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Dick Smith slams 'billionaire leech companies' for ripping off Port Douglas

WATCH

Mark Murray

06/09/2018 - 12:30 (AEST)



Dick Smith has come out swinging against holiday booking sites such as [booking.com](https://www.booking.com) and Trivago. Watch the video below. IMAGE: Supplied.

AUSTRALIAN entrepreneur Dick Smith has slammed multinational 'leeches' from the United States for ripping off accommodation houses in regional towns like Port Douglas.

In a passionate online plea, the national icon has demanded citizens boycott

holiday bookings through online travel agencies such as [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com), Trivago and Wotif as they're owned by 'American billionaires who just steal money out of our country.'

He believes more than 50 per cent of holiday bookings are now done through American OTA's that charge small businesses large commissions, robbing them of vital income.

"It's extortion," he said.

"By the way Port Douglas, in 10 years our small town of Port Douglas, says \$180 million has gone off to these people.

"Imagine if everyone decides from now on they are not going to be conned by these huge billionaire leech companies sucking money out of family businesses in our country towns?

"Imagine if you weren't paying 20 per cent here and 30 per cent there off to America. You could spend the money in your town, you could do up your hotel, you could employ the tradie.

"You could go back to donating to the football club which traditionally the family motels used to do."

Sam Cullen from local direct booking platform [tourismportdouglas.com.au](https://www.tourismportdouglas.com.au) said it was estimated up to \$20 million a year is driven out of Port Douglas by OTA's.

"It's great to have such an icon and heavyweight of Australian business supporting this cause," he said.

"Any savings in reducing commissions can be channeled into community, and that will also enable the re-investment operators require to ensure the whole destination stays competitive within Australia and International travel markets."

Several Port Douglas resorts and accommodation houses are expected to ramp up their marketing efforts in an attempt to generate more direct bookings following Smith's rallying cry.

The former Australian of the Year demanded consumers stop facilitating what he

calls 'extreme greed capitalism.'

"From now on never book through one of those sites, never. It's a con, they are not cheaper, that's a lie," he said.

"All you (need) to do is scroll down to the bottom of your phone until you find the direct booking of the motel itself, ring them directly or book.

"(That way) these American billionaires who just steal money out of our country won't get away with it any longer.

"Stand up and do something for our own country. It is ridiculous what is happening, it's outrageous."