

Short-term Rental Regulation Toolkit

FOR AUSTRALIAN POLICYMAKERS



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A LETTER FROM

Michael Crosby

Head of Public Policy,
Australia & New Zealand

One of the great privileges of working for Airbnb is travelling to the many communities around Australia and meeting with locals from all walks of life who are proud to open their homes to visitors.

I see the benefits of short-term rentals for local communities first-hand, whether it's someone looking to make a few extra dollars by sharing a room in their house, to hosts who are opening up their holiday homes to other families so they can enjoy visiting another part of Australia.

Short-term rental accommodation creates benefits for the broader community, with visitor spending supporting local small business — in shops, restaurants, bars, and cafes — which are often the focal point for many local communities in suburbs and towns across the country. It also supports local communities to host events and increase visitation, by providing additional accommodation where it may not otherwise exist.

Airbnb works with state and local governments everyday to support and develop fair and sustainable regulations that meet the needs of their communities.



We want to be a responsible partner to governments and communities to support best-practice regulatory frameworks. We are committed to supporting the sustainable growth of the visitor economy throughout Australia, ensuring that everyday people can benefit from the economic opportunities of hosting on Airbnb.

This toolkit is designed to provide practical help as you consider how to best craft fair and balanced short-term rental rules that preserve the benefits short-term rentals offer to residents and local economies across the country.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at australiapolicy@airbnb.com. We are here to work with you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Crosby". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael Crosby

Head of Public Policy, Australia & New Zealand
Airbnb



Introduction

At Airbnb, we've collaborated with governments around the world, including Australia, to enable responsible tourism that keeps more of the economic benefits in the places where it happens.

Airbnb is committed to working with policymakers to develop best-practice regulatory frameworks and balanced solutions to meet the unique needs of each community and allow residents to benefit from home sharing. We are here to help build stronger communities, foster sustainable tourism growth, and equip governments across Australia with tools to help address important issues, such as housing affordability and amenity.

This toolkit offers best practices in partnering with local jurisdictions in the areas of statewide short-term rental accommodation (STRA) registration schemes and codes of conduct, supporting economic empowerment initiatives to fund housing and community projects, trust and safety, and data and resource sharing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Airbnb acknowledges the cultural Custodians and Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways on which we live, work, and travel throughout Australia. We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, whose ancestors walked the lands upon which our office stands and whose descendants continue to reside upon.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present, acknowledging them as traditional Custodians of knowledge for Country, and we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate the enduring connections to Country, culture, and community, as well as the resilience, knowledge and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Registration

Over the past few years, state governments in Australia have been developing registration systems to support compliance and enforcement of their short-term rental rules. Airbnb supports the introduction of mandatory, industry-wide registration systems in states and territories that implement broader regulatory frameworks. Transparency over the number and location of listings is vital to understanding the industry, and for governments to be able to make informed policy decisions. After working with jurisdictions across the world, we have found the following guiding principles best form the foundation of a successful government administered registration system:

1

Easy & Accessible Registration Process

A streamlined, online registration system that allows hosts to complete every step of the application process quickly and easily helps promote compliance. Further, we have found that compliance is higher when hosts are required to complete a single application process that incorporates all registration requirements into one.

2

Data Minimisation

Consistent with privacy and data security best practices, hosts should only be required to provide the minimum data necessary to process an application and ensure regulators can enforce the relevant framework.

3

Automatic Renewal

To reduce administrative burdens on governments, registration should be

automatically renewed by the local government unless a host decides to stop hosting short-term stays, or if the short-term rental is the subject of a breach of local laws or regulations.

4

Reasonable Fees

All hosts should pay a reasonable fee upon registration. Registration fees and the number of requirements should be proportional to the space and type of accommodation they share with guests, as well as the type of hosting activity (e.g. hosted or non-hosted accommodation).

5

Reasonable Onboarding Period

Governments can help boost compliance by offering hosts a reasonable timeline to get registered. There should be ample time between the enactment of new short-term rules and enforcement to allow hosts to complete the registration process.



Statewide online registration programs that provide local governments with the information they need to enforce their short-term rental rules without creating undue burdens for regular people who share their homes is a win-win scenario for all parties.

