

MEDIA RELEASE

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Canberra Airport forced to temporarily close due to COVID-19

Canberra Airport will close for the day on Saturday 22 and Saturday 29 August 2020 with the possibility of further closures on Saturdays—and possibly Tuesdays—due to COVID-19 travel bans.

The passenger terminal first closed its doors back on 15 & 16 April due to a lack of scheduled flights from all the airlines.

Head of Aviation, Michael Thomson, said that Canberra Airport is doing what it can to stay open and to keep people employed as it works hard to reinvigorate domestic aviation travel.

“We are committed to the recovery of Australian domestic aviation and the importance it has for thousands of people’s livelihood and the economy,” Mr Thomson Said.

“Yet without a domestic aviation recovery plan in place there will be no Australian aviation and thousands more jobs will be lost. We need a national domestic aviation recovery plan.

“We have been forced to close the airport on 22 and 29 August and we will review this decision with the possibility of future closures. We simply can’t keep functioning when aviation travel is down to around 1% of pre-COVID-19 passenger numbers.

“We are calling on all governments within Australian to develop a national aviation recovery plan—a plan that adheres to health authority advice and one that allows people to travel based on a risk assessment and passengers meeting pre-requisites for travel.

“Pre-requisites may include COVID-19 testing, heat screening, mask wearing and any number of other measures that we shouldn’t try to guess at now. What’s important is that the discussion is had between the health officials, the aviation industry, and governments for a coordinated approach—and that it happens now before it’s too late.

“There are levels of risk for everything we do in life but in health, business, and our daily lives we manage risk and carry on—otherwise nothing would ever be achieved.

“COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon. We need to adapt to live with it in the world. We need to act responsibly and carry on travelling and working through managing the risk for COVID-19 safe domestic travel.

“This sort of recovery—with a measured approach—is being achieved in New Zealand where this month their domestic aviation industry will be back to operating at 70 per cent of pre-COVID-19 capacity. In August alone New Zealand has added 408 one-way flights to their domestic flight schedule.

“We will continue to work hard for the recovery of domestic air travel in Australia as we know it can be achieved with a well thought out plan, a risk managed approach, and strong leadership from government.

“There has been no transmission of COVID-19 on an Australian domestic flight, most states and territories within Australia are COVID-19 free (including the ACT) and travel between these COVID-19 free locations would be the most sensible flight routes to be supported by the health officials.”

The airport runway remains operational for general aviation, emergency flights, government and air force flights.

For more information on how the Canberra Airport is working to keep passengers safe during and beyond COVID-19 go to: <https://www.canberraairport.com.au/>

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