



## REX'S AUSTRALIAN AIRLINE PILOT ACADEMY AIMS TO BECOME THE PREMIER PILOT ACADEMY IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

*Aircraft used by the cadets for flight training.*

The Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Regional Express Holdings Limited, a member of ASX500 – Australia's 500 biggest public companies. Regional Express (Rex) is Australia's largest independent regional airline operating a fleet of 40 Saab 340 aircraft on more than 60,000 annual flights to 24 destinations from Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide in South East Australia.

AAPA was established by Rex in November 2007 to combat the severe pilot shortage that swept through the airline industry during 2007/08. It offers an intensive live-in training program that enables ab initio students to graduate with a Commercial Pilots Licence, a Multi Engine Rating and a Command Instrument rating within a record-breaking 32 weeks and is currently developing more comprehensive training programmes to cater for the needs of other airlines besides its parent company. AAPA operates brand new IFR Piper Warrior III aircraft with state of the art full EFIS cockpits and IFR twin engine Piper Seminoles for multi-engine training. In Australia some 3500 applicants have applied to be part of the Rex pilot cadet programme which is run through the Academy.

The overwhelming response to the Rex pilot cadet programme demonstrated that there is no shortage of Australians wishing to take up a career as an



airline pilot and that the main barrier to entry into the profession is in fact the high cost of flying training. While the Government has put in place some initiatives to help fund the training of pilots these are aimed at tertiary courses involving diplomas or degrees and take around three years to complete. This is too long a lead time to enable the industry to cope with such events as the recent pilot shortage and more direct funding is needed. Rex's cadet programme enables cadets to complete their training with a guaranteed job and only having to pay a quarter of the approximately AUD80,000 cost up front. Half of the remainder is paid back

*Artist's impression: Aerial perspective of the new AAPA facility in Wagga Wagga to be completed in January 2010.*

over a seven year period to the company and the remaining quarter is funded by Rex itself. This significant investment will enable Rex to secure its future and provide protection against the day when the demand for pilots once again engulfs the industry. Rex sees this resurgence of this demand as inevitable given the huge backlog of aircraft orders that still exist in Australia and indeed worldwide.

The Rex Pilot Cadetship scheme inducts graduates



*First batch of graduates for the Rex Cadet programme – November 2008.*

directly into the airline to fly as First Officers on SAAB 340 aircraft. To date 54 Rex pilot cadets have commenced the scheme with 34 having graduated from the Academy and 15 already checked to line as SAAB First Officers.

As the initial trainee courses were all destined for Rex Airlines, the curriculum and training standard were designed from the outset to airline standards. The pilot graduates that are now successfully flying as First Officers have been assessed by Rex's Check Captains to have equivalent standards as new pilots recruited with more than 1,000 hours of flying experience. This is a ringing endorsement of the success of the Academy.

AAPA aims to become the premier pilot academy in the Asia Pacific with a projected throughput of more than 200 pilots a year for both Australian and international airlines. To this end, the decision was taken to build an AUD12 million state-of-the-art pilot training facility at Wagga Wagga in New South Wales where the Rex group has its heavy engineering base.

- This Academy will be fully self contained and will have the following features on its campus:
- Individual bedrooms for all trainees on-site
- State-of-the-art classrooms and online examination rooms that comply with international standards



*A class in progress in the current Wagga Wagga training school.*

- Flight Simulators
- Brand new state-of-the-art training aircraft
- Language labs and tutors to cater for foreign trainees
- Computer Based Training to enhance self learning and instructor monitoring
- Complete Wi-Fi environment
- On-site dining for all meals
- Complete social and recreational facilities including

- swimming pool;
- gym;
- sports field and hard court;
- dining hall; and
- student lounge and library

The new facilities are expected to be completed in January 2010 and AAPA then hopes to welcome trainee pilots from airlines throughout the Asia Pacific, especially from China and India. Enquiries can be made at [enquiries@aapa.net.au](mailto:enquiries@aapa.net.au)