Qantas and JobSeeker payments - important update

For the last three weeks the ASU along with other Australian unions has been campaigning relentlessly for a wage subsidy for workers to ensure members jobs are protected through the global pandemic.

The JobKeeper Payment – a win by Unions for workers

Thanks to the work of thousands of union members across the country the Australian Government announced last week the "JobKeeper" program which will keep workers employed during the pandemic through the provision of a wage subsidy to workers of $1500 per week.

According to the Australian Government's JobKeeper Fact Sheet:

• *If your employer pays you $1,500 or more in income per fortnight before tax, the JobKeeper Payment will assist your employer to continue operating by subsidising all or part of your income.*

• *If you have been stood down, your employer must pay you, at a minimum, $1,500 per fortnight before tax.*

ASU and the ACTU write to Qantas

The ASU has written to Qantas to seek confirmation that:

• employees who are entitled to be paid more than $1,500 per fortnight will be paid their normal wages or salary.

• employees will receive superannuation on JobKeeper payments

• Qantas will re-credit any annual leave, long service leave, 20th Days/RDOS and time in lieu taken according to the voluntary leave scheme or as a result of being stood down.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has also written to Qantas on behalf of the ASU and other unions in relation to Qantas' intentions in accessing the JobKeeper program and the ASU has also written to the company urging discussions. At the moment the company is refusing to meet the ACTU and unions together – the divide and conquer philosophy seems to be continuing even in these worst of times.

Qantas' approach to JobKeeper payments – the latest blow to hardworking employees

Last week we told you that Qantas would rather spend tens of thousands of dollars on legal fees than provide sick leave to long term employees with chronic health issues.

In the latest blow to employees, Qantas has released a document called WHAT JOBKEEPER PAYMENTS MEAN FOR QANTAS GROUP EMPLOYEES. Despite the fact that Qantas is receiving millions of dollars of taxpayer funds in the form of waived fees and levies, Qantas has advised employees that it will not pay employees their normal salary and that no superannuation will be paid on the JobKeeper supplement of any payment. Qantas has also stated that it will not let employees make up the difference between JobKeeper and their normal pay by using annual or long service leave.

This is an outrageous position for Qantas to take and will force many employees to use their leave because they simply cannot afford to meet their regular expenses on $1500 per fortnight.

The ACTU has told us too they believe that the Qantas fact sheet is factually wrong – the ACTU

says that the assertion that you cannot get JobKeeper payments when you are on leave without pay is wrong – you are eligible to get the payments.

We have conveyed Qantas' approach to JobKeeper to the ACTU and urged them to discuss our concerns with the Australian Government and also to participate in discussions with the ACTU and unions so we can get certainty and clarity on entitlements.

The JobKeeper legislation is likely to be passed on Wednesday. We will be monitoring the situation closely and will be in touch with an update about how the JobKeeper legislation affects you as soon as possible after that.

Need more information?

For more information contact your local organisers:

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