

7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Dear IPC Commissioners

## **RE: Support for the Byron Shire Short Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) Planning Proposal for a 90-Day Cap**

Thank you for taking the time to read our submission. We write on behalf of the Regulate Byron Shire Short Term Holiday Letting (STHL) Facebook Page. Please note, throughout this submission we will be referring to this industry as non-hosted Short Term Holiday Letting (STHL), rather than STRA in support of Shelter NSW's statement to the IPC that:

*"We're dealing with the issues of conversions of dwellings to the holiday listing market, and classifying this use benignly as a form of housing diversity under the Housing SEPP as short-term rental accommodation is gaslighting the many local residents and actual renters in the region who are struggling with chronically low rental vacancy rates and facing no-grounds evictions in their lease agreements to make way for conversions of homes to whole home holiday market."*

We fully support Byron Shire Council's proposal to limit non-hosted STHL to 90 days in the majority of the Byron Shire with designated 365-day precincts. Although we would prefer that the cap was lowered further to 45 or 30 days in much of the Shire, and that certain zones are set up where STHL is allowed and others where it is prohibited, we recognise that the NSW Government has unfortunately over-ruled Byron Council's ability to effectively regulate this industry.

The Regulate Byron Shire STHL Facebook Page has been running since January 2021 in response to posts on on-line community boards that showed the level of confusion regarding the legality of STHL in the Byron Shire. It started with a series of myth-busting posts and quickly grew to over 1,300 followers. As the number of followers increased, so did the comments and messages to the page detailing people's experiences with STHL.

Kim Goodrick gave a snapshot of these stories in her presentation to the IPC on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 (see attached pdf file). And whilst we have many thoughts on how best to regulate non-hosted STHL, many of these have been presented by our "Byron Deserves Balance" team in individual and joint submissions, so will not be repeated here. Instead, we would like to take this opportunity to present the wide range of issues that our community is struggling with in the Byron Shire through the actual voices of past and present residents. Given the level of stress and collective trauma many people have been through in the last four years (bushfires, Covid, floods), we are very concerned that many of our communities' experiences with STHL will simply not be heard by the IPC as so many families, couples and individuals are struggling to even access the basic human right of shelter. And it is this, more than anything that is most concerning about the meteoric rise in on-line STHL platforms, in that they seek to put the "wants" of tourists and the individual greed of STHL investors above all else.

### **Our stories**

Some of these stories and comments are publicly available on our Facebook page, but many are from private messages. Where the authors wish to remain anonymous, we have sought their permission, but have used pseudonyms and edited their stories for privacy and clarity.

## 1) First Nations Housing

The Arakwal people of the Bundjalung Nation are the First Nations people and Traditional Custodians of much of the land in the Byron Shire. According to this article in the Sydney Morning Herald<sup>1</sup>, Delta Kay, a well-known Arakwal elder, is quoted as saying:

*“Guess how many houses the Byron Shire houses of my people, the native title holders of this area? There’s hundreds of Arakwal ...We’re the first people here and we’ve always struggled with housing. We’re the ones who create all this protection along the beaches so that everyone can enjoy the beauty here. How many houses do you think we have here? Five.”*

On fact-checking this number for this submission, the actual number of houses is four and all of them have been built by the Arakwal community themselves. As a historical injustice, this lack of housing for our First Nations people must be rectified and recommendations from the IPC regarding substantially increasing their access to housing on country would be very welcome.

## 2) Rebecca

One inspiration for our Regulate Byron Shire STHL Facebook Page came from an incredible poem written by Rebecca Rushbrook describing her experience of looking for a long term rental for her, her three children and their beloved black Labrador Finnegan in Lismore in 2020. And we realised that, as 2,000+ potential homes have been converted to Airbnbs in the Byron Shire over the last few years, the housing crisis that started as a ripple has now turned into a tidal wave that is engulfing the whole of the Northern Rivers.

Note: Rebecca gained a rental home in South Lismore in 2021. She then lost everything in the 2022 Lismore floods and the family barely escaped with their lives.

