



CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY
OF NEW ZEALAND
Te Mana Rererangi Tūmatanui o Aotearoa

CAA strategy

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TE MANA RERERANGI TŪMATANUI O AOTEAROA



Contents

Minister's foreword	3
Introduction	4
Strategic focus	6
Our vision	8
What is the aviation system?	8
Why is aviation important to New Zealand?	10
Why is safety and security important?	10
Our role	11
How we deliver our role	12
Case studies	13
What impact we will make?	19
Where will we focus our effort?	20
How will we know we are achieving our goals?	22

Minister's foreword

Aviation is vital to New Zealand's economic prosperity and our way of life. It contributes 11% of New Zealand's GDP, enables over \$17 billion in tourism economy and provides us with global and domestic connections; with 99% of people arriving in the country by air.

The Government views aviation as a key component in boosting New Zealand's economic growth and productivity, and we remain committed to growing and future-proofing the sector for years to come.

The work of the nation's aviation regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority, is vital to delivering this ambition and ensuring that the system thrives during a period of technological transformation and change.

The CAA Strategy demonstrates the organisation's commitment to delivering its part of the recently launched Aviation Action Plan and the New Zealand Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy. Further, it shows us how the CAA will:

- effectively deliver on its purpose 'to facilitate the operation of a safe and secure civil aviation system'
- enable innovation, productivity and economic growth in New Zealand
- deliver better outcomes for the sector and its users
- support the sector so it can sustain safety and security outcomes.

I look forward to seeing the renewed direction of the CAA, which will provide a strong foundation for New Zealand's aviation sector flourish in the years to come.

Hon James Meager



Acting Minister of Transport



Introduction

This document explains the components of our strategy on a page

Our strategy:

- sets out our role in the civil aviation system, the activities we do, and how we deliver,
- details the impact that we want to make, where we will focus our efforts, and how we will know if we've been successful, and
- is our North Star to guide us in the right direction and enable us to prioritise our investment and resource.

In developing this strategy, we have considered:

- **Minister and Government expectations**
The Minister sets annual expectations of CAA. The Minister also released an Aviation Action Plan which sets out the Government's ambition for aviation and identifies specific actions for CAA to contribute to those outcomes.
- **Board strategic priorities**
The strategy takes into account the priorities of the Board. These are set out on the next page.
- **Public expectations**
We listen to concerns raised by the public and seek to understand public expectations, including through collecting feedback from users of the aviation system in our 'Feel Safe' survey.

- **Sector perspectives**
We have met with a range of leaders and operators across aviation who have told us that responsiveness, timeliness, quality and consistency of decisions are important to the sector.
- **International Civil Aviation Organization**
ICAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations and sets global standards for aviation safety and security that we are obliged to align with. ICAO publish the Global Aviation Safety Plan and the Global Aviation Security Plan - the global strategies for the continuous improvement of aviation safety and security.
- **National aviation safety and security plans**
These are state-level documents that guide us on the areas that we will focus on to improve safety and security.

INPUTS TO ALIGN OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

- Minister and Government expectations
- Board strategic priorities
- Public expectations
- Sector perspectives
- ICAO global aviation and security plans
- National aviation safety and security plans

BOARD PRIORITY AREAS

- Improve certification timeliness
- Reduce passenger queues
- Strengthen the civil aviation rules framework
- Strengthen industry engagement and enablement
- Build a strong and positive organisational culture
- Make savings efficiencies and demonstrate value for money
- Prioritise the first principles funding review
- Achieve fiscal sustainability

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY STRATEGY



Strategic focus

Vision

Safe and secure aviation system – so people are safe and feel safe when they fly

Our role

To facilitate the operation of a safe and secure aviation system

How we deliver our role

We facilitate, influence and enable safety and security through the following activities:

Policy and
rule setting

Education and
engagement

Certification
and licensing

Monitoring and
investigation

Security
delivery

What impact will we make?

We will work with the aviation sector to maintain high standards of safety and security, which provides the foundation for innovation, productivity and economic growth. Our efforts are focused on achieving these three main goals:



Strengthen system
safety and security



Enable
innovation



Drive efficiencies
and deliver value

Where will we focus our effort?

Alongside delivering our core role, we will make improvements in five key areas. These improvements will drive efficiency and timeliness in the delivery of our functions (especially certification and security screening), ensuring that we perform our core role effectively and provide value for money.



Rules



Business
transformation



Cost-base



Enablement



Culture

How will we know we are achieving our goals?

