

Source: Manning River Times, 9 Nov 07.

Rex confirms its commitment

REX (Regional Express) Airlines has confirmed its commitment to provide Taree with an air service.

A spokesperson for Rex said yesterday they wanted to allay any fears customers in the Taree and Grafton areas had that Rex would be pulling its services from those areas.

She said a number of customers had called, anxious the service would be cut.

“We have no more intentions of withdrawing any services,” said the spokesperson.

Rex held a press conference on Wednesday in light of its recent history of unexpected flight cancellations across the State, including to and from Taree.

The press conference, chaired by Rex’s deputy chairman Mr John Sharp, did not introduce any new information and redirected media to what had been said in the five media releases on its website, which point to a pilot shortage in Australia as the reason for its sudden and often unexplained flight cancellations.

He also took questions from the media.

Flights have recently been suspended to Cooma, Wagga Wagga and Maryborough, but it is expected cancelled services will be back in the air after Christmas.

In one media release managing director Mr Geoff Bruest stated Rex had a full complement of pilots for its flying schedule but 15 per cent of them are in their final stages of their two-month ground school and simulator training.

“These pilots will progressively join Rex’s flying ranks between now and Christmas,” he said.

Last week the company announced it was setting up a pilot academy at Mangalore Airport in rural Victoria to train its own pilots after a scouting mission to Ukraine failed to find pilots.

Rex’s cadet pilot scheme and the new company pilot training academy are due to begin operating from December 10.

Rex feels it has done enough to stop any further ad hoc cancellations to flights.

“We will be watching it closely and continually monitoring the situation,” the Rex spokesperson said.