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MEDIA RELEASE

REX PROVIDES FURTHER DETAILS ON FLIGHT ZL768 ALBURY-SYDNEY

On Friday 17 March 2017, Regional Express (Rex) flight ZL768 from Albury to Sydney, carrying 16 passengers and 3 crew, was on approach to land at Sydney Airport when its right hand propeller separated from its shaft approximately 25 km south west of Sydney.

The crew followed standard operating procedures and reported the event to Air Traffic Control (ATC) for priority landing. The aircraft landed normally and none of the passengers or crew needed further assistance.

The following has been established over the last three days of investigations:

- Following abnormal indications on the right hand engine and in accordance with checklist procedures, the crew shut down the engine;
- Shutting down the engine also feathers the propeller in order to reduce drag;
- It was at this point that the propeller assembly was seen by the First Officer to separate from its shaft;
- The propeller assembly was seen to rotate upwards and to the right. The propeller was seen rotating in a horizontal position and then moving away without making contact with the aircraft;
- Both passengers and crew reported that the flight thereafter was smooth and the landing was normal in spite of bad weather at Sydney with winds exceeding 35 knots;
- All passengers have been contacted and none required further assistance;
- The propeller was found to have sheared off at the shaft and all the fittings at the main assembly were intact;
- The propeller has not yet been located;
- The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) were immediately informed following the event. The ATSB has despatched a team of investigators to Sydney and the aircraft has been quarantined;
- Rex has also been in constant communication with the aircraft manufacturer, Saab and the engine manufacturer, General Electric (GE). The latter has also kept the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) of the United States fully apprised of the situation and the developments.

While waiting for the ATSB to determine the root cause of the incident through its metallurgical analysis and other investigations, Rex has decided, by abundance of caution, to immediately remove from service and quarantine all Propeller Gear Boxes and shafts of the same series as that of the incident for further inspection and testing if warranted.

Rex's Chief Operating Officer Mr Neville Howell said; "This is an extremely rare event and the only other recorded similar event was in 1991 when US carrier Comair's aircraft also landed safely after a separation of its propeller."

"Rex places great emphasis on emergency procedures during the crew's bi-annual training so that when rare emergencies like this one arise, the crew are well rehearsed to respond appropriately to ensure a safe outcome. The Saab 340 aircraft is designed to climb, cruise

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and land on one engine with appropriate levels of redundancy to cope with these contingencies.”

“On behalf of the Board of Directors, I commend the Captain and First Officer (FO) for their management of the event.”

“The crew demonstrated enormous composure and discipline under extraordinary circumstances, and I commend their professionalism. The Captain displayed exceptional skills in landing the aircraft so smoothly in bad weather and strong winds, so much so that the passengers did not notice anything different.”

“We would also like to thank the flight attendant and our staff at Sydney Airport for their assistance and support to our passengers.”

“An audio clip of the exchange between the FO and ATC has been obtained by the media, and the entire aviation world is full of praise for the calm, collected and professional manner in which the young FO interfaced with ATC. This is a great testimony to the quality of training at Rex’s Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA) where the FO was a Rex cadet graduate in 2014, as well as to the CAR 217 Training and Checking Organisation within Rex.”

“As there is an on-going investigation by the ATSB, Rex will leave it to this authority to provide any technical updates it deems appropriate. However, we wish to state categorically that all our actions and decisions will be taken in strict compliance with the instructions of the various authorities and Original Equipment Manufacturers, and we have safety as our paramount consideration.”

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 58 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 and charter operator), **Air Link** (Dubbo-based regional airline) and the **Australian Airline Pilot Academy**.

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