We will measure the impact of our role to effectively facilitate safety and security outcomes, the reduction in risk or harm, and the economic contribution of aviation to New Zealand. We will measure timeliness of service, the quality of our decisions and the cost to serve.

Our values

Collaboration | Transparency | Integrity | Respect | Professionalism



Our vision

A safe and secure aviation system – so people are safe and feel safe when they fly

What is the aviation system?

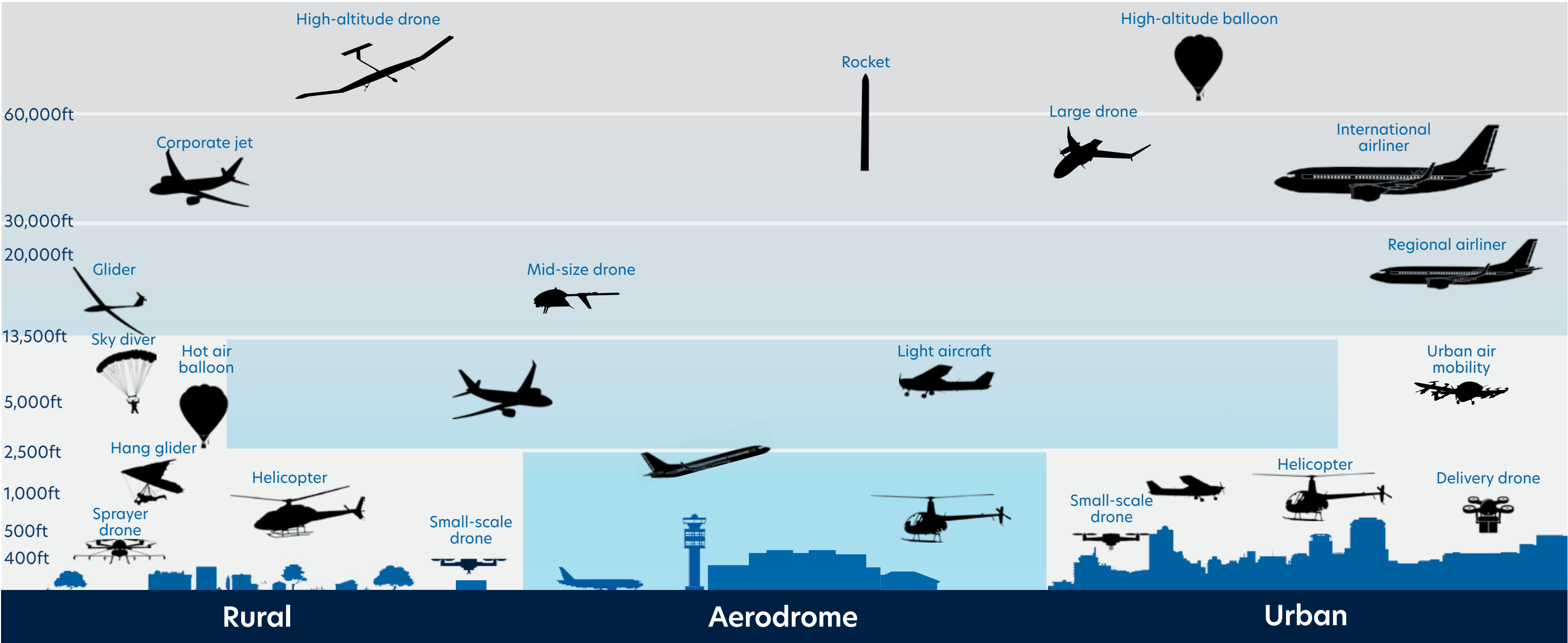
The aviation system is everything that allows us to fly – the people, the organisations, the infrastructure, and the electronic and meteorological systems that enable navigation and communication.

The components of the aviation system have to work together in a coordinated way to ensure people and property are safe and secure.

This system is a part of:

- the global aviation system which requires New Zealand to meet international treaty obligations, and
- the wider transport system that moves goods and people by land, sea and air.

The diagram¹ below depicts the aviation system in the automated age



¹ From the Ministry of Transport's [Taking Flight: An aviation system for the automated age](#)

Why is aviation important to New Zealand?

Aviation is critically important to help grow New Zealand’s economy by facilitating resilient global connections, tourism and trade. Given our location and our geography, aviation is essential for international travel and trade.²

Aviation supports our domestic economy and our connection to each other, as well as playing a key role in providing support to medical services and disaster recovery.

