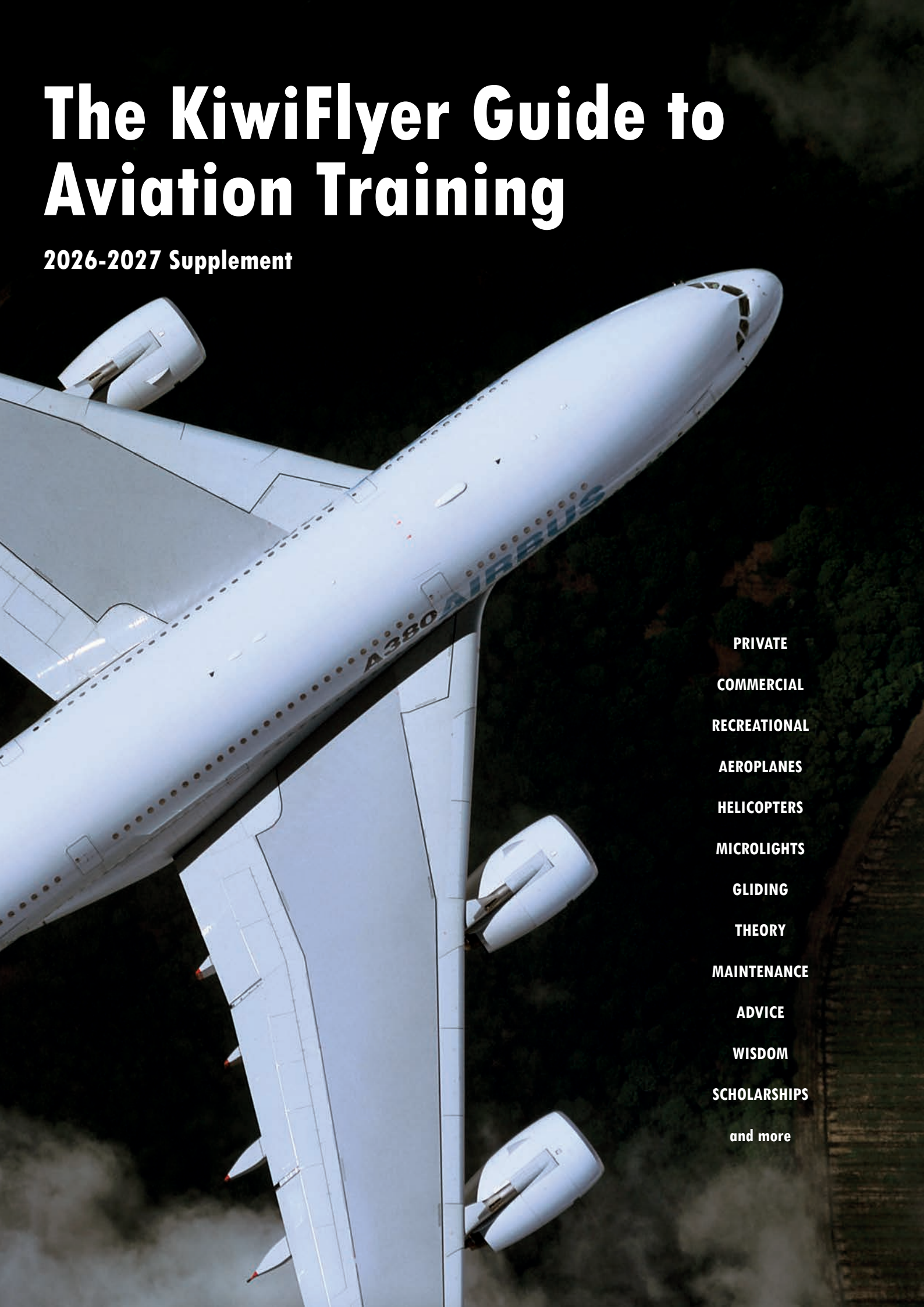
The KiwiFlyer Guide to Aviation Training

2026-2027 Supplement



PRIVATE

COMMERCIAL

RECREATIONAL

AEROPLANES

HELICOPTERS

MICROLIGHTS

GLIDING

THEORY

MAINTENANCE

ADVICE

WISDOM

SCHOLARSHIPS

and more

About this Guide

WELCOME to the KiwiFlyer Guide to Aviation Training in New Zealand. This special annual supplement includes words of advice from some very experienced operators as well as profiles of leading flight training providers from around the country.

Participants in this Guide cover a broad training spectrum and readers will find a wealth of opportunity whether it be a microlight certificate for Sunday flying, a PPL to take the family on holiday by helicopter, through to fully structured programmes designed to set the career pilot up on a fast track to airline employment.

Copies of this issue of the magazine are sent to more than 500 Careers Officers at every NZ Secondary School and students interested in aviation will find much useful information within. Aviation training is not limited to just practical and theory tuition either. There are huge opportunities in aircraft engineering or combine both as a sought-after pilot engineer. There are also pathways to an aviation focused academic career with opportunities to combine flight training and University degrees in aviation disciplines that can extend all the way to Doctorate level research.

There is much included in these pages for existing pilots to consider in terms of getting current for summer or refreshing and extending skills to a higher level. How about adding some ratings to your licence, undertaking aerobatic or other advanced training, or learning to fly an autogyro or glider? How about joining those people who fly tailwheel aircraft? As well as the fun of learning, new skills will sharpen the mind and add confidence. Some advanced mountain training or some basic glider training might turn out to be very helpful to have someday.

Even those who might not be immediately interested in training for themselves should find it interesting to look through this guide and observe the many and varied training approaches that are available. The range extends from small companies and personal one-on-one tuition through to corporates with fleets of aircraft, an array of lecture facilities and purpose built student accommodation, and everything in between.

In most cases, training providers in the guide provided their own material for publishing and often are speaking directly to prospective students. Some have taken the opportunity to tell of student achievements that they are justifiably proud of.

Our industry is a close one and word of mouth is a frequent and trusted form of recommendation. If someone asks for your advice on matters of training, please refer them to this Guide which is also available for download from our website along with most other KiwiFlyer articles and back issues.



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Aviation Training Wisdom

Career Advice that will get young aviators off to the best start possible

This is the 17th annual KiwiFlyer Guide to Aviation Training. Over the years our content has grown from 10 pages to the 23 that can be found in this issue. These supplements have always included content from senior industry figures offering advice to students of aviation from how best to get started, to decision making along the way, and how best to present oneself to a future employer with fresh licence in hand. This article summarises much of the wisdom from these previous opinion pieces which will benefit all those considering aviation as a career. The original articles are available by contacting us at KiwiFlyer or in freely downloadable back issues at kiwiflyer.co.nz

Getting a Head Start

There are several organisations discussed in the following that make it their business to help develop the next generation of aviation enthusiasts and professionals. Mostly volunteer-based, these organisations offer a variety of ways a young person can become involved in aviation either for general interest, recreation, or with a career in mind.

The Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School is an annual two week tented flying camp held at Matamata (for 58 years!) in the Waikato for 16 to 20 year olds. Most of the approximately 45 ab-initio students attending will solo during this time. The camp is a National School of Scouting NZ and is supported by numerous corporates, individuals, and the local community. Members of Scouting NZ have priority for places up to the end of August and then remaining places are open to all applicants. All staff, instructors and controllers attend on a voluntary basis, with varying levels of support from their employers. Many senior persons in the NZ aviation industry are 'Walshies' who got their first start and enthusiasm for aviation from the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School. For more information go to www.scouts.org.nz then click on National Schools/Flying

The Youth Glide Soaring Development Camp is a live-in event aimed at taking any gliding youngster, at any stage of flying, and helping them to develop further. These events are run by Youth Glide NZ which is a not-for-profit organisation providing education, tuition and training for all relevant skills necessary for gliding in NZ. Participating students range in ages from 14 to 24. Instructors, tow pilots and other helpers give freely of their time and expertise, many of whom come back year after year. The programme is augmented by great educational and social events. For more information visit www.gliding.co.nz

The Air Training Corp is part of the New Zealand Cadet Forces (NZCF) and is for both girls and boys aged 13 to 18. The NZCFs are a voluntary, disciplined, uniformed youth leadership training organisation and while they are not part of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), they are directed by the Chief of Defence Force, on behalf of the Minister of Defence, and are supported in partnership by the NZDF and the community. One of the major events within the ATC is the National Aviation Course, which is a week-long flying course held at RNZAF Base Woodbourne in January each year. Students study everything from aircraft maintenance, pre-flight checks and radio procedures, to flying with a general aviation flying instructor. By the end of the course the ATC cadets aim to pass their flight radio exam and get their wings by making their first solo flight. For more information go to www.cadetforces.mil.nz/about/air-training-corps

Based at Whenuapai and associated with the Auckland branch of the ATC is the Pegasus Flying Trust. The trust sponsors cadet flying of the trust's Grob 109 Motor Glider at no cost to cadets - often providing them with their first taste of flying. The trust also offers cadets the opportunity to apply for a flying scholarship for gliding or continuing on to power flying.

