

Wellcamp launches aviation school

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An evening shot of Wellcamp Airport. (Wagners)

Brisbane West Wellcamp has linked up with the Airline Academy of Australia (AAA) and University of Southern Queensland (USQ) for a new aviation education precinct at Australia's newest airport.

The school, officially launched at Wellcamp on Friday, will offer pilot training as well as courses for aircraft maintenance, engineering and electronics.

While the AAA will run the pilot courses with light aircraft permanently on site at the airport, USQ will conduct the other training courses.

"While many associate aviation with pilot training there are a number of other careers from aircraft maintenance engineering, logistics, electronics, navigation and communication systems that USQ will consider offering in line with student demand and the needs of the region," USQ vice chancellor Jan Thomas said in a statement.

Wellcamp received its first scheduled passenger flight on November 19 when a QantasLink Q400 arrived from Sydney. The airport's second airline will be Rex, which will begin operations on January 1 after winning new Queensland government contracted route contracts.

Wagners chairman John Wagner said the new education precinct would generate significant revenue and employment opportunities for the region.

"This agreement, which coincides with other lucrative opportunities we have in the pipeline due to Australia's new free-trade agreement with China, will put Toowoomba and the Darling Downs on the map - both nationally and internationally," Wagner said.

Competition for pilots and skilled aviation technicians is only expected to grow in the years ahead as airlines grow in line with the anticipated demand for air travel.

Boeing's latest pilot and technician outlook says the aviation industry will need to find 533,000 new commercial airline pilots and 584,000 new maintenance engineers over the next 20 years to meet this demand.

According to Boeing's outlook, the biggest demand is forecast to come from Asia-Pacific carriers, which are expected to require 224,000, or 38 per cent of all new pilots, in the coming two decades.

"Meeting this exponential increase in demand will require innovative solutions-focused on new, digital technology-to match the learning requirements of a new generation," Boeing said.