

# Airline boosts services

By **MATT CARR**

NEWCASTLE Airport will begin hosting services from Australia's largest independent airline from the end of this month.

Regional airline Regional Express (also known as Rex) unveiled several planned services from Williamtown yesterday, including several flights between Sydney and Newcastle each day.

The services will add three round-trip journeys between Newcastle and Sydney to Newcastle Airport's schedule as

**Sydney (45 mins)  
Newcastle to Sydney:**  
Departs 8.20am,  
11.50am and 6.10pm  
weekdays. 7am and  
5pm Saturday, 2.15pm  
and 5pm Sunday.  
**Sydney to Newcastle:**  
Departs 7.15am,

well as a daily service between Williamtown and Ballina.

Rex chief operating officer Chris Hine said the independent airline had maintained an interest in flying through Newcastle for several years.

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2.15pm and 5pm  
weekdays. 8.45am and  
6.10pm Saturday,  
4.40pm and 6.10pm  
Sunday.  
**Ballina (80 mins)  
Newcastle to Ballina:**

"I guess what we're hoping to do is . . . make that [Sydney-Newcastle flight] an even more viable option to driving," Mr Hine said.

Offering \$99 one-way fares on the new routes until Febru-

Departs 3.20pm  
weekdays, 8.05am  
Saturday and 3.20pm  
Sunday.  
**Ballina to Newcastle:**  
Departs 10.10am  
weekdays, 7.05am  
Saturday and 3pm  
Sunday.

ary, Mr Hine said the airline hoped to provide the most "cost affordable" airfares possible in the long-term.

"We've put that \$99 figure out in the market and we're hopeful that we can stimu-

■ CUSTOMS workers have cancelled a series of strikes after a partial breakthrough in pay negotiations yesterday. But trouble at Qantas was far from over. About 3800 Transport Workers Union baggage handlers and ground staff members walked off the job on yesterday morning, delaying thousands of fans heading to this weekend's AFL and NRL grand finals. AAP

late demand," he said.

Newcastle Airport chief executive Paul Hughes said the potential to add 38 Rex services between Sydney and Newcastle each week could make the route an affordable

option for day trips.

"We expect the daily service to new destination Ballina and the three-times daily service to Sydney to add an additional 92,000 seats to and from Newcastle annually," Mr Hughes said.

"The impact of this new airline and new destination [Ballina] will not only provide passengers with greater choice, but have a significant and positive impact on the local economy."

Rex operates 1300 flights through the eastern states and South Australia each week.