

4 AUGUST 2017

## REX COMMENTS REGARDING REGIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY SCREENING

To ABC Riverina & ABC Perth,

In response to your requests for our comments on the latest terrorist threat to airports, Regional Express (Rex) has the following comments to make:

*The safety and security of our customers is paramount to our airline and Rex abides by all regulations as prescribed by the relevant governing authorities.*

*In the aviation world, there are several specialised agencies that constantly evaluate the most recent data and information to carry out risk assessments on all aspects of aviation. This constant evaluation ensures that our transport security system is fit for purpose and security measures are appropriate for the prevailing threat environment. Rex believes that the risk assessment of air transport security risks is extremely complex and should best be left to the experts at the Office of Transport Security (OTS) who possess the latest security intelligence and who are constantly updating the risk assessments. Rex complies with all security instructions of the OTS and will continue to do so if and when regulations change.*

*We are also of the view that Australia's response to terrorist threats must be balanced and measured. For example, smaller regional aircraft carry fewer passengers than most buses and it would be senseless to enforce screening on the former while leaving 'vulnerable' the tens of thousands of buses plying the streets each day. This example can easily be extended to trains, cinemas, shopping malls, restaurants, and the list goes on. Terrorists will and do strike soft targets too as we have seen in the truck attacks in Nice and in London, and the attack on a Sydney cafe.*

*We must never ever give in to hysteria. Screening of all such potential targets would be so prohibitively expensive and onerous that normal life would be shut down. To illustrate this in the context of Rex's network, Rex operates to 45 regional communities where screening is not required. The annual operating cost associated with the provision of screening is about \$750,000 per annum at each location which means that regional air travellers will have to absorb an additional \$34M per annum in costs. The Rex Group's latest full year results (for the Financial Year 2016) only showed a \$4M operational profit, so it would be easy to see what would happen if screening were made mandatory - most regional centres would be left without an air service.*

*The socio-economic impact of the loss of air services would be devastating to regional communities. Those needing to travel for essential medical, education and business reasons would be forced to drive and when they do, they would need to stop at cafes along the way for a break where they would presumably be screened too. Additionally, the millions of extra*

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*road users would undoubtedly add to the 1,200 road fatalities recorded each year in Australia.*

*Giving in to hysteria is precisely the outcome that the terrorists seek and this would allow them to succeed in their objective of severely disrupting daily life without needing to carry out a single attack. Australia and Australians know better than to fall for their trap.*

END OF COMMENT

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*Copy:*

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- Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development
- Aviation Adviser to the Hon Darren Chester MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
- Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
- Members of Parliament
- National and regional media
- Regional councils