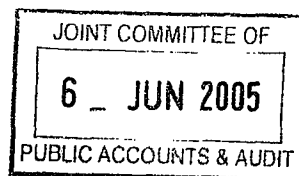

From: Jacqui Foxl
Sent: Friday, 27 May 2005 2:06 PM
To: Committee, JCPAA (REPS)
Subject: FW:
Importance: High

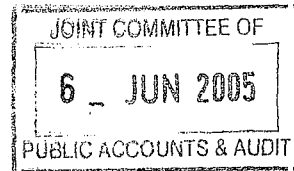
Submission No.
4



To whom it may concern

Please find attached details relating to a serious breach of security at Sydney international airport/customs on the 23 December 2004.

I had held back from forwarding this, on advice from some work colleagues, but have since made a personal decision to forward you this information in light of the seriousness of these security issues and of course the Corby conviction.



①

I would like to share with you an experience my fiancée' and I had whilst travelling with your airline.

We had booked flights to Albury N.S.W. The outward leg taking us from Brisbane to Sydney then on to Albury.

The return journey was from Sydney to Brisbane. The Sydney legs of the trip were booked using frequent flyer points.

So when told that the outward flight would leave from the International Terminal we did not think that was unusual.

A near empty plane returning to Sydney would be the logical choice for accommodating domestic "frequent flyer" passengers.

On checking in we were asked by the clerk if we would like our bags routed directly to Albury.

As Jacqui has recently had surgery for a double hernia and was booked for more corrective surgery in the new year, this came as welcomed news. We gladly accepted the offer as we had just learnt that it was a bit of a hike from the International Terminal to Terminal 2.

Next we had to run the gauntlet of all the document and security checks one has come to expect with international travel.

Not domestic travel!

The aircraft, far from being empty was full of international passengers, many of them travelling on Continental Airline tickets.

I only mention this because we seemed to be surrounded by many confused and anxious passengers, which created an atmosphere not conducive to relaxed travel. Having said that, our flight was a pleasant one. (something we have come to expect from Qantas).

On arrival in Sydney we, along with all the other passengers entered the baggage hall. Not having baggage to collect we headed straight for the customs desk.

More security and document checks, then, after handing in our specially marked boarding cards we were allowed out of the secured area and into the main concourse.

Although we had nearly two hours before our next flight we decided to forgo the temptation to have a relaxing coffee and headed off to the Qantas link departure lounge.

After quite a long walk we found the lounge and patiently waited to check in.

On attempting to check in the clerk informed us that the straight through to destination (Albury) was incorrect and we would have to return to the baggage hall to retrieve our luggage.

I pointed out that the baggage hall was a secure area and without passports or the original boarding cards we would not be allowed back in .

She then proceeded to tell us that we had to walk to the other end of the terminal. There we would find a small corridor leading to toilets. At the end of the corridor was an unmarked door. Ring the bell and someone would be able to help us.

After a desperate dash through the building we indeed did find the unmarked door. Several other highly stressed people were already standing around looking very frustrated. After ringing the bell, the doors were opened just wide enough to be able to talk to an elderly woman who was clearly not briefed on how to deal with the situation. I could not say that we actually had an opportunity to clearly state our position as the woman kept trying to close the door whilst she had highly confidential conversations on a two way with people elsewhere in the building.

When the door opened, to tell some unfortunate man next to us that they had found his suitcase but his golf clubs were still missing, I forced my way inside so I might be able to firstly tell someone of our predicament but also to find out why it was so difficult to locate baggage that by now was surely looking very abandoned as it circulated around an empty carousel.

The other factor that was of great concern was the time left in which to catch our next flight.

I have to say that the staff in this department seemed totally at odds as to what to do. There was no-one coming forward and explaining to us all, what the situation was, or was able to give us any reassurance.

Finally after another nerve wracking 20 minutes, a baggage handler arrived with two of our three bags on a trolley. On describing the missing bag to him, he confirmed that he had seen a colleague with the bag and he would contact him on the two way .

Many attempts to contact this person failed. We were informed that he may have gone to lunch. Great! With less than 30 minutes remaining until our next flight we were asked to fill out missing luggage forms.

Have you ever noticed, that when things start to go wrong, people start to go slower?

I have to say that frustration was starting to get the better of me. Common sense told me that abusing these people was not going to help the situation, so I took a deep breath, asked for our two bags and on being told that if our bag is found it will follow on a later flight proceeded to Qantas link.

