These proportions, along with those of Western Australia, are the lowest of all the states.
- Drilling down into the 70 individual LGAs in South Australia reveals that non-hosted STRA properties represent less than 5% of the total dwelling stock in approximately 94% of LGAs. Just four LGAs have non-hosted STRA at levels equal to at least 5% of the total dwelling stock, with only two LGAs having non-hosted STRA at levels equal to at least 10% of the total dwelling stock.
- Similar to the other states, South Australian LGAs with relatively high proportions of total dwellings utilised as non-hosted STRA generally comprise locations with significant tourism and visitor economies.

The report from Urbis demonstrating that STRA is only between 1 - 2% of Australia's housing stock joins a growing body of evidence from other states and territories who have looked into this same question.

In 2023, the Queensland Government commissioned the University of Queensland (UQ) to explore the relationship between STRA and the state's housing market as part of its Short Term Accommodation Review.²³

²² "Short-Term Rental Accommodation and Housing in Australia." *Urbis*.
https://www.airbnb.com.au/e/ppap_au-housinganalysis

²³ "A Review of the Short Term Rental Accommodation in Queensland. *University of Queensland*.
https://www.planning.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/83333/a-review-of-the-impacts-of-short-term-rental-accommodation-in-queensland.pdf



The UQ study found that STRA has a limited impact on rental affordability, and instead that overall dwelling stocks were a significant contributor to explaining rental price increases. It echoes the Urbis findings in that STRA is not a significant determinant of rental affordability across Queensland. The UQ study also finds no clear alignment between the suburbs where rents have increased the most and the percentage of dwellings used as STRA.

Overall, the studies reaffirm that a multitude of factors have contributed to the current state of housing markets around Australia, and that restricting STRA in the absence of meaningful policy actions to build supply is not a long-term solution to the crisis.

Case Study: John and Julie Murphy, Willunga

John and Julie Murphy have restored and preserved historically important cottages in Willunga, which link South Australia to its Irish heritage.

“We are a couple coming up to retirement who have put all of our savings and income into restoring two beautiful old Irish cottages in the tourist zone in the village of Willunga.

“We decided we wanted to be self-funded retirees as we did not want to be a burden on the state in our later years. To achieve this goal we renovated the heritage cottages that are listed as a place of historic interest. We believe that these cottages deserve to be shared as they are a part of Irish Immigration history, and are in the tourist zone.

“We employ a cleaner Karen, a gardener Chris, and a maintenance man Dave.

“As a part of the booking, our guests receive a response that promotes 25 local businesses in the area. These businesses give us feedback and thanks for the number of our guests that visit them.”

Quality, Safety and Trust

The overwhelming majority of guests who stay in listings on Airbnb behave appropriately and treat the home and surrounding community with care and respect.

However, there are rare instances of poor behaviour and Airbnb works actively to respond to these issues and prevent them from happening in the first place. Airbnb continues to prioritise the safety of our community and implement measures to deter parties and stamp out poor behaviour.



Recent measures include:

- Our [global ban on parties](#) at Airbnb listings, permanently codified since July 2022. Since we first implemented this defence in 2020, the rate of parties reported to us over NYE has [decreased](#) by 70% in Australia.
- [A high-risk reservation screening system](#) which uses technology to help identify reservations which may be problematic, to try to stop unauthorised parties before they start. This high-risk reservation screening can prevent bookings from being completed. It [was first piloted in Australia in October 2021](#) and now occupies a long-term place in the company’s global anti-party arsenal.
- The Neighbourhood Support Line available at [airbnb.com/neighbours](#), which allows neighbours to request a call from a specialised support agent and report problems. This allows Airbnb to investigate problematic behaviour which is brought to our attention. Airbnb has continued to prioritise policies and initiatives which prevent or respond to these challenges. Poor behaviour is not tolerated on our platform – neither Airbnb, nor our community of Hosts, wish to see disruptive or nuisance behaviour within their listings.

Verified listings:

- In September 2023, we announced our commitment to begin verifying the location of listings on Airbnb, with Australia being one of the first five countries included. By March 2024, nearly 1.5 million listings across the globe have completed the location verification process and will receive a ‘verified’ badge²⁴.
- By verifying listings, we are aiming to confirm that the space is real, it has an accurate location, and the host has access to it.

Removing low quality listings

- On Airbnb, quality isn’t just determined by a listing’s overall rating. There are many factors we use to understand more about a guest’s stay, including sub-category ratings, host cancellations and quality-related Community Support issues. Based on these criteria, in April 2023, we launched an updated hosting quality system²⁵, which takes a more targeted and holistic approach to better evaluate listings that may have failed to meet our community’s expectations when it comes to quality issues with a stay. In the first three months, we removed 12,000 low-quality listings. Since then, through November 2024 we removed over 400,000 listings²⁶ – including those that continued to provide a below-par experience for guests – and we continue to

²⁴ “Airbnb March 2024 Update.” *Airbnb*. <https://news.airbnb.com/en-au/airbnb-2024-march-update/>

²⁵ As Above.

²⁶ “Our Commitment to Providing the Highest Quality Stays.” *Airbnb*. <https://news.airbnb.com/en-au/our-commitment-to-providing-the-highest-quality-stays/>



evaluate every listing after each stay to help ensure they provide the best possible experience for guests.

Recommendations

Airbnb is ready to work with any government to achieve fair and sensible regulation of our sector. Globally, we have worked with over 1,000 governments to get the balance right when it comes to housing, tourism, and community expectations.

