

To: BRAT. Committee (SEN)

Subject: Airline Passenger Protections (pay on delay) Bill 2024
submission

Date : 22/08/2024.

To whom it may concern .

It is with great interest I read that an enquiry is to be held into the proposed protection of travellers for Pay on Delay by airlines which would deliver much needed protection and certainty for travellers. An enquiry that is long overdue.

As a Travelling business man for 4 years, I was away 4 to 5 days a week every month travelling intra-state and interstate around Australia for Telstra. The travel went with the territory of the project requirements and on many occasions, I was found constantly changing my travel plans, on going connections and business meetings due to such airline delays through no fault of my own . These situations occurred not only with Qantas, Jet Star, Rex but many smaller carriers as well. Although Qantas and Jet Star were more culprits than the smaller airlines.

Often, the delays were due to previous aircraft arriving late, looking for a passenger already checked in, mechanical failure once boarded and sitting on the plane for hours only to be told we weren't going any where on that day in these buses with (10 serious faults) that the pilots weren't prepared to operate them. Many a time waiting on the plane for push back only to be told by the pilot he was waiting on final paperwork , waiting on final bags to be loaded, waiting on catering to complete their loading , or just waiting for push back. Then to be sitting in a que prior to final taxing for previous flight to take off or land .

The above items mentioned yes may be just out of the control of the airline ,however they have contracts with suppliers eg baggage handling , catering, ground services some of whom may be controlled by the airport corporations themselves but , does little to uphold the marketing hype of what airline travel is supposed to be.

We ,the travelling public are required to pay for such inept services with exorbitant airfares and required to accept the the terms and conditions of the airlines if we want to fly with them. Who is going to challenge them on their terms before buying a ticket especially seeking compensation for their failures in operations and third parties when, the traveller is required to arrive and book in 1 to 2 hours prior to departure.

These failures of the airlines as mentioned had caused me no end of constant re-arrangements in :

- connecting flights with other airlines.
- business meetings.
- additional accommodation.
- car hire.
- extra days away from the office.
- extra days away from the family on weekends (valuable time lost often on moments never regained) .
- Not to mention the bad stress of dealing with such non obliging and dictatorial airline staff.

The costs attributable to such events would certainly be insurmountable should they have been able to be claimed and whilst I understand issues around safety, I condone those excuses unfounded by the airlines under the banner of safety.

The enquiry I trust will take such matters into consideration when the number of complaints put forward to the ACCC since 2018 which have risen some 200% I believe and these issues can't be overlooked any longer. Especially when 93% of the market share is held by Qantas and Virgin. This duopoly must be broken up, as compared to Coles and Woolworths with all parties dictating the rules and no PUSH BACK ! Well now it is your time to ACT and start protecting the travelling public and ensure these companies are more transparent and responsible for their operations!

The airlines above need to be held to account for POOR Performance and whilst Parliamentarians have a conflict of interest with perks of free guest lounge passes we the every day traveller supports the incompetencies of the airlines with very little or no compensation for their actions. Yet when push comes to shove Qantas gets federal funding during COVID to keep operational whilst paying huge payouts to CEO's and Board members. To my knowledge the support funding hasn't been paid back so I will stand corrected should I be incorrect on that last point.

If the many overseas airlines are subject to paying compensation then why haven't we taken a leaf out of their operations and pay for delay entitlements and tested them here in Australia? No one wants to upset the cosy arrangements of the duopoly I can only imagine but, now is the opportunity to make the playing field level and see that these protectionist actions of the airlines do not continue.

It is with sincere thanks you have given me the time to read this submission and look forward to a favourable outcome in your enquiry.

Yours Sincerely

R.W.Woodbridge.