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### Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Civil Aviation Authority and the Aviation Community Advisory Group

<b>Date:</b>	Monday 8 December 2025
<b>Venue:</b>	Datacom Centre, Wellington
<b>Attending:</b>	<b>ACAG:</b> Billie Moore (acting Chair); Chris Jackson, Dylan Robinson, Steve Kelly, Mark Blanchard, Simon Wallace, Bob Henderson, Peter Merwood, Don McCracken, Chris Hoffman  <b>CAA:</b> Kane Patena, John Kay, Catherine MacGowan, Fred Stein, June Ralphs, Stu Worden, Jane Turner, Sophie Kelsall, Xavier Ruch, Kate Smith, Kirill Kruger, John Brandeis, Jack Stanton  <b>MoT:</b> Natalie Howell

#### Executive Summary

The 8 December 2025 ACAG meeting opened with introductions and confirmation of June 2025 minutes. Key discussions focused on clarifying ACAG's role relative to the Aviation Council, which leads strategic initiatives such as the Aviation Action Plan, while ACAG provides technical advice to the CAA Director. Members agreed ACAG should be leveraged more effectively to address operational challenges and support strategic priorities. An election for a new ACAG member will be held on 12 December 2025.

CAA and MoT provided updates on the Aviation Action Plan, CAA's strategy, and the Rules Update Programme (RUP). The RUP aims to accelerate rulemaking and improve clarity, supported by additional resources and sector input. The Minister has signalled strong commitment to delivering "quick wins" under the RUP, and CAA is analysing sector feedback to inform the RUP contents. ACAG expressed willingness to assist the RUP through increased engagement and working groups. Updates were also provided on the Advanced Aviation Reform Programme, which introduces new CAR Part 107 and amendments to Parts 101 and 102, effective 22 December.

Further discussions covered the First Principles Funding Review, international engagement including ICAO Assembly outcomes and safety audit findings, and regional initiatives through PASO and MFAT's SECURE-Pac programme. The meeting concluded with a briefing on lithium battery safety risks and upcoming public awareness campaigns to address this risk. ACAG emphasised its readiness to support CAA in addressing sector priorities and operational blockers, reinforcing its role as the aviation community advisory body.

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

John Kay opened the ACAG meeting by welcoming attendees and introducing recently appointed DCE Aviation Security, Fred Stein.

#### 2. Apologies

Siobhan Routledge (MoT).

#### 3. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes for June's 2025 ACAG meeting were accepted as written.

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### 4. ACAG items for discussion

#### a) Relationship between ACAG and the Aviation Council

Acting ACAG Chair Billie Moore confirmed that ACAG will hold an election on 12 December 2025 to appoint a new member. ACAG recognised the need for clarity on its relationship to and with the Aviation Council. Ms Moore explained that ACAG serves primarily as a technical advisory body to the CAA Director on safety matters, while the Aviation Council brings together sector leaders to address more strategic issues of national significance to aviation. These include workforce, infrastructure, regulation, innovation, safety, security, and international engagement. In September 2025, an Aviation Action Plan was introduced, led by industry through the Interim Aviation Council in partnership with government. The plan outlines long-term principles and objectives for shaping the aviation system.

Ms Moore noted that the election process had highlighted strong aviation community support for ACAG's role in representing sector issues to the regulator. Unlike ACAG, the Aviation Council focuses on developing strategic action plans rather than engaging directly with the sector or lobbying the CAA on operational and systemic challenges. ACAG is seeking to better understand these distinctions to determine how it can support the CAA, not only by providing strategic feedback but also by helping resolve smaller, operational blockers. The group agreed that ACAG should be leveraged more effectively in this capacity.

### 5. CAA/MoT updates

#### a. Aviation Council and Aviation Action Plan (the Plan)

MOT endorsed the ACAG overview of the Plan and noted that the Aviation Council, originally formed as the Interim Aviation Council comprises government and industry representatives. The Council first met in October and will meet again in late December. It owns and will oversee implementation of the Plan, with support from the Minister

ACAG noted the Minister's strong commitment to the Plan and desire for quick wins. The discussion then focused on CAA-related elements of the Plan and collaboration between CAA and MoT. Both confirmed they are working closely on priority actions, including taking a joint approach to the bilateral pilots' licence agreement, establishing a workforce group to address aviation safety challenges, and holding monthly meetings with the Minister to review progress on the Rules Update Programme.

#### b. Director's updates and CAA strategy

Kane Patena gave an overview of the [CAA's strategy](#). The group discussed how the Strategy could address areas of sector frustration and minor operational hindrances, and how CAA might leverage ACAG for support. CAA is currently analysing responses to a participant survey conducted in November to identify key themes and ensure the strategy is responsive to sector perspectives. These insights will shape CAA's 2026 Rules Update Programme, with ACAG providing feedback on how well it reflects sector priorities. Mr Patena asked ACAG members how they see their role in supporting a more up-to-date, fit-for-purpose Rules programme.

Ms Moore confirmed ACAG's willingness to assist and acknowledged this will likely need a greater time commitment from ACAG members and more meetings with CAA, including online. For smaller, granular issues, ACAG proposed forming working groups to review case studies and jointly identify blockers and enablers.

