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## **Rex Reassures O'Connors Passengers**

**Regional Express (Rex) today said that it stood ready to help any passengers who faced uncertainties regarding their future travel plans following the announcement that O'Connor Airlines has been placed into voluntary administration. "It was not that long ago that many employees of Rex and their customers experienced a similar situation when Kendell and Hazelton Airlines were placed into administration after the collapse of Ansett. We fully understand the position that they now find themselves in," commented Warrick Lodge, General Manager Network Strategy and Sales for Rex. "Rex currently operates 64 flights per week between Mount Gambier and Adelaide, and has enough capacity on the route to accommodate extra passengers if required. We will monitor the situation closely and we have developed contingency plans to add more flights without needing any extra crews or aircraft on most days if necessary.**

"Additionally passengers travelling from Port Augusta may access Rex services from nearby Whyalla if they wish. Rex currently operates 68 flights per week between Whyalla and Adelaide.

"Whilst we are about to enter the quieter time of year in regards to regional air travel, we would still like to advise our customers to confirm their bookings early especially for the Christmas period in order not to be disappointed," said Mr Lodge.

Commenting on the prospect of regional aviation in Australia, Mr Lodge predicts that many of the smaller regional airlines will be faced with the same predicament as O'Connors in the months to come given the severe shortage of pilots and engineers and the spiralling costs of fuel and regulatory compliance.

"Unlike Rex not many regional airlines have the financial capability to establish a pilot cadet scheme and open their own pilot school. Consequently they will be defenceless in the face of the next big wave of pilot poaching from the major airlines over the next 12 months. There may be many regional cities that will not have an air service."

Rex is Australia's largest independent regional airline operating a fleet of 34 Saab 340 aircraft on 1,300 flights weekly to 25 destinations from Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. The Rex Group comprises Regional Express, air freight and charter operator Pel - Air Aviation and Dubbo based regional airline, Air Link.