

Budget support for aviation soars to new heights

Major domestic routes will be maintained and regional and remote communities will continue to receive essential air services, with the Liberal-Nationals Government extending two key programs.

The Domestic Aviation Network Support (DANS) program will be extended until 31 January 2021 and the Regional Airline Network Support (RANS) program will be extended until 28 March 2021. To date, more than \$150 million has been invested by the Federal Government across these two programs.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack said the extension, which could be worth hundreds of millions of dollars, formed a key part of the Government's continued support for Australian aviation as part of the 2020-21 Budget.

"Planes in the air mean jobs on the ground and as part of our economic plan for a more secure and resilient Australia, we will continue to back our aviation sector," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

"In regional Australia, flights are so central to local economies, underpinning many small businesses including tourism operators, whilst ensuring continued access to key medical supplies and personnel.

"We know regional tourism will help drive Australia's economic recovery and today's announcement of further support for key routes will be a big boost to local economies.

"We acknowledge the disruption caused by current border arrangements has made life difficult in the aviation industry, with cancelled flights, refunds and passenger frustration.

"Uncertainty affects the ability of airlines and airports to plan for recovery and undermines consumer confidence, which amounts to a significant cost to industry and ultimately the Australian economy.

"The Federal Government is doing our bit by underwriting these flights to maintain minimum connectivity, now we need the States and Territories to do their bit too as we again encourage the continued easing of border restrictions.

"Prior to the pandemic, one in four Australians would travel by air to visit friends or family every year and by underwriting key routes, we are providing the opportunity for Australians to do just that."

Today's announcement of ongoing support for the aviation sector builds on more than \$1.3 billion already committed to maintaining operations and supporting jobs in the industry.

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