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## **Regional Express Suspends Snowy Mountains Service**

### **Cites Pilot Shortage, Sick Calls**

Citing a looming shortage of current and future pilot hires, Australian regional airline Regional Express (Rex) announced Tuesday it will temporarily suspend its single return service which operates six times per week between Sydney and the Snowy Mountains (Cooma). The service will be suspended from November 19, 2007 to May 18, 2008.

Rex General Manager Network Strategy and Sales, Warrick Lodge, said the Aussie airline industry is hard-pressed for pilots... and while Lodge says Rex has largely stayed ahead of the recruiting and training curves, in recent weeks the airline had been forced to cancel some services due to crew sickness.

"To ease the pressure on flight crew availability we have undertaken a review to lessen the potential for unplanned flight cancellations by temporarily scaling back some services. This has resulted in our Sydney to Snowy Mountains services being suspended over the summer off-season period," he said.

"The Sydney to Snowy Mountains route is heavily influenced by stronger demand associated with the winter snow-season with the majority of travel occurring in the four months from June to September. By temporarily suspending the Snowy Mountains services during the off season we will ease the pressure on flight crew availability and unplanned cancellations across the remainder of our network which have higher levels of demand year round.

"Historically, Rex has achieved the lowest cancellation rate in the Australian airline industry and we are striving to get back to these levels," Lodge concluded.

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