



Up in the air

Mitch Brook catches up with David Teitzel, who recently progressed in his piloting course at the Australian Airline Pilot Academy.

Last month, we met David Teitzel, one of Rex Airline's new cadets, who gave us some insight into what his pilot training is like. He told us his thoughts about the new AAPA campus, and at that point, the focus of his course was on theory.

Now, David has passed his Private Pilot's Licence test, meaning he can be involved in private flight operations all over Australia. With most of the theory component of the course now done, David can do what he's really come here for: get into the air.

The next step in the process at AAPA is to qualify for a Commercial Pilot Licence. To do this, each of the cadets need to complete a further 100 hours of solo flying in order to build up command experience, as well as experience the whole process, from planning to landing back in Wagga Wagga at the end of the flight. It's all up to them, and David says there's a lot of planning involved. Each cadet can choose or be assigned a destination and is required to plan the expedition using maps and charts, taking note of how long the flight will be, its distance, and any danger zones or restricted areas of which he or she, as a pilot, should be aware.

Each trainee pilot lodges a flight plan. "You then jump in the aircraft and head to the destination," explains David. "Sometimes you might do a full stop; sometimes you might do a 'touch and go' and some circuits. Basically, there are three or four destinations you will fly towards as landmarks; sometimes you will actually land there and you will get out,

stretch your legs, jump back in and head off again until you end up back in Wagga."

At this stage, the cadets fly single-engine Piper Warrior aircraft, clocking up around 350 to 550 kilometres every journey, with the duration of flights varying between two and three hours and sometimes up to four. David and his fellow trainees do this often, sometimes every day in the week.

It's a challenge but for David, that's exciting. "Flying by yourself, you experience more challenging situations and there's not always someone to advise you," he notes. "It will help in situations that can pop up, and you become more able to make difficult decisions when you are the only one responsible! So that makes it more exciting."

Much of the payback is in the sheer joy of flying: David loves being in the open skies flying high above Australia. "It's pretty liberating being able to take off from a destination by yourself, and with your know-how and handling of the aircraft, arrive somewhere else. Getting to almost anywhere in Australia quickly is a great feeling."

With the major theoretical component of his cadetship now complete, David is getting stuck into the practical element of the course and is well on his way to becoming an established pilot. All he needs is a ground-school course to qualify him to fly the Saab 340 aircraft that comprise most of the Regional Express fleet.

OUTthere will catch up with David again next month as he hears the end of his cadetship. ●



AAPA cadet pilot, David Teitzel, says pilot training is liberating: "Getting to almost anywhere in Australia quickly is a great feeling."