



Wagga Wagga covers all bases

Wagga Wagga Airport is pursuing its vision to become 'a national centre of aviation significance', with the adoption of the 2010 Airport Master Plan, installation of a category 1 ILS, and the recent completion of a major asphalt resurfacing project.

WAGGA WAGGA Airport is operated by Wagga Wagga City Council under a 30-year lease from the Department of Defence. RAAF Base Wagga, which adjoins the airport, supports four major training units, delivering technical and non-technical initial employment and postgraduate training.

In 2009 Wagga Wagga City Council embarked on a master-planning process for the airport. The airport master plan, which was formally adopted by the City of Wagga Wagga in June 2010, has a 20-year horizon, although it aims to position the airport for continuing growth and development well beyond that time. The master plan provides for an extensive greenfield site to be developed as an aviation industrial precinct. Plans are currently under development for servicing this precinct.

In 2008 a significant airport pavement upgrade program began with an RPT apron reconstruction. In early 2010, the asphalt resurfacing project commenced, comprising runway strengthening and shape correction, strengthening and widening the main RPT taxiway, strengthening and shape correction of the RPT and

General Aviation aprons, line marking, drainage and lighting. The project was completed in May 2010.

In addition, a new 15,000m² hardstand is currently under development as a new light aircraft precinct. This infrastructure will underpin development at the airport for years to come.

Education and training

As the home of Regional Express (Rex) Airlines, and with excellent facilities and airspace, Wagga Wagga provided the perfect location for the Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA), which is wholly owned by Rex. AAPA offers flight training for pilots wishing to enter directly into an airline as a first officer. Current programs include Certificate IV in Aviation (Commercial Operations) and Diploma of Aviation (Instrument Flight Operations). AAPA also conducts training for private pilot licences, commercial pilot licences, single-engine and multi-engine command instrument ratings, and instructor ratings.

The recently completed AAPA training facility provides accommodation, dining, leisure and training facilities, for more

than 90 trainees and staff, including: three Level B flight training simulators equipped with Garman 430 GPS, classrooms, language lab, dining hall, lap pool, gymnasium, and tennis and basketball courts.

Plans are already in place to significantly expand the business in the short term, including an additional 110 accommodation units. AAPA attracts international pilot training from the Asia Pacific region and beyond.

Regional Aviation Services provides pilot training, and avionics installation and maintenance from its base at Wagga Wagga Airport, which is also home to the Wagga Air Centre, Encore Aviation and the aviation division of Wagga Bike Tyres.



Wagga Air Centre has been operating from Wagga Wagga Airport for approximately 14 years and provides recreational pilot training, private pilot licences and commercial pilot licences (including night, instrument and multi-engine ratings), as well as air charter and freight services, and new Tecnam aircraft sales.

Established in 2001, Encore Aviation provides Class A and B maintenance. The team of six aircraft engineering staff also provides broad licence coverage for aviation maintenance on both piston and turbine aircraft up to 5,700kg. Deeper level inspections are also catered for including SID programs, restorations and rebuilds on vintage and antique aircraft.

Wagga Bike Tyres offers initial and recurrent pilot training under the RAAUS system. The offering includes: initial basic pilot instruction; navigation and cross-country flight instruction; conversion of existing pilots or partially trained students to the RAAUS system; biennial flight reviews; and a Jabiru J160C aircraft for self-fly hire.

Charles Sturt University has a major campus at Wagga Wagga and is currently developing Bachelor Degrees in Aviation and Aviation Management.

Airservices has made a major commitment to aviation in Wagga Wagga through the establishment of its technical training school at TAFE NSW's Riverina Institute.

A joint initiative between Airservices Australia, Wagga Wagga City Council and Regional Express Airlines to purchase, install and operate an Instrument Landing

System (ILS) at Wagga Wagga Airport with the assistance of a Federal government grant will pave the way for further growth and development of a Wagga Wagga-based pilot training and aviation technical training hub.

The joint investment is intended to foster further development of the airport as a national centre of aviation significance particularly in education and training. Installation is well underway, with the ILS expected to be commissioned in November 2010.

Defence

RAAF Base Wagga is the Air Force's centre of gravity for recruit and ground support training. The base is home to two Training Wing HQs, each with two training schools under command at Wagga and three each at other RAAF Bases across the eastern seaboard of Australia. There is also a Combat Support Unit and Defence Support Element, as well as a Health Support Squadron Detachment, all of which function to support the training role of the Base.

The RAAF Wagga training elements are:

- HQ RAAF College, No 1 Recruit Training unit (IRTU), and RAAF School of Postgraduate Studies (RAAFSPS); and
- HQ Ground Training Wing, RAAF School of Administration and Logistics Training (RAAFSALT), and RAAF School of Technical Training (RAAFSTT).

RAAFSTT includes the Defence-orientated component of the TAFE NSW Riverina Institute (National Aerospace Training Centre of Excellence).

All Air Force non-commissioned ranks start their training for Air Force employment at IRTU. Navy and Army trainees also train to basic aviation technical trade qualification at RAAFSTT, and naval helicopter trainees undertake their 72 weeks of Initial Employment Training at RAAF Wagga.

During the training year from mid-January to mid-December, RAAF Wagga supports an 'under training' population of up to 1,000. Military and civilian instructional and support staff take the total base population up to about 1,700.

Support and RPT

Wagga Wagga Airport is also home to support and associated services providers including Airfreight, Airservices Australia, Eures Support Services, and the Bureau of Meteorology.

Around 152 flights and almost 7,000 seats per week link Wagga Wagga to Sydney and Melbourne. In 2008/09, some 210,000 passengers travelled through Wagga Wagga Airport – almost double the number recorded in 2002/03.

QantasLink operates Dash 8 aircraft seven days a week between Sydney and Wagga Wagga. The Q400 74-seat Bombardier fleet type commenced flying into Wagga Wagga in February 2010.

Regional Express operates regular daily services to both Sydney and Melbourne with the Saab 340 aircraft.

For further information on Wagga Wagga Airport, contact Wagga Wagga City Council on 1300 292 442.

View the 2010 Airport Master Plan at www.wagga.nsw.gov.au