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### Council open to talks with Rex

By FAYE WHEELER

Narromine is open to talks with Regional Express (Rex) if the airline decides to pull out of Dubbo - a move that would be a "crying shame" for the region.

Narromine mayor Bill McAnally was yesterday willing to explore opportunities for the town's "wonderful airport" rather than lose the carrier altogether.

But he was frank that any move made by either Rex or Narromine Shire Council would be "a business decision".

He said Rex had been a good supporter of Dubbo and western NSW, as its row with Dubbo City Council about airport security screening charges continued.

Rex threatened to pull its services from Dubbo last week after the council resolved to charge both Rex and competitor Qantaslink for screening.

Only passengers on Qantaslink's larger planes, which began the Dubbo to Sydney run this week, require the safety measure under federal law.

After talks with Dubbo mayor Mathew Dickerson late last week, Rex representatives said the company would not pay the bill, estimated at \$324,000 annually, and threatened to pull out of Dubbo.

Narromine Aerodrome is only 37km or a half-hour drive from Dubbo airport and the town has a long aviation history.

Cr McAnally did not rule out a relationship with Rex when approached by the Narromine News.

"Narromine is quite open to talk to Rex if the company thought there was an opportunity, if it was to pull out of Dubbo or any port," he said.

"We have a wonderful airport.

"But they would have to do their sums and we would have to see if it were financially viable for us as well."

The mayor's preference was for Dubbo council and the airline to come to a resolution.

"Reading between the lines, they'll work it out, and I hope they do," Cr McAnally said.

"It would be hard for Dubbo with only one carrier, you need competition.

"My feeling is that if they don't stay in Dubbo, they would go altogether and that would be a crying shame."

Cr McAnally said there would be a lot of jumps Narromine council and Rex would have to clear.

Although “a lot” of passengers using Dubbo airport were from Narromine and the western area, when it came down to it “the numbers might not stack up”.

“We might not get the patronage,” Cr McAnally said.

On the positive side, Narromine airport, mainly used for recreation flying, had a sound reputation.

It had attracted the Sports Aircraft Association from its former base at Melbourne and would host the world gliding championships on 2015, Cr McAnally said.

The mayor said Sky Park residents and the rest of the community would have input before the council made any agreement with a commercial carrier.