

My name is Monique Naiyana Neeteson-Lemkes. I am currently employed as a full time Sydney based flight attendant. I have been in this role since May 2006.

Additionally, I have been a workplace union delegate for the Flight Attendants Association of Australia (FAAA) for four years, most recently elected as Jetstar Team Coordinator. I stress that I make this submission in my personal capacity and not on behalf of the Flight Attendants Association of Australia.

In April 2006 I attended six weeks of ground school. Upon successful completion of ground training in May 2006 I was endorsed to operate domestically on an Airbus A320. As I recollect in February 2008 I was part of a group of flight attendants that attended a two day Airbus A321 conversion course. Again upon successful completion of that course, I was endorsed to operate domestically on an Airbus A321. I continue to be currently endorsed to operate domestically on both the Airbus A320 & A321.

I have been prompted to make a submission as a result of the Senate Inquiry re-“pilot training & airline safety” through listening to the passionate and heated debates at work amongst pilots and flight attendants. I have extensively read numerous copies of evidence within transcripts floating around in the crew room dated 15/2/2011.

It is the main talk amongst Captains and Flight Attendants at work currently. We don't even gossip about one another anymore. The three things I always hear is “it's about time people knew what goes on in this place”, “that Captain Klouth has incredible self-belief and he has got guts” and “if only flight attendants could speak up and tell the truth about how tired we are without worrying about Jetstar management picking on us, just maybe those senators could help us.....”.

Flight Attendants are afraid to speak the truth about current practises within the workplace. They know it'd be seen as going against their employers. It's known as the culture at Jetstar that should you choose to speak up about truthful matters, you aren't exactly welcomed with open arms. Flight Attendants don't have the attractive salary level that comes with being a Captain so the cost to “fight back” legally should our employment be terminated is extremely intimidating.

Recently I became aware and read a transcript from the ABCs *The World Today* website, dated Monday, November 15, 2010, 12:46:00 between Peter Ryan and Bruce Buchanan.

What caught my attention was one of Bruce Buchanan's responses to a question from Peter Ryan- “So you'd welcome a submission from Geoff Klouth who is one of your former training Captains and air safety investigators where he has raised concerns about Cabin Crew training. Do you believe that is a worthy light shining?”

Bruce Buchanan-“Oh absolutely, I think anyone can raise any concerns they have got. I mean the investigation and the Senate inquiry is about pilot training standards so it is

interesting that the key issue that seems to be coming out is cabin crew training and standards which seems kind of a tangential issue but more than happy to have a discussion and debate around that”.

I have taken into consideration a mixed bag of emotions, fear and advice from those close to me. For days I weighed up all of the above against how I personally feel. It’s from Bruce Buchanan’s above quoted response that has crystalized my decision in putting forward my submission.

I raise the following issues to the committee about fatigue and safety amongst cabin crew at Jetstar. I would also like to raise lack of confidence most flight attendants have both in our employer and C.A.S.A. to fix the problem.

My submission is made under any other related matters. I believe my submission to be significantly relevant to the issues of safety for the flying public and my industry colleagues.

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (i)- I am unable to provide accurate comment.

(j) “ Any other related matter”

As I started Jetstar in 2006, I’m known as an “EBA” flight attendant, (Flight Attendants employed under the original contract of employment). Since then there has been two other types of employment for flight attendants joining Jetstar. Team Jetstar (TJ) employees (those employed under the Team Jetstar contract of employment) and Casuals (those whom are employed under the Altara contract of employment).

Between the three different groups, we all have different contracts; different rates of pay and different duty hour limits for daily and monthly limitations. Team Jetstar flight attendants depending on their predominance (domestic or international) can fly one additional aircraft type in comparison to EBA and Altara, that being an Airbus A330, otherwise we all fly together on the A320 & A321.

Whatever type of contract of employment we all share a common concern, fatigue. It is not only impacting our occupational health and safety but spilling over into our personal health and safety. The impact fatigue has to both the Flight Attendant and the safety of the airline’s passengers whilst operating is of great significance and potentially dangerous.

My Flight Attendant peers regularly discuss the symptoms that manifest as a result of fatigue. These include disorientation, stinging dry eyes, involuntary nodding off whilst seated on our jump seats, short tempered dispositions, short term memory loss, ineffective decision making, involuntary yawning, anxiety and a higher error rate whilst performing duties. We tend to be much slower in reaction and workplace injuries are at a high rate but not often reported, as crew are too tired to fill out forms.

Lack of coordination is common and so is decrease to our physical ability and wellbeing. We find difficulty in concentrating and completing the simplest tasks. I have experienced all of the above on many occasions as have most of my Flight Attendant Peers. As a group, we often experience re-occurring illnesses and spend hours waiting to see doctors required by the company.

All of the above threatens the very safety of both the Flight Attendant and the operation of the flight. Flight Attendants are threatened with "fatigue management" if they mention they feel fatigued. The company stipulates that it is incumbent on the individual Cabin Crew member to assess their fitness to fly. If a crew member feels fatigue the reluctance report as such is strong for fear of non-acceptance by management. As a consequence crew that have assessed themselves as being unfit due to fatigue call in sick instead.

