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Consumer and Business Services
Government of South Australia
CBSReforms@sa.gov.au

Dear CBS Reforms team

Re: Short Stay Accommodation Register – Discussion Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Short Stay Accommodation Register Discussion Paper. Tourism Industry Council South Australia (TiCSA) supports a statewide Short Stay Accommodation (SSA) Register and Code of Conduct. TiCSA proposes that the register is simple, fair and run by the state, and that it recognises the very different ways short stay accommodation is used across South Australia, and helps to show the contribution of the various kinds of short term accommodation across the state which suits the diverse range of visitors South Australia welcomes.

As the peak body for tourism in South Australia, we represent more than 1,100 tourism businesses, around 40% of them are accommodation providers. That membership spans the spectrum of tourism accommodation:

- commercial, regulated hotels, motels, caravan parks and cabin parks
- bespoke, purpose-built accommodation, such as glamping and unique short stay accommodation such as off grid cabins and houseboats.
- hosted accommodation, including station and farm stays
- family holiday homes and river shacks
- professional short stay managers, some looking after more than 100 properties for their owners

In our consultation with our members and partner associations we know that there are a multitude of positions across industry. Not all businesses want the same things from a proposed register. Our submission seeks to reflect the feedback we have received, including where feedback from one segment of industry may be in opposition to another

To prepare this submission we held two member-consultation sessions, as well as one on one interviews with members representing regional and metro South Australia representing many kinds of accommodation. Our consultation included feedback from short stay operators and with (already regulated) commercial accommodation providers such as hotel and motel operators. To draft our submission, we have also drawn on correspondence provided by our members including submissions which members will submit themselves, that they have shared with us. What follows is our best attempt to provide a submission with feedback that works across the sector.

Please note that in April 2025, TiCSA told the Select Committee on Short Stay Accommodation that South Australia needed robust data before any regulatory intervention. While we agree that a register is that next step, our thinking has moved on since 2025, and where this submission departs from our earlier position, we have noted that.

Summary of our position

1. One statewide register, run by CBS. One point of entry, not 68 different council processes.
2. As part of registration that data is collected with definitions that reflect how short term accommodation properties are used, and this should data should be reflected in any registration fees collected, in some cases a definition should exclude a property from registration fees. For example, in our membership we include; Business-operated short stays (where the accommodation is invested in by the owner and is source of livelihood like any SME), hosted experiential accommodation (such as station or farm stays), Bespoke or purpose built accommodation (such as glamping, off-grid cabins, and other unique accommodation). We also

3. represent already regulated short term accommodation such as; hotels, motels, camping and caravan parks who we believe should be exempt from the register as they are already captured by existing licensing and regulation.

   Outside of our membership, but contributing to the visitor economy, short term accommodation includes; Hosted stays (where accommodation such as a spare room provides additional income as would be derived from a hobby) family holiday homes (utilised for private family use, as well as via an SSA platform or real estate agent when not in use for family and friends), a primary residence listed occasionally (such as an empty home utilising a SSA platform while on extended holiday or similar).
4. That the register should collect properties per owner, with an option for professional accommodation managers able to bulk submit on behalf of their owners.
5. Cost recovery fees only. If fees ever go beyond cost recovery, every dollar above that should be reinvested in the tourism industry, for example through regional marketing that drives dispersal.
6. Any additional data, such as vacancy rates and revenue should be collected through existing collection models, such as platform data sharing and STR-style benchmarking, not a new reporting burden on operators.
7. Privacy first. No owner names or addresses published, but that the number of short stay accommodation per council area (and what type of short stay accommodation that is) is available to councils to assist with decision making and investment planning. However, a public check of registration status and a public list of excluded owners and managers should be available.
8. One uniform statewide (rather than by council area or region) Code of Conduct covering owners, managers, and where possible, guests to protect operators and consumers. However, this needs to ensure the use of evidence-based enforcement and protection from vexatious complaints.
9. No new additional SSA-specific council fees or levies at local government level. We note that Councils can already apply commercial rates where an address is operating as a business, and that is enough.
10. Incentives, not restrictions, on housing, with an additional incentive in regional South Australia for housing essential and tourism workers.
11. Recognition of accreditation, such as the Austrade recognised Quality Tourism Framework and Star Rating accreditation and industry membership (TiCSA, Parks SA, Camping Association Australia, AHA, ASTRA, STAA).
12. A 12-month transition starting in the off-peak season (differing by region), with guidance and systems ready before compliance begins.
13. Further consultation with industry before any regulation is built on register data.

Responses to the discussion paper questions

1. Should the register be publicly available? Alternatively, should this be limited to a public register about disciplinary action and exclusions?

We support a limited public register.