Young Eagles is an aviation immersion programme for young people between the ages of 14 and 18. It is offered by many aero clubs under the auspices of Flying NZ. Young Eagle members experience many different aspects of aviation, from visiting air traffic control units and maintenance organisations, through to flying with an instructor. Whether you are interested in aviation for a career or for recreation, or you are just curious to find out what it is all about, Young Eagles could be an ideal starting point for your aviation adventure. For more information see www.flyingnz.co.nz/youngeagles

ServiceIQ is the Industry Training Organisation (ITO) for aviation (including pilots), travel, tourism, museums, hospitality and retail, and is committed to helping young New Zealanders make a start in their careers. ServiceIQ offers a wide range of training opportunities including the Aviation Gateway programme. The purpose of this programme is to enable schools to provide senior students (year 11 and above) with access to structured workplace learning that helps them to kick-start their aviation career by gaining foundation knowledge, skills and experience, and to gain unit standards while doing so. For more information go to www.serviceiq.org.nz/schools/gateway-training/serviceiq-gateway-aviation-training

Is the demand there?

It's only a few years ago that the demand certainly wasn't there due to the Covid pandemic. Airlines parked up planes and made countless pilots redundant. Many senior pilots were incentivised to retire early. The flip side of that, however, is that demand has now returned with a vengeance. The global shortages of pilots and engineers are well documented in the media. The average age of engineers in particular is increasing which means a solid demand for new recruits going forward. And pilots are in such demand that flying schools can barely replace their instructors fast enough to keep up with the earlier and earlier progressions into airline and other commercial flying jobs where the minimum experience requirements of old no longer apply to anywhere near the same degree that they used to

Demand is such in 2026 that in some flying schools it is outpacing their capacity to supply training. Some of the smaller providers have fully booked all their planned intakes a year ahead.

Can I get a scholarship?

The only way to learn to fly for free is to join the military, and given the commitment to service required, it isn't really free anyway. There are however, many opportunities to seek awards, scholarships and prizes, all of which can help you on your way.

The Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School is very well sponsored and makes numerous awards of flying hours and cash towards aviation study each year at its annual camp.

New Zealand Aeronautical Trusts administers a number of trusts that exist to encourage excellence in aviation. Some awards are aimed specifically at young people entering the industry and some honour achievements and contributions in all disciplines of aviation.

Flying NZ (otherwise known as the Royal New Zealand Aero Club) offer a range of scholarship awards for their aforementioned Young Eagles participants.

The NZ Aviation Federation offers annual engineering scholarships to cover fees for aircraft engineering students.

Some aero clubs offer very favourable aircraft hireage rates to their younger members - who the club effectively subsidises through the early hours of a licence. Some clubs are even involved with high schools and offer full aircraft building experiences to senior students as a part of coursework in the final years at school - and to which NZQA credits apply. Participating students end up getting to fly the plane they helped to build. One such partnership which has resulted in several aircraft being built is between Mercury Bay Area School and the Mercury Bay Student Aviation Trust.

Flying scholarships have also been set up by passionate aviators keen to give something back to the industry after enjoying long and successful careers themselves. An example is the Trewavas Family Scholarship administered by the Motueka Aero Club which is available to a young person with no previous flying experience and pays for the first ten hours of their training at the club.

Another privately offered scholarship is the Pauwels Flying Scholarship(s) created by John Pauwels and his partner Melissa Heath. These award $10000 of flight hours and $3000 of flight theory training sometimes multiple times a year. One of their awards applies specifically to John's old high school in Christchurch. A second award is not open for application but rather requires a nomination from a senior member of the aviation community.

Mentioned previously was the Whenuapai-based Pegasus Flying Trust's ATC cadet scholarship for gliding or continuing on to power flying.

All of these and other similar opportunities can be investigated online. Many of them are designed to help young people take their first steps into training so if you have the passion and enthusiasm that will make you stand out from the crowd, it's likely well worth your time to seek out what's available.

If you want to fly a helicopter
consider this opportunity

Locally-based Shamus Howard, founder of Helisika Helicopters and super-experienced A-Cat instructor / CAA authorised flight examiner, is now offering flight training from Whitianga.

Shamus has 40 years of commercial helicopter experience and has trained many private and commercial pilots.

This is not sausage factory circuit-based flying, but real-world training where you will be exposed to the bush and marine environment right from the outset.

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What about recreational flying?

Recreational flying can be a great way to start out in aviation. You can always knock out a CPL later if you decide you like this flying business and want to move on to earning income from it.

Recreational flying in NZCAA certified aircraft requires a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) or Recreational Pilot Licence (RPL). The syllabus is the same for each licence but with different medical requirements. Some flight restrictions are applicable under the RPL due to the more basic medical requirement. A common recommendation is to achieve a full PPL under the Class II medical if you can and then go to the RPL later if you want or need to due to medical issues. If you are considering flying professionally ask your doctor to check you out for a Class I medical before you start, to make sure you will be fit for commercial flying.

What about microlights? Microlight category aircraft are lighter and cheaper to operate than their General Aviaition counterparts, though many perform at the same (or better) level. Licensing is similar and some (not all) of your training hours can be cross-credited. A middle ground can be found in the Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) category where what is essentially a microlight under a more stringent control and maintenance regime can be used for training towards a PPL or CPL.

If you want to fly microlights there are plenty of clubs around that will help you out. Microlight training is governed by organisations certificated under CAA Rule Part 149. The largest is RAANZ (Recreational Aircraft Association of NZ). See www.raanz.org.nz for more details.

Is the military for me?

The RNZAF is a good option if you think a military lifestyle will suit you. Check out their website and entry criteria. Be prepared for a thorough selection process that will take time to complete. The course is tough, and you will need to commit to a period of service with the Air Force before returning to civvy street. If you are thinking that the military is 'free training', it won't work for you, as to serve King and country you will need to commit 100% to the military ethos. Consider too, that ten years or so of service is actually not that much of your life, and if you do decide to leave the military at that time, you will likely find yourself first in the queue for any number of other aviation jobs.

Do I have to be interviewed?

Most training organisations have an interview process. This can be daunting, especially if it is your first. The key to success is preparation. Think about how you would prepare for an airline interview and approach it the same way. Dress well, be well groomed, take your logbook and any supporting documents if you have already started flying. Your preparation should include knowledge of the organisation itself and their aircraft types. You should be able to talk about the learning to fly process and your desired pathways after graduation. Be prepared for and expect questions and scenarios around integrity, teamwork, leadership and communication. Most of all, be who you are, the school needs to see whether you are a good fit for aviation so you don't waste your time and (a lot of) money on a career that you are not suited to.

Remember that the selection process is a two-way street; you are selecting a school and the school is selecting a student. Make sure you have a good look around, chat with the students and staff you come across. Forget about your phone for a while. If the vibe at the school is good then you are probably on a suitable track.

The licence and the pilot

We've spoken to several high profile helicopter operators over the years who have willingly shared their advice to newcomers. It all applies equally well to freshly licensed fixed-wing pilots.

A few years ago, Toby Reid, then owner of Reid Helicopters Nelson wrote of their expectations of freshly licensed pilots and offered some great advice for those contemplating, or part way through, their training programme. Toby spoke to several others in the industry and shared their opinions too, such as that gaining a commercial pilot licence and becoming a commercial pilot are not the same thing. The former is an exercise in ticking off theory subjects, flying lessons, and hours in your logbook. The latter is a completely different exercise in attitude, hard yards, experience building, professional relationships, and determination.

Trainees who know someone in the industry and make the right decisions often manage to get a start reasonably quickly. The ones that don't however, often struggle along until either paying to get their hours up, or by sacrificing years spent mostly on the ground waiting to build time from ferry flights.

If you really want opportunities, you need to seek them out and be flexible about where you work. You may not be moving back home for another 5-10 years.

Dave Armstrong of Kaikoura Helicopters pointed out that they don't just need someone to be a great pilot, they need to be a great tour guide too. "If they haven't got the right sort of personality, they haven't got much to offer us. Neat presentation, honesty, commitment and loyalty are also important."

Those are comments that came through strongly from other operators as well. "Great client interaction is essential," said Tim Barrow of Volcanic Air Safaris. Another common theme was the recommendation not to just send a CV, but to show how keen you are by going and visiting. This sentiment was strongly voiced by Mark Williams, owner of heli-ag company Lakeview Helicopters. We spoke to Mark about career options in helicopter agriculture. There would always be qualifying requirements – experience in a 300 or R44 due to the good power management skills they teach, but equally important is who a candidate has trained with, has worked with, and was mentored by.

"When there is a shortage of pilots, operators do ask around if anybody knows someone who is good and 'needs a go'. If a student goes down that track though, they really have to stay

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connected to the industry until their number comes up. They need to make themselves known but also be prepared to knuckle down and ground crew for two or three years if necessary while they wait for an opportunity."

