

Hello,
I wish to add this short submission to your inquiry please.

My business details;

Co-owner - Mt Lyell Anchorage accommodation, Queenstown. 11 years
Co-owner – RoamWild Tasmania Tour Company, Queenstown. 18 months
Co-owner – The Paragon Theatre, Queenstown. 13 months
Board member – The Unconformity (formally Queenstown Heritage & Arts Festival) 10 years
Committee and founding member – Tasmania's Western Wilderness Tourism Assoc. 4 ½ years

As a fully accredited accommodation business in Queenstown I have worked very hard for 11 years to build my business, attract visitors to Queenstown and entice them to stay longer. When I first opened Mt Lyell Anchorage in 2007 I rarely had guests who stayed more than 1 night. They saw Queenstown as a bed for the night, between Hobart and Cradle Mountain. These days my average length of stay for most rooms is 2 nights.

I have invested over \$1mil into my property. My online ratings have been consistently very high, rated 9th best property in Tasmania for the 2017 Trivago awards and up until a few months ago, was the only accommodation property on the west coast with a 5 bubble rating on Tripadvisor for at least 4 years. I am happy to say that Penghana B&B, also in Queenstown, has joined me there.

I have volunteered thousands of hours over 13 years to tourism committees, attending conferences and meetings around the state to help promote the west coast, and working to help 2 separate tourism businesses survive and grow, without pay. I personally, have spent ten's of thousands of dollars over 11 years marketing and promoting my businesses and the destination, which has helped draw visitors to our area. Every other legal tourism business in Tasmania has done the same.

We spend money on websites, brochures, magazine ads, collateral placement in Visitor Centres around the state and large commissions to online travel agencies such as Booking.com and Expedia or wholesalers who take our products to the world at even higher commissions. All of this to promotes our state and builds our businesses and reputation.

I have paid much higher council rates, currently 2.85 times the residential rates, higher electricity rates, higher commercial mortgage rates, thousands of dollars on fire safety regulations, huge insurance rates, GST on every booking and proper wages and conditions for my staff. I was not allowed to take a single booking until I had my change of use application approved by council.

For the last 18 months or so I have been trying to compete with Airbnb properties who pay residential rates, residential power prices, spend nothing on advertising their property or this region and were not required by Airbnb to provide proof of proper insurance or fire safety. They are not paying GST. They have done nothing to support the local tourism association or volunteer with local events or festivals.

They simply invested in a property, put it straight on Airbnb and their 3% commission to Airbnb is their entire advertising cost. I had at least 8 potential investors come into The Paragon Theatre last summer to seek my advice on investing in property in Queenstown. None of them had any intention of living here and most admitted they were considering opening an Airbnb. They all mentioned that they had heard that the mine was re-opening and Queenstown was about to boom. I put them straight.

I, along with many other accommodation business owners on the west coast, have been forced to list my property on Airbnb in order to reach the millions of people these days that only book Airbnb's and look no further. They seem oblivious to the fact that they are paying an extra 14% commission to book through that platform or just can't be bothered to look for our websites for better deals. My property is clearly marked as a long established hotel on the site but Airbnb devotees still believe they are getting a better deal with Airbnb.

I have spent countless hours over many months fighting for my and my local colleagues' right to do business on an even playing field. It beggars belief that we have to fight the very authorities that force us to adhere to every rule and regulation, to have them enforce those same rules on the Airbnb properties who flout the laws whilst undercutting us and taking our hard earned business.

Thankfully, our West Coast Council have now become pro-active in chasing these illegal operators to comply with regulations. However, they have no power to shut them down until they do comply unlike my property. If I decided to remove my fire safety equipment I would more than likely be shut down immediately. Certainly my insurance would be at risk.

If the Airbnb's do become legal businesses they should have to retrospectively pay the rates and charges that should have applied from the commencement of their operation, as we have had to do.

I believe that every Airbnb should have to pay GST on every booking. Alternatively if they are below the threshold of \$75,000 they should have to pay a bed tax.

These businesses, and they ARE businesses should not be allowed to operate outside the law or profit from an uneven playing field.

I have had to take on other tourism businesses in the hope of making a profit that will give me a wage that I can save for my retirement. I gave up hope a few years ago of ever earning a wage out of Mt Lyell Anchorage. The running costs are too high and the season too short but now with the extra competition from outside investors who contribute very little to our economy and have much lower costs than I do and can therefore undercut me, I am again struggling merely to stay afloat. I constantly have to change my strategies just to keep up, let alone build my business further.

And that is totally unfair competition!

Yours sincerely

Joy Chappell
15 Cutten St
Queenstown
Tasmania. 7467
0428 429 962
info@mtlyellanchorage.com

www.mtlyellanchorage.com
www.roamwild.com.au
www.theparagon.com.au