



TACKLING ONLINE GIANTS MUST BE A PRIORITY

The accommodation industry is calling on the competition regulator to prioritise addressing the Expedia-Priceline online travel agency duopoly which is crippling hotels, motels and operators of other accommodation businesses across Australia.

This follows a speech given by the Chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Mr Rod Sims, which outlined where the ACCC will focus its efforts in 2018.

“Disappointingly, the tourism/travel industry barely rated a mention by Mr Sims which indicates the ACCC doesn’t think that two offshore online giants who command in excess of 80 per cent of all online accommodation bookings in Australia is a competition policy challenge which needs to be addressed quickly,” said the Chief Executive Officer of the Accommodation Association of Australia, Richard Munro.

“That’s despite the soaring commissions being charged by online travel agencies and the ‘bully-boy’ tactics they use when dealing with accommodation businesses, many of whom are ‘mum-and-dad’ operators based in regional and remote parts of Australia.

“At a Parliamentary inquiry public hearing in Canberra last week, the pace the ACCC works at was compared to molasses – and the accommodation industry is starting to understand why.

“An active investigation by the ACCC into the behaviour of these offshore online giants has been going for years and the longer it goes, the worse off consumers will be.

“The likes of Expedia and Priceline pay little or no tax in Australia and employ very few staff in Australia.

“By contrast, the accommodation industry employs 82,800 people and pays millions, if not billions of dollars in taxes in Australia.

“The Accommodation Association is calling on the ACCC to take tangible steps to break up the damaging Expedia-Priceline duopoly.

National Office

Suite 401, Level 4, 105 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Contact Us

P 02 8666 9015

F 02 8666 9017

E mail@aaoa.com.au

www.aaoa.com.au

ABN 36 322 115 084

QLD Office

Suite 8, 37 Bundall Road, Surfers Paradise QLD 4217

VIC Office

Level 27, 101 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000



“In the name of transparency and fairness – especially to consumers – our industry would also like to see the ACCC make public all agreements it has made with Expedia and Priceline.”

-ENDS-

Media Contact

Richard Munro

Chief Executive Officer, Accommodation Association of Australia

02 8666 9015 | 0417 466 997

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