



Sunraysia Daily, May 23



SUPPORT: Rex will be flying to Sydney, Adelaide and Broken Hill from July 9.

# Flight count down

## Two weeks before new Rex links take off

By Lauren Roden

IN a little under two weeks, Mildura residents will be just a short flight away from Sydney, Adelaide and Broken Hill.

When the new direct routes begin on July 9, about 60,000 seats – an 85 per cent increase – will be added to flights out of Mildura by Regional Express, adding to the existing 70,000 seats on their only current route to Melbourne.

It is the first time that an air link between Mildura and Broken Hill has been established.

Until August last year Sharp Airlines provided a flight to Adelaide but the route became unviable, according to Sharp.

General manager of network strategy Warrick Lodge said REX was pleased with the bookings so far for all three services, although he couldn't give an exact number of seats bought.

"When we look out into July, we've got consistent levels of bookings for all new services and there's not much difference from Mildura to Adelaide, Mildura to Broken Hill or Mildura to

## Fog delays flights

By Eugene Boisvert

SEVERAL flights from Mildura were delayed yesterday morning as a heavy fog descended on the airport.

It finally lifted around 9.30am and Qantas and Rex flights scheduled for 6.30am were able to take off.

"As a result, flights were delayed throughout the day," Mildura Airport CEO Bill Burke said.

Mr Burke said it was the first time this year that fog had delayed take-offs from Mildura but that it usually happened about six times every year.

"It's evenly spread and that's great because we need all of these services to work in parallel with each other to be a success.

"And the numbers aren't far behind the Mildura to Melbourne route, and that's quite an established service."

Mr Lodge said more than 70 per cent of people traditionally booked flights in the two weeks before their departure, so he expected bookings would increase.

"The bookings are meeting our expectations and I encourage people to support the new routes so that they are a part of Mildura's air services for a long time to

"It's the first time ever Rex have announced plans as extensive as this to start on the same date.

"When you look at the current climate it seems to be quite a bold move, but with the way we have done it we think it can work."

Flight Centre Mildura consultant Paul Hogan said they hadn't had many bookings so far, but they expected it to pick-up soon.

"I'm sure it will get busy when people see they're starting to fly out of here," he said.

Mr Hogan said Adelaide was the most popular destination so far, with medi-

main reason for travel.

He said it would soon be quicker and more convenient for Mildura residents to get places, particularly Sydney as passengers were previously required to travel via Melbourne.

"People won't have to collect their bags in Melbourne if they haven't booked a connecting flight, which actually happens quite a bit," he said.

However, Mr Hogan said it was still cheaper to fly via Melbourne, with non-sale flights starting at \$180 with Rex, Qantas and Virgin.

He said direct flights to Sydney started at \$200.

Mildura to Sydney flights will run Monday to Friday, leaving Mildura at 11.10am and arriving in Sydney at 1.20pm.

Flights to Adelaide will be available Monday to Saturday, departing at 10.05am and arriving in Adelaide 35 minutes later.

REX will provide two flights from Mildura to Broken Hill each day, one at 3.55pm, the second at 6.15pm, with a 25-minute flight time.

Flights are now available on REX's website, with fares from Mildura to Adelaide