On the subject of on-the-job training Mark talked about "candidates learning to enjoy simply flying the helicopter well. The job is not to beat up your mates on the way home, but to come home safely every day."

Mark makes the point that training an ag pilot takes time and money; "Trainees do need to recognise that they need to pay or contribute in kind for their training, and as much as it is great being able to give somebody the skills, there has to be some certainty from my point of view that they won't just accept the rating and then bugger off." Like others, Mark says he's willing to give new pilots a go. "I'm willing to accept candidates with a fresh CPL and minimum PIC time, but it depends entirely on if I like the person and what their background is, and whether their work and training history indicates the right sort of attitude and work ethic. I can tell a lot just by looking at and in the car they drive up in. I can also tell a lot by looking at what they've done since leaving school. Have they worked hard and how much have they paid their own way?

That said, the best way to get a start ag flying is to come and be ground crew and prove yourself. That's not working for free either. Ground crew get paid well if they work hard."

Mark Law had some great advice too: "If you pause right now and look within yourself and ask these questions you could get to second base:

- Am I punctual; can I get going without a prompt?
- Do I like constant, repetitive physical and mental work?
- Can I dissociate myself from my phone, tablet and social media across a normal 8 hour working day, and still function?
- Can I take a kick up the bum and or constructive criticism without featuring a 'poor me, hard done by' attitude?
- Can I communicate personally which means; stand and look people in the eye and converse clearly and confidently?
- Am I friendly, happy, humorous, and helpful?
- Am I determined and without expectations of flying immediately; i.e. expecting hard yakka on the ground within the industry before even looking to start flying?
- Can I turn my hand to other jobs, not just the flight controls?
- Am I able to innovate myself, the company, others and our industry?
- Do I expect to work within my home town community, or am I more realistically prepared to move?
- Do I understand common sense and how it fits with life and work?
- Will I listen to experienced folk?
- Will I enjoy working in all weather conditions?

If you are armed with these expectations and attributes, not only will you enjoy a great aviation career, you will tackle most other work challenges and be a great asset to everyone."

Those comments apply not just to helicopters, but all aviation careers in general.

Is it your passion?

Gaining a commercial pilot licence is certainly one of the more expensive options you can choose to commence a career. So it's well worth first considering whether aviation is something you're genuinely passionate about, or whether being a pilot just sounds like a cool thing to do.

How much do you know about aircraft and how interested are you already? When you hear a helicopter or warbird or different sounding jet flying above, are you compelled to stop what you're doing and look skywards, or did you not really notice? When you've gone for a fly, do you get a sensation of delight the moment you lift off the ground, or did you not really notice? When you're in the air, do you look about with an appreciation of what's around you and of what's keeping you up there, or did you not really notice? There are many pilots who still notice all of these things even after recording thousands of hours in their logbooks, because they're passionate about aviation. That makes flying a fantastic career to adopt.

If you don't feel these things, then there's a risk that having spent up large on a licence, you won't be motivated to work yourself into a first flying job and on up the ladder, and that you'll just as likely pursue some other career instead. One of the marked failures of the student loan scheme is that for a long time, students could borrow all the money they needed to get a licence, but some had chosen the path not out of a driven passion for aviation, but of some mistaken view of glamour. Often it transpired that they had wasted their time and money - and in those cases it was money that they would one day have to pay back. That said, students with a passion for aviation always find their way into the industry. If that's you, go for it.

Will there still be pilots?

According to some headlines that appear from time to time, Artificial Intelligence will take over many occupations - and airliners will surely be pilotless in the future. Mark Woodhouse described this hypothesis as abject

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nonsense. Mark quoted numerous research papers in support of the need for pilots for a very long time yet and noted that the futurists nearly always picked a time span of 15-20 years for their predictions - enough to convince people they're working on something that could prove revolutionary very soon, but not such a short time to actually be proved wrong before they themselves had moved on elsewhere.

Mark applied some numbers to the scenario, suggesting that as an example researchers manage to develop a network of computers for an aircraft, that could guarantee 99.999% reliability. At around 120,000 flights per day, such reliability would see 440 accidents per year! At the very least, pilots are there, not for what they do, but for what they can do. That's also a good reason to question the hype behind the numerous pilotless air taxi companies currently rushing to carry passengers from A to B.

Choosing a flight school

Frank Parker shouldn't need an introduction here (A-Cat Instructor, Flight Examiner, Retired Air NZ Captain, Owner of Ardmore Helicopters, NZ Warbirds Association President, etc.). He wrote an article in 2023 pointing out what a huge decision choosing a flight school is.

"The development of yourself as a pilot will be greatly influenced by how you are taught and who you associate with during training, but also, learning to fly is a massive financial investment. You deserve to get the best possible return on that."

Frank said he is often asked the best way to learn to fly and who are the best instructors. He speaks of helicopter flying, but the same applies to fixed wing as well.

"If only it was that easy. In short it is horses for courses and what suits one may not suit another. It is often joked that a dedicated student will succeed despite their instructor.

"For most of us achieving a helicopter licence is a major financial consideration so you do want to get best value from your training. The first part of this equation is 'you'; ensuring you have prepared for your lesson 'before' you head to the airport. A helicopter cockpit is possibly the most expensive classroom you will encounter in your life so one minute wasted on getting your checklist right has just cost you 10 bucks!

"Training Establishments come in all guises; the one-man-band down-country, the sideline to a commercial operation, and dedicated flight schools. All have their attributes and it largely comes down to your personal situation, financial resources and what suits you.

"Starting out it is beneficial to complete two to three lessons per week. This gives a good continuity in your training and enables consolidation of those important building blocks. Any more than three lessons will tend to overload the learning process and with less than one you will lose the continuity and require an extra review of the prior lesson. As you advance in your training you can step the rate up, however, unless you are walking out to the flight line with enthusiasm for the flight ahead, you are in danger of 'DDG', dollars down the gurgler, as you will not be achieving the best from the lesson.

"If finances are a challenge then break your training into blocks; achieve first solo, take a break, achieve consolidation flying, break, achieve cross country training, break and then a final work up to your PPL. A similar process can be followed for your CPL. The important part of this is for your blocks of training to give you that important continuity and consolidation.

"In my consideration the most important facet in your training

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is that you have a rapport with your instructor. This may not happen on your first flight, but, if you find yourself in any sort of conflict or are uncomfortable with them then your learning will be affected. This doesn't require that you have to be best buddies. Indeed this may be counter-productive, it simply means you need an open honest and frank relationship where positive critiques can be accomplished. This last point is most important. An instructor has to be able to tell you what you're getting wrong for you to learn. A debrief is a critique; what went right, what went wrong and what needs to be done (by you) to fix it. Learning to fly an aircraft has nothing to do with ego!

"A word about the C-cat instructor. I often hear that 'I don't want a new instructor because they don't know what they're doing'. I reply to this that the C-cat has a minimum of 250 hours of experience and has been trained for what he is doing. Additionally he/she is under the supervision of a senior instructor who will be reviewing their activity, instruction and your progression. In short the C-cat instructor is every bit qualified to teach you to fly. [Ed: I'd add to that, the C-cat instructor hasn't yet become so 'unconsciously competent' that they have forgotten how they learned or what they learned themselves when they were at the same stage you're at now. Clearly remembering what they found difficult and how they solved it along the way might mean they are actually best placed to help get you on the way too. Sure they mightn't have 2000+ hours of experiences to share but during your training you'll also be flying check rides and flight tests with plenty of others who do.]

"So where to start? If you have decided to fly for the experience (a PPL) or for a career (CPL) the first step is to explore your training options. Is there a provider near you, or do you need to look out of town? Make a visit to as many of these providers that you can, tell them your ambitions and get a feel to see if what they offer meets your requirements and expectations.

"Book an introductory flight with them to see if what they say they offer meets reality and how the experience make you feel about them. Once you have found a provider that you are comfortable with then start your lessons. Remember, to get the most from your training, prepare yourself for each and every lesson and if you feel you are having any difficulties with anything, be prepared to have an open and honest discussion about it with your instructor.

"The world of aviation is an interesting one. It provides varied personal challenges and offers unparalleled personal development. If you're contemplating learning to fly for fun or for life, start now."

Do I even need a flight school?

A few years ago in one of his KiwiFlyer articles, Mark Woodhouse raised the subject of DIY flight training - not as in read the manual / fly the plane style - but via private rather than commercial instruction. In New Zealand there is currently no legal requirement for flight training to be undertaken by a 'certificated' or 'approved' organisation. You can gain training and be credited training experience toward a licence as long as your flying instructor holds the appropriate, current qualifications. If you have family or friend connections with access to a suitable aircraft and instructor rating, you can be trained by them. Mark said that in fact, at one time one of his sons considered continuing his pilot training and that they seriously considered purchasing an aircraft and doing it together. Mark also said that he very strongly recommends having an independent examiner do the flight tests. A very important principle of quality training is the separation of the training from the checking. Flight tests should be an independent, objective sampling of the standard of training achieved.

