

# AIR PILOT



The Journal of the Australian Federation of Air Pilots

# AIR PILOT CONTENTS//



The Journal of the Australian Federation of Air Pilots

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# the PRESIDENT'S VIEW

## Captain Louise Pole

It certainly has been a busy time since our last edition of AIR PILOT. Of note, there have been significant management changes at many of our larger operators and finally we have begun to see some well overdue improvements in many pilot agreements. These gradual improvements have not been easily won. It has required determination and unity from within our various pilot groups. In the second half of 2023 we lodged a number of protected industrial action ballots and have actually taken protected industrial action at a handful of operations, including Network Aviation, CASA and a number of helicopter operators.

Protected industrial action is always a last resort for the AFAP but it is also a lawful and legitimate means to seek improvements to agreement terms and conditions. Now that some operations have finally begun to provide reasonable improvements to terms and conditions, hopefully we will see other operators following suit without the need for disruptive action as well as recognising the low supply and high demand pilot market we are now seeing.

It appears that many pilots have been very poorly treated in recent years. In some cases, this has made them angry and resentful. We do however need to move beyond simply trying to punish or 'get even' with our employers. In all cases, your pilot negotiators have worked exceptionally hard to reach "in principle" agreement with the belief that it is the best achievable deal. As a pilot member, it is important to rationally consider the document and set aside the emotion prior to your vote.


Recently I have had face to face meetings with various incoming CEOs, including Stephanie Tully at Jetstar and Vanessa Hudson at Qantas. Keeping a communication channel open to the highest levels of aviation management is important and something that the AFAP strives to achieve and maintain. It goes without saying, we will not always agree but it is important that we communicate our positions openly and strive to find workable solutions wherever possible. These recent meetings have been extremely positive, and I am hopeful that we may start to see a change in approach to pilot industrial relations in Australia.

The AFAP's aim is to work constructively with employers and industry to build a sustainable pilot pipeline and structured, rewarding career path. Recently I was appointed to the Aviation Strategic Workforce Planning Committee. This Committee is coordinated by a government body called Industry Skills Australia and seeks to bring together senior representatives from across the industry. I am optimistic that our involvement will provide a clear voice for Australian pilots and enhance the training and career path for pilots.

We also continue to advocate on behalf of Australian pilots at a variety of other government and industry forums, including through our input into the Government's Aviation White Paper. Through these forums we are continuing to argue that the only long-term solution to the current pilot shortage is by ensuring that pilots have a rewarding and clear career path.

I hope you find this Christmas/New Year edition of AIR PILOT informative and interesting.

Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and enjoyable festive season.



**Captain Louise Pole**  
AFAP President



*Qantas CEO Vanessa Hudson (left) met with AFAP President Capt Louise Pole at Qantas Head Office in Sydney on 11 December.*

# New Brisbane Office Opening Event

## Excerpt of AFAP President Capt Louise Pole's speech delivered 19 July 2023 in Brisbane

"By way of background, for several years the AFAP Finance Committee has carefully managed our financial reserves to a point where the current committee felt comfortable to commit to a long-term investment.

After exploring all avenues, including investing in the stock market, the decision was unanimously made that the most appropriate and conservative use of members' money was to invest in bricks and mortar property.

For decades, the heart of the Federation's operations has been at the South Melbourne head office and, more recently, we also rented office space for our Brisbane based staff at Eagle Junction and then Racecourse Road.

The decision was made to focus our search for a suitable property in Brisbane to allow us to establish a permanent base in Queensland where the largest proportion of the Federation's membership is located and to accommodate our growing staff.

After an extensive search, in 2019 we made a successful offer on this freehold commercial building at 33 Montpelier Road, Bowen Hills.

Soon after, COVID-19 arrived, resulting in one of the most challenging periods for our membership in recent history. Fortunately, by purchasing the property and locking in the refurbishment contract prior to the pandemic, we avoided the rising construction costs that have since disrupted the commercial property market, and the value of our property has significantly increased in the interim.

During the pandemic, the building was meticulously refurbished, resulting in this modern, three-storey office providing multiple conference rooms, a well-equipped event space, ample on-site parking and offices to accommodate our five Brisbane based staff and visiting staff and officials from interstate.

The Federation's ability to purchase and refurbish this building outright is a direct result of the sound financial management of the Federation's resources by our past and present Federal Officers, and the dedication of our elected officials at the branch and council level to grow the membership base.

I would like to thank my fellow Finance Committee members for their contributions during this process and, in particular, Life Members Rob Nicholson and George Brown for their involvement in the selection of the property, subsequent refurbishment and ongoing management.

This building is an asset for the benefit of all members to enjoy. It has already proven to be a sound investment that will further secure the Federation's financial future, an achievement that we should all be proud of. It is my pleasure to officially open the AFAP's Brisbane office, a significant milestone in the Federation's 85th year."



*AFAP Executive Director Simon Lutton assists AFAP President Captain Louise Pole in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the AFAP's Brisbane office in Bowen Hills.*



*AFAP Presidents (from left): Capt Bryan Murray (2006-2014), Capt Louise Pole (2018-present), Capt Rob Nicholson (1990-1996) and Capt Brian McCarthy (1987-1990).*



*From left: Capt George Brown (Trustee), Capt Rob Nicholson (Trustee), Capt Louise Pole (President), Joanne Janes (Operations Manager) and Simon Lutton (Executive Director).*



*From left: Capt Todd Mickleson, FO Steve Hungerford, Capt David Holt and CASA's Principal Medical Officer Dr Kate Manderson.*

# WOMEN'S NETWORK //

The AFAP Women's Network held its Annual General Meeting on 20 July at the AFAP's Brisbane office.

To open the meeting AFAP Senior Industrial/Legal Officer Deanna Cain presented on industrial relations reforms, recent and forthcoming legal developments and industry recruitment trends.

AFAP President and Women's Network Convenor Captain Louise Pole also hosted a Women's Network meeting in Cairns on 17 August.

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**International Women's Day 2024**  
**Thursday 7 March 2024**  
**Brisbane (venue to be announced)**



*Capt Louise Pole (foreground) hosted the July Women's Network meeting at the AFAP's Brisbane office.*

## WOMEN IN THE AVIATION INDUSTRY INITIATIVE

Sydney-based Jetstar Pilot Federation member Micheala Ripa has achieved a milestone by becoming Jetstar's youngest ever female captain at just 28.

With parents who are both helicopter pilots, she had dreamt of piloting her own aircraft since she was a teen and then went on to complete her ATPL subjects, gain a Grade 3 Instructor Rating and undertake charter work.

In 2013, she joined the Jetstar pilot cadetship program and began flying a Katana Diamond 20 (DA20) then progressed to flying a twin-engine Twinstar (DA42). In 2016 she was employed as a First Officer on Jetstar's A320 flying both interstate and internationally.



*Jetstar's youngest ever female captain Micheala Ripa.*

Captain Ripa is among the 6% of licensed pilots in Australia who are women, a participation rate that the AFAP and many others are keen to improve.

The Federal Government's Women in the Aviation Industry Initiative encourages girls and women to pursue one of the many careers available in aviation.

Since 2019, the Initiative has invested \$3.1 million in funding to support a range of activities to increase visibility and awareness of the sector amongst young girls and women.

These have reached more than 200,000 women and girls, directly engaging with and mentoring more than 30,000 students, parents, teachers and career advisors.

Research from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency shows that in 2021-22 women represented between 4.1% and 21.1% of employees in aviation - including as pilots, air traffic controllers, mechanics and engineers - which have traditionally been male-dominated roles.

Almost half of the Australian workforce are women. If the aviation industry does not fully take advantage of this available talent pool, it will miss out on a significant opportunity and will likely face continuing labour and skill shortages in a competitive labour market.

This highlights the need to confront the challenges of both increasing the proportion of women choosing a career in aviation and then encouraging those women already in the industry to stay.

# AFAP Annual Convention

The 64th Annual Convention was held on 6 October with Council Chairs, Vice-Chairs and pilot council Convention delegates joining the AFAP's Federal Officers, staff and others at Kingscliff, NSW.

The day before a series of pre-Convention seminars saw delegates enjoying interesting presentations from Capt Craig Bomben (Boeing, USA), Capt Ray Werdley (Human Ballistics) and Capt Naomi Radke (AFAP S&T).

At the Convention dinner, a **Life Membership** was awarded to long-term Eastern Pilot Federation member Captain Cam Terry (in person having been announced at the 2021 Convention in his absence).

Also awarded at this year's Convention was a **Scroll of Merit** to Captain Russell Thompson. Russell joined the AFAP in July 2004 and soon began volunteering his service as an elected official, including as a QLD Branch Committee Member & Convention Rep (2006-2012) and serving on the Sunstate Pilot Council (SPC) Committee as Chair (2012-2016 and again 2021-2022) and Vice-Chair (2016-2021). Since 2022 he has been a SPC Committee member.

Raised on a dairy farm in the Goulburn Valley (Victoria), his flying career commenced with General Aviation in rural Queensland where he progressed to Senior Base and Chief Pilot.

Russell joined Sunstate in 2001 and has negotiated every Sunstate EA since 2005. He has also held a position as a Check and Trainer for Sunstate for more than a decade. Russell has consistently gone into bat for his Sunstate colleagues. He has done many pilot interview representations and has always been there in times of need for AFAP members at Sunstate.

Sunstate Pilot Council (SPC) Chair Capt Jarrod Blaker and AFAP Trustee Capt George Brown (also a Life Member and former QLD Branch Chair, SPC Vice-Chair & Technical Director) describe Russell as "a man of integrity who is a calm and a responsible industrial advocate [and] highly respected within the Sunstate pilot group and throughout the AFAP more broadly".

Both Russell and Cam have many long years of service to the AFAP and their clearly demonstrated outstanding qualities made them both very worthy recipients.



*Capt Russell Thompson received the Scroll of Merit Award 'in recognition of his sustained efforts in serving the Federation with loyalty, honour and distinction, thereby substantially contributing to the achievement of the objectives for which the Federation has been founded'.*



*Vice-President (Membership) FO Michael McGinnis (in the foreground) with other delegates from the Virgin Pilot Federation.*



*AFAP Principal Officers (from left): Capt Bryan Murray, Capt George Brown, Capt Rob Nicholson, Capt Philip Remilton, FO Michael McGinnis, Capt Ben Bollen and Capt Louise Pole.*



*AFAP Executive Director Simon Lutton addressing convention delegates.*



*Capt Craig Bomben, Boeing's Enterprise Chief Pilot provided a briefing on Boeing's role in the Australian market, advancements in airliner technology, and the importance of pilot involvement in new aircraft design.*



*Capt Cam Terry (right) was awarded Life Membership of the AFAP 'in recognition of his outstanding and distinguished service and is shown here being congratulated by Australian Air Pilots Mutual Benefit Fund Chair (and former Eastern colleague) Capt David Harget.*

# EASTERN

## Pilot Federation

The Eastern Pilot Council (EPC) committee, having recently reverted to a full contingent, has had to bid farewell to Michael Ward who transferred into the Sunstate operation.

With membership growth having been achieved recently it is hoped the EPC committee will quickly be able to co-opt another pilot to ensure the valuable work of the committee can continue well into next year. This will be especially important as there is ongoing recruitment planned throughout 2024.

The EPC committee currently consists of Nathan Hayes (Chair), Ben Moss (Vice-Chair), Tim Anderson (Secretary), Shabbir Parekh, Brendan Quaiife, James Kosenko and Will Hamilton.

### Enterprise bargaining

With the recently enhanced composition of the EPC committee, so too was the AFAP negotiating team also expanded to include Ben Moss, Tim Anderson, James Kosenko and Will Hamilton.

