

AMEA Media Release

30 September 2013

### **Air New Zealand Line Maintenance Restructuring**

The Aviation and Marine Engineers Association Inc (AMEA) and the NZ Amalgamated Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union Inc (EPMU) have won their case in the Employment Court against Air New Zealand. Air New Zealand had proposed to restructure its Line Maintenance Engineers by disestablishing all of the 219 of their positions.

The Line Maintenance Engineers perform the engineering maintenance transit work and checks on aircraft arriving and departing from Auckland International and Domestic airports, and Christchurch and Wellington airports. Their terms and conditions of employment are covered by the AMEA Line Maintenance Collective Employment Agreement (Purple Book).

Air New Zealand claimed that the same work was also covered by two collective agreements that cover Light and Heavy Maintenance work based in Air New Zealand's hangars at Auckland and Christchurch. The AMEA and the EPMU have collective agreements that cover this Light and Heavy Maintenance work, known as the Blue Book and Green Book respectively. The unions' case was that neither of these collective agreements covered Line Maintenance engineering work.

Air New Zealand proposed to make these changes unilaterally. As well as employees losing jobs, this would have resulted in many employees losing salary, some by up to \$45,000 p.a.

Chief Judge Colgan found that the Blue and Green Books did not cover Line Maintenance work and that Air New Zealand could not claim that the collective agreements did. Consequently, Air New Zealand could not require Blue and Green Book employees to carry out that work

Jacqui Roberts, National Secretary says "The AMEA is pleased that Chief Judge Colgan found in the unions' favour. Air New Zealand had to be stopped from unilaterally changing employee's terms and conditions by requiring employees under one Collective agreement to carry out work covered by another without their agreement. Collective agreements are defined by the work that they cover. We had to stop the floodgates from opening otherwise a precedent would have been set not only within Air New Zealand but also for other New Zealand workers on large multiple collective agreement sites."

As directed by the Court, the AMEA, EPMU and Air New Zealand have attended mediation since an interim decision was released earlier this year. The AMEA does not have a resolution to the issues raised by the judgment yet but is hopeful that it can get agreement with Air New Zealand this week.

Ends

For further information contact

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