DCE Aviation Safety Catherine MacGowan highlighted that, while the Rules Update Programme is one way to deliver change, the strategy also includes initiatives such as digital improvements to enhance sector

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interaction with the CAA. She asked how ACAG could support CAA's broader business transformation. CAA currently has over 650 applications and is exploring solutions such as increased delegations and use of consultant services. In response, ACAG emphasised they can help identify solutions once they understand the specific problems and questions, with the Group having spent the morning brainstorming sector priorities and ways ACAG could support changes.

Mr Henderson observed that the sector's long-held perception that CAA was slow to respond and only focused on the needs and concerns of bigger participants meant that it was challenging to get smaller participant groups on board.

### c. Intersection between strategy and current sector concerns

Ms MacGowan explained that the strategy aims to respond to sector concerns by enabling the system to function more effectively. It must balance competing priorities: clarity and quality versus speed and efficiency. Using new legislative tools such as Transport Instruments will help streamline system design, while Minister- and Board-led initiatives like the "quick wins" programme focused on progressing some smaller rule changes to improve efficiency before the end of 2025. Conversely, other work, such as the First Principles Funding Review, requires more time to ensure accuracy and quality.

### d. Advanced Aviation Reform Programme

The Group received an update on the Advanced Aviation Reform programme, which includes amendments to Parts 101 and 102 and new CAR Part 107, all going live on 22 December. Since the last update to ACAG, several changes have been made:

- **Part 107:** a requirement for data provision was added to the exposition requirements.
- **Part 101:** Changes proposed in the NPRM have been moved from the Rule into a Transport Instrument, allowing greater flexibility for future updates.

Initial broad guidance for Part 107 is available on the CAA website, and a trial Advisory Circular (AC) for Part 101 has also been published. Part 107 guidance will be further developed next year, as CAA gains insight into the types of applications received. Formal consultation with the sector on the trial AC 101-1 is planned for March.

Regarding readiness for Part 107 applications, there is no dedicated CAA team in place. Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with initial support provided by the Emerging Technologies Programme team to ensure submissions are properly shaped and directed to the appropriate Aviation Safety Oversight contact. All application forms are available on the CAA website. The Group discussed changes to 102.17(c) and the potential implication on users who operate using Part 101.

### e. Rules Update Programme (RUP)

The group received an update on the rolling two-year RUP, a joint CAA/MOT initiative to prioritise and boost resource for the existing work programme to meet ministerial expectations. The programme will have two years of dedicated focus, including additional communications, legal, and policy resources, funded through reserves and potentially new Crown funding.

To establish a current-state view of industry perspectives of the rules, CAA conducted a sector survey in November to identify key themes and issues. Key findings included:

- Part 61 was rated both the highest priority for review and, paradoxically, one of the better-performing rules.

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- The rule-making process is considered too slow and does not adequately support emerging technologies.
- There are significant challenges in interpreting rules, highlighting the need for clear, up-to-date guidance.
- When asked about opportunities to improve safety outcomes, most responses pointed to attitudes toward safety culture, rather than deficiencies in the rules themselves.

ACAG observed that even this initial analysis revealed emerging themes and clusters of issues. CAA confirmed the results aligned with expectations and contained no major surprises.

**Action:** CAA agreed to share the final interpreted results with ACAG. Ms Moore also suggested additional sector priorities for consideration, such as Multi-Crew Pilot Licences and RESA.

**f. First Principles Funding Review**

The group received an update on next steps and key milestones for the funding review, s9(2)(b)(ii) [redacted]  
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CAA will engage with stakeholders throughout and provide updates every 6–8 weeks to avoid surprises.  
s9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]  
[redacted]

**g. International Updates**

(i) ICAO Assembly

The 42nd ICAO Assembly, held on a triennial basis, brought together all 192 ICAO Member States to agree ICAO’s three-year work programme, approve the budget, and elect the 36-member ICAO Council. New Zealand was represented by a formal government delegation from the Ministry of Transport and the CAA, supported by industry representatives, at an Assembly that saw record attendance of approximately 3,500 participants. 36 States were elected to the new Council, with all candidates elected except Russia. The Assembly was geopolitically significant, with China taking a more constructive leadership role, particularly on environmental matters, and proceedings concluding on a positive and forward-looking note. New Zealand delivered a country statement reaffirming its commitment to CORSIA and inclusive participation in the ICAO system.

New Zealand presented three papers, covering improvements to ICAO safety and security audit programmes, the State Letter process, and initiatives to address the gender data gap in aviation, all of which received broad support. The Assembly supported several other papers co-sponsored by New Zealand. Key Assembly outcomes

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included progress on commercial space regulation, GPS jamming and spoofing mitigation, and environmental and safety matters. The New Zealand delegation held bilateral meetings with States including Australia, the USA, the EU, the UK, Canada, and Pacific partners, to discuss aviation safety, security, emerging technologies, and ICAO engagement. Future engagement priorities will be refined in consultation with stakeholders to ensure focus on areas of greatest impact.

