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ASU • QANTAS GROUP • BULLETIN
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Qantas to Review Telephone Sales - "everything in scope"

Today the ASU and your Delegates met with Qantas management regarding Telephone Sales. This was following a request by the company to brief the union on their intention to look at all aspects of telephone sales. ASU Delegates from each telephone sales centre participated via phone.

What Qantas said

Qantas advised that the Australian based call centres - Brisbane, Melbourne and Hobart, and the Auckland call centre are 'under review'. When we pressed them on what 'under review' meant they stated that 'everything is on the table' and 'in scope'. Clearly Qantas intends to look into the number of call centres operating and whether the current locations will continue. They did not rule out any option including off-shoring to other locations.

The company could not say how long the review would take or when staff would be advised of the outcome. We believe this lack of detail and uncertainty is unacceptable!

Qantas advised the ASU that property leases in each of the Australian based centres were being reviewed. In relation to Melbourne a 12 month extension has just been secured meaning the lease will extend to August 2015. Brisbane's lease does not expire until May 2018 and in Hobart discussions were continuing with the landlord as the lease is due to expire in June 2014.

As you know job security and off-shoring were big issues for telephone sales staff during EBA 10 negotiations last year. ASU members fought hard to gain an important side letter about the future of the

Australian based call centres and this was a major consideration in ASU members supporting EBA 10. In this letter Qantas state they have no plans to close any of the existing Australian based call centres. We pointed out to Qantas that this letter extended to 3 months after the expiry of EBA i.e.: 10 - September 2016. Qantas deny they are acting against the commitments contained in this side letter because no decision has been made yet.

Clearly this review could change the company's view about the Telephone Sales network. The ASU will fight for Australian based call centre staff in each of the existing centres.

But wait there's more...

Despite stating that everything is under review in Australia and NZ the company advised that they are about to recruit new staff in the Auckland call centre to replace attrition. They say they need to bring the number up to 150 and will be recruiting approximately 30 new positions. We believe that this is a slap in the face to Australian based call centre staff and makes a mockery of the review about to get under way. We asked the airline to hold off on this and allow Australian based call centres to take on any overflow from Auckland. We believe it is putting the cart before the horse recruiting new staff before the review is complete. Qantas say

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they will press ahead with engaging new staff in Auckland.

We also questioned Qantas about the use of a call centre called Mindpearl in handling foreign language calls from overseas customers. The company advised that they do have a contract with a call centre provider called Mindpearl in South Africa to undertake this work. We have asked Qantas to check whether Mindpearl is being used in Brisbane.

What next

We will meet with Qantas again in 2 weeks time. We have insisted that ASU Delegates be in the room for this important discussion that affects everyone's future. Look out for updates from your union.

Support roles targeted for VR

Qantas updated the union on the support roles that had been invited to express an interest for voluntary redundancy. Qantas have advised that the following roles in each telephone sales call centre are 'in scope' for VR:

- Business Performance Analysts - 3 positions
- Learning & Development - 3 positions
- Quality Evaluators - 8 positions
- Planning & Resources Coordinators - 4 positions

Your ASU representatives pointed out that many of these roles could be considered operational. We questioned why these jobs were being targeted for voluntary redundancy when a broader review of telephone sales was about to commence.

Wouldn't it make more sense to finalise the broader review first and then assess what 'support roles' were required?

Unfortunately logic does not seem to be the driving principle as Qantas roll out VR's across a range of areas targeting support roles. It is fair to say that this process has been chaotic with much confusion and conflicting information given to staff.

Qantas have advised that the timeframes have been extended for these telephone sales support positions as follows:

Staff in the positions affected will be able to request their redundancy estimates up until 17th March (extended from 13th March). Staff will then have until 31 March to apply for VR. There is some confusion about whether an application for VR is binding on employees. Qantas say that once the VR applications closes on 31 March 2014 an employee cannot withdraw the application. Therefore very careful consideration should be given by each individual before making an application for VR.

Time to galvanise support for Qantas workers

Qantas telephone sales staff provide a professional and uniquely local service to Qantas passengers. Our lobbying efforts should include state governments as well as federal politicians who are currently considering changes to the Qantas Sales Act in the federal government. The ASU will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to fight for local jobs and argue for keeping highly skilled telephone sales jobs as a central part of the Qantas distribution network.

Make sure you are a union member and part of this collective effort to secure the future for telephone sales staff across Australia. You can join only line at <https://www.asu.asn.au/asujoin>

If you want more information contact your local organiser.

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