

Pilot academy welcomes international students

►WAGGA

By Ben Glover

IT MAY not be Top Gun but six budding pilots from the United Arab Emirates are giddy with excitement leading up to their first flights at Wagga's pilot school after being sent here for two months' training.

Regional Express's Australian Airline Pilot Academy has recently secured a partnership with the UAE-based Alpha Aviation Group and the six young men who arrived in Wagga on Monday are the first intake of students as a result.

The partnership is beneficial to both companies because most of the air space in the UAE is reserved for its military, leaving its students grounded, while the Rex Pilot Academy is now in a better position to fully utilise its resources.

The six arrivals will be taken up for their first-ever flights next Monday and one of the students, 23-year-old Aditya Singh, is on tenterhooks.

"I've done ground school before but it will be my first flight next Monday," Aditya said.

"I'm looking forward to it ... I hope to learn how to fly a propeller plane quite well and I'm sure the training staff here will help me achieve that."

After Aditya and his classmates complete their two months in Wagga, they'll head back to their home country where jobs await them flying Air



FLYING HIGH: A group of six pilot school students has arrived from the United Arab Emirates to train for two months at Regional Express's Australian Airline Pilot Academy in Wagga. Checking out the small aircraft in the hangar yesterday are: Akbar Khan, Johns Johnson, Ali Shah, Aditya Singh, Venkatraman Gopalakrishnan and Qadir Moin. Picture: Oscar Colman

Arabia A320s when they finish their training.

Rex Pilot Academy chief fly-

ing instructor Geoff Cook said the school's pioneering international students would

be the first of many.

"We built this for international students and we'd expect that

arrangements will be made to bring other groups here in the future," Mr Cook said.