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Aviation relief package is good first step

The Government's aviation relief package announced today at Queenstown Airport by Minister for Transport and Economic Development Phil Twyford is a welcome first step of support for the sector, says the association for New Zealand's airports.

NZ Airports chief executive Kevin Ward said the \$600m package shows the Government is acting early to help reduce the significant impacts on aviation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The funding support for Airways, New Zealand's air navigation service provider, is particularly vital as it is an important partner in the overall aviation system. Airways is in the same situation as airports with its revenue dependent on the number of flights."

Mr Ward says there is a family of government and border agencies operating at airport facilities. "We support the need to retain their highly-skilled staff and the important work they do to maintain aviation's safety and efficiency."

Mr Ward says airports will be keeping the Government up to date with specific issues as further support will be needed.

"We see this as a good first step – but we are going to need more measures to maintain core airport infrastructure and capability. We are being hit hard, along with other sectors. The connectivity and national reach of our aviation system needs protecting, and in turn the economic and social links that depend on air travel. The wider airport community is communicating regularly and working together.

"We want to plan for positioning ourselves well for when recovery becomes the new priority. That is important part of what we need to discuss in detail with the Government."

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