

Axis blasts QF/EK alliance

EXCLUSIVE

AN AUSTRALIAN Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) submission from Adelaide-based Axis Travel Centre urges that the proposed Qantas/Emirates alliance extension (*TD* 30 Jan) should be rejigged from the “currently substandard relationship that is biased towards the commercial interests of Qantas and Emirates”.

In the document obtained by *Travel Daily*, Axis MD and industry veteran Max Najar, notes that “the continuation of any partnership between the carriers in its current form will detract from the choices and availability of fares, routes, choices and quality services available”.

“Having such strong market share allows QF/EK to also control the market prices that consumers pay - as we discover that, coincidentally, other carriers increase their airfares

also, usually in the same week... consumers lose, airlines win.”

Najar noted that under the current regime, the airlines are able to amend, cancel, and rebook to non-connecting flights without paying any compensation to consumers, and with no money at all payable to the travel agents who do most of the behind-the-scenes work 24/7.

He urged the ACCC to mandate better communications to the travel industry and clients in the event of delays, as well as the establishment of a travel agency advisory board to better assist customers and the industry.

Najar also highlighted product inconsistency between the airlines, and a lack of clarity and certainty in terms of lounge access and luggage allowances.

The ACCC is continuing to consider the extended QF/EK pact, having recently granted interim authorisation (*TD* 24 Mar).