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## **Government back down on Qantas a win for unions and their supporters**

Thousands of jobs have been saved by the Government's back down on its push to open up Qantas to foreign investment through the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill, the ACTU said today.

"This is a victory for all the union members at Qantas and their supporters in the community who lobbied and petitioned MPs to make sure Qantas jobs would not be sent off shore under the Government's proposed bill," said ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver.

"There have already been announcements of 5000 job losses at Qantas, if the Government had gotten its way that number could have doubled, tripled or more," said Mr Oliver.

"The 30,000 Australians who work for Qantas can now sleep easier knowing their jobs are safe, not to mention the 165,000 who work in related tourism and manufacturing sectors, let alone the vital services and infrastructure Qantas provides to our community."

Qantas worker Leigh Millerchip was part of the delegation that went to Canberra to lobby Members of Parliament in March.

"It's such a relief to know my job and the jobs of my colleagues will stay in Australia and we can continue to make a living and provide for our families," said Mr Millerchip.

To achieve a level playing field the Government must provide support and assistance like the governments of Qantas' main competitors provide, ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said.

"The truth is that Qantas' main competitors all receive substantial backing and financial support from their governments. There is no level playing field for Qantas without the Government acknowledging this."

"The ACTU and unions will continue to seek assurances from the Qantas Board and management that there will be no further job losses and that they have a plan for the future sustainable growth of Qantas that goes beyond short term cost cutting," Mr Oliver said.

"There is a strong national interest in ensuring a viable Australian airline which maintains a true Australian identity and supports local employment and investment.

"We call on the Abbott Government to stop playing politics with our national airline and instead start to govern in the interests of Australian people and Australian jobs."

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