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Submission on Proposed District Plan – Stage 2 – Visitor Accommodation

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Submission presented by Andre Simon

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Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission. I've listed my discussion points in bullet form below for the board's consideration.

1. Why did we start hosting:

We love Queenstown and want to share it with travellers from around the world
We're avid travellers and we use home sharing services when we travel
The advantage is that you get to live and experience a city like a local
Research from the likes of airbnb have shown that traveller preferences are changing and more travellers are wanting to experience a city like a local which means renting a house rather than a hotel room
As an investment to provide for us in our retirement

We take hosting seriously and we are responsible hosts:

We now own three properties in Queenstown which we rent for short term VA
My wife was previously a property manager for Quinovic in Wellington and hence is well experienced in residential property management
We play by the rules and have successfully sought resource consent for one property and are going through this process with our other properties
We respect our neighbors and understand the potential for social impact of VA and try to minimise this
We strictly vet our guests and have a strict no party policy in place
Parking requirements are more than adequate for our properties
In three years we have had zero complaints
We have invested heavily in our properties and we want to protect this investment
This aim is aligned with complying with council regulations and keeping our neighbors happy

How do we benefit from the income?

We moved to Queenstown 4 years ago with a 3 year old daughter and my wife was pregnant with our son
Being able to rent our properties on airbnb has allowed my wife the freedom to stay at home with our children rather than needing to find a conventional full time job
We believe this is critical to the development of our children and we're very thankful for this opportunity
The extra income has also allowed us to share experiences with our children such as family holidays and the ability to travel regularly to see their grand parents in the north island which is very expensive for a family of 4

In short, hosting has improved the quality of our lives and our children's, as well as bringing us closer as a family

In the long term our aim is to be self sufficient in our retirement as the NZ economy is turbulent at best and I have no expectation that we should be relying on the government to support us

How does hosting support the local community?

There is much talk of the negative aspects of short term VA but there are wider considerations that are overlooked:

- I accept that there is an affordable housing issue in Queenstown and particularly this is an issue for worker accommodation
- At several times during the year the traditional hotel industry is beyond capacity
- If we want to support the ever increasing tourism numbers home sharing is essential
- Tourist numbers are climbing and this is putting increasing pressure on traditional hotel industry
- We also need to consider those who won't stay in hotels. While night rates vary significantly across airbnb, there is a sector that is priced well below hotel rates. This allows the potential for groups to visit Queenstown who otherwise couldn't afford to.
- A recent Deloitte study shows short term VA brings \$88 million into Queenstown p/a and generates 700 jobs

We employ a cleaning company 'Personal Maid' which started as two sisters and has now grown to employ 5 full time staff

We also employ a handy man - Build Queenstown

We employ 'Peak to Peak' and 'Remarkable Garden Services' for section care

Hosting allow us to recommend activities in the region which puts money into the pockets of the restaurant and tourism industry

Problems as I see them:

There is an expectation that eliminating hosting will increase worker accommodation:

- Yes there will undoubtedly be some impact but not the silver bullet most seem to think
- Our properties would likely rent long term between \$800-1000/wk for a 2 bed. I don't consider this to be affordable accommodation

There are issues around groups being dropped by busses in residential areas - I accept this is a problem in some regions and needs to be addressed through the resource consent process

The biggest problem I see is non compliance:

- 2 years ago the council sent out 800 letters to non compliant hosts

- It's doubtful that all of these hosts would have gone through the consent process
- Council currently don't have the man power to police compliance
- Speaking to Jim Boulton earlier this week he suggested council rely on neighbors dobbing in hosts

- I don't see how tightening the existing 90 day limit to 42 days will change this
- I fully support the need for compliance but it requires policing
- I believe it's appropriate that VA activities are prohibited in certain areas but I think this needs to be on a case by case basis. For example I live in LHE and feel this is an area where high-level VA is probably not well suited.
- On the other hand we own an apartment in Gold field heights which is zoned low density residential yet this is ideally suited for VA