



Resolution Number Fourteen

Submitted by the Greater NSW Branch Delegates Conference

Alcohol and Drug Testing for the Aviation Industry

Background

On 18 March 2004, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) publicly released its report on a fatal accident that occurred at Hamilton Island in September 2002, which included a finding that the accident was attributable to possible adverse effects on the pilot's performance through fatigue, recent cannabis use and post alcohol impairment.

In this report, the ATSB made a number of recommendations, relating to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) jointly examining the benefits of the introduction of a drug and alcohol testing program to the Australian aviation industry for safety sensitive personnel. It was stated that, wherever possible, this program should harmonise with existing and evolving national and international regulations. This recommendation was endorsed by the [then] Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson, and CASA and DOTARS were tasked with the responsibility of jointly developing terms of reference to review this issue.

The terms of reference of the review listed six issues to be addressed in considering the case for drug and alcohol testing in the aviation industry. These issues were:

- The need to define safety-sensitive personnel;
- Who would administer the testing process;
- Whether testing should be part of a company's safety management system;
- Whether testing should be on a random, or regular, basis;
- Alternative and/or supplementary programs that are used for alcohol and drug management (eg: mentoring, and differentiating between a regime for alcohol management which might need to be different to other drug management); and
- The costs involved with establishing programs (including education campaigns) and the ongoing testing regimes.

On 22 September 2008 new regulations requiring random alcohol and drug testing of Australia's 120,000 aviation workers came into effect as an amendment to the Civil Aviation Act.

The new regulations give aviation organisations, such as airlines and maintenance companies, six months to put in place detailed drug and alcohol plans covering pre-employment testing, reasonable suspicion testing and post-accident testing, as well as education, training and rehabilitation.



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The regulations cover pilots, engineers, cabin crew, flight instructors, re-fuelers, dispatchers, load controllers, baggage handlers, air traffic controllers and CASA staff that perform duties airside.

Resolution

This National Conference calls on the Commonwealth Government to make it a requirement that industry operators meet and confer with the AWU and all aviation unions about the joint development of appropriate rehabilitation and education provisions in company drug and alcohol policies that will apply to aviation workers in accordance with the requirements of the Civil Aviation Act and Regulations.

Moved:

Seconded:

Outcome: