

14<sup>th</sup> April 2010



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## ❖ NOTICE ❖

**TO: ALAEA MEMBERS – FORSTAFF AVIATION**

**RE: CONFINED SPACE MEDICAL EXAMINATION (CSME)**

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Qantas and Forstaff have recently implemented changes to CSME at Avalon. Some concerns gave rise as to privacy of medical records. The ALAEA met with Forstaffs new General Manager-Simon Thorne (STn) 23 March 2010, to voice our concerns. As a consequence of that meeting it was identified that Qantas inadvertently provided the wrong consent form for employees to sign however, this was corrected on 24 March 2010, with the same form as attached (see attached consent form from notice 29 October 2009) being provided to the ALAEA by STn for use at Avalon.

CSME at Avalon concerning Forstaff employees was not in place at the date attached notice was distributed. The attached consent form/questionnaire is the same one used at Tullamarine.

Also, as a result of the above meeting I wrote to STn on 31 March 2010, asking a series of questions which STn answered on 7 April 2010. Please see email below; (STn answers are in bold italics).

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Simon,

Firstly, I take this opportunity to relay to you that the ALAEA unequivocally supports high standards regarding OHS. I understand that the CSME is part of a legally required risk assessment process under the OHS Regulations 2007 and Duty of Care under S21 OHS Act 2004.

Please find attached the new updated form you emailed me 24 March 2010. I thank you for verifying that Qantas had been using the incorrect form at Avalon. The attached form appears to be the same form used at Tullamarine (and should be the same form used across all bases).

I say the following;

1. The CSME for Qantas employees at Tullamarine is performed at a Medical Clinic by a qualified medical practitioner (QMP) /Doctor. Employees sign the attached form.
2. I confirm that a urine examination is performed on Qantas employees at Tullamarine at the medical clinic by the QMP/Dr. This is a completely separate process not to be

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confused with random urine testing related to drug and alcohol which the ALAEA strongly opposes.

3. Qantas management DO NOT have access to the actual medical examination results of Tullamarine employees. The CSME results are stored in private and kept confidentially by the QMP/Dr.

4. Upon completion of the CSME, the results of **FIT** for Confined Space Entry (CSE), or **Not Fit** for CSE is sent to the Qantas nurse. Nothing else. The Qantas nurse sets up a data base **FIT** for CSE or **NOT FIT** for CSE and conveys that information to Qantas Engineering & HR management.

Notwithstanding the information contained in the attached form I ask the following questions;

Can you confirm points 1-4 will occur at Avalon? To be more concise;

(a) Will the CSME for employees at Avalon be performed by QMP/Dr? ***The CSME will take place in the Qantas Medical Centre at Avalon and be completed by a Qantas Medical Officer or appointed GP.***

(b) Does or will Forstaff or Qantas management have access to actual CSME results? ***Qantas nor Forstaff will have any access to the results of the CSME***

(c) Where are CSME results stored and how? ***The results will be stored appropriately with the Medical Officer or GP's confidential clinical files.***

(d) Can you confirm that the attached form will be used at Avalon? ***I can confirm that the attached form is the one at use in Avalon.***

(e) The attached form questionnaire = Part A. What if any are additional parts and are the additional parts used at Tullamarine? ***I am unaware of there being any additional parts to the questionnaire either at Avalon or Tullamarine***

(f) Will Forstaff consider the CSME being performed by employees own QMP/Dr paid for by the company? ***The CSME is a Qantas requirement and as such is conducted by a Qantas appointed Medical Practitioner***

The question on Part A concerning problematic use of drugs & alcohol is an interesting one because of confidentiality.

