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## **Rex wants airports to share the pain**

Jack Handley

Australia's Regional Express (Rex) airline deputy chairman John Sharp wants Australian airport operators to rebate some of their 2008 profits to airlines and has called on the government to help support airlines struggling to survive because of record fuel prices and the global economic crisis. He called on Sydney Airport Corporation (SACL) and other capital city airports to implement a moratorium on rate increases in this current financial year. "It is staggering to see monopoly businesses that live off airlines making record profits," he said.

"SACL's operating profit is about 80 per cent of revenue, compared to 35 per cent for London Heathrow airport and 47 per cent for Singapore Changi International airport. Such profits are only possible because of SACL's monopolistic regime. In the light of the worst crisis to hit aviation since World War II, SACL should act responsibly as a stakeholder and share some of the immense pain that the industry is undergoing and make similar sacrifices as the airlines have in the last few months.

"In addition (to the moratorium) I call on SACL and the other capital city airports to do the right thing and rebate 20 per cent of their 2008 profits back to the airlines in 2009 so as to reduce the burden on those airlines." Adelaide airport had already taken steps, he added.

Sharp also stressed the need for the federal government to step in and take firm leadership of the situation by calling on the major financial institutions that own these airports to contribute to the viability of the airlines.