Owner names, contact details and property addresses should not be published. Many of these properties are someone's home, a room in the family house, a granny flat or the family shack. Publishing this level of detail creates real privacy and security risks.

What we do support is:

- a public search that confirms a registration number is valid and current, so guests and booking platforms can check a listing
- a public list of owners and managers who have been excluded from the register, without addresses

- aggregate numbers by local government area, similar to the 'heat map' approach used in Western Australia, so councils, regional tourism organisations and investors can see where accommodation is, what type of accommodation is in their area and where investment in tourism product and/or infrastructure should be focused.

CBS and authorised compliance officers would have access to the full record.

2. Are there any criteria which you believe should or should not be included in the definition of an SSA property?

The definition should be based on how a property is actually used for paid short-term visitor stays. Importantly, the register should record which kind of short stay accommodation each property is. These categories mean very different things for housing, for local communities and for the visitor economy:

- **Business-operated short stay.** An owner operating one or more properties as a business. This may include multiple apartments in one building utilised solely for the purpose of visitor stays, similar to serviced apartments, a former motel or group of single story units now operating as unregistered short stay, or other 'residential-style' accommodation that is run as a commercial business (such as a 'holiday house' which is not utilised by its owner for family holidays, but is a commercial investment akin to a small business).
- **Hosted accommodation.** The owner is on site, whether it's a room in the home, a granny flat on a private residential property.
- **Unique hosted accommodation** such as a station or farm stay.
- **Family holiday home shared for extra income.** The beach house or river shack the family still uses, let out when it would otherwise sit empty.
- **Occasional listing of a primary residence.** A home let while the owner is interstate or overseas, utilising a short stay accommodation platform only rarely (such as once per year).
- **Purpose-built bespoke accommodation.** Glamping, eco-cabins and unique stays that are purpose built and fit-for-purpose as tourist accommodation which are utilising SSA online platforms.

It is our view that purpose-built commercial accommodation that is already licensed and regulated should be excluded, even where it lists on the same booking platforms. This includes hotels, motels, caravan parks and cabin parks. Registering it would duplicate existing obligations without adding useful data.

Capturing this nuance does two things. It lets government separate occasional, non-commercial use from professional hosting, which was a key point in our 2025 submission. It also stops register numbers being read as properties that would otherwise be available for residential accommodation on the long-term rental or owner-occupier market.

What we know is that many regional holiday homes, shacks and bespoke properties will never be available for long-term rent or residential use and that it would be helpful to collect this data for State and Local Government planning and industry understanding, benchmarking and investment.

3. Are the proposed registration requirements achievable? Will these create any unintended barriers for individuals or businesses?

Yes, they are achievable, as long as registration is simple, online and done once, with an easy renewal.

To avoid unintended barriers, TiCSA recommends that:

- **Register per owner.** Each owner registers their properties, and any fee tiers reflect the number of properties that owner holds.
- **Let property managers bulk submit on behalf of owners.** Authorised managers should be able to register and renew many properties on their owners' behalf through one account to enable them to provide additional service and support to owners also removing a burden on family

holiday house owners who might otherwise remove their property from platforms which could potentially reduce available regional accommodation.

- **Avoid duplication.** Don't ask operators to resupply safety and compliance documents already required under other legislation.
- **No new reporting system.** See our response to Question 5 on data.
- **People, not just a portal.** A dedicated CBS team that understands tourism accommodation, and that operators can pick up the phone to, will stop properties falling into the wrong category through a poorly designed online form. Any dispute between a registering business and CBS should be assessed by a panel including industry bodies (such as TiCSA), SATC and regional tourism organisations.

Tourism businesses already carry a heavy compliance load. One regional tour and accommodation member told us they hold 18 separate accreditations, licences and insurances. The proposed register shouldn't add another layer of complexity on top of that.

4. Do you agree with the proposal for local councils to oversee registration and renewals?

No. We strongly prefer a single register administered statewide by CBS, in the same way as other licensing and registration schemes. This was strongly reflected in our consultation across industry.

Running registration through 68 councils would mean inconsistent rules, fees and timelines, and real cost for owners and managers with properties across more than one council area. It also opens the door to broad-brush local measures, such as a bed-night cap in a metropolitan council area, which could have flow-on effects for South Australia's tourism industry that were never intended.

We do support councils having access to aggregate data for their area to inform planning and infrastructure, and any local compliance role should be clearly defined and limited.

We acknowledge that councils can already set rates according to whether an address is used as a business or a residence. However, our members are firmly against any additional SSA-specific fees, levies or rating categories beyond applying commercial rates to an address that is operating as a business. Members have told us about councils introducing new short-term stay rating categories without consultation or any additional services and a lack of understanding of the economic value of that accommodation to its local area. In one case, a property's annual charges rose from around $2,000 to around $7,500. Register data should not be used to reclassify properties for rating purposes.

