

## **Source: The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, 4 Feb 14**

### **Big deal has academy flying high**

By Brodie Owen

A PILOT academy in Wagga has received global recognition for its training services after it was granted approval to train pilots for the booming United Arab Emirates (UAE) airline industry.

The Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA), which is owned by Regional Express, is the only international training provider approved to conduct airline transport pilot licence training.

AAPA chairman Dale Hall said the approval is a “coup” for the academy that is only two years old.

“If you look at the figures, with the number of aircraft going to the Middle East, we’ve got potentially a big market here,” he said.

“There is a lot of airlines that are starting up and operating out of that part of the world now because of the money that is there and the short links to most destinations.”

Mr Hall said that airline training in the UAE has expanded overseas due to demand in the country for training services.

He said nutting out a deal with the UAE’s aviation regulator to conduct outside training took over a year of negotiations and facility inspections.

The Wagga facility has room for up to 200 pilot cadets and contains on-site hangars and flight simulators.

Mr Hall said AAPA was unique among pilot trainers because of its ability to adapt its training to individual airline carrier needs.

“Many of our cadets have never flown before but we’re taking them to a level where they have a thorough understanding of how the airline that they will go to does things – a lot of schools don’t do that,” he said.

“It’s very much our program which has won us this approval.”

Mr Hall is now hoping AAPA will now go on to win a contract with a UAE airline to train their pilots.

“We’ve built up contacts and it might take up to 12 months to convince airlines in that part of the world that we’re up to the job, but we can do it,” he said.

“AAPA has the potential to be quite a reasonable size provider and bring a lot to Wagga as well.”

Approval to reproduce article given on 19 Feb 14.