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## **The sky's the limit for young Mitch**

Andrew Clarke



Merimbula youngster Mitch Boyle in the co-pilots seat of the Saab 340.

The sky's the limit for Merimbula youngster and pilot Mitch Boyle, literally.

The 15-year-old's ambitions to one day pilot some of the world's biggest and most modern aircraft moved a step closer after completing work experience with Regional Express Airlines (Rex).

Mitch gained a solid understanding of the operations and systems of the Saab 340 aircraft during his five days working as a professional aviator from November 26 to 30.

Stationed at Sydney, Mitch flew on eight Rex routes that included Wagga, Lismore, Moruya and Merimbula.

Although not old enough to drive a car by himself, Mitch is a fully licensed recreational pilot and flew solo for the first time on his 15th birthday in January.

Flying is a Boyle family tradition as his father Norm is a pilot and owner of a Sportstar Aircraft.

The Year 10 student applied to undertake his work experience with Rex and with a pilot shortage currently affecting airlines across Australia.

The airline jumped at the chance to encourage Mitch to fulfil his goal of being a professional pilot.

Mitch said the experience gained was invaluable and he was saddened to have it end after only one week.

"It's amazing to see how the professional pilots operate. It's a pity work experience only lasted one week, I could have stayed there for a month," he said.

"I would like to thank Rex and the pilots I flew with for providing me with a good understand on how commercial aircraft operate. It was an interesting learning curve and only strengthens my resolve to one day become a professional pilot myself."

Australia aviation operators are currently in the midst of a pilot shortage.

Major international airlines are poaching local pilots leaving the smaller operators struggling to fill the captains' seat.

However, Rex is addressing the problem by implementing a cadet-training program and is in discussions to run its own flying school.

A young pilot like Mitch would be first choice recruits having already gained a pilot's license