One of CAA's priorities for this Assembly was to generate discussion on ICAO audit methodologies, and to promote a more outcomes-based USOAP (safety audit programme). CAA began this work in 2023. There are indications of ICAO making encouraging progress on the issue following discussions at last year's Air Navigation Conference.

CAA is keen to ensure it presents a comprehensive and strategic New Zealand State position at ICAO forums. CAA would like to explore how to better incorporate the sector's views and align involvement in international engagements with our shared strategic priorities.

The Group acknowledged the benefits of investing in this strategic, policy-led engagement and discussed opportunities for more technical engagement with ICAO, such as through the APAC Regional Office. CAA noted its current close engagement in ICAO technical forums such as meteorology, dangerous goods, aviation security, air navigation, aeronautical services, medical, and RPAS. Many of these focus areas are worked out of Montreal rather than ICAO's regional offices.

### (ii) ICAO Safety Audit

CAA advised the Group that the draft audit report had been received from ICAO. New Zealand had achieved a preliminary score of 69%, with 239 findings identified. CAA has triaged these findings to determine which will be accepted and which will be disputed. At this stage, 192 findings relating to procedures and processes are expected to be accepted. Through a process of continuous improvement in the years to come, the aim is to increase the overall score for the next safety audit of New Zealand to above 90%.

While the number of findings appears high, they do not represent 239 separate actions, as findings often cascade across related areas (for example, a procedural finding may also generate a corresponding training finding). The final report has not yet been issued; once released, formal media communications will be prepared. Most findings relate to rules and procedures, reflecting ICAO's more compliance-based audit approach. Importantly, none of the findings represent significant safety concerns.

### (iii) PASO and Other Pacific Support

The Group received an update on recent Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) activity, where CAA represents New Zealand as an Observer on the PASO Council. In May's PASO Council meeting, PASO briefed on the rollout of the Comprehensive Oversight Implementation Framework (COIF), which is designed to give Council Member States a clear, step-by-step approach to strengthening national oversight systems. This framework, based on New Zealand's Civil Aviation Rules (CARs) commonly used by most Member States, aims to improve planning and tracking of compliance activities, data management, and progress measurement. Over the past 12 months, CAA has supported PASO in developing the COIF by sharing internal operational policies, guidance, training materials, and lessons learned from implementing Kapua, in line with the Memorandum of Cooperation between CAA and PASO.

CAA also advised the Group of its ongoing facilitation of New Zealand-registered aircraft operating in the Pacific, such as Air Chatham's in Tonga, through Memoranda of Understanding that clearly define oversight responsibilities during the term. Additionally, Fiji is reviewing its primary civil aviation legislation, consolidating three Acts and associated regulations into a single Civil Aviation Bill, soon to be released for public consultation. This appears to be moving toward adopting New Zealand Civil Aviation Rules within its regulatory framework.

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### (iv) CAA/MFAT SECURE-Pac MOU

In August, CAA and MFAT signed a new five-year Memorandum of Understanding to continue delivering aviation security initiatives in the Pacific. For the past 15 years, the MFAT-funded development and cooperation programme has supported technical and operational training, installation of security screening systems, and provision of aviation security assistance across the region, including Niue, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji. The renewed agreement enables ongoing efforts to strengthen aviation systems, maintain safe regional connections, and support Pacific States in sustaining robust oversight. Under the next phase, CAA will install X-ray screening equipment and provide advisory and training support to the Cook Islands, Nauru, and Vanuatu. For its part, ACAG expressed concern that misalignment with standard international security culture is an ongoing issue in some Pacific States. CAA confirmed that, alongside operational implementation advice and support to the region, CAA strongly emphasises the importance of building positive security culture.

### **h. Lithium Battery Intervention**

The group received a briefing from DCE Aviation Security Fred Stein on the safety risk from carriage of lithium batteries. A holistic approach is being taken to lithium battery risk management, with intervention measures implemented in response to an average of two aircraft per week experiencing lithium battery fire incidents globally. The first phase of a public awareness campaign is being launched, with partners such as ACAG encouraged to share and use the materials.

Increased restrictions are being applied regarding when and where lithium batteries can be used, and the acceptance of lithium batteries in freight continues to be closely managed. New Zealand remains an exception in proactively screening for lithium batteries in checked baggage, despite current detection technology not being purpose-built for this purpose; approximately 250,000 lithium batteries have been removed from checked luggage in New Zealand this year.

At the international level, ICAO's Dangerous Goods Panel actively considering solutions to lithium battery fire containment, including ULD devices capable of containing a fire for up to six hours. ACAG noted that some new products marketed as lithium battery safety solutions do not meet safety expectations. Engagement with the UAVNZ community (heavy users of lithium batteries) was discussed, with an **action** for Mr Stein to share the campaign information with ACAG. CAA is building a communications plan with its Dangerous Goods specialist, and Air New Zealand offered to assist with dissemination, given that many elements of the campaign are specifically targeted at carriers.

### **6. Any other business**

The Group was advised that one NPRM for Rule Part 115 and three Assorted Issues Notice consultations would be live for submissions over the Christmas/New Year period.

### **7. Next meeting: scheduled for March 2026**