

Profits before people

Gutless politics again??

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It is always hard travelling. It gets much harder travelling with children. Travelling with a child with a disability is nearly impossible as many families and carers know. Airlines have a habit of treating people with a disability poorly as we all know. Maybe we should not be so precious as the reality appears airlines don't seem to care who they treat badly. As a Qantas Platinum Frequent flyer for the last 15 years I certainly never expected this to happen to me. Travelling for our family means meticulous planning of schedules and often paying big prices to fly at peak times to minimise mental damage caused by the stress of travelling with our daughter. Having to entertain her for 10 hours without a break is difficult. A 6.00am flight out is impossible when you need to drag a child with a disability out of bed at 3.30 am to get to the airport

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/dad-blasts-airline-on-ejector-seats/story-e6frea6u-1226411605454>

Can someone please explain why Governments both State and Federal allow airlines to operate in a manner that is just grubby to say the least? In a practise designed purely to maximise airline profits with no benefit to travellers airlines routinely now over book planes by 10% Qantas told me privately. On a daily basis they then eject a string of passengers to ensure maximum flight capacity. When questioned by the media they report the practise as minor, a comment that may be less than truthful it would appear given their previous advise to me. The practise is not minor, it is now habitual by airlines as any regular traveller knows and ground and ticket staff must feel embarrassed and humiliated having to regularly placate angry dumped passengers. Why the Unions allow that to happen we do not understand?

The family of 2 adults and two children who told me they were ejected in Los Angeles did not consider that holiday disruption minor. Since returning from overseas no less than six other friends have advised me the same has happened to them

Hiding behind fine print on their airlines websites, this practise which most consumers would describe as shady, misleading, deliberately deceptive or just plain shonky is excused by the airlines on the basis that empty seats would cause ticket prices to rise for other travellers. What they really mean is their profits may be challenged or they may have to find more honest ways of selling their seats

Could you imagine if a roof tiler or a plumber explained that he did not fully re roof a house or finish his job, not completing the bits not visible , because that enabled him to keep his prices low for other customers what the state consumer protection agencies or federal trade practise authorities would do. They would close such operators down in seconds. Governments both state and federal have cracked down ferociously on businesses likes banks and insurance companies hiding behind fine print and technicalities in contracts. Why are airlines still allowed to treat consumers like suckers just to maximise airlines profits?

That is basically the argument the airlines are using. We will treat some customers in a deceptive and shonky fashion, hide behind technicalities and fine print and consumers if they are the unlucky ones in the air ticket raffle should just wear it because other travellers may be better off. Surely when an airline takes a booking and takes money 6- 12 months ahead they have an obligation to guarantee a seat.

Is it not time our governments ensured the common standards and decency that protect consumers in all aspects of commercial transactions are applied to air lines. Recently the Philippines Government outlawed the practise because of consumer complaints. Airlines reacted furiously arguing how dare you attack our business model even if it is shonky because all airlines do it. If all plumbers where shonky would that be OK?

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/travel/news/airlines-furious-over-ban-on-overbooking-flights/story-e6frezi0-1226387358698>

If a developing country like the Philippines can protect its consumers why can Australia not do so?

The Australian Government is fully aware of the problem. In April Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese announced the formation of a new National Airline Customer Advocate. After the airlines have shafted, duded and deceived customers all on the basis that other airlines do it to maximise profits the federal government wants to make sure customers get a little compensation. Is that a gutless response from our leaders in Canberra again?

Good on you Anthony, maybe a quick tax payer holiday to the Philippines may be in order. We doubt you will get bumped from First Class? The roof tilers and plumbers of the world must feel they are a victim of double standards somewhere.

Qantas has been far from a model community member in recent times, always driven by the philosophy that profits seem to become before people it would appear.

It should be said that Air pacific and Qantas did make an effort to find alternative travel for our family. Their interest level in doing so seemed to increase dramatically after we suggested we would leave our daughter Kim with the check in staff and my wife and I would return the next day to resume our delayed flight home.

We look forward to seeing if any of our political leaders seriously take on this issue. Their response so far suits the airlines beautifully. There is no doubt the only winner is the airlines as the rules now stand and the little guys, the consumers are being dissed by airlines.

PS If the Qantas complaints people had rung back as they promised last week I might not have bothered doing this, but they obviously lost my number!

LIFESTYLE IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION (LISA) INC.

Tel: 03-9434-3810: Email: info@lisainc.com.au or

**vk3qq@optusnet.com.au Web www.lisainc.com.au : [www.lisa-
aus.blogspot.com](http://www.lisa-
aus.blogspot.com)**

NOTE: We are always interested in feedback and information; general, specific, good or bad. If you wish anonymously: Our mail address is, 73 Nepean Street, Watsonia, 3087