

Honourable Company of Air Pilots (NZ Region)



Issue 8: February 2026

NEW MEMBERS

Nil

REINSTATED MEMBERS

Nil

RESIGNED

Nil

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Greetings fellow Air Pilots,

I trust you all survived the New Year holiday period in good health and good spirits. There was little Company activity over the holiday period, but we have just had our first executive committee meeting for 2026 and have a number of work streams underway. Some of these are covered below.

I need to start, however, by advising that our Treasurer, Barry Mitchell, has been struck with a serious medical condition and is no longer able to actively contribute to the Company. Several committee members have visited Barry and have passed on the very best wishes of his fellow Air Pilots. I have been authorised by Barry's daughter to share the following: 'In early December, Barry Mitchell was diagnosed with a particularly aggressive form of brain cancer, which is progressing quickly. Given the

circumstances, the time for visits has now passed, and Barry is no longer able to take calls or respond to messages. We kindly ask that members please do not phone or text him directly. If you would like to send a message to Barry, please forward it to Ron Thacker, who will pass it on to Catherine (Barry's daughter) to share with him. Thank you for your understanding, and for the respect, care and camaraderie you have always shown Barry. It is deeply appreciated at this time.'

Bill MacGregor has kindly offered to fill the Treasurer role and will take on those duties as soon as we can get him authorised with the bank as an account administrator.

We have received the annual call for nominations for the 2026 trophies and awards and would like to be able to generate a number of nominations from the NZ region. To that end, I ask that you all cast a wide net across your aviation networks in search of viable candidates for awards. The terms of reference for awards can be found on the Company website. Nominations (or suggestions for nomination) can be directed to the committee at admin-nz@airpilots.org.

Upper Freeman Ron Thacker
Chair

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Our social media viewership is growing steadily, particularly on LinkedIn. We are still keen to receive stories you may have to share, particularly those that afford lessons to our fellow aviators. Sharing those stories will enrich the wider aviation community while also furthering recognition of the Honourable Company. I also encourage you to 'Like' any posts of ours that you come across so that our existence and activities are distributed to a wider audience.

MASTER'S VISIT

We have just been advised of the proposed dates for the visit to New Zealand by the incoming Master, Elizabeth Walkinshaw. She will arrive from Australia on 12 November and depart for Hong Kong on 22 November. Details of the visit schedule will be promulgated once they have been agreed with the Master. As usual, we anticipate hosting a cocktail reception in Wellington and our annual dinner, probably in Auckland.

YOUNG PILOT NETWORKING EVENT

You may recall (from our last newsletter) that we had intended to host a networking event to allow young pilots to meet potential employers and gain an understanding of the requirements and skills to gain employment as pilots. Unfortunately we were unable to gather sufficient support from industry professionals and so this proposal has been shelved. We will continue to explore the potential for such an event later this year, potentially relying on Air Pilots themselves to provide the experience we seek.

BRIDGING THE GAP SEMINAR

On 12 February, committee members Mike Zaytsoff and Richard Beaton conducted a one-day seminar for young pilots at Ardmore. The 'Bridging the Gap' seminar provided some 16 aspiring professional pilots with information on writing CVs, conducting effective interviews with airline recruiting panels, desirable skill sets to be an effective first officer, threat and error management, and some introductory aircraft technical systems. The seminar was well received, with a number of email testimonials provided to the committee. We have already had an expression of interest from a major training provider to potentially deliver the seminar for their trainee pilots, and are exploring similar opportunities with other training organisations. Our initial plan is to deliver two seminars each year, with one in Auckland and the second in one of the other regions. The courseware is already well developed and will be refined as a result of feedback from this first seminar. If you think you might be able to help with the delivery of these seminars, please reach out to us at admin-nz@airpilots.org.



INSTRUTOR SCHOLARSHIP

We recently received the following message from Sophie Fitchett, who was the recipient of our 2025 instructor scholarship (using it to complete her C-Cat instructor upgrade): “I appreciate the Company's ongoing commitment to promoting good airmanship and maintaining high standards of air safety. Being recognized in this way motivates me to uphold those values in my teaching and contribute to the safety and professionalism of the aviation community. Thank you again for your support and encouragement, it means a great deal to me.”

COMPANY HISTORY

As part of its Air Pilots centenary planning, the London office has commissioned a history of the Company. It is being compiled by former Master Michael Fopp, who has an extensive background in aviation history. As part of this history, London is keen to gather information from the regions. Michael will be in Auckland over the period 4-5 March and is keen to meet with members who can contribute to the NZ region's story. If you are able to contribute to our story, please contact Allan Boyce (allan.boyce@heavyjet.co.nz) who is coordinating the interviews.

MONTHLY WEBINAR

Our series of professional development webinars continue at 1000hrs on the second Wednesday of each month. You should have all received email invitations to join these webinars – if not, please contact the secretary and we'll ensure you are on future invitations. These presentations are conducted in partnership with the NZ Society of Air Safety Investigators (NZSASI) and are open to all who are interested.

*“Everyone has oceans to fly, if they have the heart to do it. Is it reckless? Maybe.
But what do dreams know of boundaries?”*

Amelia Earhart