Already we have introduced for councils, City Portal²⁷, a high-level dashboard which provides the number of listings in a councils' area, visitor spending trends, and access to the 24/7 neighborhood support line. We also launched the STRA Policy Toolkit²⁸, at the Australian Local Government Association's annual conference in July 2024, which helps policymakers understand what is best practice when it comes to regulation. These tools show how committed we are to working in partnership with policymakers.

Given all the evidence and data that has been outlined in our submission, and the intent of the Inquiry to understand best practice regulation, we make the following recommendations to the Inquiry:

Recommendation 1 - Registration Scheme

Airbnb recommends the South Australian Government establish a short-term rental accommodation registration scheme. We have provided what best practice looks like when it comes to an effective and efficient registration scheme in Annex A of this submission. This would bring South Australia in line with New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia.

Recommendation 2 - Code of Conduct

Airbnb recommends the South Australian Government link a code of conduct to the registration scheme, so expectations are clear on hosts, guests, and the community. If South Australia were to follow New South Wales' model, then two serious breaches of the code could result in a guest or host being placed on an 'Exclusion Register,' which the Office of Fair Trading in New South Wales currently controls.

Recommendation 3 - Industry Roundtable

Airbnb recommends the South Australian Government establish an Industry Roundtable with all relevant stakeholders, that could meet quarterly, to ensure strong and clear communication channels between the sector and the government. Moreover, if the Government was to agree to recommendations one and two, then this Roundtable could

²⁷ "Airbnb Introduced City Portal to Australian Local Governments." *Airbnb*. <https://news.airbnb.com/en-au/airbnb-introduces-city-portal-to-australian-local-governments/>

²⁸ "Airbnb Unveils Short Term Rental Policy Toolkit for Australian Policymakers." *Airbnb*. <https://news.airbnb.com/en-au/airbnb-unveils-short-term-rental-policy-toolkit-for-australian-policymakers/>



help steer the delivery and design of the registration scheme, and ensure strong host awareness, education, and compliance throughout the process.

Recommendation 4 - Consultation and Cost Benefit Analysis for any Additional Regulation

If the Government considers additional regulation beyond the above recommendations, it is recommended that: a) industry is given appropriate time to provide feedback on the impact of any additional regulation, particularly on its host community; and b) a cost benefit analysis is done on said regulation, to clearly understand any outcomes in addition to how they may impact the visitor economy.

Conclusion

Airbnb would again like to thank all committee members for their interest in the STRA sector and for inviting us to make a submission.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute our insights to this Inquiry and hope they will be considered appropriately.

The South Australian Government, the South Australian people, and Airbnb, are all united in our desire to see South Australia's tourism economy grow and reach new heights.

As we have outlined in this submission, we believe our strong and passionate South Australian host community, who are unlocking new opportunities, experiences, and regions everyday, are excelling at being ambassadors for the State, and are instrumental in the State achieving its ambitious visitor economy targets. We hope their contribution is appreciated by the committee.

Given many of the clauses in the terms of references for this Inquiry also attempt to link STRA to the current housing pressures being experienced in South Australia, we hope the clear and independent research that has been presented in this submission, and as widely available elsewhere, can put our footprint into perspective and show that policymakers at all levels have the levers at their disposal to increase supply, which is the most effective tool in mitigating the current housing crisis.

We are available and open to discuss anything contained in this submission at any time and look forward to reading the final report from the committee.



Annex A - Registration Scheme Best Practice

Airbnb has worked productively with all levels of government across Australia to ensure fair and balanced regulation. Registration schemes for STRA currently exist in New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia.

We understand that the select committee is interested in understanding what best practice looks like for the registration schemes which exist in other jurisdictions. To assist with that, we have developed these high-level principles to help the government ensure any scheme is effective and efficient:

A simple, centralised, and state-run system

Based on our experience in Australia and overseas, Airbnb believes any potential registration scheme should be a simple-to-use, online, declarative registration system, where hosts can input their personal information and instantly obtain a registration number through an online platform. The system should be run by the State and be mandatory for hosts to register to ensure that all data relating to short-term letting activity is being accurately captured. Appropriate exemptions should be considered for those forms of accommodation which may be listed on short-stay accommodation platforms, but otherwise subject to other regulatory regimes, for instance traditional Bed and Breakfasts, boutique hotels or caravan parks.

Data transparency

The system should include a data collection system which supports local authorities to monitor STRA activity and ensure compliance with safety regulations. However, we believe the data required from hosts should be the minimum data necessary to process their registration to ensure privacy. This could include: the address of the dwelling; the type of residential accommodation (e.g. hosted or non-hosted, or primary or secondary residence); the name and address of the host of the dwelling; and a declaration that the dwelling complies with the fire safety standard or other applicable standard. Appropriate geospatial data should be available for local councils to access, in order to understand the scale of the short-stay sector, as well locations of properties within their local area. Whilst individual premises' details should not be publicly available, data sets, broken down at the local government area, could be available in the way that [Tasmania's registration data](#) is regularly shared.



Emergency Management

A registration scheme could also gauge a host's interest or ability to offer their STRA property during a time of crisis. This would allow an agency or department within the South Australian Government to contact hosts who are receptive to such arrangements during times of crises, regardless of the online booking platform they use. A comparable initiative exists in Tasmania, where accommodation providers (with an ABN) can register their willingness to make their accommodation available for a short period of time to those needing support immediately after a natural disaster or emergency.

Fees

Airbnb believes that fees for registration should be accessible for all, proportionate, and levied on a cost-recovery basis. There could also be options for 'tiering' the registration fees based on the host's level of activity. For example, offering lower cost registration for private room hosts, or those property owners who only intend to offer their properties infrequently such as during major events.