

Aviation services company penalised almost \$100,000 for underpaying pilots

14 December 2011

A national aviation services company has been penalised \$96,030 for underpaying 33 pilots, following a prosecution by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The Federal Magistrates Court in Perth has imposed the penalty against National Jet Systems Pty Ltd, which operates a fleet of jets offering freight and passenger services throughout Australia.

Federal Magistrate Toni Lucev found the company had breached workplace laws by underpaying 33 pilots a total of \$123,423 in 2006-2007.

The underpayments were the result of National Jet Systems failing to provide the pilots with wage increases they were entitled to under their workplace agreements.

Federal Magistrate Lucev said there was a need to impose a penalty “to demonstrate to others the seriousness with which the Court views contravention of industrial instruments, with a view to deterring others from committing such contraventions.”

National Jet Systems rectified the underpayments after the Fair Work Ombudsman commenced legal proceedings.

The biggest underpayment of an individual pilot was \$7337.

The Fair Work Ombudsman also alleged that National Jet Systems had breached workplace laws by applying duress to two pilots in an effort to pressure them into signing workplace agreements.

However, Magistrate Lucev dismissed this allegation, finding that while National Jet Systems had applied pressure to the two pilots, it did not amount to unlawful duress.

Employers or employees seeking assistance should contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fairwork.gov.au.

A free interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

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Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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