

Article:	Qantas' unqualified safety man
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An unqualified engineer allegedly performed nearly 2000 maintenance jobs on Qantas airplanes over 10 months, a court has been told.

Timothy Leslie McCormack was even responsible for signing off on the safety of aircraft before the planes took off, often on long-haul international flights.

And when Qantas discovered he was unqualified they still allowed him to continue working for a further three months before he was finally banned.

McCormack, 26, faced the Downing Centre District Court briefly on Friday to face 111 charges, including forging Commonwealth documents and performing unauthorised maintenance on Australian aircraft.

Police allege McCormack, who is living at Warriewood, forged his qualifications and engineer's licence and performed maintenance work on 88 aircraft for Qantas between September 15, 2006 and July 3, 2007. He has denied the charges.

Emails between Qantas staff submitted to court suggest the company had uncovered discrepancies in McCormack's qualifications by April 12, 2007.

The series of emails show McCormack's qualifications weren't fully investigated for almost three months before he was finally prevented from working on planes in July 2007.

McCormack signed off on the safety of 35 planes in that period.

The Federal Police statement of facts entered into court allege McCormack altered a colleague's engineer's licence on his home computer before passing it off as his own.

Police also allege McCormack was promoted to a Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (LAME) after falsifying a number of exam results.

McCormack began his career with Qantas in January 2002 as an apprentice aircraft maintenance engineer (AME).

He finished his apprenticeship in July 2004 and was employed as an aircraft maintenance engineer - a relatively junior and heavily supervised position.

All McCormack's work had to be double-checked and approved by a licensed aircraft maintenance engineer. In July 2006 his Qantas supervisors received 10 documents purporting to be exam results issued by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

Police later discovered McCormack had only ever passed one CASA basic exam and no licence had ever been issued in his name.



The documents allege he showed his forged LAME licence to supervisors on July 20, 2006 and, in September, began overseeing maintenance works and certifying the safe release of aircraft.

Qantas maintenance logs reveal McCormack worked on Boeing 747/400 aircraft, frequently used for long-haul international flights.

He allegedly performed a total of 1918 maintenance tasks on those planes.

Police allege that Mr McCormack remained in his position for more than 10 months before his secret life began to unravel.

A series of emails tendered to court reveal initial queries over Mr McCormack's qualifications began as early as April 2007.

An email addressed to Mr McCormack from his supervisor Rodney Hesse dated April 12, 2007 notes that he is not listed as a licensed engineer in Qantas computers.

"Tim, can you pls (sic) come and see me RE your AME regrade as the system shows you eligible from 22/06/05, what's your current level?"

Another email sent to Mr McCormack from Mr Hesse dated May 14, 2007 reads: "Tim we need to discuss this urgently, can you pls come and see me. Thanks Rod."

A third email sent from Mr Hesse to another Qantas employee, Darren Cook, on May 23, 2007 reads: "Darren, can you please give me a call re Tim as I am confused as to Tim's status - AME vs. LAME."

McCormack continued working on aircraft throughout this exchange. He worked on his first plane on September 15, 2006 and worked on his final plane on July 3, 2007.

Qantas contacted the Australian Federal Police in July 2007.

The case was adjourned until June 30 and the trial is expected to last 10 days.