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## **Rex's Sydney & Melbourne routes in doubt**

IN A damning indictment of the damage Gillard government policies are inflicting on Australia's aviation sector, Regional Express (Rex) has announced that it may be forced to axe another seven of its routes to and from Sydney and Melbourne over the next 12 months.

"High fuel prices are universal, but Australia's airlines also face Gillard government-induced obstacles that are threatening the viability of air services and regional Australians look set to be casualties again," Leader of The Nationals and Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Warren Truss said today.

"It is revealing that five of the six reasons Rex cites for reviewing its operations are directly attributable to government policy."

Rex says regional aviation is at risk and will reconsider its future owing to:

- Federal Government's decision to remove the enroute navigation charges rebate scheme from 1 July 2012;
- Insufficient oversight of ACCC on Sydney Airport and other airports;
- New security screening measures for regional airports;
- Increased fuel excise to replace government funding for CASA;
- CASA proposal to mandate new technology/equipment for regional aircraft; and
- A carbon tax.

Rex has said it will make a decision on terminating the following routes over the next 12 months:

- Sydney-Taree,
- Sydney-Grafton,
- Sydney-Moruya,
- Sydney-Bathurst,
- Melbourne-Griffith,
- Melbourne-King Island, and
- Melbourne-Merimbula.

"The loss of air services is a critical blow to local communities," Mr Truss said. "Whether it's manufacturing, mining, agriculture or business, lost air services cut off access to the rest of the world."

“People are unable to travel to the city for healthcare services or to see medical specialists, and other professionals stop coming to town. Businesses close because they cannot maintain contact with their customers.

“If Labor cares about regional Australia the government must act promptly to ensure the viability of regional aviation services.”

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