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## **Extension of assistance package for domestic and regional air services a vital step in protracted recovery**

With the full resumption of domestic travel still some way off, Australian airlines have today welcomed the [Federal Government's announcement of an extension to two key programs](#).

The Domestic Aviation Network Support (DANS) and Regional Airline Network Support (RANS) programs provide subsidies for the maintenance of major domestic and regional routes, ensuring essential connectivity while such flights are not commercially viable.

Commenting on the Deputy Prime Minister's announcement which acknowledged the significant disruption caused by current border arrangements, Airlines for Australia & New Zealand (A4ANZ) Chairman, Professor Graeme Samuel AC, said the program extensions were welcome and important measures from Government.

"We appreciate the Government's support for, and recognition of, the vital role that airlines play in supporting Australia. These programs allow for the continuation of flights that create critical connections for people in all parts of Australia."

A4ANZ CEO, Dr Alison Roberts said, "We thank the Government for its commitment to Australia's aviation industry and we welcome the Deputy Prime Minister's comments today that these extensions form a key part of the Government's continued support for the industry as part of the 2020-21 Budget.

"Australia's airlines, large and small, will struggle to shoulder the costs associated with fully restarting their network operations. The industry would be significantly assisted in recovery planning and preservation of capacity if the Budget were to bring certainty on other forms of support that will likely be needed until at least 30 June 2021."

Prof Samuel said, "Australia's domestic air travel has not bounced back like in many other countries with closed external borders, and we know that airlines have a long, slow recovery ahead of them.

"The Deputy Prime Minister today expressed clearly the negative impact that this uncertainty is having on not just the aviation industry but its flow on effects to consumer confidence and the economy. Planes in the air mean do indeed mean jobs on the ground – not just for airlines, but airports, tourism operators and other businesses. Domestic air travel was worth \$81 billion in 2019, with 44% of tourism dollars being spent in Australia's regions.

"We look forward to further discussions to ensure that as many people as possible have jobs on the other side of this crisis, and Australians are able to access affordable air travel, in turn stimulating the economy."

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