

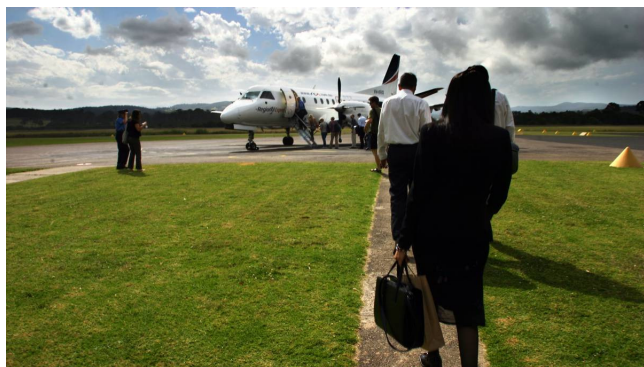
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Rex threatens to leave town

By Abanob Saad



Rex deputy chair John Sharp. Photo contributed



Rex said it was considering pulling its service from Dubbo if it was forced to pay security screening charges. Photo: FILE

AIRLINE Regional Express (Rex) is ready to pack up its bat and ball and go home, deputy chairman John Sharp says.

Mr Sharp said he had hoped the city's elected leaders would not pass a resolution on Monday night to impose airport security screening charges on Rex.

"It is unreasonable, not fair and they've made a very serious mistake," he said.

"The council doesn't understand what it is doing because they are misinformed."

The deputy chairman said the company would defy the council and vowed to stick to his guns refusing to pay a single cent.

"They can do what they like, but we will do what the law requires - not to pay the security screening charges," he said.

"No-one is going to force us to pay."

As a result of the council's resolution, Mr Sharp said all options were on the table to force the council to change its mind, including pulling out of Dubbo.

Mr Sharp said there was no clear reason why the airline would be forced to pay those charges even though the federal government's policy exempted them.

"I'm extremely disappointed, annoyed and I just can't understand why they're doing it," he said.

"We've been kicked in the teeth by council. We don't deserve to be treated like this, we're an excellent country service."

Mr Sharp slammed the mayor, Cr Mathew Dickerson, for "misleading the public and cheating on the public debate".

Cr Dickerson had misrepresented the facts on safety, security, the requirements of the law and the airline's share of the security screening charges, he said.

He highlighted the "ridiculous arguments" of the mayor in an article published in the Daily Liberal in which he said it was common sense to wear a seatbelt on private property even though the law did not require it.

"I can extend that argument and say you have to wear a helmet when riding a bike but why not wear one while walking because you can trip and fall over, it's safety," he said.

Mr Sharp promised there would be no rest until the council backs down.

"We will do everything we can to stop the Dubbo City Council charging us," he said.