

6/12/2019

Qantas: 'Stolen' frequent flyer points causes outrage

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travel advice ► flights

Qantas passengers furious after frequent flyer points vanish

QANTAS has been flooded with complaints on Facebook from passengers who are “disgusted” at one big problem.



Kate Schneider @SchneiderK

MAY 7, 2018 2:02PM

Video Image

SHOCKED passengers have hit out at Qantas after their hard-earned frequent flyer points vanished from their accounts.

The airline was flooded with complaints after posting a promotional video on its Facebook page last month asking “What will you do with your Qantas points?”

The post was meant to be inspiring, but to some flyers it proved to be the final insult. Because, unfortunately, the answer to the question was “nothing” for many unsuspecting passengers who went to cash in their points only to discover they no longer existed, leaving them “disoriented”.



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MESSAGE

I wrote to you in relation to flight JQ44... Email to airline that got me \$800

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The root of the problem originates from a deal made between the airline and Woolworths back in 2016. Under changes to the Woolworths Rewards program, the default option for Qantas passengers changed to earning discounts with the supermarket giant instead of frequent flyer points.

Those wishing to continue earning Qantas points while shopping at Woolworths needed to manually go into their account and select that option.

Qantas says the rebranding was well-publicised at the time, but some passengers say they didn't get the memo and instead received a nasty surprise. They claim to have found out this year that they actually hadn't been earning any points since the switchover and thus they had all expired.



For an easy 1,000 bonus points, select 'Convert to Qantas Points'

Small text explaining the conversion process and terms.

400 bonus points for each \$100 spent on Qantas flights. Expires 31/12/2019.

Get 1,000 bonus points



An email from Qantas regarding the Woolworths Rewards Card. Source: Supplied

- Comments from users discussing the loss of points and the airline's response.

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For some, the loss amounted to hundreds of thousands of points, worth thousands of dollars.

Points are usually worth around one cent each, depending on what they're used for.

One passenger wrote on the Qantas Facebook page of their loss: "Qantas wiped 360,000 points from me, all accumulated from fifo work, only contacted by email when they wiped my account, very disappointed Qantas."

Another said: "Qantas the reason most people lost their points was when Woolworths stop(ped) their rewards points system. If Qantas was reasonable they would do the right thing by these people."

- Qantas wiped 360,000 points from me, all accumulated from fifo work, only contacted by email when they wiped all my account, very disappointed qantas
Like Reply 2w
- wow... that's about \$2,500 worth? (if JB HiFi vouchers bought). That is disgusting behavior by what should be our honorable national airline.
Like Reply 1w
- Qantas took my 360,000 points with out any warning, very disappointed. I was sent a email after they wiped my account. I was accumulating points through air travel only and planing a family holiday with the points
Like Reply 2w
- There is not one positive report on here... I have them, but not that bothered too many horrible stories & I heard they now want to charge a fee?? No thanks
Like Reply 2w
- I will try to redeem them by getting flights . but as I found out, that is almost impossible
Like Reply 2w

More disgruntled customers. *Source: Supplied*

'I WAS SHOCKED THEY CAN DELETE YOUR POINTS'

Stephen Roberts is among the passengers claiming to have had points wiped without warning. The 49-year-old from Canberra said 175,618 points disappeared from his account last April.

It was a hard-earned stash too; he had been accumulating Qantas points since his early 20s with his first credit card, and had only redeemed them on one previous occasion.

"I was saving the rest of my points — just under \$1000 worth — for something special from JB Hi-Fi, like a high-end digital camera or an expensive Dyson vacuum cleaner," Stephen told news.com.au. "Little did I know what was to come."

He only discovered the loss a few months ago.

"When I logged onto my Qantas account for the first time in a long time back in late 2017, I saw in shock (as) all my accumulated points were 'expired'."



VIDEOS IN THIS ARTICLE



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MESSAGE

Travel to your destination by flight...
The flight...
were told the flight was cancelled due...
We were able to travel to...
Thank you for...
Me

Email to airline that got me \$800

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3,200 Qantas Points

Showing 6 recent transactions

Recent ▼ Sort by ▼
 Date ▼

Points will only expire provided you earn or use points (excluding Family Transfers and any transfer of points from Qantas Business Rewards) or pass on points every 18 months.

