

Jet Adventures submission for enquiry into short stay accommodation

Margaret River Region

To whom it may concern

My name is Peter Kalbfell and I am the director/skipper of Jet Adventures which run exciting jet boat adventure tours from Dunsborough and Busselton <https://www.jetadventures.com.au/> I am writing a submission because I am very concerned with how the increasing popularity of air b&b is also now quite likely having a detrimental affect on my business. In comparing the six months Dec-May 2017/18 to Dec-May 2018/19 I have experienced a 34% decline in sales. My business was only ever borderline at it's high point so this huge drop off in sales has been devastating for my business.

We started Jet Adventures late in 2015 and have built an outstanding reputation within the region as a company that excels in giving customers an amazing experience. In just over three years we have gained 261 trip advisor reviews with 98% excellent and 2% very good. There are no reviews ranked 3 star or lower. The ocean can be unpredictable and can change at short notice making it sometimes difficult to ensure customers have a good experience so we are very proud of our ratings on trip advisor, facebook and other places that people leave reviews.

https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Attraction_Review-g488341-d9718306-Reviews-Jet_Adventures-Dunsborough_Margaret_River_Region_Western_Australia.html

We are members of the Margaret River Busselton Tourist Association, Australia's South West and we are an accredited operator with the tourism council. We receive a few bookings through the MRBTA but by far our main source of bookings is through the local accommodation providers who recommend us to their guests. As their guests more often than not return to their resort/guest house/motel raving about their experience with us many accommodation providers go out of their way to recommend us and some even book their guests directly with us. They book with confidence knowing that I will give them a great experience. Word of mouth is incredibly important in this industry as we rely so heavily on the good feedback from our previous customers to gain future customers.

As a tourism operator I drop off my own brochures to basically every accommodation provider in the region that I can locate. I talk to the staff who are often owners or managers to explain our tours and it is a win win for us all. Their guests have a great experience on offer such as ours or the many other different tours on offer in the region and the guests have a great range of accommodation providers on offer. It's really about making sure that all the visitors to this region, especially the overseas and interstate visitors go home after their holiday raving about what an amazing place the Margaret River region is and telling their family and friends what a great place this is to visit.

The big problem with air b&b is that many people may choose this option and save a little money which is fine but they will leave this region with a poor experience as they won't find the great tours in the region and even if they do are most likely hesitant to book because there is no-one to give a first hand account of the tour. Many b&b operators are well known to be take their guests on illegal wine tours etc. which are poorly run, unregulated and unprofessional.

If I give customers a poor experience on our tours I will pay for it in the long run so that's why I am so dedicated to making sure that doesn't happen and I'm meticulous about doing everything possible to give my customers the best possible experience on the day. My competition has now become poorly run illegal wine tours etc.

My current sales data over the last six months is incredibly disappointing as this is the time I expected sales to be going up by a similar amount to what they've fallen. Many accommodation providers I've spoken to are suffering from a similar downturn which is very concerning. The term "empty spenders" is quite relevant as it seems that very few are actually benefiting from the air b&b apart from home owners that are supplementing their income.

I have recently had to make the tough decision to put Jet Adventures on the market as I can no longer afford to keep pouring money into it. The business is for sale at what it has cost me to setup but it's looking more likely the boat will go over east and the business will fold. Geronimo skydive have already folded down here and many accommodation providers are on the brink so I won't be a lone ranger being forced to close the doors on business. I believe although air b&b is not the sole cause it has played a huge part in my downturn.

Please let me know if you would like any more information about how this is having a detrimental effect on my business and I am happy to produce booking reports etc. so you can do the comparisons for yourselves. People may quote figures and say tourism is up but it's certainly not showing up on my books. Thanks for taking the time to read my submission

Yours Sincerely

Peter Kalbfell