What other considerations are there?

Often overlooked is the opportunity to spend time with other aviators; you can learn much about flying from talking with fellow pilots. Look for these social opportunities whenever you can.

Discuss your career plans with working pilots to get an idea of the job and lifestyle you think you're looking for. Most pilots will agree that your passion for aviation will be what gets you through any low points in your career, as there will be pitfalls on the way that other industries are more resilient to.

Make sure you research what your training money will buy you and remember cheapest is not generally the best. Be prepared to pay good money for good training.

Do take heed of the aforementioned advice in this article. Those who are really successful in creating an aviation career for themselves seldom just got lucky; they worked hard, sought out opportunity, then placed themselves in those opportunities as they came along. If you have a genuine passion for aviation and a drive to succeed, then the sky really is your limit.



Building New Zealand's aviation engineering workforce

NMIT's aviation engineering programmes offer clearer pathways, flexibility and a choice of training locations for future engineers.

New Zealand's aviation sector is facing a growing shortage of skilled aviation engineers, making clear training pathways more important than ever. NMIT is helping build that workforce through aviation engineering training in Nelson and at RNZAF Base Woodbourne. An exciting new North Island training option will also be offered from February 2027, based at NZAero's manufacturing facility in Hamilton.

The New Zealand Certificate in Aeronautical Engineering is available at both Level 3 and Level 4. Students can enter at the stage that matches their knowledge, while careers advisers and employers have a practical pathway to recommend.

Level 3 is designed for people starting out, with no previous aviation engineering experience required. It suits school leavers, career changers and those interested in aircraft, engines and technology. Students develop skills in maintenance documentation, aeronautical tools and equipment, safe work practices, aircraft structures, avionics and propulsion systems. Classroom and online learning are combined with workshops, projects and field trips.

After Level 3, students can progress to the Level 4 certificate. People with equivalent knowledge or engineering industry experience may also be eligible. Level 4 develops capability across avionics, piston and gas turbine engines, aircraft structures and maintenance practice. A three-month work placement provides industry experience and can connect students with employers.

Both qualifications are available in Nelson and Woodbourne. With the addition of the Level 3 programme in Hamilton in 2027, and plans to offer Level 4 in future, specialist aviation engineering training is now more accessible to learners in the North Island.

NMIT Head of Aviation, Reid Carnegie, says the updated structure responds to the skills and qualities employers need.

"The aviation industry needs people who can apply technical knowledge, work professionally and adapt as aviation technology changes. Level 3 gives newcomers a strong practical foundation. Level 4 takes that learning further and adds workplace experience, helping learners understand the standards, discipline and teamwork expected in aviation engineering."

NMIT data shows a 100% employability rate, reflecting the strength of graduate outcomes in a sector where demand for aviation engineering skills is high. Alumni are working for major airlines, GA operators, and maintenance, repair and overhaul organisations, and aerospace in New Zealand and overseas. People employed in the sector can access Level 4 block courses and online Level 6 study towards the Civil Aviation Authority Part 66 Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Licence examinations.

For industry, these programmes offer opportunities to meet emerging talent, support placements and strengthen the workforce. For careers advisers, they provide a route into a specialised field with strong employment prospects.

Prospective students, careers advisers and employers can explore NMIT aviation engineering programmes or speak with a study navigator about the right starting point.

www.nmit.ac.nz/aviation-engineering



Study Support from Waypoints Aviation

Pilot Books - Ground Courses - Mock Exams - iBooks

Owned and managed by Mark and Ruth Woodhouse, Waypoints Aviation provides a range of comprehensive study support material for student pilots working through their licence examination credits. Mark is an experienced airline pilot, A-Cat flying instructor, GA Flight Examiner and ATPL ground instructor.

Resources offered by Waypoints include the PilotBooks series of flight and ground training textbooks, Apple eBooks, online Mock (practice) Exams, and Ground Courses. Most of this material development has been led by Mark himself, who is continuously improving their resources and extending the range as opportunity permits.

Much has been adding to the Waypoints training resources throughout the last year, in particular, development and refinement of Mock Exams and a number of the PilotBooks and eBooks (available through Apple's iBookstore) have been revised and updated. Examiner Theory Courses for NZ CAA and for PNG CASA have been developed and delivered in 2025. Keeping the Waypoints training material current and relevant is a full-time job, says Mark.

PilotBooks and eBooks

The well-known and respected PilotBooks series of flight and ground training textbooks for the PPL, CPL, IR, BTK and ATPL have been authored by Walter Wagtendonk, Stewart Boys and Mark Woodhouse. These books have become the de facto purchase for most new student pilots starting their careers and many will be pleased to hear that Waypoints are presently also developing more volumes in the series. Volume 11(H) 'Basic Turbine Knowledge - Helicopter' for AC61.10 subject 65 - BTK is now available.

All the Waypoints PilotBooks have been converted to Apple iBooks. The Waypoints iBooks can be purchased through the Apple iBookstore or visit the Waypoints website for more details.

The ibooks are easy to use, elegantly presented, well-illustrated, and include



Mark and Ruth Woodhouse with their beloved Chipmunk.



interactive question and answer sessions for each chapter, as well as links to Waypoints mock exams. There are user-friendly tools to view the different layers in each book (chapters, sections, questions, etc.). Text is searchable, and you can add highlights and notes to it for your own reference. These resources are also of course much more portable than a textbook and easy to refer to whenever the opportunity permits. If you're an iPad using aviation student, this is a study option that's likely going to be perfect for you. And if you don't have an iPad it's potentially enough reason to buy one.

Online Mock Exams

Waypoints Mock Exams are multi-choice practice exams, styled on the real CAA/ASPEQ examinations (similar to the old Sample Exam papers they used to make available). Question bank sets are available now for all the PPL(A) and (H) subjects, for all the CPL(A) and (H) subjects, for BTK(A) and (H), for all of the IR subjects and for six of the ATPL(A) subjects. The ATPL Meteorology mock exam question bank is under development, and effort is going into expanding the IR and CPL(H) question banks.

Also, for those studying to obtain a Microlight Pilot Certificate (MPC), candidates can now sit both their MPC Operational knowledge and MPC Technical knowledge exams online with their instructor present, using the Waypoints Mock Exam website. At the conclusion of an exam, a certificate is generated showing the mark achieved and the syllabus reference for any questions answered incorrectly.

Mock exam question banks are under regular development and each mock exam you sit is unique, made up of a set number of multi-choice questions, generated randomly from a large master question bank, covering the full syllabus of each subject. All content is modelled on the type of questions you may get in the real CAA/ASPEQ examinations.

These mock exams are designed to fine tune and focus your knowledge in preparation for the real examination. Each multi-choice item comes with a syllabus reference and a study reference.

Ground Courses

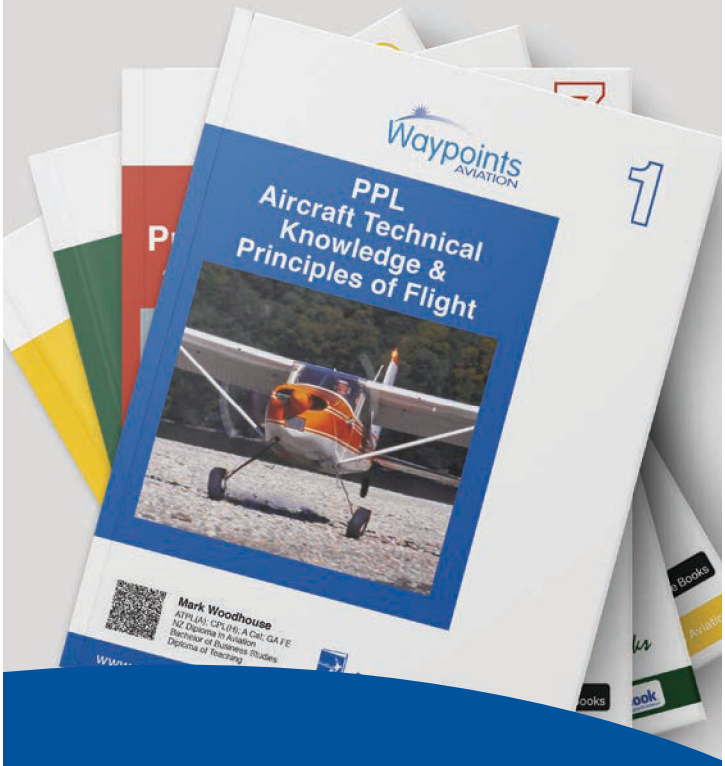
Waypoints provide ground courses for the higher level professional licences and ratings. ATPL theory, and BTK ground courses are run in conjunction with and based at the Nelson Aviation College in Motueka. Waypoints works very closely with the College.

