

Industry-Led, Consumer-Focused: The Right Approach

This has a direct, positive impact on:

- **Accredited travel businesses in your electorate**
- **A high proportion of females – who make up 72% of the workforce**

The Challenge: Red Tape Comeback Endangers Local Businesses

Australian travel agents and tour operators have thrived under an industry-led accreditation model that ensures high consumer protections while allowing businesses to operate efficiently. Our industry-led regulation already meets high consumer protection standards and has a track record of supporting impacted travelers. This is in comparison to airlines that require the proposed government mandated ombuds scheme to ensure travellers have a fair umpire and support program for when things go wrong.

A Success Story: Industry-Led Regulation that Works

The Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme is the gold standard accreditation scheme for travel businesses in Australia. Run by ATIA, it covers travel agents, tour operators, wholesalers and consolidators – ensuring high consumer protections while keeping businesses free from unnecessary red tape.

- **Trusted Oversight** – ATIA’s Accreditation Scheme was developed with input from the **Consumer Affairs Forum** and **CHOICE**, following **ACCC best practices** for industry codes of conduct.
- **Highest Standards** – ATIA Accredited businesses must **meet strict criteria**, including compliance with the **Charter and Code of Conduct** and an independent complaints process.
- **Consumer Protection at its Core** – Consumer bodies have **direct say and oversight** in complaint resolution, ensuring fairness and accountability.
- **Robust and Independent Dispute Resolution** – Unresolved complaints can be escalated to the **ATAS Complaint Appeal Committee (ACAC)**, led by former **ACCC CEO Hank Speir**. The **Consumer Federation of Australia** plays a key role in selecting the Chair and consumer representatives.

ATIA remains committed to raising industry standards and expanding participation in ATAS. With an upcoming review of the scheme this year, we will be asking for Consumer Affairs’ involvement to ensure its ongoing success.

Key Risk: Aviation Industry Ombuds

Some airlines are pushing to include travel agents in the proposed Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme – but this misses the point. The Ombuds should focus on fixing the real issue:

- **Passenger mistreatment by airlines** – including flight delays, cancellations and refund disputes.
- **The failure of the Airline Customer Advocate** to effectively resolve airline-related complaints.

Why Travel Agents Don’t Belong in the Scheme

- Airlines – not agents – set fare rules and hold consumer funds.
- Effective industry-led solutions already exist. ATAS provides an independent, no-cost dispute resolution service for consumers dealing with travel agents.

ATIA is calling for a **clear commitment**: The **Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme must remain focused on airlines and airports**, not burden unrelated businesses with unnecessary regulation.

Here's What Your Support Delivers

- **Better Outcomes for Consumers** – Keeps the Ombuds focused on airlines, ensuring fair treatment for passengers dealing with delays, cancellations, and refunds—the real problem.
- **Stronger Small Businesses** – Travel agents help Australians book and manage their travel. Unnecessary regulation adds costs, not value.
- **Smarter Regulation** – ATAS already provides **strong consumer protections** without government red tape. Keeping the Ombuds airline-focused **protects consumers while letting small businesses thrive**.

Your support keeps **regulation effective, businesses strong, and consumers protected**.