

SUBMISSION FOR THE AVIATION GREEN PAPER (3)

Further to my first two submissions about Qantas and Jetstar's inadequate wheelchair assistance, and community transport organisations not being given licences by QAL to drop off or pick up from the kerb, when it would only need a small area to be allocated to enable disability access into and out of the airport.

After taking part in the excellent virtual Roundtable on Disability Access today, I realised there is one imperative that, *if legislated and enforced by the government*, would make an enormous difference to the quality, consistency and safety of the disability assistance offered by the airlines.

As an example, the airlines seem to treat wheelchair assistance as if it is an 'optional luxury', when it is actually an 'essential aid'. Not all vulnerable people have relations or able-bodied friends who can come to their aid in the airport.

Virgin Australia have expanded their assistance since 31 May for passengers flying into the Gold Coast airport. However, even they state that there may be an occasional shortage of staff to carry out this service, e.g., if a number of planes arrive at the same time, or absence of staff due to sickness.

The minimum number of staff needed to operate the various types of disability assistance should be ascertained. That number should be set in stone, so those services are not affected. There must be other areas where staff can be taken from that will not compromise health, safety and disability access.

Otherwise, more staff must be employed. After all, passenger care and safety should not be sacrificed for a higher profit margin.