Free Stuff

Waypoints believe passionately in quality training. Consequently, there is a huge amount of freely downloadable training resource material on their website. There are PowerPoint briefings for common flying lessons; pilot's notes for various aircraft including Tomahawk, Chipmunk and Tiger Moth, aerobatic training notes and also low-level display flying notes written to support the NZ Warbirds low level display flying course. Material on the Free Stuff page is offered as a free download, in pdf and MS Word formats, as it becomes available. The content has been produced and collated from a wide range of sources and where possible full credit has been given to the original author(s).

For more information visit: www.waypoints.co.nz or Facebook.com/WaypointsAviation

Waypoints AVIATION



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Waypoints PilotBooks provide up to date, comprehensive pilot knowledge in a well laid out and easy to understand way. Our material is designed to cover the NZCAA syllabus requirements and thoroughly prepare you for your licence exams.

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Waypoints Aviation

Auckland Pilot Training Group

Elevating aviation training at New Zealand's biggest flying school

Auckland Pilot Training Group (APTG) provides aspiring aviators with a pathway into the global aviation industry offering pilot training aligned with growing global demand. APTG is a partnership between two well-established operators: Ardmore Flying School and Auckland International Pilot Academy.

New Zealand's largest flying school operates a fleet of 30 aircraft, employs 43 experienced instructors, and has four simulators. It operates from two airport campuses located within 30 minutes of Auckland's CBD: Ardmore (near Papakura) and North Shore (near Silverdale).

APTG Ardmore Campus CEO Irene King says, "Auckland is a fantastic place to learn to fly, with varied terrain, plenty of wide-open spaces and the controlled airspace and procedures professional pilots need to experience during training. Operating from two of Auckland's fastest-growing areas puts us right where students and their families need us to be."

APTG North Shore Campus CEO John Punshon adds that APTG also serves the enormous inbound training market. "New Zealand has a fantastic reputation internationally for professional pilot training. APTG's scale puts us on offshore airlines' radar in a region dominated by Australian training offerings.

"In around 24 months we can train a new recruit to the point where they have the necessary licences and ratings to land their first professional flying role, leading to a career with airlines, flight instructing, tourism, emergency services and more... It's a qualification pathway where the sky really is the limit."

Training Programmes we offer

- NZ Diploma in Aviation (General Aviation) (Level 5)
- NZ Diploma in Aviation (International including DGCA) (Level 5)
- NZ Diploma in Aviation (Airline Preparation) (Level 6)
- NZ Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane Flight Instructor) (Level 6)
- Air Transport Pilots Licence Examination Credits
- Multi-Crew Integration Course – MCIC
- We've recently expanded our options to include Helicopter Pilot Training, offered in partnership with Ardmore Helicopters.

Benefits of training with us

- Train at the largest pilot training group in New Zealand with over 125 years of combined training experience
- Two airport campuses with one aligned, integrated high quality standard
- Flexible start dates with a minimum of 7 intakes during the year
- A diverse fleet of 30 plus aircraft including 14 Cessna 172 and 3 Diamond DA42 Twin Stars
- Five CAA Licensed Simulators including for Cessna 172, B200 King Air, DA42, and A320.
- Experienced team 43 of qualified Instructors (4 A-Cats, 12 B-Cats, and 27 C-Cats)
- Remote accessibility for flight theory courses through the Stoneybrook e-learning platform
- High quality accommodation in close proximity to each campus
- Transport to and from accommodation



The Group's Airbus A320 Simulator provides a perfect platform for budding airline pilots to begin type rating training and complete a Multi-Crew Integration Course.

Student loans

AIPA has confirmed funding for 2027. Ardmore is still awaiting a decision for the 2027 academic year. Irrespective, places will be limited with work underway on other payment options.

Contact us now to start your aviation journey

Our shared values of professionalism, diversity and inclusion, safety, integrity, and respect are the cornerstone of our partnership. By aligning our visions and pooling our expertise, Ardmore Flying School and Auckland International Pilot Academy form a unified force ready to achieve new heights in aviation education.

The journey towards becoming a pilot and the opportunities available are shifting to the next level. Call us at 09 426 4273 (North Campus) or 09 298 5055 (South Campus) or visit our website at www.aucklandpilottraining.co.nz to learn more about our exciting flight training programmes.

Ardmore Flying School Open Day - 31 October 2026

Our annual Ardmore Flying School Open Day is back! Join us on Saturday, 31 October 2026, from 10am–4pm for an action-packed day at Ardmore.

Book a half-price introductory flight, try our complimentary A320 simulator experience, grab a coffee, ice cream or something from the BBQ, and chat with our team about our range of flight training programmes.

Whether you've always dreamed of becoming a pilot or are just curious about aviation, we'd love to welcome you to Ardmore!



Instructors at Ardmore with one of the Cessna 172 aircraft.



Top student Emilie Kendall receiving her award at the 2025 graduation ceremony.



2027 Enrolments are now open for the Diploma in Aviation!

Ardmore Flying School has been delivering outstanding, internationally recognised aviation training for well over 60 years.

Apply now and take off on your exciting career in aviation.

PPL Intake dates are available for February, April, June, August and November 2027.

For more info, contact us:
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enrolments@ardmore.co.nz
2 Harvard Lane, Papakura, Auckland

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Choosing a training organisation that suits you is the most important decision you can make in your flying career. Achieving your licence is the first step; finding employment is the real challenge. Training with a well-recognised provider is the key and Ardmore Helicopters is the answer.

Why train with us

You will find a relaxed and friendly atmosphere at Ardmore Helicopters and programmes tailored to your individual needs, all conducive to successful training outcomes.

Our highly experienced team of two A-Category Instructor/Examiners take a personal approach to your training with one-on-one tuition.

Frank Parker who owns and manages the Company has been flying helicopters in military and civil roles for over 45 years and lends his passion to the business.

Courses available

Ardmore Helicopters has been providing top line pilot training for over 29 years. We offer a range of training options from Private Pilot Licence (PPL) through to Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL), Gas Turbine Ratings, Instructor Ratings and many Type Ratings.

Our students train in the Guimbal Cabri G2 helicopter. This is a modern state-of-the-art aircraft regarded as one of the safest training helicopters.

Why train at Ardmore Airfield

Ardmore Helicopters is based at Ardmore Airfield in South Auckland, New Zealand's busiest general aviation airfield. The traffic density and airfield procedures give students invaluable exposure and help to develop essential 'situational awareness' which will last a lifetime.

Our 'hangar' is literally 100 metres from the airfield helicopter training area (TLOF), so there's no wasted transit flying time. Also, we are 5 minutes from Auckland International Airport so students will experience 'controlled airspace' and Air Traffic Control procedures.

The 'forest training area' and Hunua Ranges are respectively 5 and 10 minutes from the field so mountain and 'bush' training is on our doorstep.

Our pilots

Past graduates from Ardmore Helicopters can be found in all areas of the industry both in New Zealand and around the world working in Rescue, Police, Fire fighting, Tourism, Agriculture, Corporate and Utility work.

We have a solid reputation in the industry and our graduates are well regarded by prospective employers. If you would like to talk to one of our graduates who is 'out there doing it' we are happy to put you in contact with them.

Where to start

If you have ever considered becoming a professional helicopter pilot, stop dreaming and book an introductory lesson. You will get a ground briefing about the aircraft and the flight, then take to the air with one of our instructors for a local flight. Once airborne you will take the controls for some basic manoeuvres. Back at the airfield the instructor will show you an 'autorotation' (landing without engine power) before you try your hand at hovering. You will still be wearing a smile a week later!

For more information

If you would like some further information, come out to us at Ardmore Airfield for a coffee and a chat. Alternatively visit our website www.chopper.co.nz

We look forward to meeting you.

ARDMORE HELICOPTERS

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Providing personalised training to Private and Commercial Pilots for over 29 years

Flight Training - Theory Courses - Type Ratings

Using exam data to sharpen theory training

Stoneybrook Training's KDR Generator provides direct feedback to students and flying schools

Every ASPEQ theory exam result comes with a Knowledge Deficiency Report - a list of the syllabus codes the candidate got wrong. Not the questions, just the topics. For most students it is a row of numbers that means very little, and it gets filed away with the result.

In the last six months, more than 1400 of those reports have been run through Stoneybrook Training's new KDR Refresher Generator. A student uploads their KDR and gets back revision aimed at the specific items they missed, rather than being told to go and read the whole subject again. With an average of ten codes on a report, this is a ten-point study plan instead of a three-hundred-page one.

Director of Stoneybrook Training, Ian Matheson says, "It's been a massive project for us as there are about 8000 KDR codes but the benefits are threefold – for students, ourselves as theory training providers, and training schools.

"Every Monday morning a summary arrives: how many reports were submitted that week, which subjects they covered, and which codes are appearing most often, both for the week and across the whole dataset. The system is designed to prevent the same report being counted twice within its statistics, but nothing is recorded that identifies a candidate or the school they trained at.