### The Queue

by Rebecca Rushbrook (with kind permission)<sup>2</sup>

*I am standing in line  
to petition for somewhere to live.  
Thirty six of us, socially distanced,  
uneasy as we meet each other’s eyes.  
There is one house.*

*With her mascara and curls,  
the real estate girl  
is more Disney than Dickensian.  
But here I approach,  
an Oliver Twist,  
clutching my application  
like an empty bowl*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/byron-blues-how-mega-money-and-global-exposure-are-changing-an-australian-paradise-20210623-p583pa.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.abc.net.au/northcoast/programs/breakfast/housing-rental-crisis-slam-poet/12887120?fbclid=IwAR3CmZP3GNCwZCs4\\_0CB44AOut9qgmmYpB3lIMKICJ-sRdypW7AHLkeUKO](https://www.abc.net.au/northcoast/programs/breakfast/housing-rental-crisis-slam-poet/12887120?fbclid=IwAR3CmZP3GNCwZCs4_0CB44AOut9qgmmYpB3lIMKICJ-sRdypW7AHLkeUKO)

*I have no right to fill.*

*I have three children.*

*I have a dog, a job,  
a washing machine...*

*Yesterday I was normal.*

*Packing the lunches  
and finding the uniforms,  
sculling coffee,  
and shouting too loudly  
as I hurried us all out the door  
in time for our day.*

*Then the floor fell away.*

*Our rental is selling.*

*Now I wake every morning  
in a burning building  
and it's money, not water  
that will put out this fire  
and I don't have enough.*

*So I line up  
with my single income  
and the weight of my family  
heavy in my chest.*

*The real estate girl  
smiles at two tradies.*

*I look at them and think,  
'Two paychecks, no kids,'*

*I look at the application  
and wonder  
how hard it would be  
to hide our dog.*

*He's a Labrador*

*with bad back legs.*

*He is the heart of my daughter.*

*I thought I could carry us.*

*When the marriage that made them  
hit its iceberg and sank,*

*I collected the flotsam  
and built us a boat.*

*Learned to sail by myself.*

*I was getting the hang of it.*

*Keeping one hand on the rudder.*

*Fishing with my foot for our dinner.*

*But these waves were made for liners  
and my craft is too flimsy.*

*This water pours into it  
faster than I can bail.*

*You'll have seen them,  
the polar bears  
in open ocean,  
nudging their cubs  
to keep them together,  
as they desperately scan  
for any land that will hold them.*

*The rentals have melted.  
The lenders won't loan.  
Paying your way  
doesn't earn you a home.  
I am lining up  
with thirty six people  
clutching white knuckled  
to the edge of this crack  
we are sliding through.*

*Far over our heads,  
the currawongs sail  
their clear paths  
to their nests by the river.  
My eyes ride on their trajectories.  
There are tents in the bush down there.  
More every week.*

### **3) Jane**

*"I first moved to the area in 1978. Since retiring, I have been renting and doing volunteer work at the Mullum Neighbourhood centre where all there are are people desperate to find accommodation as so many rentals are now airbnb or exorbitant. I have been renting a studio in Ocean Shores for 3 years. The property is now being sold and at 70, I am prospectively looking at homelessness as this community's rentals no longer exist. To say I am fretting is an understatement. Profoundly depressed is closer."*

Jane has now been forced to completely leave the area and now resides in Sydney.

### **4) Kate**

*"I have been trying to find a suitable (and affordable) long term rental property for myself and my 3 children attending Byron High. I/they REALLY don't want to have to change schools/ move away from their friends. They attended Byron Primary all the way through as did their older brother. I volunteer with WIRES as well as working full time as a NDIS support worker. I was living in our former marital home until a year ago but made the difficult decision to finally move out from a toxic relationship.*

*I'm starting to lose hope now though."*

Kate and her children have now left the Byron Shire.

