



Unethical, Unlawful Behaviour Must Not Be Tolerated

If allegations are proven that online travel aggregator Trivago has been duping consumers on accommodation room-rates, it is a disgrace and Trivago should face significant sanctions, according to the Accommodation Association of Australia.

The Accommodation's Association's view follows the news the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) announced it has instigated proceedings against Trivago for allegedly breaching Australian Consumer Law by allegedly making misleading hotel pricing representations in its television advertising and on its website.

"The ACCC deserves credit for seeking to hold Trivago to account – and this should be one of many ways our competition regulator is scrutinising the practices of Trivago and offshore-based online travel agencies, which overwhelmingly dominate the Australian accommodation booking market," said the Chief Executive Officer of the Accommodation Association, Richard Munro.

"Hikes in commissions, a lack of professionalism in their dealings with operators of accommodation businesses, compelling accommodation operators to agree to room-rate price parity clauses, paying virtually no tax in Australia and employing very few Australians are among the many ways the likes of Trivago and offshore-based online travel agencies are wrecking balls for Australia's accommodation industry.

"If unethical and unlawful practices by Trivago and offshore-based online travel agencies operating in Australia is proven to have taken place, guilty parties deserve to face the full weight of Australian law.

"The Accommodation Association urges the ACCC to investigate the relationship between Trivago and its parent company, Expedia, to help ensure that Australian consumers and Australian accommodation operators are not being ripped off.

"The Accommodation Association re-states its position that room-rate price parity clauses should be banned in Australia immediately.

"This follows bans on room-rate price parity clauses being introduced in France, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Italy and Sweden.

"As things stand, for consumers to maximise their chances of paying the lowest possible room-rates in Australian accommodation businesses, they should contact the accommodation business direct or try a bricks and mortar accredited Australian Travel Agency.

"Any unethical and unlawful practices which disadvantage consumers and accommodation businesses must not be tolerated under any circumstances."

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