



**TOURING:** Federal member for Riverina Michael McCormack talks with opposition parliamentary secretary for roads and regional transport Darren Chester at REX's pilot training academy yesterday. Picture: Michael Frogley

# Rural communities high on agenda

## ►WAGGA

RIVERINA residents face some serious challenges with the impact of the carbon tax and the proposed second airport in Sydney, according to the opposition parliamentary secretary for roads and regional transport Darren Chester.

Mr Chester, who kicked off a regional tour at Wagga's Regional Express (REX) pilot training academy yesterday, will also visit Gocup

Road and June Licorice and Chocolate Factory today to see what effect the Roads to Recovery program has had on rural roads.

Touring with Mr Chester, federal member Michael McCormack, said it was important Riverina residents continued to have access to Kingsford Smith airport.

Mr Chester agreed with Mr McCormack that a possible diversion of flights to Sydney's proposed second airport was high

on the agenda.

"We need to see regional flights continue to land at Kingsford Smith, regardless of whether a second airport is built," Mr McCormack said.

"Residents of regional towns and cities need that kind of assurance and they need services available in metropolitan Sydney."

Mr Chester said if the coalition was to win the next election it would need to understand the needs

of people living in regional centres.

"We also need to ensure we are utilising what we have available to us, which can mean using rail for freight instead of trucks."

Chairman of the pilot training centre Dale Hall said he was pleased with the visit from Mr McCormack and Mr Chester.

"It's great they can see how we are addressing pilot shortages and trying to maintain services," Mr Hall said.