

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Remote airstrip funding crucial for isolated communities

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) welcomes the latest round of the Federal Government's Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program saying it comes at a critical time for the struggling airports sector.

AAA Chief Executive James Goodwin said there were around 350 remote airstrips across Australia which were integral to rural and remote communities.

"Remote airstrips provide communities critical access to medical services, they enable farmers to use aircraft for spraying and mustering and also support bushfire fighting aircraft which helped save lives and property during last year's devastating bushfire season," Mr Goodwin said.

"These smaller airfields have played an important role during the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing medical professionals and supplies into remote communities ensuring they have access to the health services they need to remain safe.

"Flights landing on these remote airstrips are often delivering food, essential supplies and mail to regions which have limited access to the larger supermarkets and retail outlets.

"They're also vital in keeping our remote communities connected to the rest of Australia, helping residents reach the larger cities for medical appointments, business travel and education.

"As Northern Australia heads into the wet season, it's crucial these landing strips are able to function so that communities aren't left stranded when local roads are cut off by flooding.

"There is \$7 million available for a range of projects including improving runway surfaces, new lighting and animal proof fencing.

"Importantly these projects will create local jobs for local people with the economic flow on effects set to benefit remote towns doing it tough."

The Federal Government will fund 100 per cent of Indigenous owned and operated aerodrome projects and 100 per cent of Local Government owned projects of \$150,000 or less. For successful projects over \$150,000, funding will be split 50:50 with the Federal Government.

Applications close on 12 November 2020. For Round 8 guidelines and application details, visit [www.business.gov.au/RAUP](http://www.business.gov.au/RAUP).

Ends.

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