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Back to the Snowys – Onboard Rex’s first Cooma flight

By Glenn Cullen

<http://thesnowgauge.net/australia/return-to-the-snowys-onboard-rexs-first-cooma-flight/>

Key Points:

- Currently **5** return flights a week Monday to Friday; rises to **9** seven days a week starting June 10 and -then up to **12** from 4 July to October 2 (includes three return flights on Fridays and Sundays)
- Prices range from the **\$99** each way now and from **\$150** each way during the ski season
- You can take skis/snowboard but expect to pay **\$7.70kg** after **20kg** of luggage
- Brisbane flights to Cooma unlikely but Newcastle may be investigated
- Transfers from Cooma Airport-Jindabyne-Ski Tube-Thredbo should be operational by May. Expect to pay **\$35-55** each way.

They’re back.

After a three-year hiatus, flights from Sydney to the NSW Snowy Mountains resumed today and this time there’s some confidence they’ll be here to stay.

Regional Express’s flight to Cooma became the first commercial operation here since 2013 when Brindabella Airlines went into receivership and the first time REX has been here in six years.

Touching down at 1.30pm, the 50 minute flight on the Saab 340, 34-seater will be one of five returns a week for now, rising to 12 during the winter.

Speaking to The Snow Gauge, REX chairman John Sharp wasn’t definitive about how long the service would be locked in for but said if it was supported there was no reason it couldn’t be indefinitely.

“It’s a very strong tourist district and we have a very strong business community,” Sharp said. “Putting the two things together we think we’ll be able to sustain a service in the years ahead but it will require the local people to support us as much as we can because without their support there is no business and without business we can’t stay.”

With potential development in both Perisher and Thredbo and stronger summer trade he felt this would happen.

Sharp said REX was now a much better airline than it was six years ago, picking up awards for the best regional air service in the world four times over that period.

While Brisbane – initially mooted as being another direct destination service from Cooma – has effectively been ruled out for now given the security costs associated with having larger planes come into the airport, Newcastle looms as another possible option.

“We’ll look at anything with potential to work. We already operate to Newcastle so there’s no reason that it can’t be looked at as another destination for the NSW Snowy Mountains,” he said.

In the meantime he said REX may look to push peak services to 4-5 times a day if there was demand.

The baggage service will allow skis but pack light people – the stated limited is 15kg (though it’s understood 20kg will be allowed). So you’ll probably need to pack some of your gear in the 7kg carry-on if you want to avoid the \$7.70/kg excess. Tight but do-able I reckon.

A transfer service has also been established with Mark Wallace’s Alpine Resort Shuttle to start up in time for the winter but perhaps as early as May.

Wallace, who owns two hotels in Jindabyne, will also run a small café out of the airport.

“We’re committed here for the winter,” Wallace told The Snow Gauge.

He’ll operate a 12-seater van in line with the arrival and departure times from the airport and Jindabyne/ski fields.

The shuttle will have drop-offs in Jindabyne and then go through to the ski tube and Thredbo. He said logistically a direct service to Perisher wasn’t feasible. Other private operators may yet choose to pick up the slack here.

Costs he says will be in the \$35-\$55 range depending on the drop-off/pick-up point. A website will be set up shortly.

He’ll look to also run a summer service on demand.

Enquiries at this stage will be through www.rex.com.au

[Hertz](#) will also operate a car rental service with pick-up from the airport.

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