Date	Description	Points	Status
Wed 19 Nov 2017	QF 200 Sydney to Perth	300	10
Fri 17 Nov 2017	QF 200 Perth to Sydney	300	10
Fri 20 Jun 2017	EXPIRED STATUS CREDITS	-	-100
Wed 13 May 2017	QF 1400 Perth to Sydney	300	10
Fri 02 May 2017	QF 1400 Sydney to Perth	300	10
Sun 20 Apr 2017	EXPIRED POINTS	175,000	-

Stephen lost all these points. *Source: Supplied*

He called the airline for an explanation and — hopefully — some compassion but instead was simply told: “You need to manage your points.”

“I asked why you did not notify me before you took my points? ‘We do, we send an email in the month before they expire.’ I checked for this email at the time Qantas said they sent it. Not surprisingly, I could find nothing.”

It turns out that the email had been swallowed up by his spam box, at a time when Stephen said he had been in the middle of moving his family — including two young children — interstate. He questioned why Qantas didn’t call him or even text, considering they had his number.

“It was a very hectic time ... the last thing on my mind was managing my Qantas points, but that is exactly what Qantas expected me to do. Any my punishment for not doing this? The loss of all my points.”

He continued to try to get the points back, without luck.

“I called them several times over a two-week period, pleading with Qantas, trying to explain that these were my hard-earned points over 25 years and I was saving them for something I really needed.”



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Points are not as valuable these days. Picture: Yishai Bock Source:Flickr

He was simply told: "We don't give back expired points."

"This company lacks any decency or compassion that you would hope our national airline would have ... Shame Qantas, shame.

"Qantas would seemingly be making (a fortune) ... by this callous act, repeated on countless unsuspecting members like myself. The recent Facebook activity confirms there are many in this situation, some losing double or triple the number of points I lost.

"This has left a very bitter feeling towards Qantas, so much so I avoid flying with them if at all possible."

While he's given up on getting his points back for now, he hopes that collective action may have more success in "righting this wrong".

They send you an e-mail. That is it. Can you believe it? Mine went to my spam box. They had my mobile number on file, and yet they did not even have the decency to call me, before they stole ~\$1200 worth of points. Qantas were heartless and lacking any compassion when I pleaded with them to give MY points back. Shame Qantas. Shame.
Like Reply 1w Edited

Shame, Qantas, SHAME
Like Reply 1w Edited

I had a similar problem with my dad's points, after he had passed I didn't have his card but I knew there were points there and I rang with name dates etc and they said stiff cheese sorry.
Like Reply 1w Edited

points should never expire. Not fair
Like Reply 1w

We lost dad's after we had a stroke. sent mum an email but we were so busy with dad's life in the balance then all the rahap that poor mum didn't even look at her email account for months! Poor dad has since died.
Like Reply 1w

qantas dont own the points you do. How are they allowed to take them off of you. I am inquiring how they are allowed to do this. Will keep you informed.
Like Reply 6d

Qantas what possible options there
Like Reply 1w Edited



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MESSAGE

Message: To view or release to flight CC 54 (30/03/2019) The flight status at 7:15am but was cancelled. Due the were able to travel to Budapest on 7/04/19 however we weren't allowed

Email to airline that got me \$800

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The 48-year-old from Victoria had saved up 9500 points by Christmas 2017 but they vanished.

"I was ripped off and had my rewards points wiped," she told news.com.au. "I thought I could regain them by shopping at Woolies, but due to misinformation this dream is now dead as well. Scammed.

"I was told I could regain them if I accumulate points by flying and shopping at another source. Have since been told by Woolworths that I only shopped \$1000 and it needs to be more than \$2000, or will not be converted into Qantas points.

"That means I lose the expired points ... Qantas should be reminded that they are dealing with people, not chattels."

Curious, as I too had missed the memo, I checked my own measly frequent flyer balance only to find it also now at 0. (I haven't flown much in recent times and prefer using my rewards for grocery discounts.) However, last June I had over 14,000 points — tiny in the scheme of things, but it was something.

I did find warning from Qantas that they'd expire on June 30 last year but it was in small print within the monthly balance update email, and we all know many people don't read that.

TRENDING IN TRAVEL



TOP READER
Google reveals most dangerous travel destinations are

Your May Qantas Points balance plus our latest news

May 2017 at 6:40 am

Found in My Mailbox

Your April Qantas Points balance plus great offers for you

April 2016 at 7:24 am

Found in My Mailbox

View the email in your mailbox. Qantas Points and Status Credits shown are as at 15 May 2017



View the email in your mailbox. Qantas Points and Status Credits shown are as at 15 Apr 2016



advertisement

Dear Kate, welcome to your May newsletter.

WELCOME! Your points are due to expire on 30 June 2017. Find out how to keep them active.

TIP: With Points Plus Pay + Rights, you could fly sooner using a mix of Qantas Points and cash!

