

Submissions (1) and (2) for the Aviation Green Paper are attached. You are welcome to use my name.

When I chose to fly Jetstar, a budget airline, I knew I was reducing my level of comfort and service, but *I didn't know I was reducing my level of safety!*

I look forward, with hope, to the required changes.

Thank you,
Gay

SUBMISSION FOR THE AVIATION GREEN PAPER (1)

Shining a spotlight on Qantas and Jetstar's inadequate, discriminatory and potentially dangerous Wheelchair Assistance!

Background

I will be 82 on [REDACTED] 2023. Over the years, I have had [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I've been informed that, if I stress these joints, I will create further damage, lose more function, and feel more pain.

I live on the Gold Coast and my family live in Sydney. My friends on the GC are around my age, do not drive and are unable to help me. Therefore, I need to book Wheelchair Assistance to board the plane and, on arrival back home, to wheel me from the plane to the baggage carousel, *claim my bag, and wheel it and me to the shuttle bus at the far end of the Gold Coast airport.*

I have been successfully using Jetstar's Wheelchair Assistance for some years, not realising the airline staff were extending their assistance *beyond official limits* out of personal empathy, compassion and/or sheer humanity!

Earlier this year, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] My doctor warned me that a proportion of women have no pain with a heart attack, they just become breathless and feel exhausted. He told me if I experience these symptoms, I must stop immediately and rest.

As a result, I am unable to walk briskly, climb stairs or ramps, carry, lift, push or otherwise exert myself. This made Wheelchair Assistance even more essential for me.

A potentially life-threatening situation

On 11 April, 2023, my Jetstar Wheelchair Assistance was terminated abruptly at the baggage carousel.

I was told I would have to ask another passenger to lift my bag off the conveyor belt!

Then I was told to stand up so the Jetstar assistant could take the wheelchair away!

I was deserted, and abandoned in Gold Coast airport by a subsidiary of Qantas – an airline that calls itself the 'Spirit of Australia'!

Solution

In order to safeguard vulnerable seniors and people with a disability, it is essential that Qantas *and* Jetstar extend their Wheelchair Assistance regulations **to include lifting a small suitcase off the baggage carousel and wheeling it and the passenger to their appropriate transport pickup area.**

I do not understand how, after negotiations, Virgin Australia made this extension in May, – but Qantas and Jetstar can't (or won't?).

Sincerely,

Gay

Gay Kayler Ashcroft

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION FOR THE AVIATION GREEN PAPER (2)

Due to my health conditions [see Submission (1)], I travel with Transcord community transport, who always use a sedan, to make access easier for me, and supply a high level of care.

When I tried to book Transcord to and from the Gold Coast airport, I was informed they were unable to assist me, because QAL would not give them a licence.

No vehicles are allowed to set down or pick up in front of the airport without a licence to do so, – and ***these licences are not given to any community transport organisations.***

As a result, I am forced to use the ConXion shuttle bus, which has a designated drop-off/pick-up waiting area at the far end of the airport from the baggage collection conveyor belts. I need the airline’s Wheelchair Assistance to retrieve my bag and to take me there. (This is not available with Jetstar and Qantas. However, after negotiations, Virgin Australia agreed to provide this extension of service, from 31 May, to all those who need it.)

There are two high steps to negotiate to get into and out of the shuttle bus. Although the ConXion drivers do their best to help me, it is a struggle, often on my knees, to get into and out of the vehicle. I have to ignore all my medical advice not to exert myself, and I run the risk of causing myself further pain and injury. However, I do not have a choice.

Taxis and private limousines are licensed to pick-up and drop-off at a designated entrance. However, they are not allowed to enter the airport building. This necessitates an extension of Jetstar’s Wheelchair Assistance to access them. And, when you reach your destination, the drivers don’t want to spend time helping to get you and your luggage into the building.

Additionally, many seniors and people with a disability cannot afford to pay taxi or limo fares – particularly if they live on the northern Gold Coast.

I sincerely hope this Aviation Green Paper will be able to bring about the necessary changes to assist a section of seniors and people with a disability to fly safely with appropriate accessibility.

Sincerely,

Gay

Gay Kayler Ashcroft

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