

Wednesday, 5 August 2020

Statement from ACTU President Michele O’Neil on Virgin Australia

Virgin Australia’s announcement that they are cutting the jobs of 3000 workers is devastating. The unions representing Virgin Australia workers send our support and solidarity to every single worker at the airline today.

This announcement is not only a terrible loss for these workers, their families, and communities, but it is also a loss for the country.

We are losing 3000 highly skilled and experienced workers from the aviation industry and 3000 more households will be plunged into uncertainty at a time when so many people are already struggling.

The plan for the future for Virgin Australia announced today has important elements that unions have argued are critical to save the maximum number of jobs coming out of the pandemic and ensure there remains two viable national airlines in Australia.

Bain Capital have entered into a contract of sale to buy Virgin Australia and have made commitments to inject capital into the airline to secure its sustainable long-term future. Now more than ever we need to see the sale finalised and those commitments met.

We know that the Federal Government’s refusal to put in place a comprehensive aviation industry support plan and extend JobKeeper to all aviation workers has led to enormous uncertainty and now more job losses.

Throughout this pandemic, other countries’ governments have chosen to support their aviation industries.

But this Government has chosen to turn their backs on aviation workers in the middle of the worst recession we have seen since the Great Depression.

Today’s announcement underlines just how urgent it is for the Government to put in place an aviation industry support plan and provide all working Australians with a national economic reconstruction plan that will deliver decent, secure jobs.

ENDS

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