### **5) Ella and Brad**

*"We have lived in Byron Shire for 17 years. We have many family and friends in the area. Up until yesterday, our family (me, my husband and our two children aged 12 and 9) were renting a house in Bangalow (where we have lived for 6 years) for \$650 per week. Our house sold to a family from Melbourne. We spent 4 months looking for a new home and could not find anything in Bangalow,*

*Byron, Federal, Mullumbimby, Brunswick Heads or Lennox Head that was in our price range. We increased our budget to a whopping \$950 per week hoping we could then find something in the areas we want to live in (Bangalow was our first choice as we still have a child in school there). Similar houses to where we were living were rented for \$1100, which was just too high for us.*

*We have ended up having to move to Ballina, meaning buying a second car and much more driving to get our children to school (we used to walk them). Our house is nice, but I am sad to be leaving the community we have loved for 6 years. To have to pay \$300 per week more to live 20 minutes further away is heartbreaking.*

*We are hard workers, earn good money, have well behaved kids and perfect rental references. We have strong family ties in the area. We are luckier than many in this situation and could afford to pay more rent, even if it meant moving further away.*

*I have nothing against people who have a spare room renting it occasionally or people who rent their home when they go on holiday, but investors buying whole homes and renting them on airbnb all year has contributed to families like mine not being able to live in their community anymore.”*

Since this was written, Ella and Brad’s rent has increased to \$1,150 per week in Ballina.

## **6) Denise**

*“Help. I’m being left homeless. I am a working pensioner and have lived in the same house for 24 years. All my medical teams are here. Where do I go from here?”*

Denise is still residing in the Byron Shire, but in a precarious housing situation.

## **7) Shelley**

*“Seven years ago I worked in hospitality in the Byron Shire and rented a very basic studio for \$150 per week. That same studio was advertised at \$380 per week two years ago and is probably double that now. I still work in hospitality, but simply cannot afford to live in Byron Shire anymore. I don’t know how anyone working in a minimum wage job can.”*

Shelley has now left the Byron Shire.

## **8) Elizabeth**

*“We had a routine inspection on the apartment we rent in Suffolk Park today. We are unfortunately not able to renew our lease in November as they have put the rent up by \$100 a week. My husband works full time as did I, I’m a nurse<sup>3</sup> but I am currently on maternity leave. However, the rise in rent has left us with little option but to leave what feels like home to us here in Byron Bay.....This means completely uprooting our lives, moving states, leaving friends, leaving behind a job that I absolutely love. They will absolutely no doubt, put the rent up even more after we leave too.”*

In fact, the rent went up by \$200 per week and Elizabeth and her family have moved interstate.

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<sup>3</sup> Please note the presentation given to the IPC Panel on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023 by James Bennett-Levy regarding the crisis of Health Workforce in the Northern Rivers due to housing issues.

## 9) Janine

*"I first came to Byron in 1996 and the house I rented for \$120 a week is now part of a resort. I worked as a cleaner and in a bar. After leaving for a while, I returned with my family in 2006 when I was fortunate enough to purchase my home, I have been here ever since and never rented it out, in fact have paid house sitters to stay, but now I get to live next to houses where every tenant is now on holidays often to party drink and relax (ie very noisy). Our dead-end street has 10 times the traffic, multiple airbnbs and for a rural setting, is as bad as living in town.*

*After a lot of hard-work a group of us purchased an approved tourist accommodation space in 2016. In order to operate we had to upgrade septic, pool fencing, decrease bedrooms, install wired fire alarms and emergency exit signs. We had to pay for council to come check things and a fire report which resulted in needing to install a new water tank designated for fire, just in case. We also pay insurance for tourism accommodation and must keep all our compliance paperwork up to date. Yet houses across the road are now listed on airbnb with none of this.*

*Not only are we competing against all the homes that are on airbnb that had no extra costs or compliance and are likely not insured adequately, we are also finding it harder and harder to find workers. To support our business, we need gardeners, repair men, lock smiths and cleaners just to name a few, and these businesses are also needing to charge more and more just so they can survive. It's clearly not going to get any easier as we lose more support services and workers due to no rentals unless something is done.*

