

AEI Press Release

Australian Aviation Safety Suffers Further Setback

Hoofddorp, Netherlands 07 Dec 2010

AEI (Aircraft Engineers International) is becoming extremely concerned about the safety image being projected within the Qantas group. In a quite unprecedented action, a Qantaslink airline (Sunstate), has deducted pay from over 20 Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineers salaries. AEI believe this decision was taken after their professional judgement determined aircraft defects needed to be corrected before further flight in order to maintain required levels of airworthiness and safety. Qantas has claimed that the reason for deducting the pay was unprotected industrial action, but AEI disputes this.

AEI offers its unconditional support to the engineers concerned, who despite incredible commercial pressure ensured that passenger interests were protected and safety remained paramount.

AEI General Secretary Fred Bruggeman commented, "Punitive action taken against aviation safety professionals raising legitimate safety issues cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. Safety may suffer as a result of this action and this sorry episode will surely cause untold damage to both the Qantas group and the travelling public's perception of air safety."

AEI has been warning for some time that airline claims of "safety being paramount" is all too often nothing more than an empty marketing slogan. It is interesting that the Qantas Group Business Practices document (published on the Qantas website) commits the group to conducting business to the "highest levels of ethics and integrity" whilst insisting upon the highest standards including safety standards from its employees. In fact page seven claims that Qantas are committed to "providing a workplace that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying."

Mr Bruggeman continued, "The evidence published in this case is both clear and shocking. It highlights an incredible level of arrogance within management circles and raises genuine concerns about the sincerity of the Qantas group to adhere to their own procedures and ensure that safety, rather than profit, remains paramount. AEI calls on the Qantas Chief Executive Officer, Alan Joyce to intervene personally and bring what AEI believes to be intimidation of safety professionals to an immediate end."

More details of the Qantaslink actions can be found at:

http://www.alaea.asn.au/attachments/article/195/20101123_Notify%2046_Notify%20attachment.pdf