

MEDIA RELEASE



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AAA renews funding call to Protect Regional Airports

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) has renewed calls for the establishment of a \$100 million Regional Airport Infrastructure Fund ahead of the regional stream of its national conference today.

The fund would help address the \$170 million aeronautical infrastructure deficit that already faces our regions.

AAA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said regional airports were struggling to make ends meet, and funding for essential maintenance and upgrades was essential to ensure the sustainability of our regional network.

“Many regional airports are operated by local councils and expect persistent budget deficits over the next 10 years,” Ms Wilkie said.

“These airports provide vital connection to local communities, ensuring access to emergency services, business networks and loved ones.

“Councils must invest in maintenance and upgrades to ensure their airport’s safe operation and regulatory compliance, and we face the very real risk of airport closures if a sustainable funding model is not available.”

The AAA has called on the Federal Government to establish a \$100 million Regional Airport Infrastructure Fund to be delivered over four years, using a co-contribution funding model in partnership with state and local governments.

Regional airports facilitate 15 million passengers across Australia each year, with more than 360,000 RPT aircraft movements going to or from a regional airport in 2017-18.

Regional airports also facilitated 6000 emergency evacuations a year and housed 500 aircraft to support firefighting duties.

There is currently no dedicated fund for regional airports not classified as remote, leaving some local councils to draw on limited ratepayer funds to complete essential maintenance and upgrades.

“We must ensure the future of our regional network to ensure local communities aren’t left behind,” Ms Wilkie said.

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