



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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DEFINITIONS

Complaint Received - a customer has lodged a written complaint via website.

Ineligible - this is a case that has been deemed ineligible according to the Airline Customer Advocate (ACA) charter e.g. No response from airline, event occurred more than 12 months prior, complainant has already reported the complaint to a government complaints body.

Eligible - this is either a case that has been raised by the complainant but has not yet been deemed ineligible by the airline or has been reviewed and confirmed as being eligible.

Finalised - closed, either resolved or unresolved

Resolved - the customer has accepted the outcome offered by the airline.

Unresolved - the customer has not accepted the outcome offered by the airline and there is no further escalation available through the Airline Customer Advocate.

Outstanding - a case that is not marked as ineligible or finalised will fall under outstanding.

ADVOCATE'S FOREWORD

This Annual Report contains details about the total number of eligible complaints received and finalised by the Airline Customer Advocate, the number of eligible complaints outstanding, and the top issues for each participating airline and corresponding percentages.

The Airline Customer Advocate was established in 2012 to facilitate the resolution of complaints from customers of the four participating airlines about the services provided by the airlines.

These airlines are Jetstar, Qantas, Rex, and Virgin Australia.

The Advocate is an aviation industry funded dispute resolution scheme. This funding model is typical of the many diverse and long-established industry specific resolution schemes across Australia that partner with consumers.

The Advocate provides an informal process to resolve complaints in accordance with an airline's Customer Charter, as well as its Conditions of Carriage and any applicable laws including international conventions that define an airline's liability in prescribed circumstances, such as lost baggage. The Australian Consumer Law also protects airline customers.

Australian airline customers took more flights domestically and internationally overall in 2023, as total passenger numbers across all the participating airlines increased to 67,605,684 (up 10%) from 61,112,643 in 2022.

The Advocate received 1,408 eligible complaints in 2023. This represents an increase of 9% on the previous year and is in line with the increase in passenger numbers year on year. The major drivers of complaints during the year related to flight delays and cancellations, refund requests, and baggage.

Overall complaint resolution rate for 2023 has declined from the prior year, decreasing 6% to 37%, compared to 43% in 2022 and 40% in 2021.

1,012 telephone enquiries were received compared to 6,789 in 2022 and 3,520 in 2021.

During the reporting period, the total complaint finalisation timeframe averaged 37 calendar days. Pleasingly, the average complaint finalisation timeframe for the second half of 2023 was 19 days which showed a significant improvement from the first half and is now within the agreed service level of 20 days. Furthermore, data from the first quarter of 2024 shows that this trend continued to improve, with an overall average across all airlines dropping to eight calendar days.

The ACA has made, and continues to make, significant investment to uplift operational, organisational structures and customer experience, with much more to come. We will be pursuing other airlines and aviation consumer agencies (both localised and international) to participate in the ACA scheme. We have also increased our internal support team, with key responsibilities focused on complaint resolution, escalation process, turnaround times and reporting.

PARTICIPATING AIRLINES

Jetstar

Jetstar Airways is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Qantas Group and commenced operations in May 2004. It states it is a low-cost airline and carried 17,726,994 domestic and international passengers through Australia during the reporting period.

Qantas

Qantas was established in 1920 and is Australia's largest domestic and international airline. It carried 27,843,754 domestic and international passengers during the reporting period.

Rex

Rex was established in 2002. It states it is Australia's largest independent regional airline it carried 2,756,957 passengers during the reporting period.

Virgin Australia

Virgin Australia was established in 2000 and states it is Australia's second largest airline, behind the Qantas Group which includes Jetstar. It carried 19,277,979 domestic and international passengers during the reporting period.

The complaints submitted to the Advocate, contained within this Annual Report, do not necessarily reflect the overall performance of each individual airline.