Innovation and new technologies offer more opportunity for aviation to contribute to New Zealand’s economy. We are actively collaborating with participants to support opportunities for innovation.

- Aviation contributes 5.6% of New Zealand’s GDP, and commercial air transport supports 177,000 jobs (IATA estimate).³
- 217,000 tonnes of air cargo are carried through New Zealand’s airports, with 16% of exports and 22% of imports carried by air freight.⁴
- Almost all international visitors arrive by air and their contribution to the economy was \$16.9 billion in 2024.⁵
- The use of drone technologies is forecast to benefit the economy by \$4.6-\$7.9 billion over 25 years.⁶

The Government’s ambition is to grow and future-proof our aviation sector. The Aviation Action Plan sets out a shared industry and Government ambition for an efficient, resilient and innovative aviation sector. The New Zealand Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy⁷ sets out the Government’s vision to double the value of these sectors by 2030.

We are committed to delivering our part of this.

Why is safety and security important?

The ability of New Zealand’s aviation system to thrive and contribute to economic growth and productivity is built on a foundation of safety and security. People expect to be safe and secure when they fly.

Parliament and Government has determined that regulation is required to ensure the aviation system operates safely and securely. The Civil Aviation Act 2023 and Aviation Crimes Act 1972 are the primary legislation that regulates the aviation system.

Our role

To facilitate the safe and secure operation of the aviation system

The Civil Aviation Act 2023 states that our main objective is to “**facilitate** the operation of a safe and secure civil aviation system.” We also deliver aviation security services (AvSec) which identify threats and manage associated risks at security-designated airports.

The word ‘facilitate’ makes it clear our role is to help, influence and enable others who operate in the aviation system to meet their safety and security responsibilities. We need to work collaboratively across the aviation system to make sure safety and security risks are managed well.

Life cycle of aviation documents



- We control entry to the New Zealand civil aviation system through certification and licensing.
- We oversee the ongoing safe and secure operation of the system through engagement and education, monitoring and investigation, and the delivery of aviation security services.
- We control exit from the aviation system and take action if a participant is unwilling or unable to operate safety and securely.

2 [Aviation Action Plan, pg6](#)
3 [The value of air transport to New Zealand, iata.org](#)
4 [The value of air transport to New Zealand, iata.org](#)
5 [Tourism satellite account: Year ended March 2024, stats.govt.nz](#)
6 [Drone Benefit Study, Ministry of Transport, 2019](#)
7 [MBIE: New Zealand Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy](#)

How we deliver our role

The Act sets out the functions we undertake. Those functions describe the various ways we are expected to ‘facilitate’ safety and security. The Act also sets out the obligations of others who operate in aviation to ensure they meet their safety and security responsibilities.

CAA activities to facilitate safety and security

Activities	Description
Policy and rule settings	We undertake policy work to ensure legislation and rules are effective, up to date, aligned with international standards and can respond quickly to changes in the aviation system. We engage with ICAO and other states to influence international standards in New Zealand’s best interests. As an Associate Member of the Pacific Aviation Safety Office Council, we work alongside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to support the delivery of quality aviation safety and security for member states in the Pacific.
Certification and licensing	Not everyone can operate in the aviation system. Those that do, need permission to do so whether through a license, certificate or exemption. We ensure that people, organisations, aircraft and aviation infrastructure meet the requirements to operate safely and securely.
Monitoring and investigation	We monitor those in the aviation system to ensure they continue to meet their obligations. Using data, evidence and insights, we carry out proactive monitoring and assessment activities. We also conduct investigations where there has been a reported incident. We take enforcement action when required to hold people to account when they cause unacceptable risks to the safety and security of the aviation system.
Engagement and education	We undertake education and engagement activities that influence participants to meet their safety and security responsibilities, reducing risk and harm in the aviation system. Data analysis enables us to take an intelligence-led, risk-based approach to determine what, and where, risk is occurring in the system and the engagement and communication activities required.
Security delivery	We deliver aviation security services. We keep passengers, crew and other personnel safe by carrying out aviation security screening and searching; by working closely with other border and Government agencies to identify threats and manage the risk of unlawful interference with aircraft and aviation infrastructure; and by conducting robust quality assurance to drive continuous improvement.

Case studies

Advanced aviation reform

Following recommendations from the Advanced Aviation Reform Advisory Group, we developed a suite of civil aviation rules (CARs) to reduce regulatory burdens and support growth in the advanced aviation sector.