Airbnb can help support governments who follow these best practices with a permit field that allows registered hosts to include their permit number on their listing page. When entering a number, the host attests that the number

entered is valid and accurate. The registration number is displayed publicly on the host's listing page in a designated field, giving guests peace of mind and regulators the opportunity to enforce, as needed.

We also partner with state and local governments to educate our host community on compliance. This includes building Responsible Hosting pages that specify detailed information on how to comply with local rules for short-term rentals in various locations around Australia.



**Scan to visit
the Responsible
Hosting page
for Australia**



”

To date, we've partnered with over 1,000 governments around the world to support common sense rules for short-term rentals.



Scan to
download the
Urbis report

Housing

Airbnb got its start during the Global Financial Crisis as a way to help our founders pay their rent. More than 15 years since our founding, thousands of people stay in Airbnb listings across Australia on any given night and more than 45 percent of hosts say the income from hosting allows them to stay in their homes.¹ Today, the majority of hosts (85%) in Australia share only one home on Airbnb, helping to provide affordable accommodation options for guests, disperse travel to new destinations, and generate billions in economic activity for communities.²

Australia is facing unprecedented challenges when it comes to housing. A range of factors alongside a once-in-a-generation pandemic, have placed immense pressure on our local housing landscape. That's why, every day, we work with governments to ensure that hosting on Airbnb, and the economic activity created by hosting, make communities stronger. To date, we've partnered with over 1,000 governments around the world to support common sense rules for short-term rentals.

Airbnb worked with experts, Urbis, to better understand the role of short-term rentals in the Australian housing market. Using Airbnb data, Urbis analysed the six states to examine the scale of impact.

Overall, even within locations with a higher proportion of housing used as non-hosted³ STRA, housing affordability varies significantly, indicating STRA has no consistent impact on housing affordability.

Furthermore, Urbis finds that STRA plays an important role for guests, hosts and the wider community. Our hosts make vital contributions to local communities by sharing their spare or underutilised spaces. More guests can explore more locations across the country, with flow-on benefits to towns and cities. Guests on Airbnb prefer to stay in short-term rental accommodation as they can find a listing that suits their particular needs and budget, or it allows them to explore new parts of the country that otherwise have limited alternative options. Hosts on Airbnb share their homes for a range of reasons. While economic motivations are the most common, there are also social and wellbeing factors, such as meeting new people and sharing and learning about other cultures. Urbis' full study can be found [here](#).

Through this work, we understand cities continue to navigate unique, complex challenges – including housing affordability. Experts agree the chronic, decades-long underproduction of new housing supply is driving today's housing affordability challenges. We want to play a role in finding sensible, long-term solutions to help increase the housing supply and work with cities to balance the benefits of home sharing with communities' needs.

1 Self-reported, based on 2,973 host responses to an internal Airbnb 'Homes host' survey conducted between 1/12/22 - 28/4/24

2 Internal Airbnb data as at 1 January 2024.

3 Where the host is not generally on-site during a guest's stay.

Economic Empowerment

When guests travel using Airbnb, they create a powerful ripple effect in local economies. A 2023 independent Oxford Economics report analysed Airbnb's tourism data and found Airbnb guest spending in Asia Pacific was more resilient to the pressures of Covid-19 than the traditional travel and tourism market; it shrank by less and recovered earlier than the industry average. In Australia, Airbnb's total contribution to GDP has rebounded to a total of \$13.6 billion, eclipsing the 2019 contribution to GDP of just under \$11 billion⁴.

Significantly, Airbnb's ecosystem and economic multiplier effect reaches deep into a number of industries throughout the economy, bringing job opportunities to a diverse range of communities far beyond those in which our hosts operate. Across Australia, over 94,000 jobs are supported by Airbnb's community and

for every 100 Airbnb listings across Asia Pacific, Oxford Economics estimates that 213 jobs are supported⁵.

Airbnb has been at the forefront of two key trends shaping travel, and the report quantifies the economic value and jobs these trends bring to cities and towns throughout Australia. Firstly, travel is now more dispersed, and so the economic benefits are being shared across more destinations. Importantly, this brings economic opportunities to the rural and regional areas, supporting local small businesses and livelihoods beyond the capital cities.

