

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Submission to Short Stay Accommodation Inquiry- sub no.108

From: Taunton Farm Caravan Park
Sent: Wednesday, 23 January 2019 4:32 PM
To: Committee, Economics & Industry Standing
Subject: Submission to Short Stay Accommodation Inquiry

To Jessica Shaw,

I would like to present our submission to the WA Governments inquiry into the Short Stay (Holiday Rental) inquiry.

We are the owners and operators of BIG4 Taunton Farm Holiday Park and established the park from scratch, 26 years ago, on part of our working beef and sheep farm, just north of Cowaramup, WA.

Since we opened we have slowly developed the park and expanded it to 18 fully contained "farm style cottages", (from originally 2), 80 powered sites for caravans and camping and have relocated and restored the first church in Cowaramup, circ.1928 and the original Cowaramup primary school, circ. 1924 into an "Historic Function Centre".

Our notable achievements over the years, apart from expanding the facilities, has been winning the WA Tourism Awards, 3 times and becoming the first park in WA to enter into the Hall of Fame.

Over the 26 years, we have slowly built up the numbers of guests staying with us. In the last calendar year, we hosted 12,197 holidaying guests.

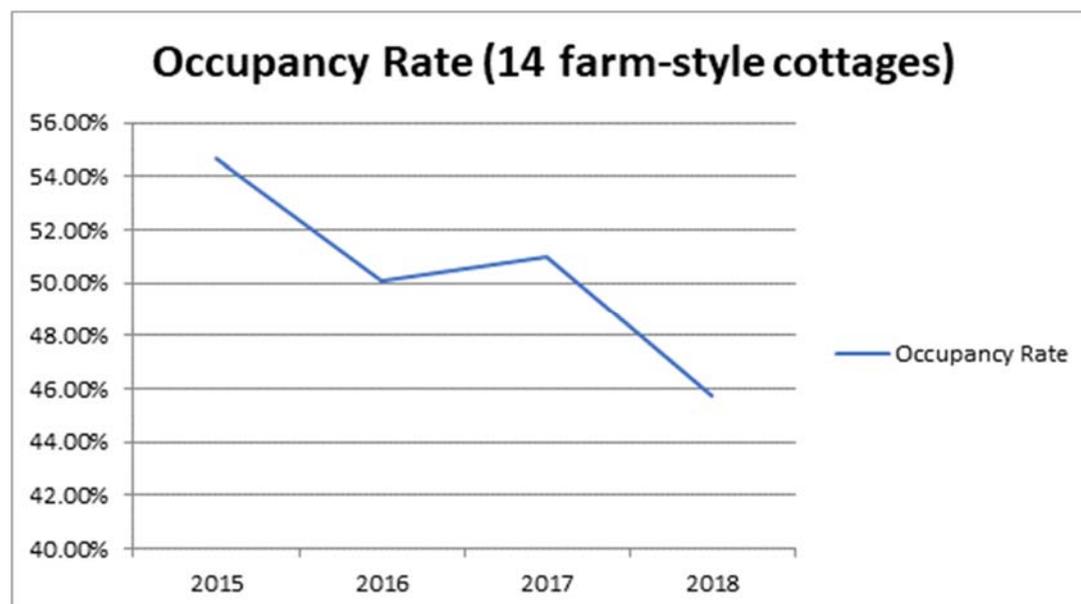
Unfortunately, over the last 3 years we have seen a marked decline in our occupancy rates, especially in our cottages.

This downward trend, coincides directly to the proliferation of Holiday Homes in the region of which the majority are owned by absentee land owners and are unregistered by the Local Government.

We have followed an expansion policy, whereby we develop more cottages when our occupancy reaches 60%.

The parks further development has been put on hold due to our occupancy rate falling last calendar year to just below 46%.

This graph was printed from our computer booking system, RMS and based on the calendar years.



We presently employ 4 full time staff and 5 house keeping staff on a casual basis. Our house keeping staff numbers can vary and is directly dependant to our occupancy rate. This gives local people an avenue to earn an income and work on a casual basis to fit in with their livelihood or other responsibilities, i.e. children.

We are not against registered accommodation venues, competition keeps your standards high and keeps you on your toes, as long as we are able to complete on an even playing field where our competition has to abide with the same rules, regulations, charges and fees that we have to abide with and pay.

As a caravan park, we have to abide by the legislation of the Caravan Parks and Campground Regulations of 1997.

Enforcement of these regulations are carried out by the Local Government.

At present the Local Governments do not have State wide Legislative Regulations in place for Holiday Homes in which to follow and enforce like other sectors in the tourism accommodation industry.

Local Governments need leadership and direction from the State Government, through state wide regulations in order to manage and control this rapidly expanding network of unregistered holiday homes throughout the state.

I am sure all State wide Local Governments would breath a sigh of relief to have a policy in black and white from which to follow.

I have studied the Caravan Parks and Campground Regulations, and I believe that these could be used as a template in order to formulate a set of regulations for the Holiday Rental Homes industry.

These regulations cover the majority of aspects that would need to be addressed, including public liability, building safety and compliance, health regulations, licencing and much more including non-compliance and penalties for such.

I also believe that the owners of Holiday Rental Homes have turned their place of residence into a “commercial” operation and should be rated by the local Shires as such, to reflect their change of use.

Without going further, I fully support the submission by the Registered Accommodation Providers of the Margaret River Region (RAPMRR) in all aspects.

If there is any further information you require, please do not hesitate in contacting me either by E-mail or Mob.

Yours faithfully,

Rob & Julie Saunders



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