If you are deemed to have had too many sick days you are then threatened with "sick leave" management. It doesn't appear to matter how many O.S.C.A.R's (Operational Safety Company Advisory Report) we write. Nor do we feel it matters how many times we verbally tell Bruce Buchanan when we see him on a flight. It seems Jetstar doesn't listen to us.

Five years ago in my training school I was taught that the C.A.S.A was this amazing organisation that was there to protect the airline industry and safety within the airlines.

I feel that the C.A.S.A and the A.T.S.B have failed to successfully address concerns that have been raised by Flight Attendants, regarding the operating culture within Jetstar that is creating hazardous levels of fatigue.

The operating culture that is creating hazardous levels of fatigue within Jetstar;

1. Rostering practises at Jetstar involving 6 consecutive days of usually 10 hour duties followed by a single day off then rostered another 5-6 days. These rostered duties can consist of consecutive early morning starts, or consecutive late starts, or a combination of both. Completion of a 6 day shifts, usually with a back of the clock flight. This causes elevated levels of fatigue by 4th-5th day & by day 6 Flight Attendants begin to experience the symptoms described by me. This results in high sick leave for the company. Jetstar management require Flight Attendants to "explain" in person why they are so sick and so often. This is a vicious cycle we cannot seem to escape.
2. The Pairing of quick sectors together for a four sector day. Maximum passenger loads for all sectors and operated by CASA approved reduced crew complement. In the majority of these occasions no meal breaks are available. Sometimes we are so hungry that our stomachs hurt but we have to keep on going.

3. Loading of particular types of long duties to certain types of employment contracts as it is cost effective and because it's only allowed in their contract. I feel the deepest kind of empathy for Team Jetstar Flight Attendants. Their contract allows them to operate 15 hours of duty. How can a Flight Attendant who has worked 15 hours of duty carry out an emergency evacuation without any fatigue bias?
4. Crew operating out of their home base having to wait sometimes in excess of 30 mins for transport and their waiting around is counted as part of their rest. The forever problematic Jetstar Crewing System, especially the constant booking errors, is a constant gripe not only by the Flight Attendants but the Flight Crew as well.
5. Crew operating out of their home base being checked out of hotel rooms sometimes 3-6 hours before their rostered shift commences as Jetstar hadn't paid for late checkout.
6. Sydney, Melbourne, Cairns, Brisbane crew operating back of the clock duties which are rostered 11-12hour duties, not including the seemingly inevitable delays. Crew are expected to drive home as normal. It is a well-documented fact that Driving fatigued is more dangerous than driving with a raised blood alcohol level. We drive amongst the other driving public too.
7. Team Jetstar Flight Attendants have, upon completion of a rostered duty been informed by ground staff to go and meet an aircraft to continue on another two sectors or possible overnight. The regard for personal life is virtually non-existent, but what's of greater concern is the fatigue felt at the end of such an extended duty. If you are asked to work back with no notice for such an extended period would you feel engaged and would you then proactively promote a safety culture?
8. Emergency procedure testing takes place once a year. Flight attendants are rostered for approximately 14 hours starting from 5am. Delays regularly occur, extending duties close to 16hrs.
9. Flight Attendants rest being reduced to meet operational requirements of the airline. Rest periods are legally required periods for crew to rest. They should not be reduced for business objectives. Strategies to avoid the company seeking reduced rest periods for crew could include better rostering practices to ensure effective flight coverage.
10. Reduction in a cabin crew numbers required to operate a Jetstar aircraft. (Cabin Crew ratio) resulting in the re-distribution of duties of left over duties onto

remaining crew, whilst maintaining maximum passengers. The increase in workload for crew adds to fatigue for obvious reasons as no time to eat.

11. Contract of employment specific, a rostered duty can be changed at any time with just notification of a phone call not allowing crew to adequately rest.
12. There appears to be no provision made to the welfare of any crew member at the completion of a duty. Our management build and endorse duties that leave us exhausted at their completion. There appears to be no consideration of our welfare post duty. Most of us have to drive home, often in heavy traffic, often for considerable distance. I am concerned about motor vehicle accidents stemming from fatigue. This has happened three times in Jetstar that I'm aware of. All of them were quite serious in fact, two cars were written off. Two of the crew from these accidents had in excess of three months off work.

I fear an accident occurring every day I'm at work. I am scared that either one of my colleagues or I will be involved in a serious event that we will have to deal with some degree of fatigue bias. The commercial drive by my company seems at times, at odds with the welfare of the staff. We are the face of the organisation. The ones that greet you and ensure that you are comfortable, but above all, ensure you are safe. I am not convinced that under the effects of fatigue that this can be effectively achieved.

Flight attendants across the network are pinning their hopes on the Senators and this Inquiry to deliver shorter and safer flying hours for Flight Attendants.

Finally I'm genuinely concerned that by making this submission I could be persecuted at work and lose my job. I make this submission as a last resort as my employers and regulators have failed to act. I have been contacted by dozens of colleagues to speak out who share the same concerns and fear of persecution from Jetstar.

Monique Naiyana Neeteson-Lemkes