

Old man pays for forged pilot's licence

By AAP

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- **A Queensland man who crashed one plane and flew another into electricity wires has paid a big price for forging his commercial licence to get a job as an agricultural pilot.**

Lachlan Sidney Jones learned on Friday he may never fly commercially again for forging the document and faking flying hours because he felt family pressure to succeed in life.

Jones, 28, of St George, in the state's south, pleaded guilty to flying 856 times without a licence for five companies over an 18-month period between 2013 and 2015.

The Brisbane District Court heard Jones had an Australian private pilot's license but failed to pass the exam for a commercial pilot's licence.

So Jones travelled to the US, where he passed the "easier" US commercial pilot exam and began working there as a licensed agricultural pilot.

While in the US, Jones crashed into a paddock, "substantially" damaging the light aircraft, the court was told on Friday. "He then returned to Australia in 2013 to work the season here," Judge Paul Smith said.

It was then Jones forged an Australian CPL and logged false flying hours to obtain work locally, he said. Jones was found out by a Civil Aviation Safety Authority investigation in January 2015, sparked by a tip-off that a young pilot was flying unlicensed.

But not before he flew a plane into an electricity wire in outback Queensland while on the job, the court heard. Judge Smith acknowledged Jones' youth when he committed the offences and the family pressure he was under to succeed.

However, he said "there are real dangers involved with agricultural flying". "It is crucial people be appropriately licensed to fly aircraft," he said.

Jones was charged with five counts of not authorised to perform duty, one count of influencing a commonwealth public official and one count of making a false document to induce commonwealth official.

He was sentenced to six months imprisonment, suspended for two years, and was given a \$10,000 fine.

Judge Smith acknowledged the punishment may prevent Jones from ever flying commercially in Australia or travelling back to the US because of his criminal charge and visa restrictions.

Extracted from:

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/man-pays-price-for-forging-pilot-s-licence/daea9843-f582-4ad1-aafc-51b9c66d2eaa>

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