

choice

AUSTRALIAN CONSUMERS IN THE TRAVEL MARKET
ANNUAL TRAVEL TRENDS REPORT – PHASE 4 OF THE CHOICE TRAVEL
PROJECT



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ABOUT US

Set up by consumers for consumers, CHOICE is the consumer advocate that provides Australians with information and advice, free from commercial bias. By mobilising Australia's largest and loudest consumer movement, CHOICE fights to hold industry and government accountable and achieve real change on the issues that matter most.

To find out more about CHOICE's campaign work visit choice.com.au/campaigns and to support our campaigns, sign up at choice.com.au/campaignsupporter

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Introduction

This report outlines the results of CHOICE's fourth travel trends survey which is completed as part of the CHOICE Travel project. The research involved surveying a nationally representative sample of 2,506 Australians aged 18-75 years who took a domestic flight for a holiday in the past 12 months and at least one international flight in the last two years.

The CHOICE Travel project commenced following the deregulation of the Australian travel intermediary industry in July 2014. The project offers research, advocacy and information for Australian consumers in the travel market.

The aim of the project is to create a better understanding of the issues facing Australian consumers in the travel industry, and ensuring that initiatives from government, industry and the consumer movement meet identified consumer needs.

As part of the project, CHOICE conducts an annual travel trends survey. The research, outlined in this report, is updated annually to assist tracking and awareness of key issues over time. The survey identifies issues in a number of areas; including flights, travel insurance, accommodation, and car hire and customer satisfaction with each of Australia's major airlines

Key findings

- Half of Australian travellers experienced a travel problem in the 12 months to July 2017.
- Flights continue to cause the most problems, with 32% of travellers experiencing a problem with flights in the 12 months to July 2017.
- Airlines' response to delays and cancellations leaves a lot to be desired. 62% of travellers who faced a delay said no action was taken by the airline. One in three said that the airline's response to their holdup was poor, very poor or terrible.
- Satisfaction with the airline's response to complaints isn't great – 38% of those who complained gave them a terrible/very poor/poor rating for dealing with their travel related complaints.
- Three quarters (75%) said they were covered by travel insurance for their last international holiday. Younger travellers seem less sure with only 51% of Gen Z and Gen Y (18-37 years) travellers stating they were covered by travel insurance.
- Travellers believe they're covered for events that they are unlikely to have cover for – two out of three (66%) assume that their travel insurance covers for insolvency or bankruptcy of travel agents or providers – however, less than a third of travel insurance policies actually provide this cover.

Information and advocacy

The annual travel trends report identifies for CHOICE where to prioritise policy, advocacy and information to improve the consumer travel experience. In 2017-18 CHOICE will target the following areas:

- Airline passenger rights
- Credit card surcharges and the travel industry
- Travel insurance
- Car hire
- Timeshare schemes

Airline passenger rights

This remains the key problem area for Australian travellers. The number of passengers who reported problems with flights was 32%, consistent with 31% who reported problems in CHOICE's 2016 survey 63% mentioned delays and cancellations significantly lower than the 74% who said they faced delays and cancellations in 2016. However, 62% said the airline didn't take any action to assist with the delay, again consistent with 63% in 2016.

Most passengers do not complain when confronted by problems, and with a 34% satisfaction rate with airlines response to complaints, travellers' reasons for not complaining are justified. Passengers doubt that complaints will achieve anything (37%), and there's a perception that the complaint process is a hassle (34%).

CHOICE launched complane.com.au in July 2016 to help consumers complain. The information collected was used to inform CHOICE's Australian Airline Industry Super Complaint released in November 2016. The super complaint called for urgent enforcement action to ensure that the airline industry complies with the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), particularly in relation to unfair contract terms and consumer guarantees. CHOICE will continue to raise concerns about complaints handling.

Travel insurance

Coinciding with 2016 research commissioned by the Insurance Council of Australia and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade into [Australians' travel insurance behaviour](#), the CHOICE research finds travellers have little understanding of their travel insurance. CHOICE's 2016 [Consumer Pulse survey](#) recently found 42% of consumers read none or almost none of the terms and conditions when signing up to a product or service online.¹

¹ CHOICE Consumer Pulse Wave 10, 23rd September to 6th October 2016, n=1026

CHOICE reviews of [230 travel insurance policies](#) combined with case studies highlight serious issues with travel insurance exclusions and consumer understanding of policies, including in relation to mental health, specialty sports and alcohol exclusions.

Car hire

Consumers have the greatest dissatisfaction with **car hire companies'** responses to complaints and our CHOICE Help consumer rights advice service continues to receive enquiries related to unfair practices in the car hire industry. Car hire contracts are complex documents, particularly for people with English as a second language. Consumers are also under significant time pressure when hiring cars and often do not have adequate time to read and understand their contract.

CHOICE is conducting preliminary research into consumers' experiences of the car hire industry. This includes an analysis of car hire contracts, loss damage waiver and excess reduction products, customer service and booking processes.

Timeshares

Timeshare schemes are complex, financial products that are harming consumers. They are sold using aggressive and likely misleading tactics, and the current protections are not helping consumers. In addition, these schemes are extremely poor value.

Following a submission to ASIC in January 2017, CHOICE will continue to call for reforms to timeshare schemes to make them fairer, transparent and better value for consumers.

1. Travel problems

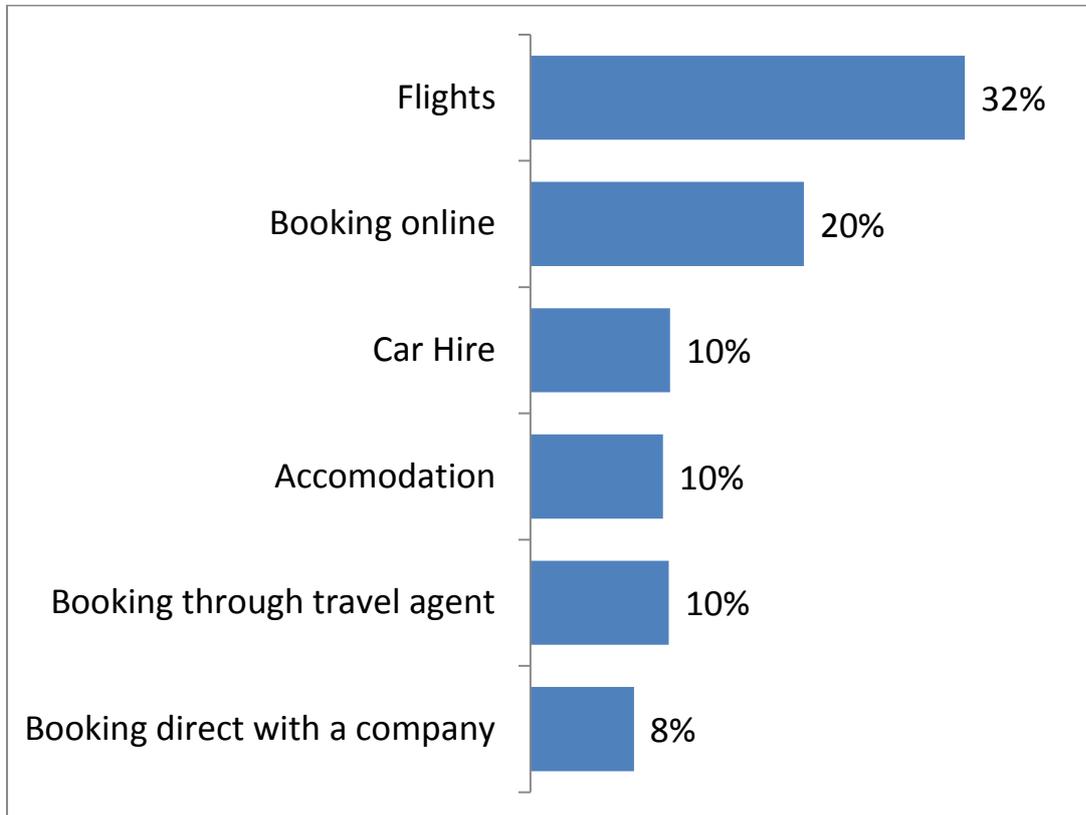
Key findings

- 48% of Australian travellers experienced a travel problem in the 12 months to July 2017. This was significantly more than the 45% of Australian travellers who said they had faced a travel problem, either domestic or international in the 12 months to July 2016.
- Flights continue to remain the most concerning passenger problem. 32% of passengers said they experienced a problem with a flight in the 12 months to July 2017. This was consistent with the 2016 research where 31% of travellers were most likely to face issues with flights.²
- More than half of younger generation travellers faced problems when travelling – 58% of Gen Z and 59% of Gen Y. Issues with flights (37%) were most common, followed by problems with booking online (26%) and with a travel agent (16%) – for Gen Z and Y combined.
- Passengers also experienced travel problems with booking online (20%), car hire (10%), accommodation (10%), booking through a travel agent (10%) and booking directly with a company (8%).

² Recollection of problems experienced appears to have a recency bias where those who have travelled in the last 6 months are more likely to report problems than those who returned more than one or two years ago.

Supporting charts

Travel problems with domestic or international holiday booked in last 12 months

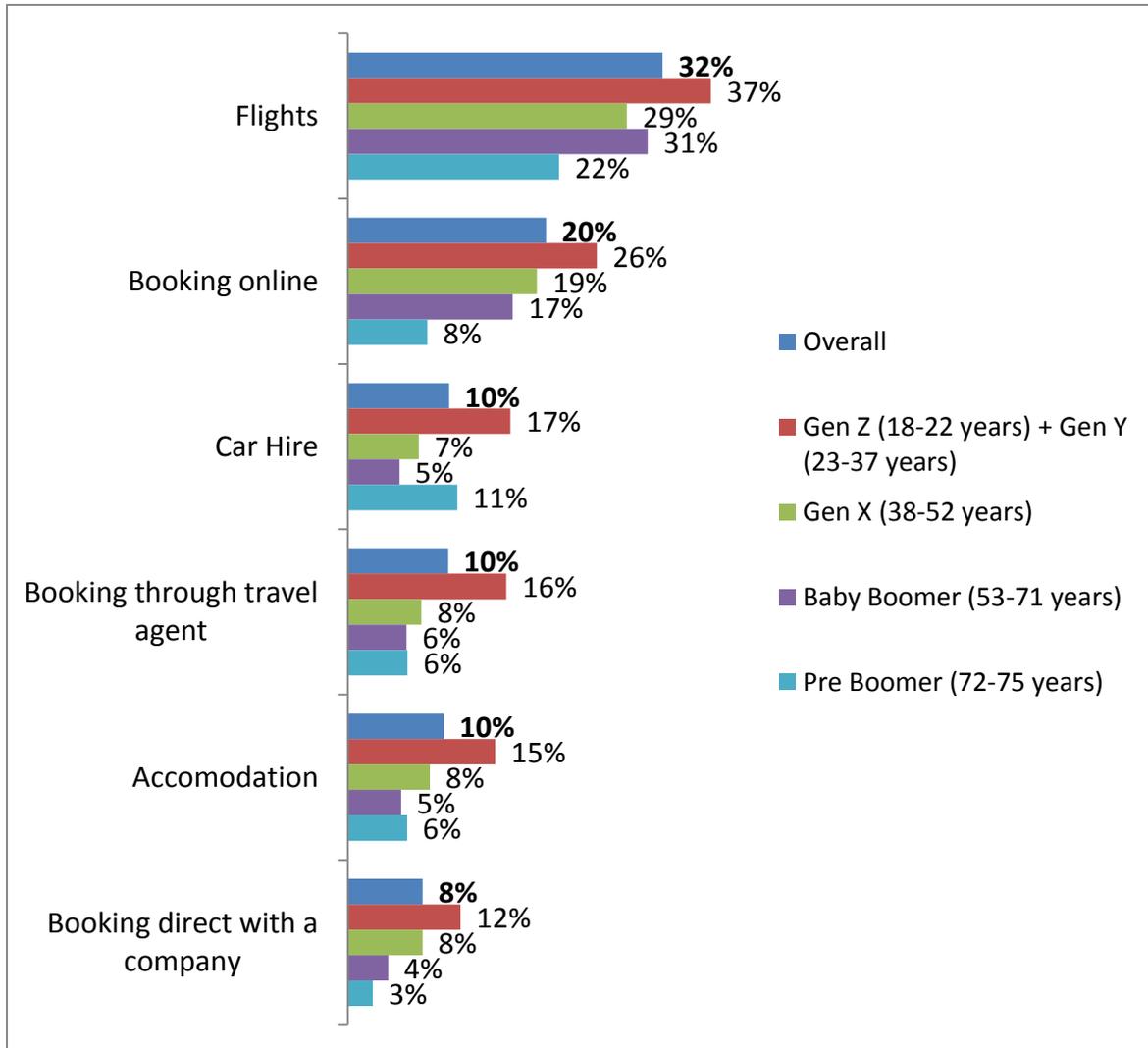


Base total n=2506

Q: Have you experienced any problems with either your domestic or international holidays booked in or out of Australia, in the past 12 months?