From the outset of having the full contingent it was clear to the team that the company were keen to revise their position of deviating from their 3% wages policy, despite the AFAP voicing the strong views of the membership.

With an impasse reached the negotiating team recognised that the only remaining option to convince the company to move was that of undertaking a PIA ballot, which took place during September.

The result was clear with an average of 92% voting to endorse all forms of action.

The change in position from the company was swift as both the Eastern and Sunstate Pilot ballots were returned on the same day and the clear message was the pilot group was angry.

After a number of urgent meetings in-principle agreement was reached along the following lines:

- Over and above the 3% wages policy – a 5% 'wash through' being applied to all pay points



*Seated (left to right) at the EPC committee meeting held 31 May are Capt Shabbir Parekh, Capt Brendan Quaiife, FO Tim Anderson, EPC Vice-chair Capt Ben Moss and EPC Chair Capt Nathan Hayes while joining online are FO James Kosenko, FO Michael Ward and FO Will Hamilton.*

- A revised junior pay scale to enable faster movement onto the main/higher salary scale after 1500 hours.
- An additional 1% above the super guarantee rate.
- Additional pay points for years 10 to 15 of service.
- 10 days off – with the company able to purchase back one day (equivalent to a 5% increase in salary)
- A revised 'Duty Hour Allowance Away' to include all time away from home base or an option for pilots to retain the Duty Hour Allowance payment, increased by approximately 50%.

While drafting has virtually concluded, the negotiating team is confident that strong ballot result was instrumental in forcing the company to significantly revise their position and it is expected that the relevant documentation and subsequent ballot of the pilot group will take place during December.



# NETWORK

## Pilot Council

There have been a number of significant developments at Network Aviation as a result of the growing level of AFAP membership and, more importantly, increased membership participation this year.

### Network Pilot Council

Delegates at the 2023 AFAP Annual Convention unanimously voted in support of forming a Network Pilot Council (NPC) under the AFAP Rules. This is a significant milestone and will ensure that Network pilot representatives receive all the protections under the Fair Work Act of being formally elected pilot representatives.

It will also mean that they have full control and autonomy in matters that affect Network Aviation pilots as well as carry votes at the AFAP Executive Committee and Annual Convention. We look forward to welcoming the first Network Aviation Pilot Council Committee coming into force as part of the 2024 AFAP council election process. Forming a formal council under the AFAP Rules is a testament to the high-quality work and commitment of the current AFAP pilot representatives at Network Aviation.

### Enterprise Bargaining

The new proposed *Network Aviation Pilots Enterprise Agreement 2023* was narrowly voted down on 13 December (with 54% of the pilots voting against it).

This was the second time an agreement has been voted down at Network Aviation. An earlier proposal was voted down in October by over 90% of Network pilots. While the second proposal was an improvement on the first, it clearly was not sufficient to achieve majority support.

To say it has been a difficult and protracted negotiation would be an enormous understatement. As well as voting down two proposals, the pilot group has taken protected industrial action (PIA), including a 24 hour stop work on 4 October and participated in conferences in the Fair Work Commission over 7-10 November. It was this FWC process facilitated by Deputy President Binet that led to the latest proposal which was not quite sufficient to achieve majority support amongst pilots.

Network pilot representatives are now determining the best path forward. Hopefully an agreement will be achieved before too long as Network pilots currently remain among the lowest paid jet pilots in the country.

Special mention should be made of the hard work and diligence of the AFAP Network negotiating team – Stephen Maughan (NPC Chair), Cameron Mapley and Ben Walmsley, ably advised by AFAP Senior Industrial Officer Chris Aikens.



*AFAP Executive Director Simon Lutton and Senior Industrial Officer Chris Aikens presented alongside the NPC reps in Perth on 4 December.*



*A meeting held 13 August in Perth reviewed the position of the pilot group towards an EA and began to address other ongoing matters.*

# OVERSEAS

## Membership

### Considering working as a pilot in the US?

With the global aviation economy well and truly rebounding many Australian pilots have once again looked abroad to advance their careers.

As an AFAP member you have the opportunity to remain in touch with us and continue to access a number of our professional services and resources.

While the AFAP cannot represent you industrially or legally outside of Australia, there are still many other ways retaining an AFAP Overseas Membership can be of benefit to you.

#### Membership Benefits

One major benefit of retaining AFAP Overseas Membership is remaining eligible for the Australian Air Pilots Mutual Benefit Fund (AAPMBF).

You do not need to maintain a CASA Class 1 medical while overseas for this benefit, however any claims will be assessed by that standard (Rule 2.8).

If you have let your AAPMBF lapse already having moved overseas, you might be able to return to the fund under the Reinstatement Rule (2.4; restrictions apply). For more information consult the AAPMBF.

The AFAP also runs training for members (e.g. accident and incident response, safety interview support, runway safety liaison), as well as professional development and networking opportunities (through AFAP's CrewRoom, New Wings, Resilient Pilot, Women's Network etc).

Members are of course entitled to join any of these, and while many events are held in Australia, there is also remote virtual access that may be available.

Members retain access to the welfare representative framework of the AFAP, as well as access to the Member Assistance Program (MAP).

You (or an immediate family member) can call 1300 307 912 (within Australia) or +619 9388 9000 (outside Australia) for free, confidential counselling with a registered psychologist. In-person, telephone and online appointments are available.

Members also continue to be able to use the discounts for LogTenPro, Europcar, and Union Shopper.

#### Safety & Technical Resources

All members of the AFAP - including Overseas members - have access to the AFAP Safety & Technical resources including assistance and advice on safety & technical matters, and opportunities for input towards the various policy, regulatory, and legislative developments affecting our profession.

This extends not only within the Australian context e.g. CASA, but also internationally through the International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations (IFALPA) and the member associations representing over 100,000 pilots worldwide.

Overseas members may also continue to contribute to their profession by becoming a Safety & Technical representative; your global experience, expertise, and perspectives are highly valued. Overseas members have sought guidance on, and contributed to, pilot matters across the globe including the North Atlantic and the Far East.

Importantly, Overseas Members can access the global network of immediate pilot assistance in the case of an accident or incident, anywhere in the world via IFALPA. The AFAP can connect you to the nearest pilot association or regional representative to assist in the case of an event.

#### Membership Fees for Overseas Members

Annual fees for our pilot members living overseas are \$330 for Captains and \$165 for First Officers.

#### Staying in touch while Overseas

- Transitioning to Overseas Membership?
- Returning to the AFAP?
- Know someone who should join or rejoin?

We want to stay in touch with Australian pilots wherever you are in the world.

**Captain Stuart Beveridge** (United Airlines)  
National Pilot Council - Overseas Representative  
[stuart.beveridge@afap.org.au](mailto:stuart.beveridge@afap.org.au)

To renew or apply for overseas membership contact:  
[membership@afap.org.au](mailto:membership@afap.org.au)

## Australian Pilots in the USA

In non-unionized countries and workforces, it is very important to carefully read the contract of employment conditions.

Overseas legal advice may be necessary. In unionized countries and workforces, pilots should join and be actively involved in their applicable union.

Specifically for those in the United States, the AFAP recently discussed with our fraternal organisation, the US Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA-US) on what Australian pilots should do and expect when coming to the US for pilot employment.

Based on our discussions with ALPA-US, we advise pilots considering moving to the US for a flying role to:

- Ensure that your employment is covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement, negotiated by a union.
- Be cautious of training bonds attached to employment and how that might prevent you from being able to leave.
- Look out for opaque conditions; ensure that you are employed under the same conditions as your local pilot colleagues.
- Avoid non-unionized carriers where possible. These carriers are notorious for creative interpretations of conditions and laws, and redress for grievances is either costly, or difficult to impossible.
- Use the ALPA app, even if you are not at an ALPA carrier. The ALPA app has a number of open resources available to all pilots including KCM access, jumpseat flight finder, and Flight and Duty Limit calculators.

### Download and use the ALPA Mobile Apps:

[www.alpa.org/resources/alpa-apps](http://www.alpa.org/resources/alpa-apps)

**AFAP Member Assistance Program:**  
Call 1300 307 912 (within Australia) or  
+619 9388 9000 (outside Australia) for  
free, confidential counselling with a  
registered psychologist.

## Pilot unions in North America

In North America, pilots are restricted to membership of the union established in their employee group:

### **Air Line Pilots Association, International:**

43 pilot groups across United States and Canada (over 75,000 members) including Alaska Airlines, CommuteAir, Delta Air Lines, FedEx, Frontier, Hawaiian Airlines, JetBlue, Kalitta, Piedmont, Spirit and United Airlines

### **International Brotherhood of Teamsters:**

ABX Air, Allegiant Air, Atlas Air, Cape Air, GoJet, Horizon Air, Miami Air, Northern Air Cargo, Omni International, Republic and Silver Airways

### **Allied Pilots Association:**

American Airlines

### **Southwest Pilots Association:**

Southwest

### **Independent Pilots Association:**

United Parcel Service (UPS)

### **Major non-unionized employers:**

Ameriflight and Skywest



United Airlines pilots approved a new contract on 29 September with pay raises over the life of the contract, as well as quality of work-life and work rule improvements, sick leave and vacation improvements, and an increase to retirement benefits for United's 16,000 pilots. ALPA reported 82% of pilots who took part voted in favour of the four-year contract, which it valued at \$US10+ billion.

"I am proud that our pilot group will be recognised for their contributions to the company's success. United Airlines cannot thrive without the hard work of its labour groups," said United MEC Chair Capt. Garth Thompson.

# SAFETY & TECHNICAL //

## AFAP SAFETY OCCURENCE GUIDE

The AFAP has developed a valuable resource to empower you in the face of safety-related occurrences – the AFAP Safety Occurrence Guide. The comprehensive guide has been carefully considered to assist you in navigating the challenging aftermath of an operational event, be it an accident, incident, or performance event.

The guide has two purposes:

- To ensure you understand the process, feel supported and return to line as expeditiously as possible
- To clearly define the AFAP's expectations of best practise to the Australian aviation industry

### Understanding the Guide:

The AFAP's Safety Occurrence Guide provides a framework for members of what to do and what to expect following a safety-related occurrence. It offers insights into the support available, outlines the safety event interview process, and sheds light on typical human reactions to such circumstances. The content is a compilation of experience and knowledge gained from fellow AFAP members and AFAP staff and representatives supporting them.

The AFAP intends the guide to influence the aviation industry and to set the expectations for safety and performance related occurrences in Australia. It should be noted that not all operators adhere to best practice.

### Early Engagement for Optimal Outcomes

Through the AFAP's international pilot union connections, experiential data suggests pilots engaging support earlier, post an occurrence, are more likely to remain in the industry longer term. The guide encourages members to contact the AFAP post an occurrence as soon as possible with our own examples of pilots seeking guidance within 3-4 days post occurrence being more likely to experience a desirable outcome and more expeditious return to normal duties.

### Understanding Human Stress Responses

The human stress responses of flight-or-fight to any unexpected situation are normal. As pilots operate in an extremely complex environment, experiencing a safety or performance occurrence throughout your career is likely with expected normal elevated reaction to the event.

The guide delves into the various stress responses, offering insights into anticipated behaviours associated with survival states and the importance of early support.

Once engaged, the various levels of AFAP support are explained and can include a tailored recommendation unique to the member and their operator. It usually becomes clear to each member what type of support they are comfortable with and include some of the options in Figure 1.

Reaching out for assistance including calling the AFAP can help interrupt the survival response reaction, facilitating the return to line process.

