

Friday 27 November 2020

Court rejects Qantas workers bid for sick leave

Qantas workers, including those battling cancer and heart disease, will not be allowed to access accrued sick leave after a federal court ruling this morning.

The ruling bars workers from accessing sick leave after Qantas stood down workers at the beginning of the pandemic. Several workers have been forced to accept redundancies during this period in order to pay medical bills.

Qantas has previously been found to have misused and underpaid the JobKeeper wage subsidy and is currently attempting to outsource all baggage handling, ramp workers and cleaning jobs.

Last year Qantas CEO Alan Joyce was the highest paid CEO in Australia and the highest paid airline executive anywhere in the world.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus

“Qantas has abandoned long-term workers with serious medical issues by refusing to allow access to sick leave during a stand-down.

“This is a deliberate decision that Qantas and Alan Joyce have made. They have a responsibility to these workers, some of whom are dealing with life-threatening medical issues, and have the money to pay out sick leave. They are refusing to do so.

“These workers are uniquely disadvantaged, being stood down and also unable to pursue work elsewhere due to illness.

“No worker in Australia should have to take a redundancy to cover medical bills, least of all during a pandemic.

“Qantas has attacked workers at every turn during this crisis. They are currently trying to outsource thousands of jobs in baggage handling and cleaning, in an attempt to cut wages and conditions for workers.

“We stand with the airline workers in their unions who are continuing to fight for fairness in the face of appalling conduct from Qantas.

“The Morrison Government has walked away from the airline industry, leaving thousands of workers unsure about their futures during an unprecedented crisis.”

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200