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MEDIA STATEMENT

PEL-AIR RESPONSE TO ARTICLE IN THE HERALD SUN

Pel-Air Aviation Pty Ltd is aware of an article published by the Herald Sun, which highlighted three instances when pressurisation was not set correctly. The informant speculated that pilot fatigue could be a likely cause of the errors and further draws the link of pilot fatigue to pilot shortage.

These allegations are very serious and it behoves Pel-Air, as a member of a publicly listed company, to respond transparently and accurately to the allegations.

Pel-Air has completed its findings on the first 2 incidents of October 2023 and is quite advanced in its investigations of the incident of January 2024. Pel-Air's findings were reviewed by an auditor from Ambulance Victoria (AV). In all 3 incidents, fatigue was assessed to be unlikely as a possible cause of the pilot error.

Each pilot, before starting a rostered duty, is assessed on his/her individual fatigue score according to the biomedical model which takes into consideration the cumulative effect of duties in the prior fortnight. No pilot can be put on duty if their fatigue score is below the minimum safe level according to the predictive model. In addition, every pilot who feels fatigued (in spite of having a fatigue score above the safe level) must report this to the supervisor who will mobilise the reserve pilot if the fatigue is serious. In all three incidents, the pilots had a score of over 90 with the minimum threshold at 77.

On the matter of pilot shortage, Pel-Air is not immune to the legacy effects of COVID which is manifesting itself in a world and industry-wide shortage of fixed-wing pilots, especially for the smaller aircraft. Be that as it may, any causal link between the pilot numbers and pilot fatigue is simply not possible given that Pel-Air has in place a fatigue monitoring system explained above that sits above the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) very prescriptive rules on pilot duty hours.

We understand the concerns of the informant but, having completed over 12 years of flying for AV with impeccable reliability and an unblemished safety record, we believe that Pel-Air has earned the right to be trusted and relied upon.

In a couple of months Pel-Air is set to deliver a brand new fleet of four aero-medical aircraft that will greatly enhance the current capability of AV. Pel-Air does not deny that the next few months will be extremely challenging as it prepares for the brand new fleet while at the same time conducting the training of the crew for the state-of-the-art aircraft. However, Pel-Air has always been able to work collaboratively with AV to overcome all issues in the past and believes this support will continue to assist Pel-Air in overcoming the challenges in the next few months.

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