

LORNE AFFORDABLE HOUSING ONLINE COMMUNITY MEETING 1 5 JUNE 2023

Lorne Business Tourism Association Housing presentation

Leon Walker

President of the LBTA – Local business owner – Permanent Lorne resident with family

Strong thriving community = strong tourism industry that makes Lorne Lorne

History.

- Nothing new in staff shortages, however it has been compounded over the covid years;
- Homes that were rented were sold, now short term rentals and/or holiday homes
- Unaffordable rentals - \$750 for a 2—3 bed (when available), on par with costings in Melbourne, however this is unrealistic due to the wage differences of Lorne to Melbourne

LBTA – Thinking outside the box

‘**Adopt a Worker**’, seasonal staff in existing properties (granny flats, units, camping) at a affordable rate

Not a lot of pickup due to covid lockdowns, but, worked in raising awareness of staff and accomm shortages. A few accomms were directly sorted to businesses , not through the LBTA

Campaign reached Nooas and Port Macquarie as a potential solution as the same issues happening there

Good media coverage

Camp sites with GORCAPA

With backpackers back in 2022, central campsites were negotiated with LBTA and GORCAPA to hosue seasonal workers with tents or campervans at a reasonable cost for full time equivalent seasonal workers. 6 sites with up to 4 Pax, so 24 workers houses. Sites \$160 per week (\$40 per person). Avail November to after Easter

Good for backpackers but not long term or suitable for families or higher jobs.

Currently GORCAPA are meeting with park managers (not just in Lorne) for the next season to start the process earlier.

Exisitng Dwellings used

Use of existing dwellings that have been vacant by larger employers. Merrivale had rented the grand Pacific, and other businesses in backpackers. This has taken the pressure off the town a little bit with large employers filling one accom. However is exclusive for these businesses and doesn't fix the long term issue. Also not suitable for families or higher level positions.

Where to?

Need achievable outcomes. Long term affordable rentals, not necessary to buy

Reclass exiting accomm that only allows short term stays into permanent rentals; holiday cottages etc that don't have a long term permanent permit through the Surf Coast Shire

Secure houses for workers; take 1-2 percent of holiday accomm equities to 20+houses.

Subsidize rentals through tax/rates reductions for owners who rent out long term instead of Airbnb etc. Or tax Airbnb properties a commercial tax as they are a business. Have this tax go back into the community land trust?

Section 88 visa, currently backpackers can only work 1 year in Victoria then have to leave and work up north to obtain second year visa for 3 months. Look to reclassify tourists towns that need workers so that the international workers can work longer and sustain Lornes future. A lot of permanent Lorne residents came here as backpackers and stayed and settled over the years, thus growing the community.