*But also why are the airbnbs not regulated and audited for safety, insurance, building compliance? They are running a business but are not held accountable like other businesses are. I say all airbnbs should have a permit to operate or not operate at all.*

*With all the costs of set up and compliance, along with discounted rates to stay competitive and high running costs, I wonder why we do it some days."*

## 10) Eddie and Joan

*"My wife and I live in a house in Byron Bay that we bought in 1994. It is an original farmhouse and is over 100 years old. We rented it out for a number of years to a family while we lived on our rural acreage. We moved in and renovated in 2001. We like living here because it is central to everything, and we have made lots of contacts. When we bought the house, it was mostly surrounded by paddocks. Gradually these were built on as we only owned the house block.*

*When we moved in it was a typical neighbourhood with some renters, some owners including many older people from the original worker/farmer makeup of the town. It was mostly quiet as the road through the cutting into Ruskin St was still unsealed and we got to know most of the neighbours.*

*In the last few years though, there has been a drastic change. Most of the older long-time residents have died or moved and their properties have been sold for massive prices. Most of the permanent renters have gone and the majority of these properties are now Airbnb's. This has led to the usual problems of excessive noise, late night partying and street movements, excessive unsorted rubbish, and lack of parking as often 6 cars will come to one rental property. The guests in these places ignore and don't interact with locals and owners are often hard to track down. We have also had to deal with some of these Airbnb "guests" in our street ourselves which is difficult in our 70s. Some are*

*polite and comply not realising they are excessively noisy etc, but others can be belligerent and rude with a strong sense of entitlement. Residents shouldn't have to deal with that at all and offending places should be prosecuted and closed down. The Police are good but usually understaffed and overworked.*

*Airbnb is a scourge destroying the ambience of neighbourhoods, not just here but Australia wide and needs to be strictly cracked down on and heavily regulated for the amenity of residents."*

**11) Peter**

*"I have a close friend who was given an eviction notice. Within a week, his 13-yr-old tried to end her life. Correlation is not causation, fair enough, but ffs, get with the program greedy investors. Your economic fantasy ladder is causing real life problems."*

**12) Samantha**

*"I lived in Suffolk Park Beachside for 6 years and have lived in Byron for 15 years. I had to leave my home in Suffolk in October 2019 because of an abusive relationship. I moved away hoping for a fresh start, but I felt incredibly sad and lonely, and I missed my friends terribly, so I have tried to move back to the Byron Shire. But unfortunately, there is no place available. My previous house in Suffolk Park was \$650 per week for a 3 bedroom, 1 bathroom house which I thought was expensive, but I saw that the same house is now renting for \$1200 per week!*

*I know of someone who recently moved up from Sydney and bought a property in Byron. They spent \$100k renovating and putting in a new pool.... just so they can Airbnb it. They charge around \$1300 per night in the high season and are booked out. In the meantime, they rent another accommodation nearby where they paid 1 year up front to secure the property.*

*The Airbnb property was booked out for December and January, but only 2 weeks in February, 2 weeks in March, Easter, and the rest of the time it is empty. I would imagine that this property is a reflection of what is happening in the Airbnb business in Byron. December and January FULL and the rest of the time empty or thereabouts.... And I find this unacceptable. In fact, it makes my blood completely boil!!*

*I read every day whilst searching for a place to live myself, of homeless families and people (like myself) who have lived in the shire for a long time unable to find a place to live. And yet, these rich investors come in, take over and exploit our town. I find it COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE. But I fear this is the way Byron is heading now because I no longer know anyone who lives in Byron town and the vibe there is completely soulless as it is just full of holiday lets."*

**13) Catherine**

*"I am very saddened to lose a lovely neighbour as the house sold and is now converted to AirBnB. Not only do we not have real neighbours, that help and support each other, but we have cars parked all over the street as 20 plus people cram into a small house (against the wishes of the host), disturbing noise late into the night, and unnecessary stress. We also know that one more family is no longer able to live in the shire. I have lived in the shire for over 25 years, and the changes AirBnB cause are very disturbing for the whole community. It is simply landlord greed. I totally support AirBnB of a spare room in the house, where the owner continues to live there, and AirBnB of the whole house when the*

