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22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023,

Director, Aviation White Paper Office  
Aviation White Paper  
Dept. of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development Communications and Arts  
GPO Box 594  
Canberra ACT 2601

**Submission Aviation Green Paper by Airline Pilot**

Dear Director,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on some of these very important aspects of the aviation industry as part of this Green Paper.

Having been employed as a pilot in Australian aviation for almost 30 years, I have never seen our industry in such a fractured state.

For far too long, there has been little to no support by industry and government to foster and develop the training and retention of Australian pilots.

We have now reached a point where following the retirement age of many, we have reached a critical shortage. This has been further exasperated by many others leaving the industry in pure frustration.

Reasons for this are many, however, I believe some points need to be addressed in order to save the industry, which the economy so heavily relies on.

- **Tax and Superannuation**

The average airline pilot spends approximately one third of their working life away from home. Many shifts are late night, multiple day, and regularly disrupted at last minute. This clearly has a significant effect on family stability, where the partner of the crew member often sacrifices their career to provide caring duties for children.

Individual total superannuation balance caps make no allowance for this situation. I believe, by combining the Total Superannuation Balances of both individuals for these select professions, families could enjoy the same tax effective retirement benefits as the rest of the public.

- **Protection of Wages and Job Security**

Airlines have increasingly used third party companies to operate in competition to its own employees in order to drive down wages. Jetconnect for example uses New Zealand based pilots and cabin crew to operate Qantas services across the Tasman. The general public often has no idea that they are buying a Qantas ticket but not being flown by Qantas pilots. This increasing use of satellite companies threatens job stability and career progression, and has been a significant cause of Australian pilots seeking careers overseas.

- **Make public transport fair and equitable for Airport workers**

The simple act of getting to work to an airport is becoming increasingly challenging. Sydney airport has a train station at both Domestic and International terminals, however, the Gate Charge imposed at these two stations makes the regular use of this public transport method financially prohibitive. With increasing focus of emission reduction and billions of dollars spent on road redesign to alleviate congestion, a State government review mandated by the Federal government into providing a standard public transport fares as incurred by all other station provided to airport employees is well overdue. Airport employees should be exempt from the Gate charge.

I was asked recently by a parent of a child who was interested in pursuing a career as a pilot in Australia of my thoughts on the future of the industry. My genuine response is that I am very hesitant to recommend it. In my time, I have seen the opportunities for career development diminish significantly and the sacrifices and pressure on family simply outweigh the benefits to the career compared to the stability and normality of a non-flying position or the significantly higher take-home salaries offered overseas.

Prior to September 11, family members were able to sit on the flightdeck while their parent or partner was flying. This inspired of many pilot's children to becoming pilots themselves. Post this terrible tragedy, flight decks are restricted, so now children just see aviation as a cause of their parent being away. The inspiration has gone.

**The government could improve the situation by:**

- **Providing superannuation and tax concessions to recognise the loss of income by partners of aviation professionals.**
- **Limiting the ability of airlines to use satellite companies to reduce wages and job security of its employees.**
- **Make public transport to and from the airport more affordable for airport employees.**

Sincerely,

David Collits