

4 JULY 2019

## MEDIA RELEASE

### CASA CONDUCTING SURVEY OF REX ENGINEERS

In response to the spurious claims by a disgruntled engineer regarding Regional Express (Rex)'s safety culture, The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has sent its staff today to our heavy maintenance base in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, to survey five random engineers to determine if they share the feelings of the disgruntled engineer.

Rex's Deputy Chairman John Sharp said, "The disgruntled engineer was taken to task for several instances of professional negligence and misconduct. In retaliation, he has made the unfounded claim that engineers are being intimidated out of reporting defects. CASA's visit is to find out directly from our engineers if there is any merit to these claims."

"If the claims were true, then one would expect to find a decline in the defect reporting rate over time. The reality is the complete opposite and over the last two years the reporting rate per 1000 hours has actually **increased** by over 10 percent. Also, if the workplace environment is as bad as the disgruntled engineer portrayed, the turnover of engineers at his base would be correspondingly very high. In fact, we have an average of only one resignation a year over the last two years (out of 18 licensed engineers), at a time when licensed aircraft engineers are at critical shortage Australia-wide. This speaks volumes about the absurd claims of the disgruntled engineer."

"Rex, as the largest regional operator in Australia, is always closely audited by CASA. After five CASA audits since February 2018, CASA concluded in its final Surveillance Report of October 2018 that:

*"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."*

The CASA Board wrote to the Rex Board recently stating categorically:

#### **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."*

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 disgruntled staff manipulating the safety regulator to ventilate his personal industrial grievances.

The contact details for CASA are:

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**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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