

MEDIA RELEASE

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Virgin cuts highlight need for aviation recovery strategy

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) says today's announcement of further job losses and cuts to long-haul international routes by Virgin Australia highlights the need for the Government to develop a recovery strategy for the aviation industry as the economy adapts to COVID-19.

"Our thoughts are with those affected by Virgin Australia's announcement," AAA Chief Executive James Goodwin said.

"There are few industries hit harder by the pandemic than aviation and this is another blow for the sector," he said.

"There is deep concern amongst the airport sector at the flow-on impact of the significant job losses and service reductions outlined by Virgin Australia,"

"This highlights the need for the Government to develop an aviation industry recovery strategy as the economy adapts to COVID-19."

"Throughout the extraordinary COVID-19 crisis, airports have been committed to staying open to assist people to return home from overseas, for essential workers to continue doing their jobs and keep our global freight airbridges operating,"

"There has been a 98 per cent reduction in domestic and international air passenger movements since the pandemic began, yet the fixed costs to operate airports haven't changed, with runways still needing to be open and safety and security screening maintained," he said.

"Airports are concerned Virgin Australia's withdrawal from long-haul international routes will push back the safe reopening of international air corridors while the laying up of its short-haul regional fleet may further reduce the connectivity of regional Australia to our major cities."

"It is important that governments maintain a strong focus on the challenges of the aviation sector and the flow-on benefits the sector has to the rest of the economy,"

"Airports are calling for support for installation of Government-mandated domestic and international security screening equipment as well as rebates for international screening charges,"

"Assistance for regional airports is also needed as they continue to operate essential services for their communities, but many are not eligible for government support programs," Mr Goodwin said.

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