

Dissenting Report by Australian Greens

Senator Christine Milne

The Committee itself recognises that , “ *it is inevitable that the proposed legislation will encourage Australian operators to either reduce standards of employment or employment opportunities for cabin crew and pilots or encourage operators to move offshore. The Committee believes that this may not be in the best interests of the industry or the travelling public, particularly if it results in the reduction of standards of safety Australian passengers enjoy.* ” Paragraph 2.40.

Whilst the majority report has taken into account the concerns that were raised in the inquiry by the Australian Federation of Air Pilots and the Flight Attendants’ Association of Australia regarding potential job losses and reductions in airline safety from implementation of the legislation, it has reached a conclusion inconsistent with this evidence and its own analysis.

The legislation simplifies the ability for airline operators to transfer aircraft operations between Australia and New Zealand. This may encourage operators to shift business to whichever country provides greater cost saving measures, with a potential loss of jobs from the Australian airline industry.

While both Australia and New Zealand meet International Civil Aviation Organisation safety standards, these provide only a minimum safety standard. The Australian and New Zealand aviation safety regulations are not equivalent, and there were significant concerns raised during the inquiry about the differences in cabin crew to passenger ratios which had a potential impact on safety. An unintended consequence of the legislation is that there would be different safety standards for Australian airline operators and foreign airline operators both flying over Australia. To recognise safety concerns and then to recommend that the legislation be passed, is inconsistent with the government’s policy of upgrading airline security.

The Australian Greens cannot support legislation that results in Australian airline operators reducing standards of employment or employment opportunities for cabin crew and pilots, or moving their operations offshore, or reductions in safety standards for airline passengers.

Recommendation:

Unintended consequences become intended consequences when they are known. In recommending that the Bill be passed, this Committee is condoning the known inevitable consequences which are clearly not in the best interest of Australian workers, operators or the travelling public. The bill should not be passed.

Senator Christine Milne
Australian Greens Senator for Tasmania