### Industry Best Practices

The guide emphasises best practices after a safety event, including immediate actions, preparation for meetings, and maintaining post-meeting connections. It also addresses the importance of positive safety culture behaviours and the role of AFAP in mitigating undesirable operator responses.

### Accessing Support

Remember, reaching out to AFAP is about supporting your return to line and you have the choice about what level of support you think will serve you best.

AFAP's 24/7 Emergency Hotline (+61 (0) 459 747 757) is available for immediate assistance. During business hours you can contact the office at +61 (0) 3 9928 5737.

The Member Assistance Program offers free, confidential counselling (1300 307 912).

**The AFAP Safety Occurrence Guide is a tool to empower you during challenging times. Please familiarise yourself with it and reach out for support if needed.**



Figure 1: Levels of AFAP Support from a pilot in the AFAP Safety & Technical team or an AFAP Industrial Officer (or both).

# NAVIGATING THE FUTURE OF AVIATION

As the aviation industry hurtles towards an uncertain future, the AFAP is advocating for strategic measures to address current challenges and ensure a robust industry by 2050. In the supplementary submission to the Aviation Green Paper, the AFAP emphasizes the critical need for immediate action in the face of severe staffing shortages, impending pilot experience crises, and the industry's reliance on yet-to-be-proven technologies.

## Addressing the Pilot Shortage: A Race Against Time

The AFAP's primary concern is the severe shortage of experienced pilots, a crisis that poses a substantial risk to regional connectivity and local economies. Urgent strategic policies are needed to increase pilot supply through additional training programs and incentives. A proposed tripartite body on pilot training oversight, involving government, AFAP, and employers, aims to take a collaborative and holistic approach to the issue.

To attract more individuals, including women, to pursue careers in aviation, the AFAP calls for industry-wide initiatives, such as a bonded program for remote area service, tiered industry training levies, and portable entitlements. By aligning with successful programs like the AFAP Resilient Pilot initiative, the AFAP seeks to create a resilient and diverse workforce, ensuring the industry's sustainability.

The AFAP's Resilient Pilot program has proven successful in fostering confidence and competence among participants running for over two years with success attributed to the no jeopardy positive environment. With the right level of government support, the AFAP believes the Resilient Pilot Program also has the potential to make entry into an aviation career less daunting and prepare pilots for future career steps by developing competencies and behaviours to match the current and future technology.

## Reforming Aviation Agencies: A Call for Accountability

The AFAP advocates for reforms within aviation agencies like Airservices and CASA to better align with industry needs and international standards. Inappropriate development around airports, fatigue risks, and cabin air quality are critical issues that require immediate attention. The AFAP is calling to have more input in oversight bodies and professional development programs, and aims to ensure that the voices of working pilots are directly represented in policy decisions.

The AFAP believe Airservices Australia (AsA) emerges as a problematic agency within the aviation industry, operating with excessive autonomy and lacking sufficient oversight and accountability measures. In recent years, there has been a notable reduction in staff resourcing at AsA, contrary to its claims. Through Freedom of Information access, the AFAP acquired data from CASA, revealing a concerning trend in the growing prevalence of TIBA airspace intended as an exceptional contingency measure. The data strongly suggests that AsA has miscalculated its resourcing requirements, and the AFAP attributes this, at least in part, to the funding and commercial focus of the agency.

## Supporting Regional Aviation: Infrastructure for Viability

Recognising the challenges faced by struggling regional airports, the AFAP proposes transferring responsibilities to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport.



The AFAP again this year proudly sponsored the aviation human factors conference [PACDEFF](#) which was held on 12-13 September in Brisbane. Pictured (from left) are AFAP Safety & Technical Director Philip Remilton (National Pilot Council), Brian Greeves, Vanessa Pillay (Qantas Pilot Council), Lachlan Gray (AFAP S&T Officer), Steven Hungerford (Virgin Pilot Federation), Geoff McInnes, David Mogford, Christian Antoniak, Anna Wakelin (AFAP technical rep and IFALPA Regional Vice-President, South of Pacific) and Marcus Diamond (AFAP S&T Manager).

This strategic move would provide consistent resources, along with infrastructure grants and subsidies, to support regional airports facing viability challenges. Such measures are crucial to maintaining connectivity in remote communities and ensuring the sustainability of regional aviation.

## Environmental Sustainability: International Efforts

The AFAP supports and contributes to IFALPA positions on reducing aviation emissions. By aligning with international efforts, the AFAP aims to maximise aviation's contribution to achieving net-zero emissions, fostering a more sustainable future for the industry.

## Ongoing Engagement: Shaping the Future Together

The AFAP commits to ongoing engagement with the government, providing feedback on the Green Paper and advocating for pilot representatives to have a formal role in oversight bodies. By actively participating in consultations and input sessions, the AFAP aims to help shape the future of aviation through collaboration and strategic planning.

The AFAP's further submission to the Aviation Green Paper addresses not only the challenges of tomorrow but also the pressing issues of today showcased in the recent AFAP Convention theme 'Here and Now'. By advocating for immediate measures, the AFAP seeks to bridge the gap between the present and 2050, ensuring a resilient, sustainable, and thriving aviation industry for Australia.

The AFAP's 'Further Submission to the Aviation Green Paper consultation - Nov 2023' is available at the website: [www.afap.org.au](http://www.afap.org.au)

# REX

## Pilot Federation

### Regional Express Saab Fleet

In the past month, the AFAP was able to resolve several disputes with Rex management, in the Saab operation.

The first of these issues arose after Rex recently reported a profit before tax in excess of \$12m for the Financial Year ending on 30 June 2023. According to their current Pilots' enterprise agreement (EA), a profit before tax in excess of \$10 million was meant to trigger the payment of all outstanding back-pay entitlements contained within the EA.

The AFAP first raised the issue in writing with Rex's management in early November 2023. Thankfully, Rex subsequently acknowledged their obligations in relation to this matter, and the relevant payments were made to all relevant Pilots.

At the same time, the AFAP had become aware that Rex was not paying leave loading on Annual Leave, in accordance with the terms of the current EA. In fact, they were continuing to pay the loading in accordance with the terms of the previous EA, which amounted to only 2/3 of the rate specified in the 2022 Agreement. Once again, Rex rectified that issue after the issue was highlighted by AFAP representatives.

Finally, the AFAP had advised Rex of another dispute in October 2023, this time regarding the timing of when 'RDO Buy-Back' payments (a provision in the current EA) should be made.

The AFAP maintained that the payments should be made to Pilots at the time their roster was published, whereas Rex advised that it intended to make the payments as much as four weeks later. After correspondence and further discussions between Rex and the AFAP, Rex has now resumed the practice of making the payment at the time the roster is published.

### Regional Express Boeing 737 Fleet

In recent months, only a limited number of concerns have been raised with AFAP staff by members on Rex's 737 fleet.

There are at least two matters that the AFAP is currently progressing relating to provisions in the new 737 enterprise agreement (EA) approved earlier this year.

The first matter relates to the requirement in the new EA for the Rex Airlines Domestic Pilot's Committee to be established, in order that Rex, the Pilots and AFAP staff can regularly meet to discuss the implementation and operation of the various conditions contained in the EA, with the overall aim to reduce the level of disputation about EA matters.

Rex is already meant to have developed, in consultation with the AFAP, the composition of the Committee, and the meeting protocols.

Further, the Committee was to meet every three months. Unfortunately, none of those outcomes have as yet occurred. The AFAP is in the process of writing to Rex, intending to rectify those shortcomings.

Further to that, there are still questions to be answered by Rex concerning their method for compiling their seniority list ("Pilot List"), at present.

After being questioned previously about the matter, Rex provided the AFAP an ambiguous response, that did not seem to align with the provisions of the current EA. The AFAP is currently awaiting a further response from Rex on the issue.

### National Jet Express

The near four-year saga that has been the NJE (REX nee Cobham) enterprise bargaining has drawn to a close. Successive reports over that journey have covered the progress and dramas, including COVID related delays and the REX acquisition, so we will not traverse that territory again.

It is now only satisfying to say that the negotiations have finally concluded in an agreement which has been put to the pilots to vote on and was overwhelmingly endorsed.

The Fair Work Commission has approved the agreement, subject to a couple of undertakings from the company which were agreed.

It is now time to bed down the agreement and ensure the benefits it provides are delivered to pilots, including each CPI increase of which many have been, and continue to be, significant - dating back each year to 2021 and continuing to 2025.

## Pel-Air Aviation

Pel Air continues with challenges operating with very low pilot numbers at both NSW and VIC bases. New employment contracts with variations have been issued regarding the Victorian Ambulance service arrangements, members have sought AFAP assistance due to concerns of minimal improvements and additional conditions of employment including issues relating to award payments, and CCTV arrangements in the flight deck.

Enterprise bargaining continues without significant progress to a final Agreement, mainly due to Pel Air's position to offer conditions same or less than current protections than the Award and offering limited time and effort to progress negotiations.

More is required for an Agreement to be worthy of a yes vote. Bargaining is also not assisted by Pel Air's position that the National Employment Standards relating to hour of work do not apply to the pilot group due to the FRMS.

Ongoing discussions between the parties continue, and it is required for Pel Air to improve the understanding of the application of the Award and the NES and to get a decent Agreement.

The AFAP has continued to oppose CCTV in the flight deck (although it is NSW Ambulance policy), as well as new issues occurring in Ambulance Victoria. There are ongoing concerns about Pel Air's approach of including terms in contracts inconsistent to approaches to aviation safety in Australia.



*Pel Air Saab 340A at Wagga Wagga airport*



## Member Benefit - LogTen Pro

As a member-only benefit, the AFAP offers members a special offer the subscription for the LogTen professional pilot logbook for iPhone, iPad, Watch, and Mac.

This is a 50% discount on the first year for new subscribers (for either LogTen Basic or LogTen Pro) and ongoing discount thereafter depending on chosen subscription.

Existing LogTen subscribers are also eligible to receive the AFAP ongoing discounted rate.

This market-leading advanced logbook offers pilots:

- Total flexibility - hundreds of options for tracking everything you need and want to track, as well as the ability to create your own filters, groups, and reports;
- Instant access to detailed analysis of your data including tracking certificates, currencies and endorsements;
- iCloud backup, instant iCloud sync between devices, digital signatures, print official logbook reports etc

**Sign up now at <https://coradine.com/logten4afap/>**

You will be asked to provide you AFAP membership number. If you need help with remembering it, contact AFAP Member Services via [admin@afap.org.au](mailto:admin@afap.org.au).

If you are already a LogTen Pro customer please contact the Coradine support team via [marketing@coradine.com](mailto:marketing@coradine.com) to ensure you are getting the ongoing discount.

Coradine can also provide support for pilots wanting to switch over to LogTen from another electronic format, their support team would be happy to help you.

# NATIONAL

## Pilot Council

### Airnorth

The *Aircrew Logistics Pilots Enterprise Agreement 2006* automatically terminated on 7 December, as it was a pre-2010 agreement (i.e. a "zombie agreement"). Accordingly, Airnorth now operates under the *Air Pilots Award 2020 Award*.

Although having approximately 12 months' notice of the termination of its zombie agreement, Airnorth did not engage with its pilots or the AFAP on arrangements to follow the termination until the very last moment.

First, the company announced that it would put a new enterprise agreement (EA) out to vote to replace the zombie agreement. This proposed EA was rushed with minimum consultation with the broader pilot group. The Airnorth representative pilot group, the Aircrew Logistics Pilot Group (ALPG) did its very best to make last minute improvements, but had a very limited opportunity to do so in light of the rushed process imposed by Airnorth.