"About 90 reports a week are now coming through, across every licence level from PPL to ATPL. That summary is the starting point for how we maintain our training material. When a code climbs the list, we go and look at how we teach it.

"A recent example: The most frequently failed item in the entire dataset is CPL Aircraft Technical Knowledge 26.62.2 - describe the function and operation of a typical GPWS system - which has now appeared 55 times, well ahead of anything else in that subject. So we went back to the lesson. It covered the history of the system and the rules requiring it, but never worked through the five warning modes which are being tested in the exam. The lesson has been rewritten, and the short test practice questions with it.

"This loop now runs continuously. Candidates tell us where they fell short, the aggregate tells us whether the problem sits with the candidate or with our teaching, and the material is evolved. Without it, a course potentially quietly drifts from the syllabus and nobody finds out until a run of students fail the same subject.

"Schools can benefit from the system too. A ranked list of the codes your own students keep missing is a more useful thing to take into a briefing than a pass rate, and we are happy to produce one for any school whose students are using the tool.

"Currently the statistics are by report rather than individual students - a candidate sitting three subjects generates three reports, and because using the tool is a choice, it is a self-selected sample - but one which can become a large and growing signal.

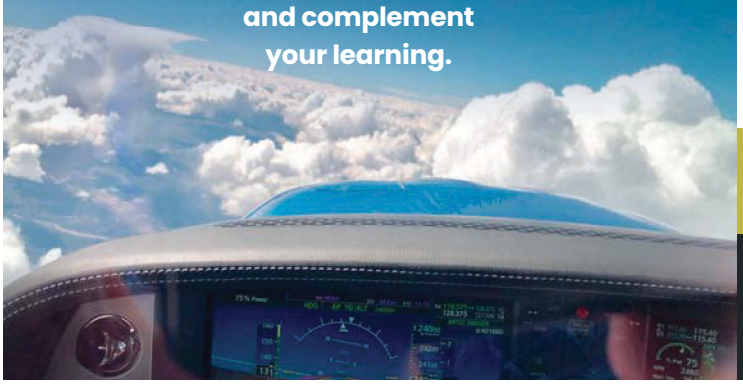
"The obvious next step is more of it. The more students who put their KDRs through, the faster the weak spots surface - including in courses that are nothing to do with us. Theory training here is small enough that we can all end up teaching the same topics with similar oversights, and just large enough that the data can show us which ones."

The KDR Refresher Generator is at **www.stoneybrook.training**

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Open the door to the world of taildragging at Hamilton with Classic Cubs

by Neroli Henwood



Piper Supercub BQV during training for her new owner at Tapanui airstrip near Gore, West Otago.

In the early history of aviation, aircraft generally had tailwheels or tail skids, and this became the 'conventional undercarriage' configuration. It was in the later stages of World War II that new aircraft were more commonly fitted with a nosewheel undercarriage. Now of course the majority of aircraft are so equipped. This is for practical reasons, especially with the advent of jet-engined aircraft. Airfield tarmac doesn't like jet engine exhaust heat being directed at it. Pilots and designers (and insurers!) also came to appreciate the easier ground handling characteristics of nosewheel aircraft. Taildraggers seemed destined to be consigned to the annals of history.

However, there are still niche jobs for tailwheel aircraft, such as top dressing, towing gliders, bush flying and of course the resurgence of interest in relatively recent years of keeping vintage and warbird aircraft active. Thus, pilots are still needed with taildragger skills - including the knowledge of how to handle these conventional gear aircraft and how to care for the fabric covered versions. There are a number of flying schools or aero clubs in New Zealand that offer tailwheel conversion training and currency checks. A handful offer primary or ab-initio flight training in tailwheel aircraft. Classic Cubs offer both.

Bill and I operate a modest one-aircraft flying school called Classic Cubs based at Hamilton Airport, in the Waikato. Our daughter Olivia learnt to fly in Supercub BQV and gained her CPL and C-Cat instructor rating in 2018. Olivia was instructing with L3 Harris at Hamilton until COVID resulted in her redundancy in 2020. We are delighted that she now instructs with us in the Supercub BTC and has gained her B-Cat instructor rating.

BTC is a 1957 Piper Supercub with a 160 hp engine, and is equipped with flaps as standard. We owned Supercub BQV (100 hp) for 19 years, initially based at Ardmore, then moved to Hamilton this year and now recently sold to private owners in Tapanui. BQV was extensively refurbished in 2015 and had new fabric and a newly overhauled engine as part of the repairs.

When we purchased BTC in 2016, she hadn't flown since 1968, and that was after nine years of topdressing, based at Glen Murray in the North Waikato. She needed a bit more work than a 'cut and polish' to resurrect her to flying condition. After finishing topdressing she was parked up in the old Tauranga Aero Club hangar, becoming derelict over the years and after several moves, her remains ended up at Castleton's airstrip, near Te Awamutu. We carried out a ground up restoration under the expert supervision of Dave Stewart from Hamilton Aero Maintenance. We used waterborne Stewart Systems on the fabric, and it is standing up to the rigours of flight training well.

We took the opportunity of some downtime due to bad weather two years ago to fit a uAvionix TailbeaconX ADS-B system to BTC and highly recommend it for its simplicity of operation and minimal weight and space requirements. This also gives our ab-initio students an introduction to modern digital flight instruments with options of Primary Flight Displays in addition to being the display for the ADS-B control.

Since first flying again in May 2021, BTC has logged about 600 hours, including a trip to Haast in July 2021 for the AOPA Winter Fly-in. We know her well, but pilots who have the pleasure of training in her for advanced training such as strip and mountain flying, or PPL and CPL BFRs relish the taildragger challenge. And with BQV's departure, she is now enjoyed by all of our ab-initio students too.

Everyone that we meet in aviation has their own stories to tell but they often have similarities and overlaps. The pilots who have

learnt to fly in the Cubs or have come to begin their taildragger love affair with us, all seem to leave with the same smile, same enthusiasm and same desire to keep flying these types of aircraft.

Taildragger Training

All ab-initio pilot training can be carried out in BTC, and we can provide ground study assistance for exams, if needed. Trial flights can be arranged for anyone who wants to 'have a go' before making the big decision to carry on towards a PPL and/or CPL.

The syllabus of taildragger training for an already licensed pilot typically starts with feeding yourself into the cockpit through the clamshell doors. Students sit in the front seat of the Supercub. The next major difference is operation of the brakes. The standard arrangement being heel brakes rather than the more common toe brakes in modern trainers.

Upper air work then allows students to become familiar with the layout of the cockpit and general handling of the aircraft. This also gives the trainee pilot an idea of the glide performance and the side-slipping manoeuvre if they haven't already covered that in previous training. The rest of the conversion course covers the ground handling and circuits, as that is where the differences are compared to a nosewheel aircraft. Ground handling points covered include taxiing in confined spaces, turns to clear under your nose for obstructions and handling the controls proactively when taxiing in windy conditions to avoid a ground upset. Wind awareness needs to be at a higher level for taildragger pilots, so that is one of the things we emphasise throughout training.

Flight training covers 3-point and wheeler take-offs and landings, STOL, and crosswind operations. All the type training above is integrated into the PPL syllabus for ab-initio trainees and to date Bill has sent 23 students on their first solo in the Supercub and trained three pilots to CPL level, one to C-Cat instructor level and one to B-Cat. This is in addition to a myriad of BFRs and Supercub Type Ratings. As a new B-Cat, Olivia has sent two ab-initio students on their first solo recently and trained one student to CPL at Hamilton.

After completing a Type Rating, pilots often build hours for their next step in the taildragger world. It could be towing gliders, warbird, or ag. flying. Two prospective DC-3 pilots have been through our training as well. The Waikato has a large number of options for pilots to show passengers the sights, including the west coast beaches, Waikato River, Coromandel Peninsular and King Country / Central Plateau.

Another option for taildragger hour building for students is an introduction to strip flying or terrain and weather awareness / mountain flying training. This is popular for those older pilots who have missed out on TAWA training introduced to the PPL and CPL syllabus in recent years. Bill is also a Glider Tow Pilot Instructor for those pilots interested in that line of work.

We can teach students in their own aircraft, and Bill is also a microlight aircraft instructor and microlight ATO.

Classic Cubs has been based in the Waikato since February 2010, and at Hamilton since April this year. The disruption to the aviation industry with the arrival of COVID in 2019, saw Bill return to full time flight instruction, after taking early retirement from Air NZ.

Bill and Olivia are always happy to see visitors and talk taildragging. Feel free to give us a call if you are in the area.

Bill & Neroli can be contacted via www.supercub.co.nz, email: bill@supercub.co.nz or phone Bill on 021 065 4538 or Neroli on 021 063 7159.



Bill and Olivia standing proudly in front of Supercub BTC.


uAvionix PFD in action over the Waikato Rover east of Hamilton Airport.

