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**Airline wants investigation into charges**



REX will call for an investigation by state and federal authorities if Dubbo City Council does not explain its decision to charge the airline for passenger security screening from next month. Photo: BELINDA SOOLE

AIRLINE Regional Express (Rex) will call for an investigation by state and federal authorities if Dubbo City Council does not explain its decision to charge the airline for passenger security screening from next month.

Despite federal legislation requiring only passengers on the soon-to-be-introduced 74-seat QantasLink Q400 aircraft to be screened, Dubbo City Council has decided to screen all QantasLink and Rex passengers departing Dubbo airport and pass the cost on to the airlines on a pro-rata basis.

Earlier this month Rex General Manager, Network Strategy and Sales Warrick Lodge told the Daily Liberal the airline was furious that its passengers would effectively be subsidising QantasLink passengers because its competitor had introduced the larger aircraft.

He said Rex 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.

At the time, Mr Lodge said of Council: "They want to screen all passengers so they don't have to impose all the costs onto QantasLink. QantasLink has had input into the process and of course they want Rex to be captured in this cost."

Mr Lodge said the ongoing cost of security screening would equal \$8-9 per departing Rex passenger.

Yesterday Rex released a statement saying it was concerned about reports aired on ABC News on February 13 that NSW Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner had said: "Currently passengers catching smaller planes will have to go through the same security screening (as the larger aircraft) too. The issue of the security screening at Dubbo airport and the inflexibility of the federal regulations there, that was raised with me by the Dubbo City Council."

Rex has accused council of misleading the Deputy Premier.

The airline said it had made four submissions to Dubbo City Council stating that Air Transport Safety Regulations (ATSR) did authorise simultaneous unscreened and screened flight departures.

Rex has now called on the community to contact their elected representatives to protest.

Dubbo City Council mayor Mathew Dickerson said while it was not a federal requirement to screen Rex passengers, the decision to do so had been based on safety.