Other responses totalled 4%

Travel problems with domestic or international holiday by generation



Base total n = 2506

Q: Have you experienced any problems with either your domestic or international holidays booked in or out of Australia, in the past 12 months

2. Flight problems

Key findings

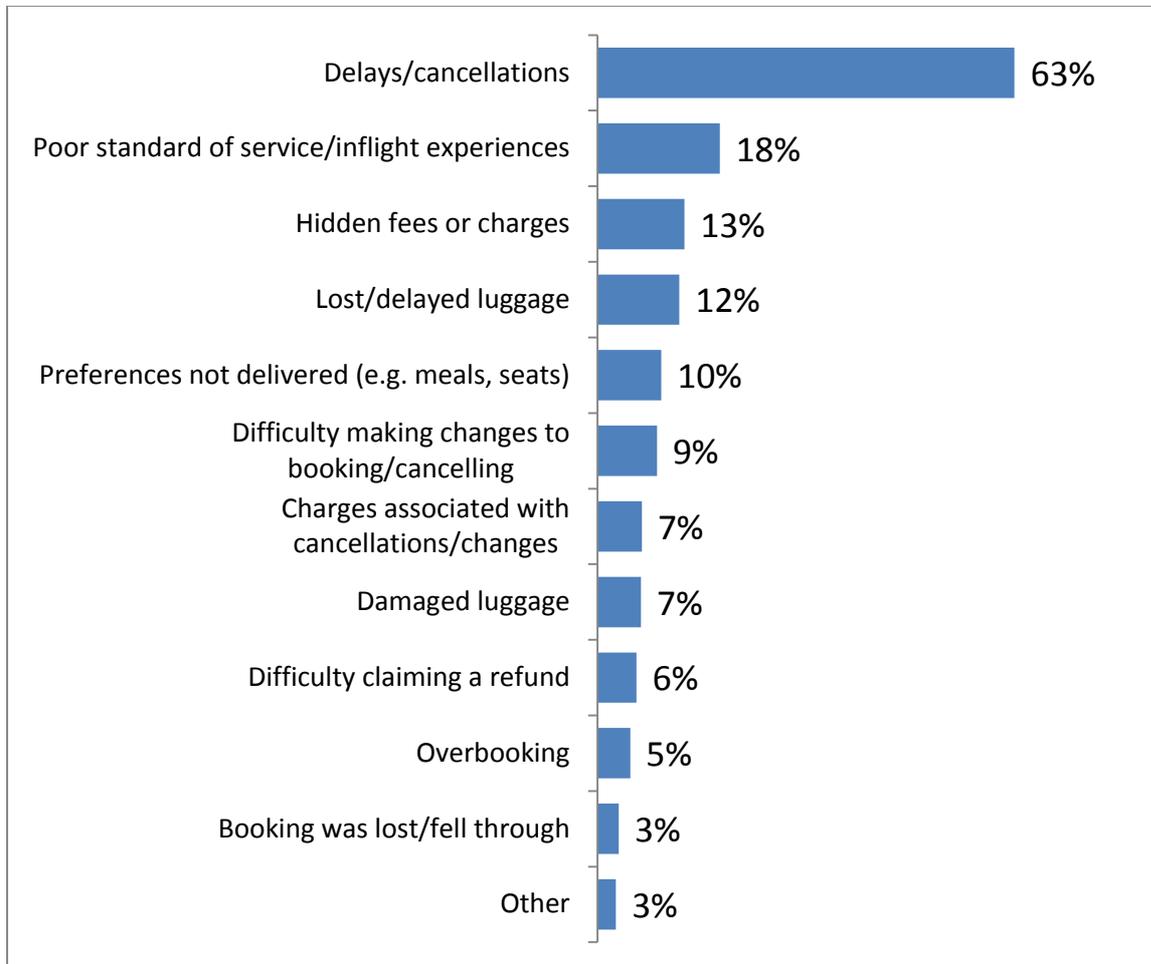
- Of Australian travellers who had a problem with a flight, 63% experienced a delayed or cancelled flight.
- Jetstar travellers were more likely to have faced delays/cancellations in the last 12 months (41%). This aligns with data from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics. 16% of domestic flights in 2016-17 either failed to leave on time, or arrived late. The worst performer was Jetstar, owned by the Qantas Group, with more than one in four flights experiencing a delay – a deterioration on 2015-16.³
- Half (50%) of the travellers who had a delayed flight said the delay was more than two hours. 53% of travellers reported the same issue in 2016.
- Airlines are still shirking action when it comes to dealing with delays and cancellations. 62% of people said that no action was taken by the airline when they experienced a delay, consistent with the 63% in 2016 and still up from 52% in 2015. One in three said that the airline's response to their holdup was poor, very poor or terrible.
- Airlines are more likely to take action when there is a delay of more than six hours.
 - No action was taken by the airline for 73% of those delayed up to five hours.
 - 32% of those whose flight was delayed by more than six hours were offered a meal voucher. However, only 9% whose flight was delayed by five hours or less were provided with one.
- 34% of travellers affected by flight delays were satisfied with the airlines response. Satisfaction with the airline's response was directly related to the severity of the delay or cancellation and the response from the airline.
 - Dissatisfaction was high (44%) for those who had their flight cancelled.
 - Those delayed by two to eight hours were more dissatisfied (52%) than others with a shorter delay of less than two hours (18%).

³ https://bitre.gov.au/statistics/aviation/otp_annual.aspx

- An airline's failure to respond directly impacted on traveller satisfaction – 38% of those who said the airline didn't take any action gave a rating of very poor/poor/terrible for the airline response to the delay.
 - Virgin and Qantas customers are most likely to report being satisfied, with 41% rating airline's responses as excellent/very good/good respectively.
 - 37% of Jetstar and 43% of Tigerair travellers who faced delays rated the airline response terrible/very poor/poor.
-
- Domestic travellers are more likely to report facing problems than travellers on international airlines. 58% of major problems with flights were reported for domestic flights and 67% of minor problems reported were for domestic flights.
 - More travellers on Qantas reported problems internationally (32%). Amongst domestic airlines, more travellers on Jetstar reported a major (38%) or minor (39%) problem.
 - Other problems reported with flights include poor standards of service/inflight experience (18%), hidden fees or charges (13%), lost/delayed luggage (12%) and meals or seat preferences not delivered (10%) Jetstar travellers were more likely to report they faced the above problems.

Supporting charts

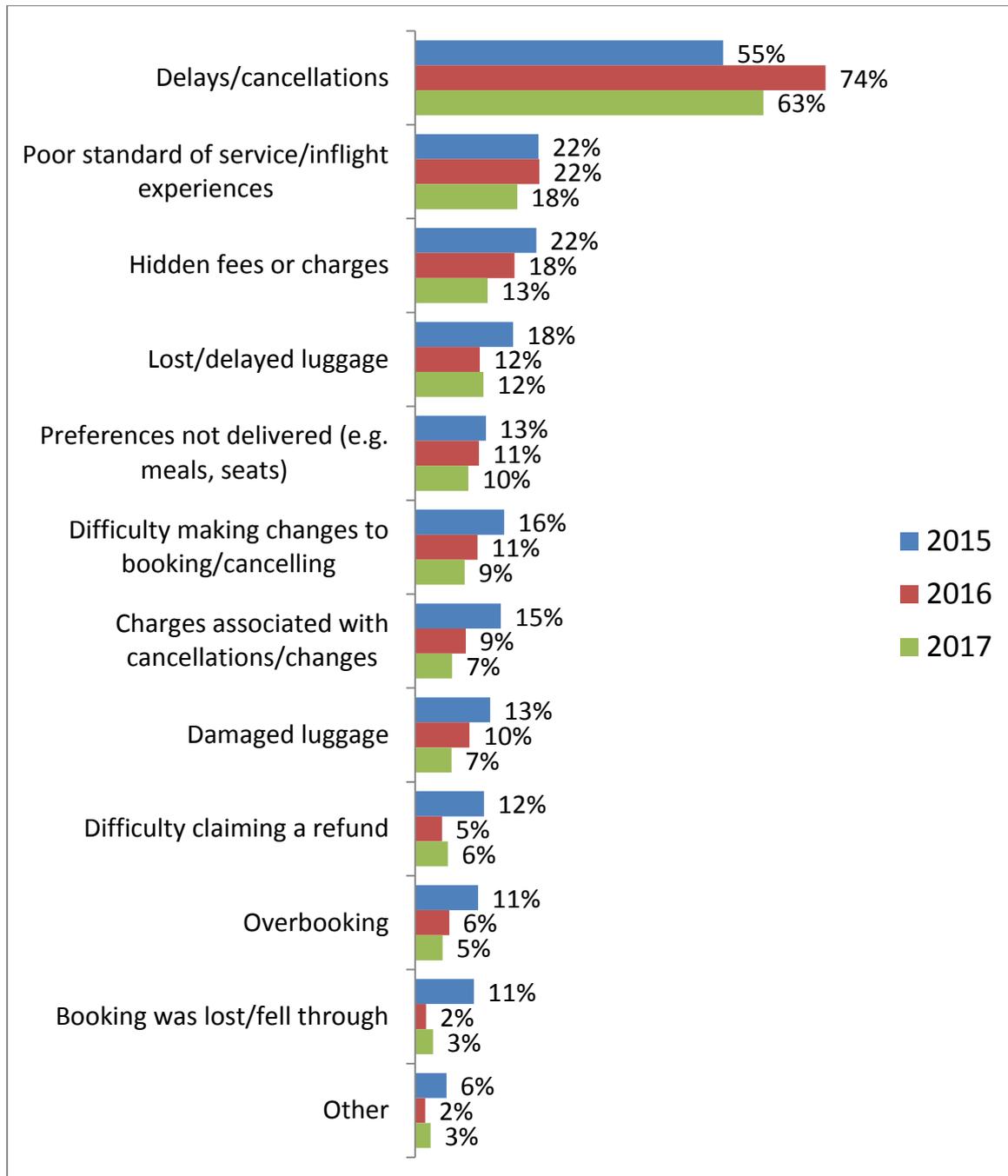
Problems with flights experienced in last 12 months



Base total n = 805 Australians who faced problems with flights

Q: What were the main problems you have experienced with flights in the past 12 months?

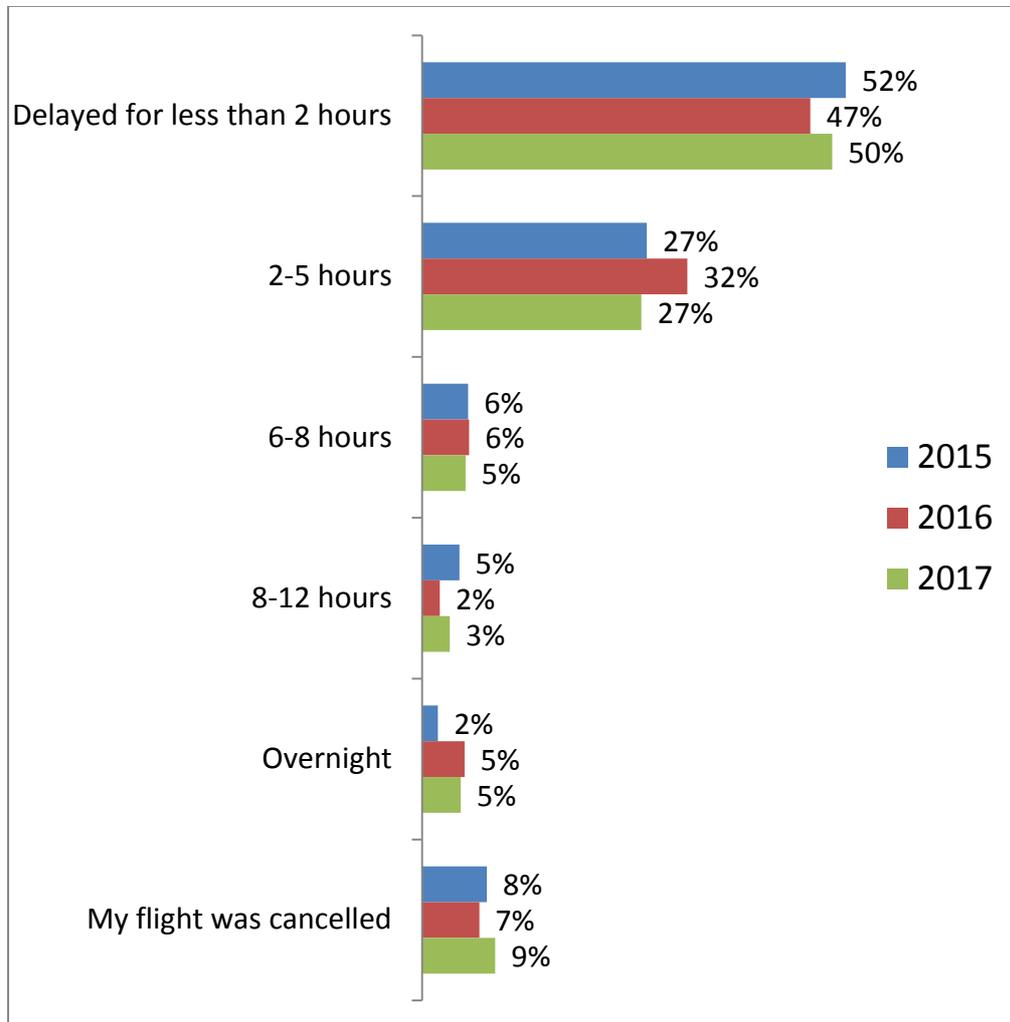
Problems with flights – 2017, 2016 and 2015 comparisons



Base total n = 805 Australians who faced problems with flights (2017), n=766 (2016) and n=575 (2015)

Q: What were the main problems you have experienced with flights in the past 12 months?

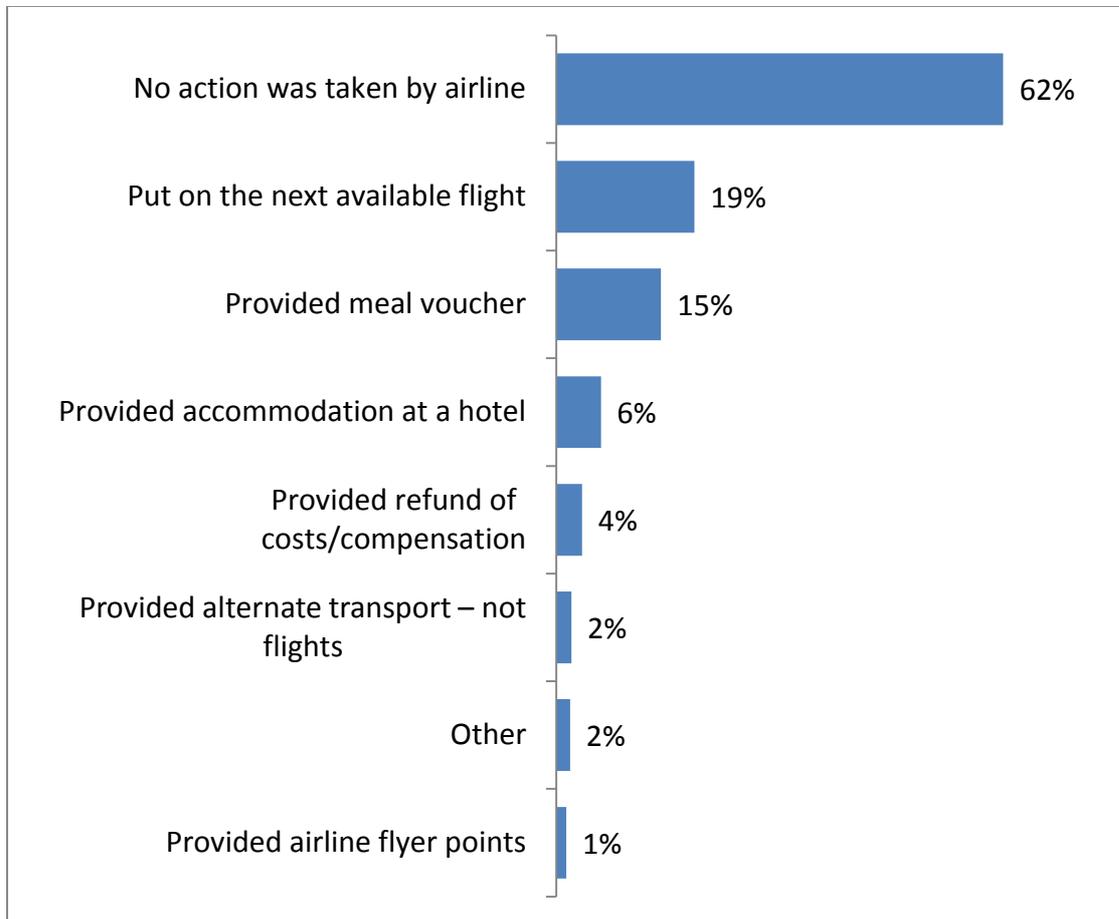
Period of delay experienced – over the years



Base total n = 495 Australians who faced delays/cancellations with flights (2017), n=559 (2016) and n=323 (2015)

Q: You mentioned that you have experienced a flight delay or cancellation in the past 12 months. How long was the flight delayed for?