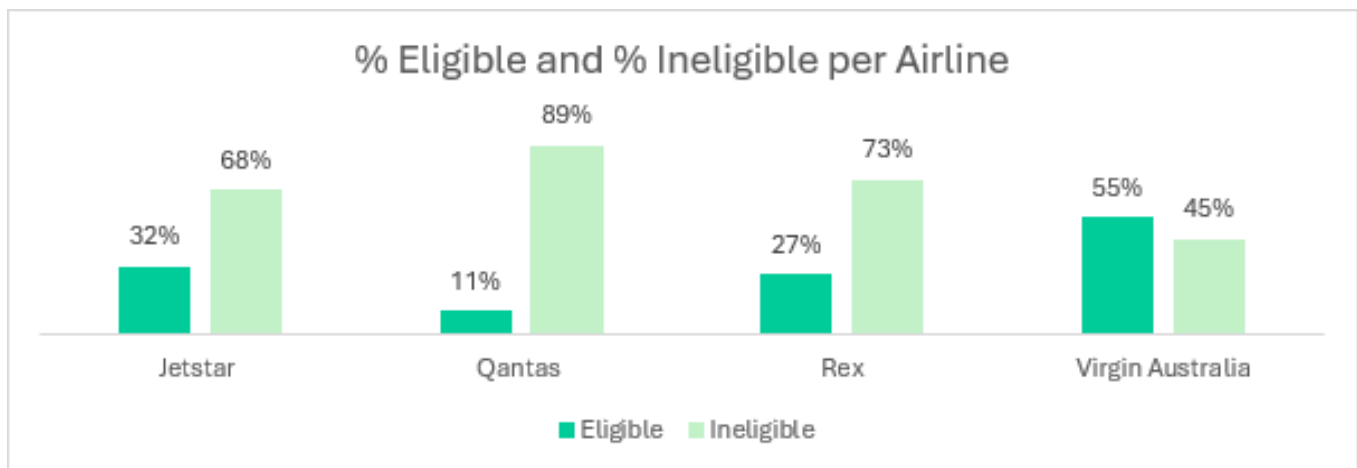
ELIGIBLE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

A complaint to the Advocate is eligible if:

- (a) The complaint is about a participating airline's services; and
- (b) The customer has already tried to resolve the complaint directly with the participating airline by following the complaints process set out in the airline's Customer Charter and has sought a review of the response received from the participating airline and allowed for the timeframes specified in the participating airline's Customer Charter or as otherwise communicated. Alternatively, the customer has not received a response within those timeframes; and
- (c) The complaint relates to an event or circumstances that occurred less than 12 months ago.

A person may lodge a complaint on behalf of another person who is unable to make the complaint on their own behalf, provided they have that person's authority.

