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❖ NOTICE ❖

TO: ALL QANTAS MEMBERS

RE: ENGINEERING AUTHORITIES – PROCESS

APESMA have informed the ALAEA that they have been advised that Qantas management are requiring some Professional Engineers (PE) to sign Engineering Authorities (EA) outside their area of currency (i.e. outside their area of expertise and/or aircraft type). Qantas has an obligation as an employer and under CAR214 to provide sufficient training to its Professional Engineers. To sign outside a PE's area of currency or expertise is not good engineering practice and may lead to poor engineering decisions being made.

Accordingly, APESMA has advised its members that Professional Engineers should not sign Engineering Authorities outside their area of currency or expertise.

APESMA has recently written to CASA on behalf of Qantas Professional Engineer members to raise their concerns about matters including the poor engineering decisions being made by management authorised persons who are covering work out of hours (overnight and/or on weekends). It is alleged that in many cases, management authorised persons are signing EAs outside their area of expertise, where they have little recent experience or day to day knowledge.

APESMA has also raised issues related to the systemic failure of the PE peer review process for out of hours decisions by these management authorised signatories, and the absence of hand over from the out of hours management authorised persons to the normal day shift Professional Engineers (required to ensure awareness of continuing airworthiness instructions).

Recently an ALAEA LAME was involved in obtaining an EA out of normal hours and relied on the PE involved expertise to ensure the aircraft involved was not subject to any airworthiness directives (AD). The PE issued the EA and the aircraft flew on three legs with the defect before being grounded as it was discovered on the dayshift that the aircraft involved was in fact subject to an AD for the particular defect which should have been repaired before it flew.

The particular AD describes the risk of flying with the defect as "*could result in loss of a window and rapid loss of cabin pressure. Loss of cabin pressure could cause crew communication difficulties or crew incapacitation.*" Clearly an unacceptable risk.

Later it was evident that upon writing a justification for the EA the PE implied the LAME may have been at fault by saying "*The conclusion was that the defect may have in fact been a "peel type chip" condition (particularly in the fwd lower corner). However as cracks in any of the structural layers were not reported, it was postulated that structural layers were not affected and therefore, load*

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

carrying capability of the subject window had been maintained. Notwithstanding the fact that AMM 56-11-00 states that the "peel type chip" condition is cause for removal of the window, it was presumed that because the defect had previously deemed to be delamination, there may have, in fact, been some doubt." therefore attempting to shift the blame for the PE's error onto the LAME. It is clear that it is the PEs responsibility to check if there are any ADs for particular defects and ensure "safety before schedule".

ALAEA members who need to obtain an EA should ensure they fill out an Engineering Authority Request form recording all the relevant information they are aware of and not seek EA's verbally to avoid any conjecture over what information was or was not supplied. Members should also be mindful of the requirements regarding raising a Form 500 with SDR indicated if a defect is found resulting from an AD inspection.



STEVE PURVINAS
Federal Secretary