

**REX SAAB 340 F/O
ROSINA BOOTH:**



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**REGIONAL EXPRESS AIRLINES SAAB 340
FIRST OFFICER**

ROSINA BOOTH started flying when she was a bright-eyed 16-year-old but the excessive cost of lessons forced her to cease training and to pursue a business degree. After graduating she worked in human resources but, still longing for a flying career and with a bit of cash in her pocket, she returned to the air at Moorabbin Airport, where she earned a scholarship from the Royal Victorian Aero Club.

The scholarship proved to be a godsend and after successfully applying for a position in Regional Express Airlines' (Rex) brand new cadet pilot program (which offered a guaranteed position as a First Officer at the completion of training) she embarked on her

new flying career at Rex's flight school, AAPA (Australian Airline Pilot Academy) in 2008. Today, the Adelaide-based 26-year-old boasts more than 450 hours flying time.

"My prior flying experience was in light aircraft so I've been surprised to find that the Saab is quite a manoeuvrable and responsive aircraft," she says. "With such a large rudder it can also handle strong crosswinds very well. Being a regional airline we land at some challenging aerodromes such as Coober Pedy which has a runway width of only 18 metres. We also fly into aerodromes that do not have any slope guidance which, particularly at night, surrounded by nothing but darkness, can test your skills."

Rosina says she hasn't encountered any difficulties flying in a male dominated environment, Rex has only been a positive experience.

"From my initial flight training all those years ago to my experience with Rex and its cadet pilot program, I've found colleagues, peers and management to be very encouraging. I don't feel that I've been disadvantaged in any way but at the same time, I've not been favoured. I've had to work as hard as everyone else to pass all the same tests.

But while Rosina's integration into the industry and Regional Express has been

quite uneventful (around pilots), she admits to receiving attention from passengers. "I think that the media has a lot to do with this perception as the general public will see for instance, Richard Branson on television surrounded by female flight attendants but never a female pilot," she says. "I've heard a couple passengers make interesting comments in their attempt at humour such as 'oh no, there's a woman flying us' which I laugh off. But mostly the comments are very encouraging, particularly from other women who say things like 'good on you' or 'it's nice to see a woman flying'".

So why are more girls seeking flying careers?

"Flying is becoming a more popular career option because it's more accessible and a more acceptable environment for women," she says. "Through the efforts of the women who came before us to put a female face to the career, I think this has made other women consider flying more as an option too.

"We also now live in an era where many women wish to not only raise a family, but also have a successful career. Airline careers were previously not very conducive towards this. I feel very fortunate that I can follow my passion as a career. I get a real buzz and a great deal of satisfaction from progressing my skills and knowledge on a daily basis." ✨