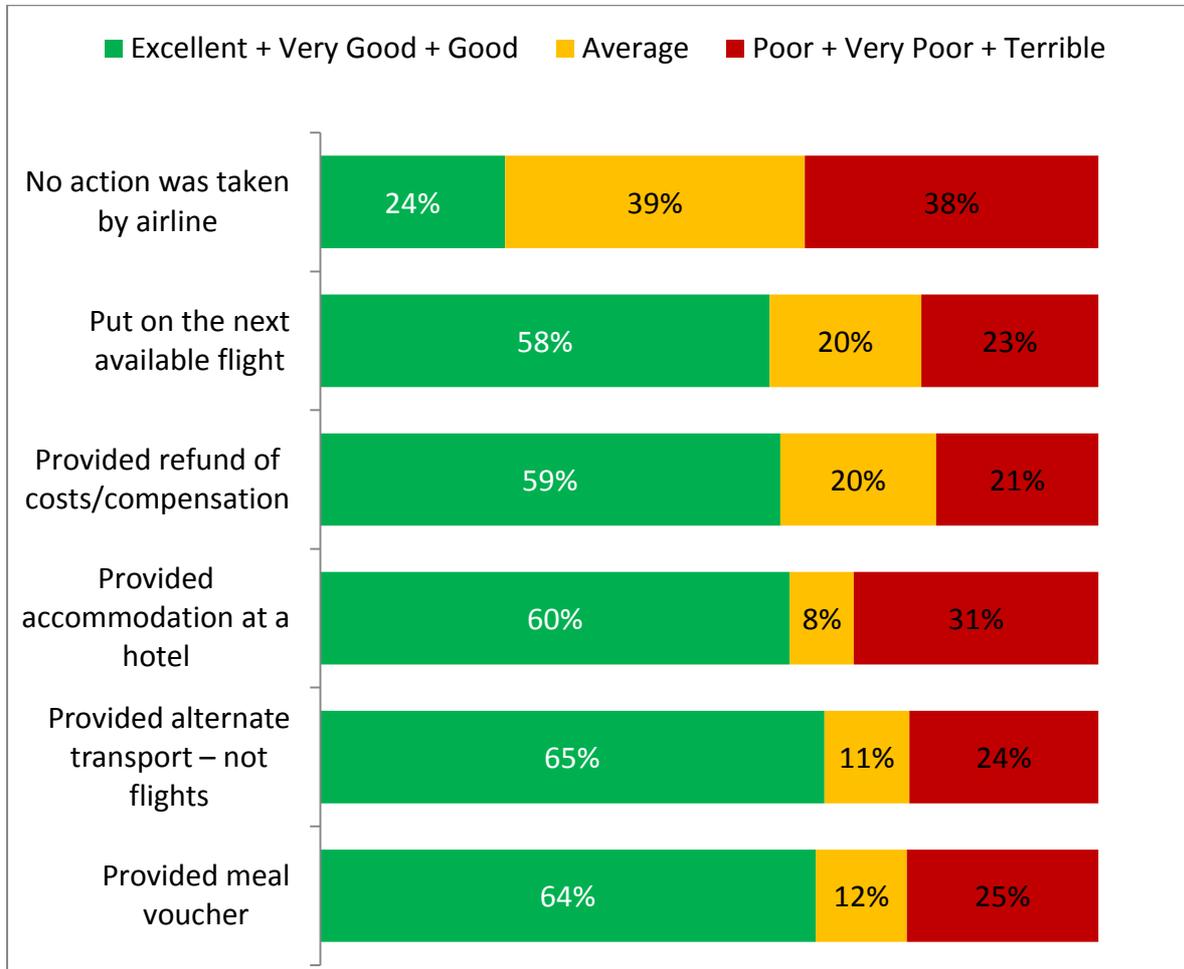
Assistance provided for flight delays and cancellations



Base total n = 495 Australians who faced delays/cancellations with flights

Q. What assistance were you provided by the airline when you experienced this delay?

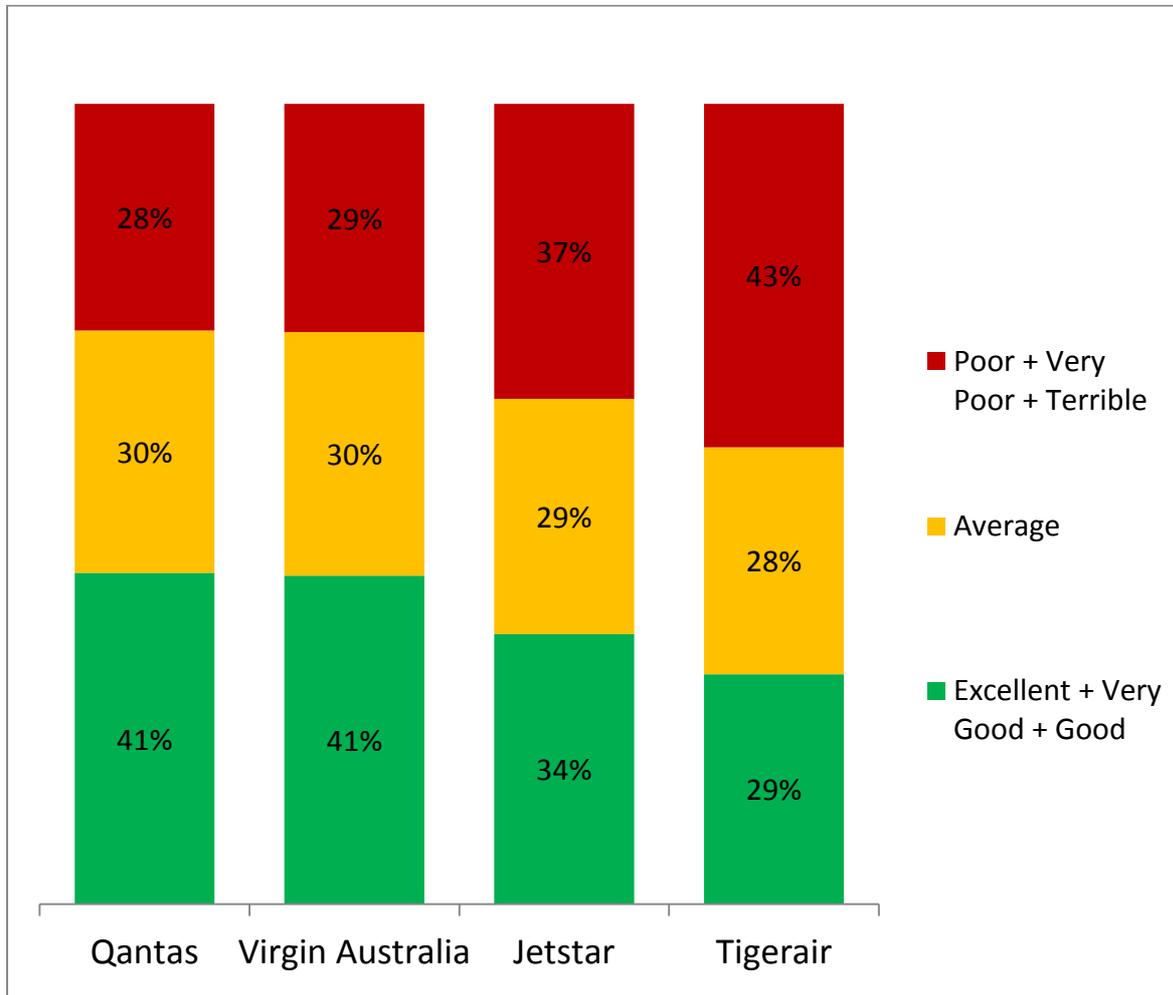
Satisfaction with assistance provided by airline for delays or cancellations by airline's response to delay



Base total n = 495 Australians who faced delays/cancellations with flights

Q: Overall, how satisfied were you with the airlines response on this occasion? By What assistance were you provided by the airline when you experienced this delay?

Satisfaction with assistance provided by airline for delays or cancellations by airline



Base total n = 495 Australians who faced delays/cancellations with flights

Q: Overall, how satisfied were you with the airlines response on this occasion? By Which of the following airlines did you experience problems with?

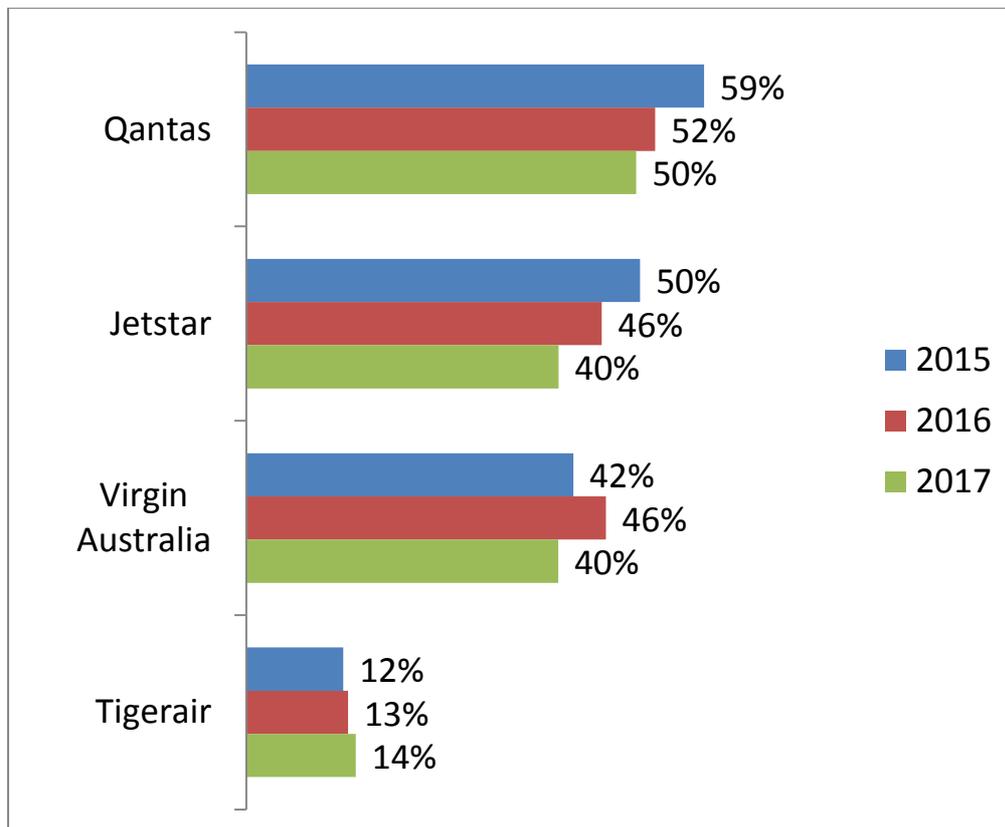
3. Domestic airline satisfaction

Key findings

- Australian domestic travellers continue to favour Qantas. 50% of people report flying Qantas domestically in the last 12 months. 40% Virgin Australia, 40% Jetstar and 14% Tigerair.
 - Tigerair passengers are more likely to be Gen Z (23%) and Gen Y (18%) compared to other generations.
- Jetstar passengers scored the airline lower in satisfaction for punctuality for 2017 compared to previous years (64% excellent/very good/good in 2017 compared to 71% in 2016 and 74% in 2015). One in ten passengers continue to be dissatisfied with Jetstar punctuality (11% gave a rating of terrible/very poor/poor).
- Slightly more Virgin passengers gave the airline a terrible/very poor/poor rating for customer service compared to 2016 (4% in 2017 compared to 2% in 2016).
- Qantas perception for value for money remains steady at 64% but it is significantly lower than other airlines – Jetstar (72%), Virgin (77%) and Tigerair (77%).
- Qantas and Virgin Australia passengers are more likely to have higher overall satisfaction ratings compared to Jetstar and Tigerair passengers.
 - 85% of Virgin Australia and 84% of Qantas domestic travellers gave them a satisfaction rating of excellent/very good/good
 - 9% of Tigerair domestic travellers gave it a low satisfaction rating – which is higher than similar low ratings given by travellers on other domestic airlines.

Supporting charts

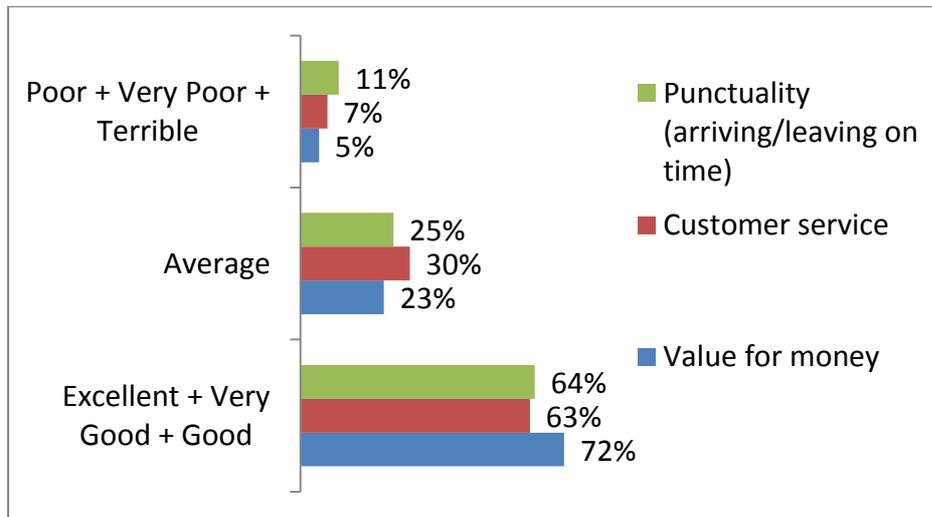
Domestic airlines flown



Base total n = 6523 total, 2015 n = 1517, 2016 n = 2500, 2017 n=2506

Q: Which of these domestic airlines have you flown within Australia for personal reasons in the past 12 months? Please exclude any domestic flights taken for business travel?

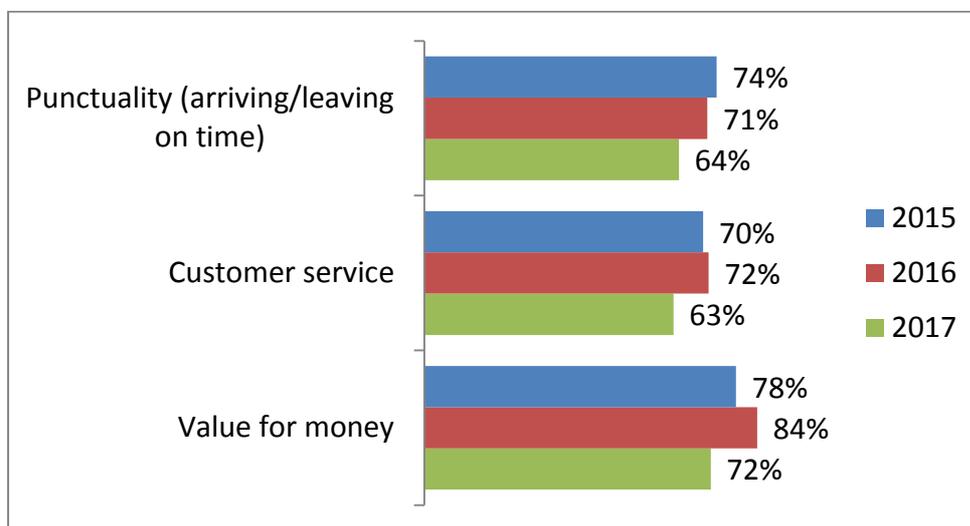
Airline ratings - Jetstar



Base n = 1015 Australians who travelled on Jetstar domestically in last 12months

Q: Thinking about all the domestic flights you have taken with JETSTAR in the past 12 months, how would you rate them on the following aspects?

