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Regional aviation welcomes further government assistance

The Regional Aviation Association of Australia (RAAA) has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement today extending critical financial assistance to the aviation and tourism industries. It has been widely acknowledged that aviation and tourism have been the worst affected industries and earlier this year the RAAA, Airlines for Australia and New Zealand (A4ANZ) and the Australian Airports Association (AAA) called on the government to extend the support that has been in place.

The CEO of the RAAA, Mr Steven Campbell praised the government in extending this support stating that without these measures many regional communities would have lost vital air connectivity with major cities. Our aviation companies just could not sustain the losses in continuing these flights which provide vital medical supplies and freight to the regional communities as well as passengers." Mr Campbell said.

"Airlines can't just turn the tap on and off with schedules and aviation workers can't work from home. Without this support our industry would have been decimated and regional communities effectively cut-off."

"We also know that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are still very much hurting our industry and border closures have not helped. The extension to 30 September 2021 will hopefully see us turning the corner once the national rollout of the Covid-19 vaccines has had its impact."

"The Tourism Aviation Network Support mechanism has great potential, however the value of it will be decimated if state border closures continue to occur. The travelling public are very wary of shutdowns and border closures and are loathed to risk weeks in quarantine if a sudden closure occurs, even with a 50% airfare discount."

"We also acknowledge the support for small and medium enterprises which we hope our general aviation companies can make use of. Organisations such as flight training and maintenance providers have struggled as the negative effects on the airlines have had a significant flow-down effect. I look forward to working with government on the Future of Aviation paper to ensure these vital parts of the aviation eco-system remain sustainable and able to provide their essential supporting services during the recovery."

"The RAAA appreciates the acknowledgment of the Federal Government that aviation deserves this further support; we have a long way to go before we can say we are coming out of this pandemic. Aviation is quite often the canary in the cage at the beginning of these financial crisis's and are usually the last ones out of them." Mr Campbell said.

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The RAAA represents aviation across Australia. It has over 100 members and its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) holding members directly employ over 2,500 Australians, many in regional areas. On an annual basis, the RAAA's AOC members jointly turn over more than \$1.5 billion, carry well in excess of 2 million passengers and move over 23 million kilograms of freight. Our Regional Airport members also provide and manage critical infrastructure across Australia.