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MEDIA RELEASE

REX APPLAUDS GOVERNMENT DECISION ON AVIATION RESCUE AND FIRE FIGHTING SERVICES

Regional Express (Rex) today praised the recent announcement by the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, The Hon. Darren Chester MP outlining a number of changes to improve Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (ARFFS) regulatory arrangements at Australian airports.

The Minister's enlightened and sensible decision will see future requirements for Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (ARFFS) determined solely on sound safety risk reviews by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) that are based on empirical evidence.

Rex Chief Operating Officer Mr Neville Howell said, "It is very pleasing to finally see a minister who is willing to listen to reason and to take bold steps to make aviation sustainable, especially for the small regional operators, with reforms to regulatory policy that is based on sound and compelling safety evidence."

"For far too long now the aviation industry, and particularly regional aviation, has been subjected to unnecessary, unproven and oppressive regulatory regimes that have contributed to no less than 17 regional airlines going out of business since 2001, leaving the future of safe and reliable air services to some communities uncertain."

"Together with his decisive actions in taking concrete steps to reform the highly dysfunctional CASA, the Minister has shown much leadership in tackling the biggest issues confronting the aviation industry," Mr Howell added.

"However, I would call on the Minister to reconsider the decision not to change the status quo for airports that are currently below the new thresholds but are already equipped with the ARFF stations. There should not be any sacred cows and we should be mindful of the unnecessary cost imposition to the regional aviation community. We estimate that airlines will be paying around \$30 million per annum for the unneeded stations and this is a very big amount to bear," Mr Howell said.

Regional Express (Rex) is Australia's largest independent regional airline operating a fleet of more than 50 Saab 340 aircraft on some 1,500 weekly flights to 58 destinations throughout all states in Australia. In addition to the regional airline Regional Express, the **Rex Group** comprises wholly owned subsidiaries **Pel-Air Aviation** (air freight and charter operator), **Air Link** (Dubbo-based regional airline) and the **Australian Airline Pilot Academy**.

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