5. What concerns, if any, do you have regarding these proposed requirements?

Fees

We support a cost recovery model only, similar to Western Australia's, with a higher one-off fee to cover the initial assessment and administration, followed by a lower annual renewal. Fees should fund a properly resourced CBS team, not general revenue. It is worth noting that our 2025 submission opposed operator fees altogether. We now accept that a modest cost recovery fee is a fair price for a register that actually works, noting that an exclusion for registration fees is strongly suggested for operators who are already contributing through taxes and licences as already-regulated businesses.

Cost recovery-only registration fees matter because many operators are already doing it tough. Regional members have been hit by the algal bloom, cost of living pressures and fuel costs, and some tell us bookings have been the quietest they have seen in 20 years.

Our members were clear on one thing: If registration fees go beyond cost recovery, any income above the cost of running the register should be reinvested in the tourism industry. Regional commercial accommodation providers told us they already invest in regional marketing, which supports their own businesses and those around them. They suggested that if fees go beyond cost recovery, a small regional marketing levy would help drive regional dispersal and benefit every tourism business in regional South Australia. To reflect the view held by the majority of our members however, TiCSA submits our preference for registration fees is cost recovery only, with no new levies.

Usage and revenue reporting

Good data on capacity and occupancy is genuinely valuable. It shows what holiday homes and shacks contribute to regional economies, and it underpins decisions about where leisure events, business events, flights and infrastructure investment go. In many regions, only a handful of commercial operators currently report, while far more short stay properties aren't counted at all.

That data should come through existing collection platforms, not a new reporting obligation to CBS that adds red tape for operators. That means mandatory data sharing by booking platforms, which we recommended in 2025, and benchmarking similar to the STR model already used by commercial hotel/motel accommodation. Where a property isn't on a platform, operators should be able to upload a simple export from their booking system. Data should only be published as regional aggregates, and no individual operator's revenue or occupancy data should be disclosed.

Reading the data properly

TiCSA is aware of community sentiment which blames Short Term Accommodation for adding additional pressure to the housing crisis. Collecting accommodation use and category data will help to identify that a registered property is not the same as a property that would otherwise be available for long-term rent. Results need to be read through the categories set out in Question 2.

Already-regulated operators

Licensed commercial accommodation also that lists on SSA booking platforms shouldn't be pulled into duplicate registration.

6. Do you support the introduction of a Code of Conduct for the Short Stay Accommodation sector?

Yes. Responsible operators across our membership already manage guest behaviour through screening, house rules, security bonds, occupancy limits and 24-hour contact. A Code of Conduct sets that standard for everyone. It gives communities confidence and helps keep the small number of rogue operators, who allow repeated parties and disruption in residential streets, out of the sector. Further a registration of property managers protects non-business owners (such as those listing family holiday homes) from dodgy property managers.

7. If supported, would you prefer the Code of Conduct to be uniform for all Short Stay Accommodation properties in South Australia?

Yes. One statewide Code should apply to every registered property, so owners, managers, guests, platforms and councils are all working from the same expectations. A patchwork of council codes would add complexity, particularly for managers working across several council areas. Property-specific guidance, such as river and boating safety for waterfront properties, can sit within a uniform Code.

8. Are there any particular issues with the use or management of Short Stay Accommodation properties you would want to be considered in drafting a Code of Conduct?

- **Who it covers.** Owners, professional managers and guests.
- **Owner and manager responsibilities.** A manager should be accountable for the services they have agreed to provide, while owners stay responsible for private arrangements made without the manager. A complaint about a managed property shouldn't automatically see the owner removed from the register.
- **Guest behaviour.** Occupancy limits, noise, gatherings, parking, waste and respect for neighbours.
- **Contactability.** Every property should have a contact person or service that can respond promptly. Requiring someone to physically attend within a set time isn't practical for remote regional properties.
- **Evidence-based enforcement.** A complaint being made is not the same as a breach being established. Owners and managers should have a fair chance to respond, and minor administrative errors should be easy to fix.

- **Vexatious complaints.** There should be a mechanism, like councils' nuisance complaint policies, to deal with repeated unsubstantiated complaints. These sometimes come from objection to short stay accommodation itself rather than anything a guest has done.
- **Escalation.** Strong action, including exclusion from the register and from booking platforms, for repeated or serious breaches where reasonable steps haven't been taken.

