

# Media Statement

By your side



19 March 2020

## Taxpayer support for aviation industry must flow to workers

The Australian Services Union has urged greater engagement with workers and total transparency about use of the Government's first round of aviation industry assistance.

Assistant National Secretary Linda White said all funds announced by the Government must be used to maintain jobs and stand-downs should only be used once those funds were exhausted and as a measure of last resort.

"We all deserve to know where the \$715 million in taxpayer funds are going and they must be used to protect jobs," she said. "What has the Government done to ensure these funds are directed at protecting jobs?"

"In every other country in the world where taxpayer dollars are being used to support the aviation industry, the decisions about how to use those funds are being made by Government, industry and unions, working together.

"This Government has declined to engage with the unions in this industry and now we see the consequences of that – taxpayer dollars are not being used to protect jobs."

Ms White said in a unique and difficult time, the union was exploring every option to protect workers jobs, pay and entitlements.

"First and foremost, we're urging Qantas to ensure all workers get as much work as is available to them now.

"But we must be highly practical about the situation, maximising access to leave and accrued entitlements so people can make ends meet."

Ms White said the union had also written to the Prime Minister seeking extra funding to support the sector and greater engagement with the workers through their unions.

"In aviation we need a much more substantial and broad-based second package of support.

"More broadly, there needs to be a targeted assistance package for vulnerable people in financial stress particularly in industries where jobs are affected.

"We stand ready to meet with CEOs and the Government to work out the best approach to next round of assistance and have written to the Prime Minister, asking for this to occur as a matter of urgency.

"We've been through a number of crises in the aviation sector in the past and we know we must go hard and go early to get the best economic outcome.

"At the end of this worldwide pandemic, aviation employers will enjoy a boom in trade and travel and their capacity to enjoy the good times tomorrow will depend on looking after their workforce and their families today."