

Media Statement

16 March 2020

By your side



Airlines must stand-by their workers for national recovery

As the airline industry braces for its most significant challenge in over a decade the Australian Services Union has called on employers to invest in their workforce through the tough times.

Secretary of the ASU's Victorian Private Sector Branch Matt Norrey said with the increased restrictions on air travel it's important to remember the impacts on airline workers and their families and to think ahead to what will be required to recover.

"Tough times like these are a test of employers' genuine commitment to their workers and their ability to think beyond the next quarterly result," Mr Norrey said.

"Employers need to give back to their loyal, hard-working employees who have delivered in more profitable years and will do so again in the future.

"This pandemic will pass, and the airline industry will need it's skilled and experienced staff on deck to help get this country back on its feet.

"All airlines and ground handlers should continue to pay employees during the downturn.

"The ASU supports the accelerated use of paid leave entitlements to respond to lower demand, but no employee should be stood down without pay."

Mr Norrey said the Government's focus on protecting Australian's health needed to be matched by a plan for key affected industries – starting with aviation.

"It is clearly in the national interest to have a strong and resilient airline industry. We need to focus on what can be done to keep the economy ticking over.

"Employment is critical to the goal of economic strength and recovery, so the airlines industry and government need to engage with workers through their unions so that we end up stronger on the other side of this crisis.

"At the end of this worldwide pandemic employers will enjoy a boom in trade and travel and their capacity to enjoy the good times tomorrow will depend on looking after their workforce and their families today."