Dear Kate, welcome to your April newsletter

Find your next holiday with flights and more special points offers!



The points warning I received, with the warning in small writing below. Source:news.com.au

Sure enough, my points have expired too. Source:news.com.au

'WELL-PUBLICISED'

Flying in the face of what I'd just discovered when looking at my own account balance, a Qantas spokesperson said the Woolworths switchover was well-publicised at the time, and that it's simple to keep earning points.

"It's really easy to stay active in the Qantas Frequent Flyer program — it's as simple as earning or redeeming one Qantas Point within 18 months," the spokesperson said.

"Even if members aren't flying regularly there are a variety of ways to earn or use points on the ground through everyday spend using a Qantas Points-earning credit cards, buying a burger or watching a movie at the cinema."

The airline said it had announced in the media at the time: "Frequent fliers who don't opt in will receive money off their shopping rate ... is Points.

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NEWS

It's worth your return flight to the UK. The flight...
Arrived at 11:55am but was cancelled due...
We were able to travel to Singapore via...
However, we arrived at our d...

Email to airline that got me \$800

Me

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almost as much as completing a tax return.

That's according to Angus Kidman, editor-in-chief of comparison site Finder.com.au and a "manic frequent flyer".

Mr Kidman said it's not unusual for rewards schemes to have time limits where points will expire upon inactivity and it's up to us to manage them.

"Earning points through shopping or your credit card counts as activity, but the onus is on the consumer to make sure they check that points are actually being credited," Mr Kidman said.

He said that following the Woolworths Rewards rebrand — which came after an earlier rebrand in 2015 — customers were responsible for amending their Qantas details.

"With the new program you could again convert Woolworths Rewards into Qantas Points, but you had to register your Qantas details again to do that, it didn't carry over from the earlier registration.

"That's where some people got caught out — if they were originally enrolled in Everyday Rewards and didn't realise the scheme changed (twice), they could have thought they were earning when in fact they weren't.

"If you assumed that your shopping was topping up your balance but it wasn't, having your points cancelled by Qantas after 18 months of no activity would come as a rude shock."

So checking your balance now and again can pay off.

"If you're hoping to use frequent flyer points in the future, log into your account once a month to make sure you are earning when you think you are. If your points have expired, it can't hurt to contact Qantas and ask nicely if they can be reinstated, but under the terms of the program, the airline is not obliged to do that."



Time for change? Picture: Aero Icarus Source:Flickr



WHO REALLY BENEFITS FROM POINTS?

HOPE IN TRAVEL ADVISOR



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Message

I write to you in relation to flight 1244... The flight... were sold the flight was cancelled... were able to travel to Europe at... Manager however... at our...

Email to airline that got me \$800

Me

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"So long as they sell the points for more money than it costs them for customers to redeem them, the airline is winning. Even better for them if the points expire before they're redeemed."

So it's clear who wins the most from the frequent flyer scheme, and it's "definitely the airline", said Steve Worthington, an adjunct professor at Swinburne Business School. As well as being a great money maker, the personal data passengers give away for free while using such programs is priceless for companies.

Their ultimate advice?

"Unless you fly often and are prepared to get your head around a very complicated (and ever-changing) system, don't let the pursuit of frequent flyer points dictate your itinerary.

"And before you think about spending any extra money in order to earn points, weigh up the reward benefit by multiplying the points by 0.01 — the result will be the approximate dollar value of your points."

If you're spending points, you'll get the best bang for your buck on seat upgrades.

However, points are becoming less valuable these days — when Choice did its frequent flyer point breakdown in June 2015, points used for seat upgrades were worth as much as 14 cents but now the best value upgrade found was worth less than half that amount.

"When it comes to redeeming points for flights, in 2015, points were worth on average 1.4-1.5 cents on domestic flights, and 0.7-0.8 cents on international flights. Now, Qantas points redeemed for flights are worth closer to 1.1 cents on domestic, and 0.7 cents on international, while Virgin points are worth around 1 cent for domestic and 0.7 cents for international."

On a final note, do remember that Virgin's Velocity frequent flyer points expire after 24 months of inactivity (previously it was 36 months).



VIEW COMMENTS

The controversial holiday has been labelled "disgusting" and "sick"

It's the X-rated holiday that promises guests three nights experiencing "heaven on earth".

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Promoted | Health Insurance Comparison

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MESSAGE

Travel tip: get an upgrade to flight Q84... The flight was cancelled due to weather, however we arrived at our destination...

Email to airline that got me \$800



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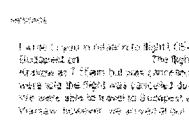
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