

## News

# Students reach for the sky

## Eyes opened to careers in aviation

By TOM THREADINGHAM

THE sky was the limit for Toogoolawah State High School students as an industry professional shared his wealth of knowledge on aviation.

Participating in a hands-on work experience program for the past few months, the students turned their attentions from building the winged wonders to listen to an interesting insight into job opportunities in aviation from veteran pilot Phillip Cooper.

Mr Cooper, a check and training captain for Virgin Australia, took the time to speak with the students on his role and opportunities within the aviation industry.

"Bruce Clarke and the airfield's volunteers started up their work experience through the hangar workshop building aircraft, so I just volunteered my time and I thought towards the end of their program I



**SKY HIGH:** Toogoolawah students received an interesting insight into the aviation world from Virgin Australia check and training captain Phillip Cooper. PHOTO: TOM THREADINGHAM

could give a careers talk, particularly as I'm an airline pilot with Virgin Australia," Mr Cooper said.

He said his talk helped to put the students' learning into perspective and provided goals for them to work towards.

"It's just made it a complete program in that sense," he said.

"I think back 40 years when I started and people were helping me and giving me opportunities, so it's certainly a good feeling to offer that back, I mean after all these kids are the future.

"My days are nearly finished now in my career so if we can inspire them and encourage them, that's

what this is all about really."

To cap off the course and information session, Mr Cooper fired-up his five-seater twin engine Morava L200D to take the students on joy flights in the skies above the region.

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield president and work experience program co-ordinator Bruce Clarke



**Phillip Cooper fired-up his five-seater Morava L200D to take the students on joy flights over the region.**

said the careers advice had been an invaluable opportunity for the students.

"They're getting to experience everything and not just in a hands-on atmosphere but a presentation of all opportunities in the industry from military and civil aviation to cabin stewards and professional

pilots," he said.

"It gave them a broad overview of it all and taught them what they need to do to get there.

"We've got an excellent amount of experience here at the airfield and Phill obviously has some industry knowledge and added that little bit more.

"They really get an opportunity to see the lot."