In a survey of Australian hosts on Airbnb, almost three quarters (73%) said they plan to use the money earned from hosting to help cover the rising costs of living⁶, and over a third (39%) said they host to make ends meet.⁷

4 Oxford Economics 2023, *The Economic Impact of Airbnb in APAC: An independent report by Oxford Economics*. The data is for the twelve months to March 2023. Prices in 2022 figures.

5 Oxford Economics 2023, *The Economic Impact of Airbnb in APAC: An independent report by Oxford Economics*. The data is for the twelve months to March 2023. Prices in 2022 figures.

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

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



Tourism Levies

Airbnb is committed to partnering with state governments in Australia to continue revitalising tourism following the pandemic. For example, we would welcome the opportunity to explore the introduction of a sustainable tourism levy, at an appropriate rate, to provide much-needed funds for social and affordable housing projects. We suggest that a sustainable tourism levy for STRA could be:

- 1 **Broad in scope** to increase revenue which funds social housing infrastructure projects.
- 2 **Simple** to encourage higher rates of industry compliance.
- 3 **Minimal exemptions** which decrease the need to educate affected parties and again, broaden the potential revenue stream.
- 4 **Simple calculation of the levy** - e.g. based on a percentage of the accommodation charge, paid by the guest at the time of payment.
- 5 **Clear transition period / commencement date** - any new levy should also take into account the time required to educate the industry and public, as well as for industry participants to build systems and processes. We recommend a minimum 12 month notice period, having regard to the similar time frame provided for the introduction of the NSW Passenger Service Levy.
- 6 **Set at a rate between 3 to 5%**, in line with sustainable examples from overseas.⁸

It's important to recognise that hosts are real people, who love their communities, support jobs, and direct guests to local businesses during their stays, but who are also struggling with the cost of living. They also provide a service that people love, with more than one million people staying in an Airbnb globally every night.

Guests will bear the brunt of additional costs for travel and so any revenue options or contribution amounts considered by the government must carefully balance these interests.

Protecting home sharing

As noted, Airbnb plays a crucial role in helping people remain in their homes and communities by providing the ability to supplement their income or make use of the underutilised spaces in their homes.

Hosted accommodation is generally of low impact since the host typically resides on-site and is available to resolve any issues, or rare instances of disruptive behaviour.

Home sharers on our platform play a critical role in providing surge accommodation and elastic supply during major and local events, when hotels or motels may be fully occupied or non-existent in a particular location. For many hosts, sharing a spare room or underutilised space in their home is crucial to their ability to make ends meet and stay in their homes.

Any local rules must be responsive to the different types of hosting activity in order to ensure that everyday Australians can continue welcoming guests to their local communities.



Day caps

In our experience, caps on the number of days that accommodation can be used throughout the year has not been shown to 'return' properties to the long-term rental market, nor does it incentivise that kind of outcome.

Many properties listed on platforms like Airbnb will never move to the long-term rental market because they were never used in that way previously, or they are not suitable for that purpose. This is because hosts might be sharing their primary place of residence, or because the listing has always been a holiday home and is used by the host themselves throughout the year. The space might also be a granny flat or connected to a primary residence and is best suited to shorter term occupation.⁹

Since day caps are typically defined arbitrarily, they can impact listings which will never be made available for long-term rental, subjecting the owner to red tape and restrictions. Recently, the NSW Government noted that day caps may often result in more, rather than less, under-utilisation of homes.

This clearly impacts the potential benefits to local visitor economies and the broader community, and to everyday hosts themselves.

Differential rates for short-term rentals

Airbnb notes that differential rating categories may apply to short-term rentals at the local government level. Differential rate proposals are often based on the assumption that properties are being used for short rental all year round - when in fact many hosts share their homes on an ad-hoc basis to help meet their mortgage repayments, pay bills or save for their retirement.

Airbnb suggests that local governments consider the frequency with which a property is being used for short-term rental and apply rate increases only to those properties that are shared above a certain usage threshold. Airbnb also suggests that primary places of residence be exempted from these kinds of proposals. It's important that everyday Mums and Dads can continue to share their homes, particularly against the background of cost of living pressures.

