

## Source: Daily Liberal, 16 Feb

### Rex wants public protests

By ANGELA CLUTTERBUCK

AIRLINE Regional Express (Rex) has fired off a mass email to customers in a campaign that aims to reverse a Dubbo City Council decision to charge the airline for passenger security screening.

It has called for state and federal authorities to investigate the decision, one it says is unfair because federal legislation does not require the passengers of aircraft the size of Rex's to be screened.

Dubbo City Council has ruled that both Rex and QantasLink passengers will undergo security screening from March, and the airlines will be charged per passenger for the service, which has been contracted to MSS Security.

That decision followed an announcement by QantasLink that it would introduce a larger 74-seat Q400 aircraft to service the Dubbo to Sydney route, alongside its existing Dash-8 aircraft.

Contained in Rex's email are the email addresses of Dubbo City councillors in order for members of the community to lodge their protests.

Rex's email asks that customers: "please help us to fight for your rights to make air travel cheaper for all Rex passengers".

The message informs Rex passengers they can expect to be charged \$9 per departure for security screening charges that were not required by law and that the levy "will go towards subsidising QantasLink's flights, which are required by law to be screened, to the tune of \$300,000 (per annum)".

Dubbo mayor Mathew Dickerson previously told the Daily Liberal that Council's decision came down to safety.

"We looked at the operation of the terminal and safety of passengers and said, 'Is the security of Rex passengers not as important as that of QantasLink passengers?'," he said.

"We have to do the right thing for passenger safety, and that's why I was amongst a council that voted unanimously for this."

Rex said it had operated services at Albury and Wagga Wagga airports where screened and unscreened departures ran in parallel to QantasLink, while at Mildura Rex passengers were also screened but not charged.

A consultation period concerning the council's plan to charge the airlines for the cost of screening ended last week.