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Assistance package for regional air services a vital step, as impact of COVID-19 deepens

Australian airlines reeling from the economic impacts of COVID-19 crisis have today warmly welcomed [the Federal Government's announcement of a \\$198 million relief package for regional aviation services](#). The package includes subsidies to ensure regional communities benefit from an ongoing airline service, as well as an additional \$100 million to provide direct financial support to smaller regional airlines, as needed.

Commenting on the Deputy Prime Minister's announcement which acknowledged that airlines had been "critically disrupted as a result of border closures" and were experiencing a significant reduction in passenger numbers, Airlines for Australia & New Zealand (A4ANZ) Chairman, Professor Graeme Samuel AC, said the package was a welcome and important measure from Government.

"We congratulate the Government on its support for, and recognition of, the vital role that airlines play in supporting regional Australia. As the Deputy Prime Minister said, regional aviation is critical for:

- communities around Australia which rely on airline services for connectivity;
- provision of essential pharmaceutical and medical services; and
- the jobs of 26,000 people employed in regional aviation.

This regional aviation package from the Government is both welcome and a necessary step in the industry's survival."

A4ANZ CEO, Dr Alison Roberts said, "We thank the Government for its commitment to Australia's aviation industry. As a nation we are more dependent on aviation than most countries around the world, and as the Deputy Prime Minister said today, 'regional aviation has been smashed by COVID-19.'

Dr Roberts said, "All our member airlines play a vital role in providing regional Australian residents access to essential social, medical, business, financial and educational services, as well as moving important freight including life-saving medicines; and in encouraging growth in tourism and business."

"We share the Deputy Prime Minister's desire for as many people as possible to have jobs on the other side of this crisis. We welcome this package from Government, their commitment to working directly on these measures with airlines, and to ongoing engagement with the aviation industry throughout this crisis."

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