What are the consequences of employees answering yes to problematic use of drugs & alcohol? ***The information provided is confidential between the medical officer and the employee. The Medical officer will use the information to determine only the fitness of the employee for confined space work. Should the medical officer consider it appropriate he may recommend to the employee that they be referred to their own GP for treatment in the case where problematic drug or alcohol issues are identified. The uptake of this referral is at the employees discretion.***

What is the Forstaff/Qantas policy concerning rehabilitation of employees relating to problematic use of drugs or alcohol? ***Forstaff has a strong and supportive policy about assisting its employees who need help with any issues affecting their capacity to safely carry out their job function. This includes Drugs and alcohol. The companies EAP program is designed to provide a confidential service to assist employees with a range of health related issues. This includes Drug and Alcohol issues.***

**Australian Licenced Aircraft Engineers Association**

Provided that the answers to the above questions are satisfactory, I intend to put out a notice to ALAEA members employed by Forstaff and attach the bulk of this email, as well as your response to this email, advising the membership accordingly. Should your answers raise more questions, in conjunction with ALAEA Reps Vin Leckie and Andrew de la Torre, I will be requesting a further meeting on site with you to attempt to address any outstanding issues.

I ask the you respond to this email via email to me by **12pm, 9 April 2010**.

Your assistance with this matter will be greatly appreciated.

END

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Notice cont;

The key issues for members' to understand is that management DO NOT have access to your medical information and that your records are kept in a safe controlled medical storage environment. Further, the urine examination is NOT to be confused with random urine testing for drugs and alcohol which the ALAEA opposes. The urine examination for CSME is done by medical professionals, in a private & confidential medical location, with records not accessed by management, stored by medical professionals in a secure storage facility.

The CSME consent form/questionnaire was negotiated by the ALAEA with Qantas at Tullamarine and is the same process being used at Avalon.

The attached consent form/questionnaire is the correct one to use.



Brad Stewart  
**National Union Organiser**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2009

QF: 029/2009



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# ❖ NOTICE ❖

**TO: QANTAS MEMBERS**

**RE: MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

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Due to recent concerns in Melbourne regarding the release of private medical information via the Confined Space Entry Health Questionnaire a change of wording was requested by the ALAEA. The ALAEA requested that the medical information or report that arose from the medical examination would be kept in confidence with the medical practitioner because all management needed to know was whether a person was fit for work or not and in this example it was for Confined Spaces work.

The attached document has been agreed as a suitably amended version that was adopted after consultation with both the Qantas Occupational Health Department and Qantas management.

Members are advised that they should verify that any medical examination form they are requested to sign (e.g. the attached version, when agreeing to the Confined Space Entry Health Questionnaire and assessment) has the words *"I understand that medical records will be held in confidence by the medical personnel undertaking the assessment and that a fitness for work certificate regarding the work will be provided to my manager."*

**STEVE PURVINAS**  
Federal Secretary

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## Health Questionnaire for Confined Space Entry

**Family Name:**

**Given Name:**

**Staff number:**

**Section:**

**Manager:**

**Location:**

### **Information & Authorisation:**

I authorise Qantas to conduct a Confined Space Entry Health Assessment on myself. I understand that this is required because of the potentially hazardous nature of confined space work. The assessment is conducted to determine my fitness to carry out work in confined spaces and also to assess any possible health affects from that work.

I understand that medical records will be held in confidence by the medical personnel undertaking the assessment and that a fitness for work certificate regarding confined space entry work will be provided to my manager.

I further declare that the answers provided by myself to the health questions detailed below are, to the best of my knowledge, an accurate representation.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Part A: Applicant to Complete:**

<b>Do you have or have you ever had:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
any health problems which you believe could interfere with your ability to work safely in fuel tanks?		
any condition affecting your ability to hold a driver's license?		
claustrophobia? Other mental health problems?		
any asthma, cough, wheezing, abnormal shortness of breath or chest tightness?		
diabetes?		
any problems with your joint flexibility? Any joint dislocations?		
heart conditions?		
skin problems?		
allergies, any reactions to chemicals at work?		
epilepsy or convulsions, other episodes of loss of consciousness?		
dizziness, vertigo, balance problems?		
problematical use of alcohol or other drugs?		

**Provide Details if answered "yes" to any of these questions:**

**Please list any current take Medication:**

*Medical Officer comments on history including comments by employee about past Confined Space work:*