Given the limited opportunity, the ALPG did an outstanding job at getting rid of some of the worst provisions contained in the proposed EA. However, despite the work of the ALPG, the vote result was 'no' with a 31/20 split and one pilot abstaining. Airnorth has announced negotiations will recommence in early 2024. We hope that Airnorth will engage in a more considered and deliberate set of negotiations for a new EA.

Second, the rostering provisions in the Award are different to those contained in the zombie agreement. To avoid the Award rostering provisions, and at the last minute the day before the zombie agreement terminated, Airnorth offered Individual Flexibility Agreements (IFAs) to the entire pilot group across both fleets. IFAs are voluntary, and some pilots have chosen not to enter into those IFAs. Accordingly, now Airnorth has to operate under two sets of rostering rules.

We hope that Airnorth can work efficiently and productively with the AFAP and the broader pilot group in the new year to negotiate on a new EA that provides certainty and consistency for all.

### Airwork

The last six months have been difficult for this night freight operation. Negotiations for a new EA, that had been on and off for three years, had stalled. The end result was that in October a PIA ballot was undertaken.

The day the ballot result was announced the company also advised employees that it had lost the main Toll Group contract from mid-2024. This contract underwrote the majority of the work within the operation.

Consequently what was to be a resumption of negotiations after the ballot result turned into consultation regarding the whole future of the operation. This will be ongoing into early 2024.

### Alliance & Bravo

Alliance (and its subsidiary company - Bravo) are persisting with efforts to negotiate a single (joint) enterprise agreement (EA) covering Queensland-based pilots. Unfortunately, throughout the negotiations, the management of Alliance and Bravo have stubbornly refused to acknowledge the pay rates and work conditions that other comparable operators are currently offering their pilots. groups. Given that mindset, progress has been very difficult to achieve so far.

Meanwhile, after telling their pilots in South Australia that they would have to wait some time before they could commence EA negotiations, Alliance and Bravo unexpectedly announced in mid-December that they now want to start negotiating in January 2024 for a single (joint) EA covering their Adelaide based pilots.

Whilst this is a welcome turnabout by both companies, it does again re-ignite the question as to why the two companies deliberately choose not to do a single EA, to cover all their pilots in Australia. Pilots in Darwin have already expressed their interest in starting EA negotiations, whilst negotiations for a new Alliance F100 Perth EA are required to start no later than the end of March 2024.

The AFAP will correspond further with members in all states about this issue in the coming months.

In the meantime, Bravo's lawyers recently notified the AFAP that Bravo had paid amounts owing to our members that were deducted from their pay, in partial satisfaction of contested training bonds for E-190 type ratings they already held. Bravo also confirmed that they would not pursue the balance alleged to be owing from any of those pilots. As those amounts have now been paid, and Bravo has undertaken to not pursue the balance, the AFAP has discontinued its wage recovery proceedings against Bravo in the Federal Court (that were commenced earlier this year).



## ASL Airlines Australia (Pionair)

Under the new ASL Airlines management, there has been a decrease in the number of issues raised by members. The new management appears to have finally been able to resolve the initial problems they had in relation to the remuneration levels of their pilot group, along with a few rostering issues that were occurring.

The AFAP understands that ASL Airlines is still intent on introducing B737-800 freighters into their operation. This is in addition to plans to introduce E190 operations as well (as originally planned by Pionair).

Although management made it quite clear a number of months ago that they wanted an EA in place by 1 July 2024, they have now 'gone quiet' on that suggestion, which is somewhat of a disappointment, given that the previous EA bargaining process under Pionair management started off at full pace too, only to stop sharply due to the turn-over of pilot representatives and loss of interest from management at the time.

## Bonza Airlines

Bonza has pushed ahead with its plans to utilise a 'wet lease' like arrangement with Canadian airline Flair Airlines, to provide one or two B737 airframes, for a three month period, based at the Gold Coast Airport. To better understand the proposed operation, the AFAP has spoken to both Bonza management and our counterparts in the Canadian pilots union that represents Flair pilots. That has given us an insight into what the Canadian pilots have been told about this temporary arrangement. Despite this, the AFAP still has questions, and will be continuing to raise these matters with Bonza's management.

CASA and Canadian regulator CAA have approved the operation of the C-registered B737s under Bonza's AOC.

The AFAP has also followed up other issues affecting members at Bonza. AFAP met with Bonza management in mid-December to query why the annual leave of some pilots had been cancelled.

Also, questions about rosters and hours of work, along with provisions under the Air Pilots Award 2020, were also discussed. Bonza's managers were insistent that they were working on a number of the issues raised by us, and that various new policies would eventuate in early 2024.

## Chartair

Chartair matters continue with back and forth to the AFAP without any offers to resolve concerns raised. Chartair has requested written correspondence and we plan to clarify a range of issues. The AFAP will assist past and present members employed by Chartair with steps to review employment data to develop their fair work claims as a resolution to these issues.

## Corporate Air

Corporate Air has exercised its right to not consent to the dispute arbitrated in the Fair Work Commission, which left the AFAP with no other choice but to file the matter in the Queensland Magistrates Court which listed it for conference on 30 November 2023.

## Corporate Aircraft Charter

A matter is listed for hearing in January 2024, in which the amount of underpayment will be determined by the South Australian Employment Court. The company will appeal the decisions of the South Australian Employment Court in the Federal Court of Australia.

## Learn to Fly

The AFAP continues to pursue underpayments of wages for casual pilots employed as Flight Instructors. As this matter progresses the company has disputed the work hours (noting data on work hours was provided by the company). The AFAP is seeking a timely resolution and is engaging with the company's representative in order to get a positive outcome for the pilot group. The AFAP will assist to progress matters to fair work claims where required but are hoping to see resolution of these matters without escalation.

## Leidos Airborne Solutions

Negotiations are continuing for a new SAPL enterprise agreement which resumed after almost two years, following a COVID-19 break, in February 2023. Unfortunately, with the acquisition by Cobham Special Mission by Leidos the negotiations basically started anew, and we have progressed little in that time, particularly in terms of remuneration.

At the same time, we have been consumed with a dispute over the terms of the company's proposed fly-in fly-out (FIFO) arrangements where the company is proposing pilots' annual leave be debited from their rostered days off (RDOs).

While bargaining has continued in the background, the dispute was ultimately arbitrated by the FWC which held that the company's proposed annual leave scheme was not permitted because pilots do not enjoy the full benefits of the NES, including the right to apply and take annual leave at a time(s) and duration of their choosing.

This is a significant decision and builds upon a similar decision involving HNZ (at the time) in 2015. The company has appealed the decision and the FWC has granted a stay until the appeal is heard in February.

Meanwhile, SAR is now due to renegotiate their agreement. Although meetings are yet to occur, the company has issued the NERR and we anticipate setting dates from which the AFAP will be looking to schedule ongoing bargaining meetings.



*Pearl Aviation's Metro 23 aircraft at Darwin airport.*

## Pearl

After a negotiation process that lasted for almost ten years, Pearl management recently put a draft enterprise agreement (EA) out to a ballot of its pilot group.

The result was overwhelming, with nearly every pilot voting in favour of the proposed agreement. Since then, the FWC subsequently approved the new EA, with the document coming into operation in early December.

This new EA replaces the previous 1999 agreement, and although it benefits the small pilot group in a number of areas, particularly as it relates to remuneration levels, it does also mean that several existing provisions beneficial to the pilot group have now disappeared.

## Penjet

The AFAP attempted to resolve some pilot underpayment matters via the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission without outcomes. We are currently awaiting directions from the Brisbane Magistrates Court regarding these underpayments.

## Civil Aviation Safety Authority

The AFAP continues to work closely with other unions representing CASA's technical employees, including the Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers' Association (ALAEA) and Professionals Australia (PA).

Members opposed a CASA pay offer that removed Flight Operation Inspectors (FOI) endorsement loadings for new FOIs.

This resulted in a challenging position as CASA used this critical skills recognition for the safety of the aviation industry as a bargaining chip, the FOI loadings have been retained in the agreement.

This bargaining strategy by CASA may have increased the reported disconnect between technical employees and CASA management regarding the recognition of technical skills.

As bargaining approaches an end, the CASA EA offer is currently subject to approvals by the Australian Public Service Commission) the timelines suggest that it may be heading to a vote early February 2024.

The technical unions claims have pushed CASA to include new clauses on workforce planning, workload management, and compensation for additional hours but the offer as a whole will need to be considered further by members at the conclusion of bargaining.

## NATIONAL PILOT COUNCIL INFO SESSIONS - MEL/BNE

The National Pilot Council (NPC) hosted two information seminars (followed by networking) in Melbourne (27 August) and Brisbane (3 December) where attendees participated in a discussion on industrial rights in the aviation industry and learned more about salary rates and working conditions (including rostering and other common issues for commercial pilots).

AFAP Legal/Industrial Officers outlined recent and forthcoming changes to industrial relations legislation, and other critical aspects impacting employment as a professional pilot.

AFAP Safety & Technical staff provided an update on recent progress and success in the effort to improve safety standards (including in fatigue management).

NPC Vice-Chair Rob Close also briefly described how pilots working in General Aviation (in fixed wing or rotary operations) can best make use of the Member Benefits & Services the AFAP has to offer, including mentoring, welfare services and Loss-of-Licence cover through the AAP Mutual Benefit Fund.



*AFAP Legal Counsel Andrew Molnar presented on the recent changes in industrial law at Moorabbin Airport on 27 August.*

**If you would like the AFAP to run a similar information seminar and networking event in your location, please contact NPC Committee Chair Captain Philip Remilton ([philip.remilton@afap.org.au](mailto:philip.remilton@afap.org.au)).**

# Royal Flying Doctor Service

## RFDS Central Operations

A long period of negotiations for a new RFDS-CO EA was concluded when the proposed agreement was voted up by just under 70% of those voting and then ratified by the Fair Work Commission (FWC). Coming into effect on 25 July, it provides significant improvements in pay and conditions for the pilots until July 2027. This was able to be achieved through the outstanding efforts of the two AFAP reps Glenn Beaver and Lyden Hughes.

## RFDS Queensland

Although negotiations for a new EA started back in May 2023, they have not progressed so well. That has remained the case, even after 95% of the pilot group voted 'No' in mid-September, for a proposed EA that RFDS-QLD management concocted. Interestingly, that followed on from a 96% 'No' vote by nurses at RFDS-QLD only a few weeks earlier.

Throughout the negotiations to date, when questioned, RFDS-QLD readily admits that it is short of pilots. It acknowledges, time after time, that it continues to lose multiple Pilots to better opportunities, whilst also admitting that it does not have the overall training capacity at present to train sufficient replacement Pilots in the timeframes required. This has subsequently resulted in an increasing incidence of RFDS-QLD not meeting the requirements of its contract with the Queensland State government.

Despite that situation, RFDS-QLD management has repeatedly shown little willingness to make the hard decisions required, in order to resolve the current concerns of the pilot group. Instead, they have introduced a couple of short-term improvements, along with some other changes that pilots would not see the benefit of for at least 12-18 months. Overall, the pilot group has generally said that the offers are 'too little, too late'. Currently the bargaining team is looking at what other options they have to force their management to come up with a better offer.



RFDS's Pilatus PC-12 aircraft

## RFDS South Eastern Section

The RDFS-SES earlier this year initiated bargaining for a new EA which will bring all pilots based in NSW (Bankstown, Broken Hill and Dubbo), Launceston and Essendon together under one agreement to replace the existing operation specific EAs. Overall, the AFAP supports the company's objective to move to one EA for all RFDS-SES pilots that aligns pilot salaries and conditions across the organisation.

