Victorian Government Comments on Short Stay Accommodation

The Andrews Labor Government will introduce new laws aimed at stamping out bad behaviour in short-stay accommodation in Victoria.

Under the reforms, apartment owners could be liable for any damage, noise or loss of amenity caused by their guests.

The Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Jane Garrett, said, “Our short stay industry is a major tourism drawcard and helps to support thousands of jobs. We want to make sure we are supporting this important industry while protecting the rights of residents.”

“These reforms will help residents to enjoy their homes by reducing disruption caused by some rogue short stay visitors.”

VCAT would also be given new powers to award compensation of up to $2,000 to neighbours, and to ban repeat offenders from letting their property for short-stay accommodation.

Guests could face fines of up to $1,100 for a range of breaches, including:

- creating unreasonable noise or behaving badly,

- causing a health, safety or security hazard,

- damaging common property, or

- obstructing a resident from using their property.

Short-stay apartment owners may be ordered to pay neighbours’ compensation and pay for repairs to damage to common property caused by their guests.

The government acknowledges the majority of short-stay accommodation is used responsibly in Victoria, and pointed out that the reforms are intended to reduce a small number of incidents of bad behaviour.

The new laws will encourage short stay apartment owners to take more steps, such as bonds and screening practices, to ensure their apartments are not used for unruly parties.

Consumer Affairs Victoria will help settle in short stay disputes that cannot be resolved through the owners' corporations dispute resolution processes.

The announcement follows months of consultation with stakeholders and industry on recommendations made by an independent panel into short stay accommodation in Victoria.

The panel’s report estimated short stay accommodation generates around $792 million in revenue and more than $160 million in wages in Victoria. It represents a multi-billion-dollar industry and supports more than 64,000 jobs.

There are an estimated 170,000 short stay properties in Victoria representing 27% of the national total.

Nationally, the panel found the industry supports $31.3 billion in economic activity and 238,000 jobs.

Minister for Planning, Richard Wynne, said “These changes will make sure our policy and legislation keeps pace with the changing ways people live and use their homes.”