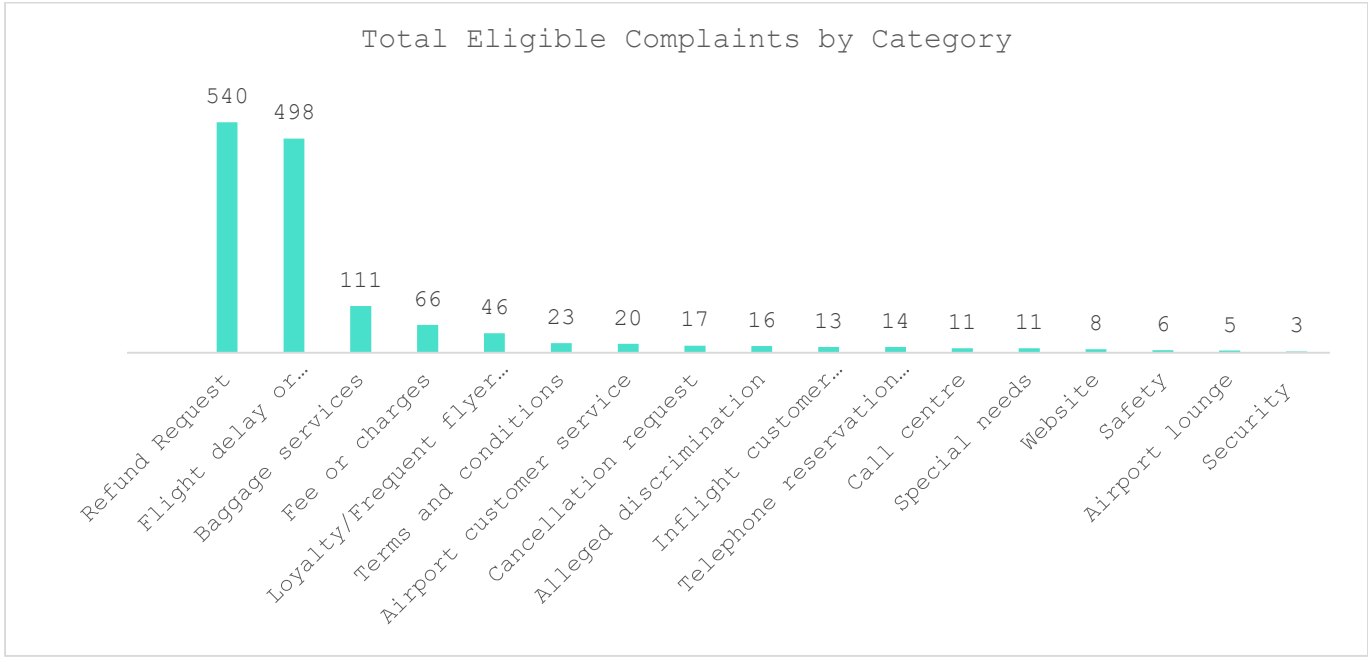
A person cannot use the services of the Advocate in relation to a complaint if a claim has already been filed in a court or tribunal (whether pending or finalised), or a complaint has been lodged with a government authority in relation to the same matter.



AIRLINE SERVICES

Customers can submit a complaint concerning 15 set categories, and services, provided by the participating airlines. During the period, the 'refund request' category was 38% of all categories across all airlines, as the highest number of complaints submitted. Flight delay or cancellation was next highest at 35%.

- Refund request
- Fees and charges
- Specific needs
- Baggage services
- Alleged discrimination
- Airport lounge
- Safety
- Security
- Conditions of carriage
- Flight delay or cancellation
- Contact Centre or reservation services
- Customer services
- Airport customer service
- Loyalty / frequent flyer program.



TOP COMPLAINTS OVERALL

The below tables refer to eligible complaint rate received by the ACA per 1000 passengers.

Airlines Top 5 Complaint

Airline (Number complaints per 1,000 passengers* carried)	1	2	3	4	5
Rex	Refund request 0.0025 per '000	Flight delay or cancellation 0.0018 per '000	Baggage services 0.0015 per '000	Telephone reservation services 0.0004 per '000	Airport customer services 0.0004 per '000
Qantas	Refund request 0.0072 per '000	Flight delay or cancellation 0.0032 per '000	Baggage services 0.0014 per '000	Fees or charges 0.0009 per '000	Loyalty/Frequent flyer program 0.0007 per '000
Virgin Australia	Flight delay or cancellation 0.0114 per '000	Refund request 0.0109 per '000	Baggage services 0.0024 per '000	Loyalty/Frequent flyer program 0.0011 per '000	Terms and Conditions 0.001 per '000
Jetstar	Flight delay or cancellation 0.0104 per '000	Refund request 0.0069 per '000	Fees or charges 0.0011 per '000	Baggage services 0.0011 per '000	Airport customer services 0.0006 per '000

*Passenger numbers as provided by individual Airline (0 means no complaints)

