



Fair Work Australia terminates all action

In the small hours this morning Fair Work Australia cancelled all industrial action - that is the unprecedented action of Qantas and the action of the three unions seeking to bargain with the airline. In its decision Fair Work Australia noted that it was Qantas' actions in grounding the airline that would cause significant harm to the Australian economy.

It has been a very stressful 24 hours for ASU members at Qantas but now after the intervention of the independent umpire, Fair Work Australia, things hopefully will get back to normal after the crazy action of Qantas management to ground the airline.

Their high handed response to pilots wearing red ties and ground staff and engineers taking limited industrial action ground Australia to a halt, stranded passengers and staff away from home and increased the stress levels and uncertainty for loyal Qantas staff and passengers.

What has happened?

Sometime on Saturday 29 October Alan Joyce decided to declare war on the members of the TWU, ALAEA and AIPA, by locking these Qantas union members out of work from 8pm on Monday 31 October then according to the evidence at FWA Lyell Strambi decided to ground the airline. It was too risky to continue flying apparently according to Mr Strambi, because pilots would be too stressed!

We all know though that the grounding of the airline is the decision of Alan Joyce - backed up by the Board. This is the most extraordinary overreaction - he has threatened to lock out thousands of employees, he has inconvenienced tens of thousands of passengers and is trashing the Qantas brand.

Qantas could at any time have gone to Fair Work Australia - they decided to hold the Australian public at ransom rather than seek a real agreement.

When the Federal government found out at around 2pm AEDT they started to prepare an application to FWA to terminate or suspend all the industrial actions, that is the company lockout and the industrial action by the unions. FWA started hearing the government's application at 8pm on Saturday and then continued for many hours on Sunday. Many parties appeared at the Tribunal including Qantas, the unions involved, the federal government, the ACTU and other Qantas unions including the ASU.

When the hearing concluded FWA decided to terminate all action. This means the irresponsible actions of Qantas can cease and ASU members can get back to what they do best - providing excellent customer service.

Qantas is presumably going to start the process with CASA to get Qantas flying after the grounding. We hope that Qantas will stop playing games and get the airline flying again soon.

What should happen next?

- Qantas must get planes back flying.
- Qantas must come to the table and do a proper respectful deal with its employees which includes their job security demands.

We know that the Australian public has been shocked by Qantas management's action and have been supportive of staff who want job security and Australian jobs.

Hopefully Qantas management will learn from the mistake of their ill conceived industrial action and grounding and realize it is time for decency and fairness.

We applaud our members professionalism in the face of the chaos of the last 24 hours and we will continue to keep you informed as developments occur.

In the meantime our support for those unions seeking to reach an EBA with the airline will continue. All Qantas unions and the ACTU will continue to work cooperatively in the interests of the Qantas workforce.

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