*owner is on their own holiday, but not the AirBnB of the whole house continually. I support a maximum of 90 days annually.”*

#### **14) Amanda**

*“There are some stories that just break your heart. Like this one sent by a grandmother who is worried about her daughter who lost her 17-year-old son in a tragic accident in our community recently and now she and her other 2 kids and husband face the prospect of homelessness. This is what she wrote.*

*I am writing on behalf of my daughter who has lived in ocean shores and mullum for over a decade in rentals. However the owner of her unit in Ocean Shores needs to move back in as she herself had to move out of her rental in the hills, so they have to leave in a few weeks.. they really want to stay. All their supports and services are in the Byron Shire and their kids are at Mullum High.. She has 2 children 13 & 16 yrs who don't want to leave their school or friends. She used to have 3 children, but her 17 yo son was fatally injured in a bike/car accident just over a year ago.. such a terrible trauma for her and his siblings and for all the family. Her partner is on disability pension due to a building accident years ago.*

*She got the news they have to move from their rental, where they've lived for several years the day after the 12 months anniversary of his death. She is devastated and even though they are searching everywhere, They can't find anything and she is so stressed whilst still being in a lot of grief after losing her eldest boy. She doesn't want to leave the area. Her son went to Bruns primary and then Mullum High and lived in that area for most of his life. She feels he is still there in spirit with her and there are many tributes to him and little memorial sites scattered in the Mullum, Bruns, South Golden area and Ocean Shores in his memory that locals and his peers and family have done. The Catholic Church in Mullum was packed for his funeral. He was loved by so many in the community. They don't want to leave the area but she can't find anything to rent.. they are becoming desperate and very stressed and still in grief as time draws closer to move out and with nowhere to go. And this having to leave where her son lived and died is causing her so much grief.*

*I myself was pushed out of living in ocean shores after 12 years of being there, and now live in the Tweed in a small duplex. I have taken other family members and grandchildren in due to losing their rental homes too. So my place is full to capacity and I am not allowed to, and there is no room to, put a van or a tiny house on the duplex I live in. So I am unable to house them.*

*This is a long shot, but this very stressed family who are already in grief need somewhere to live. Does anyone have a unit, or a house, or anything they could rent this family of four. To lose a son and a brother is one thing. To then lose your home and security when you are so vulnerable is quite another.*

*Amanda's daughter and family were forced to leave the Byron Shire as they could not find a rental.*

#### **15) Jack and Marcia**

*“We moved into a cabin on a rural property and lived there for 4 years. It didn't have any council approval and we spent a lot of money doing it up ourselves. By the time we left it looked great...in fact, too good, because the owner kicked us out to Airbnb the property. As we are from Europe, we had no idea how bad the situation is for renters in Australia, and the STHL issue in the Byron Shire just makes it a hundred times worse. We are essential workers and are here on sponsorship visas, so this makes renting here doubly difficult.”*



**16) Rebecca**

*“Really concerned about my apartment block because the other owners want to change our by-laws to allow STHL in our building which was built as affordable housing under the Affordable Housing SEPP.*

*I want locals to have houses and don't want to live in a guest house with constant noise in a non-soundproof complex.*

*Feeling pressured to comply. STHL is a home wrecker.”*

Rebecca has now left the Byron Shire due to the pressure she was under from other owners, and is renting her apartment out long term.