The AFAP RFDS-SES negotiating committee's pilot representatives Shane Brook (Broken Hill), Mark Woods (Mascot) Jesse Hawtree (Launceston) and Brett Reynish (Dubbo) have submitted a log of claims based on the member feedback. Claims include a simplified salary structure (i.e. a base salary inclusive of all salary allowances and additions), pay parity for Launceston pilots who are currently paid much less than their NSW peers and the introduction of an Equal Time Roster which would bring RFDS-SES in line with other aeromedical organisations and other industry EAs.

As the RFDS-SES has been focused on the doctors and nurse's agreements, this has delayed the parties progressing bargaining for the most of this year. As these are now completed, bargaining has been rescheduled to commence in the new year and the parties will be holding face to face meetings in Sydney.

While bargaining has not progressed any further than exchanging a log of claims, discussions so far have been positive and the AFAP and RFDS-SES are equally committed to collaborating on bargaining to avoid what has typically been lengthy and prolonged negotiations.

## RFDS Western Operations

Amendments to the Fair Work Act relating to requests for flexible work arrangements (FWA) recently took effect. These new provisions have been tested by an AFAP member at the RFDS-WO who requested an FWA that would allow him to fulfil his parental duties. After agreement initially was not reached, the AFAP member made an application to the FWC. In a conference conducted by Commissioner Lim, whose assistance can not be underestimated, an FWA was agreed between the parties. Unfortunately the RFDS-WO later sought to amend the agreement reached, and the pilot has now returned to unpaid parental leave while the issue continues to be discussed.

The AFAP will commence a dispute over remuneration of work conducted on grey days. This matter follows a trend over the RFDS-WO again resiling from a common understanding between the company and the pilots.

RFDS-WO has for some time now suffered from a pilot shortage. However we are pleased to report that recruitment appears to strong and hopefully this will address the currently heavy pilot workloads.

# ADVOCACY

The AFAP engages in policy reforms through our active safety and technical committee, which is a major contributor to the development of Australian and international aviation safety standards.

The AFAP is also a foundation member of the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) that contributes to the international aviation standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

## Federal Government's Aviation Policy

Locally, Industry Skills Australia has announced the inaugural Strategic Workforce Planning Committee for the Aviation industry that includes AFAP President Captain Louise Pole (seated left in photo at right).

The Committee will be the driving force in the development of the national workforce plan for the Aviation industry. The workforce plan will be focused on identifying and responding to the industry's workforce challenges and drivers.

At the first meeting held on 21 November at Essendon, the committee members noted that "access to funding and workforce shortages, including pilots and flight instructors, are priorities that need to be addressed."



*The Government's Strategic Workforce Planning Committee includes representatives from the AFAP along with Airservices Australia, Australian Airports Association and others.*



## Aviation Medicine

CASA's Principal Medical Officer Dr Kate Manderson, (pictured at left with Capt Louise Pole), presented at the AFAP Executive Committee meeting held at the AFAP's Brisbane office on 19 July.

She discussed the importance of providing professional pilots with a safe environment where a pilot's medical issues are managed in line with modern medical information and protocols.



*IFALPA Regional Vice-President (South of Pacific) Anna Wakelin (far right) advocated for professional commercial pilots at a UNSW Aviation Industry Panel event held 9 November in Sydney with (from left) panel moderator Adam Thorn – Editor, Australian Aviation, Seena Sarram – Lawyer (Beswick Lynch Lawyers), Jesse Suskin – Head of Government Relations & Public Policy (WING Australia), Dr Ian Douglas – Emeritus Professor, UNSW School of Aviation (& former Chair of International Air Services Commission), Kai Everist – Assistant Secretary for the Aviation White Paper Taskforce (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts).*

# AFAP & AAPMBF Scholarships



*Dr Christine Boag-Hodgson (Discipline Head, Aviation at Griffith University) with Alexandro Vallejo Brotzman.*

Born in the USA and moving to Australia when he was eight and again at 11, aviation appealed to Griffith University final-year Graduate Diploma of Flight Management student Alexandro Vallejo Brotzman as long as he can remember.

His father travelled for work which meant the family had to relocate every few years to a new home.

"I vividly remember the highlight of moving was always the 'plane ride' and I became obsessed with everything associated with aviation, specifically logistics, management, and of course piloting," explains Alexandro.

"It took a while, but I eventually realised that my true calling was to become a pilot, specifically in the airlines. Ever since, I've done everything I can to reach that goal".

"The scholarship is a career altering opportunity. Being a student pilot is like having a full-time job that doesn't pay – it's tough to earn a decent income when most of your time is up in the air or hitting the books."

Flight training at Griffith University is delivered through BasAir Aviation at Archerfield airport and Alexandro travels more than hour each way to and from the airport.

***"I am very thankful to the AFAP and MBF for awarding me this scholarship."***

"The scholarship, aside from opening many doors, will financially keep me afloat until the end of flight school which means I can stop worrying about money and focus purely on training, studying and of course, flying."

The new year marks the beginning of intensive flight training, including hour-burning exercises and CPL flights in preparation for his CPL(A) flight test scheduled for late February.

Upon completion, he will have earned his CPL(A), Multi-engine Command Instrument Rating (MECIR), and ATPL (Theory) and will be looking towards a flying opportunity in mid-2024.

## AFAP New Wings

Through the New Wings program, the AFAP and AAPMBF jointly fund annual scholarships to the value of \$3000 for student pilots at seven Australian universities that train future pilots.

Bachelor of Aviation student Miles Hatcher was awarded an AFAP & AAPMBF scholarship at the Griffith University Aviation Ball on 10 November.

Miles has completed his second year of a Bachelor of Aviation and achieved the highest GPA and academic results in the cohort.

"It is a real honour to be awarded the scholarship.," says Miles. "It came at the perfect time as I was finding fee schedules for flight training and the associated costs to be daunting. The money will assist in covering some of the costs incurred for training and other associated costs such as charts and a Class 1 medical."

Growing up in a defence family that moved frequently, "as well as living on military bases where there is lots of flying activity", fuelled Miles' early interest in aviation.

His dream is to fly domestically and finds this appealing "as it combines some medium-distance flying, but also shorter hops along the East Coast".



*Scholarship recipient and Bachelor of Aviation student Miles Hatcher (right) was awarded an AFAP & AAPMBF Scholarship for an outstanding aviation undergraduate and student pilot.*

# NATIONAL JET SYSTEMS

## Pilot Council



*The newly constituted National Jet Systems (NJS) Council has grown with the nomination and successful election of NJS Council committee reps (from right) Anthony Clouting (Chair), Justin Gordon (Secretary) and Eric Galliers (Vice-Chair).*

The 2023 year has been a difficult and somewhat unusual year for National Jet Systems (NJS) pilots. At a time of tight pilot labour markets and shortages of pilots leading to crews being stretched in other operations, the transition and retirement of the 717 fleet and the delayed introduction of the new Airbus A220s has resulted in reduced levels of flying in NJS.

Coupled with that there have been greater levels of paxing out of pilot's home bases, which is causing a fair bit of angst within the pilot group. Despite these pressures the newly constituted NJS Council committee will have met three times in 2023. Next year is destined to be a potentially difficult year should further delays be encountered with the A220s.

Other key topics that have been addressed by the NJS Council committee recently include:

### **First Officer A220 Upgrade Protocols**

One of the significant worries for first officers is that of potentially being bypassed by less senior crew from another base who have secured the necessary 150 hours on the A220.

Although this would be a very unlikely scenario given the concurrent type rating training for crew from across all bases, the NJS Council committee has been seeking that the company provide assurances that senior first officer crew receive an opportunity to upgrade relative to their seniority in their individual bases.

This may mean an additional provision of upgrade line training to get those affected to the requisite number of type experience hours (150) prior to check to line as captain. This is inclusive of the mandatory 100 supervised hours all new type captains will need.

### **A220 Roster Protocols**

Some apprehension to transition onto the A220 has come from the loss of lifestyle provisions in the current Enterprise Agreement.

The NJS Council committee has presented an alternative set of roster protocols to the company that effectively have the B717 protocols mirrored for initial A220 flying (whilst the new aircraft flies the same type of flying currently performed).

The intention is for these protocols to be followed at roster build and allow the company to revert to FRMS limits (A220 roster protocols) should the actual day of operations require it.

For example, roster a 60 hour two RDO period, however should there be a delay in sign off prior to the RDOs, then the company could have the option to reduce the break to less than 60 hours, as per the Enterprise Agreement, to 55 hours.

### **A220 Type Rating Course Duration, Accommodation and Pre-Paid allowances**

The NJS Council committee has suggested that the company explore serviced apartment options for type rating training as the type rating course period has now moved to 11 weeks, with a couple of weeks completing online training (potentially at home).

Thankfully crew will only be spending three nights in accommodation on each visit, to facilitate simulator availability and the requirement to provide 10 x RDOs per 28 day period.

These and other matters will continue to be pressed by the NJS Council committee during what will be an interesting year ahead.

# CABIN AIR QUALITY

## FUME EVENTS MONITORING & BLOODTESTS

Cabin air may be contaminated with organophosphates when engine oil and/or hydraulic fluid leaks into the cabin air conditioning system, the air supply for which is drawn from the engine bleed air. Pilots, air crew and passengers are exposed when oil leaks past the seals in either normal operation or during a failure event, causing what is referred to as a 'fume event'.

Pilots and cabin crew are most at risk as there can be constant low-level leakage of engine oil decomposition products in the bleed air into the cabin air at a very low rate. In some individuals, potentially toxic contaminants can slowly build up in their bodies through repeated exposure.

In some circumstances, aircrew have been impaired to the point that flight safety has been compromised with the insidious deterioration of crew performance being noted as a real concern.

In 1999/2000 the Australian Senate held a year-long inquiry and concluded that exposure to contaminated air (engine oil or hydraulic fluid decomposition products) was a health and flight safety issue.

Since then more than 50 recommendations and findings have been made by 12 air accident investigation organisations globally including a recommendation made twice to the FAA and EASA by the British AAI that all aircraft should have contaminated air warning systems.

Despite this only DHL B757 and A300 aircraft have any form of effective bleed air filtration and aircraft continue to fly with no warnings systems installed.

AFAP was the first pilot union in the world to actively raise awareness of this issue some 25 years ago and now plans to be one of the first unions globally to offer the blood test to crews.

In 2010 the High Court of Australia upheld a ruling that inhaling heated engine oils was harmful to the lungs.

Today, a typical jet engine oil's label clearly states 'Do not breathe mist or vapour from heated product' and Airbus and Boeing are evaluating new bleed air cleaning technologies while a new oil, said to be less hazardous by the manufacturer, is close to market.

The AFAP - along with the Royal Australian Air Force and many other pilot and cabin crew unions around the world - have funded the development of a blood test to detect a specific organophosphate used in jet engine oils in the bloodstream.

The research is being finalised by Dr Clem Furlong's team at the University of Washington, Seattle (USA) and will be published in a medical journal in 2024.

### GCAQE JET PILOT STUDY

A cohort of AFAP members from the same fleet will be invited to participate in an anonymous research study intended to collect survey data about fume events reported by pilots who fly older jet aircraft in conjunction with blood samples to be tested to confirm a specific protein decoration by the organophosphate engine oil additive called tricresyl phosphate (TCP).

The Global Cabin Air Quality Executive (GCAQE) conducts and/or fund various studies around the world to investigate cabin air quality issues.

All of the data collected in this study will be deidentified and participation is voluntary, strictly confidential and anonymous. No names or other identifying information will be published.

The collective data will be analysed and published in a medical journal to further the science on fume events. Individual pilots may confidentially access their own results via a trusted legal source appointed at the project set-up.

We hope this survey will help bring about the steps needed to protect crew health and enhance flight safety much like TCAS or EGPWS have previously.

