

MEDIA RELEASE

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Airports back new report on vaccines and borders

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) is backing a new report released by the Business Council of Australia (BCA) highlighting the need to ease COVID-19 restrictions in line with the vaccine rollout.

AAA Chief Executive James Goodwin said the *Shifting gear: three steps to safely, quickly and permanently reopen Australia in 2021* report reinforces our calls to end snap border closures.

“As more Australians start to receive the jab, there should be no excuses for the states and territories to suddenly close their borders,” Mr Goodwin said.

“Australians want to book travel in advance but they’re worried about being left stranded in another state or territory and being forced to isolate in hotel quarantine at their own cost if a flare up suddenly occurs.

“Keeping borders open will rebuild confidence to travel, fill our airports and aircraft with passengers and allow the aviation and tourism sectors to begin to stand on their own two feet again.

“Australians want to get their lives back and the vaccine rollout is quickly proving to be the confidence boost travellers and the airport sector so desperately need.”

Mr Goodwin said the report also emphasised the need for a careful approach to reopening Australia’s international border.

“Restarting international travel will be crucial in getting the nation’s economy back on track,” Mr Goodwin said.

“Before the pandemic, overseas travel injected more than \$60 billion into Australia’s economy with more than 9 million foreign travellers flying in to explore all that our country has to offer.

“Keeping COVID out and maintaining safety is a top priority but let’s start to look at a plan to reopen Australia to other COVIDSafe countries where we already have strong links. This would help to continue our economic momentum and assist in getting more of the 41,000 stranded Australians home from overseas.

“We want to visit family and friends, we need agriculture workers and international students and people want to start going on international holidays again. Airports stand ready to work with the government on a roadmap to achieve this and to be part of the solution.”

The BCA report has made it clear businesses which rely on international travel, including airports, should be provided targeted Commonwealth Government assistance until international travel resumes.

Ends.

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