



Media Release

18 October 2017

Campaign to Improve Safety and Access for 15 Million Rural and Regional Passengers

The Australian Airports Association, with support from the Australian Logistics Council, Regional Aviation Association of Australia and the Royal Flying Doctor Service, today launched the 'Protect Regional Airports' campaign designed to improve safety and access for the 15 million passengers that use rural and regional airports each year.

AAA CEO Caroline Wilkie said there are more than 2,000 landing strips and airports in Australia including 250 that provide public transport.

"Regional airports employ and support in excess of 4,000 staff, accounts for 45 per cent of Australia's tourism revenue and allows for more than 6,000 emergency evacuations a year," Ms Wilkie said.

"Australian airports have some of the world's highest safety standards and this is something we are very proud of.

"To achieve and maintain these standards is an expensive exercise. There are unique challenges in regional Australia such as old lighting, animals and livestock on runways and unsealed runways.

"We know that many of these airports are doing it tough, in fact independent analysis demonstrates that there is a \$170m shortfall in maintenance and infrastructure funding.

"The analysis also shows that costs for airports are expected to increase by 40 per cent over next 10 years," Ms Wilkie said.

The 'Protect Regional Airport' campaign is designed to raise awareness of the contribution regional airports make to Australia and to encourage the Australian Government to commit to a two-pronged funding proposal.

The proposal is to:

1. Extend and expand the Regional Aviation Access Programme (RAAP) to a \$15m allowing remote communities such as Milyakburra in the NT or Mimili in SA to also benefit, and
2. Develop a new \$25m a year program similar to the RAAP that would allow regional centres like Moruya, Biloela, Manjimup or Cummins to apply for funding.

Ms Wilkie said that the funding would provide regional and remote airports access to much needed funding to address local challenges.

“There are a range of the different types of safety improvements that could be funded including improved lighting, runways and animal fencing,” Ms Wilkie said.

“We are asking for this funding based on a 50:50 funding contribution split between local/state government and the Commonwealth. However, we would like to see that all applicants need to be assessed on a case by case basis, to allow for special provisions where an equal contribution arrangement may not be possible, particularly in very remote areas.

“To continue being a successful and prosperous nation, the back bone of Australia, the regions, need equitable access to markets, health care, exports and produce all of which are facilitated by regional airports. This is why we are calling on the Government,” Ms Wilkie said.

Airport Safety Week will run between 16 and 20 October.

END.

Media Contact:

Sharnee Pardy
Communications Manager
0438 420 096
spardy@airports.asn.au