PA-18 Super Cub based at Hamilton



Perfect for getting taildragger time or just great fun.
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Contact Bill on 021 065 4538 or bill@supercub.co.nz
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The Biennial Flight Review

Same old two-yearly check or an opportunity to upskill?

A biennial flight review becomes a lot more interesting and a lot less of a chore if it is treated as something other than just a box ticking exercise of demonstrating what you know. Many pilots will be flying with someone more experienced than themselves, and even when the other way around, likely with someone having different experiences or perspectives. The BFR is therefore not only a regulation to be adhered to, but also an opportunity, as Bill Henwood explains here.



Classic Cubs' Supercub BTC at Hamilton Airport.

All pilots, whether flying 500 kg microlights or 300 tonne airliners are required to undergo a Biennial Flight Review. It is intended as a revision session and is a dual exercise. There are certain mandatory exercises which can be done more than once if needed, to come back up to the standard you must have achieved when you passed your initial flight test - in some cases many years ago. Some pilots even strive to improve on their first effort, as a result of more experience. There is also provision for BFR flights to encompass discretionary opportunities of new training, for instance a PPL upskilling with CPL exercises, or exploring some local farm strips.

The underlying rationale for the BFR is to ensure pilots remain competent in carrying out critical exercises to remain safe, such as engine failures. It does not absolve pilots from retaining their knowledge and skills acquired during their initial training, between BFRs. I always recommend pilots review critical exercises such as engine failures on a regular basis. For example you could run through the drills mentally every Monday morning while driving to work, and also have a regular flying session dedicated to emergencies. While I was doing my CPL training I was hopeless at FLWOP. My instructor advised me to learn and practice the procedure while riding my motorbike home (about an hour) and back again in the morning - of course being careful not to ignore the immediate requirement of riding defensively and not colliding with anyone coming the other way! By the time I got to fly the next day I could do the memory checks within 10 seconds. I followed that pattern as my career progressed onto bigger and more complex aeroplanes. When I was flying the 737 I had the same time to drive to work and 11 memory drills to keep fresh. If there was a failure on first take-off then I had practiced all the drills mentally only about an hour ago. I have some pilots presenting themselves for a BFR who haven't practiced engine failures since the last BFR two years ago. Imagine having an engine failure the day before your BFR, having not practiced for two years. How successful would that outcome be? Is that the best you can do for your passengers?

Another aspect of a BFR is the paperwork that goes with the responsibility of being a Pilot in Command. Weight and balance, take-off and landing distance calculations, and new rules all need to be refreshed. I issue a BFR questionnaire when someone books me for their BFR, which is open book and covers all the things we need to talk about before the flight and without wasting precious sunny days. Any difficult areas that a pilot may have forgotten about can also be discussed while reviewing the questionnaire. And I update it every two years so you don't get the same one twice and such that the whole gamut of a pilots knowledge base is revised over time.

I had a pilot recently who had just upgraded the autopilot system in his IFR aeroplane. He was competent in the normal aspects of the new system but hadn't explored the redundancies and flight path protections built into modern autopilots. So it was difficult to carry out stalls and steep turns because the aeroplane wanted to recover itself from a low speed condition or over 60 degrees angle of bank. Fortunately I knew how to disable the protections for training purposes. Of course, the trick was then to remember to turn it back on for normal ops!

I also get arguments that "I only fly from ABC to XYZ so why do we need to do all the other stuff?". Nothing on your licence says, "only valid for flight from ABC to XYZ". The privileges of your licence demand continued competence in all the other stuff too.

Another area of up-skilling that can easily be achieved, especially for microlight pilots, is the experience of operating in or through a control zone. There seems to be a reluctance with some pilots to do this and they prefer to stay clear of control zones, even to the extent of spending extra time and fuel, or running a risk with weather, in taking the long way around. Controllers are there to help but rely on pilots being familiar with radio work and complying with clearances, or having the confidence to ask for an alternative if the clearance can't be complied with for whatever reason. We have found since moving our base to Hamilton, that the busyness and extra radio work has been no problem, even for new ab-initio students, as they practice this by default on every flight.

So do approach a BFR as an opportunity to refresh and extend skills, not just to renew your privilege to fly. Consider it an opportunity to upskill rather than a chore, and do the study beforehand to arrive well-prepared. But also, fly a BFR like you fly every day, not how you think the examiner wants you to fly - especially if you have invented some of your own best practices (because they generally aren't). It's not a test where the instructor is looking to fail you, but a friendly assessment of how current your knowledge and skills are, along with what should be an enjoyable session to bring those back up to speed if required.

Happy flying.

Bill Henwood

60 years of helicopter training at Nelson spanning two of New Zealand's longest serving aviation families

A helicopter training milestone was recently celebrated in Nelson between two of New Zealand's longest serving aviation families, when in 2025 Angus Wallis followed in his grandfather Sir Tim Wallis' footsteps, gaining his Helicopter Private Pilot Licence. Toby Reid was Angus' instructor and ironically it was Toby's grandfather John Reid (MBE) who taught Sir Tim how to fly helicopters.

When John Reid's logbook was researched, the date of Sir Tim's first flight was found to be 21 July 1965. The first flight Angus took with Toby was on 2 August 2025 – little more than a week to the day of Sir Tim's flight 60 years ago.

John Reid was also known for training New Zealand's very first military pilots, working with the New Zealand Army to instruct Captain R.J.O. Pearce and Lieutenant Walter Steward in Bell 47 G2 ZK-HAQ back in November of 1963.

Toby says "It was a pleasure to teach Angus how to fly - made special by the fact that we are both continuing our family's aviation legacies within the New Zealand helicopter industry. Angus did a fantastic job with his training and we wish him all the best for his career."

Sir Tim completed his licence in Bell 47 ZK-HBB which he had imported from the Bell factory in Fort Worth, Texas.This was when a helicopter licence was little more than a rating and when a designated Flight Examiner from the Civil Aviation Department was just as likely to opt to stay on the ground and watch the candidate fly the helicopter, than participate in the experience himself.

Sixty years later, Angus Wallis earned his licence in one of Toby and Rachael Reid's modern Cabri G2 helicopters. TR Heli Limited also operate R44, MD500 and H125 types across a variety of training roles in the Nelson region.

Find out more about helicopter training within a family legacy that spans six decades by contacting Toby and Rachael on 021 273 5023, emailing toby@trheli.nz or visiting **www.trheli.nz**



Sir Tim Wallis in 1965.



John Reid (left) training early military pilots (right).



PPL, CPL, Instructor Ratings, Type Ratings, Night Ratings, CASA to CPL conversions, BFRs & more.

Based in Sunny Nelson, we offer one-on-one structured helicopter flight training to suit your schedule. Nelson is a fantastic location to fly from with its three National Parks. You will benefit from our family's decades of aviation experience, wisdom, and hospitality. We also offer helicopter acquisition and management services, guiding you through the process of owning your own helicopter. Limited accommodation is available on site.
To find out more, contact Toby & Rachael Reid at TR Heli Ltd. on 021 273 5023 or toby@trheli.nz **www.trheli.nz**



A Nimbus II glider soars over Lake Coleridge.

Gliding is a valuable skill for power pilots too

Aside from the fact that gliding is great fun on its own, there have been more than a few outstanding 'saves' made by power pilots after engine failures, when those power pilots also happened to be gliding enthusiasts. Jill McCaw explains the attraction and how to get started.

Power pilots can learn a lot that will make them better power pilots by having a go at gliding.

Glider pilots, by necessity have a clearer picture of the energy in the atmosphere - air flow over and around obstacles such as mountains, at lower levels around trees and how the atmosphere behaves in general - than most pilots who rely on engines. But, they also learn not to be afraid to fly without an engine and have a much better understanding of how an aircraft will perform, if for instance the engine does stop – instinctive knowledge that has saved the day in high profile incidents such as: the 'Gimli Glider', the Air Canada Boeing 767 (calculated by its glider pilot Captain, during the emergency, to have a glide ratio of 12:1) that ran out of fuel at 12,500m and glided safely to a landing, 17 minutes later (having used a sideslip technique taught in glider training to slow final descent) at the decommissioned Gimli Air Force Base, Minnesota, and Captain Sullenberger's water landing of a US Airway's Airbus A320 on the Hudson River when it was disabled by a flock of geese. Both men knew not to give up, that while their aircraft may have lost thrust it hadn't stopped flying and safe landings were possible.

We don't expect you to need to perform something as extreme as that from some gliding experience, but you will gain more flying skills and have an awful lot of fun.

