



ASU Members Make Key Contribution to Aviation Policy Development

The ASU's submission to the Federal Government's aviation policy development draws on the survey responses to the ASU Aviation Issues Survey 2008 received from almost 800 frontline aviation workers across Australia.

ASU members working in a variety of roles from check-in to operations to call centres, retail, maintenance, freight and IT from all States and territories provided their responses.

A wide cross section of industry employees working for the Qantas Group, regional carriers, overseas airlines, ground handlers and freight companies are represented in the survey.

Some of the key results from the ASU Aviation Issues survey are:

- 65% of respondents do not think foreign carriers should have seventh freedom rights
- 56% of respondents thought that there would be a decrease in Australian aviation jobs if seventh freedom rights were granted
- 56% thought their wages and conditions would decrease if Australia expanded its seventh freedom rights
- 74% did not think the 49% foreign ownership cap on Qantas should be removed

- 73% of customer service agents surveyed thought air rage is a problem in Australian airports
- 81% of customer service agents surveyed had experienced air rage at their airport
The key reasons for air rage were:
 - long waits in queues
 - not enough staff
 - lack of understanding of ticket restrictions
 - excess baggage charges
- 80% of customer service agents did not receive adequate training to deal with hostile customers
- 74% of respondents said passengers using check-in machines should show ID to customer service staff
- 67% of respondents did not think air cargo security was the best it could be

What did we say?

Our submission covers the main issues of concern to ASU members which were highlighted as important at our recent National Airlines Division Council meeting.

We made a number of points and here is a summary of the key observations and suggestions:

- The ASU has concerns about pursuing 'open skies', or further international air service



agreements. We urge the Government to include unions in future international air service negotiations, as occurs in both the United States and European Union, and to prioritise agreements with countries with sound labour and safety practices.

- The ASU supports the maintenance of the foreign ownership cap for Qantas, and urges the Government to preserve Qantas as an Australian carrier and Australian employer.
- The ASU supports subsidies for regional routes and expresses some concern about the lax security at our regional airports, and the threat it poses to our major airports.
- We need the Government to address the skills shortage in customer service and travel professional roles.
- A renewed focus on airports as an aviation service is an urgent priority as distractions such as retail are causing airport corporations to neglect investment in infrastructure and maintenance of airport facilities which results in queues and capacity constraints. Pricing of airport services is also unaffordable for airport employees.
- Air rage continues to be a big issue at our airports, and attention needs to be paid to increasing passenger awareness of ticket restrictions.
- More support is needed for passengers with disabilities and the staff who work with them.

- Electronic check-in machines pose a significant security risk to our airports, and there is a lack of passenger awareness of security restrictions.
- Further efficiencies could be made in administering Aviation Security Identification Cards (ASIC) without compromising security.
- Government also needs to consult with unions and employees on security and safety issues.

What's next?

We have only given you a small snapshot of our total submission; the full submission is available on the ASU website – www.asu.asn.au.

Our submission joins many others to be considered by the government which will then prepare a National Aviation Policy Green Paper which will outline possible aviation policy directions.

This green paper will be released for public comment later this year. The ASU will then consult our members and make further comment on the Green paper's release. The Federal government will release its new aviation policy statement in mid 2009.

Watch out for more details on how you can contribute at each stage of the ongoing process.

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