

Qantas fined \$58m for Covid layoffs

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Qantas Airways QAN.AX, Australia's largest airline, has been fined A\$90 million (\$58.64 million) for illegally sacking 1,800 ground staff and replacing them with contractors during the COVID-19 pandemic, a court ruled on Monday (August 18).

In imposing a penalty close to the maximum available for breaching Australia's workplace laws, Federal Court of Australia Judge Michael Lee said it was to ensure it "could not be perceived as anything like the cost of doing business".

"My present focus is on achieving real deterrence (including general deterrence to large public companies which might be tempted to 'get away' with contravening conduct because the rewards may outweigh the downside risk of effective remedial responses," Lee said in a summary judgment.

He said A\$50 million of the penalty would be paid to the Transport Workers' Union, which brought the case on behalf of the 1,820 staff fired by Qantas during the pandemic.

It comes around nine months after Qantas and the Union agreed on a A\$120 million settlement for the sacked workers.

Qantas shares were down 0.13pc in early trade.

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