

MEDIA RELEASE

19 May 2021



Research shows strong demand for domestic travel continues

Half of Australian travellers say the Federal Government's subsidised airfare program, launched in April, has increased their likelihood of booking a flight, according to new research commissioned by the Australian Airports Association (AAA).

The survey of 500 people who have travelled by air in the past five years found 70 per cent would change their existing travel plans from an unsubsidised to a subsidised destination.

AAA Chief Executive James Goodwin said the consumer research showed the funding initiative has worked and urged the government to consider extending the program after the initial 800,000 seats have been sold.

"The Tourism Aviation Network Support (TANS) program has helped fill aircraft seats and significantly increased foot traffic through many of the nation's airports which continue to do it tough due to snap border closures and next to no international air travel," Mr Goodwin said.

"Given the success of the program, the government should consult with the tourism and aviation sectors and consider extending the half-price tickets to other destinations, many of which missed out on the first round of the program.

"Our consumer research found that around three in four people whose savings have increased during the pandemic are planning on spending these extra funds on domestic travel which means the demand is there."

The main reason people are travelling via aircraft is to visit family and friends (48 per cent) or go on a holiday (43 per cent) with business travel accounting for just 33 per cent.

"It's time to get back to business," Mr Goodwin said.

"Online meetings served a purpose at height of the pandemic, but nothing beats seeing your colleagues, stakeholders or business partners in person.

"Heading back to the major cities for work via our airports will help to fill CBD hotels and provide a major boost to cafes and restaurants which are reeling from thousands of people still working from home."

Despite being almost halfway through 2021, the risk of sudden state and territory border closures is still the greatest barrier to interstate travel with 61 per cent of respondents saying the issue has hindered their willingness to cross borders. This is up from 52 per cent when the same question was asked in December 2020.

Around two in three of those who took the survey said they would fly to New Zealand under the Trans-Tasman Safe Travel Zone and almost 80 per cent of regular travellers said they would like to see more international travel bubbles put in place with countries where the occurrence of COVID-19 is low.

“Our research suggests there is high-level support among the travelling public for a cautious and planned approach to broadening the scope for international travel,” Mr Goodwin said.

“The top priority is to keep Australians safe but people also want to reconnect with family and friends and the economy.

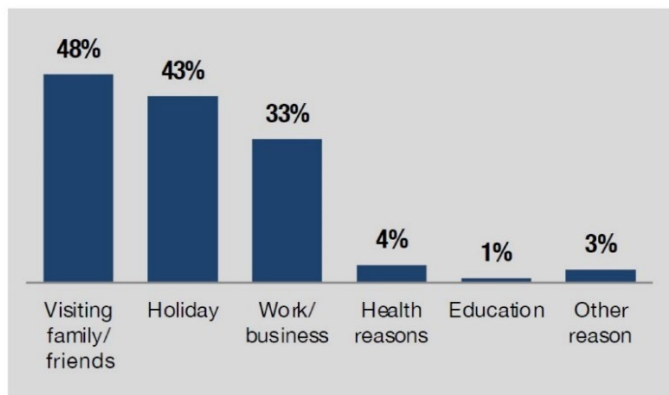
“Airports remain ready to work with the Australian Government and facilitate more international travel when it’s safe to do so, so that we can bring more Australians home from overseas and slowly reopen our nation to the world.”

The survey was conducted at the end of April 2021 and completed by a sample of 500 Australians who have travelled by air (domestically and internationally) over the past five years.

Ends.

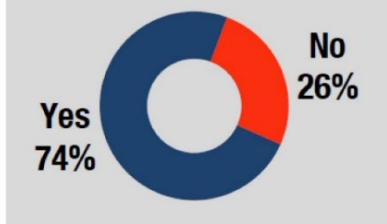
Media Contact: Hannah Maguire – 0429 920 254

For what reasons have you travelled by aircraft since the beginning of the pandemic?

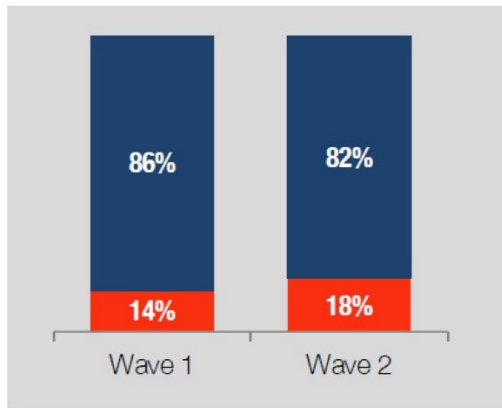


Around three in four of those whose savings have increased suggest they’re planning on using these extra funds for travel. This is higher than the result in December (74%, up from 69%).

Are you planning on using increased savings to travel?

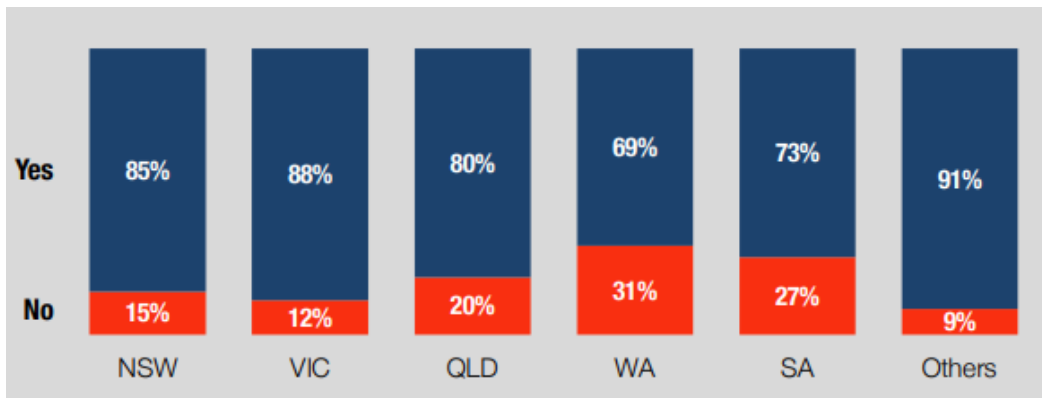


Would you be willing to travel interstate?

