

Targeted support recognises aviation's critical role in Australia's COVID-19 recovery

As Australia's aviation sector continues to face devastating blows from the impact of lockdowns that have kept international borders closed and more than 13 million Australians confined to their homes, airlines have today welcomed the [Federal Government's announcement keeping essential support for aviation in place and maintaining vital domestic and regional connections](#).

Commenting on the Deputy Prime Minister's announcement – which acknowledged the fact that the aviation sector is uniquely impacted by localised restrictions and domestic border closures – Airlines for Australia & New Zealand (A4ANZ) Chairman, Professor Graeme Samuel AC, said the support package offered a vital lifeline to stem the further loss of critical skills and experience from the sector's workforce.

"The COVID-19 pandemic saw international travel plummet by 98 per cent, and domestic by 86 per cent at the start. In the 18 months since, airlines have faced a protracted, stop-start recovery; forced to play catch-up as a result of chaotic, inconsistent border closures and policies."

"Thanks to the Federal Government's support, airlines have been able to maintain a minimum air network across Australia – in both capital cities and regions – for routes that would otherwise not be commercially viable, but are needed to ensure access to medical, financial, and educational services, as well as travel for business, leisure, and to visit family and friends. We were pleased to hear the Deputy Prime Minister today commit to the continuation of this support [until the end of the year](#)."

A4ANZ CEO, Dr Alison Roberts said, "The necessity of these support measures cannot be overstated. Recent outbreaks in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Brisbane have plunged domestic air travel back down to less than 40% of pre-COVID levels. The impact of this on airlines' highly mobile workforce is significant and extends well beyond the state and territory boundaries of impacted cities and regions."

"More than 34,000 employees have been impacted by stand-downs or redundancies over the past 18 months. Airlines have been challenged by needing to ensure that workers are trained and ready for when demand picks up, while being forced to strip costs from their businesses. Unsurprisingly, [recent ABS jobs data](#) show that although the Australian economy had been showing promising signs of recovery, the picture for the aviation sector is starkly different, and at risk of being left behind (see below)."

Prof Samuel said that, "There is no doubt that the recovery path for the aviation sector remains extremely fragile, but it is too important to fail. Not only does air travel directly and indirectly support over 770,000 jobs, but it provides essential connectivity for both people and critical freight. Today's announcements will help put the aviation sector back on track, not only in its own recovery, but to ensure access to affordable air travel and support Australia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic."

Media Enquiries: Graeme Samuel 0408 335 555 or Alison Roberts 0405 323 254



Source: ABS Payroll date 3 Jul 2021 (Table 6 Industry)

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia/latest-release#data-download>

Website: www.a4anz.com

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