Top 5 Complaint Categories

Airline (Number complaints per 1,000 passengers* carried)	Refund request 38%	Flight delay or cancellation 35%	Baggage services 8%	Fees or charges 5%	Loyalty/Frequent flyer program 3%
Rex	Refund request 0.0025 per '000	Flight delay or cancellation 0.0018 per '000	Baggage services 0.0015 per '000	Fees or charges 0.0004 per '000	0
Qantas	Refund request 0.0072 per '000	Flight delay or cancellation 0.0032 per '000	Baggage services 0.0014 per '000	Fees or charges 0.0009 per '000	Loyalty/Frequent flyer program 0.0007 per '000
Virgin Australia	Refund request 0.0109 per '000	Flight delay or cancellation 0.0114 per '000	Baggage services 0.0024 per '000	Fees or charges 0.001 per '000	Loyalty/Frequent flyer program 0.0011 per '000
Jetstar	Refund request 0.0069 per '000	Flight delay or cancellation 0.0104 per '000	Baggage services 0.0011 per '000	Fees or charges 0.0011 per '000	Loyalty/Frequent flyer program 0.0003 per '000

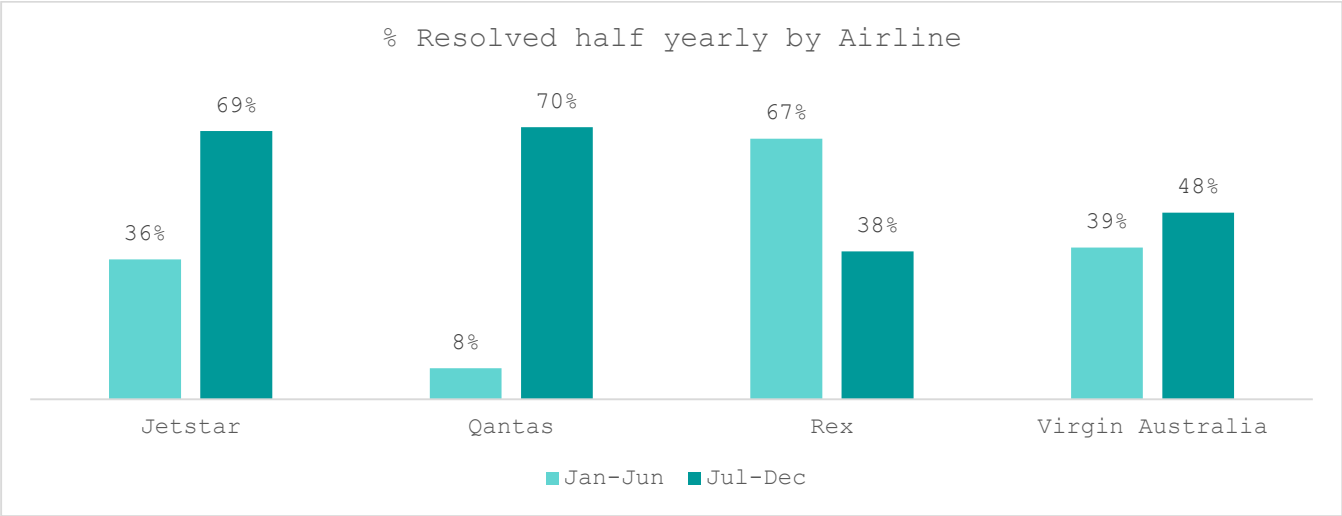
*Passenger numbers as provided by individual Airline (0 means no complaints)

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

A complaint is defined as ‘resolved’ if the customer accepts the outcome offered by the airline, and a complaint is ‘finalised’ if the case was actioned and closed.

During the reporting period, 100% of the 1,408 complaints received were finalised. This represented an improvement on the 1,286 complaints finalised in 2022.

Of the 1,408 complaints finalised in 2023, 520 (37%) overall were considered resolved.

