

TWU NEWSROOM

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Attn: Australian and U.S.-based business, labor and aviation reporters and editors

Transport Workers Unions of America and Australia Announce New Unprecedented Partnership – Other Unions Around the Globe Likely to Join

Global Airline Alliances and Multi-National Firms Operating Formerly Public Transit Systems Requires Coordinated International Action by Unions

NEW ORLEANS -- Leaders of the Transport Workers Union of America (TWU), representing more than 200,000 workers and retirees at major U.S. airlines, Amtrak and public transit systems, such as the MTA in New York City, have joined with the 90,000 –member Transport Workers’ Union of Australia (TWU) in forming an unprecedented alliance to deal with privatization issues, multi-national employers and corporate alliances.

“The accent is different but the problems are the same,” said Transport Workers Union of America International President James C. Little. “The challenges that TWU of Australia faces at Qantas reflect issues we have with Oneworld partner American Airlines; on the transit side we are both negotiating with the French company Veolia; in organizing, both unions have had recent campaigns at airlines owned by British billionaire Richard Branson, the list of similarities goes on and on.” Added Little, “Transportation unions have to coordinate activity around the globe to match activity by international companies in the transportation sector.”

The leadership of both unions met in New Orleans today to sign a formal pact establishing the Trans-Pacific Transport Unions Alliance. The meetings this week followed discussions held last month between union leaders of both TWUs held in Sydney.

The unions will now begin to coordinate research, campaign strategies and activity. The two TWU organizations also will seek common approaches to common issues such as violence directed at bus and transit operators.

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Transport Workers' Union of Australia National Secretary Tony Sheldon said, "Employers across our common industries are accelerating their attacks on working people. Strategies companies develop in one part of the world are being used to undercut Labor and communities elsewhere. The solution is for Labor to organize together, to coordinate our efforts together and to fight back and gain opportunities for working people and their families."

Discussions with other unions to expand the alliance are scheduled for next month in Toronto.

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