



Mr Don Challen AM  
Chair  
Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council

Via [adrian.christian@treasury.tas.gov.au](mailto:adrian.christian@treasury.tas.gov.au)

4 June 2020

Dear Mr Challen,

I am writing to you on behalf of Airbnb Australia and our community of hosts across Tasmania.

I understand you are currently taking submissions from major stakeholder bodies, and as Tasmania's largest accommodation provider — representing thousands of listings across Tasmania — I thought it helpful to provide you with our perspective.

Airbnb has been proud to work with the Tasmanian Government - and partner with the thousands of local Tasmanians who share their homes on our platform - to support the growth of tourism and job opportunities in Tasmania in the past. As Australia emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are deeply committed to safely regrowing tourism and getting people back into jobs.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Airbnb played a critical part in Tasmania's visitor economy. Research by Oxford Economics found that in 2019 alone, **Airbnb guests spent US\$260.3 million** which **added US\$200 million to the state's GDP** and **3,200 jobs** in every corner of Tasmania.

Importantly, the majority of this tourism activity took place in regional Tasmania, helping to spread tourism spending and jobs.

Tasmania has led the way on embracing the sharing economy and modernising rules for short-stay accommodation.

As part of your consultation, we strongly urge the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council to **resist any short-sighted calls to change the regulatory settings for short-stay accommodation in Tasmania**. Additional red tape or restrictions on the short-stay accommodation sector of any sort as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic will only hinder the recovery of the visitor economy in Tasmania.

One of the major reasons for the recent success of Tasmania's visitor economy is the introduction of Tasmania's nation-leading short-stay accommodation rules in 2017 by the then Minister for Planning, now Premier, Peter Gutwein.

These short-stay accommodation rules, supplemented by a rigorous, world-class compliance process which took effect in 2019, enabled Tasmanian hosts to continue to reap the benefits of sharing their homes which in turn benefits the state's visitor economy.

The data is clear in this respect, and we would contend that it is no coincidence that the extraordinary growth of Tasmania's visitor economy since 2017 occurred at the same time as these progressive rules came into effect. Since enacting short-stay accommodation planning reforms, Tasmania has seen consecutive years of strong tourism growth across guest spending and jobs supported in the tourism industry. Tasmania's reforms commenced 1st July 2017 and since then:

- direct and indirect tourism employment grew by 7.7% and 7.8% respectively in the 2017/2018 financial<sup>1</sup> and 9.4% and 11.3% respectively in the 2018/2019 financial year<sup>2</sup>
- tourism consumption grew by 10% in the 2017/2018 financial year<sup>3</sup> and 9.8% in 2018/2019 financial year<sup>4</sup>.

The cornerstone of Airbnb's business in Tasmania is the community of local hosts who share their homes. In the main, these are "mum and dad" operators who are looking to supplement their income, and they have been hit hard by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside our host community, we have worked to reinforce local public health measures and do our part to limit the spread of COVID-19. We continue to monitor the latest information provided by the Tasmanian Government and communicate this information to our host community. Additionally, we will also be undertaking significant measures through our Enhanced Cleaning Initiative to ensure that the future of travel on Airbnb is COVID-safe.

Alongside our community of hosts in Tasmania, we look forward to working closely with the Tasmanian Government to safely and sustainably regrow Tasmania's economy and the jobs that rely on short-stay accommodation throughout the state.

When the time is right, we want to work with the Tasmanian Government to support our hosts and their communities to once again welcome tourists as soon as safely possible. We have previously written to the Premier to offer our support for direct international flights between Tasmania and New Zealand — by way of incorporating Tasmania into our marketing channels in New Zealand — as well as supporting any marketing campaigns to attract visitors to Tasmania once again.

We look forward to working with the Tasmanian Government in relation to these issues, and would be pleased to engage in discussions and provide additional information which would be helpful for the Council's deliberations.

Sincerely,

Derek Nolan



**Head of Public Policy, Australia and New Zealand  
Airbnb**

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<sup>1</sup> Tourism Research Australia 2019, *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2017/2018*, p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Tourism Research Australia 2020, *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2018/2019*, p.13.

<sup>3</sup> Tourism Research Australia 2019, *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2017/2018*, p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Tourism Research Australia 2020, *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2018/2019*, p.6.