

Media Release

For immediate release

Airbnb “Quarantine Stays” puts Apartment Residents at Risk

The Owners Corporation Network is the independent peak consumer body representing apartment owners in NSW. There are over one million people living in apartments in NSW.

“Airbnb Hosts” are offering “self-isolation” packages to return travellers who are booking 14 day stays in residential buildings, instead of going home to their families” OCN Director, Jane Hearn, said.

“The Prime Minister introduced 14-day mandatory quarantine for a reason – return travellers are the most common transmission route. He has directed people to go home, not extend their travel by booking into our residential communities”, she said.

“The “home quarantine” letting business is a very high-risk development. It increases the viral load on apartment owners and tenants.”

“We live in close proximity. We do not have “onsite management” or protocols for control of infectious diseases during an epidemic. It is not even possible to stop potential carriers going into the gym,” she said.

“Genuine residents returning home need assistance”, she said. “We are home to families and the elderly. More people are working from home. Doctors, nurses and other essential workers live apartments in dense urban areas to be close to their place of work. Kids will soon be home, or on holiday”.

“It is outrageous that Airbnb would dump potentially contagious people in unrelated, unprotected communities while they might be infected.”

“In some buildings, a third of apartments have been converted to Airbnb scattered among residents, despite development conditions that say “no short term letting”, she said.

OCN is calling on the Premier and the Minister for Health to exercise their extraordinary powers under the *Public Health Act 2010* (NSW), to stop “quarantine” letting in residential apartment buildings. The alternative is to enable Strata Committees to adopt resolutions to stop short term letting during the period of the pandemic.

- Ends -

Media comment:

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