

URGENT MEDIA RELEASE

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Government Reneged on Airbnb Code of Conduct

In a stunning move today, the NSW Government has withdrawn the Code of Conduct for the Short-Term Rental Accommodation Industry, so that illegal “Airbnb Apartments” can operate unfettered across Sydney and NSW during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jane Hearn, Director, Owners Corporation Network said.

“In a time of a national health crisis, the Government is more concerned to protect thousands of illegal listings for units in densely populated apartment buildings, than protecting residents.”

“The failure of NSW to honour its commitment is staggering”, she said.

“Taking away the Code of Conduct from apartment communities denies them even the barest essential for the proper governance of their own building. There are buildings in Sydney where a third of apartments have been turned into tourist accommodation in direct violation of development conditions and by-laws.”.

“It is no surprise that NSW data shows COVID-19 clusters in Sydney, Waverley and the Northern beaches – apart from youth hostels these areas also have the highest concentrations of “Airbnb apartments”, she said.

“OCN is calling on the NSW Government to issue a public health order that requires Short Stay Hosts to stop receiving Guests until the pandemic has passed.”, she said.

“Cities around the world have already issued Executive Orders.”

“This is the only way to bring clarity to the situation. We know there is asymptomatic transmission. This trade not only brings transient Guests, it also brings multiple contractors who work across multiple buildings.”

“The entire strata sector, owners and residents; building managers, strata agents, and strata lawyers have called on the Government to address the concerns of apartment communities on COVID-19 issues.”, she said.

“Apartment buildings have no protection. The “stay at home” does not stop transient visitors. It is too important to leave to the market.”, she said.

Media comment:

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