



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Qantas**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 27 March 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Thursday, 27 March 2014  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Entsch, Warren, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr ENTSCHE** (Leichhardt) (10:22): I rise today to speak on behalf of the members of the Qantas crew base in Cairns, who received the shattering news four weeks ago that their base will be closed. One hundred and ten crew and their families were given just two weeks to decide whether they would relocate to another base, or resign and take a redundancy. Staff members have contacted me telling me how the closure would impact on them. They said—and this is typical of the comments: 'As a family we love living in Cairns and we are not planning to relocate anywhere in the future. Qantas has forced us to uproot our lives, take our kids out of day care, forced my husband to leave his job, and made major changes regarding our financial stability.' 'We have been challenged and distressed by Qantas's decision. Our family enjoys living and working in Cairns. We share a sense of passion and engagement amongst the community and the diverse environment.' 'As locals on flights, we give great advice on what to see and do in Far North Queensland. We recommend locally owned operators and businesses. No other port in Australia has a crew so dedicated to promotion of their area.' 'Our outstanding commitment and performance has been overlooked by the upper echelon of corporate Qantas.' These comments are backed by the fact that Cairns consistently rates high in its customer service scores, as voted by the passengers, coming first in Australia in January, December and November. This is adding to Qantas's bottom line, as fantastic customer service has economic value and encourages repeat and referral bookings.

I wrote to the CEO of Qantas, Alan Joyce, on 4 March and asked him to reconsider his decision, allowing the base to remain, with a reduction in staff size if absolutely necessary, or to phase out the base over an extended period of time, with a review in 12 months.

To date, unsurprisingly, I have received no response. Today I have learnt that some crew have accepted redundancies because they are unable to relocate to a major city. They finish on 4 May. Those crews that are in a position where they have to uproot and move to Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth will be gone by 30 June. This is very disappointing news. Consider that the Qantas board of directors had a choice of three people to take on the CEO role. Their choice took a world-class, full-service airline and transformed it into a low-cost, no-frills carrier. On the other hand, one of the unsuccessful candidates moved to a low-cost, no-frills carrier and turned it into an outstanding full-service carrier. One ponders on who got the best deal: Qantas or Virgin. I would suggest many of Qantas's woes could be addressed if the board were to revisit that decision. Qantas is a great airline with great staff and a great future. What it needs is a leader with comprehensive knowledge and the commitment to rebuilding and maintaining a full-service airline. *(Time expired)*

*A division having been called in the House of Representatives—*

**Sitting suspended from 10 : 25 to 10 : 42**