

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **NT Consumer Affairs wants you to have a holiday in the true sense of the word**

Holidays are an event most families look forward to each year, however booking unreliable travel and accommodation can leave you stranded and out of pocket.

Consumer Affairs Commissioner Gary Clements is encouraging travellers to book carefully this Easter to avoid a holiday disaster.

“I strongly advise travellers to research a business’s reputation before booking,” he said.

“Holiday goers can now check a business’s online reviews and social media at the touch of a button. Trustworthy businesses should have good reviews, clear contact details and a dispute resolution process in place in case something goes wrong.”

Mr Clements said consumers should also consider using an accredited travel agent to book their travel and accommodation.

Accreditation organisations such as the Australian Federation of Travel Agents’ Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) ensure members adhere to a strict code of conduct.

Mr Clements said travellers should also take care when paying the full amount in advance.

“Preferably, they should explore alternate options for payments, such as third party escrow services.”

For further peace of mind, consumers should also think about travel insurance and consider purchasing extra coverage in case their travel agent, or any service providers, become insolvent.

Before booking, consumers can follow these steps to protect their travel and accommodation purchases:

- Carefully read the Terms and Conditions of any travel purchase. Make sure you understand any cancellation or change fees.
- Make sure the website is secure when booking online and always keep any documentation and receipts.
- Consider the way you pay. If you don’t receive the goods or services you pay for, you may be able to get a ‘chargeback’ if you pay using credit card or ‘credit’ function. Contact your bank for information about what services are available with your card.
- Remember when using sharing services, such as ‘Airbnb’, you are still protected by your consumer rights.

For more information about Northern Territory Consumer Affairs go to the Consumer Affairs website [www.consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au](http://www.consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au) or contact Consumer Affairs on 1800 019 319.