

Document tendered by Doug Luke, Victims of Holiday Letting.
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Good Afternoon.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak as Co-ordinator of Victims of Holiday Letting and as a long standing resident of Byron Shire.

I first came to Byron Bay in 1981 from my home in Cornwall, UK. My wife, my one year old daughter and I stood on the beachfront. My wife asked me what I thought of Byron Bay. Standing there with the Cape to my right, the mountains to my left and a clear blue WARM ocean in front. I said: P A R A D I S E. I always deny saying Paradise. Being Cornish I would almost certainly have said: ALRIGHT, I SPOSE.

When I grew up in Cornwall the sugar cubes wrappers said: "Where the sun comes early and stays late" Whoever wrote that hadn't been to Byron Bay.

I DID say PARADISE and we immigrated in 1997.

Byron Bay was still largely unspoilt. I mixed with men and women who caught whales, who drove cows along the road from Lismore on a Sunday, who packed tripe late in the Norco Butter Factory. for despatch to Sydney.

It was Paradise for us and we said we would do nothing to the detriment of the natural environment or built environment. We joined local groups that cared for Byron Bay. We fought unsustainable large developments.

I love living here but it saddens me to see what has become of our town. Streets that once had flowerbeds now concreted over. Our local shops that served our residents replaced with fast food outlets and backpacker internet cafes. Shops now selling knick knacks.

I have to drive to Ballina to buy a half decent kettle.

Byron Bay is Party Town. We locals don't dare go into town in the evening. Groups of young men and women roam the streets, mostly well on the way to oblivion, to a club where the lads can ogle the silly girls with their wet tee shirts. Soon they will be able to visit a bar/restaurant with topless girls.

We are NOT anti-tourist. We just don't like living in a town famous for alcohol related violence and sexual assaults. We are often told if you don't like go to Ballina. NO thank you very much.

It's good to see there are still families who are happy to come here and enjoy our beautiful beaches and coastal walks.

These are the tourists we need; they won't be giving all there money to what the man from Newcastle calls the Grog Monster. They won't be stuffing stodgy burgers down their throats. They will visit some of our wonderful restaurants. They will stay in accommodation that is fully compliant with Council Planning regulation.

Victims of Holiday Letting want Holiday Letting in our Residential Zones to stop. Our Council is looking at the idea of Precincts where Holiday Letting is permitted but complying with Council regulation and paying its fair share towards Councils Rate Income. Outside of these Precincts there will be no Holiday Letting.

Residents will once again be able to sleep at night and enjoy living in their homes.

Tourism in Byron Bay is taking on a more and more ugly face, which cannot continue. The Tourism industry should be encouraging families to come here and international tourists who want to see one of the most beautiful parts of Australia.

Some refer to Byron Bay as the Golden Goose but with the large number of extra businesses that have arrived since I arrived the Golden Egg is being divided into smaller and smaller portions.

The Tourism Industry wants to operate in a free market but when market forces, such as exchange rates, a high cost of living etc lead to businesses here failing the blame is put on Council. Relatively modest business rates are first in the firing line. Council isn't doing enough to promote Tourism. Hang on on Guys it's your business not Council's.

There is a place for Tourism in Byron Bay but please remember that there are residents in this place who should not be victims of Tourism and who should not be subsidising the Tourism industry when their rates are used to clean up and fix the local infrastructure that is trampled by tourists.

Let's put our local people before profit.

Thank you