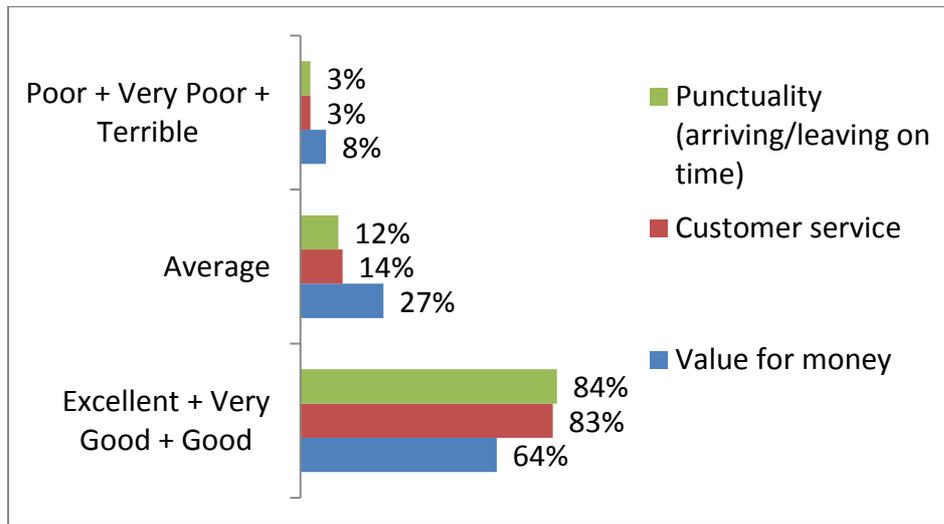
Airline ratings Excellent/Very Good/Good – Jetstar over the years



Base total n = 2916 total, 2015 n = 767, 2016 n = 1134, 2017 n=1015

Q: Thinking about all the domestic flights you have taken with JETSTAR in the past 12 months, how would you rate them on the following aspects?

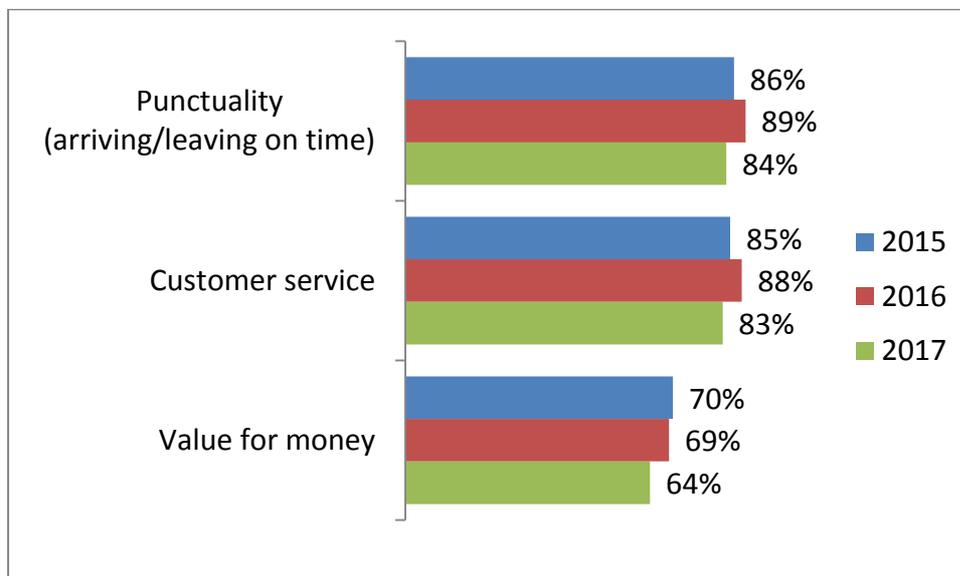
Airline ratings - Qantas



Base n = 1239 Australians who travelled on Qantas domestically in last 12months

Q: Thinking about all the domestic flights you have taken with QANTAS in the past 12 months, how would you rate them on the following aspects?

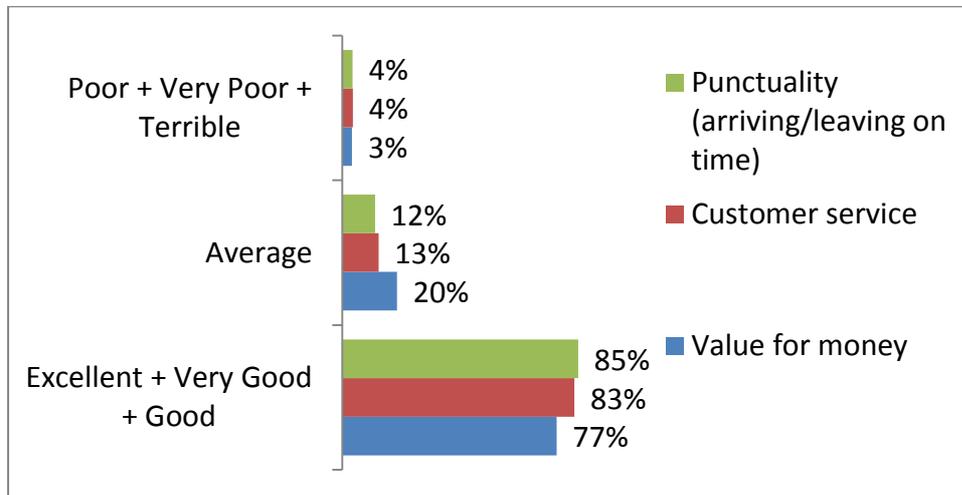
Airline ratings Excellent/Very Good/Good – Qantas over the years



Base total n = 3417 total, 2015 n = 874, 2016 n = 1304, 2017 n=1239

Q: Thinking about all the domestic flights you have taken with QANTAS in the past 12 months, how would you rate them on the following aspects?

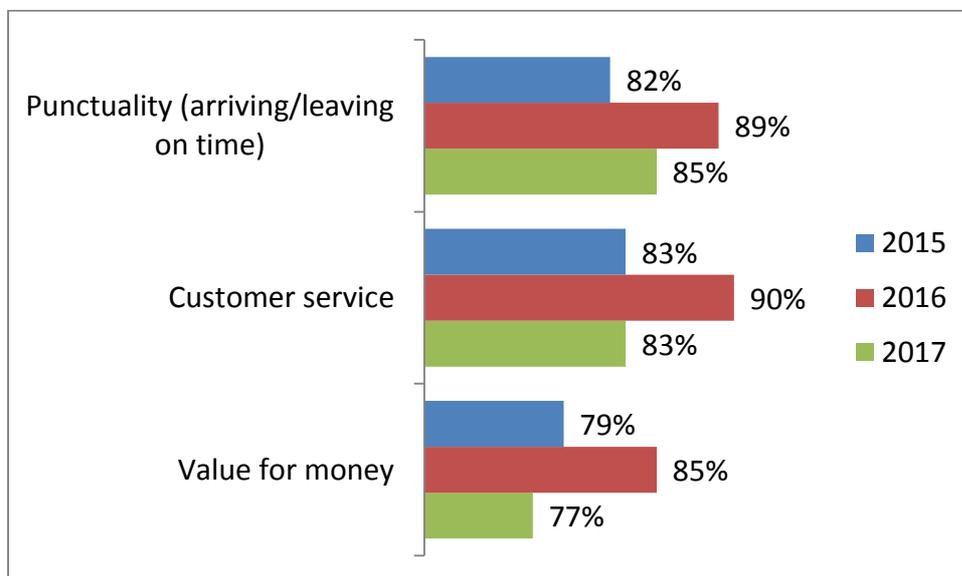
Airline ratings – Virgin Australia



Base n = 1003 Australians who travelled on Virgin Australia domestically in last 12months

Q: Thinking about all the domestic flights you have taken with VIRGIN AUSTRALIA in the past 12 months, how would you rate them on the following aspects?

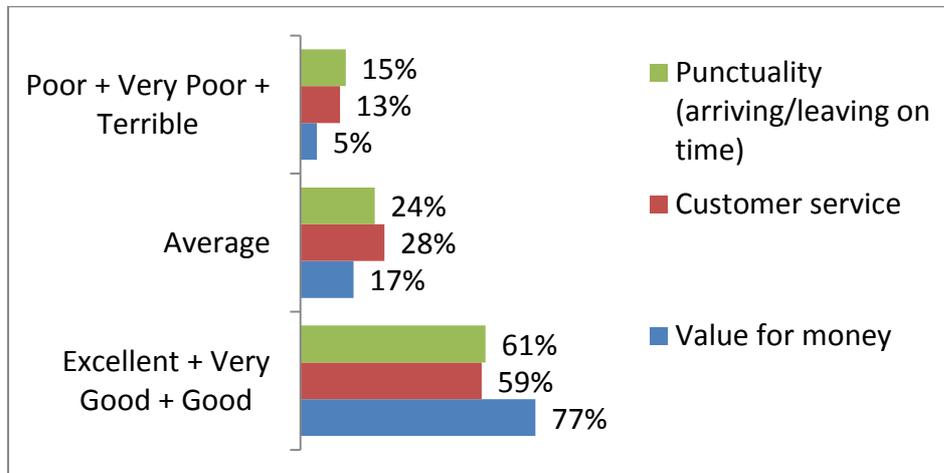
Airline ratings Excellent/Very Good/Good – Virgin Australia over the years



Base total n = 2785 total, 2015 n = 635, 2016 n = 1147, 2017 n=1003

Q: Thinking about all the domestic flights you have taken with VIRGIN AUSTRALIA in the past 12 months, how would you rate them on the following aspects?

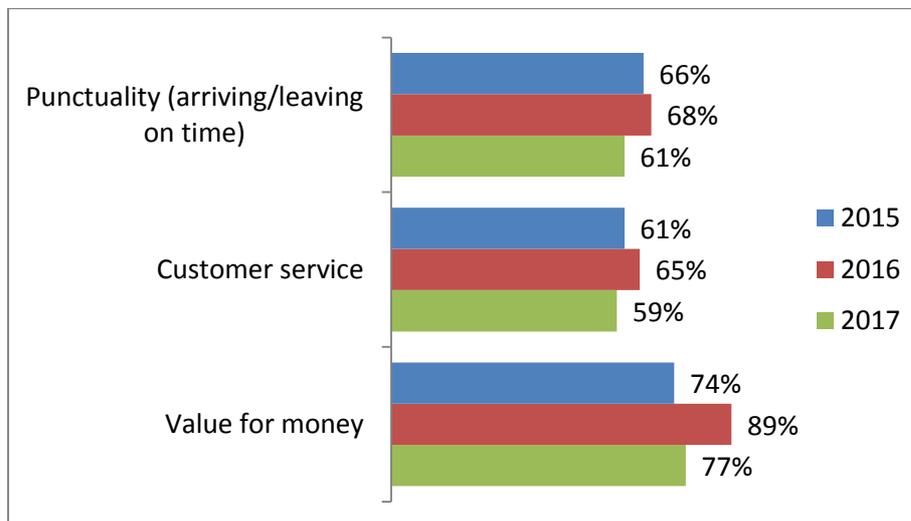
Airline ratings - Tigerair



Base n = 335 Australians who travelled on Tigerair domestically in last 12months

Q: Thinking about all the domestic flights you have taken with TIGERAIR in the past 12 months, how would you rate them on the following aspects?

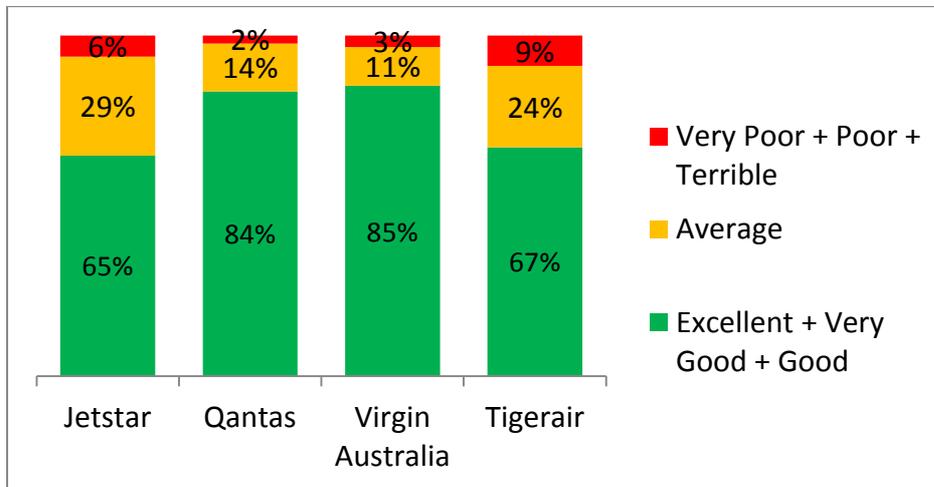
Airline ratings Excellent/Very Good/Good – Tigerair over the years



Base total n = 849 total, 2015 n = 192, 2016 n = 322, 2017 n=335

Q: Thinking about all the domestic flights you have taken with TIGERAIR in the past 12 months, how would you rate them on the following aspects?

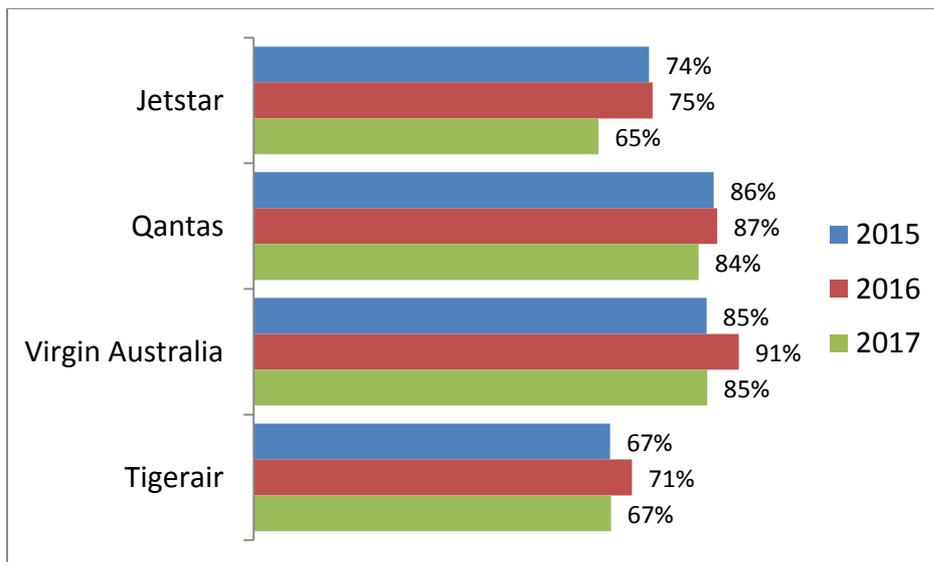
Airline ratings - OVERALL



Base Jetstar n=1015, Qantas n=1239, Virgin Australia n=1003 and Tigerair n=335

Q: Overall, how would you rate each of the following domestic airlines that you have flown in the past 12 months?

