

Rex takes off with daily Cairns flights

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THREE new daily flights to Cairns will take off from July in a bid to increase airline competition and business opportunities in the North.

Regional Express (Rex) yesterday announced the introduction of three return flights each weekday between Townsville and Cairns commencing from July 6.

Fares will start from \$123.05 and will increase the number of Rex services between the two northern centres from two to 34 flights a week.

Network strategy and sales



general manager Warrick Lodge said Rex believed there was support for more flights.

Mr Lodge said Rex's investment in North Queensland

would bring jobs and other benefits to the region.

"Our Cairns to Townsville services are estimated to deliver about \$4 million in fare savings per year for the two communities in addition to providing better schedules more adapted to the needs of the business traveller," he said.

"I urge everyone to give us a fair go so that the benefits are long lasting and more services can be introduced over time."

Townsville Enterprise CEO Patricia O'Callaghan said Rex's commitment was a vote of confidence for the region.

"Rex has obviously been

doing market research that has favourably pointed out the demand is there," she said.

"We know a number of businesses do business in Cairns and vice versa and we know Cairns is a key leisure tourism market so we are confident it will be supported."

Ms O'Callaghan admitted it would be up to the market to determine Rex's sustainability.

But she said the timing of the announcement could not be better leading into the city's busy winter events season.

"We do know Rex is already investing in marketing campaigns and we already partner

with a number of commercial airlines and will look to do that with Rex," she said.

Mayor Jenny Hill hoped Rex's increase from two to 34 flights a week in less than two months would promote more market and price competition.

"I didn't think Rex would jump as quickly as they did to near full-time service," she said.

"Their fares are comparable and the flight timings will suit most people in business or all those holiday-makers.

"It's been a business decision for Rex and obviously they will need that carry-through from passengers."