**17) Mark**

*“This issue doesn't just affect the Byron shire, it also has deep implications for the areas around Byron that are now experiencing crunches due to the influx of individuals who can't afford to live in Byron but need housing. The entire region is being affected because of this housing and regulatory issue, locals are being pushed out through the rapidly inflating rental and buying costs, to be replaced with another slew of city individuals who neither know of nor care for the region's unique challenges and requirements.*

*Just the other day I was wondering aloud to another individual where the creatives who bring the lifeblood of the region were going to be shoved to next- Byron created this in the 1990's when it bulldozed all the bush houses and pushed the alternative individuals out in favour of Sydney investment money. We're being pushed out again by more city investment and the catchcry of 'expansion at all costs!'. It's happened in so many places over the decades, I'm trying to look at the maps now and figure out where the next new place for the creatives will be.”*

**18) Louise**

*“We need to stop putting tourists first. We need to shift our economy towards a more local economy. Be more sustainable within the shire so we don't rely on tourism money as much. We need to put our lifestyle and the quality of our lifestyle (or how good it used to be) above dollars”.*

**19) Bill**

*“Byron Deserves to be rid of AirBnB!”*

**20) Sasha**

*“I've had to move into a van after being a long term local here for over 20 years. It's nuts out there and I'm really feeling it now...a home is a human right.”*

**21) Laura**

*“Limiting or licensing whole-home rentals is imperative. If anyone can operate a hotel out of their residential property, then it sets a precedent that anyone can run any kind of business out of their home, regardless of the impact on neighbours.*

**22) Anthony**

*“On 18 December 2020 the mandatory State Government legislated Code of Conduct for STRA came into force. All STRA owners/managers are required to provide contact details to neighbours and be available to respond to calls between 8am and 5pm every day of the week. They are required to respond to emergencies 24/7. I am aware of one large Byron based holiday let management business that has not complied with these regulations and is liable for a complaint to be lodged against them on the NSW Fair Trading website. All STRA are also required to have mandatory public liability insurance. I wonder how many Byron Shire STRA are aware that there is a mandatory Code of Conduct and are meeting their obligations? <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/.../Code-of-Conduct...>”*

**23) Jenny**

*“My postman just moved to Wardell and drives to Byron Bay to work ?????”*

**24) Ben**

*“It’s so nice to know your neighbours. STHL (whole house) destroys connection and community. It creates an itinerant population. It is known that connection and community is extremely important for mental health and wellbeing. STHL is creating loneliness. Very sad. Old-fashioned owner-occupied B&B works.”*

**25) John**

*“We will need a fly in fly out workforce soon, rental accommodation is astronomical.”*

**26) Kerry**

*“People who want to work here can’t find anywhere to live because of this so are leaving to find work elsewhere. To say nothing of the erosion of community.”*

**27) Kari**

*“I went to Hawaii a few years ago...AirBnb doesn't exist on Kauai. They had to ban it because of the homelessness issues it caused. I believe Maui did the same thing. The locals told me there was a 10K fine for renting out your residential home for business purposes without a permit. So the government has the power to do something. Enough people just need to stand up against it.”*

**28) Tara**

*“Pretty sure most of the pollies at state level make money on their airbnbs which is much greater than long term rental, so they are likely just lining their own pockets.”*

Note: See references for relevant examples. <sup>4,5,6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/deputy-premier-john-barilaro-under-fire-over-undeclared-airbnb-business-20161124-gswqdu.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.9news.com.au/national/coronavirus-nsw-labor-senator-deborah-oneill-had-guests-at-airbnb/e77a320f-2215-4572-abbd-2ae0e9a9300c>

<sup>6</sup> <https://7news.com.au/lifestyle/health-wellbeing/nsw-mp-staying-at-holiday-house-report-c-965529>

**29) Simone**

*“STHL - destroying community with every overnight stay!”*

**30) Leigh**

*“If you've owned a house in Byron (and surrounding areas) for 2+ years and you've made a motza from the huge increase in price then think yourself lucky. Don't then rub it in the community's face by slamming up the rent (or Airbnbing) to ridiculous levels that long-term families and community members can't afford. It's not cool and yes...I'm gonna say it...its greedy....*