Airline ratings Excellent/Very Good/Good – Overall over the years



Base Jetstar 2015 n= 767, 2016 n= 1134, 2017 n= 1015

Qantas 2015 n= 874, 2016 n= 1304, 2017 n= 1239

Virgin Australia 2015 n= 635, 2016 n= 1147, 2017 n=1003

Tigerair 2015 n= 192, 2016 n= 322, 2017 n=335

Q: Overall, how would you rate each of the following domestic airlines that you have flown in the past 12 months?

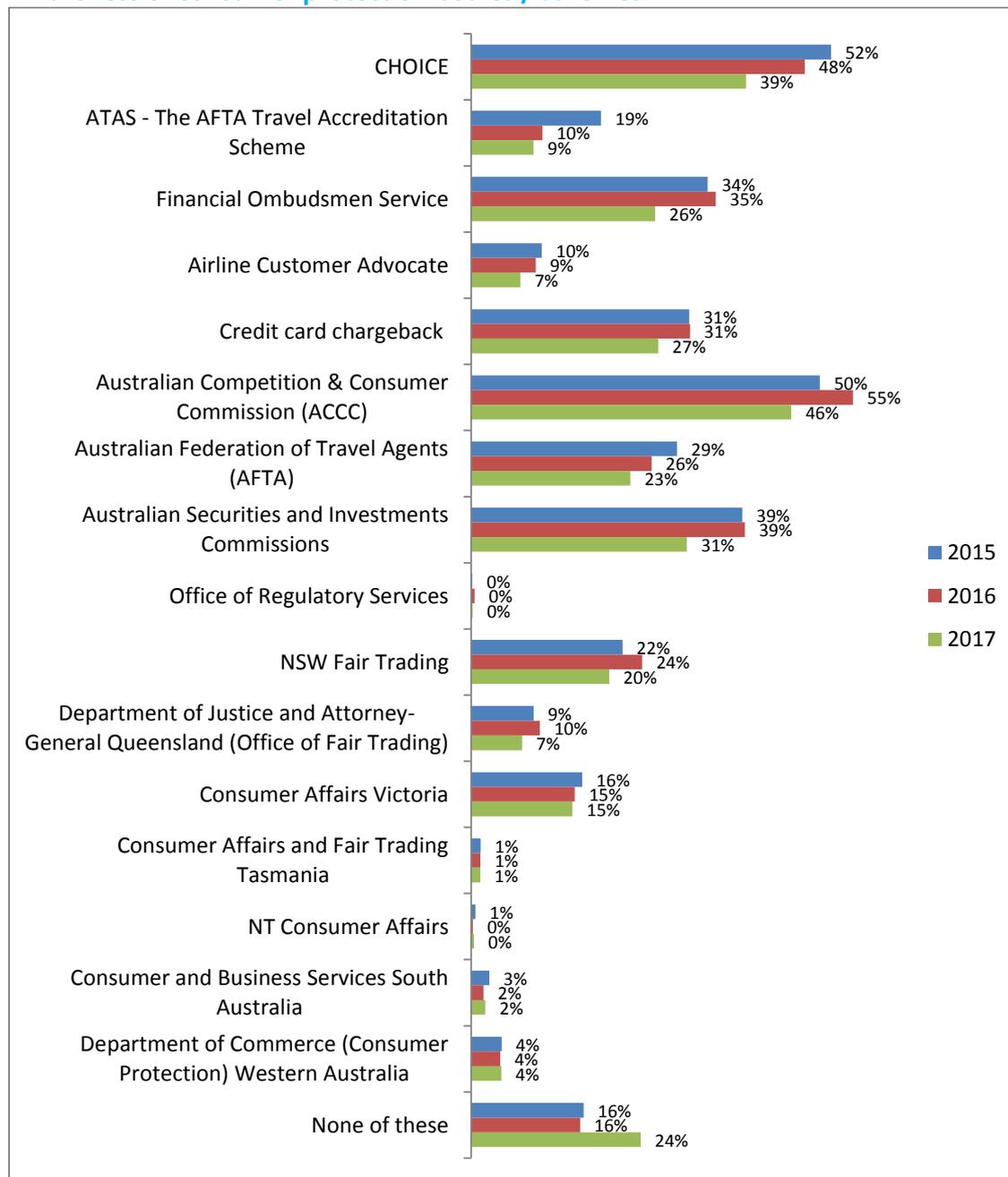
4. Consumer protections

Key findings

- Awareness of consumer protection bodies or schemes has declined compared to previous years.
 - Awareness is lowest amongst the younger generations.
- More travellers who faced a problem chose to contact an organisation to complain or resolve a travel related issue (39%) compared to last year (34%).
- 11% of those who had problems contacted airlines to complain about or resolve a travel related issue. 4% contacted the Airline Consumer Advocate, up from the 1% in 2016.
- 10% contacted travel agents, up from the 8% in 2016 and 6% contacted hotels consistent with the 5% in 2016.
- Among those who contacted any organisation for a travel problem:
 - Travel insurers had the lowest satisfaction rating with 41% of those who contacted them giving them rating terrible/very poor/poor.
 - Airlines were a close offender with 38% giving them a terrible/very poor/poor rating for dealing with travel related complaints.
 - Banks/credit card provider and hotels seem to be doing ok with around half of people who contacted this group for problems giving a satisfaction rating of excellent/very good/good (54% for bank/credit card providers, 52% hotels).
 - Travel agents continue to receive similar satisfaction ratings of 45% for problem resolution as 2016.
- Six of ten (61%) of those who faced a travel problem in last 12 months **didn't complain**.
 - 37% doubted it would achieve anything.
 - 34% felt it was too much hassle/effort.
 - 9% **didn't know who to complain to**.
- Female travellers were more likely to have not complained (66%) compared to males (55%). Also Gen X (68%) and Baby Boomers (65%) were more likely to not have complained compared to younger travellers (54% combined Gen Z and Gen Y)
- The proportion of passengers who didn't complain despite facing a travel problem remains consistent compared to last year. However, fewer of those who didn't complain did so because they doubted it would achieve anything (37% in 2017 compared to 46% in 2016). More said the matter was resolved satisfactorily by travel agent/supplier (23%) compared to last year (19% in 2016).

Supporting charts

Awareness of consumer protection bodies / schemes



Base total 2017 n=2506, 2016 n = 2500, 2015 n = 1517

Q: Which of these were you aware of before today? (from list of consumer bodies provided)

Prompted awareness of consumer protection bodies by state – state bodies⁴

Consumer organisation	State	2015	2016	2017
NSW Fair Trading	NSW	68% (n=322)	74% (n=612)	62% (n=521)
Department of Justice and Attorney-General Queensland (Office of Fair Trading)	QLD	45% (n=152)	50% (n=246)	37% (n=200)
Consumer and Business Services South Australia	SA	31% (n=37)	24% (n=44)	28% (n=58)
Consumer Affairs Victoria	VIC	64% (n=256)	60% (n=371)	56% (n=372)
Department of Commerce (Consumer Protection) Western Australia	WA	42% (n=68)	42% (n=104)	41% (n=95)

Base total 2017 n=2506, 2016 n = 2500, 2015 n = 1517. Low base sizes for ACT, NT and TAS and results need to be interpreted with caution.

Q: Which of these were you aware of before today?

⁴ ACT, NT and TAS have been excluded due to low base sizes

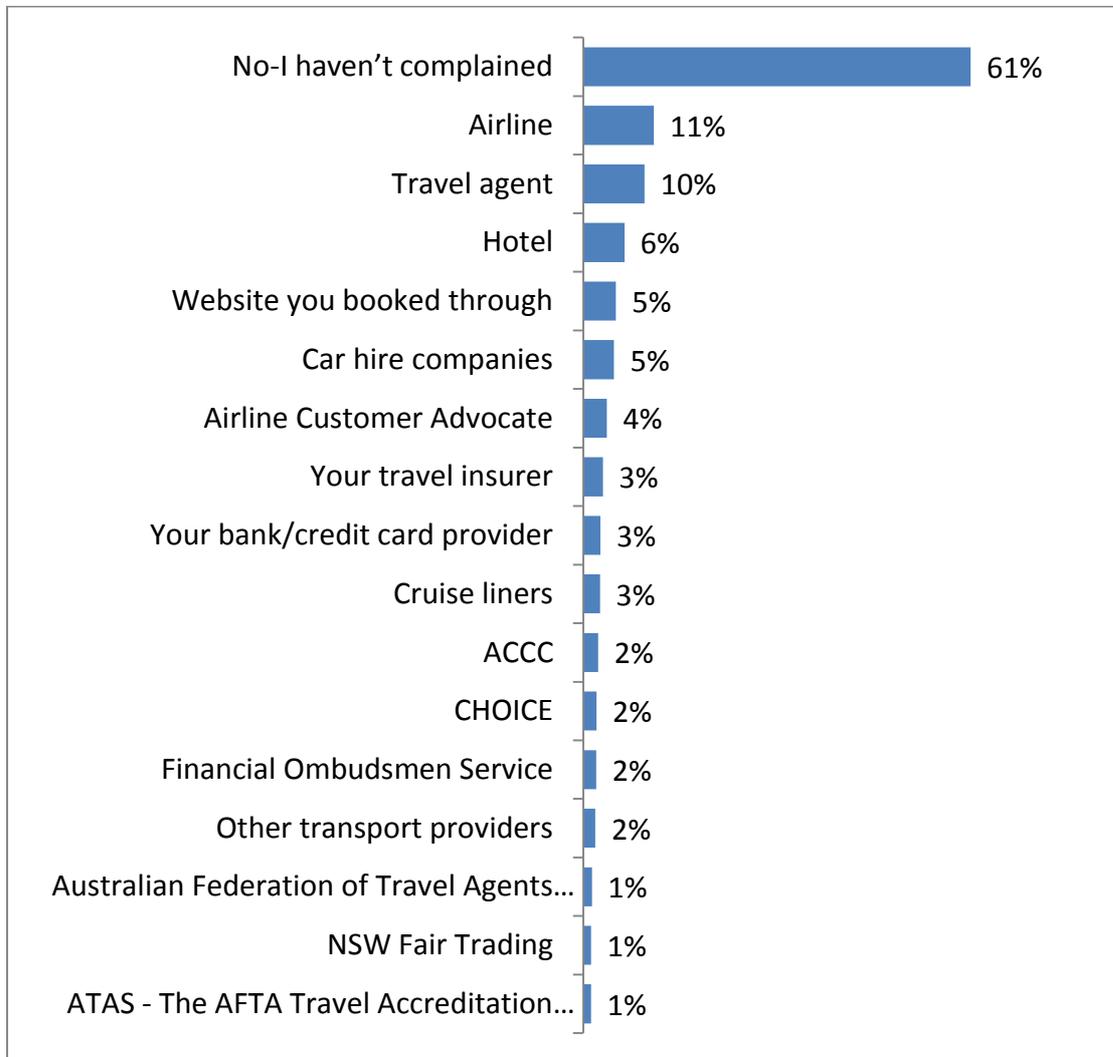
Prompted awareness of consumer protection bodies by generation

Consumer Protection Bodies	Overall	Gen Z (18-22 years)	Gen Y (23-37 years)	Gen X (38-52 years)	Baby Boomer (53-71 years)	Pre Boomer (72-75 years)
Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC)	46%	26%	28%	50%	62%	62%
CHOICE	39%	24%	22%	41%	55%	57%
Australian Securities and Investments Commissions	31%	12%	17%	30%	45%	49%
Credit card chargeback	27%	9%	16%	28%	37%	38%
Financial Ombudsmen Service	26%	13%	19%	26%	35%	33%
Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA)	23%	7%	13%	18%	35%	43%
NSW Fair Trading	20%	14%	14%	19%	27%	20%
Consumer Affairs Victoria	15%	7%	10%	15%	18%	25%
ATAS - The AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme	9%	2%	7%	6%	13%	12%
Department of Justice and Attorney-General Queensland (Office of Fair Trading)	7%	2%	4%	7%	11%	9%
Airline Customer Advocate	7%	7%	7%	7%	8%	3%
Department of Commerce (Consumer Protection) Western Australia	4%	3%	3%	4%	6%	5%
Consumer and Business Services South Australia	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	6%
Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Tasmania	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%
None of these	24%	53%	33%	23%	14%	15%

Base total 2017 n=2506, Gen Z n=118, Gen Y n=747, Gen X n=621, Baby Boomer n=908, Pre Boomer n=112

Q: Which of these were you aware of before today?

Organisations contacted to complain in the last 12 months



Base total n = 1214 Australians who faced a travel problem in last 12 months

Q: Have you contacted any of the following organisations to complain about or resolve a travel related issue in the past 12 months?

