



READY FOR TAKE OFF: Taking to the skies for the first time as a qualified first officer this week is Casey Howard, 19. The milestone has been made all the more special because his dad, captain Michael Howard, has been by his side. Picture: Oscar Colman

Father-son duo take to the skies

►WAGGA

By Ashleigh Gleeson

REGIONAL Express flight captain Michael Howard has been a pilot for more than 30 years, but this week has been one of the proudest in his career.

That's because his son Casey, 19, has been by his side in the role of co-pilot, after graduating from the Australian Airline Pilots Academy (AAPA) in May.

"He did a fantastic job, it was great to see him jump straight into the right seat," Michael said at Wagga Airport yesterday.

"He came to Wagga when he was three years old and to see him progress and become the young man he is, it's a credit to the community and his teachers.

"It's great to be flying with him now, when you're up there you have a common purpose – to get the plane safely from A to B."

It was during high school that Casey decided he wanted to follow in his dad's footsteps and become a pilot.

After completing Year 12, he was narrowed down from 2000 applicants to secure one of 10 places in the AAPA course

The former Wagga High School student then went on to receive the Chairman's Award for highest overall achievement.

"It feels good to have put in all that hard work and practice – it feels like it's paid off," Casey said.

"I wasn't that nervous for my first flight with Dad, I think he makes it less stressful."