

Barcelona disease

A RECENT program on ABC TV dealt with issues of sustainable and affordable housing in international cities. Obviously, the issues varied from country to country but the problems being faced in Barcelona are an object lesson for Hobart. Barcelona is being flooded with visitors seeking short-term accommodation and landlords are evicting long-term tenants to capitalise on much higher financial returns from this market. Residents are being forced to move to outlying areas of the city, with

poor public transport, shopping, schools and recreational facilities. Not surprisingly, there is a growing backlash against this situation and the city council is fighting to protect their residents from eviction. The Mayor of Barcelona has identified what the city is calling "tourism without boundaries" as the root cause of this massive problem.

Hobart potentially faces the same disease. The catchcry from the tourism industry is the more visitors the better. More high-rise hotels, more Airbnb and charter flights. Anything that can be done to bring more visitors. No limits. Tourism without boundaries.

There have to be limits and as a community we need to set those limits now, before the Barcelona disease completely swamps us here.

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Michael Lynch
Taroona