

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

Date:	Friday 27 June 2025
Venue:	Asteron Centre, Wellington
Attending:	<p>ACAG: Chris Jackson, Dylan Robinson, Qwilton Biel, Steve Kelly, Johl Steel-Brown, Simon Wallace, Billie Moore, Bob Henderson, Peter Merwood, Don McCracken</p> <p>CAA: Keith Manch, John Kay, David Harrison, Catherine MacGowan, Warwick Burr, Jason Ashworth, June Ralphs, Stu Worden, Jane Turner, Sophie Kelsall, Xavier Ruch, Kate Smith, Kirill Kruger</p> <p>MoT: Carolina Durrant, Siobhan Routledge, Erin Wynne</p>

1. Welcome

John Kay opened the ACAG meeting by welcoming attendees.

2. Apologies

Mark Blanchard (Airways - Johl Steel-Brown attending for Mark); Chris Hoffman (AOPA); Joe Franklin (CAA); Mike Hill (CAA); John Brandeis (CAA)

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as accurate and complete. Follow-up Steve Kelly (AirNZ) was confirmed as ACAG's representative for the reconvened Ground Base Navigation Aid (GBNA) Review Panel.

4. ACAG items for discussion**a) CAA's priorities: Minister and Board Chair's expectations**

The group discussed the role of economic enablement in CAA's work programme. CAA reconfirmed, that in line with section 23 of the Act 2023, its main purpose is to regulate a safe and secure aviation system. CAA has sought to align organisational structures more closely with an intelligence-led, risk-based regulatory model with the aim of becoming a more effective and efficient regulator. A new Advice, Triage and Planning function has been established to improve response times across the Authority. As a result, this should reduce regulatory burden on the sector and better enable economic development.

In terms of emerging technology, better support for economic development has been a key outcome of developing a much more flexible Rule set. Learnings and insights from the Advanced Aviation Reform project may be incorporated into future Rule development processes.

The group discussed how industry can influence issues and priorities and the appropriate channels for CAA to update on priorities for industry to consider. ACAG expressed the importance of understanding each other's needs and strengthening feedback loops to better work together.

b) Accessing flight manual AIR number on website

CAA provided an update on a functional website issue. For some time, the aircraft register (and subsequently the AIR number information for the aircraft concerned) has not been readily available on CAA's website due to ongoing issues with automating data-reporting from the new regulatory business system (Kapua). While work to remedy the issue is ongoing, there is a current workaround where the aircraft register is manually extracted and uploaded in CSV format every few days to the website (Aircraft register | aviation.govt.nz).

This CSV file contains the AIR number, associated with the specific aircraft in the last column. CAA is targeting September as the date for implementing an automated reporting solution and a familiar search interface on the website. ACAG requested that CAA release comms to the sector. **Action:** Jason Ashworth (CAA) to confirm whether a comms piece has been made publicly available. **Action resolved:** 20/08/2025 (Sophie sent ACAG the website link)

c) Fees, levies and charges:

ACAG thanked CAA for reducing General Aviation fees, levies and charges from 43% to 10 % and discussed the possibility of further reductions. CAA confirmed that access to central government liquidity funding has ceased, so there will be no further reductions in the next 6 months. However, CAA will monitor its reserves and the mechanisms to support recapitalisation over the next 6 months. The group discussed the pricing review and whether the first principles funding review would offer robust analysis on the impacts of increased levies on the sector and the consequential decrease in demand for CAA's services. John Kay confirmed that the regulatory impact statement offered insight into this possibility. ACAG reiterated their appreciation of the work to reduce fees and levies thus far and would enquire again in 6 months.

5. Update on the Advanced Aviation Reform Programme (CAA/MoT)

The group received an update on the progress and development of Advanced Aviation Reform's three workstreams.

- **Part 107**

CONTEXT: The purpose of the new Part 107 is to enable research and development activity without the need to amend expositions every time an iteration is required. It would not replace existing pathways for R+D activity but provide an experimental space where these operations can take place without the need for amendments. It's intended to be used in conjunction with new restricted airspace areas.

