



**INAUGURAL GRADUATES:** Cadet pilots (from left) Ram Gopalakrishnan, Johns Johnson, Akbar Kahn, Qadir Moin and Ali Shah are the first graduates from the UAE through the Alpha Aviation program, run through Australian Airline Pilot Academy. Picture: Oscar Colman

# Graduates up, up and away

By Nicole Barlow

BOARD a flight on Air Arabia in the next 12 months and chances are the plane will be flown by a graduate from Wagga.

The first batch of graduates from Alpha Aviation graduated at the Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA) hangar in Wagga yesterday.

Graduates will continue training to become junior first officers with Air Arabia in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

AAPA is contracted to Alpha Aviation to provide the core component of 70 hours flying experience for a multi-crew pilot licence.

Five cadets graduated yesterday and left soon after the ceremony to fly home to the UAE, where they will complete the rest of their 110 hours of simulator training.

Cadet pilot and course captain Qadir Moin was the recipient of the Chairman's Award for highest overall achievement.

Mr Moin said he was fulfilling a childhood fantasy by becoming a pilot and has enjoyed his time in Wagga.

"It's been fun ... it's a good



**SKY'S THE LIMIT:** Cadet pilot Qadir Moin received the Chairman's Award at yesterday's graduation ceremony of Alpha Aviation cadets.

change but it can't compare to home," he said.

Mr Moin addressed fellow trainees, Wagga's mayor, deputy mayor and senior council staff, AAPA chairman Chris Hine and Alpha Aviation general manager Mustafa Yusuf and showed the humour that made him well-liked by peers and trainers.

"They say the three best things in life are a good landing, a good adrenaline rush and a good bowel movement ... performing a night landing you can experience all three," he said.

It is expected that an average of 60 cadets per year will pass

## Fast facts

- Five cadets graduated from Alpha Aviation, which is contracted by the Australian Airline Pilot Academy.
- The cadets originate from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and will continue their training back home to eventually work for Air Arabia.
- Yesterday's graduation ceremony was the first with UAE graduates and it is expected up to 60 cadets from the UAE will graduate every year in Wagga.

through the Wagga training facility.

Mr Yusuf said Wagga was chosen because of its high-quality safety procedures and was ranked number one out of facilities in Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East.

"Most aviation professionals in the Middle East are talking about Wagga," he said.

The number of cadets graduating was only small but Mr Hine said the ceremony held great significance.

"This will put Wagga on the world aviation training map," he said.