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## MEDIA RELEASE

### REX APPLAUDS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL AVIATION UNTIL MARCH 2021

Rex today thanked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack, following the announcement that the Regional Airline Network Support (RANS) program will be extended.

The extension of the RANS program, which will now run until 28 March 2021, will ensure that vital regional air corridors remain operating, albeit at reduced capacity.

Rex Deputy Chairman, the Hon John Sharp AM, said, “The COVID-19 pandemic has all but decimated regional aviation. At the outset of the pandemic, regional airlines were haemorrhaging money after the devastating downturn in passenger demand. Many regional airlines, including Rex, were left on the brink of insolvency amid the worst operating conditions the industry has seen”.

“The Morrison Government saved Australia’s regional air services from total collapse. As regional air services are a crucial part of the socioeconomic and sociomedical fabric of regional Australia, such collapse would wreak total chaos to the regional and rural economies that are already suffering so badly from the pandemic. Saving regional air services is extending a critical lifeline to the bush and is investing into the future of all Australia.”

“For example, Rex has been able to continue flying essential travellers including medical specialists consulting in regional areas and patients from regional areas seeking treatment in major cities, because of the Federal Government’s aviation rescue initiatives.”

“Although we have seen passenger numbers beginning to improve in some states, the current market environment means that air services continue to be unprofitable. The extension of the RANS program means regional communities across Australia will continue to retain and benefit from access to their air services. More importantly, it allows Rex to increase services in many cities whenever the services could cover their variable cost. This will greatly assist in the rebuilding and recovery of regional and rural economies hard hit by the prolonged drought, the summer’s unprecedented bushfires and the economic impact of lockdowns and border closures due to COVID-19.”

**Rex** is Australia’s largest independent regional airline operating a fleet of 60 Saab 340 aircraft (pre-COVID) on some 1,500 weekly flights to 59 destinations throughout all states in Australia. In addition to the regional airline **Rex**, the **Rex Group** comprises wholly owned subsidiaries **Pel-Air Aviation** (air freight, aeromedical and charter operator) and the two pilot academies **Australian Airline Pilot Academy** in Wagga Wagga and Ballarat.

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