

Wednesday, 13 September 2023

Workers defeat Qantas: High Court confirms sackings were illegal

In a massive win for union members, the High Court of Australia today ruled that Qantas' sacking of 1700 ground and baggage workers was illegal.

The case was brought by the Transport Workers Union in a long legal battle in which two Federal Court rulings found that Qantas' outsourcing of jobs during the pandemic breached the Fair Work Act and was motivated by a desire to avoid enterprise bargaining and protected industrial action.

Since the mass sacking, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission reported that complaints about Qantas and their services soared by 68 percent in 2022.

Despite pocketing \$2.7 billion in taxpayer-funded subsidies during the pandemic and recording pre-tax profits of \$2.5 billion in the last financial year, Qantas aggressively fought to not reinstate the workers, claiming they would sack them again.

Qantas has been the poster child of exploiting loopholes to outsource jobs and suppress the wages and conditions of its workers.

The ACTU welcomes the High Court judgement and congratulates the TWU for standing up for its members.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"Today is a huge victory for the workers. The court of public opinion had already delivered their judgement on Qantas' disrespect to their customers and their workforce. Now the High Court of Australia has confirmed that Qantas illegally sacked 1700 workers, doing untold damage to them and their families.

It is some justice for the 1700 Qantas workers' families who can thank their union for standing by them through thick and thin. It is only by being in a union that they had the resources to take on Qantas.

Qantas has created and used every loophole to exploit the system. Whilst this is one victory, this behaviour will not be stopped unless the Parliament passes the Closing Loopholes Bill. This Bill gives workers greater job security and stops companies like Qantas from gaming the system."

ENDS

Media Contact: Cameron Warasta 0447 159 467