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Boeing Group boosts Rex's pilot training academy

[Paul Phelan](#) , 20 July 2010 – 5:32 pm

Regional Express Holdings, the publicly listed Australian regional airline 65% owned by Singapore investor Lim Kim Hai, today announced that its wholly-owned subsidiary, the Wagga-based Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA), will provide pilot training services in cooperation with Boeing-owned Jeppesen in Australia.

AAPA will train future airline pilots for Jeppesen's client companies all over the world to the standard required for Australian and international commercial pilot licences. Commencing this month the agreement with Jeppesen will run for three years, with Jeppesen sourcing student pilots for AAPA from its existing client airlines, particularly in the China, India and the Middle East. The recruits will train initially at AAPA's new centre which transferred from Mangalore, Victoria to Wagga last year.

Advanced students will then undergo advanced airline training provided by the former Alteon, which was renamed Boeing Training and Flight Services last year, and operates Boeing simulators at training centres in Brisbane (a joint venture with Virgin Blue), a B777 simulator in Sydney it operates on behalf of V Australia and, and another centre in Melbourne. BTFS has pioneered the concept of training pilots from *ab initio* straight through to airline-readiness using the multi-crew pilot licence (MPL) concept, which foreign airlines in the region believe is the way of the future.

Like other Australian regional operators, Regional Express suffered sudden and disruptive pilot shortages two years ago as its freshly qualified trainees began leaving to fly bigger jets for foreign flag carriers. (The company has since developed its own training school and pilot retention scheme to retain cadets for at least three years.)

Airline pilot training in Australia then experienced a resurgence following disappointments in the USA over schools failing commercially, and security-based problems with visas, so the new \$12m facility at Wagga identified a new market which has continued to grow.

Commenting on the agreement AAPA Chairman, Jim Davis said, "We are absolutely thrilled that a company with the global reputation and prestige of Jeppesen has chosen AAPA as its Australian partner for *ab initio* pilot training. It is a testament to the quality and standard of pilot training at AAPA to have received such an honour".

Richard Low, general manager of Jeppesen Australia said student pilots would be drawn from fast-growing aviation markets in China, India and the Middle East. "We envisage more than 80 students a year coming to Wagga Wagga to learn to fly," Low said. "AAPA has a fantastic facility for students to complete their Commercial Pilots Licence and instrument ratings in order to transition to airline jets."