

Advice on event and travel cancellations due to COVID-19

18 March 2020

The ACCC has issued [advice for consumers and businesses on their rights and obligations](#) if events, flights or travel services are cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), or if people wish to cancel their travel plans.

If events, flights or other travel services such as cruises are cancelled, the ACCC expects refunds or other remedy such as a credit note or voucher will be offered in most circumstances.

However, if the event, flight or travel service is cancelled due to government restrictions, consumer rights under the consumer guarantees may be impacted. In these situations consumers may be entitled to a refund under the terms and conditions of their ticket, or potentially may make a claim under a travel insurance policy.

“Given the exceptional circumstances, the ACCC encourages all businesses to treat consumers fairly and compassionately,” ACCC Chair Rod Sims said.

“We welcome the decisions by many businesses who are already offering refunds to all ticketholders, and expect other event and travel businesses to also offer remedies to all affected consumers when events or travel services are cancelled.”

If a consumer chooses not to attend an event that is still going ahead or travel domestically due to coronavirus concerns, this may be treated as a ‘change of mind’. The same applies to hotel room bookings. Consumers’ rights to refunds in these circumstances will depend on the terms and conditions and any cancellation policy adopted by the business.

“Consumers in all situations should contact businesses directly to request a refund or other remedy such as a credit note or voucher,” Mr Sims said.

“Failure by any business to honour its cancellations or refunds policy may constitute misleading conduct under the Australian Consumer Law.”

“We also remind consumers that many small and medium business are trying to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak as best they can. We urge consumers to exercise patience and treat service staff with courtesy and respect as they fulfil consumer requests for refunds and remedies,” Mr Sims said.

Notes to editors:

ASIC is the consumer-protection regulator for financial products including travel insurance. Please be aware that many travel insurance policies exclude cover for pandemic diseases. For more information please visit: [MoneySmart - Travel insurance](#).

Consumers are urged to follow advice from the Australian Government's [Smartraveller website](#) before booking flights or other travel services overseas.

We refer all consumers to the [Australian Department of Health](#) for the most up-to-date information on types of events prohibited by government action.

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ACCC Infocentre:

Use this form to [make a general enquiry](#).

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