Jacqui and I then made a mad dash (if that is possible with a big suitcase) to the farthest end of the terminal back to the Qantas link lounge.

We were confronted by a long que of people checking in.

I asked Jacqui to go straight to the check-in clerk who we first spoke to. She, to her credit, responded by not only calling us to the front to check in our bags but personally took us to the head of the line for the x-ray security check.

All the while saying that the bus for terminal 2 was just about to leave.

I went though without incident, Jacqui, however was not so lucky.

You have a pair of scissors in your bag. She was informed. Jacqui denied knowledge of such item and informed the man that the said bag has been though 3 checks already on its way down from Brisbane.

This seemed to stimulate some professional challenge to this person. He seemed determined to prove his international colleagues wrong.

After several fruitless passes through the machine a direct search was called for. At this point I made the fatal mistake of allowing my frustration to boil over. The natural reaction to my somewhat rude comments was to make damn sure that we missed the bus.

The personal contents of Jacqui's bag were unceremoniously dumped out on a bench in full view of everyone. Yes after much searching the smallest manicure set you have ever seen was located wedged right down in the corner of one of the pockets. Jacqui was unaware it was even there, needless to say my friend had the last laugh. Not only did he find his miniscule scissors but we also missed the bus.

It appeared, as we waited for the next bus that we had missed our flight. The check-in clerk assured us that all was not lost, that the bus would drop us at terminal 2 and we would get our flight. On the way across the airport we watched in horror as our bus stopped opposite an on-coming bus. The drivers casually got out from their respective buses, had a bit of a chat then boarded the other bus to resume our journey. Contrary to what we were told the bus finished its journey at Terminal 3.

On enquiring with the driver how we were supposed to get to Terminal 2 he proceeded to direct us on this convoluted route through part of Terminal 3, through the undercover carpark and finally at ground level into Terminal 2.

We then had to go up to another level and then on to the furthest end of the building (gate 58). Our flight, thank god, was running late, although boarding had begun we were able to reach the gate and finally board the flight.

Once we had settled with family in Wodonga (VIC). We contact a Qantas department to try and retrieve our bag. After some hours we were informed that the bag had indeed been found and was arriving in Albury at 8.30pm that night. Because we were unable to come to the airport at that time it was agreed to send the bag to the house by courier. It duly arrived, our delight and relief soon turned to sorrow and anger. The large holdall style bag had been packed with only Christmas gifts. Half of those gifts were now missing. I will not go into details about the lost items as it is covered on our claim form.

Heading The main purpose for this somewhat long winded letter is :

- (1) To try and convey to you the emotion and frustration we experienced.
- (2) To perhaps show you, that carrying domestic ~~practical~~ passengers on an international flight is not practical, particularly if those passengers have connecting flights from another terminal.

Item 1.

One gets the feeling that frequent flyer reward passengers are an inconvenience, particularly at busy times. Perhaps the reason for flybuy rewards has been lost. I used the word reward deliberately. It is to reward loyal customers by offering full value service at a much reduced rate or even for no charge. No one in their right mind would willingly pay for a "make wait" ticket on an international flight. Not given all the extra ^{queues} and security one is subjected to. But for fly buy passengers it's alright. By adopting such strategies you run a very high risk of losing the very people you are trying to "reward".

Item 2.

The mix up with the baggage exposed a number of issues. The lady at the Qantas Link desk said that they had a number of incidents out of Brisbane that week. (at least 3 others on our flight). Did anyone contact Brisbane to stop further mistakes. The ^{was} that the lost baggage issue was handled was farcical. No one seemed to have a clear idea ^{is it} about what to do.

What was all that rubbish about leaving us in a poky corridor and closing the door. All that seemed to be in the room was racks of baggage. Nothing too life threatening, I would have thought.

The key to our loss was the hour in which our bag (and handler) went missing. The fact that only half the contents went missing and that several "attractive" items were left suggests the person has very limited opportunity to remove the contents. (perhaps into a locker). If, as we suspect, the theft was done in the controlled baggage area of an international terminal, it doesn't say much for the overall security. I mean if something can be taken out, then one assumes, something can be bought in and planted in a bag.

Thanks for spending the time to read this letter. My motive for writing is purely to inform someone who is perhaps at a level in the company to have concern about our experience and be able to correct those things that need addressing.

The theft was unfortunate, we have informed the police and we are lodging the appropriate claims. Even if our claims are successful it will in no way compensate for all the frustration, anxiety and anger we were subjected to during, what was supposed to be, joyful time of the year.

I will enclose all our flight and baggage details.