

Are we fixing a housing crises or prolonging one?

Not so many years ago Byron Shire was dependent on the commodity market industries like whaling, meat, beef and dairy which were all traditionally very stable and consistent but as the years past, alternatives appeared for the products we were producing making it very difficult for those businesses to maintain their viability. Not to mention the loss of jobs and associated impact on the local community.

The council supported by the community sought solutions by thinking outside the square and collectively targeted the tourist industry as a prosperity driver for our future community.

Today that industry is under local pressure brought about by challenges in the need for social change, to provide houses in numbers, homes for the homeless, hospitals with every medical option, roads without potholes, safe and secure beach and coastline.

Some have been misled into thinking the shortcut to equality is to limit the profit some make to support those without a job, or at least without a worthwhile paying job into a house of their own.

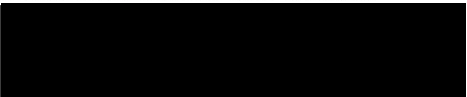
If we were serious about affordable housing we would do a lot more to build more houses in a timely and economic way, rather than objecting or restricting almost any development to the point where there are so very few new homes coming onto the market.

This is the case currently at play; some think by limiting the use of investment houses to providing accommodation for the longer term resident will solve the housing market issues for the working families.

I have serious doubts about this as the reports council has commissioned researching the issues have consistently been contradictory and very unclear in recommendations leaving a lot to interpretation by the reader.

It is most likely any investor with a house to rent is not going to bother with long term rental customers and have issues with moving out their furniture and back in again for the higher price shot term rental customer, encouraging a decision to leave the premises empty between holiday renters.

I am concerned, that if endorsed by Council this 90 day policy will have an immense impact on our local business community. In particular, eliminating hundreds of jobs and removing millions from the local economy. Given the 90 day caps are unlikely to be viewed by the majority of councillors objectively, I am urging State Government to remove delegated authority from Byron Shire Council on this matter.


Cr. Alan Hunter
Byron Shire Council