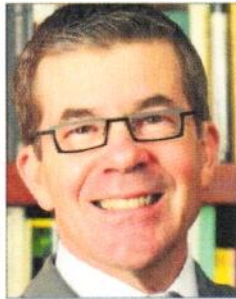


OPINION

Send your letters to the editor to leaderletters@fairfaxmedia.com.au

COMMENT: STEPHEN GODDARD

Government must arrest Airbnb invasion



AT LEAST with WestConnex, the NSW government acquired homes. One, on the other hand, could very soon be invaded.

A new framework for regulating Airbnb and other short-stay accommodation platforms is apparently set to go before the NSW cabinet.

On behalf of people who live in and own apartments, consider this our last-minute plea for sensible, democratic reforms to short-term holiday letting. Owners should have the right to decide if short-term stays are allowed in their buildings.

Short-term tenants bring extra wear and tear on lifts, pools, gyms and common laundries. They are often on holiday and more likely to turn up the music and party on the balcony. The government can introduce whatever party measures it wants but our

homes are not a controlled precinct like Kings Cross.

In discussions with the government, one minister told us they supported the right for each strata building to decide for itself. Another asked if we thought a code of conduct or measures to crack down on party houses would work. We said it wasn't enough and that piecemeal measures treated a symptom, not a problem.

I like self-regulation as much as the next business person but those measures sound like something cooked up in Airbnb headquarters. Implementing its idea would be akin to getting a hangover relief strategy from Jim Beam.

The University of Sydney Urban Housing Lab has found short-term letting has taken 6000 properties from the long-term rental market in NSW. Short-term platforms put

pressure on rents and on supply.

We know the government is also considering an option to limit the number of days you can Airbnb a property, but this causes new problems. There are already stories about people being forced to sign 11-month leases so that landlords can cash in on extra Airbnb rates at Christmas time. Limiting the number of days you can rent a place or Airbnb would encourage this further.

And we have no idea how such a limit would affect people who own beach houses in holiday towns and have based their investments (and loans) on Airbnb revenue.

The government must do the right thing and give apartment owners the democratic right to decide if they want short-term holiday makers in their building.

Stephen Goddard (pictured) is a director of the Owners Corporation Network.

YOUR VIEW

CONSIDER ALL ROAD USERS

Re your article "Cyclists rule to become law" (Leader, May 16).

The photo above the heading says it all - look at the way the cyclists are spread into lanes - totally unnecessarily.

While motorists must allow cyclists safety, cyclists must take responsibility for their actions, and this includes considering road users, not riding through red lights etc.

Joell

The photo accompanying the item on the new cyclists road-sharing law in last week's Leader highlights the hypocrisy of this law.

The law is designed to make drivers share the road safely with riders.

The photo shows multiple riders in more than one lane, riding three abreast.

I am all for safe passing laws when sharing the road with cyclists but they have to do their bit for their own safety.

How about laws that make them stick to one lane and to ride no more than two abreast and single file on single lane streets?

These laws will not prevent cycle-car accidents while cyclists fail to respect that are also have to share the road safely with car drivers.

Paul, Kingsgrove

SENIORS HOUSING BULK

The Sydney South Planning Panel rejected plans for seniors housing at Sans Souci because "the bulk and scale of the proposed development was excessive for the area" (Leader, May 16).

With five-storeys of seniors housing proposed for the Oatley Bowling Club site, I'd expect Georges River Council to reject it also, not only on the grounds of excessive bulk and scale but also because it's located in the Myles Dargby Reserve (public parkland) and in a bush fire zone.

James Dell, Oatley

MOATE AVE NOISE POLLUTION

I find it amazing that after all the reports and request for local input into the noise pollution in the Moate Avenue area that someone has given the green light to put further roundabouts along Moate Ave.

What these decision makers do not understand is that the noise makers are the motor bikes and high performance cars, usually with modified exhaust systems that create the noise problem.

The riders and drivers of these, slow down to enter the roundabouts and then accelerate away from them till the next roundabout creating the noise.

The noise created is louder than the large buses that use Moate Ave and also the aircraft noise on take-off and landing.

The roundabouts are not very practical when you consider that the cross streets along Moate Ave carry very low volume traffic and create Moate Ave traffic to stop when they take these legal Right of Way.

Stop signs would have been far more practical and safer.

Again a decision taken by, I would guess, someone who does not experience the



SHARING THE ROAD: Drivers keep well clear of cyclists on the Sydney to the Gong Ride through St George and the shire, but this is often not the case.

problem on a regular basis as the residents along Moate Ave have to.

Maybe now they might put noise and speed cameras to compensate for this badly thought out system.

One can only live in hope that one day they will get it right.

Les, Brighton-Le-Sands

PLANET'S 'ASSISTED DYING'

The recent sad and stressful experience of David Goodall in travelling to Switzerland to end his life in peace and dignity, highlights the need for action on 'assisted dying'.

Paradoxically, our planet is dying - human assisted dying - tragically showcased by the massive extinction of our fauna and flora, as well as the evident breakdowns of our climate.

Caring for our planet and ourselves is inseparable. Our failure in the former should necessitate a new kind of debate about "assisted dying", no doubt sooner than we'd like.

Lee-Anne Walker, Oatley

KIND ACTS

HANDBAG LEFT ON TRAIN

On April 24, I was travelling into the city with friends for an overnight stay when I inadvertently left my handbag on a seat at Sutherland Station.

Thank you to the honest person who handed it to station staff.

Also a big thank you to Des at Jannell station who arranged for the guard on the next train to bring the bag from Sutherland to Jannell saving me the trip back.

Your help and thoughtfulness was greatly appreciated.

Lesley, Grays Point

RUNAWAY TROLLEY STOPPED

Recently as I turned the corner from Caringbah Post Office into Hay Street I watched in horror as an abandoned shopping trolley began hurtling down the slope directly towards my car.

The lovely owner of the adjacent boutique was enjoying a coffee across the street. She jumped up and ran across the road and managed to grab the trolley which was very close to my car.

If the trolley had not been stopped it would have caused serious damage to the front of my car. This lady has my most utmost respect.

Toni B, Caringbah

DAMIAN WAS AN ANGEL

My husband and I would like to thank some very kind people who were so helpful when we both fell over on May 2.

Three ladies and two gentlemen lifted us up and sorted out our shopping staying with us until we were feeling better.

Then they helped lift my husband into Damian's car as he insisted on driving us home and carrying our shopping into our retirement village home.

After he left us he called in at reception and asked the nurse to look in on us.

Thank you so much Damian and the other three angels who were so caring and helpful.

Jean and Norm, Sylvania

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