



4 May 2026

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

To the Committee Secretary,

Re: Inquiry into Aviation Consumer Protection Bill and 3 related bills

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport inquiry regarding the Aviation Consumer Protection Bill and 3 related bills.

CHOICE welcomes the introduction of legislation to Parliament to establish an independent ombuds scheme for travel complaints, a new regulator, as well as the enabling legislation for the creation of the Aviation Consumer Protections Charter.

While these reforms fall short of a European-style compensation scheme, these changes should force airlines to provide fair remedies for cancellations and delays, provided the final version of the Aviation Consumer Protections Charter is strong. These reforms are long overdue.

However, CHOICE is concerned that the new regulator, the Aviation Consumer Protection Authority, will sit within the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development. We recommend that the new regulator be independent and could be established within the ACCC to benefit from its existing infrastructure.

A statutory review should be included within at least three years of commencement to, among other things, consider how the regulator is performing, including whether its position within the Department remains appropriate and should be reconsidered.

CHOICE is also concerned that the exemption power is too broad and should be removed, or appropriate guardrails put in place. As proposed, an entity could be made exempt by the Minister from the entire framework, without conditions or time limits. This has the potential to significantly undermine consumer protections.

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If an exemption process is included, this may be more appropriate for the regulator to administer. It should be required that the net public benefit substantially outweighs the impact on consumers, and that appropriate timeframes and conditions are imposed in all circumstances.

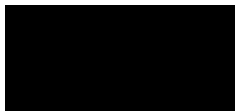
This process should also be subject to public consultation before any exemption is granted. Any urgent exemption request could be dealt with by way of a short, time-limited interim exemption while a formal exemption is considered.

CHOICE reiterates that the framework will only be as strong as the Aviation Consumer Protections Charter. It must be clear and comprehensive so that it adequately protects consumers when they travel.

Should you wish to discuss this issue further we would be happy to meet at your convenience. You can contact Beatrice Sherwood on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] to organise a time or should you require any further information.

We look forward to the outcome of the consultation.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Kelly
Director, Campaigns and Communications
CHOICE