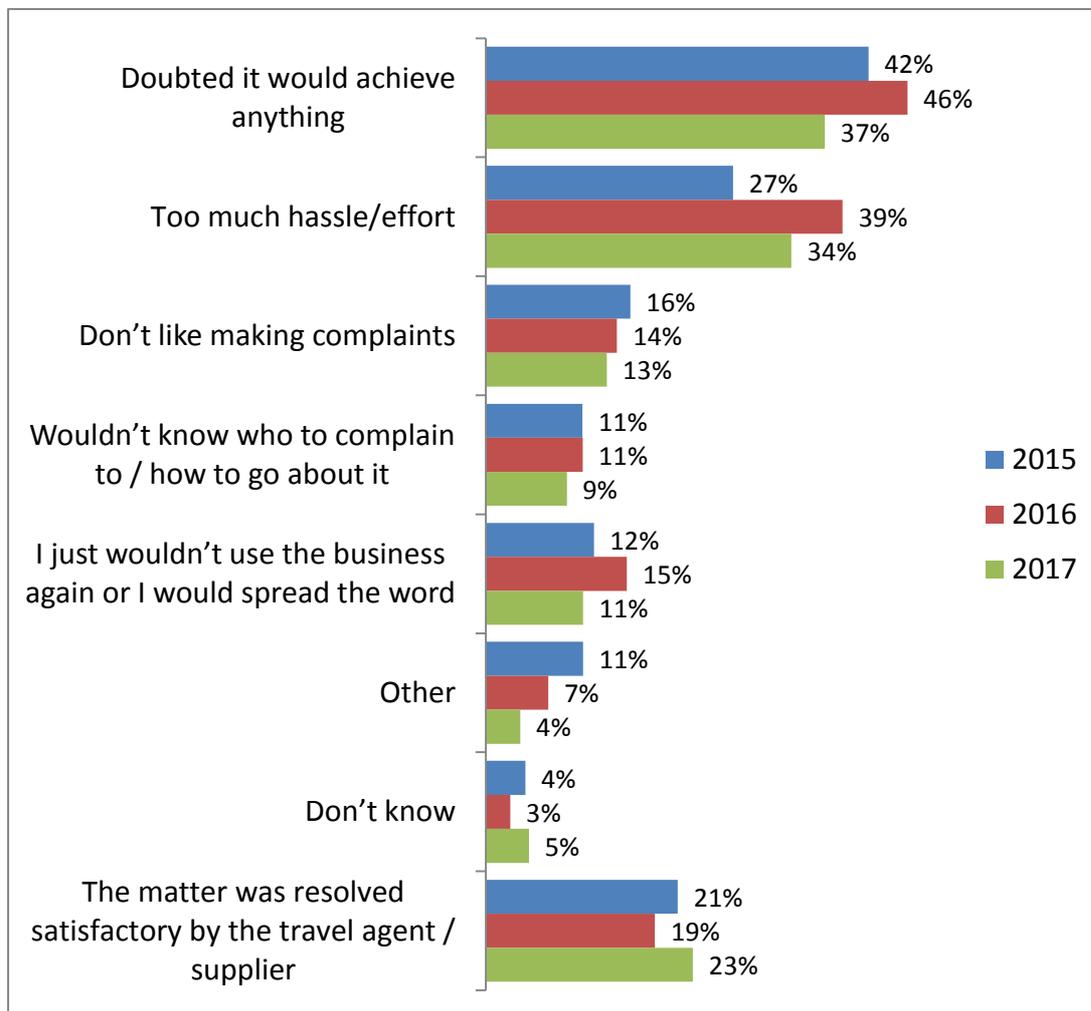
Satisfaction with response by organisation contacted in the last 12 months

Satisfaction with Organisation contacted for travel problem	Excellent - Good	Average	Poor - Terrible	I am yet to receive a response	Base n=
Hotel	52%	31%	17%	0%	74
Travel agent	45%	38%	14%	2%	105
Airline	34%	21%	38%	7%	131

Base n = 31 to 131

Q: How satisfied were you with the response you receive from X?

Reason for not complaining to an organisation despite facing a travel problem



Base total n = 1917, 2015 n=426, 2016 n=744 and 2017 n=747

Q: You mentioned that you didn't make a complaint, which of the following best describes why you did not complain?

6. Travel insurance

Key findings

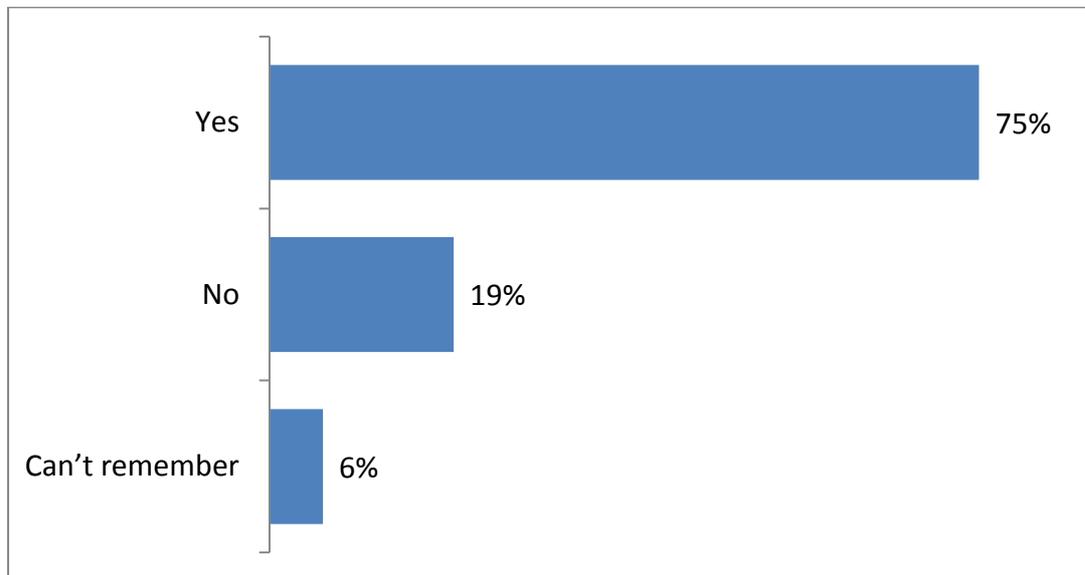
- 75% said they were covered by travel insurance for their last international holiday..
 - Female travellers (77%), Gen X (75%), baby boomers (91%) and pre-boomers (96%), were more likely to say they were covered by travel insurance.
 - 19% of travellers **said they weren't covered by travel insurance**. Gen Z (34%) and Gen Y (32%) travellers were **more likely to say they weren't covered by travel insurance**
 - Travellers who used a travel agent were slightly more likely to say they were covered by travel insurance (76%) than those who **said they didn't** use a travel agent (70%).

- Travellers were most likely to purchase travel insurance policies from an insurance company (38%), followed by their credit card (24%) and then travel agents (19%).
 - The proportion of travellers who purchased insurance from insurance companies has declined since 2015 (42% in 2015, 42% in 2016 to 38% in 2017).
 - The proportion of travellers who had insurance through their credit cards has increased significantly since 2015 (13% in 2015, 18% in 2016 and 24% in 2017).

- When asked if their travel insurance covered for bankruptcy or insolvency of the travel agent or travel operators, almost 66% people who had a travel insurance policy answered 'Yes' or 'Assume so but not so sure'.
 - Those who said their travel insurance was through their credit card are less likely to state they were sure that they were covered for bankruptcy or insolvency of the travel agent and are more likely to state they assumed so.
 - 37 out of 144 policies covered insolvency for a 'travel operator' in the November 2017 CHOICE review while one travel insurers covered insolvency for a travel agent, so it's highly unlikely all of the 66% were actually covered for insolvency.

Supporting charts

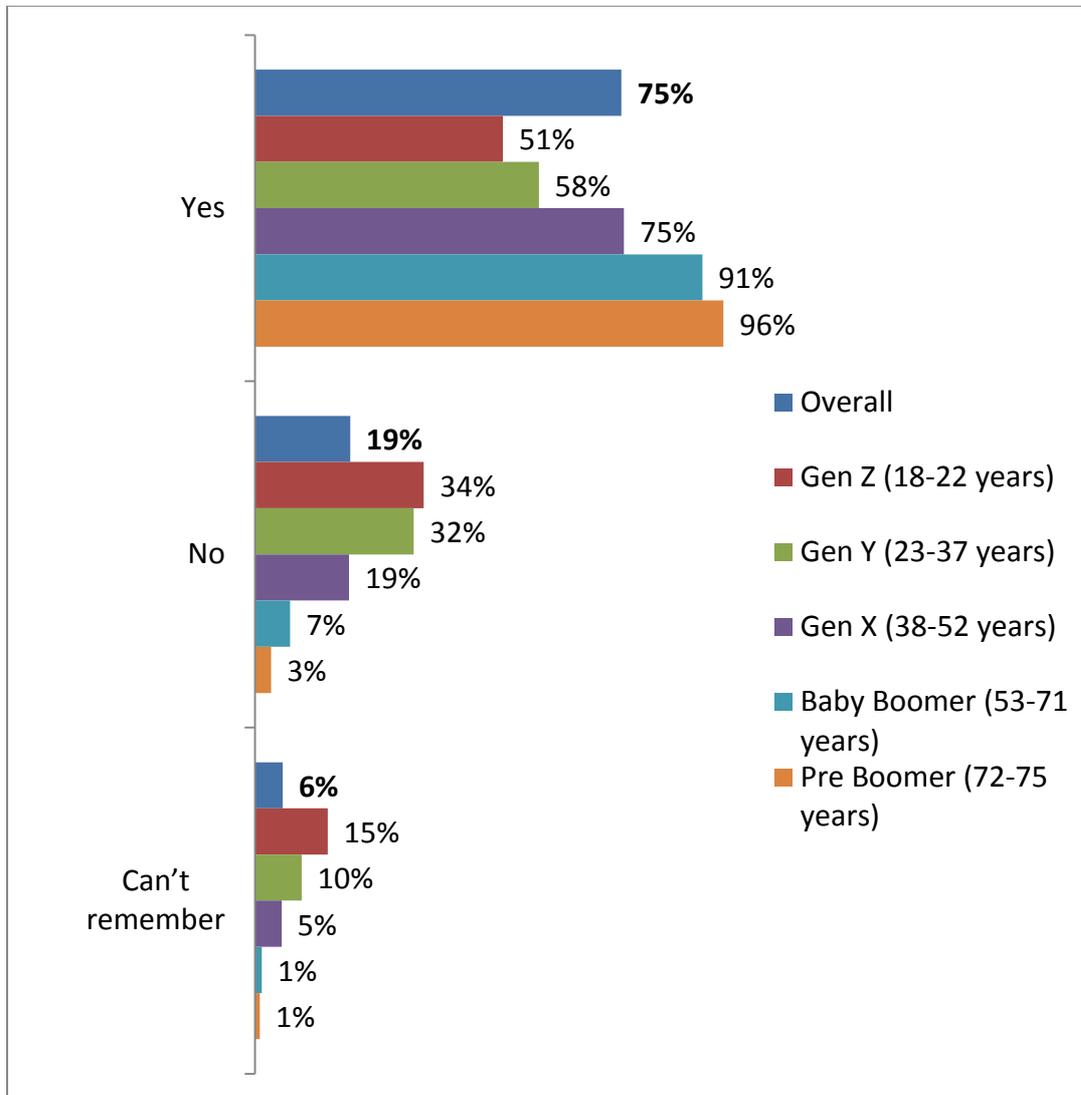
Travel insurance cover for an international holiday



Base total n = 2506

Q: Thinking about your last international holiday, were you covered by travel insurance?

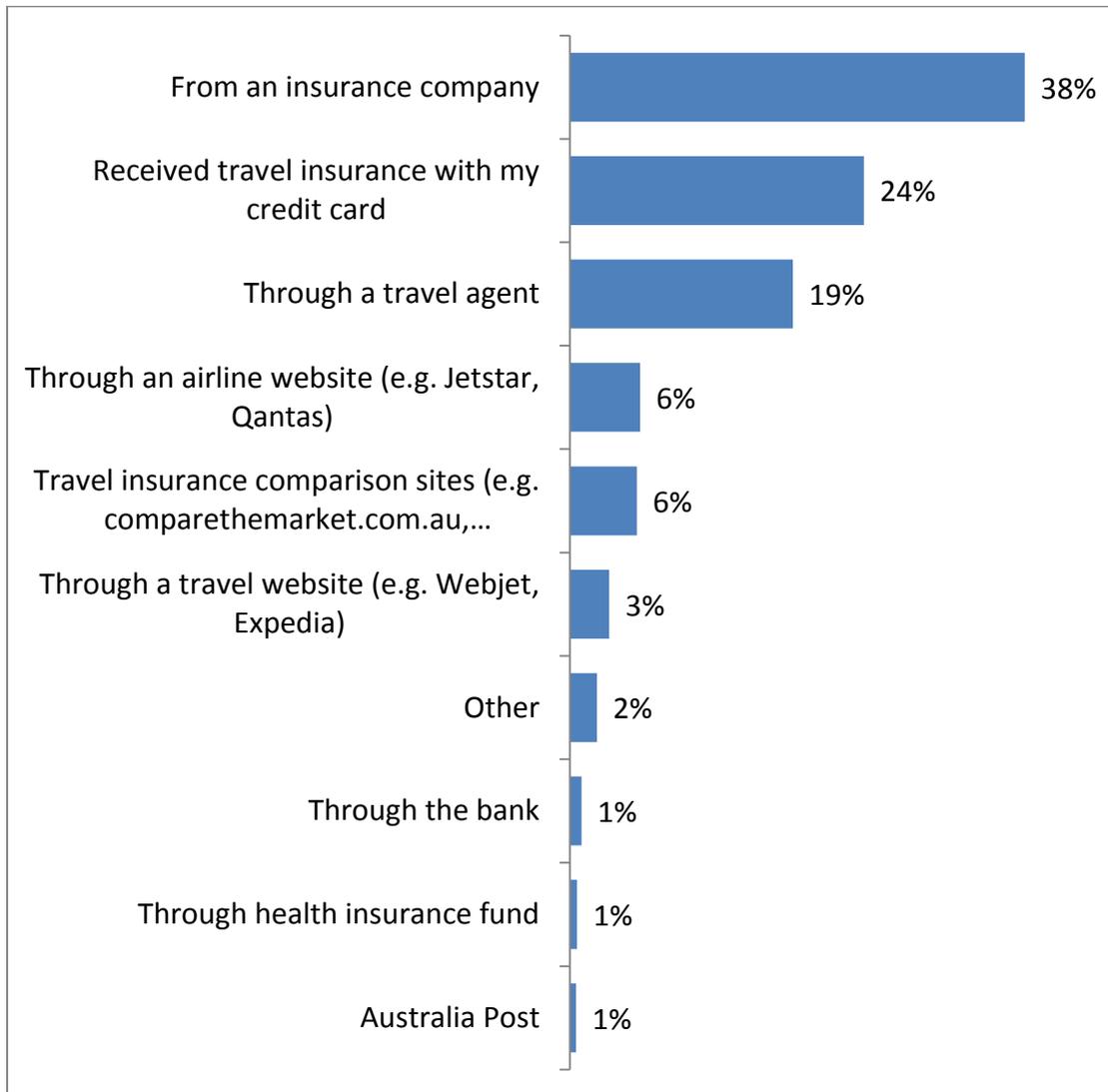
Travel insurance cover for an international holiday by generation



Base n = 2506. Gen Z = 118, Gen Y = 747, Gen X = 621, Baby boomers n= 908 and Pre boomers n = 112

Q: Thinking about your last international holiday, were you covered by travel insurance? By Age Group