*I bought my place 2 years ago in Byron. My mortgage is \$900 a week. I live in the studio and rent my 3 bedroom house out to long-term locals for \$500 a week leaving me paying \$400 a week. Its fair. Yes...I could make double (or airbnb but it would be having my cake and eating it at the expense of other community members who are suffering major stress from not having a roof over their head. It frustrates me when I see so many hardworking people (including friends) getting squeezed out of their long-term community because people who are fortunate enough to have seen a spike in their house price are taking advantage (knowingly or unknowingly) of those who are absolutely essential to the community but don't earn huge amounts of money.*

*Yes...I know what comments are coming...'its free market economics'...'blame the system'...'if you don't like it leave'....and of course...'How dare you tell me what to do with MY HOUSE'.*

*I love this community so this is a plea to all the home owners who are in a position to help consider doing the right thing above the \$\$\$\$\$\$......rent to long-term community members at a fair price! You'll thank me later with your good karma!”*

**31) Melanie**

*“I put my name down for public housing 4 years ago. Was told it was over ten years wait. Everywhere is like this, not just here in northern rivers. And instead of increasing much needed cheap housing for low income earners, govt is actually spending less, not more...as the homeless list soars. And those people in professions like waitresses and cleaning, they are being ousted out of town because there are no rentals that they can afford. And govt is not addressing this problem at all.”*

**32) Christina**

*“Some words on behalf of my cleaning community and family:*

*Simply put, we're here to provide a service to ease your load. We're here to support families, community, and single parents, by providing a cleaning service that yes, is not a necessity but being a single mum myself, I know is such a help and blessing; especially coming home after a long day's work to a clean House.*

*To our holiday rental community; we're not your employees. My staff do not work for you. We're subcontracted. They rely on consistent hours to pay their rent, and buy their groceries. I cannot have staff on stand-by for your last min bookings, and to be treated poorly, penalised, or threatened because we may not have someone available to clean your holiday home.*

*You wouldn't call a plumber for a last min problem and expect them to drop their day to come and service your needs.... why is the cleaning community treated as though we're slaves to the investors of Byron Bay?*

*We don't need to work for holiday rentals, in fact I much rather support my residential community helping them, than to be treated like the lowest of humans because we're not at the beck and call of your investment home's schedule.*

*Please treat us with respect."*

**33) Nicole**

*"The house next door was purchased for \$2.3mil & is now a holiday home for a family who live in Sydney (I think). When they are not there, they rent it as a holiday let. It's managed by a holiday agent. They are planning on more decks to over-look my yard and a pool. If it gets too noisy, I'll need to move - I've not decided yet."*

**34) Kellie**

*"Our neighbour hasn't even told us that she has an airbnb but we saw her listing and all the different cars that are there. Continual pot smells and my neighbour wants quiet for her clients so she decided to call DOCS on us to get our kids and us to be quiet.*

*These people that buy a house turn it into an airbnb and cause trouble are just horrible."*

**35) Brendan**

*"People that have lived here for 10 years want a house, people that have lived here for 5 years want a house, people that have lived here for 2 years want a house, people who are cemented in the community with kids in school with support networks and jobs here want a house, people who have spent years fundraising for better schools and sport fields etc want a house, those that made this area what it is today want a house. Entitled \*\*\*\*s want your house so they can make money off a beach/tourist town, but hey, if you don't like it, just rip up your family and leave everyone you know and go somewhere else. Yep - that's the kind of answer that one expects from people who make no connections and do nothing but leave destruction in their wake, because it's not personal, it's business right? Well, it's only not personal to you. To all those you trample on, it feels pretty bloody personal."*

## **Conclusion**

We feel that these comments and stories speak for themselves as to the level of intrusion, trauma, homelessness, dislocation and stress STHL has had on people's lives in the Byron Shire. Just like the tobacco industry fought for profits despite the health effects on individuals, the STHL industry are employing the same tactics against the human right to shelter and the general wellbeing of the community. It simply must be effectively regulated, and we implore the IPC to recommend that the NSW Government allow Byron Shire Council to implement the 90-day cap with precincts as unanimously voted for by all elected Councillors and supported by the vast majority of residents in the Byron Shire.