

WOMEN-ONLY HOLIDAYS NOT ALLOWED



Erin Maitland, a former Australian tour-guide has developed a unique idea to start a company offering holidays designed for women only. However, her application was turned down by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal on the grounds of violating the Equal Opportunities rights.

Women travelers have been becoming a major part of the tourist industry and **numerous tour operators realize the value of offering women-oriented travel deals and packages.** Women simply wish to take a break from their family lives and have as much right to do so as their husbands. A recent legal case has divided Australia and a major argument has arisen regarding how far tour operators can go in terms of targeting one gender.

After talking to many women, the former tour guide, Erin Maitland, decided to start her own travel business 'Travel Sisters' in Melbourne, Australia. She felt **it was time to target the female market exclusively.** In her opinion, there are thousands of women who simply refuse to go on mixed-group holidays. Their motifs may be religious, personal - very often they had had traumatic experiences which involved domestic violence, or simply refuse to be approached by men or even face some offensive remarks. Apparently, bed-hopping and booze is a frequent motif of many men to actually join a trip, according to the asked women.

Ms. Maitland believes her company would help women take some valuable time-off without having to worry about, well, anything. She wishes to design her tours to suit typical female interests. Many women are keen to go on such a trip and as Ms. Maitland believes, even their husbands or partners can feel 'safer' with no competition around.

However, according to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Erin Maitland lacks sufficient evidence to show it is necessary to ban men from traveling with her company, and thus violates the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Erin and hundreds of women are very disappointed by the court's ruling, however, if enough evidence is produced in the future, an exemption may yet be granted.

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