

Wendy Sealey

Good Afternoon,

I own, and I run 5 unhosted short term visitor accommodation. I love my job, I love that my job enables me to showcase my city. I love that my job has created an opportunity for a young woman that I know to take the plunge and become self-employed. I love that because of my job, I can afford to employ other small businesses in my community to do work I would have otherwise done myself. I love that with each new booking I get, I have an opportunity to create a special experience for someone visiting Christchurch... My city! And because it is my city, I care about how it looks and feels to visitors. There are a lot of things I can't control about a visitor's experience in my city, but where they stay and how comfortable and safe it is is something I can control.

Over the past 8 years I have hosted over 600 guests through 3 platforms. The majority of these bookings have been through AirBNB, and approximately 3% return annually or more often after their initial stay.

I host how I'd like to be hosted.

Travelling with children - I need it to be safe.

Travelling with extended family - I need space.

Travelling with friends - I need comfort.

Travelling for work - I need it to be private.

And travelling with pets - I need it to be secure.

As a guest I need to find out about my accommodation and how suitable it is for my needs. I can check out the reviews on the hosting platforms, most especially AirBNB, and discover that Wendy's accommodation is...

And I quote,

*"A home away from home, warm and cozy. Loved your approach, keeping us well informed with suggestions on things to do. Really loved the courtesy and warmth in welcoming us."*

*"One of the cleanest and well appointed places we have stayed in and over many years of travelling. Well located and convenient."*

*"Your home was for and above most every AirBNB I've stayed at. The amenities, the cleanliness, the comfort, the considerations, the cozy, the heart. Thank you."*

*"Your house is lovely and has truly felt like a home. It is so well equipped with everything we could need and more. Probably one of the best holiday homes we have stayed in."*

And as a host I can check if the property is suitable for my guest by checking that my guest is...

And I quote

*"Jo came with a lovely group of guests, good communication and everything left clean and tidy. Welcome back anytime."*

*"Jason was a wonderful guest. Cleaned thoroughly and even washed the sheets before departure. I would absolutely have him stay again."*

*"Valentina was an excellent guest, she left the apartment very clean and tidy and was easy to communicate with. I would be happy to host her again and I recommend her to other hosts."*

On that note, I am confident I have a 95% chance of not hosting a ratbag guest. But just to be sure, I have a policy of phoning any potential guest who hasn't communicated their intentions while in Christchurch, anyone who has no reviews, or anyone who states they live in Christchurch because *"Why do they need somewhere else to stay when they have a home here?"*

I also do not host for one night to avoid party bookings. The relationship I have with neighbours ensures if there are any issues with guests I am contacted immediately.

I certainly have had guests who think it is okay to have family over for drinks and get a bit rowdy. I get in my car and drive down to the house and ask them to be respectful of the neighbours, tone it down and wind it up by 11pm.

This situation is much more easily resolved in STVA than in the long term accommodation of which I have a couple, where I have a few rights as a landlord to interfere in how people live.

After obtaining information from the council on STRA complaints throughout the city it became clear to me that the number of complaints was small in fact the majority were purely to complain that an AirBNB existed, and for no other reason.

Whether it is Tall Poppy Syndrome or Crab Mentality there appears to be little or no justification for significant changes to the city plan to accommodate these complaints. And certainly no economic benefit that justifies such expense.

STVA offers visitors choice and diversity in a largely homogenous accommodation sector.

I welcome open discussion and criticism of all areas of tourism in my city. But criticism and complaint without constructive and positive solutions is just whining.

The proposed new planning rules are complicated, prohibitive and are hard to follow. They don't solve the issue of providing a safe inclusive open accommodation market that fits nicely within the community. I would love that all hosts were responsible and conscientious like myself. The plan change won't fix this but a STVA register, a simple accommodation WOF and police check would. I would love that all guests were clean, tidy and respectful but not even the RTA can guarantee this. This is why the STVA review process is so important

I would love to continue doing what I love... my job! And opposing the proposed plan changes in their entirety will enable this.

It's not about the money - Christchurch isn't Queenstown or Las Vegas. It is a moderate market. It's about welcoming and facilitating all aspects of tourism and visitor diversity to Christchurch.