

3 JULY 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

REX RESPONDS TO AOPA'S RECKLESS AND IRRESPONSIBLE REMARKS REGARDING ALAEA CLAIMS

In response to the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA)'s defamatory, reckless and irresponsible remarks against Rex in response to a Sunday Telegraph article alleging a poor safety culture by the Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers Association (ALAEA), Rex wishes to state the following for the record:

1. AOPA's comments are entirely based on a disgruntled engineer's industrial dispute with Rex and his subsequent complaint to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) through his union as well as remarks by anonymous sources;
2. The Executive Director of AOPA admitted on air that he had not even read the complaint letter furnished to CASA when he gave the media interviews;
3. The Executive Director of AOPA refers to a report which he claims CASA received alleging that Rex has a poor safety culture. The use of the term "report" is misleading. The so called "report" is in fact a complaint letter from the union to CASA and is not an analysis by an independent third party examining facts and making findings as the term "report" would imply;
4. CASA received the complaint five weeks ago and did not find anything of substance to warrant their prompt attention. In fact, Rex invited CASA for a thorough briefing on the industrial dispute on 24 June 2019, however the matter was of so little concern that no meeting has been scheduled yet;
5. CASA in an ABC interview stated yesterday that if they had any safety concerns warranting action, they would have taken the necessary action immediately;
6. CASA has conducted five extensive audits on Rex since February 2018, examining all aspects of its Safety Management System (including Safety Culture) and Aircraft Maintenance Organisation. In addition, Rex has met with CASA on at least nine occasions since then to provide safety briefings and updates. At the end of this exhaustive scrutiny, the Surveillance Report of 22 October 2018 stated categorically:

"The audit concluded that the REX SMS was operating in an effective manner. REX staff were appropriately trained, safety concerns were effectively oversights and managed by the senior management. The organisation presented a consistent and unified commitment to the development and ongoing continuous improvement of safety management principles across all business areas sampled by the audit team.

On behalf of the CASA surveillance team, I would like to acknowledge the cooperation and open approach demonstrated by REX Management and staff during the audit."



7. The CASA Board wrote to the Rex Board as follows:

15 March 2019

“Finally, I would like to assure you that at this time, the Board and management of CASA are satisfied that Rex is currently meeting all its safety obligations. CASA has a clear mandate to uphold the highest levels of aviation safety in Australia. Rex should expect to continue to receive robust and professional scrutiny that is commensurate with the important role you play in Australia’s air transport system.”

22 May 2019

“I would like to re-iterate my previous advice that the Board and management of CASA have no current safety concerns with Rex. Through the normal oversight processes and interactions undertaken, CASA is satisfied that Rex is currently meeting all its obligations.”

8. Australia’s aviation safety standards are the envy of the world, and CASA is to be commended for that. CASA is the official guardian of safety for Australian aviation and they are the only authority qualified to pronounce whether an airline is safe or not. Clearly CASA concluded on 22 May 2019 that there are absolutely no safety concerns with Rex. It is inconceivable that Rex’s safety culture could have so sharply deteriorated as alleged in just one month or that CASA would have failed to pick up troubling signs of Rex’s safety culture in over two years of intense scrutiny.
9. Rex believes that our Safety Management System, including our safety culture, is second to none in Australia. However, we invite all who have lingering doubts to talk directly to CASA which is the only authority that has all the facts and evidence, instead of giving credence to aviation amateurs who have an axe to grind or a personal agenda.

The contact details for CASA are:

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10. All Rex services will continue to operate as normal.

Regional Express (Rex) is Australia’s largest independent regional airline operating a fleet of more than 50 Saab 340 aircraft on some 1,500 weekly flights to 60 destinations throughout all states in Australia. In addition to the regional airline Regional Express, the **Rex Group** comprises wholly owned subsidiaries **Pel-Air Aviation** (air freight, aeromedical and charter operator) and the **Australian Airline Pilot Academy**.

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