Qantas’ own Flying Doctor...

As far as extra curricular activities go, it is unlikely that a Phd in Cosmic and Solar Radiation would jump to mind for most commercial Pilots. Just another achievement to add to the list, however, for B744 Captain Ian Getley who’s research findings have been recognised by both the International Scientific Community and the International Federation of Airline Pilots. Ian’s achievements are acknowledged in detail below by Prof. Jason Middleton, Head of Aviation Department, UNSW.


Approximately five predictive codes have been developed around the world but all have based their program on validated data from Northern Hemisphere flights. As the Earth’s Magnetic shielding is not distributed uniformly Ian’s research helped to improve the accuracy of several of these codes by adding previously unavailable measurements from high southern latitude flights.

During his research he was fortunate to measure one of the largest Solar Particle Events in the current Solar Cycle (11 year cycle), over northern Continental United States that was the first event of such magnitude ever recorded on a commercial flight. This resulted in two substantial international scientific papers detailing the findings, with a further four scientific papers on research related data that have helped in predictive code development.

Ian’s work is recognised by both the International Scientific Community where he has regularly made presentations and by his fellow Pilots at the International Federation of Airline Pilots where his scientific knowledge has aided the Human Performance Committee in radiation related matters.

In recognition of his continuing research UNSW has invited Ian to become a visiting Fellow and we look forward to more interesting research in the coming years.

(L>R) Prof. Jason Middleton, Dept Head of Aviation UNSW, Capt/Dr Ian Getley, Mr Ron Bartsch, CCM Safety Compliance and Operational Risk, Qantas Airways.