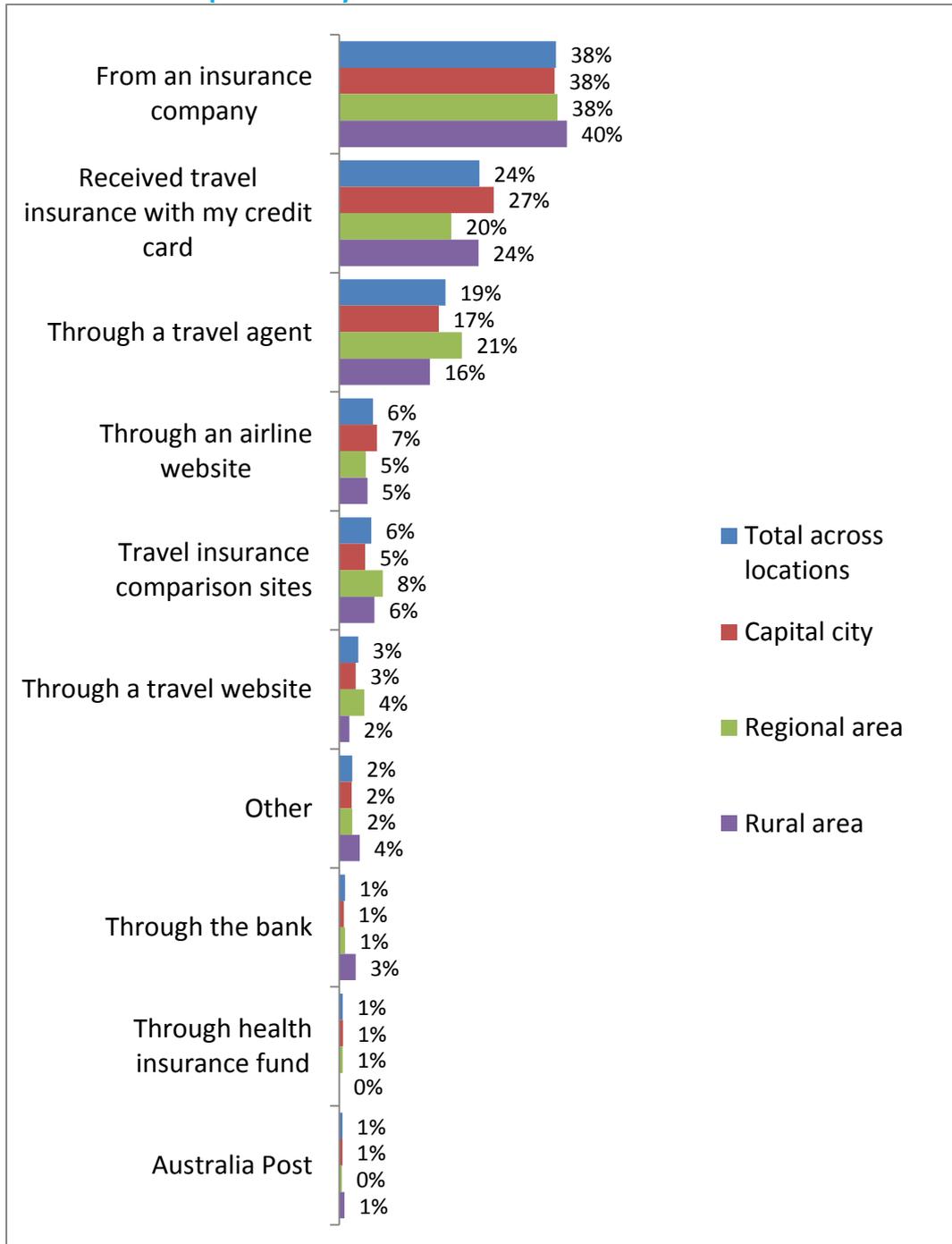
How travel insurance was purchased



Base total n = 1893 Australians who said they were covered by travel insurance in their last international holiday

Q: Who did you purchase your travel insurance from on this occasion?

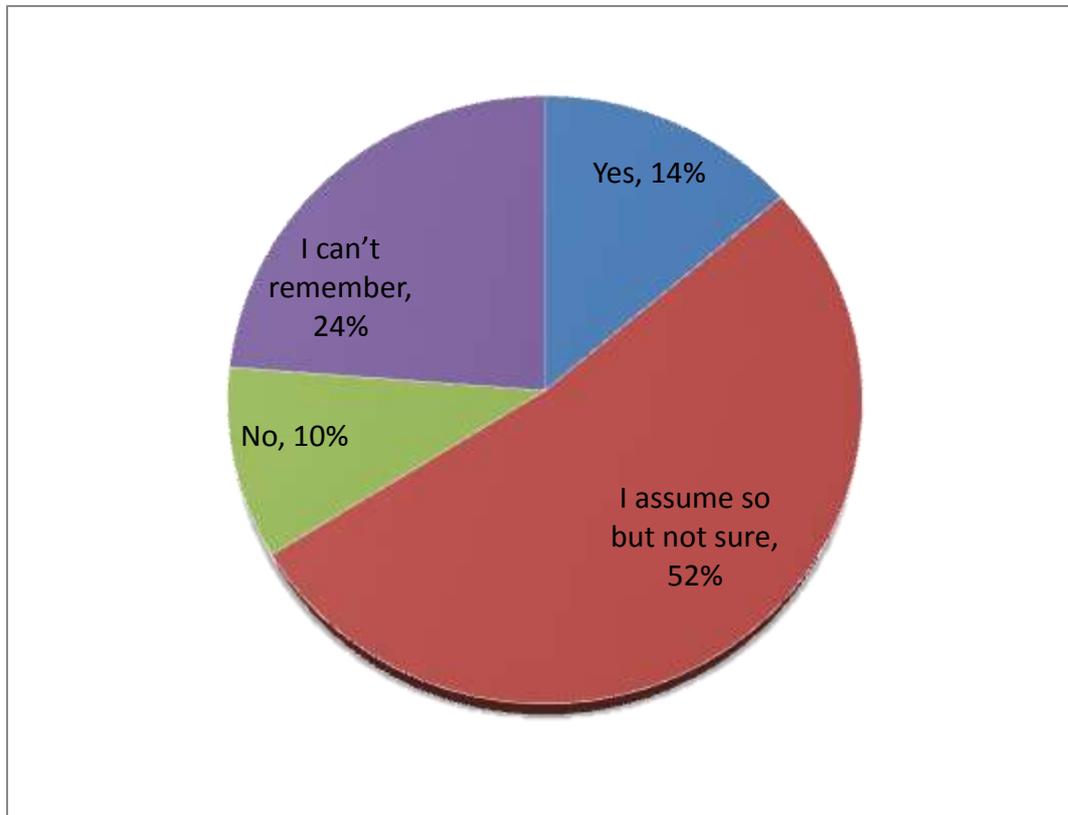
Travel insurance purchase by location



Base total n = 1893 Australians who said they were covered by travel insurance in their last international holiday

Q: Who did you purchase your travel insurance from on this occasion?

Cover for bankruptcy and insolvency



Base total n = 1893 Australians who said they were covered by travel insurance in their last international holiday

Q: Did the travel insurance policy cover you for bankruptcy and insolvency of the travel agent or the travel operators?

7. Travel agents

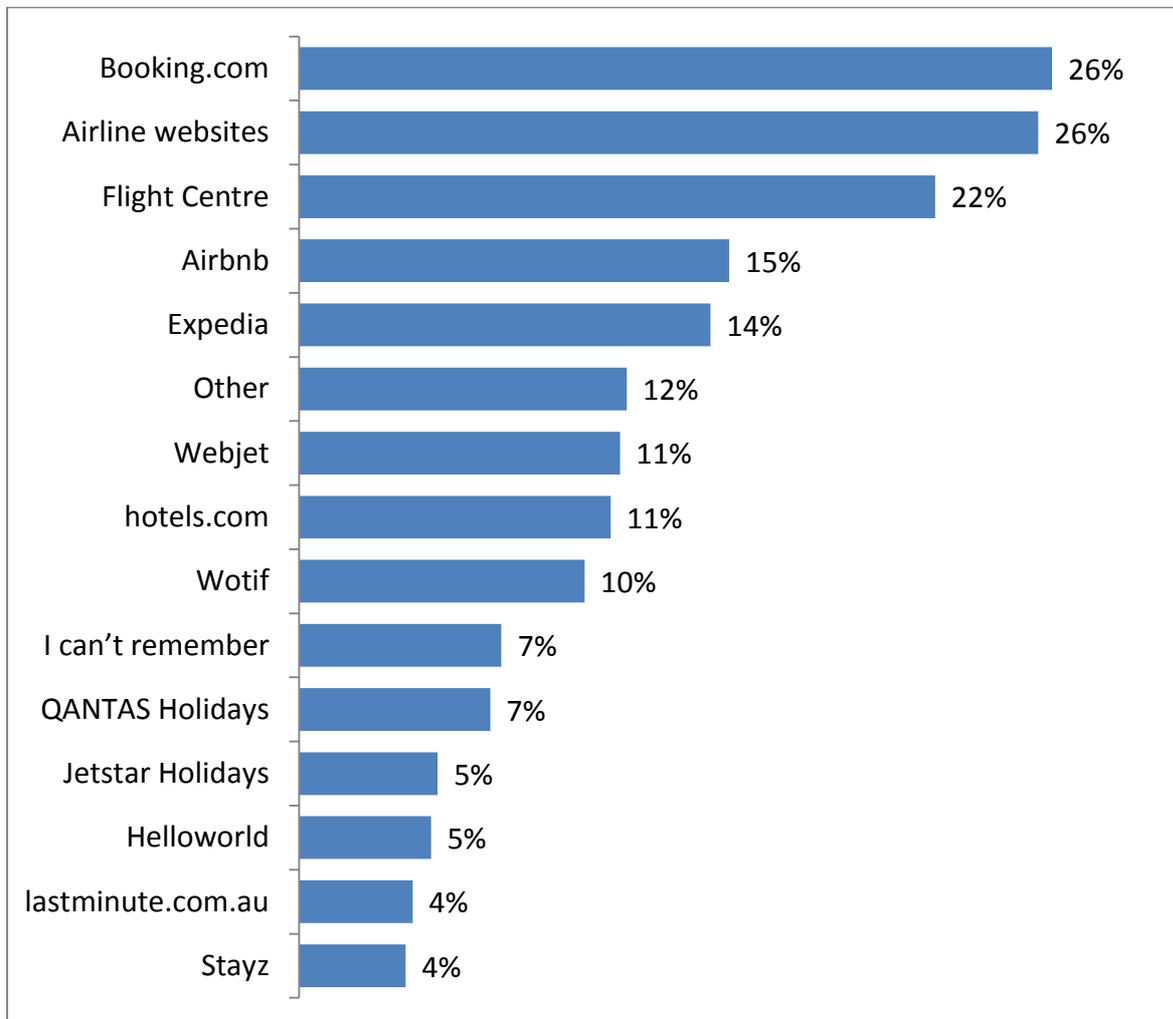
Key findings

- 87% of travellers used a travel agent/booking site to book a holiday or aspects of a holiday in the last 12 months.
 - Travellers with household income below \$50K are less likely to use a travel agent in the last 12 months (17% vs 13% overall)
- Among people who did use a travel agent/booking site, 26% used airline websites, 26% used Booking.com, 22% used Flight Centre and 15% used Airbnb.
 - Airbnb usage is higher amongst younger travellers – Gen Z (24%) and Gen Y (20%). Airbnb usage is also slightly higher for travellers based in capital cities (16%) compared to regional/rural travellers (13%) and for high household income travellers (over \$100K) (17%)
 - Gen X (26%) and Baby Boomers (35%) are more likely to have used airline websites and also travellers with incomes over \$100K (30%).
 - Regional/rural travellers (30%) are more likely to have used Booking.com compared to capital city based travellers (24%)
 - Flight Centre use is higher for Baby Boomers (26%) and travellers with incomes under \$50K (28%)
- Credit cards continue to be the most common payment method. 69% of those who used a travel agent paid using a credit card. This is significantly higher compared to 58% in 2016 and 59% in 2015.
 - Travellers aged 38 years and over were more likely to have used a credit card to pay their travel agent – 76% Gen X, 75% Baby Boomers and 69% Pre Boomers compared to 47% for Gen Z and 62% for Gen Y.
- A quarter (25%) of travellers who used a travel agent in last 12 months paid using a debit card; this is consistent with previous years.
 - Younger travellers are more likely to have used a debit card to pay their travel agent compared to other generations - Gen Z (56%) and Gen Y (33%) used a debit card significantly more than all other generations.

- There has been a significant decline in the proportion of travellers who paid their travel agent via cash (9%) or direct deposit (12%) this year. In 2016 the figure was 17% paid their travel agent cash and 21% via direct deposit. In 2015 this was higher, 28% paid their travel agent cash and 23% via direct deposit.
- Travellers who used a travel agent in last 12 months have higher awareness of the credit card chargebacks (89%). Also, travellers who paid their travel agent by credit card are more likely to be aware of credit card chargebacks (80%) compared to those who paid by debit card (18%), direct deposit (12%) and cash (6%).
- Australian travellers who used a travel agent in last 12 months were likely to report facing a problem with car hire (11%) and/or accommodation (11%), compared to those who reported problems with car hire and /or accommodation and **didn't use a travel agent**. (4% for car hire and 5% for accommodation)
- The proportion of Australian travellers who used a travel agent and faced a problem with the booking in the past 12 months has come down significantly over the years – 11% in 2017 compared to 15% in 2016 and 27% in 2015.
- Australian travellers who used a travel agent are likely to have higher awareness of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) (24%) and ATAS (10%) and the Airline Consumer Advocate (8%), than those that did not use a travel agent. This is consistent with previous years.
- People who used a travel agent were more likely to have contacted any organisation to complain about or resolve a travel related problem.

Supporting charts

Travel agents/booking sites used in last 12 months



Base total n = 2155 travellers who said they actually used travel agent/booking site in last 12 months Excludes those who said they haven't used a travel agent in last 12 months (n=348)

Q: Which, if any, of the following have you used to book a holiday or any aspects of your holiday in the last 12 months?

