

Submission No. 3

From: Leigh Turner
Sent: Monday, 6 June 2005 11:50 AM
To: Committee, JCPAA (REPS)
Subject: Submission on Aviation Security
Importance: High

Dear Committee Secretariat,

I wish to provide the following submission for consideration in your Review of Aviation Security in Australia:

In the light of the outrageous debacle relating to serious questions over baggage handlers tampering with checked-in luggage entrusted to airlines, there are two quite obvious and simple-to-implement measures that can immensely improve airline passenger baggage security.

1) International airlines operating from Australian airports, and in particular Qantas, should be forced by government mandated regulations to print the weight of checked-in baggage onto the actual Boarding Pass, as is common practice with many of the airline carriers operating in the more developed and sophisticated European airline system.

In fact a properly compliant IATA Boarding Pass already has provision on it to record the checked weight, it's just that Qantas software doesn't bother to print it on their version of boarding passes. An example of a backward and antiquated flight check-in system that's not keeping up with the times when security risks, and the pressing need to introduce additional mitigation and countermeasures, is becoming extremely important.

2) Introduction of a new government regulation requiring mandatory strapping of all checked-in baggage with a security wrap-around band to prevent tampering with the bag contents by unscrupulous airline baggage handling staff between the time of check-in and subsequent collection of the baggage at the destination airport luggage carousel.

These measures are essential in light of the recent revelations that Qantas employees obviously cannot be trusted not to tamper for criminal purposes with customer property that's been entrusted to them. It's high time the lax Australian government took a heavy hand with dealing with CEO Geoff Dixon and the Qantas management to force them to take certain basic responsibility for baggage security measures and stop the sickening buck-passing and obfuscation that's so plainly evident in the Australian aviation industry.

In fact if the measure 1) above had been already operationally implemented, Ms Corby would have had documentary evidence in support of the checked-in weight of her baggage that could well have been the critical swaying evidence in determining her guilt or innocence in the Indonesian courts. It can be argued that she has been a hapless victim of Qantas's penny-pinching neglect and internal failure to adequately address endemic baggage tampering and very serious security problems.

I do hope that your committee takes seriously my simple suggestions. The problem does not require rocket science and expensive / complex solutions, but very basic enforced airline procedural change measures like this.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr) Leigh Turner

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