

Submission by [REDACTED] -4 November 2024

I'm writing to express my opposition to the wet lease arrangement between Virgin Australia & Qatar Airways that poses a significant threat to Australian jobs & the aviation industry. This arrangement exemplifies the current corporate strategy of outsourcing employment to foreign labour, dismissing the decades of expertise & commitment of Australian aviation professionals. This agreement reintroduces the very aircraft that VA once operated prior to the C-19 pandemic--yet with foreign crews instead of the qualified Australian workers who once upheld these positions within Virgin. For those of us who dedicated years/ decades to the company, this is an unjust dismissal of our work. Not only does this arrangement threaten Virgin Australia jobs, but a slippery slope of foreign labour, endangering employment at other carriers, including Qantas. Qantas, engaged in a similar partnership with Finnair but a clear 2 year limit on foreign crews. Virgin Australia, by comparison, offers no such deadline, thereby creating a dangerous precedent for the industry. Virgin Australia, under Bain Capital, argues that this partnership is about maintaining competitiveness. Yet this justification falls flat when we examine Bain's financial standing, Bain Capital is estimated to be worth \$300 billion-orders of magnitude greater than Qantas's estimated \$9billion. The "competitiveness" argument looks more like an excuse to sidestep Australian wages in favour of cheaper foreign labour, all while maximising profit for Bain's executives. For many of us, working in aviation was more than a job-- it was vocation. Virgin's actions reflect a disregard for the livelihoods and values that Australian aviation embodies. If Australia values its aviation sector, national job security, then this arrangement must be re-evaluated. I urge a thorough reconsideration of this decision to safeguard Australian jobs and uphold the integrity of an industry vital to our national economy.