

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Rex tactics disappoint as King Island Airport stands up for community

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) supports King Island Council's efforts to ensure the sustainable future of its airport and urges airline Regional Express (Rex) to get behind proposed changes.

AAA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said changes to how airlines were charged for using the airport were consistent with standard industry practice. The airport will charge airlines a fee per passenger for the first time.

Ms Wilkie said this was an essential step forward after the council's airport operations forecast a loss of more than \$470,000 in 2017-18.

"King Island is a small community of only about 1600 people and they simply cannot continue to underwrite the commercial activities of airlines in this way," Ms Wilkie said.

"It is not fair for Rex to expect the community to cover its cost of using the airport at the same time the airline is posting healthy profits.

"Community owned airports like this one provide essential connections for tourism, business and family and must be able to operate in a way that ensures they are sustainable over the long term."

Most RPT airports in Australia apply a small charge per passenger to airlines using their facilities and infrastructure.

Ms Wilkie said the new charge of \$7.50 per passenger was in line with common industry practice and followed extensive consultation with airlines and other council stakeholders.

"A \$7.50 passenger charge represents a fraction of a Rex airfare to the island and will ensure the airport can continue to meet airline and passenger needs in this important tourism location," Ms Wilkie said.

"It is disappointing to see Rex take such a heavy handed approach in its dealings with the council."

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