CAA confirmed that the process of granting special use airspace (SUA) will remain largely the same as it is now. With regards to the use of SUA for a Part 107 holder, CAA confirmed that applications to carry out operations under a Part 107 in Special Use Airspace will still need to provide evidence of appropriate proportionate safety mitigations. For example, evidence of alerting flight paths in a specific testing area. CAA confirmed that, at this stage, it difficult to assess demand from participants to apply to be a Part 107 holder.

- **Shifting the boundary between Part101/102, while maintaining safety**

CONTEXT: This work seeks to shift the boundaries of Part 101/102 to reduce regulatory burden on the sector. The goal is to develop a Transport Instrument to attach to the existing Part 101, with a matrix that allows for the exceedance of some existing rules, provided some prescriptive requirements are met.

During the policy development process, the team conducted risk assessments on Part 101 rules to determine where thresholds could be adjusted to enable suitable lower risk operations to be carried out without certification under Part 102. CAA confirmed it was working on easing thresholds to the Rules listed below: (include list)

- 101.15(1) – clarification
- 101.205(b) – ease threshold
- 101.207(a)(1)(i) – ease threshold
- 101.209(b)-(c) – ease thresholds
- 101.211 – ease thresholds

A significant change was moving technical standards from Part 101 into a Transport Instrument, allowing the Director to amend technical details (subject to the Minister's approval). The NPRM will be available for public consultation until 27 July. ACAG offered positive feedback on the NPRM and sought clarity on whether night flying training would be covered through Part 141 (affecting participants such as UAVNZ). CAA confirmed that

that the training standards outlined in the Transport Instrument could be updated in response to developments by training providers or credible industry bodies.

In the second half of 2025, CAA will focus on finalising and updating the rules and updating current Part 101 guidance. The intent is for the Rules go live by 31 December 2025.

5. Afternoon break

6. General updates – ongoing work

a. Authority leadership changes

Keith Manch gave the group an update on recent Authority leadership changes. Kane Patena will commence his role as Director at CAA starting 1 September 2025, with Keith supporting the transition until January 2026. Kane has a wealth of knowledge and experience in government, transport and regulatory systems.

Catherine MacGowan (DCE Aviation Safety Oversight) will start at CAA mid-June and Fred Stein (DCE Aviation Security) will join the leadership team in mid-July. Fred joins CAA from the US TSA, having most recently worked in the TSA's Singapore office. He has a keen focus on aviation security, cybersecurity and capability development.

Catherine gave an update on newly appointed managers within the Aviation Safety Oversight Group:

- Advice Triage and Planning Manager – Penelope Cook (*who brings a wealth of experience in triage work*)
- General Manager Certification and Monitoring – Joe Franklin (*with this role, CAA hopes to leverage intelligence to reduce regulatory burden and boost monitoring*)
- Head of Licensing and Standards – still vacant
- Head of Aeronautical Services – Sean Rogers

John Kay explained to the group that, following the Flight Plan structural changes in April, CAA's Policy and International Engagement teams now covers both aviation safety and security. Furthermore, a newly formed System and Organisational Strategy team will help map out a long-term strategy for the aviation system. The Group discussed the importance of developing policy that is informed by frontline teams, with ACAG emphasising the need for this work to be appropriately resourced.

ACAG thanked David Harrison for his time as DCE Aviation Safety and Keith Manch for his role as Director. ACAG also suggested that CAA explore whether aviation rule-making committees could be trialled to help further streamline policy to rule development.