To access published articles and other resources, visit the GCAQE website ([www.gcaqe.org](http://www.gcaqe.org)).

For more information about the study or to discuss providing an anonymous blood sample, contact AFAP Safety & Technical Manager Capt Marcus Diamond ([marcus@afap.org.au](mailto:marcus@afap.org.au)).

*(Compiled with assistance from the GCAQE.)*



AFAP members received an informative update from Dr Susan Michaelis PhD BCA(hon) (left) and Captain Tristan Loraine BCAi (centre) from the Global Cabin Air Quality Executive (GCAQE). They are pictured above with Anna Wakelin (right), who also serves on the GCAQE Board, at the AFAP's Melbourne office on 30 October.

# QANTAS

## Pilot Council

### Qantas Pilot Council

The AFAP has now formally established a Qantas Pilot Council (QPC) with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) declaring the following pilots elected on 12 October 2023 forming the QPC committee:

- **Michael Egan** Chair
- **Mark Gilmour** Vice-Chair
- **Daniel Kobeleff** Secretary
- **Michael Armessen** Committee Member

This committee has been providing representation and regular communications to members on a variety of matters. The AFAP QPC committee members are committed to the importance of transparency and providing members with clear information.

The AFAP QPC has also been able to see first-hand the benefit of the AFAP's democratic structure and in particular the extensive pool of resources from AFAP staff and other pilot-run councils, providing exposure to a wide variety of industrial tactics and tools employed by the various organisations represented.

The AFAP membership at Qantas continues to grow as pilots see the benefits of the AFAP structure and legal resources.

### Short-Haul Bargaining

The AFAP has surveyed members and identified areas of the agreement pilots want improved in the new Qantas Short Haul EA.

The AFAP presented a summary of our survey results and key claims to Qantas in December. The survey and feedback from Qantas Short Haul pilots is that the current EA is too flexible for the Company and needs to provide for:

- Increased days off and protections around those days off;
- Greater pay certainty (such as pattern protection if disrupted in a live roster);
- Improved density of flying (through higher Minimum Guarantee Hours/implementing Ratio In Guarantees)

The AFAP has reserved our position on the appropriate base salary increases pending resolution of the core matters identified from our survey.

Qantas as yet have not responded to the AFAP claims, however are continuing to press for an in principle agreement in the lead up to Christmas. The AFAP QPC is realistic about what it hopes to achieve from this SH EA negotiation given the only very recent, continual substantial increase in AFAP members.

Qantas IR confirmed that the Qantas Wages Policy does apply to the negotiation of the Qantas Short Haul Agreement and this means that all Short Haul pilots will be subject to a two-year wage freeze before salary increases of 3%.

Qantas IR also confirmed that Short Haul pilots would be eligible for the \$5000 recovery boost payment providing an agreement is reached within 9 months of the expiry of the current agreement (which expired on 30 August 2023) and all other eligibility conditions are met, such as the pilots do "not cause harm" to the business.

Qantas IR also has advised it will not recognise the savings from the efficiencies that were provided in the recent Short Haul Agreement variation (such as the removal of various work rules and the geographic box in exchange for an undertaking to provide the first 20 x A321-XLR replacement aircraft).

As part of bargaining, Qantas outlined the updated delivery schedule of the 20 A321-XLR is:

- 3 x aircraft in FY2025
- 9 x aircraft in FY2026
- 8 x aircraft in FY2027.

Qantas also provided its planned retirement schedule of the current 75 x B737 aircraft as approximately seven aircraft per year over ten years beginning in calendar year 2025.

Qantas' position is that guarantees of further aircraft would not form part of this negotiation as the Company believe they have already achieved the efficiencies they need to operate the A321 aircraft as part of the recent variation to the current Short Haul Agreement.



## Long-Haul Bargaining

The AFAP expects bargaining to begin next year with the current Long Haul EA due to expire on 28 April 2024. The QPC will as with Short Haul develop a survey that (along with direct feedback from members) will inform the development of the AFAP log of claims.

The AFAP as a bargaining representative has a seat at the negotiating table and will negotiate at both Short Haul and Long Haul with experienced professional negotiators from the AFAP in combination with pilot representatives pursuing a log of claims based on the survey results and member feedback.

The AFAP QPC are committed to being a member driven Council and we will continue to represent our members' best interests and address members' concerns as indicated in surveys and feedback received directly from members.

The AFAP QPC also aim to provide much needed transparency to the negotiating process by providing regular updates on meetings and our progress to ensure our members are fully aware of the important issues along the way. It goes without saying that detailed, unbiased explanations of any proposed EA offer put to the QPC by Qantas will of course be provided to members.

It is important to note, that as our membership continues to grow, we will gain further leverage. As our leverage grows, we intend to utilise all appropriate negotiating tools and strategies available to achieve our member's stated EA desires.

Beyond the EA outcome, the survey results will enable the QPC to assess if our members needs are being adequately met and address any shortcomings or concerns our members may have.



*Qantas Airbus A380*

The AFAP has a growing number of Qantas Mainline pilots joining or enquiring about joining the AFAP. This support is welcomed as increased membership numbers will improve our role and bargaining power in the upcoming negotiations.

Any member interested in Qantas Mainline developments or Qantas Mainline pilot interested in AFAP membership are welcome to contact AFAP Executive Director Simon Lutton ([simon@afap.org.au](mailto:simon@afap.org.au)), Melbourne-based Senior Industrial/Legal Officer Pat Larkins ([patrick@afap.org.au](mailto:patrick@afap.org.au)), or Brisbane-based Senior Industrial Officer Chris Aikens ([chris@afap.org.au](mailto:chris@afap.org.au)).

# HELICOPTER

## Pilot Council

Peace prevails, at least for now, at **CHC Offshore** where after 4-5 weeks of industrial action and several conciliation conferences in the Fair Work Commission (FWC), an agreement in the form of an memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been reached.

The task of converting that MOU to a formal agreement has been extremely frustrating with the company drafters selectively adopting the parts of the MOU it likes and seemingly oblivious to others.

The task therefore was taken over by the AFAP and EMA Consulting on behalf of the company to try and draft a document that reflects the full agreed position.

We are hoping to achieve this by the end of December, after which the agreement which provides for a 5% increase backdated to May 2023, and ongoing increases year on year, will be formally put to pilots to vote on.

In the meantime, members at **OffShore Services Australasia (OSA)**, formerly Babcock Offshore until the acquisition by CHC, commenced protected industrial action after several months of trying to progress bargaining. The bans and actions which include MELS, overtime, no communications and stoppages up to 12 hours have been widely adopted by members.

In the latest development the parties are now considering applying the existing CHC Offshore agreement, which the company initially declared would never happen!

The central issue for OSA members is the increasing delta between their conditions and wages and those of their industry colleagues, especially when compared to the industry average. The company understands that it must bridge that gulf.

In the meantime, PIA continues with further stoppages scheduled over the Christmas and the new year period

**Auriga**, which has also been previously reported on, has made some modest progress in non-wage matters, but the gap in wages continues to be significant. This is also because Auriga has recently been awarded the Karratha MPT contract (from PHI-HNZ).

It is important to not allow that gap to increase. At our meeting in November the company negotiators indicated they had developed a revised proposal but were yet to obtain Board/CEO approval. That approval was provided at our meeting on 1 December at which the company tabled its offer.



From right: Helicopter Pilot Council committee chair Capt Matt Nielsen, Capt Brett Hunter and Capt Richard Armitage (attending as proxy for Capt David Crick) at the AFAP Annual Convention on 6 October.

The proposal fell woefully short. Hence members called on the AFAP to make application to the FWC for protected action ballot orders, which the AFAP did and those orders have been granted.

The compulsory FWC conciliation conference (held between the issue of the Orders and declaration of the ballot) was held on 18 December, and despite the best efforts of the AFAP/Reps, little or no progress was made on the critical issues of base pay, backpay or touring/home base arrangements. At the time of going to print, in the absence of a genuine offer from the company, notice of commencing PIA looms large.

OSA's former onshore siblings (before it was acquired by CHC) **Babcock Mission Critical**, has commenced bargaining for a new agreement, seemingly after a blink of an eye since finalising the current agreement.

Hopefully, this round of bargaining won't be as controversial as the last round with many issues now addressed. The parties have held three meetings with further meetings scheduled for January.

In more controversial matters, negotiations for a replacement Broome/Truscott agreement at **HNZ/PHI** continue against the backdrop of the long running annual leave dispute where the company discharges all accrued annual leave after every 22 days during the pilots' off-swing (RDOs) – days when they are not required to work anyway.

Efforts have been made during bargaining to address annual leave such that it will conform to the NES, but with mixed results especially impacting touring pilots.



*One of PHI's Sikorsky S92 helicopters based in Broome, WA*

Nor has it addressed the issue of previously accrued annual leave or the right to agree a roster pattern.

Significantly, however, the dispute which emerged within the Broome/Truscott operations has now spread to the Pilbara and Gascoyne Offshore operations and the Karratha MPT operations.

Each of those matters are also before the FWC. The disputes returned to the FWC on 11 December. No agreement was reached towards resolving all aspects of the disputes. As a result, the dispute is now set down for arbitration with the FWC scheduling dates in early February to determine a preliminary jurisdictional question, after which the substantive dispute will be scheduled and heard.

Finally, the previously reported casual underpayments dispute still remains unresolved at PHI-HNZ. The company is refusing to address the concerns raised and understandably this dispute is also destined for the FWC.



*CHC operates three Sikorsky S92 helicopters from Broome, WA for Shell Australia's offshore Prelude project.*

## LifeFlight

At **LifeFlight**, the AFAP is continuing its efforts to resolve both a long running pay dispute, as well as negotiations for a new enterprise agreement (EA).

The pay dispute relates to the significant underpayment of the July 2022 salary increase. After initiating a dispute with LifeFlight in October 2022, the AFAP pursued the matter through a conciliation process at the Fair Work Commission (FWC) in early 2023. When there was still no resolution, the AFAP began preparing its evidence and arguments, in preparation for a FWC arbitration hearing to decide the matter in late September 2023.

In parallel to that underpayment case, AFAP members and staff were also continuing their efforts to arrive at a new enterprise agreement with LifeFlight. However, that process had effectively stalled by mid-2023, with LifeFlight claiming that it could not proceed with further negotiations until it knew the outcome of the 2022 pay dispute.

Thankfully, after less than a single day's evidence at the FWC underpayment hearing, LifeFlight's position changed. Suddenly it was questioning the AFAP as to whether a new EA (with improved conditions) would resolve both outstanding concerns that the Pilots had. LifeFlight was even agreeable to have the FWC run several conciliation conferences, in order to help expedite progress in the EA negotiations.

Subsequently, although the renewed negotiations have since dragged on for longer than the AFAP had expected, the Pilot group is about to vote on a vastly improved draft EA. If the majority of Pilots do support this latest EA offer, the underpayment issue and the EA negotiations will finally both be resolved.



*LifeFlight Agusta Westland AW139 at Wagga Wagga airport.*

# VIRGIN

## Pilot Federation

### Virgin Australia

The main priority for the AFAP Virgin Council has been on bargaining for a new Narrow Body Enterprise Agreement. The AFAP team (Steve Hungerford, Shaun Rudduck, Ben Raby, Brad Wilson and Mark Bannister) has met with Virgin since September right up until just prior to Christmas. The parties have been focused on resolving the key remuneration items before moving onto other issues within the broader document.

