

Media release

EMBARGOED: Until 12:01, Thursday, March 23, 2023

Etihad Airways accused of climate greenwashing in ACCC complaint

Etihad Airways' net zero and sustainability claims have been referred to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for alleged misleading and deceptive conduct.

Flight Free Australia, represented by the Environmental Defenders Office, has asked the competition watchdog to investigate advertisements shown during a soccer match in 2022 with the messages "Flying shouldn't cost the earth" and "Net zero emissions by 2050" both displayed alongside the Etihad logo.

Flight Free Australia says the ads implied that flying with Etihad does not have a significant environmental impact and that Etihad either intends or reasonably expects to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

However, Flight Free Australia says Etihad has no credible path to net zero. According to Flight Free Australia, Etihad's own sustainability report forecasts an increase in carbon dioxide emissions to 2026 due to increased services, while its emissions reduction initiatives are un-modelled and rely on speculative technology and offsetting. The group says Etihad has also significantly understated its emissions.

Flight Free pledger Alex Mungall said: "When we see Etihad sponsoring sports, and advertising their so-called sustainability, that flying 'need not cost the earth' or that they will achieve 'net zero by 2050', we see potential greenwashing.

"Our complaint alleges Etihad has no credible path to net zero in place and is instead talking up emissions reduction initiatives that are not technologically, practically or economically feasible.

"Greenwashing undermines trust in climate action. The world's scientists this week warned that keeping warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels requires deep, rapid and sustained greenhouse gas emissions reductions in all sectors and that includes aviation.

"We call on Etihad to withdraw their sustainability claims."

EDO Senior Solicitor Zoe Bush said: "Research shows people want to reduce their emissions and make sustainable choices.¹

"When a company makes false claims about its climate credentials it gains a competitive advantage by misleading people and exploiting their desire to do the right thing.

"We've pored over Etihad's public documents and found insufficient evidence that it intends, or reasonably expects, to reach net zero by 2050.

"We know the ACCC is looking closely at climate and sustainability claims and we are asking it to investigate whether Etihad has engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct in the commissioning of these ads.

DOWNLOAD THE COMPLAINT

[230322 Complaint to ACCC - Etihad Airways climate advertisements](#)

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

Environmental Defenders Office | Senior Solicitor Zoe Bush

Flight Free Australia | Alex Mungall

MEDIA CONTACT

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ABOUT FLIGHT FREE AUSTRALIA

Flight Free Australia is a small group of ordinary people, troubled by the climate emergency and particularly by the knowledge that aviation emissions are impacting global heating. As they wanted to reduce these emissions, they decided to form Flight Free Australia to encourage others to join with them.