

# MEDIA RELEASE



9 May 2018

## Regional funding boost welcomed, but more needed to ensure regions aren't left behind

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) has welcomed the Federal Budget allocation of \$28.3 million over the next four years for remote airports, but warned some regional airports would continue to be left behind without additional funding.

AAA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said new funds to continue the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Programme (RAUP) would keep communities connected in some of Australia's most remote locations.

"The AAA has been campaigning for many months to Protect Regional Airports and we're delighted with this outcome," Ms Wilkie said.

"This week's budget allocation is welcome recognition of the important role regional airports play in their communities and will keep local people connected and thriving for years to come.

"This funding will help ensure remote airports can keep their infrastructure safe and fit-for-purpose, connecting their community to essential emergency services, loved ones and services only available in larger regional and metropolitan centres.

"Unfortunately, regional airports not eligible for RAUP funding have been left out of this year's budget and we will continue our campaign to support them in the year ahead."

The AAA's Protect Regional Airports campaign called for the RAUP to be extended for a further four years, which has been achieved but at a funding level lower than targeted. It also sought the creation of a separate fund for regional airports not eligible for funding under the programme.

"Most regional airports are owned and operated by local councils, and 60 per cent lose money simply trying to maintain what is mostly WWII era infrastructure," Ms Wilkie said.

"The RAUP is only available for aerodromes classified as 'remote', meaning many airports will simply miss out on much needed funding.

"More must be done to break the back of the infrastructure backlog facing our regional airport network to ensure we have a safe and viable regional aviation network for all Australians."

# MEDIA RELEASE



Ms Wilkie said the AAA would work with its campaign partners to continue its efforts to Protect Regional Airports.

The campaign was launched in 2017 in conjunction with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Australian Local Government Association, Australian Logistics Council and Regional Aviation Association of Australia.

ENDS