

Submission in response to consultation on ticket reselling in New Zealand

Name (full)

Elizabeth Au

Organisation (if applicable)

Submitter category

Have you experienced problems with ticket resale?

Yes, I have personally experienced a problem

Please share your experiences, either positive or negative

I am enclosing the original letter I sent to the Commerce Commission. Furthermore when we went to the show the "doubled (rip-off) priced" tickets I had purchased were at the very back row of the auditorium which was only about 35% filled! This made me even more upset although to the organiser's credit they asked everybody to come down to the front and we ended up in good seats.

30 January 2019

Dear Commerce Commission

I booked 2 tickets for the show Madiba on January 24th for 1 February 2019.

Furthermore, I understood from the very busy and overwhelming site that I was paying for 2 tickets at \$80.00 each.

I booked the tickets then completed the boxes including the credit card requirements and as there seemed to be no option I could see I also paid for delivery of the tickets to my address. This was however, later reimbursed to me as e-tickets are available.

I understood from this pop-up-plus site that the booking fee was \$28 for 2 tickets but was in fact for just for one ticket, which was also misleading in my opinion. The whole process on this very busy and overwhelming screen was very difficult to follow especially when other boxes seemed to constantly pop up but were still connected to the show Madiba, not to mention the timer counting down that time was running out!

When the confirmation arrived in my email I was shocked to see that I had paid \$330.05!

What I believe I should have paid is: 2 tickets \$80.82 X 2 = \$161.64

Booking fee = \$28

42.50) Delivery fee = \$24 (this was later reimbursed at

Total = \$189.64

But what in fact I did pay was: Price per ticket: NZD112.92

Ticket Cost: NZD25.84

Booking Fee: NZD56.46

Handling Fee: NZD47.75

Buyer Total: NZD330.05

A difference of \$140.41

When I discovered this I immediately wrote to their customer care service asking why.

They called me and unhelpfully explained that 'everything was on the website'. I know that I did confirm the amount but in my own defence I felt pressurised with the timer and emotive (eg: 5 tickets left etc) pop-up messages coming up repeatedly on the screen.

In retrospect I realise now that the whole experience is specifically designed to pressurise, confuse and manipulate buyers as it would appear that the tickets are disappearing at such a fast rate you are going to miss out!

I accept that I will not be reimbursed for this but I would like to think that New Zealand users are made aware of the negative way this Viagogo site operates and hope that the Commerce Commission will be able to somehow eliminate it completely, as I believe it has been banned in other countries.

Thank you and kind regards,

Your views on the issues

Are these problems serious enough to require changes to the law or industry practices?

Yes

Tell us what you think

1. NZ is not a high income earning country.

2. Because of our geographical placing we do not have easy access to see great overseas shows/entertainment readily and think we probably pay more than other countries anyway simply because such shows have to pay more to get here.
3. Viagogo is not a NZ company .
4. Viagogo (and possibly other similar companies) has shown that it's main aim is not to fairly assist New Zealanders to see shows but to make money off them by confusing and charging lots of extra fees.
5. We as New Zealanders have to be better technologically educated to be more aware of such despicable practices.
6. I am a senior citizen myself and computer savvy up to a reasonable point and I take responsibility for being ripped off for these tickets. However, I also want to be able to depend on the NZ government to ensure, especially as the number of senior citizens grows and who may not be so computer literate, that there are provisions in place to protect vulnerable people from being caught in such situations.

Your views on the options, and the pros and cons

Price cap on resale tickets:

Option A: Face value + 10%, or Original sale price (whichever is lower)

Why did you choose the option above? Please explain

Whichever is cheapest/acceptable for the purchaser given the tiers of tickets usually available, along with a published price structure. Customers don't set the price or are privvy to how much money promoters/performers etc make from their performances but they want to be fully and clearly informed about their purchasing options. Why would customers want to pay more than they have to or want to?

More information disclosure: Do you agree with this option? Why or why not?

I think New Zealanders are appreciative that shows /entertainers etc come to our shores but we also appreciate transparency and fairness in transactions.

Ban on ticket-buying bots: Do you agree with this option? Why or why not?

Yes definitely. I understand Viagogo uses these bots and although I do not understand how they work they should not be used to dominate, undermine or unfairly influence customers' ability to buy tickets at a fair price.

Joint industry-government actions: Do you agree with this option? Why or why not?

Not sure about this one, but if it overall works for the betterment of New Zealanders who not only make a living from bringing in shows etc but also for New Zealanders buying the products then it's probably something to think about.

Are there other solutions that would work well?