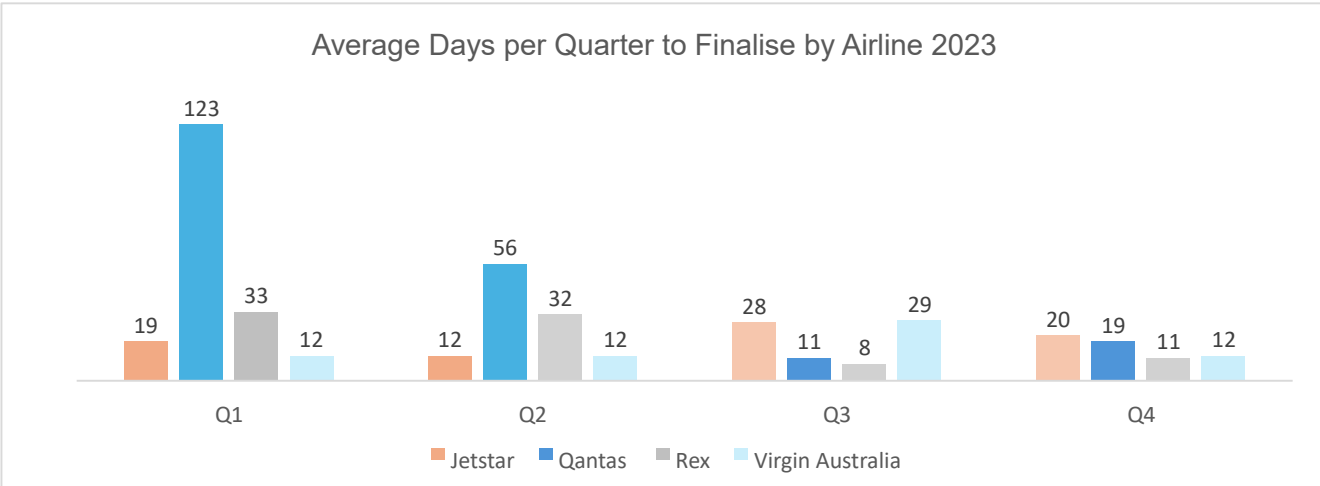
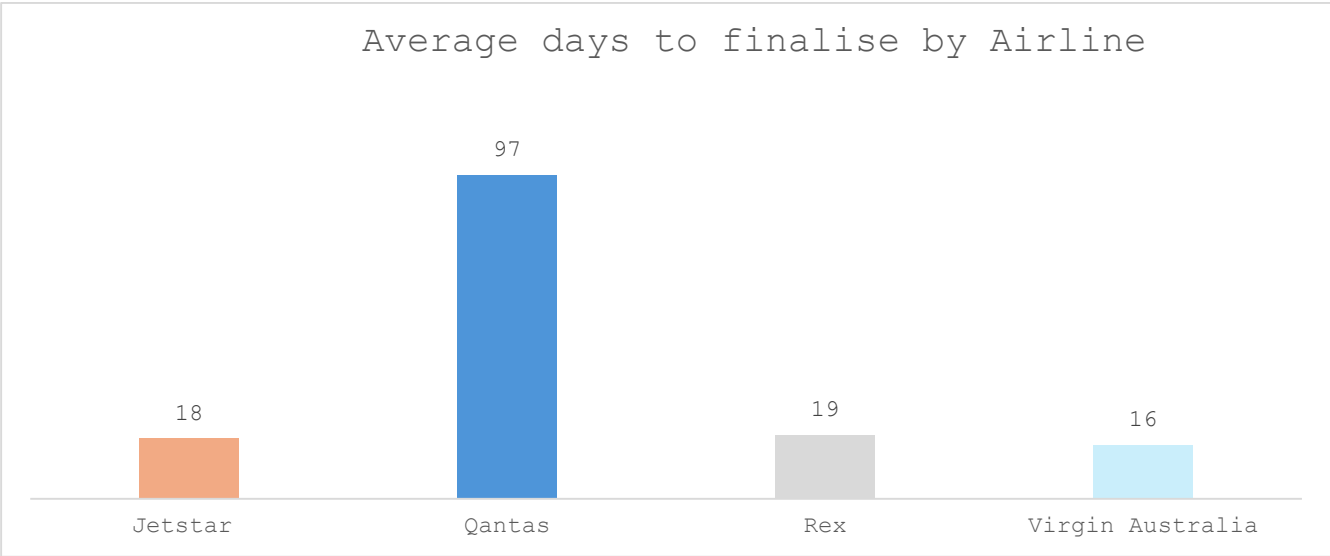


