
Media Release

Tourism Accommodation Australia concerned ACCC ruling on Online Travel Agents doesn't go far enough

2 September 2016: Australia's peak accommodation organisation, Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA), has expressed concerns about the recent agreement between the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and Online Travel Agencies (OTA) – Booking.com and Expedia – in regard to restrictive price practices.

TAA CEO Carol Giuseppi said, "TAA welcomed the chance to be included in discussions with ACCC, but has advised ACCC that in its view the agreement doesn't go far enough to protect hotels and consumers.

"Whilst the decision that hotels no longer have to give OTAs the same availability of rooms was welcomed, TAA advised the decision to allow OTAs to prohibit hotels from offering lower rates online clearly lessened competition and was detrimental to hotels and travellers.

"We advised the ACCC it should have insisted that OTAs allow hotels to set their own rates online.

"Hotels will only be able to offer cheaper prices than an OTA over the phone, over the counter or via a loyalty club.

"Smaller hotels in particular feel very vulnerable to the power of the global OTA duopoly.

"The ACCC needs to send a stronger message to these two global giants to ensure travellers' interests are protected.

"Over the past year a number of hotel groups have committed to providing members of their loyalty programs with exclusive rates lower than that offered by OTAs, which highlights the benefits of booking direct with hotels.

"For consumers, joining a hotel's loyalty club is the best guarantee of accessing competitive rates."

About Tourism Accommodation Australia

Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA) represents the interests of Australia's accommodation chains and individual members in the hotel, serviced apartment, integrated resort, motel and vacation ownership sectors. Servicing owners, operators, managers, franchises and other industry stakeholders, TAA is a division of the Australian Hotels Association, a federally registered organisation of employers representing hotels since 1836.

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