The suite of CARs included:

- creating a new rule part to facilitate rapid iterative research and development of advanced aviation technologies, with greatly reduced regulatory burdens when contained in predetermined locations and airspace,
- revising existing rules to allow some lower risk unmanned operations to be conducted without certification, and
- utilising a Transport Instrument (secondary legislation that sets out detailed or technical standards) to ensure that the CARs can be easily kept up to date in response to sector developments and risk.

This work was informed by a wide range of sector engagement, formal consultation, and close working with other Government agencies.

As a result of this work, New Zealand is one of the only states that has these types of rules and mechanisms for enduring research and development activity. The proposals for this rule part were informed by engagement with other national civil aviation authorities around the world, reflecting the importance for the advanced aviation sector that our regulatory framework is considered robust and acceptable to other states where they may operate in the future.



Taking an intelligence-led, risk-based approach to certification

An aviation organisation wanted to operate a larger aircraft. This meant that they had to apply for a different operating certificate to reflect the risk and complexity of the operation. They had assumed it would take us at least three months to assess their application and confirm our decision.

However, a collaborative, modern regulatory approach enabled the certificate to be issued within two months - in time for the beginning of a busy charter season.

Throughout the process we collaborated with the operator to project manage the application, ensuring that both parties understood their roles and responsibilities, and that the deliverables and timelines were realistic.

First, we established what the operator needed from its move to a Part 125 certificate. We then assessed our intelligence on the operator from previous applications. This enabled us to determine which additional checks were required to ensure the safe operation of the new aircraft in New Zealand.

Due to the different requirements between the existing certificate and the Part 125 we undertook a site visit, selected a senior person to interview, and assessed the operator's safety management system and training programmes to ensure they were fit for purpose.

This intelligence-led, risk-based approach ensured that the operator met the safety requirements to operate the new aircraft while reducing the application time and cost specifically associated to this case.



Improving safety management at a flight school

We routinely triage and analyse occurrences reported by participants to identify themes and areas where we need to focus our attention.

This core work is the responsibility of the Triage, Analysis, and Insights team. Recent work by this team resulted in us making an informed decision that frontline staff needed to take a closer look at an increasing trend in runway incursions at a regional aerodrome.

Our inspectors from Certification, Licensing and Standards, and Monitoring and Inspection worked with the users of the aerodrome to better understand what was causing the increase in runway incursions events. While we were conducting this engagement, we received some Aviation Related Concerns from trainees at the local flight school operating from the aerodrome.

This led to our Investigation Team, working alongside inspectors already engaged with aerodrome users, to do a deep dive into the flight school's activities. As a result of this coordinated activity, we made the decision to suspend the flight school from operating until it could raise its safety management to the required standards.

Our Certification Team are continuing to work with the flight school to support their re-entry into the system.

This inspection and investigation activity also provided us with additional information about participants that we can use to oversee their continued management of their safety and security risks.

We can use this information to take a risk-based approach to the next certificate renewal or monitoring and inspection activity at the flight school, aerodrome, and other aerodrome users.



Fly Like a Bird, Think like a Pilot

In November 2022, CAA started working with the sport and recreational aviation sector governed under Part 149, Aviation Recreation Organisations Certification. Activities include hang gliding, paragliding, parachuting, recreational, warbirds and aeroclubs.

From 2012 to 2022, the sector suffered 518 serious harm accidents and 45 fatalities. This translated to an estimated social cost of \$384 million, based on the Ministry of Transport’s Social Cost formula. The sector accounted for 47% of all aviation-related harm during this period.

Initiatives to improve safety outcomes included:

- sponsoring two Safety Days for the Parachute Industry Association (PIA)
- a national safety campaign, Fly Like a Bird, Think Like a Pilot.

The campaign was aimed at helping pilots advance their flying career by staying safe in ‘the fun zone’, depicting common activities while sharing some clear safety messages. It asked NZHGPA (New Zealand Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association) pilots to focus on three key areas that are most related to the incidents that are happening related to; ‘My Environment’, ‘My Plan’ and ‘My Self’.

The campaign was successful in reaching its audience with over 1.5k video hits on Instagram. We are monitoring whether the campaign has been successful in reducing harm in this sector.



Hamilton International Airport

CAA worked with Hamilton Airport to develop a new international departures facility, for a daily flight of up to 232 passengers, with future-proofing for domestic jets. This project involved significant engagement with the airport, airlines and border agencies.

We equipped the facility with state-of-the-art screening equipment for both checked and carry-on baggage, ensuring a seamless and efficient passenger experience.

