

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the proposed wet lease arrangement between Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways, a decision that poses a significant threat to Australian jobs and the domestic aviation industry. This arrangement exemplifies the current corporate strategy of outsourcing local employment to foreign labour while dismissing the decades of expertise and commitment that Australian aviation professionals have contributed to these companies.

This wet lease agreement reintroduces not just the aircraft type, but the very aircraft that Virgin Australia once operated prior to the COVID-19 pandemic—yet this time, with foreign crews instead of the dedicated Australian workers who once upheld Virgin Australia's reputation. For those of us who dedicated decades to the industry, this is an unjust dismissal of our work, and one that undermines the value of Australian talent and experience. Not only does this arrangement threaten Virgin Australia jobs, but it also potentially opens the floodgates to foreign labour dependence in aviation, simultaneously endangering employment at other carriers, including Qantas.

Qantas for its part engaged in a similar partnership with Finnair, but set a clear two-year limit on the presence of foreign crews. Virgin Australia, by comparison, offers no such deadline, thereby creating a dangerous precedent for the industry. This lack of accountability disregards the future of Australian aviation professionals, potentially dismantling a workforce cultivated over generations.

Bain Capital, the owner of Virgin Australia, argues that this partnership is about maintaining competitiveness. Yet this justification is questionable when its financial standing is examined. Bain Capital is estimated to be worth \$300 billion—orders of magnitude greater than Qantas's estimated \$9 billion. The 'competitiveness' argument would appear more like an excuse to sidestep Australian wages in favour of cheaper foreign labour, all while maximising bonuses for Bain Capital and Virgin Australia executives.

It is disheartening to think that this arrangement benefits only corporate bottom lines and management bonuses. For many of us, working in aviation was more than a job—it was a significant part of our lives. Losing my job after 30 years in the industry also came with the loss of sick leave, long service leave, and ultimately, a lifelong career. Virgin Australia's actions reflect a disregard not only for individual livelihoods, but also for the broader values that Australian aviation stands for.

If Australia values its aviation sector, if it values its workers, and if it values national job security, then allowing this arrangement to go unchecked would be nothing less than an abdication of responsibility. This decision deserves rigorous re-evaluation in the interest of protecting Australian workers, preserving domestic expertise, and maintaining the integrity of an industry vital to our national economy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.