9. Are there any factors which may affect an individual or corporation from complying within the proposed timeframe?

Yes:

- **Seasonality.** A start date or deadline in the summer peak would land when coastal operators have no capacity for paperwork. Conversely, our outback regions have the opposite high season. A single date for registration will not work for all operators.
- **Many owners per manager.** Professional managers will need time to contact owners, many interstate or overseas, and gather authorisations and information.
- **System readiness.** Operators can't comply until the online system, guidance and categories are final and available.
- **Capacity.** Many small operators are now doing everything themselves, having had to cut staff during recent downturns, the ability for a staged registration submission (where an online form can be started and saved, to return to later) may help support time-poor operators.

10. What transitional provisions may be required? And why?

We recommend a 12-month transition, the longer end of the proposed 6 to 12 months, recognising that the off-peak season varies for regions across the state.The transition should include:

- published guidance and a working online system before the compliance period begins
- bulk registration for professional managers available from day one
- an education-first approach in the first year, with the chance to fix incomplete applications
- protection for guest bookings that have already been confirmed
- a CBS team operators can phone
- recognition of appropriate accreditation to encourage best practice and instil confidence in local communities of professionalism of operators, and time for operators to complete accreditation should they wish to.

11. Do you have any concerns about the enforcement of a Short Stay Accommodation Register?

Enforcement needs to be properly resourced and consistent, so that unregistered operators don't gain an advantage over those doing the right thing. It also needs to be proportionate:

- investigate alleged breaches before taking action
- give owners and managers a chance to respond
- provide clear review and appeal processes
- reserve stronger action for repeated or serious breaches
- clearly define the roles of CBS and councils

A public list of excluded owners and managers, without addresses, will help platforms and guests avoid operators who have been removed. Booking platforms should be required to display valid registration numbers and remove excluded listings.

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12. Are there any other elements relevant to the scope of this paper that should be considered?

Housing: incentives, not restrictions

Our 2025 position stands: there is no evidence that short stay accommodation is a primary driver of housing shortages across South Australia. But in some regional towns, our members are seeing real, local pressure on housing for the people who staff our tourism and hospitality businesses. One regional operator has taken a guest room out of inventory for the past four years just to house a housekeeper. Members involved in feasibility work tell us that regional tourism investments within three hours of Adelaide have stalled because there was nowhere to house staff.

If an incentive for long term rental, like that seen in WA were considered, TICSA recommend supports this model, rather than restrictions or caps on how people use their property. Further, if an incentive were considered, we would encourage an additional incentive in regional South Australia for properties which are used for housing essential and in-need regional workers: teachers, nurses, doctors, police, and hospitality and tourism workers such as cleaners, managers and drivers.

However, we also believe that it is worth submitting that regional short stay accommodation houses contractors working on short term infrastructure and essential projects in towns where there are few other options. This includes following the Murray River Flood and following bushfires in regional areas.

A level playing field

TiCSA's Commercial accommodation providers have shared that they carry costs and obligations that some short stay operators generally don't, including those operating as businesses. These costs and obligations include WorkCover, fire safety, disability access, commercial insurance, GST and liquor licensing.

We maintain our 2025 position that this gap should be narrowed for professional, business-operated short stay accommodation, essentially operating as 'decentralised' hotels/motels, but not for those who are operating for occasional or family use. This is why we submit for consideration the collection of category data as part of the registration scheme. However, TiCSA also acknowledges that some of our short stay operator members see registration as 'the thin end of the wedge' and are concerned about overreach and additional regulation following the introduction of a register. TiCSA submits that any further regulation which is considered following the introduction of a register should include industry consultation and that alternatives to regulation are explored via industry bodies such as TiCSA, ASTRA, AHA and Parks SA.

Recognising tourism businesses across government

Although out of the scope of this consultation, it is important to note that in the past, some genuine accommodation businesses have been excluded from government support, including the recent algal bloom recovery grants. This is due to not fitting into a narrow definition. TiCSA has advocated for these businesses when such an exclusion has occurred. TiCSA submits that the register's categories, together with Quality Tourism Framework accreditation and industry association membership, should be used across government to identify tourism businesses seeking support from future schemes such as the algal bloom support grants. If an operator is registered as a business by one agency for fees, it should be recognised by any other arm of government when it comes to support.

Terminology

We encourage government to keep using the neutral term "short stay accommodation" rather than naming individual platforms.

Conclusion

Getting this right matters to every part of our membership. A well-designed register can protect the family holiday homes, hosted stays and bespoke accommodation that spread visitors across regional South Australia. It can give commercial operators confidence that professional short stay operations

meet fair standards. And it can give government, councils and the South Australian Tourism Commission the data they need to plan for growth in the visitor economy.

We would welcome the opportunity to keep working with CBS as the register, Code of Conduct and any related reforms are developed, and we are happy to bring operators from across the sector together to test the detail. Please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely

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