

Virus-hit Fiji Airways cuts workforce by half

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Pandemic-hit Fiji Airways fired more than half its workforce Monday, as travel restrictions put the islands' vital tourism sector in deep freeze and reduced the national carrier's revenue to "virtually zero".

Chief executive Andre Viljoen said that after "exhausting all other options" the airline had decided to let 758 staff go—some 51 percent of the workforce—while those remaining would face a permanent pay cut of 20 percent.

"The sad reality of prolonged flight suspensions means that we simply do not have work for a large segment of our [workforce](#) now," the airline said in a statement.

"The airline will receive virtually zero revenue in the coming months."

Fiji Airways depends heavily on the tourist trade, particularly from neighbouring Australia and New Zealand, but has seen virtually all flights suspended.

Talks are currently underway to create a "travel bubble" among South Pacific nations that have coronavirus under control, allowing some tourism to resume.

But details are still being worked out and implementation could be many months away.

Both Australia and New Zealand have stringent restrictions on overseas

travel and impose a two-week quarantine on all international arrivals.

Fiji Airways staff had already agreed to a pay cut of up to 35 percent before the jobcuts.

Those who still have jobs will also face a permanent pay cut of 20 percent, the airline added.

Fiji has reported just 18 cases of COVID-19, with no deaths and no new cases reported in more than a month.

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