

## Source: ABC Mid North Coast, 20 Apr 12

### Sydney-Taree-Grafton Rex air service more secure

The Greater Taree City Council says it has had positive negotiations with the regional airline REX.

REX flies the Sydney-Taree-Grafton route and reported an overall four-per-cent drop in passenger numbers for the first half of the financial year.

The council has been in talks with REX, because the route's five year contract ends in June.

The Council's general manager, Gerard Jose says it's hoped an agreement will be reached soon.

"Really within the next few weeks we hope that we'll be able to have a proposal that we can sign a long term agreement with REX. and the council that will result in the partnership continuing.

"Obviously I would like to have something in place that guarantees that relationship into the future.

"We have a very strong and positive relationship with REX and we'd like to see that continue," he said.

Mr Jose says if REX were to drop its Grafton-Taree-Sydney route other aviation options would be explored.

But he is quietly confident the airline won't drop the route.

"If REX withdrew from the provision of services which I don't believe is likely, council would then have to explore other options.

" I don't want to contemplate that, but obviously if REX reduces the number of flights we would be in discussions with them about the impact it would have on the community and ensure that the impact is reduced," he said.