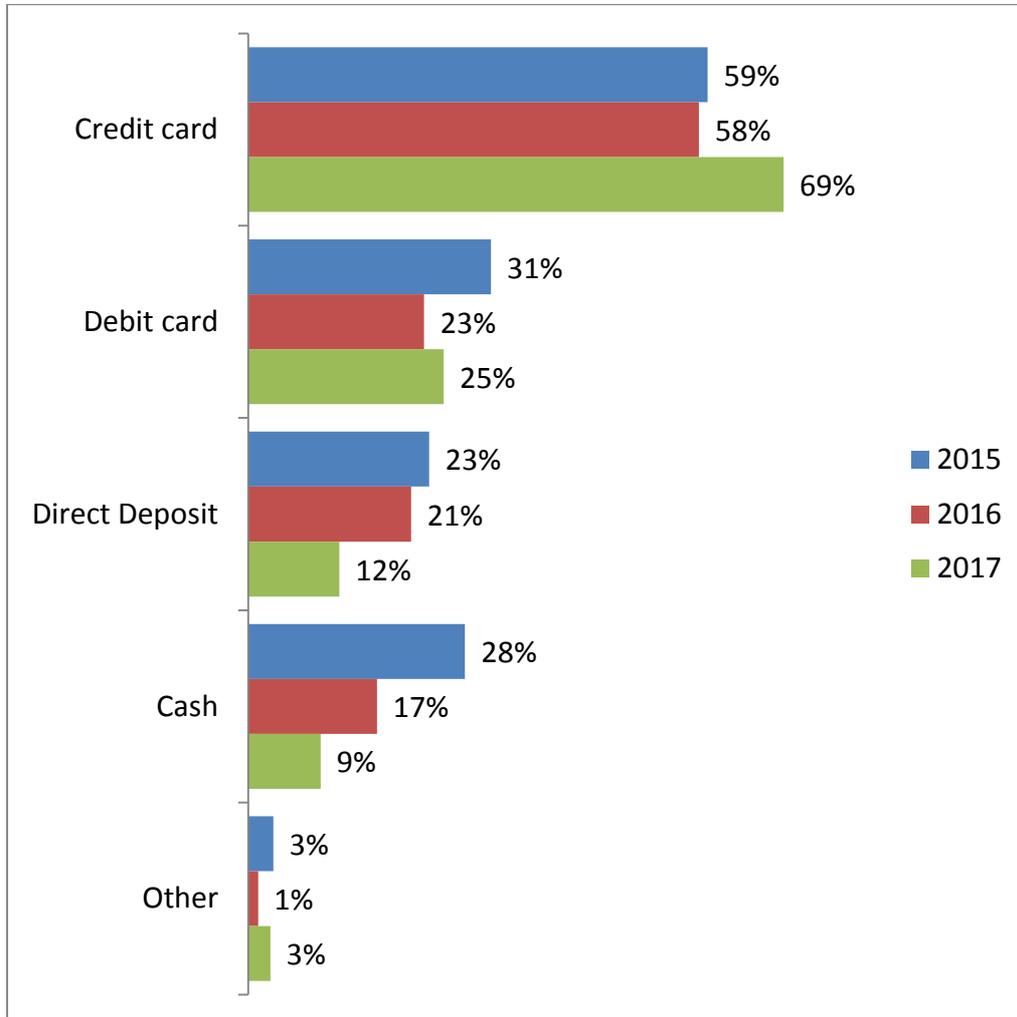
Travel agents/Bookings sites used in last 12 months –by generation

Site used	Overall	Gen Z (18-22 years)	Gen Y (23-37 years)	Gen X (38-52 years)	Baby Boomer (53-71 years)	Pre Boomer (72-75 years)
Booking.com	26%	20%	26%	30%	25%	28%
Airline websites	26%	14%	18%	26%	35%	28%
Flight Centre	22%	21%	21%	19%	26%	28%
Airbnb	15%	24%	20%	14%	11%	7%
Expedia	14%	19%	15%	15%	13%	8%
Other	12%	2%	3%	8%	21%	28%
Webjet	11%	14%	14%	12%	9%	2%
hotels.com	11%	10%	12%	11%	11%	3%
Wotif	10%	6%	12%	13%	8%	4%
I can't remember	7%	19%	8%	7%	5%	2%
QANTAS Holidays	7%	3%	10%	7%	4%	3%
Jetstar Holidays	5%	5%	6%	4%	4%	3%
Helloworld	5%	2%	5%	2%	6%	6%
lastminute.com.au	4%	3%	5%	6%	2%	2%
Stayz	4%	1%	5%	5%	2%	3%

Base total n = 2155 travellers who said they actually used travel agent/booking site in last 12 months Gen Z n=99, Gen Y n=644, Gen X n= 529, Baby Boomer n= 790, Pre Boomer n=93

Q: Which, if any, of the following have you used to book a holiday or any aspects of your holiday in the last 12 months?

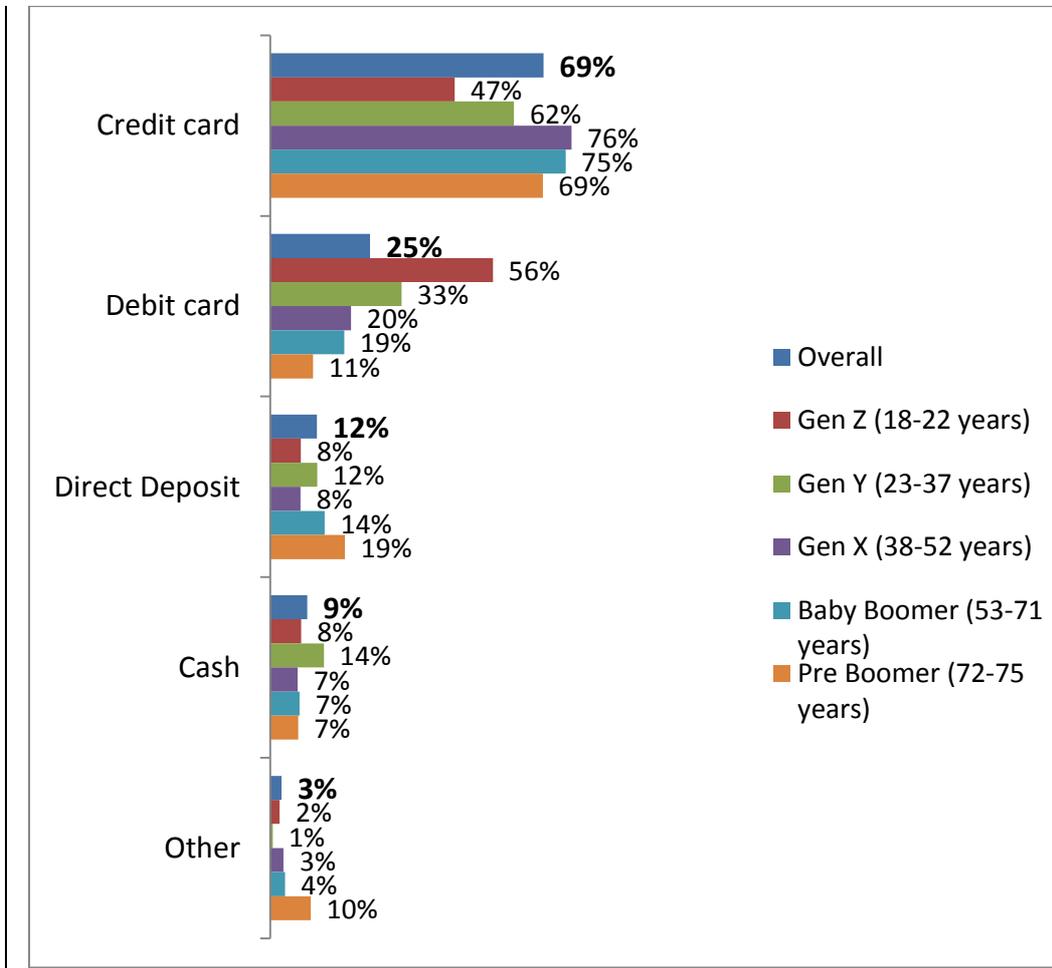
Payment methods used – over the years



Base total n=3527, 2015 n=738, 2016 n=950 and 2017 n=1839

Q. Which of the following payment methods did you use for your bookings with the travel agent?

Payment methods used by age



Base n=1839, Gen Z n=74, Gen Y n=556, Gen X n=448, Baby Boomer n=682, Pre Boomer n=79

Q. Which of the following payment methods did you use for your bookings with the travel agent? (By generation)

Problems experienced by travellers – by travel agent use in last 12 months

Travel problems faced in last 12 months	Didn't use a travel agent			Used a travel agent		
	Yes - major/minor problem	No problem	Not applicable	Yes - major/minor problem	No problem	Not applicable
Booking online	17%	75%	8%	21%	73%	6%
Flights	29%	69%	3%	33%	65%	2%
Car Hire	4%	44%	51%	11%	49%	40%
Accommodation	5%	56%	39%	11%	69%	20%
Booking through a travel agent	5%	28%	67%	11%	52%	37%
Booking direct with a company	4%	68%	29%	8%	72%	20%

Base n=2506

Q. Have you experienced any problems with either your domestic or international holidays booked in or out of Australia, in the past 12 months? By Which, if any, of the following have you used to book a holiday or any aspects of your holiday in the last 12 months?

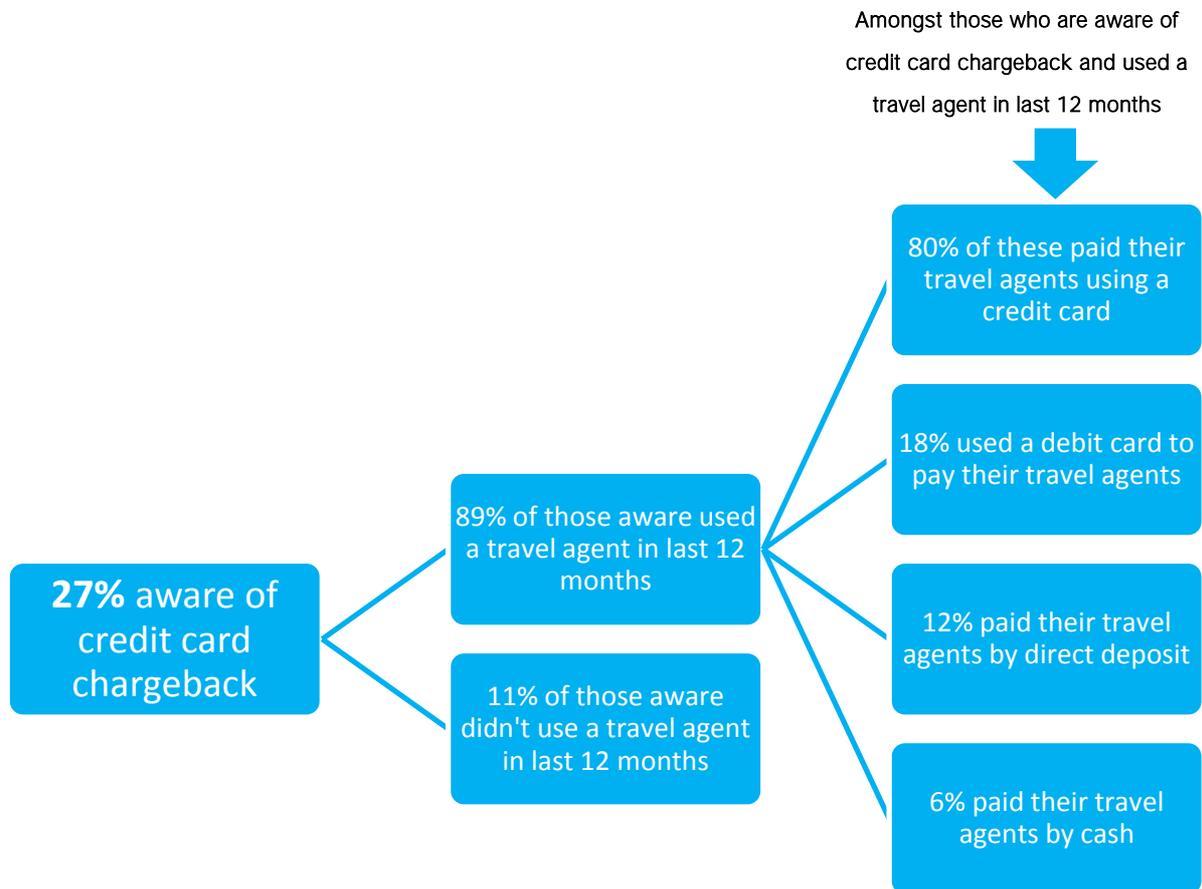
Prompted awareness of consumer bodies – by travel agent use in last 12 months

Awareness of Consumer Protection Bodies	Overall awareness	Didn't use a travel agent	Used a travel agent
Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC)	46%	49%	45%
CHOICE	39%	42%	39%
Australian Securities and Investments Commissions	31%	32%	31%
Credit card chargeback	27%	22%	28%
Financial Ombudsmen Service	26%	25%	26%
Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA)	23%	18%	24%
NSW Fair Trading	20%	19%	20%
Consumer Affairs Victoria	15%	14%	15%
ATAS - The AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme	9%	4%	10%
Department of Justice and Attorney-General Queensland (Office of Fair Trading)	7%	6%	7%
Airline Customer Advocate	7%	3%	8%
Department of Commerce (Consumer Protection) Western Australia	4%	5%	4%
Consumer and Business Services South Australia	2%	1%	2%
Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Tasmania	1%	3%	1%
None of these	24%	33%	23%

Base n=2506

Q. Bodies and schemes designed to protect Australian travellers, by – Which, if any, of the following have you used to book a holiday or any aspects of your holiday in the last 12 months?

Credit Card Chargeback Awareness – by travel agent and payment methods



Base n=713 who were aware of credit card chargeback

Q. Bodies and schemes designed to protect Australian travellers, by – Which, if any, of the following have you used to book a holiday or any aspects of your holiday in the last 12 months?

Organisations contacted to complain by travel agent use in last 12 months

Consumer organizations contacted for travel problems	Overall	Didn't use a travel agent	Used a travel agent
No-I haven't complained	61%	79%-	58%-
Airline – in writing, in person or over the phone	11%	11%	11%
Travel agent	10%	4%-	10%-
Hotel	6%	4%	7%
Website you booked through (if didn't book directly with service provider)	5%	1%-	6%-
Car hire companies	5%	2%	5%
Airline Customer Advocate	4%	1%	4%
Your travel insurer	3%	2%	3%
Your bank/credit card provider	3%	2%	3%

Base n= 1214 travellers who had a travel problem, n=149 didn't use a travel agent in last 12 months, n= 1065 used a travel agent in last 12 months. The above table only shows organisations which have a sample size of N>= 30 only.

Q - Have you contacted any of the following organisations to complain about or resolve a travel related issue in the past 12 months? by - Which, if any, of the following have you used to book a holiday or any aspects of your holiday in the last 12 months?

Appendix

Research approach

The fieldwork for this survey took place from 19 June to 12 July 2017. To ensure the sample is representative of the Australian population, the data has been weighted by age, gender and state according to ABS Census Data, 2016. The fieldwork agency used for this survey was The Online Research Unit, ISO aligned panel.

Survey periods:

Phase 1: 8th November – 11th November 2014; n = 1,100

Phase 2: 22nd June – 6th July 2015; n = 1,517

Phase 3: 20th June – 11th July 2016; n = 2,500

Phase 4: 19th June – 12th July 2017; n=2506

Some survey results are broken down by generation as follows:

Gen Z: 1999 – 1995

Gen Y: 1994 - 1980

Gen X: 1979 - 1965

Baby Boomer: 1964 - 1946

Pre Boomer: 1945 or earlier

Published research

CHOICE has published pieces of the research online:

Phase 1 research 2014

Australian consumers in the travel market 2014:

<https://www.choice.com.au/consumer-advocacy/policy-submissions#reports>

Phase 2 research 2015

Is it worth making a complaint about an airline: <https://www.choice.com.au/travel/on-holidays/airlines/articles/do-airline-complaints-work>

Domestic airline satisfaction survey: <https://www.choice.com.au/travel/on-holidays/airlines/articles/airline-satisfaction-survey>

Australian consumers in the travel market 2015:

<https://www.choice.com.au/consumer-advocacy/policy-submissions#reports>

Australian Airline Industry Super Complaint:

<https://www.choice.com.au/travel/on-holidays/airlines/articles/choice-lodges-airline-super-complaint-with-accc-061216>

Phase 3 research 2016

Australian consumers in the travel market 2016

<https://www.choice.com.au/consumer-advocacy/policy-submissions#reports>