

Submission

On the 7th of April 2023 I was suppose to be on EK5051, a codeshare with Qantas leaving Brisbane at 11:05am and arriving in Singapore at 17:20. My husband and I had driven all night from Goondiwindi to Brisbane the night prior, had little sleep in Brisbane and made our way to the airport only to realise the flight was delayed at least 8 hours and that this information had been known a night prior as the single outgoing flight from BNE to SIN was delayed. We, and others who booked through Qantas had also not received a text, call or email, and showed up at the airport to be told too bad. The staff member giving out insurance letters even implied it was somehow our own fault for booking a codeshare, when others next to us who had only booked via Qantas also did not receive any texts or emails. No offers of food vouchers were made to over a dozen people we saw alone even though this was in Qantas' delay policies. We only received this after pushing and a having a supervisor come out. We drove from Goondiwindi and had no home to return to for the day.

This flight got progressively later and we would miss out Emirates connection in Singapore, yet no one from the Qantas call centre or the check in desks at BNE were willing to book us on an alternate flight and Emirates said per codeshare rules Qantas must be the airline to resolve this. It took 6 hours of waiting for a single staff member to turn up and resolve this.

QANTAS knew about this delay the day before but without a financial penalty, there was no incentive to get an alternative plane and crew ready, nor to rebook passengers on Singapore Airlines who had two flights to Singapore depart while we waited all day.

This was also my last chance to see my grandmother in her 90s and because of QANTAS, that opportunity was missed.

Living in Goondiwindi we also relied on the Qantaslink flight from Moree to Sydney quite frequently like many of the residents. QF2183, the evening flight, is very popular for working professionals who are already under more burden in rural and remote areas to take leave for access important appointments in the city that urban residents take for granted.

However being the last flight of the day it is the first to be canned if any of the previous flights have issues or delays. It has happened so often to my husband who regularly flew from MRZ-SYD – at least 4 times in a year, and to myself leaving on a daytime flight and barely making my connection to MEL. This has made us miss important meetings and appointments in city – ones we can't simply reschedule quickly, being dependent on an airline monopoly to leave town. It

has also disadvantaged our communities as we need to take extra unplanned leave to attempt the flight again, or our business in the city is cut short or missed completely. In the city, casual backfill for health, education and government sectors are easy to organise at short notice. In a rural community where someone who missed a flight comes back a day later, it means a clinic closing appointment books for an extra day, or collapsed classes as the teacher is unavailable for longer than planned.

With financial penalties, QANTAS would need to hire and keep more standby aircraft and staff available so that once again rural and remote residents are not the ones missing out on vital health and financial business in the city and the communities that depend on them aren't being disadvantaged by flow on effects with professionals serving the community taken out of action for longer than planned

Being such a vital lifeline for rural residents, QANTAS has a responsibility to the local community and should send a spare plane to pick up the last runs of the day and is currently not incentivised to do so because they have zero consequences.

We love travelling in the EU – whenever there are delays airlines scramble to find solutions so that they are not penalised. In 2023 Lufthansa Group posted a 2.7 billion Euro operating profit. Clearly being in the EU hasn't hurt them.

If QANTAS monopolise rural routes, there must be consequences for poor performance and the taking of responsibility for the impact to the lives of rural and remote residents.