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Qantas Air Safety chief urges better regulation standards for fire protection industry

The fire protection industry must strive for excellence in safety and regulation standards according to QANTAS Air Safety Manager, Darren Cook.

Speaking at the Fire Australia 2011 Conference & Exhibition at the Adelaide Convention Centre, Cook said that safety was the airlines number one priority and urged the fire protection industry to embrace the challenge of improving maintenance and safety requirements with a 'make it happen' mentality.

On the day Qantas celebrated its 91st anniversary after being founded on November 16, 1920, Cook said the fire protection and aviation industries shared the same responsibility of a 'safety first' expectation.

"Safety is our number one priority at Qantas," Cook said.

"When it comes to safety, there is no question or concern for us to say that we are more than happy to put a plane on the ground to make sure it's safe and safe for our passengers.

"And in regards to safety, there is nothing more important than maintenance of our aircrafts. The same applies to the maintenance of fire protection equipment.

"If there is a bigger fear then I don't know what it is than fire on board an aircraft," Cook said.

Cook spoke in detail on how the Aviation Industry manages its maintenance and education during his presentation on day one of the Fire Australia 2011 at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

Fire Protection Association Australia (FPA Australia) CEO, Scott Williams, said the importance of safety in the fire protection industry would be the key message and focus of the conference.

"People know when they get onto an aircraft, whether it be Qantas or another carrier, that absolutely everything has been done to ensure the aircraft meets all safety standards and is airworthy from a safety perspective," Williams said.

"You only have to look at recent events in Australia where the entire fleet of aviation companies have been grounded in the event of major safety concerns.

"The fire protection industry needs to take leadership from the Aviation industry and its strong regulatory and governance framework to ensure all safety measures are met with complete accountability.

"So in the same way a plane doesn't fly if safety standards are not acceptable, buildings should no longer be occupied unless the proper fire protection measures are met.

"We want far better safety outcomes and it all starts with advocating the importance of education and the appropriate qualifications," Williams said.

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The Fire Protection Association Australia is the country's peak body for fire safety, providing information, services and training to the fire protection industry and broader community. For more information, please see www.fpa.com.au or contact FPA Australia – (03) 9890 1544.