

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Airports receive Budget support but won't fully recover until international borders reopen

The continued challenges faced by Australia's airport sector have been recognised by the Australian Government with the sector benefiting from a range of support measures in tonight's Federal Budget.

Australian Airports Association (AAA) Chief Executive James Goodwin said the new and extended key aviation support programs have kept aircraft flying and airport workers in jobs.

"Australia's airports have been doing it tough throughout the pandemic but the people who work in them have been doing it tougher," Mr Goodwin said.

"The extension of the regional and domestic aviation support programs announced in March continue to keep critical air routes open meaning aviation staff stay in work and Australians can continue to travel to where they need whether it's for health, education, work trips, visiting family and friends or taking that much-needed holiday.

"The addition of the Tourism Aviation Network Support (TANS) program has prompted increased sales to the government-chosen tourist destinations and has filled terminals with thousands of passengers.

"We saw major infrastructure investments at two of our key mid-sized regional airports including \$66 million to upgrade Newcastle Airport's runway to Code E. This investment will enable the airport to accommodate long range aircraft and facilitate international flights.

"Rockhampton Airport will benefit from a \$25 million investment to house Alliance Airlines' regional fleet and \$85 million will go towards road access works for Perth Airport's Northern Access Precinct.

"While many of our airports are seeing a sharp increase in passenger numbers, we must remember a full recovery is still some time away. Across Australia domestic passenger numbers are still 40 per cent lower than pre-COVID levels.

"The government has missed an opportunity to support our regional airports and remote airstrips with no new funding for the Regional Airports Program (RAP) and the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program (RAUP).

"We look forward to working with the government to ensure critical airport infrastructure support is extended to regional Australia to assist smaller airports and the regions they serve."

The 2021/22 Budget Papers acknowledge international travel is expected to remain low until at least mid-2022.

"Without international travel, the airport sector and the broader economy will not make a full recovery," Mr Goodwin said.

“The positive domestic economic outlook is masking continuing concerns in the aviation industry with most airports still operating at significant losses.

“We urge the Australian Government to work with industry and develop a plan to slowly and safely reopen the borders, starting with more travel bubbles with other COVIDSafe nations, similar to the arrangement we have with New Zealand, which is working well.”

**Budget support at a glance:**

- Perth Airport Precinct – Northern Access (\$85 million)
- Williamtown Airport 'Code E' upgrade (\$66 million)
- Rockhampton Airport Alliance base hangar development (\$25 million)
- Tourism Aviation Network Support (TANS) program
- International Aviation Support (IAS) program
- Aviation Services Accreditation Support (ASAS) program
- Domestic Aviation Security Costs Support (DASCS) program
- Extension of Domestic Airports Network Support (DANS) program
- Extension of Regional Aviation Network Support (RANS) program
- Newcastle Airport upgrade to runway (\$66.1 million)
- Airservices Australia to provide critical air navigation, air traffic control, and aviation fire and rescue services at major Australian airports (\$550 million)
- Investigations at Australian civilian airports to understand the risks and develop corresponding management plans for any identified per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination (\$130.5 million)
- Building Better Regions Fund – Round 6 (\$256.5 million)
- Civil Aviation Safety Authority to support registration of commercial Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) and enable transition to full cost recovery from 2022-23 for the regulation and administration of commercial and recreational RPAS (\$28.3 million)
- Bureau of Meteorology to maintain meteorological services at Australian airports (\$24.8 million)
- Review of Australia’s approach to transport security with a view to reduce unnecessary costs and red tape for industry (\$0.9 million)

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