

Construction takes off



**Work starts on
\$10 million
commercial pilot
training
academy: Page 2**

**CEREMONIAL SOD: NSW
Minister for State Development
Ian Macdonald (right) turns the
first sod at the new Australian
Airline Pilot Training Academy
site at Wagga Airport. (From
left) Wagga mayor Kerry
Pascoe, Wagga City Council
general manager Lyn Russell,
Member for Riverina Kay Hull
and Rex managing director
Jim Davis watch on.
Picture: Brett Koschel**

Construction begins for Rex pilot training centre

THE ceremonial first sod was turned yesterday on the \$10 million Regional Express (Rex) Australian Airline Pilot Academy.

It was the first day of a bright future for the training centre to be operated by Rex.

Based at Wagga Airport, construction expected to be finished by 2014.

It is hoped the academy, when fully functioning, will provide more than 200 pilots per year for the industry, while the centre will also train flight attendants and aircraft engineers.

NSW Minister for State Development Ian Macdonald was on hand yesterday with the ceremonial shovel, assisted by Wagga mayor Kerry Pascoe and Rex managing director Jim Davis.

Mr Davis said it was a very exciting time for both Rex and Wagga.

"There are great expectations for this academy. Cadets will live and breath training here and we hope to provide the

highest quality graduates for the Australian airline industry," he said.

"I think this development is a real vote of confidence for Wagga from the Government and an investment in the future of the city and Regional Express."

Member for Wagga Daryl Maguire was also at the ceremony and said it was a great reward for the partnership between Rex and Wagga.

"I think this is one way Rex is rewarding Wagga for sticking by them and I think everybody should be delighted," Mr Maguire said.

"The pilot academy will help put Wagga on the map as a centre of excellence for industry training and that will have huge benefits not only for us but for Australia."

The academy transferred from Mangalore, in Victoria, and provides graduates with a commercial pilot's licence, multi-engine rating and command instrument rating.