



**Regional Express**

**26 September 2018**

## **FLIGHTS FROM TULLAMARINE TO KING ISLAND REINSTATED AS COUNCIL AND REGIONAL EXPRESS EXPLORE A LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

King Island Council and Regional Express (Rex) today announced that negotiations will commence on a long-term partnership agreement to secure Island access.

With support from the Tasmanian Government and facilitated by the CEO of Tourism Tasmania's John Fitzgerald, the commitment comes after both parties expressed their willingness to work together on a longer-term solution.

Providing airlines with certainty of cost and residents and visitors with reliable and frequent links to Melbourne and mainland Tasmania remains the focus for Council, which services its Island community of 1600 residents, as well as its growing tourism market.

Agreeing to place the increase of its airport charges for all airlines on hold until 1 April 2019 to facilitate the negotiation of these long-term partnership agreements, King Island Council welcomed Rex's reinstatement of its Tuesday and Wednesday service from Tullamarine until the same date. The flights will recommence on 30 October 2018 and will operate through until the end of March 2019.

The Mayor of King Island, Duncan McFie, said he was "looking forward to working constructively, cooperatively and in a mutually respectful manner with Rex to create a win-win for the Island and Rex". Mr McFie added that "protecting island access for our residents and visitors is of paramount importance to King Island Council and that is why we are working closely with airlines and the Tasmanian Government on a way forward".

Rex's National Airports Manager, David Brooksby, said "Rex, and its predecessor airline Kendell, have been servicing the island for almost 40 years. Rex has decades of experience servicing over 50 regional and rural cities and we are the pre-eminent specialists in understanding the dynamics of regional air services within the fabric of the local economy. Communities that work with Rex will invariably have the best chance of a sustainable air service that is reliable and affordable."

"Rex has partnership agreements with more than a dozen communities and every time one such agreement is reached, all the stakeholders benefit – the residents with lower fares, the airport with more passengers and assured revenue base and the airline with better loads."

Both Rex and Council further welcomed the commitment from Tourism Tasmania to develop a marketing campaign aimed at generating additional demand for interstate travel to the Island, in recognition of the vital role King Island plays in supporting Tasmania's visitor economy.

Council also announced a resource sharing agreement between its airport facility and Burnie Airport Corporation this week, which comes into effect on 1 October 2018. This will see the technical and operational standard raised for the region and further strengthen its position for future growth.

Negotiations with all Regular Public Transport (RPT) and freight airlines servicing the Island will commence imminently, with the support of the Tasmanian Government.

ENDS

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