

Greater sustained funding needed for Australia's regional and remote airports

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) is calling for greater government funding of regional and rural airports after hearing from members around the country during its bi-annual Division Meetings.

"Our Division Meetings have provided us with valuable insights from our airport members nationwide, highlighting the challenges they face," AAA CEO Simon Westaway said.

"In particular, we've heard that many regional airports need improved sustainable funding to ensure their infrastructure is up to scratch and that all of Australia stays connected.

"Many of these local airports are council-run and often operate at a loss, so to plan for the future they need stronger funding commitments.

"According to Federal Government data, 15 per cent of domestic passengers travel through regional airports. Their importance to the nation's aviation network cannot be overstated.

"As part of our Federal Election asks, the AAA would like to see an ongoing pledge of \$50 million a year for the Regional Airports and Remote Airstrip Upgrade Programs to help close the infrastructure gap in our smaller gateways across Australia.

"These airports and aerodromes are vital lifelines for many communities, connecting residents to essential services, family, friends, and tourism opportunities.

"Regional airports also play a crucial role in supporting emergency management and General Aviation needs, including pilot training, recreational flying, and private aviation services.

"Without adequate investment, outdated and strained airport infrastructure will impede economic growth and hinder the travel industry.

"With the ongoing uncertainty around Rex Airlines, support for the sustainable continuation of regional airlines is also crucial as they are the lifeline for access to healthcare, education, business, and social connections.

"Australia's mid-sized airports also need to be kept in the funding picture and often miss out on government grants simply due to their size.

"These airfields should be covered by a federal \$25 million Mid-Sized Airport Program to ensure they can better plan and co-participate in essential safety upgrades.

"We also advocate for investment in an International Regional Gateway Expansion Program to help non-metro airports re-establish international ports, covering costs from infrastructure improvements to the technology requirements of Australian Border Force.

"Airports bridge the gap between cities and regional areas, enhancing mobility, tourism, and economic prosperity. Investing in our regional airports ensures they remain vital lifelines for our communities."

Ends.

Further Information:

- AAA Division Meetings have been held for every state and territory over March and April, except for Queensland where extreme weather events forced the local session to be delayed.
- The meetings are exclusive to AAA members to discuss the latest technical and operational industry issues impacting their airports.
- The AAA arranges for airport-related regulators and government agencies to attend Division Meetings to provide members with direct access and the latest information.

The AAA's Federal Election document can be found [here](#).

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