

## Mayors' move for tourism bed tax labelled shortsighted tax grab

Four Queensland mayors have copped a slap in the face for leaning on the Premier to install a tourist bed levy in Queensland, their move labelled a tax grab to cover local government budgets.



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Mayor Tom Tate and Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner are among the four Mayors under fire.

Australia's peak accommodation body has hit out at the latest push for a tourist bed levy in Queensland, calling the move "a shortsighted tax grab".

Mayors from four Queensland councils have written to Premier David Crisafulli imploring him to consider legislation for a bed tax to help fund local tourism infrastructure, while the concept has recently been a lightning rod for debate during discussions over a 20-year tourism road map being developed for the state.

Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate, Brisbane leader Adrian Schrinner, Amy Eden from Cairns and Ry Collins from the Whitsundays co-signed the letter calling for an "opt-in" tax to help local councils keep pace with soaring infrastructure costs partly fuelled by increased visitor numbers.

The Queensland government has been quick to rule out statewide bed tax legislation, instead saying councils "have the ability to strike their own levies for local infrastructure".

Accommodation Australia CEO James Goodwin hit out at the proposal, pointing to “the fragility of the Queensland visitor economy”.

“Accommodation providers on the Gold Coast and surrounding areas have been hit hard by the cost-of-living pressures on households, rising energy and insurance costs and that’s before you add recent natural disasters like Cyclone Alfred,” he said.

“Hotel occupancy in March was only 55 per cent, highlighting the fragility of the Queensland visitor economy.

“Why would anyone believe that applying a tax to a holiday would help boost tourism demand and fill hotel rooms?

A bed tax is a false economy.

“We should be putting the welcome mat out for tourists, not hitting travellers and the accommodation sector with a shortsighted tax grab to cover local government budgets.”



Accommodation Australia CEO James Goodwin hit out at the bed tax proposal, citing already low hotel occupancy rates. Pic: Jane Dempster.

Accommodation Australia is the largest lobby group in the sector, representing almost 2000 properties across the country.

Tourist taxes – sometimes as little as two per cent of an overnight room rate, are common overseas and the concept is regularly debated in Queensland.

In February, a bed tax was raised as a possible way to raise billions of dollars towards Queensland Olympic stadiums and infrastructure.

Queensland Tourism Industry Council CEO Natassia Wheeler said the body was not advocating either for or against a bed tax “at this stage”.



Cairns Mayor Amy Eden. Picture: Brendan Radke

“Our focus is on supporting a constructive, statewide conversation that ensures the tourism industry remains meaningfully involved in shaping long-term funding solutions,” she said.

“We acknowledge there’s already been valuable engagement between government and industry.

“As pressures on tourism infrastructure and delivery continue to grow, now is the time to bring these conversations together into a co-ordinated, forward-looking approach – exploring all sustainable funding options that are fair, regionally tailored, and reinvested into the visitor economy.”

A spokesman for Queensland Tourism Minister Andrew Powell said “The State Government has ruled out a statewide or local bed tax (tourism levy)”.



Whitsundays Mayor, Ry Collins, holding the Top Small Tourism Town gold prize.

Former tourism minister and opposition MP Michael Healy has previously advocated for a bed tax on the condition that money generated stays in the local government area.

In a statement provided to The Courier-Mail on Friday, he said “it doesn’t matter what I think ... (but) David Crisafulli, the man who was supposed to be Tourism Minister, ruled out any new taxes before the election”.

<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/queensland/mayors-move-for-tourism-bed-tax-labelled-shortsighted-tax-grab/news-story/d95acea9d0c119aaaa30656dd9161673?btr=68a6c6eeb1021b49d53b5767e9f84347>