

As a manager, one has a budget to meet with very little leeway, to maneuver because of the increased expectations of shareholders on ROIs.

The largest or one of the biggest single expense to an organisation is staff costs. Thus a manager worth her/his salt will know of this expectation and the need to control staff costs which also includes annual leave.

Therefore direct reports have to plan and take their annual leave at the end of each year to negate the need to pay increased wages on accumulated leave, leave loading, superannuation (FNPF) contributions, PAYE and to avoid such accruals and provisions for the next financial year. With such tight management control on staff costs, it's very rare that staff will have any outstanding leave to carry forward to the next financial year.

Also given that companies only afford their staff 4 weeks annual leave in a year, it's normal for people wanting to go on leave to have only 4 weeks maximum leave before they are required to report back to work.

Therefore it'll be news for my ears of a company that affords its staff, 6 weeks or more annual leave in a year or allow staff to accumulate their annual leave given that I've mentioned above of the costs and works involved to cater for a trip.

Besides the retirees and those sports men and women, most people that travelled, do work. Therefore the majority of the people that did travel to Rotuma fell into these categories besides the students. But I've never heard of a company that provides staff with 6 weeks of annual leave to "*plan visits to Rotuma*".

Thus I have a *bone to pick* with Randolph especially when the back bone of Fiji's economy is now tourism and services. I was once told that the airport in Rotuma is an all weather one bar storms/hurricanes after its last upgrade around 2008/9.

The issue referred to in FT of 25/11/12; my husband was in Rotuma. He told me that the day the flight was cancelled it rained about 6am for an hour or so and it stopped before he visited the Air Traffic Controller's home. The weather was fine thereafter for the rest of the day but the flight was still cancelled and rescheduled for the next mid week besides that of its normal schedule for that week, thus resulting in two flights for that particular week to Rotuma.

Obviously there are always safety issues to consider during bad weather but "*bad weather conditions*" cannot be blamed as the cause of the "*unreliability of travel services*" to Rotuma, all the time in order to have "*a minimum of 6 weeks from the time they arrive in Rotuma to allow for such disruptions.*" It's always convenient to blame the weather which is not *foul every day, all day and all the time!* It's too convenient to use the same lame excuse and its time that questions are asked whether this is a way to distract attention from the type of poor and expensive services afforded to Rotuma all these years. Is the way forward to an amicable solution to come up with for a four-week holiday in Rotuma during Christmas?

Please allow me to relate my story. Our four friends from New Zealand booked in April last year but failed to get a seat on the Christmas plane to Rotuma. My family of nine from Sydney booked in the beginning of June to travel to Rotuma, too. We were all willing to immediately pay the \$1300 return fare by direct transfers but unfortunately were told that only one seat was available on the dates we wanted to fly from 14/12/12

and return by 11/1/2013 in order to spend a week at Tanoa Plaza and Warwick Hotel before returning to Sydney on 19/1/2013.

Upon enquiring with our local travel agency, I was told that most passengers who booked to Rotuma have yet to pay. I thought for such an industry, in this day and age where dog eats dog to survive, liquidity, cash flow, revenue and controlled expenses are the basis of survival for a company. Fiji Air miserably failed and became bankrupt for their lapse of attention to details regarding those basic things.

But all I see is excuses and the need to constantly increase the fares to over \$650 to whitewash the continual bad service. Thus after six months of patiently waiting we had to travel to Rotuma on MV Niuvaga, which is another story for me to relate later for something to be done in the future to improve conditions for travelling Rotumans.

I know our friends spent exorbitantly whilst here in Fiji. We were lucky in a way for our dollar is very strong (about 1:2 Fijian) and we only spent Aud\$1.5K per head, which is very minimal in comparison to others on \$1,200 on frozen meat in Rotuma alone, all our air and boat fares, hotel accommodations to and from besides building materials, solar, car parts, helpers, and groceries etc as a token contribution to the economy.

But still the point I want to make to Randolph is the expectation of a tourist and the provision of service. For you can't keep making the same excuse all the time or you'd be found wanting!

For besides that English gentleman, you now have 13 other crumby ones who can portray a story to another 130 people to be wary of the poor and unreliable services in the face of all these ads and campaigns for tourists to make Fiji (which includes Rotuma) their tourist destination.

I've previously read in the news and now the Bulletin and from your response on 25/11/12 that you Randolph do work in travel service. Therefore please advise me for future reference (if I again wish to fly to Rotuma for Christmas) as to when is the best time to book and pay?

Also do I get a discount for paying my ticket earlier when I book and pay months in advance since I'll lose out on interest on the \$1.3K while the airlines gain from the usage of my money?

Furthermore what happens when a flight is canceled? For the practice with Fiji Air then and no wonder it became bankrupt, that one is placed on the waiting list which could drag on for a couple of weeks before you're given a seat and able to fly since it has happened to our visitors and me for three consecutive Christmases, and now this.

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