A photograph of two women walking through a field of tall, dry grass and green coastal shrubs. In the background, there are several houses, including a prominent two-story brick house with a balcony. The sky is a pale blue with soft, wispy clouds, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting. The overall mood is calm and natural.

Trust and Safety

We understand the need for robust trust and safety policies in order to help people trust one another. Airbnb has heavily invested in strengthening our platform policies and technology to help people trust one another. Promoting the online and offline safety and privacy of our community is Airbnb's priority. Behind this work are cross-functional teams made up of experienced professionals with backgrounds spanning risk intelligence, law enforcement, military, and social work.

Community Safety

To promote community safety, we have implemented a series of initiatives and programs:

Ongoing identity verification for hosts and guests.

Although no identification process is foolproof and we cannot guarantee someone's identity, we take steps to help everyone to feel confident that guests and hosts on Airbnb are genuine. This is why we have procedures in place to attempt to verify the identity of our users.

Verifying the identity of guests and hosts helps us to:

- Scan for fraudulent behaviour
- Understand if a malicious actor has taken control of an account
- Investigate safety and security issues such as assault, robbery or fraudulent activity.

Partnering with expert organisations through our **Trust and Safety Advisory Coalition (TSAC)** to advise on our policies, processes, training and community education. More information can be found [here](#).

The **Australia Trust and Safety Portal** that offers a comprehensive view of the safety and security resources available at Airbnb.

Community Safety



Scan to visit the Australia Trust and Safety Portal

Reservation screening technology to reduce the risk of disruptive and unauthorised parties, as well as enhanced measures around holidays.

Consumer Safety

To promote consumer safety, we have implemented a series of initiatives and programs:

A dedicated **safety-focused Solo Traveler Safety feature** for guests travelling solo in a private or shared room on Airbnb. More information can be found [here](#).

Secure messaging and account protection measures. We do our best to keep guests safe by employing anti-abuse technology on the Airbnb platform. We'll block potentially dangerous messages that contain words or numbers that might include contact information or references to other sites, including external links.

A **double-blind review system** — hosts review guests, and guests review hosts, with the reviews written before the other side of the review is revealed, providing more incentives to behave the right way.

Consumer Safety

Extensive fraud and scam prevention efforts, including specialised fraud prevention agents and 24/7 support teams. We strive for zero tolerance for fraud, and use sophisticated technologies and behavioural analysis techniques to help prevent fraudsters from utilising Airbnb.

This is a significant deterrent for anyone seeking to engage in scam listings or fraudulent behaviour.

Secure payments through our platform, which helps to deter scams and financial fraud. Airbnb controls payments, and we do not release a host's payout for a booking until 24 hours after a guest has checked into a listing, so there's recourse - including through our Guest Refund Policy - in case something isn't as expected.

This includes a **real-time risk detection system** that uses machine learning and predictive analytics to instantly evaluate hundreds of risk signals to flag and stop fraudsters. When we detect potentially concerning behaviour or such behaviour is brought to our attention, we take action, including removing users and listings from the platform. More [here](#).

Host Tools

To give hosts tools to help keep their properties and communities safer, we have implemented:

1

Giving hosts the ability to **assess reviews** of guests before accepting bookings and to limit bookings only to guests with positive reviews.

2

Education campaigns, such as our campaigns on fire safety (in partnership with rural fire services) and beach safety (in partnership with Surf Life Saving Australia), that includes expert tips and guidance to help ensure the Airbnb community stays safe over summer.

Partnerships

To promote neighbourhood safety and amenity, we have partnered with local communities and implemented:

1

A ban on disruptive and unauthorised parties, pursuant to our [community disturbance policy](#) as well as maintained a [prohibition on party houses](#).¹⁰

2

A [24/7 Neighbourhood Support Line](#) to give neighbours the ability to communicate directly with us.

3

Support for policymakers and law enforcement to take action on problematic party houses.

4

A dedicated [portal for law enforcement](#) to submit valid legal requests for information from us, available in nine languages.



Scan to
access the
Neighbour
Support Line



Scan to visit
the Airbnb Law
Enforcement
Portal

¹⁰

Globally, in 2022, just 0.039% of reservations resulted in an allegation of a party. Further, since introducing our global party ban policy in August 2020, we have seen a global 55 percent year-over-two-year drop in the rate of party reports to us.

