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Push Rex to Bankstown says report

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THE fight is on to ensure regional travellers don't get shafted after a report by a high-level government taskforce strongly promoted the idea of pushing regional airlines into Bankstown.

According to News Limited reports a taskforce has canvassed the idea of expanding Bankstown airport, currently only used by non-passenger aircraft, to accommodate regional airlines which "clog" air slots at Sydney's main terminals.

The report states Bankstown could be used by airlines including Regional Express (Rex) and Qantas Jetlink.

Regional Express Airlines has consolidated its position against the idea saying regional customers have the right to access Sydney airport in its current location and its customers should not be disadvantaged.

"Rex has long opposed seeing long-term operations and flights moved across to Bankstown," Rex general manager of network strategy Warrick Lodge said.

"Regional customers have more need to commute on regional lines than on popular domestic lines, making it critical we have a link which is close to the Sydney CBD.

"A lot of people travel with us for business reasons because it allows them easy access to the CBD from the airport and also for essential medical needs."

Mr Lodge said to push regional airlines out of the city would be treating regional residents as "second-class citizens".

The NSW government has opposed the creation of a second Sydney airport, following reports a site in the city's west is under consideration.

Planning and Infrastructure minister Brad Hazzard said he had not been briefed by the federal government on the proposal, but stood firm the government would not support the plan.

"There is a strong view in the NSW state government that a second airport will certainly not be happening in the Sydney Basin, nor will it happen on the Central Coast," he said.

The study suggested Sydney Airport was nearing capacity, but a peak tourism and transport body said the airport has the capacity to extend which should be considered before building a second airport - a point also made by Rex.

"Sydney airport has the ability to handle more aircraft - the only thing in its way is legislation, which we believe is more critical to be looking at," Mr Lodge said.