



Media Release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:00AM JUNE 22, 2016

High flying TAFE students

Aviation experts say there is a global shortage of commercial pilots.

TAFE Queensland North is launching into action, now offering a Diploma of Aviation in Townsville to help the next generation of pilots take off.

TAFE Queensland North General Manager, Joann Pyne said the course is already proving to be popular.

"We have had great interest in our new Diploma of Aviation and we are one of only a few TAFE's in Australia offering this qualification," she said.

TAFE Queensland North is working in partnership with Aviation College at the Townsville Airport to deliver the course, which covers both theory and flight based training.

Aviation College Chief Pilot and Chief Flying Instructor, Tony Beauchamp said airlines are crying out for pilots, so anyone considering a mile high career should capitalise now.

"Asia has the biggest pilot shortage. Even if we trained 600 students a year, we would only cover 1 per cent of the void needed in China alone," Mr Beauchamp said.

Head of Engineering and Automotive at TAFE Queensland North, Andrew Crosby said the course is delivered face-to-face, five days per week and is in line with the latest industry standards.

"It takes students 36 weeks to complete the course and at the end of their training they will walk away being job-ready with a commercial pilot's licence," Mr Crosby said.

Student, Orion Forgan wants to pursue a career with the Air Force.

"This course will give me the skills required to go out and succeed in the aviation industry.

"My dream job would be flying transport aircraft, like C17s or Hercules," Mr Forgan said.

Mr Beauchamp said Townsville is the perfect training ground for up-and-coming pilots.

"Our students are operating in controlled and uncontrolled airspace, including Class C military airspace.

"Townsville also has over 300 days of sunshine each year, so students lose very little training time because of weather interruptions," Mr Beauchamp said.

Ms Pyne said the sky's the limit with the Diploma of Aviation.

"Aviation College and TAFE Queensland North work really well together, between the two of us we are delivering a great product," she said.

The next intake for the Diploma of Aviation is August 22.

People already in the aviation industry may qualify for the diploma through TAFE Queensland North's Recognition of Prior Learning program, saving students time and money.

Students may also be eligible to study now and pay later, with a Federal Government VET FEE-Help loan.

To find out more about the Diploma of Aviation call TAFE Queensland North on 1300 656 959 or visit <http://tafenorth.edu.au/course/17181/diploma-aviation-commercial-pilot-licence-aeroplane>

The media is invited for filming, photographic and interview opportunities – please confirm your attendance for flight booking purposes, call 0408 746 747.

- Instructors and students will be available for interviews
- The hanger and training simulator room can be filmed and photographed
- A joy flight will be taking place and photographers and camera operators will be offered a seat on board the aircraft for photographs and filming.
- We ask that the media please wear enclosed footwear.

Where: 149-157 Common Road, Rowes Bay

When: Wednesday, June 22 at 12:00pm sharp start - 1:15pm.

Media Contact: Sarah Weir 4042 2746 or 0408 746 747