Dear Committee Members

I am writing to you as an airbnb host who is very supportive of regulation of the short-term rental market.

I am especially concerned with the conflation of the 'sharing economy' with investment properties offered as short term rentals that are often multiple properties with one owner and negatively geared. These are houses that are taken out of the long-term rental market, and operate WITHOUT any of the planning approval required for other tourist accommodation. The airbnb statistics for Hobart indicate that a shrinking percentage of airbnb that is now offered as a share, as was originally envisaged, and that these investment properties now dominate the inner city short term rental market to the detriment of the true sharing economy and the long term rental market.

A clear distinction needs to be made between what is legitimately the sharing economy, and what is property investment for tax minimization and capital gain. If you own multiple houses and let them out short term on airbnb, how can that be called the sharing economy?

The share economy should be facilitated in Hobart, it is an economic good in driving increased tourism and helping people with mortgage stress stay in their own homes. However we need to be clear that investing in property for airbnb is NOT the sharing economy, any more than running a commercial hotel is. Investors are simply taking advantage of the airbnb platform, and airbnb doesn't care because they are raking in vast amounts of money.

The true sharing economy is a boon to people like myself on a modest pension or people whose employment income is not keeping pace with the cost of living increases and suffer mortgage stress, allowing them to afford to live in their own property by offering an additional room to share. Without being able to share their property with visitors, such homeowners might be forced into the incredibly tight rental market.

The huge increase in whole houses being bought up in inner Hobart, especially Battery Point, for the sole purpose of letting out on airbnb, and often negatively geared as a tax incentive, has impacted negatively on the share economy to benefit the financially secure and to disadvantage those less secure. Investment properties have an incentive operate at a loss. People trying to get by on stagnant wages and rising cost of living pressures by offering share accommodation should not be undercut by investors who are doing nothing to help the rental market.

Professor Cassandra Pybus