COMPLAINTS OUTSTANDING

0 (zero) complaints were outstanding at the end of the reporting period. This is an improvement on 24 from 2022.

TIME TAKEN TO FINALISE COMPLAINTS

The average number of calendar days taken to finalise a complaint was 37 in 2023. While this was over the published 20 business day timeframe specified by the participating airlines, there was an improvement of 9 days (20%) compared to 2022.



When considering quarterly performance, the above graph highlights an improvement to overall response time as the year progressed, with the average days to finalise at 15.5 days for quarter 4 of 2023. In addition, these faster response times have continued to trend down into 2024.

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES

Customers can call the Advocate's toll-free enquiry number 1800 813 129 to access information about the Advocate's service and its role in facilitating the resolution of complaints.

Customers are provided information about how to resolve their complaint with an airline directly or assisted with lodging an eligible complaint with the Advocate. Customers can also request a Complaint Form if that is the customer's preferred method of lodging their complaint. Some consumers may be referred to another complaint handling service or regulatory body if their concern is about a non-participating airline or a non-airline service.

A complaint number is automatically generated and emailed to the email address included on the form. A customer can track the progress of their complaint at any time and if required, also lodge additional documentation.

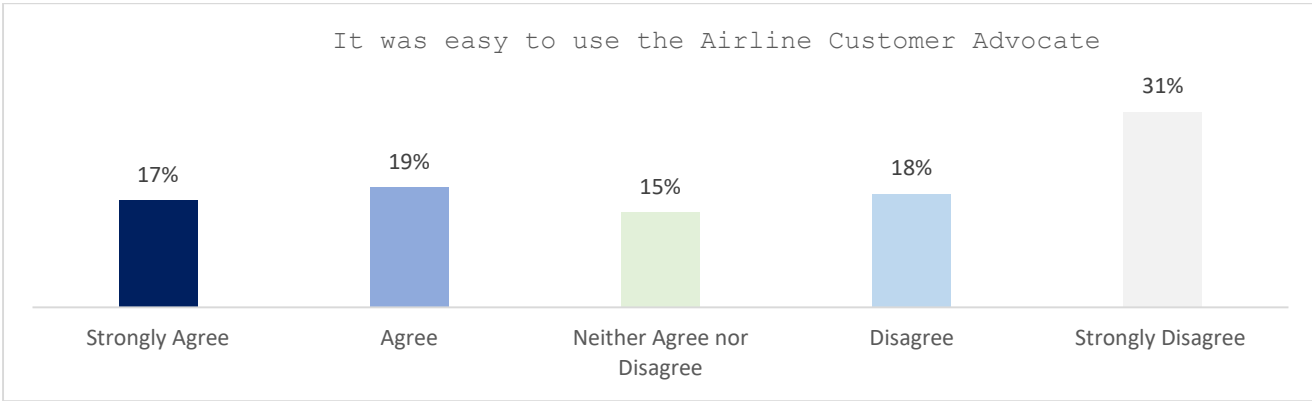
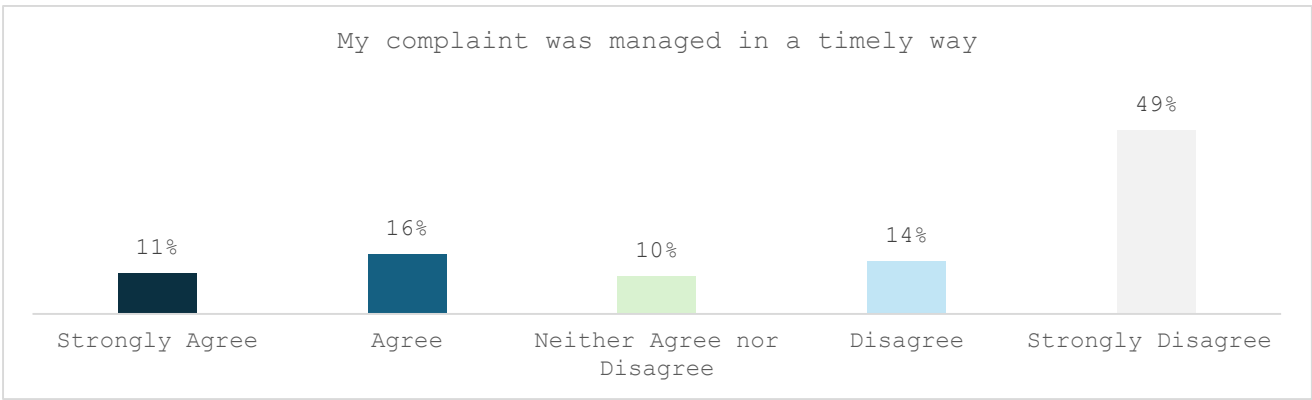
During the reporting period, the Advocate received a total of 1,012 calls. This is a reduction of 85% on the previous year.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH THE ADVOCATE

