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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **AIPA AND QANTAS CONDUCT SPECIAL FLIGHTS TO ASSESS LONG-RANGE FLYING**

The Australian and International Pilots Association (AIPA), representing pilots employed by the Qantas Group, has signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the airline to conduct three special flights to assess ultra long-range flying (ULR).

The flights, from London and New York to Sydney, begin this weekend and will conclude in December.

Safety is a major consideration in every aspect of aviation. Ultra long-range flying will test the technical limits of the aircraft and the ability of crews to operate effectively over extended periods.

AIPA members are already involved in ULR flying on Qantas services between Perth and London. The Association is also carefully monitoring the airline's development of a trial Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS).

AIPA believes both Qantas and CASA should ensure that an FRMS is world's best practice and not simply an extension of current practice.

Pilots operate in a working environment which requires a high level of judgement and decision making as they move between time zones and manage interrupted periods of rest and sleep.

AIPA has agreed to take part in the gathering of data on these special flights and will meet with Qantas to assess the results. However pilots recognise the limits of using data from only three flights to fully assess the impact of ULR flying.

It is important to note that these special flights are exploratory in nature because they exceed anything that has been previously flown and for which useful data exists.

Pilots believe three special flights will produce a limited set of data that will not adequately replicate real-world flying conditions.

AIPA expects that each separate ULR route will have different considerations. Significant caution will be required when first embarking on any commercial versions of these flights. Reviews of rules can be made when flights have demonstrated proven fatigue and safety outcomes.

It will be necessary to continue to gather and assess information about ULR and other flying over an extended period of normal operations to fully understand the issues which might impact on human performance.

AIPA will continue to emphasise the need to regard safety as the most important issue in any assessment of ULR flying. The three special flights should inform continuing discussions between Qantas and its pilots about a proper safety assessment of ULR services, instead of being used to drive commercial decisions.

Quotes attributable to AIPA President Mark Sedgwick:

“The commercial viability of additional ULR services such as the proposed Project Sunrise remains a decision for Qantas. However should these types of flights be proven as financially viable, then the overriding consideration is the ability to safely operate such services with appropriate considerations being given to the operating crew.”

Quotes attributable to AIPA Safety and Technical Director Captain Shane Loney:

“Qantas is proposing to fly some of the longest routes in the world and what we need is a scientific long-term study into the impacts on crew so we can make sure ULR flying is as safe as we and the airline can make it.”

“Pilots are concerned about being able to get enough quality rest during ULR flights to maintain peak performance and we believe significant caution should be exercised in the initial operations to make sure there are no unintended consequences.”

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