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Prolonged Queensland border closure to further devastate business, families

Airlines for Australia and New Zealand today described the decision to prolong Queensland's border closure as devastating – and totally baffling – in light of the agreed approach and thresholds contained in the National Cabinet's [Framework for National Reopening](#).

Commenting on [today's announcement](#), Airlines for Australia and New Zealand (A4ANZ) Chairman Prof Graeme Samuel AC said that the decision to keep Queensland's borders closed to nearly 5 million Australians living in NSW had significant consequences; hurting businesses, the economy and most of all, families who continue to be separated by seemingly arbitrary border restrictions.

Prof Samuel said, "Australia's domestic airlines have worked tirelessly since the start of this pandemic to support essential, COVID Safe travel, and manage risk on the basis of health and medical advice. Our members are simply perplexed, however, by the approach taken today which just extends the uncertainty for so many Australians."

"Classifying the 32 Local Government Areas (LGAs) that represent Greater Sydney as a "hot-spot" when they do not meet the definition agreed to by [National Cabinet](#), on [advice](#) from the Acting Chief Medical Officer, is hard to understand and even harder to accept."

Both Queensland and NSW are currently operating within the parameters of Step 2 in the National Framework, which allows for the removal of domestic borders.

A4ANZ CEO Dr Alison Roberts said, "Internal border controls have rarely been adopted in other countries as part of their COVID responses, and Australia is well behind other countries in getting domestic aviation flying."

"Australian domestic capacity is at just 21% of what it was at the same time last year, while other countries in our region [have regained almost all their domestic flying capacity](#). Our prolonged grounding is also hurting other parts of the aviation and tourism ecosystem that depend so heavily on having planes flying."

Dr Roberts said, "The reopening framework takes a risk-based approach and is based on expert advice. It creates much-needed national consistency, and allows some certainty for workers and families, planning trips across the border in the lead up to Christmas. We urge all states and territories to work with this framework, not against it."

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