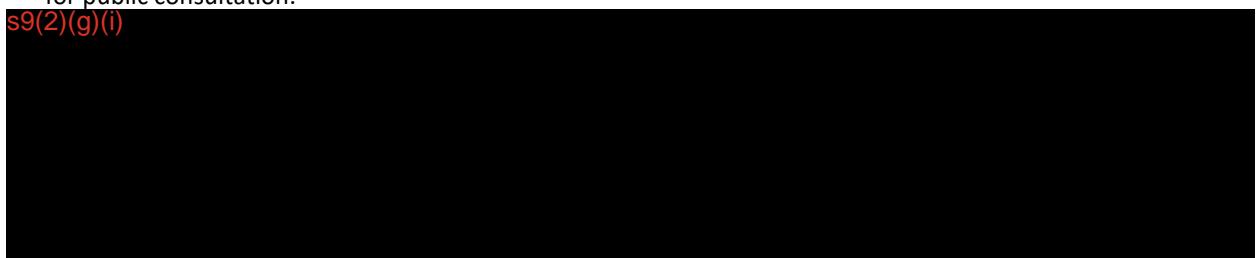
b. Flight Plan Programme closure, change implementation

Keith Manch confirmed that CAA's new organisational structure is now in place. The group learned that the new ways of working enabled by the structural changes could shape rule-making and system design. ACAG requested that industry be involved earlier in the rule-making process, including the NPRM drafting stage. ACAG suggested that, for large rule projects, CAA could establish Aviation Rule-making Committees such as those used overseas.

c. First Principles Funding Review

CAA advised that the Funding Review dates are provisional and subject to change (for example implementation requires three rounds of Cabinet approval). CAA is currently working towards mid 2026 timing for public consultation.

s9(2)(g)(i)



d. International update

i. The Group received an update on CAA's forthcoming international engagements:

• **Directors-General Civil Aviation (DGCA) conference (end of July)**

A key focus for this year's regional conference is to progress work to enhance regional cooperation and determine coherent regional positions for events such as the ICAO General Assembly.

• **ICAO Assembly (end of September/early October)**

One of CAA's priorities for this Assembly is to generate discussion on ICAO audit methodologies, and to promote a more outcomes-based USOAP 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 NZ 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.

ii. International arrangements update

- Work is underway with EASA to develop mutual recognition of NZ organisations holding EASA certificates.
- CAA has also been approached by the UK government on the potential for a mutual recognition agreement for pilots' licences.
- FAA currently has a limited capacity to engage on issues such as updating the Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement Implementation Procedures.

iii. Other international engagement

• **EASA conference (June)**

Key discussions centred on the regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As there are no proposals that States should implement detailed technical standards, for now, high levels of trust are considered appropriate. CAA will likely lead something on AI and informally consult on what AI developments are progressing with the sector.

Aviation cybersecurity is still a slowly paced matter and is yet to be prioritised in CAA's policy projects. It is yet to be adopted formally in any ICAO Annex than Aviation Security, despite being an issue spanning safety as well as security. CAA is taking an observation approach.

The group observed that some Pacific Island States who have adopted New Zealand's Civil Aviation Rules as their own now have outdated rule sets from not adopting changes resulting from the new Act. CAA confirmed having raised the issue at the most recent PASO council meeting. MFAT is also aware and is exploring capability options to aid Pacific Island states to adopt new rule changes.

e. Act implementation (CAA/MoT)

The group was informed that the Act implementation programme has now formally come to an end. Final steps included removing references to the 1990 Act from the CAA website, although implementation pages will still be publicly accessible. In the last few weeks, the implementation team focused on internal knowledge transfer sessions. ACAG and MOT both thanked June Ralphs (CAA) for her contribution and work on the Act implementation.

The group received an update from MOT on the new Director's independent review function. MOT has appointed three reviewers who are currently being inducted. The Secretary of Transport will sign off on the RASUs later this year. MOT has received no submissions for the review function as yet.

f. Rules programme update (CAA/MOT)

CAA updated the group on potential changes to the rules programme. CAA hopes to formulate a 3 to 5-year plan that seeks to improve and streamline the rule-making process. CAA, alongside the MOT, is exploring a separate rules programme approach that might modernise the rule set. The MOT is aware of consultation

fatigue across the sector and advised that a new approach to rule-making would require a revamped approach to engagement with ACAG on what should/shouldn't take priority.

