

## How are you compensating people forced to cancel travel?

Open letter to Transport Minister Anthony Albanese

Dear Minister

I have provided you with a copy of my experience whilst travelling through the Gold Coast Airport recently (*see main article – ed.*). I feel strongly that the Australian public has not been fully advised on major connotations regarding the introduction of body scanners.

I also believe that those travellers wishing to opt for a pat-down, have the right to expect one on radiation damage prevention grounds, a medical and scientific matter which, like the harm from mobile phones, is still unresolved and could be found to go one way or another with future evidence and experience.

I am now faced with a decision of having to cancel our long awaited and pre-booked trip to Canada on 10th February this year or risk being rescanned...or perhaps being arrested. I don't wish to lose our bookings money but I will certainly never allow my family and I to be scanned again.

I would welcome some dialogue on this matter with you or your department to see if there ways of serving the Australian public better in this matter without risking any deterioration in the airport security measures.

I trust it will be patently obvious to anyone that after the experience we have gone through, we will no longer travel out of Australia until the Australian Government changes their policy and allow the optional pat-down. I could not possibly run the risk of seeing my wife or my son be forced to undergo an unproven and thus beyond any question a potentially highly dangerous procedure in front of me. Could any parent or spouse? I have already had this inflicted on me and will not allow it to happen to my family.

We have studied and checked out each and every submission to the Aviation Transport Security Amendments (Screening) Bill 2012 and, despite the Government's safety reassurances, we are more convinced than ever that:

- indirect DNA and cellular damage can not be ruled out beyond any reasonable doubt when using the L-3 ProVision millimetre-wave body scanners,
- the protection it offers to the traveller against terrorism is enormously overestimated, and
- denying the Australian public their human, natural-given right to travel because of these flawed safety claims is unconstitutional and dictatorial, a restriction and a law which the EU and US have decided they could not possibly implement nor justify.

It is our intention, if we can not be guaranteed by the Australian Government the option of being patted-down to seek recovery of our personal expenses which were incurred some three months before the Bill was to be approved on the 15th August 2012.

The details of our trip are: (details provided). Return cost of flight paid in full on 18th May 2012: \$4364.28. There will also be some hotel cancellation costs which, if not cancelled in time, could add up to in excess of \$4000.

Your explanation as to how your Department can help us claim and recover this money – and what procedure has been set into place to compensate those who like me had no way of knowing that the opt-out procedure would be removed after they had already paid for their travel – is urgently sought.

Over the past 10 years we each have flown overseas more than 30 times, and we feel your policies equate to an unreasonable imprisonment of travellers with a clean, proven travel record .

Your early response would be appreciated.

– Bruno Marevich, Australian Naturopaths P/L Castle Hill NSW  
*(now, but not when the incident first occurred, a member of CLA)*