The sticking point in bargaining has been Virgin's desire to see minimum days off reduced from 12 per 28 days to 10 per 28 days in 6 peak roster periods (12 less days off per year). The AFAP position has been clear from the beginning that the pilots will consider the 2018 EA days off (which were a minimum of 11 in 7 RPs and 12 in 6 RPs) if Virgin restore the previous pay structure (higher base and productivity hourly rate) with cost of living (CPI) increases applied.

Virgin pilots want a return to the pre-pandemic pay structure of a higher base salary/ higher guaranteed hours/ higher hourly rate. The pilot group do not want to persist with the low minimum credit guarantee and pay per hour system in place, which has driven a transactional culture.

While discussions have been constructive, the parties remain apart on the key remuneration items and also the work rule changes being sought by Virgin to increase productivity.

Ultimately, the AFAP has been given a clear but narrow mandate from our survey to pursue a return to the 2018 pay structure, however members have been clear that they will not support wholesale reductions in key conditions.

The AFAP has prepared a full draft document to present in the new year with the aim of making rapid progress towards an acceptable deal we can endorse to our members. The current agreement expires on June 30 2024, after which pilots have the option to escalate should a reasonable agreement not be reached.

### Recruitment and Expansion

Positively Virgin has announced the increase in fleet numbers by 6 further MAX-8 airframes in 2024 (bringing the MAX-8 fleet to 14 by the end of calendar year 2024 and the total B737 fleet size to 98).



*Virgin Pilot Federation Committed Chair FO Steve Hungerford addressing pilots in Adelaide on 5 September.*

Virgin has not announced a planned expansion in network but indications are it will be focused on Short Haul International given the majority of the new aircraft are being allocated to Virgin's international AOC.

Command upgrades and external recruitment, along with returning inactive pilots, has remained steady at Virgin since our last update. Opportunities for pilots to return from redundancy under the Re-Employment Policy (retain Group Seniority) has continued with more than 65 pilots returning between October 2022 and October 2023.

Due to some of the remaining 450 redundant pilots not bidding, Virgin has now recruited a further 31 pilots external to the GDOJ List bringing pilot numbers to approximately 1100 pilots.

With delays to the deliveries of both the MAX-8 and MAX-10 aircraft, the resource plan is still based on 92 airframes in the 12 months to August 2024 and subject to change. We anticipate recruitment to continue throughout 2024 as the MAX aircraft delivery dates are locked in and Virgin is able to take its fleet up towards 100 airframes and above with the MAX-10 deliveries.

### Rostering and PBS Issues

The pilot group remain frustrated with Virgin's inability to deliver on software changes, with the Company having shelved the CAE Crew Management System implementation earlier this year (at which point it was already two years late).

The Preferential Bidding System (PBS) is dysfunctional under the strain of a significant training pipeline and excessive pre-assignments being put into the system by Virgin.

The tension between planned duties (in which Virgin are pushing the envelope) and what is achievable in day of operations is significant.

Roster disruption is commonplace and routinely sees days fall apart with uncrewed duties due to pilots not being available outside of their standby window and/or running out of duty hours (we note that there has been no noticeable increase in pilot sick leave removals).

## Cabin Crew Negotiations

Both cabin crew unions had ~90% of their members approve the option to take Protected Industrial Action (PIA). This had the significant potential to disrupt the Virgin network over the Christmas and New Year period. Pleasingly an in-principle agreement has been reached and this has avoided the need for action to be taken.

The cabin crew had our full support in using their lawful rights to pursue a fair deal as unfortunately the theme from Bain's behaviour during Covid-19 was to cut conditions too aggressively. It is time that the owners acknowledged this and restored pay and conditions for all employee groups.

## Virgin Australia Regional Airlines

The AFAP has been in negotiations for a new VARA Enterprise Agreement since early 2022 and a document has been agreed to be released to vote. The vote will close on December 21.

The negotiation has had the added complexity of introducing conditions for the B737 in the VARA EA which mirror the current Virgin Narrow Body Pilots agreement. VARA is transferring the F100 pilots to the B737, with this planned to be completed by 2025 when the final F100 airframe exits.

For A320 and F100 pilots, the package will provide a number of improvements including a 7.04% increase from the Commencement Date of the EA and salary back paid from the Commencement Date to the effective date of increase.

The proposal also includes a 68% increase to the hourly rate and a reduction in the overtime threshold to 57.5 (from 59) per 28 days.

Additional benefits for F100/ A320 Pilots are:

- 2.5% retention bonus (using the base salaries as at 1 July 2022);
- Outside Buffer Rate (payments for extending more than 2 hours past original sign-off), increased to the new

Productivity Rate (e.g A320 Captain rate increases from \$93.35 to \$237.96)

- New RDO payments - RDO Payment (e.g. A320 CPT \$673.64) + minimum four hours at Productivity Rate (or greater if actual hours exceed 4)

- Introduce additional allowance for Check & Training pilots paid in addition the annual allowance (Check Captains - \$150 per check, Training Captains - \$50 per training event)

- Work rules - all existing protections retained

For the B737 pilots employed at VARA they will be provided salaries in line with those at Virgin Narrow Body including any negotiated increases in that operation.

First Officers will be paid VA Narrow Body rates from 1 September 2023 or their original planned transition date (whichever is earlier) and Captains the same as FOs except the date is 1 March 2024.

Additional B737 VARA Pilots benefits include:

- The VARA EA enhanced redundancy entitlement will be grandfathered for B737 VARA Pilots until 5 April 2026.
- Pilots will maintain their existing LSL balance (based on 1.3 weeks per year of service) on transfer to the B737. Any future LSL accrual based on VA NB Agreement provisions.

Ultimately, it will be up to the pilot group to determine if the package is acceptable in the current climate.

The agreement will expire in June 2024 so it is a short term deal and the parties will be back at the table early 2024.

Given this is a short-term agreement, the AFAP recommends pilots vote yes and bank the gains now which will form the baseline for negotiations early next year. Pilots will also negotiate with the benefit of knowing the outcome of the Network and B737 negotiations.



Virgin's Boeing B737-800 aircraft

# JETSTAR

## Pilot Federation

Like most airlines worldwide, Jetstar has recruited extensively throughout 2023 with over 200 newly hired pilots joining Jetstar over the last 12 months, along with more than 300 command upgrades or other training movements for existing pilots.

Jetstar has facilitated AFAP and JPF pilot representatives delivering a webinar briefing to each of the Jetstar new hire induction courses.

This has provided an opportunity for the JPF pilots representatives and AFAP staff to introduce themselves, provide some valuable insights on Jetstar working conditions and for those pilots who were not already members of the AFAP gain a better understanding of the role of the AFAP both generally and within Jetstar. These briefings have led to a steady increase in Jetstar pilot members.

### Re-opening of Perth base

In November 2023 Jetstar finally announced its plans to re-open the Perth pilot base in the second half of 2024 for at least 60 narrow-body pilots. Jetstar simultaneously announced its plans to significantly expand flying out of Perth next year, including the launch of three new international routes ex Perth to Singapore, Phuket and Bangkok utilising the new Airbus A321LRs and XLRs.

This is a welcome announcement particularly for those pilots who tragically had their base closed at the beginning of Covid in 2020.

Jetstar and the AFAP have commenced consultation about the re-opening of the Perth base and bidding process for pilots to be allocated vacancies in Perth.

Given the company will require a minimum of 30 Captains and 30 First Officers to be based in Perth to support the expanded Perth network we expect that all former Perth based pilots who wish to return to Perth in their existing rank will be able to do so.

### JBid

The automated JBid bidding system implemented during Covid-19 continues to be frustrating for Jetstar pilots by consistently producing undesirable rosters for pilots and showing no signs of improvement.

This is despite the additional resources that were dedicated to updating and simplifying JBid in June this year in a concerted effort to improve roster satisfaction.

Ultimately poor rostering outcomes leads to poor pilot engagement and, by extension, the stability of Jetstar's operation.

A JBid Steering Committee has recently been constituted to conduct a more wholesale review of JBid and we are hopeful that pilot reps can be directly appointed to this committee to provide valuable input.

### Flexible Workplace Arrangements

With Jetstar's part-time equivalent arrangement, Voluntary Flexiline (VFL), reaching the 10% minimum capacity that Jetstar is required to make available under the EA and its refusal to expand the VFL pool beyond 10%, there is a long waitlist of pilots seeking VFL. Further existing VFL pilots are unable to rollover their current terms for the first time since VFL was introduced in 2011.

Unfortunately, the Jetstar EA doesn't have any provisions for a part-time arrangement outside of a Job Share and the oversubscribed Flexiline provisions.

As a result, the AFAP has been approached by a number of pilots 55 years and over about accessing a Flexible Workplace Arrangement (FWA) to reduce their working days/hours given the current full time rosters are not sustainable for pilots nearing retirement age.

The AFAP has asked Jetstar to reconsider the AFAP's previously proposed Transition to Retirement (TTR) proposal which was tabled but not agreed by Jetstar during bargaining. TTR would enable pilots to work less than 12 roster periods per annum to a minimum of 6 RPs by being able to take full roster periods of LWOP and would fit within the scope of the current EA.

In light of both recent legislative changes around FWAs and the the current recognised global pilot supply issues, we hope that Jetstar will be more amenable to proposals that enable pilots to prolong their careers.



Jetstar A320 at Melbourne airport. (Credit: Capt James Niven)

# SUNSTATE

## Pilot Council

### Enterprise Bargaining

The Sunstate Pilot Council (SPC) negotiating team of Jarrod Blaker, Rod Millroy, Dan Lyons and Richard Copland continued a fraught set of negotiations with Qantas throughout 2023.

It had been made clear by the negotiating team that Qantas' strict adherence to the 'company wages policy' was causing real issues within the pilot group and that unless there was a significant increase to base salaries, days off and duty allowances then the company would have real issues attracting and retaining pilots.

Initially the company negotiators refused to deviate in any meaningful way from the wages policy to the extent that the AFAP negotiating team subsequently undertook a PIA ballot of the membership in September 2023.

The ballot results were emphatic and clearly caused the Qantas negotiators to urgently review their position in order to avoid any action being undertaken.

The negotiating team agreed to provide the company with a small window to provide a significantly improved offer before any action was to commence, and the end result was such a move that enabled the negotiating team to avoid having to undertake any action that would have incurred a real risk of the company hardening rather than moving their position.

An in-principle agreement was finally reached with the company that delivered:

- Over and above the 3% wages policy – a 5% 'wash through' being applied to all pay points
- A revised junior pay scale to enable faster movement onto the main/higher salary scale after 1500 hours.
- Additional pay points for years 10 to 15 of service.
- Ten days off – with the company able to purchase back one day (equivalent to a 5% increase in salary)
- A revised 'Duty Hour Allowance Away' to include all time away from home base or an option for pilots to retain the Duty Hour Allowance payment, increased by approximately 50%.

The membership within Sunstate had shown remarkable solidarity and clearly the company had been rattled by the willingness of the pilot group to consider taking industrial action to the extent that there was a wholesale and dramatic revision of their position straight after the ballot results were announced.

The proposed offer was voted up by close to 80% of the pilot group in mid-December. The new EA delivers substantial improvements to many terms and conditions for Sunstate pilots.

### Sunstate Pilot Council Committee

With movements within the pilot group, further vacancies occurred within the Sunstate Pilot Council committee. A nomination for a vacancy was received from FO Thomas Dunphy from the Cairns base while the Council secured representation for the Adelaide base, with FO Bianca Salim volunteering to serve.

A full SPC contingent will be in an excellent position to continue to represent the entire workforce into 2024.

The SPC Committee is now made up by captains Jarrod Blaker (Chair), Anthony Berko (Vice Chair), Richard Copland (Secretary), Thomas Dunphy, Dan Lyons, Louise Pole, Bianca Salim and Russell Thompson.



