

13 AUGUST 2009

MEDIA RELEASE
(EMBARGOED UNTIL 1.00PM 13TH AUGUST 2009)

REGIONAL EXPRESS LAUNCHES INTO NORTH QUEENSLAND

Australia's largest independent regional airline, Regional Express (Rex), today announced that it will commence services between Townsville and Mackay from Thursday 1 October 2009.

Announcing the introduction of the airline's inaugural Northern Queensland service, Rex General Manager Network Strategy and Sales, Mr Warrick Lodge said that "Rex was excited by the potential for regional air services in Queensland".

"Rex's subsidiary company Pel-Air Aviation has been successfully providing specialist charter services for Barrick Gold between Townsville Airport and Osborne Mine, near Cloncurry, since February 2009 and this provides an excellent platform to service the regional communities with regular air services. Rex has been rated the best regional airline in the world and we are happy to be able to bring our proven model of affordable airfares, reliable service and old-fashioned country hospitality to North Queensland for the first time."

"Townsville and Mackay are wonderful cities and Rex is looking forward to building local relationships in the region. We have so far employed 13 of the former MacAir staff and we intend to take in more of the retrenched staff as our operations grow." Mr Lodge added.

The new Rex service will be operated with the highly successful 34-seat SAAB 340 turboprop aircraft. For the first time the two communities will have 3 return flights every week day except Wednesday, allowing both the Townsville and Mackay business communities to spend a full day at their destination and return home for the night. Convenient Saturday and Sunday flights are also provided. (See Schedule below.) The standard, fully inclusive entry level one-way web fare between Townsville and Mackay will be \$129.00.

"Rex has been working closely with Townsville Airport and the local community and we have been very encouraged by the level of support that has been received. This support has been integral in Rex's decision to launch the new service that will add some 60,000 annual seats between Townsville and Mackay. The additional seats, convenient timetable and affordable pricing will bring about significant economic and social benefits for the Cities of Townsville and Mackay," Mr Lodge said.

Townsville Airport Chief Operating Officer Kevin Gill said the airport applauds the decision by Rex to make the region their inaugural North Queensland service.

"This is not only great news for Townsville but for North Queensland tourism generally and the addition of 60,000 seats into the region annually is a significant investment. The additional capacity will offer our local residents an increased availability to fly direct to Mackay for both their business and leisure travel, and at the same time encourage visitors from the Mackay region to come and explore the sights of Townsville and our surrounding areas."

"We look forward to working with Rex and congratulate them on their significant commitment to the region," Mr Gill said.

Townsville Mayor Cr Les Tyrell welcomed the new service. "This a major boost for both cities," Cr Tyrell said.

"Regional air services are absolutely vital for tourism and economic exchange, and I believe this daily link with Mackay will be appreciated by business people and fly-in fly-out workers. Rex should be congratulated for taking the initiative and having confidence in our city. An investment in the aviation industry is a bold step at any time. They deserve our support and, on behalf of Townsville, I wish them well." Cr Tyrell added.

Mackay Mayor Cr Colin Meng also commented, "As Mayor of Mackay Regional Council, I would like to congratulate the Board of Rex for choosing to expand their business into North Queensland. The cities of Mackay and Townsville are great neighbours and there has been a need for an airline service to operate between these two cities for quite some time. The benefits will be broad-reaching across both regions, assisting business requirements and health services alike. I am sure the community will welcome the convenience of a short 45 minute flight in comparison to the usual 4 hour drive."

Townsville Airport is the gateway to North Queensland with more than 1.5 million passengers passing through the airport annually. The region has a strong business focus but is increasingly building its profile as a leisure destination as the local tourism product continues to expand. Home to the Royal Australian Air Force and Army bases for North Queensland, James Cook University and the port, Townsville is a major hub for people and freight moving to and from North-West Queensland. Townsville Airport is owned by Queensland Airports Limited (QAL).

QAL is a 100% Australian owned, Queensland based company that owns and operates Gold Coast, Townsville and Mount Isa Airports. As part of its portfolio of aviation support businesses, QAL also owns the Northern Australian Aerospace Centre of Excellence (NAACEX) in Townsville and Aviation Ground Handling (AGH) which has a significant presence at Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast Airports. QAL also provides technical assistance to the consortium that acquired long term leases of Cairns and Mackay Airports.

Regional Express (Rex) is Australia's largest independent regional airline operating a fleet of 40 Saab 340 aircraft on some 1,300 weekly flights to 29 destinations throughout New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and now Queensland. The Rex Group comprises Regional Express, air freight and charter operator Pel-Air Aviation and Dubbo based regional airline Air Link, as well as the pilot academy Australian Airline Pilot Academy.

Commencement of the Rex service is subject to all regulatory approvals being received. Reservations can be made via the internet (www.rex.com.au), phone (13 17 13) or your local travel agent.

Rex Townsville-Mackay Schedule

TOWNSVILLE - MACKAY ✈️				MACKAY - TOWNSVILLE ✈️			
FLIGHT NO.	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	DAY	FLIGHT NO.	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	DAY
ZL5117	7.05 am	8.10 am	Mon - Fri	ZL5118	8.40 am	9.45 am	Mon - Fri
ZL5123	7.55 am	9.00 am	Sat	ZL5124	9.30 am	10.35 am	Sat
ZL5131	11.40 am	12.45 pm	Mon - Tue, Thur - Fri, Sun	ZL5132	1.15 pm	2.20 pm	Mon - Tue, Thur - Fri, Sun
ZL5139	5.10 pm	6.15 pm	Mon - Fri, Sun	ZL5140	6.45 pm	7.50 pm	Mon - Fri, Sun

Rex Media Contact: Corporate Communications – 0402 438 361

Townsville Airport: Melissa Pearce – 0437 331 557

Elissa Keenan – 0448 866 049