

17 June 2009

The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Deputy Prime Minister

Re: Award Modernisation – Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010

The undersigned Flight Attendants write this joint letter regarding the award modernisation process. In particular, the abovementioned exposure draft handed down by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) on 22 May 2009.

We are concerned that the exposure draft covering domestic Flight Attendants;

- Will discriminate against those of us who have family responsibilities;
- Does not enable us to reconcile our work and family responsibilities; and
- Fails to protect the health and safety of Flight Attendants operating domestically.

We ask the Government to intervene in this matter and ensure that we are protected from conditions of employments that fail to meet the **request under Section 576C(1) – Award Modernisation**, that awards must have regard to;

- the need to help prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin and to promote the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value;
- the need to assist employees to balance their work and family responsibilities effectively and to improve retention and participation of employees in the workforce;
- the safety, health and welfare of employees;

Below are a number of examples of the **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**, that if left unchanged, would severely impact on our ability to continue our careers as Flight Attendants and on those who wish to be employed into the future as same;

Reconciliation of Work and Family Responsibilities/ Discrimination

The **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**, in its current form would discriminate against those of us who have family responsibilities and would not enable us to reconcile our work and family responsibilities.

For example, pregnant Flight Attendants may be required to work up to 6 weeks before the birth of their child. Due to the nature of our working environment, Flight Attendants generally must cease flying at 28 weeks due to the potential of health related implications. Under the **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**, pregnant women would potentially be forced to take sick leave or unpaid leave. This is brutally unfair and dangerous.

Furthermore, the **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**, excludes 'work rules', such as displacement, that are important in ensuring that we are able to reconcile our work and family responsibilities. Without them, Flight Attendants could potentially be displaced from a 4 hours

duty and be assigned a 6 day trip. We would find it impossible to ensure that we could meet our caring responsibilities.

Safety, Health and Welfare of Employees

The **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**, in its current form fails to protect the health and safety of Flight Attendants operating domestically. Under **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**, Flight Attendants can be rostered a 12 hour duty that can be extended to 15 hours for any reason.

These hours can be extended further in circumstances where a Flight Attendant is rostered airport reserve as hours spent on same do not count towards the daily duty hour limitations.

For example, if a Flight Attendant spends 6 hours on reserve and is given a 12 hour duty that would be a total of 18 hours.

These are extremely long hours that would place Flight Attendants at risk of fatigue and other health related complications. Furthermore, this would place the travelling public at risk should a Flight Attendant experiencing fatigue need to act in an emergency situation.

Given that rest periods can be reduced to 10 hours for any reason under the **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**, Flight Attendants would not have an opportunity to get adequate rest between duties. Therefore, duty hours coupled with the rest provisions under the **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010** would fail to ensure the safety, health and welfare of Flight Attendants.

Furthermore, under the **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**, our personal leave entitlements will be reduced by 5 days in the second year. Flight Attendants are at high risk of being exposed to and catching a number of illnesses because we work in a confined space with the travelling public. Flight Attendants also are exposed to number of illnesses such as sinusitis which prevent us from performing flying duties even though we are fit to perform ground duties. Given the nature of our working environment, personal leave entitlements need to be increased under the **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010**.

We ask that you refer to our Union's - the Flight Attendants Association of Australia Domestic/Regional Division – submission dated 12 June 2009 (attached) for more examples of how we believe the **Aircraft Cabin Crew Award 2010** would impact negatively on Flight Attendants.

These conditions of employment have never been available under awards or workplace agreements in our occupation for good reason. However, thanks to Work Choices they are available to Team Jetstar, a Qantas Group subsidiary and are impacting negatively on those of us who work for that airline. Airline participants have relied on these conditions of employment, unfairly, when pressing the AIRC for conditions of employment that reflect those available to Team Jetstar.

Our Government said that they have facilitated the death of Work Choices, however, these excesses of Work Choices, if left unchanged will have a detrimental impact on those of us employed under a modern award and/or on a workplace agreement that is underpinned by same.

We ask the Government to intervene to ensure that we are not exploited, that we are afforded the protections that have been promised to the community by our Government and that a real 'fair minimum safety net' is afforded to all Flight Attendants; present and into the future.

Yours sincerely,