People often ask me about what is involved in learning to glide. I've had thirty odd years involved in the sport and I've got the answers to that question pretty much off pat. It summarises to something like this:

- A modern training glider has a glide ratio of around 38 to one – so it doesn't fall down when the wind stops. Modern racing gliders reach more than 60 to one.
- Gliders fly by using the energy in the atmosphere.
- To get involved, simply go out and introduce yourself to your local club.
- You fly in a two-seater with a qualified instructor.
- The instructor, tow pilot and everyone involved is a volunteer.
- It takes roughly eight hours of flying time to get to solo but -
  - A lot of that time is spent doing circuits – because being able to fly take-off and landings is crucial.
  - If you've got previous flying experience this time is a lot shorter – you already understand many of the concepts involved and can fly straight and level.

- Getting to solo is only the beginning – that's when you really start to learn to soar.
- You pay to join the club and it is the club's responsibility to make sure that you are safe to fly and that includes giving you the training you need to do so: i.e. training is free.
- You pay National Affiliation fees, club fees, glider hire and your tow fees.
- Circuits therefore are the expensive part of training, even though they are the shortest flights.
- Most clubs own at least one two-seat training glider and a single-seater so you don't need to own a glider of your own.
- Once you get involved you are expected to play your part in the work required to get everyone flying:
  - Getting gliders out in the morning and putting them away at night.
  - Running wings.
  - Retrieving gliders off the field and helping them line up for the next take off.
  - Taking your turn as duty pilot (administration, time keeping, general organisation of ground operations).
  - Joining in with working bees on aircraft, airfield and clubrooms.
- A huge part of learning to fly a glider (once you've mastered the basics of straight and level) is how to find that rising air using thermal, ridge and wave lift. (When I'm explaining the above, I use large arm movements for maximum effect. Diagrams also help.)

It is the ability to read the energy in the atmosphere and use it to pilot your aircraft where you want it to go that elevates gliding into the most fantastic sport – far outweighing power flying.

Please remember that everyone involved is a volunteer and if you want to get involved you are going to have to commit to more than just turning up every other weekend for an hour's lesson.

Gliding clubs have a special character, a group of aviation minded individuals who love spending time together discussing the arcane arts of soaring, and that that is why the gliding movement feels, to many members, like an extended family.

Gliding New Zealand and all gliding clubs welcome people of all ages to learn to fly but have a special arrangement for young people. YouthGlide NZ is a not for profit, youth development programme. The Mission Statement is: to use the sport of Gliding to inspire and develop young people's imagination, character and self-determination with the excitement and possibilities of flight as a lifelong adventure sport or a fulfilling aviation related career prospect.

YouthGlide's Aims and Objectives are to:

- Introduce young minds to the potential of Aviation.
- Develop self-confidence / motivation / self-discipline and boost self-esteem.
- Develop more positive teenage relationships with adults.
- Safely introduce youth to an adventure sport.
- Enable youngsters to realise their potential for achievement.
- Encourage women into flying as a sport and / or as a career.
- Inspire youngsters with technology; bringing maths, physics and computing alive.
- Provide young people an exciting and healthy outdoor alternative activity.
- Introduce young people to aviation careers.

To be available to young people regardless of their religion, gender or ethnicity.

YouthGlide groups work under the umbrella of an existing gliding club. An annual Youth Soaring Development camp with a similar structure to the Walsh Flying School, is held at Omarama in summer and similar camps can be found around the country over long weekends. The greatest success of these camps is the camaraderie and excitement generated by a group of young aviation enthusiasts spending time together.

Whatever your age, if you'd like to join us and give gliding a go, see the Gliding New Zealand website for information on your local club.

Jill McCaw





www.kiwiflyer.co.nz
or email michael@kiwiflyer.co.nz

Learn to fly with Heliflite

To become a great helicopter pilot, you need to understand the aircraft you fly and the environment in which you operate it.

Based at Ardmore Airport in Auckland, Heliflite combines flight training, helicopter maintenance and commercial operations under one roof. Our group of companies is certificated by the New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) under Part 135 for commercial air operations and Part 145 for aircraft maintenance, giving our students the opportunity to train within a genuine aviation environment.

That connection between training, maintenance and commercial operations is a key part of what makes Heliflite different. Our students don't just learn to fly; they gain an appreciation of the aircraft, maintenance and operational standards that underpin professional helicopter flying.



Helicopter Flight Training

We offer complete helicopter pilot training from first flight through to Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL), with training conducted primarily in the Robinson R22, R44 and Schweizer 300.

Our training is structured around each student's individual goals, experience and rate of progression. Whether you are learning to fly for recreation, working towards a licence, or preparing for a career in aviation, the training programme can be tailored to suit your objectives.

We also provide type ratings on larger turbine helicopters, allowing pilots to continue developing their experience as they progress into more advanced aircraft.

Heliflite is also certificated by the CAA to provide Robinson Safety Awareness Training, which is required for pilots operating Robinson R22 and R44 helicopters.

Private Pilot Training

Our Private Pilot Licence (PPL) programme is designed to provide a thorough grounding in helicopter flying while keeping the training practical, enjoyable and relevant to each individual student.

Training can be completed in one of our helicopters or, where appropriate, in your own aircraft. From the first lesson onwards, our instructors focus on developing sound flying skills, good decision-making and a strong understanding of helicopter operations.

Commercial Pilot Training

For those looking to pursue a career in helicopter aviation, our CPL programme goes beyond simply meeting the minimum licence requirements.

Students are exposed to commercial-style operations throughout their training, developing the practical skills and operational awareness expected by professional helicopter operators. As students progress through the course, flights are increasingly conducted in a manner representative of real commercial operations, including the planning,

legal requirements, decision-making and operational discipline associated with flying for hire and reward.

We encourage significant R44 experience as part of the CPL programme, giving students exposure to a larger and more capable helicopter and helping build the experience sought by many entry-level commercial operators.

Where time and experience allow, our standard CPL programme includes two additional type ratings and an unrestricted night rating in addition to the core licence requirements.

The objective is straightforward: graduates should leave Heliflite not only holding a commercial licence, but with practical experience and an understanding of professional helicopter operations that can be put to use from day one.

Experienced Instructors and Real-World Experience

Our instructional team brings extensive operational and training experience to the cockpit. The team includes highly experienced CAA Category A, B and C instructors, including IFR-rated Flight Examiners, supported by a professional ground team who help keep students moving efficiently through their training.

With flight training taking place alongside active commercial operations and aircraft maintenance, students are immersed in a working aviation environment rather than an isolated training operation.

Take Your First Flight

If you're considering learning to fly helicopters, the best place to start is in the air.

Our 30-minute introductory flights provide an opportunity to experience what helicopter flying is really like. An instructor will take you through the basics, from pre-flight preparation and aircraft familiarisation through to the ultimate test of coordination — hovering the helicopter.

Our training rates remain competitive, with package options available for students committing to larger blocks of training.

We welcome you to visit us at 57 Victa Lane, Ardmore Airport, meet the team and see our facilities for yourself.

For more information, contact Sylvia on 09 299 9442 or visit heliflite.co.nz

Pilot knowledge

Just box ticking? Yeah Nah

Getting through the theory can be a frustrating hurdle for some who see hands-on flying as the focus of their aviation education. But it's knowledge that might save the day when things aren't proceeding normally in the air. Mark Woodhouse from Waypoints Aviation explains:

Knowledge is one of three of aspects of performance in everything we do. The other two being attitude and skill.

Without knowledge we have limited control. Things can happen to and around us, and without knowledge we may have no idea why, what to do, or what is likely to be next.

A tragic example of this is described in TAIC Inquiry AO-2018-005. An MD600N helicopter suffered a failure in the electronic engine control, resulting in the 'full authority digital engine control' system changing to 'fuel flow fixed' mode. The fuel flow fixed mode resulted in the rotor speed varying beyond normal operating parameters. The pilot was not able to control the varying rotor speed and a forced landing ensued. The helicopter struck the ground hard but remained upright, and the engine continued to produce high power. This, combined with an imbalance in the rotor system from the ground impact damage, resulted in a severe shaking of the airframe, which destroyed the helicopter. One occupant received fatal injuries and the pilot and one other occupant received serious injuries.

TAIC found that a key lesson of the inquiry was that a pilot's technical knowledge and understanding of aircraft systems is essential to their interpretation of and response to malfunctions.

With knowledge we have recognition, understanding, anticipation and an improved ability to influence what happens next. The sad reality though, is that if we sit back and don't seek knowledge, then we tend not to realise just how much we don't know.

With knowledge, if you don't use it, you lose it. It's nature, we're all the same. I certainly do! So having access to revision references is so important. We must all make regular and 'as required' reference back to material we have confidence in.

Little things are sometimes forgotten. For that reason, revision and rechecking is often necessary. Don't assume! Just don't. Check! In aviation, the cost of assumptions has a nasty history. An assumption IS the mother of all muck ups and building your knowledge only comes from effort. There are no shortcuts.

So take every opportunity to stay current and to learn more about what you're doing as a pilot, whether that's to do with aircraft systems, weather, human factors, or any other aspect of aviation knowledge. The reward will be a more competent, confident, safe, and capable you.

Mark Woodhouse

