

Source: Daily Liberal, 26 Feb 13

We're not backing down: Regional Express

DEPUTY chairman of airline Regional Express (Rex), John Sharp, is sticking to his guns and vowed not to back down from demanding the Dubbo City Council to scrap its plan over security screening costs.

Mr Sharp spoke to the Daily Liberal after a private meeting with the mayor, Cr Mathew Dickerson and director corporate development Ken Rogers.

"We made it clear we have no intention of paying for security screening charges," he said.

"There's no reason why we need to do so."

Mr Sharp said Rex had taken the battle to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) in a bid to force the council to change its mind.

"It is an anti-competitive measure and it disadvantages us commercially," he said.

He insisted the federal government's policy meant the company's Saab 340 aircraft did not require passengers to go through security screening. "Dubbo will be the only regional airport that we fly to that will charge us for security screening," he said.

Mr Sharp said the mayor was not telling the truth when he claimed the security screening cost per departing passenger was only \$4.69.

"It is indisputably \$9," he said.

"The mayor's insistence of costs does not match the facts."

While the mayor remained steadfast in requiring safety for all passengers, Mr Sharp said he would continue to fight the unnecessary costs forced upon Rex.

"The mayor is not used to changing his mind but he is, at the end of the day, a servant of the council," he said.

"I hope the other councillors see our side and change their mind."

He denied Rex was engaging in a media beat-up and said the airline was never consulted about the security screening charges other than a council letter asking them by which method they wanted to pay.

Cr Dickerson earlier said Rex was not worried about safety but only about cost.

"These comments are so insulting they are not worth responding to," Mr Sharp said.

Mr Sharp said all Rex's planes had bullet-proof doors and a range of security measures on board.