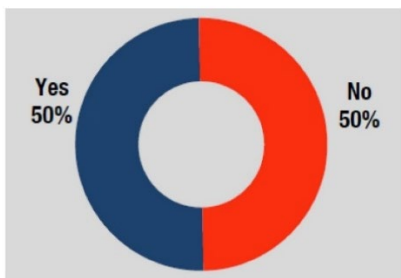


Wave 1
86% say yes

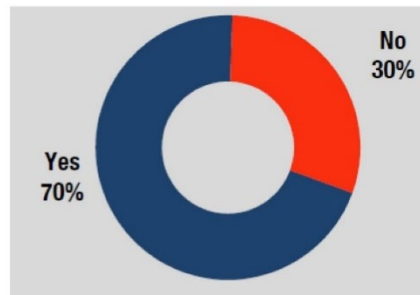
Wave 2
82% say yes



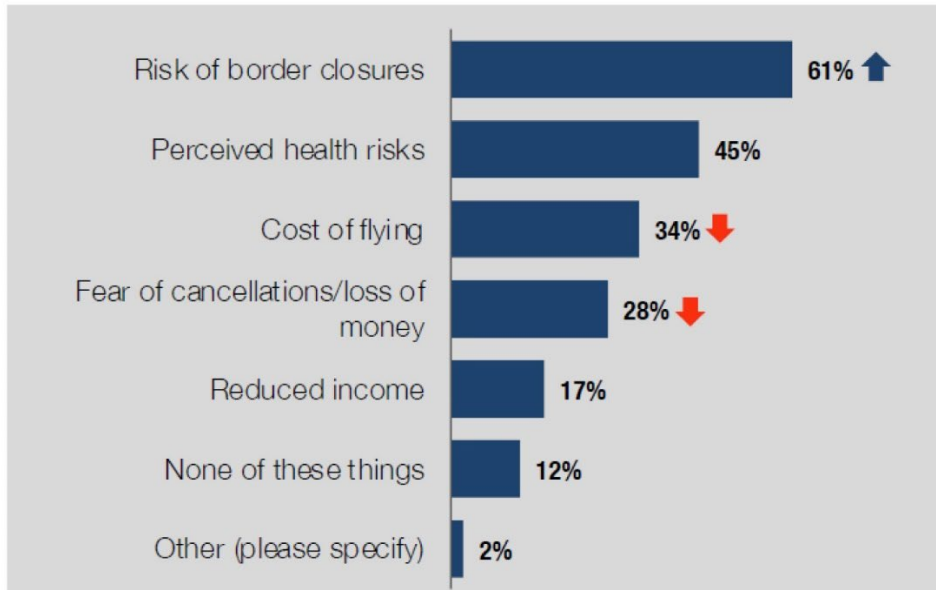
Has the Australian Government's announcement of 800,000 half-priced airfares to major tourist destinations made you more likely to travel this year?



Would the subsidised airfares program encourage you to change your travel plans from an unsubsidised destination to a subsidised destination?



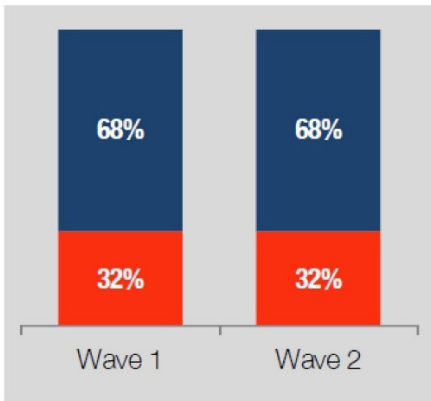
What, if anything, is discouraging you from travelling domestically by aircraft?



Concern about the risk of border closures is higher among those in NSW, South Australia and Western Australia.

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	ACT
Risk of border closures	64%	50%	62%	70%	73%	68%
Fear of cancellations/loss of money	44%	44%	37%	49%	52%	64%
Perceived health risks	33%	36%	31%	46%	33%	18%
Cost of flying	30%	28%	21%	30%	35%	36%
Reduced income	18%	20%	12%	22%	15%	9%
None of these things are discouraging me	11%	17%	13%	8%	10%	9%
Other	2%	3%	1%	0%	6%	0%

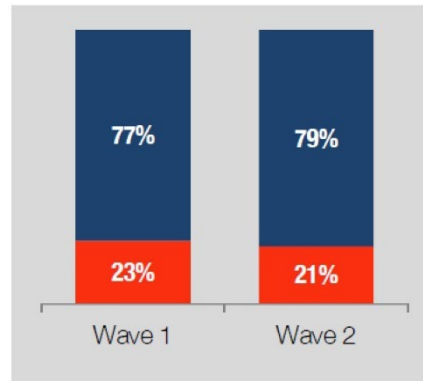
Do you support a phased re-opening of international borders?



Wave 1
68% say yes

Wave 2
68% say yes

Would you like to see more International Safe Travel Zones put in place with countries where the occurrence of COVID-19 is low?



Wave 1
77% say yes

Wave 2
79% say yes.

Would you fly to New Zealand under the new Trans-Tasman Safe Travel Zone?

