

MEDIA RELEASE

25 August 2014

Australian travellers urged to pack some peace of mind

Australians dreaming of their summer holiday are being encouraged to ‘pack some peace of mind’ when booking their next trip.

A new initiative by Australia’s consumer protection agencies is reminding people of their protections under the Australian Consumer Law, and the simple steps they can take to protect their travel and holiday bookings.

Gary Clements, the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs, says that increased competition and the growth of online bookings have changed the way people plan and purchase their trips.

“For some people, booking a holiday might be a quick and simple process, while others put a lot of time and effort into researching their trips,” he said.

“We know that Australians love travelling, both in our country and outside of it.”

Statistics show that Australians made nine million trips overseas in the past year.

“It’s easy to get caught up in the holiday dream and forget about the simple precautions you should be taking to protect your purchase,” Mr Clements said.

“Reputation and customer service is a really simple way of making sure that your holiday is going to be a great one.

“Look at reviews, get onto social media and ask friends for their recommendations.

“If you are booking with a travel agent, check that they are accredited, for example, under the ATAS logo.

“The Australian Federation of Travel Agents, which administers ATAS, can help you find an accredited agent.

“Remember, any business you book with, either in person or online, should have clearly stated refund and complaint handling policies.”

Consumers can also protect themselves by choosing how they pay for their travel.

“Credit cards often attract surcharges, but this can be a small price to pay as they offer chargeback protections, which consumers can seek from their bank if they don’t get what they paid for,” Mr Clements said.

Chargebacks may be available on purchases made with credit cards or with Mastercard or Visa debit cards when ‘credit’ is selected. Chargeback are not available when paying with ‘cheque’ or ‘savings’ on debit cards, cash, cheque, money transfer, direct debit or BPAY.

Holidaymakers are strongly encouraged to take out comprehensive travel insurance and check what circumstances and activities are not covered by their policies.

For more tips and information on how to ‘pack some peace of mind’ for your next holiday, visit www.packsomepeaceofmind.gov.au