All 1,408 eligible customers are offered a survey after a complaint is closed. The survey assists the Advocate with what it is doing well and where it needs to improve its service.

During the reporting period, 257 customers responded to the survey. The number of respondents completing the survey dropped by 21% for 2023 compared to 2022, with the increase to resolved complaints. Notably, there was a decrease across all questions of the survey to number of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Below are some of the results from the customer satisfaction survey questions.



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ABOUT THE ADVOCATE

Customer feedback is gathered verbatim from emails sent to the Airline Customer Advocate during the completion of their cases.

- Thanks for your email, and thanks for following up with ***. Again, I appreciate your assistance as I'm sure without your help I would not have gotten any further.
- I feel that in being contacted by the ACA, it has kicked them into gear and taken my (many) requests for action on their part far more seriously, so many thanks for being the catalyst for this. There is no need for any further action by the ACA on my behalf. Many thanks.
- Please be advised that I have not received any contact from *** regarding case ID *** as per your last email. Could you please advise me what the step is, in order to finalise my complaint.
- I am grateful to find a body that will advocate for us. I have been chasing a refund on our pass of \$506.58 since end of October. I have had over 9 calls often lasting several hours over the past months. It has caused me terrible emotional distress and mental anguish getting nowhere.
- If the ACA could once again get involved in our complaint and have *** reply to our email that would be greatly appreciated.
- It has been exhausting, I am so tired of emailing and calling, being told different things, and ignored. I would be so grateful if you could help with the airline. Without your service I do not know where to go for help.
- Oh, my goodness thanks you so much for following this up for us. I was feeling sick at the thought of losing all that money and absolutely getting nowhere with the airline. We would be happy to accept the standard credits.
- Thanks for the message; coincidentally, I have now received the funds promised and I also confirm the matter is now resolved and concluded.
- I would like to just say a thank you for pushing this along for me. I have finally been granted a refund of my money.
- Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I wanted to let you know that after 9 months they have finally sent our vouchers and have provided us with the promised points. It's such a relief to know that companies can be made to honour their promises. You people are legends! Thank you again.
- Thank you for prompting a response from ***. We heard back late last week that we would be receiving a refund. We are yet to receive the funds, but I believe this response was only due to your team's advocacy.
- Thank you so much for your prompt response. It is very helpful,
- I really appreciate your prompt and detailed response; I have just submitted via the link thank you.