*SPC committee members past and present who attended the Annual Convention congratulated Capt Russell Thompson on his Scroll of Merit Award (from right): Capt (Retired) John Grady, Capt Louise Pole, Capt Rod Millroy, Capt Russell Thompson, Capt George Brown, Capt Anthony Berko and Capt Jarrod Blaker.*

# WELFARE

## Feeling stressed? 8 tips for conquering it

by Francesca Sabbatini, Psychologist at PeopleSense (the AFAP's MAP psychologists)

Stress is an inevitable part of life, a companion we often wish would stay far away. A long day at work, shift changes, being away from loved ones, life admin piling up. We've all been there.

But what if, instead of seeing stress as an adversary, we viewed it as a challenge waiting to be conquered? To conquer something, we first must understand it.

### So, what is stress?

Stress is the body's natural response to external pressures or demands. It's a physiological and psychological reaction that prepares us to face a challenge. While stress can be helpful in certain situations, chronic stress can have detrimental effects on our wellbeing.

Stress can stem from many areas of our lives, including work-related pressures, personal relationships, financial concerns, or even daily hassles. How you think about the challenges you are facing has a large role to play in how stressed we feel. Stress is not a mental health condition, however recent studies, link chronic stress to health issues, including cardiovascular problems and mental health disorders.

Now that we have laid the groundwork for understanding stress, it's important for us to highlight you can do things to actively manage and reduce related health risks. Let's delve into practical strategies to conquer it.

### Keeping stress in check

**1. Deep Breathing and Mindfulness:** One of the most effective ways to combat stress is through relaxation and mindfulness exercises. Taking slow, deep breaths can activate the body's relaxation response, calming the nervous system. Mindfulness techniques can help bring focus to the present moment, reducing anxiety about the past or future. There are plenty of apps and online resources freely available to get you started.

**2. Move Regularly:** Physical activity and movement is a powerful stress buster. Exercise releases feel good endorphins. Whether it's a brisk walk, a jog, or a full workout routine, incorporating regular exercise into your routine can significantly contribute to stress reduction.

**3. Establish Healthy Boundaries:** Learning to say no and setting realistic boundaries is crucial for managing stress. It's essential to prioritise and allocate time and energy wisely, ensuring that you maintain a healthy balance in all aspects of your life.

**4. Get into Green Spaces:** Step into the embrace of nature. Many studies have shown that spending time in green spaces, whether it's a park, garden, or woodland, can significantly reduce cortisol levels – the stress hormone. So, take a leisurely stroll or find a quiet spot to absorb nature.

**5. Prioritise Self-Care:** Taking care of yourself is not a luxury but a necessity. Do your best to consider your needs. Try to get enough sleep, maintain a balanced diet, and engage in activities that bring you joy. Investing time in self-care enhances resilience, making it easier to navigate stressful situations.

**6. Connect with Others:** Social support is a potent stress buffer. Share your feelings with trusted friends or family members. Talking about your stressors can provide a fresh perspective and emotional relief.

**7. Flip your script:** Cultivate a positive outlook on life and be curious about your thinking habits. While it's natural to encounter challenges, focusing on solutions rather than problems can shift your perspective. Practice gratitude and work to try to change your perspective where possible to help you think about challenges from a different perspective.

**8. Seek professional assistance:** Seeking help from a mental health professional can be a valuable resource when dealing with stress. Individual support can help you supercharge your stress busting strategies and tailor strategies to your specific situation.

Stress doesn't have to be an insurmountable obstacle. By understanding its nature and implementing effective strategies, we can transform our relationship with stress. Incorporating these top tips for managing stress can help you lead a healthier, more balanced life. So, the next time you feel stressed, remember, you have the tools to conquer it.

Visit [www.afap.org.au](http://www.afap.org.au) for a complete list of AFAP Welfare representatives and links to welfare services.





AFAP Welfare Director Captain Darren Gray

### New Welfare Director appointed

Following the AFAP's Annual Convention 2023, Captain Darren Gray has been appointed as the AFAP's new Welfare Director.

The Welfare Director is responsible for representing the Federation on matters affecting the welfare of pilot members.

This includes the establishment and training of a network of welfare representatives from each AFAP council and, as the need arises, Human Intervention Motivation Study (HIMS) peer mentors. He also carries overall responsibility for the Member Assistance Program (see article to the right).

Working in the pilot welfare sector for over a decade with both the AFAP and Virgin Australia, Captain Gray has also served as a trustee of the loss-of-licence AAP Mutual Benefit Fund.

Currently a B737 captain at Virgin Australia, Captain Gray has also served as a AFAP Virgin Pilot Federation representative from its inception until 2020. Darren's previous roles include B777 Captain, E190 Captain, flying business jets, night freight, instructing and flying in PNG.

### Member Assistance Program 1300 307 912 (Australia) +618 9388 9000 (International)

Depending on your location, you can access confidential professional assistance – from psychologists trained in pilot-specific issues – in person or by phone, or videolink.

The Member Assistance Program (MAP) is free for AFAP members and their immediate families. Four free sessions are available per issue. If required, there may be provision for additional sessions. MAP psychologists also provide 24/7 crisis care.

This service should be used to help resolve any problems or issues that may be causing you or your family concern, including:

- Stress and anxiety
- Trauma
- Relationship difficulties and family issues
- Change in career and resettlement
- Interpersonal conflict
- Aftermath of an accident or incident
- Coping with workplace injuries
- Alcohol and drug issues
- Work-related problems
- Gambling worries
- Grief and loss
- Financial or legal pressures

AFAP members and their immediate family can also access a wellbeing session. A qualified Psychologist and Coach can help you establish a wellbeing plan or behaviours to assist you to maximise your wellbeing. What you decide to focus on is up to you and may include;

- Review of wellbeing behaviours and development of a wellbeing plan
- Developing positive thinking skills
- Enhancing relationships
- Resilience training
- Sleep management
- Coaching
- Mindfulness training



## AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF AIR PILOTS

24/7 EMERGENCY HOTLINE: **0459 747 757**

MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP): **1300 307 912**

AFAP MEMBER SERVICES: **03 9928 5737**

# LEGAL

## Flexible Working Arrangements

On 6 June 2023, amendments to the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) relating to flexible work became operative. Although the Fair Work Act always had provisions relating to flexible work, the amendments have revised and strengthened the avenues available to employees.

In particular, they have (1) enlarged the types of employees that are able to request a flexible working arrangement, (2) have prescribed a specific process that must be followed by employers when a request for a is received and, importantly, (3) allows the Fair Work Commission to deal with a dispute about a request for a flexible work arrangement, including by arbitration.

This allows the FWC to arbitrate a dispute where the employer has refused the request for a flexible work arrangement on "reasonable business grounds".

Previously, the Fair Work Act allowed employees to ask for flexible work arrangements, and employers were obliged to respond to those requests within 21 days of them being received. Further, employers were able to decline a request on reasonable business grounds.

However, these rights were largely illusory, as the Fair Work Commission had no jurisdiction to deal with the dispute. This meant that there were no consequences if the process was not followed by an employer, and no ability to review whether there really were reasonable business grounds.

The amendments expand who can access the provisions in the Fair Work Act. Further to those who are parents, are over 55 or have a disability, categories have been introduced of persons who are experiencing family and domestic violence, who provide care of support to a member of their immediate family or household experiencing family and domestic violence or are pregnant.

Of course, the request for a flexible working arrangement must be related to the circumstances of an employee falling within one of the access providing categories.

The types of flexibility that might be requested will depend on the particular circumstances of the employee and the type of work being performed. It could include part-time work, changes to the usual hours of work, or the arrangement of work, such as limited overnights.

Once a request is received, the employer has 21 days in which to respond. The employer must discuss the arrangement proposed with the employee and give genuine consideration both to the request and the impact a refusal might have on the employee.

If the employer does want to refuse the request, after having genuinely considered the request, it can only be on reasonable business grounds.

In refusing the request, the employer must provide written reasons (including why there are reasonable business grounds), propose any other arrangements which could be accommodated by the employer, and let the employee know that the Fair Work Commission is able to deal with the refusal should the employee dispute the information provided by the employer.

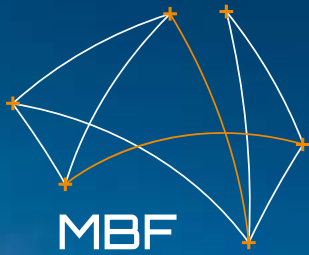
If the employee does wish to dispute the refusal, or if the employer has not provided a response to the request within 21 days, then the employee and the employer must try to resolve the dispute at the workplace level. If that is not successful, either party may refer the dispute to the Fair Work Commission. It must first be dealt with by means other than arbitration (for example, in conference or mediation). If not resolved, the Fair Work Commission is able to arbitrate the dispute and may make orders that the employer grant the request for a flexible work arrangement, or a modified version of the request.

The focus of the new provisions is very much aimed at employees and employers coming to an agreement, first without the involvement of the Fair Work Commission. Arbitration (and an imposed outcome) is the very last option to be exercised and is only to be used if there is no reasonable prospect of the dispute being resolved by other means.

These provisions are capable of being far-reaching. Employers will have to explain why requests are refused and give detailed explanations of how a request would adversely affect operations. Not only that, but the obligation to provide alternatives to the employee, and to the requirement to consider the effect on the employee of refusing a request give real rights to employees to have their requests dealt with seriously. And of course, the ability for the Fair Work Commission to hold employers accountable is a welcome addition.

These provisions are new. Decisions on arbitrated outcomes have been few so far. Those decisions have centered around procedural matters rather than considering the competing rights of employees and employers.

Forthcoming decisions will shed light on how the Fair Work Commission will deal with the new provisions and will provide guidance on how it will approach the balancing exercise. The AFAP will be closely watching the development of how the FWC will interpret these new provisions.



MBF

# CASE STUDY

LOUISE HUDSON



|                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Name              | Louise Hudson |
| Age               | 43            |
| Nationality       | Australian    |
| Current Location  | Brisbane, QLD |
| Medical Condition | Broken Foot   |

## Aviation Career

I am currently employed with Virgin Australia as a B737 Captain. I have been with Virgin for 15 years which included a 4 year career break when I worked for the airline as a Flight Dispatcher and Navigation Analyst. Prior to Virgin I was with National Jet Systems as a BAe146 First Officer and a DHC8 Captain.

## Why were you grounded?

I broke my foot in an accident at home.

## What was your general health prior to your medical condition?

I have always enjoyed good health and am quite active, especially at home in the garden, so when I broke my foot in May this year I found the initial limitations quite challenging. However, I was fortunate to have confidence in returning to full flying duties once the injury had healed.

## Why is Loss of Licence cover so important?

The monthly benefit provided peace of mind for the period of time following the exhaustion of my sick leave entitlements and continued until I had regained my Class 1 Medical two months later. Loss of Licence cover is becoming an increasingly important aspect of a pilot's financial plan due to the lack of Income Protection options for Pilots.

I would encourage everyone who becomes injured or ill - even if you know you will return to full flying duties in the mid to long term - to contact the MBF as soon as you feel you have the capacity to do so. In this way the MBF will be aware of your situation and the claims process will be simple and straightforward when the time comes to take advantage of your Loss of Licence cover.

## MBF experience

When I first contacted the MBF to enquire about the claims procedure I was immediately put at ease by Christine's empathetic approach to my situation. As I had not expected to have to go down the Loss of Licence path on this occasion, I had left it quite late to make my first claim. Christine guided me through the process and maintained contact with me via email to ensure my claim would be received in time for review by the Board.

AUSTRALIAN AIR PILOTS  
MUTUAL BENEFIT FUND

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