ACAG suggested reviewing the Exemptions process and using this to identify which rules may no longer be fit for purpose. ACAG, some of whose members are also part of the Interim Aviation Council (along with Keith Manch) advised that the Interim Aviation Council aims to investigate and prioritise rules that need to be updated by the end of the year. CAA expressed concern it was not being kept sufficiently informed of issues in the aviation system to take action and spur rules changes. In response, ACAG asserted that a key barrier to submitting a rules issue was the length of time it took for rules to be amended.

g. ICAO Safety Audit preparation (CAA)

CAA advised of being well prepared and on track for the July ICAO safety audit. The most complex work has been preparing responses to over 800 Protocol Questions, now uploaded to ICAO's portal, related to CAA's core regulatory functions as well as the newly updated State Safety Programme. CAA is hosting 7 auditors and 4 international observers, with audit interviews taking place at CAA offices and at TAIC.

The ICAO auditors will visit certain other sites on 18 July, to fill any gaps regarding our PQ answers and seek evidence of how New Zealand implements SARPs. However, this is an audit of the State's safety oversight functions, not the operations of participant organisations.

Post-audit, CAA will focus on developing corrective action plans to address Findings. CAA is aware of some areas where Findings are likely; however, not all Findings will be applicable to NZ, so will not be accepted. Some Findings will require rule amendments that could be addressed through the new 2 to 3-year rules programme outlined earlier.

The Group agreed that the audit provides a good opportunity to demonstrate that New Zealand has a safe aviation system. ACAG discussed the importance of supporting CAA on the audit outcome, to ensure the sector receives strong messages, particularly as a Finding does not necessarily equate to non-compliance. ICAO will publish a draft report in October 2025, where CAA can challenge draft Findings and potentially have them overturned. The final report becomes public in February 2026.

The CAA is well prepared for the July ICAO safety audit, having completed over 800 Protocol Question responses related to its regulatory function, all of which have been uploaded to ICAO's portal and updated State Safety Programme. The audit will involve 7 auditors and 4 international observers, with interviews held at CAA and TAIC offices. Additional site visits by Auditors on 18 July will help fill any gaps regarding our PQ answers and seek evidence of how New Zealand implements SARPs. It's important to note that the audit focuses on the State's safety oversight—not the operations of aviation participants.

Following the audit, the CAA will develop corrective action plans for any identified Findings. While some Findings are anticipated, not all will be accepted if they're not relevant to New Zealand. Certain Findings may require rule changes, which could be addressed through the upcoming 2–3-year rules programme. ACAG emphasized the audit as an opportunity to showcase New Zealand's safe aviation system and discussed the importance of sector support. A draft report will be issued in October 2025, allowing CAA to challenge any Findings before the final report is made public in February 2026.

h. State Safety Programme and National Aviation Safety Plan

Having a State Safety Programme (SSP) is an ICAO requirement and CAA updated our SSP in 2025. The purpose of the SSP is to outline how New Zealand oversees safety through identifying steps to meet set safety goals. CAA is also developing a National Aviation Safety Plan (NASP), which sets out New Zealand's strategy to continuously improve the safety of aviation operations through the implementation of defined Safety Enhancement Initiatives (SEIs). As both the SSP and the NASP are State-level documents, input from the sector is crucial to identifying issues. CAA is currently drafting goals and tasks to improve safety and hope to consult with the sector over the next few months.

i. Other business

The group discussed reforms to the Resource Management Act and the potential role CAA could play in influencing content for the new reforms. MOT confirmed the RMA amendments are still in the conceptual

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stage. **ACTION:** MOT to provide ACAG with a summary for ACAG to use when informing CAA of the safety challenges and touch points. (Action stated as resolved during November 2025 meeting)

7. Next meeting: scheduled for early November