

QF:010/2007

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## ❖ NOTICE ❖

**TO: ALL QANTAS MEMBERS**

**RE: Prisoners Working on Qantas Aircraft**

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Some members may have seen press in the last few days relating to an ALAEA submission to the Australian Senate regarding the use of prison labour on Australian aircraft being maintained in Singapore. Prior to the submission it was reported to the ALAEA by three separate sources over varying periods that prisoners had been utilised by third party contractors preparing Qantas aircraft for maintenance. Qantas management was also informed of the practice by the ALAEA office approximately two years ago.

Since being raised in the public forum, over a dozen members and non-members have confirmed that they have also seen correctional institution labour working on a number of carriers in Singapore including Qantas. One email received from a non-member reads –

*"I read the front page of the SMH website today regarding the use of Singapore prisoners to clean Qantas aircraft. I frequently witnessed the practice on the Qantas B767 aircraft under going C Checks at a facility here in Singapore from 2001 till 2002 where I was employed on contract as a supervising LAME after the Ansett collapse.*

*The cleaners were invariably "foreign guest" workers who had over stayed their work visas and were put to use at the maintenance facility doing spot cleaning prior to inspections in an effort to clear off their debt to the Singapore government.*

*David Cox's denial in the newspaper is a little hard to understand as I recall he along with the senior engineering managers of the time visited the maintenance facility to discover how the company was able to get the Qantas aircraft turned around in record times - which there were of course "Changi Prisoners" cleaning his aircraft."*

Comments related to the use of prisoner labour were only a small part of the entire submission and subsequent hearing in Canberra last Tuesday. The objective of our submission was to highlight the standard of maintenance in overseas facilities compared to Australia and seeking changes to the Qantas Sale Bill amendment currently before the Senate. The Executive General Manager of Qantas Engineering made the following comment in The Australian newspaper –

**"To undertake supervise and certify for the safety of all who fly."**

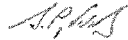
*"If it turns out to have any legs at all and our people have sat on it and pulled it as an industrial trick, then I will be extremely upset with them because their job was to watch Qantas's back on that site."*

This comment represents a clear shift by management about their position and initial complete denial of the use of prison labour in Singapore. It also suggests that it is the fault of our members (which it wasn't) that it wasn't reported earlier (even though it was reported).

Members have expressed concerns regarding a recent Notice to Qantas staff demanding immediate information on this matter to be reported to Qantas management directly or via the Cross reporting system. Concerns are related to the ability of the airline to discipline staff for alleged breaches of procedure for not reporting security risks as soon as they occur and the lack of confidentiality of the Cross reporting system.

Subsequently the ALAEA recommends any member contact the ALAEA for advice prior to direct contact with their employer relating to maintenance that has previously been carried out in overseas facilities. Additionally the ALAEA is in the process of developing a new confidential reporting system for all members that will be accessed via the recently upgraded ALAEA website.

On a final note it has been and will continue to be the aim of the ALAEA to uphold and defend the quality of maintenance on Australian aircraft in Australian facilities. There is no doubt that Qantas has an enviable safety record. It is not just the perception of Qantas's safety record that the ALAEA wants to protect. It is our intention to ensure that the record remains in tact by highlighting deficiencies reported by our members to ensure that Qantas remains one of, if not the safest airline flying today to the benefit of the safety of the travelling public.



**STEVE PURVINAS**  
Federal Secretary