



# Ready... jet set... go!

David Teitzel, one of Rex's pilots-in-training, has graduated and is now attending ground school. **Mitch Brook** finds out what's happening on terra firma.

**H**aving completed his cadetship with Rex Airlines, David and his fellow cadets are now focused on working their way through the next training stage at the Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA).

"Ground school is the training for the Saab 340 Turboprop"; the aircraft that makes up the majority of the Regional Express fleet, David explains. "It's an upgrade from the smaller planes to the bigger Saab." Having been trained in smaller aircraft, David must take a course to adapt what he has learned to the new aircraft. He is doing this at ground school, alongside fellow graduates.

"It's the next level of training for commercial pilots as they step into the airline industry. It's the entry-level step, for me anyway, into the airline industry. As I'm now an employee of Rex, they are providing training that equips me to be endorsed as a pilot and fly a passenger aircraft," he says.

Ground school prepares the trainee pilots to fly a particular aircraft (the Saab 340) for a specific airline (Rex), and consists of several stages. "There's a huge theory component which is based on aircraft systems – how the plane operates and everything involved in flying the plane. Then there's planning, documentation, performance characteristics and a big one: emergency procedures."

The next stage is to complete a series of 'familiarity flights'. This is where the trainees observe professional First Officers and Captains actually flying the planes so that they can become acquainted with the new setting and different controls.

After ground school, the trainees jump into the simulator. When you hear 'flight simulator', you might imagine a small computer screen with fighter jets roaring across it like in computer games, but this is different.

"It's a multi-million dollar aircraft simulator that has its own room and works like a real aircraft – it moves around when you fly; you don't just sit there and watch a screen," explains David.

The simulator teaches the cadets how to fly the plane; after this, they move on to the actual aircraft, gaining practical experience before completing the 'Checked-To-Line' test, which is where the airline assesses whether they are ready to fly passenger flights in Rex's fleet.

In comparison to the cadetship, David says: "The work is a lot harder now: a huge step up from the intensity of the cadetship. You need to be pretty dedicated to the task at hand to achieve the results the airline expects and also the expectations [you place] on yourself. It is very exciting, and we are getting closer and closer to the ultimate goal!"



AAPA cadet pilot David Teitzel. After completing his cadetship, David is in training at ground school. This will allow him to fly the Saab 340 aircraft that make up most of Rex's fleet.