

Vivien Richards

Wednesday 12 February 2020

Manager
Consumer and Corporations Policy Division
Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600

Dear Manager,

SUBMISSION

Re - Exposure Draft – Details of the Competition and Consumer (Australian Consumer Law – Electronic Ticket Resale Service) Information Standard 2019

Ticketlink is a Primary Ticketing Agency owned by Cairns Regional Council, providing ticketing services for the Cairns Performing Arts Centre, Tanks Arts Centre, Munro Martin Parklands, The Rondo Theatre, The Young Company Theatre, Kuranda Amphitheatre and various other venues in Cairns and the surrounding districts. I have worked for Ticketlink since June 2003 and I have held the position of Ticketlink Ticketing Coordinator since June 2013.

I was delighted to see that the Government is addressing the issue of online ticket scalping through ticket reselling websites. Online ticket scalping has caused Ticketlink a lot of stress, a considerable amount of extra work and loss of income. More importantly, our customers have not only paid exorbitant prices for event tickets, but they are reluctant to purchase tickets again, which has repercussions for the performing arts industry in this area.

Welcome as the draft is, I do not believe that it goes anything like far enough to prevent ticket scalpers from extracting large amounts of money from the public, and in so doing damaging the reputation and viability of the performing arts sector in Australia.

The following four aspects require addressing in the legislation:

1 Ticket Resellers - Exorbitant Ticket Prices, Stolen Credit Cards

Issue

Tickets scalpers are putting outrageous mark ups on resale tickets, which is extremely harmful to the performing arts industry. Ticket scalpers also regularly use stolen credit cards to make their initial purchase from the primary ticket seller. The credit card owner then does a bank chargeback and the money automatically comes out of our account. To date Ticketlink has lost many thousands of dollars through this fraudulent activity.

Solution

Ticket resellers must be limited to charging the face value of the ticket, (plus the websites fees). Restricting the resale price to the original purchase price completely removes the incentive for ticket scalpers to purchase tickets with the aim of reselling for a large profit. It will also remove the fraudulent use of stolen credit cards. If genuine ticket holders cannot attend events and wish to resell their tickets through a ticket resale website, they will be happy to get their original outlay back

2 Ticket Resellers - Fees and Charges

Issue

Ticket reselling websites charge exorbitant fees, and do not reveal these high fees until the very end of a transaction.

Solution

Ticket resale websites fees and charges should be capped at a reasonable level. These websites should also be required to show their fees and charges throughout the whole booking process, to give customers complete transparency on the full amount they will have to pay for the ticket.

Live Performance Australia and the ACCC require primary ticketing agencies to be upfront on the exact price a customer will have to pay for a ticket, including all fees and charges. These reselling websites need operate within the same rules.

3. Part of House, Row and Seat

Issue

Ticket resale websites occasionally, though not always, mention the part of house the seats are located in (balcony, stalls etc), but I have never seen any mention of the Row Letter or Seat Number. There is a big difference between 'Stalls Row A Centre' and 'Stalls Row X Side'. Consumers do not know where they are sitting until the purchase is complete, and therefore have no way of assessing value for money prior to committing to the purchase.

Solution

Ticket resale websites must be required to show the exact seats the customers are purchasing from the start of the transaction. When purchasing tickets for events, consumers have a right to know exactly what they are purchasing

4. Policing of Ticket Resale Websites

Issue

No mention has been made of the way these sites are going to be monitored for breaches of the legislation, and what action is going to be taken to force these sites to comply with the law.

Solution

Active monitoring of the websites for breaches of the legislation is essential. Contact details of the relevant Government Agency must be provided to the ticketing industry to enable quick and efficient reporting of breaches.

Regards

Vivien Richards
Ticketing Coordinator
Ticketlink, Cairns