



Joint Media Statement

17 March 2020

TWU & ASU APPEAL TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT JOBS IN AVIATION ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

The Transport Workers' Union and Australian Services Union have written to the Federal Government in a joint appeal to urgently intervene to save jobs and companies in aviation.

As Qantas massively cuts its flights and all aviation companies scale back operations, the unions wrote to the Prime Minister asking for urgent talks to ensure jobs are protected so the economy can rebound when the crisis abates.

In the letter, the unions argue for a Government guarantee for the airline industry but add: "we urge the Government to seek assurances from companies over the protection of jobs as part of any assistance package. The focus of assistance and support to the industry must be on protecting the jobs of workers not simply propping up companies," the letter says.

"These companies will need the workforce capacity to accelerate out of the downturn when the crisis subsides, and shedding jobs will not only contribute to the economic crisis now but limit our capacity to recover in the future.

"We are particularly concerned that some companies may even see the crisis as a chance to target roles that they want to outsource. We know that this has already started happening," the joint letter states. It adds: "We warn against situations where well-paid airline executives get to set the terms of state assistance, with workers shut out and their interests ignored."

The unions say they are willing to meet the PM or hold a video-conference at any time.

Quotes from Michael Kaine – National Secretary, Transport Workers Union

"The Government must act urgently to protect jobs and working families. It is vital that workers and their representatives are included in plans for assisting the aviation industry."

This is not the long-term decline of an industry but a potentially short, sharp hit that will require workers to be ready to go back to their jobs. In the meantime, they need to be able to look after their families."

Quotes from Linda White – Assistant National Secretary, Australian Services Union

"Now is not the time for the Government to sit on its hands. The aviation industry is too important to this country, and we need to work together to face the current situation and ensure this vital industry is able to ride out the storm."

"Australians, whether they are in cities, in regional areas or remote locations depend on the aviation industry and we cannot fail them at this difficult time."

"The recovery effort starts now - the more proactive we are today, the better positioned we'll be to withstand and recover from this crisis."

Media contacts: Tim O'Halloran (ASU) 0409 059 617; Judith Crosbie (TWU) - 0432552895