Help and Assistance

And in the extremely rare case that something goes wrong, we act quickly to resolve the issue:

1

In Australia's [trust and safety portal](#), hosts and guests will find links to information to help support them in preparing for emergencies such as bushfires and storms.

2

[Our 24/7 Safety Line](#) offers assistance to hosts and guests.

3

Our global community support team serves hosts and guests in multiple languages, and we have a specialised team to work with local law enforcement when necessary.

4

Our in-app Local Emergency Services feature quickly connects users to local emergency services.

5

We may suspend or ban people who violate our policies, such as by throwing a disruptive party in a listing, and in some cases, we take legal action.

6

We may suspend or remove listings that fail to meet quality standards or cause severe neighbourhood disturbances.



Data & Resource Sharing Through the City Portal

With hosts in more than 100,000 cities and towns around the world, one of Airbnb's priorities is to work with governments on fair, balanced short-term rental regulations that both protect the benefits of home sharing and help meet the unique needs of each community. To build on these efforts, Airbnb introduced the City Portal in 2020 – a first-of-its-kind resource for local governments and tourism organisations informed by years of work with governments around the world.

We launched the City Portal with 18 pilot partners. Today, more than 350 governments and tourism organisations have partnered with Airbnb to access this unique resource. The City Portal offers local policy makers insights into Airbnb in their community and tools to help enforce their laws. Specifically, the City Portal's technology offers governments and tourism organisations the following:

1

Local and global Airbnb data insights into short-term rental market characteristics. For example, tourism organisation partners can see where guests are coming from and adjust marketing accordingly.

2

Centralised access to the Airbnb Neighbourhood Support hotline and Law Enforcement portal. An official who needs to reach our law enforcement support team because of a safety incident can find the applicable tool via the Portal.

In addition, the City Portal offers government and tourism partners access to an Airbnb team member that can help provide one-to-one support with the City Portal or issues that arise locally. For example, if an official has a question about our rules for parties or “party houses,” they can easily reach Airbnb staff.

The City Portal is offered to all local councils across Australia on an opt-in basis as part of our ongoing commitment to work collaboratively with all levels of government to balance the benefits of home sharing with the needs of communities. Local governments can express their interest and learn more by visiting airbnb.com/cityportal.



**Scan to register
your interest for
the City Portal**

Case Studies and Model Rules



New South Wales

In New South Wales, legislation requires all STRA to be registered on the NSW Government's Short-Term Rental Accommodation Register. The registration process is completed online, with an initial fee of \$65 to register a home for twelve months, and annual fee of \$25 to renew.

The information required from hosts includes: the address of the dwelling; the type of residential accommodation; whether the dwelling will be used as hosted or non-hosted short-term rental accommodation; the name and

address of the host of the dwelling; and a declaration that the dwelling complies with fire safety standards. Once registered, hosts receive a registration number which they are required to display on their listing advertisement.

The registration scheme complements a Code of Conduct which sets out clear behavioural expectations for all industry participants – hosts, guests, letting agents and booking platforms – and clear mechanisms for addressing the rare instances of bad behaviour.

Tasmania

In Tasmania, hosts are required to register for a short-stay accommodation permit with their local council or claim an exemption if their listing is eligible. Hosts who may be eligible for an exemption include those sharing their primary home while they are away, or those who have lawfully used their property as visitor accommodation before 2018. Hotels, motels and caravan parks are not required to obtain a permit.

Additionally, the *Short Stay Accommodation Act 2019* requires booking platforms like Airbnb to collect information from hosts. This includes: a statement confirming that the short stay accommodation has the appropriate planning permissions; the address of the premises and the number

of bedrooms that are to be used for short stay purposes; and whether the premises comprise all or part of the primary residence. Booking platforms are required to share data with the Tasmanian Government quarterly.

Portland, Maine, USA

In Portland, Maine, regulators created the STRA framework with housing affordability in mind. There is a clear distinction between hosting in primary residences versus non-primary residences, with no nights restrictions for either category. Instead, registration fees are on a sliding scale. Hosts are required to pay higher registration fees as they list more non-primary residences for short-term rentals, with fees going to the City's affordable housing fund.



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 1.5 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.