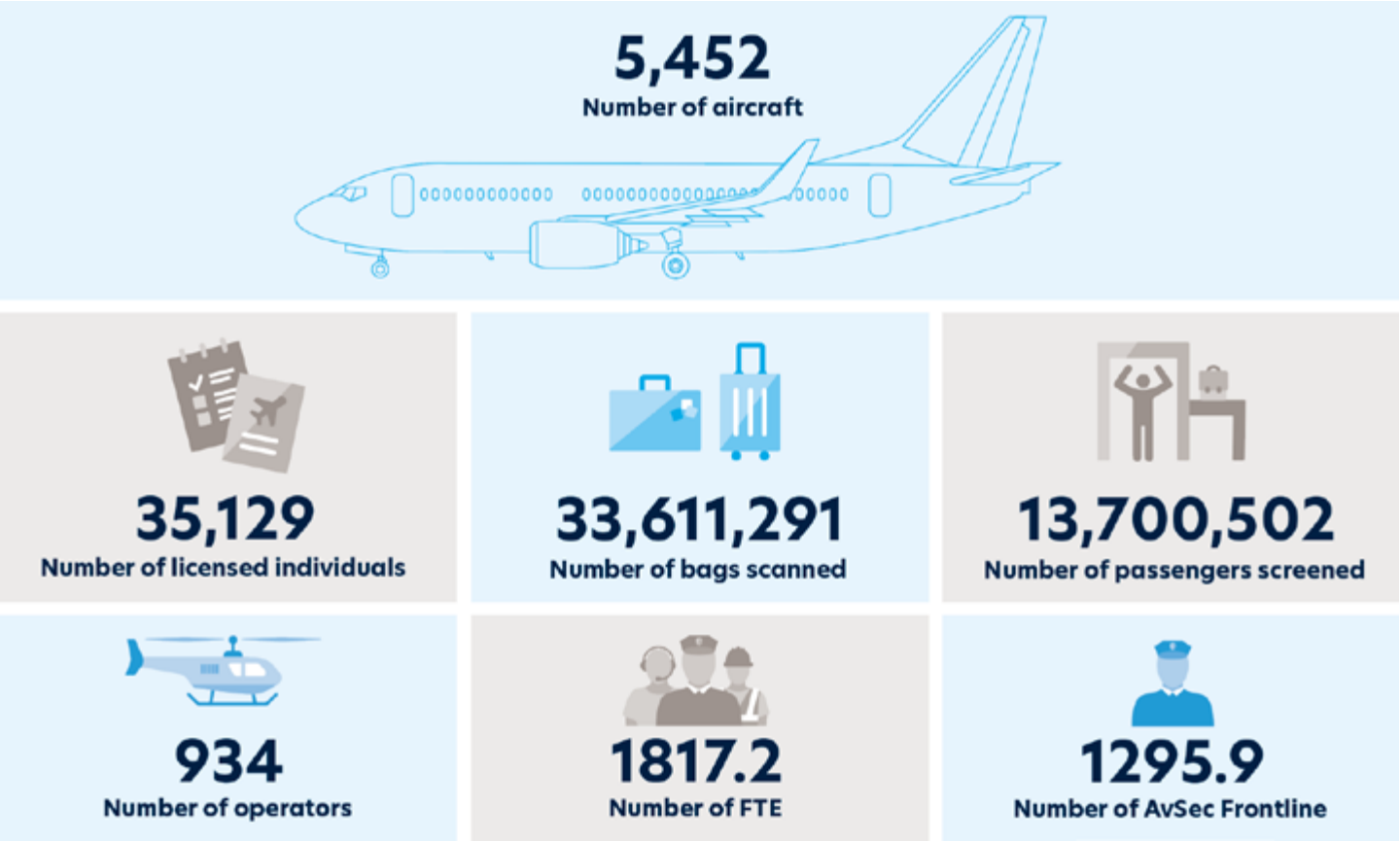
As well as the public-facing part of this work, we worked behind the scenes to help Hamilton Airport attain the necessary regulatory approvals to accept international flights.

Another key outcome was supporting Hamilton Airport to clearly identify and define its Airside Security Area and Security-Enhanced Area. These defined areas are critical in supporting the various entities operating at Hamilton Airport, and in implementing the enhanced security measures needed for a secure airport environment.

New Zealand has a proportionately large and diverse aviation sector compared to most other states we work closely with. Aviation contributes 5.6% of our GDP, compared to 4% in Australia and 4.8% in the UK.⁸

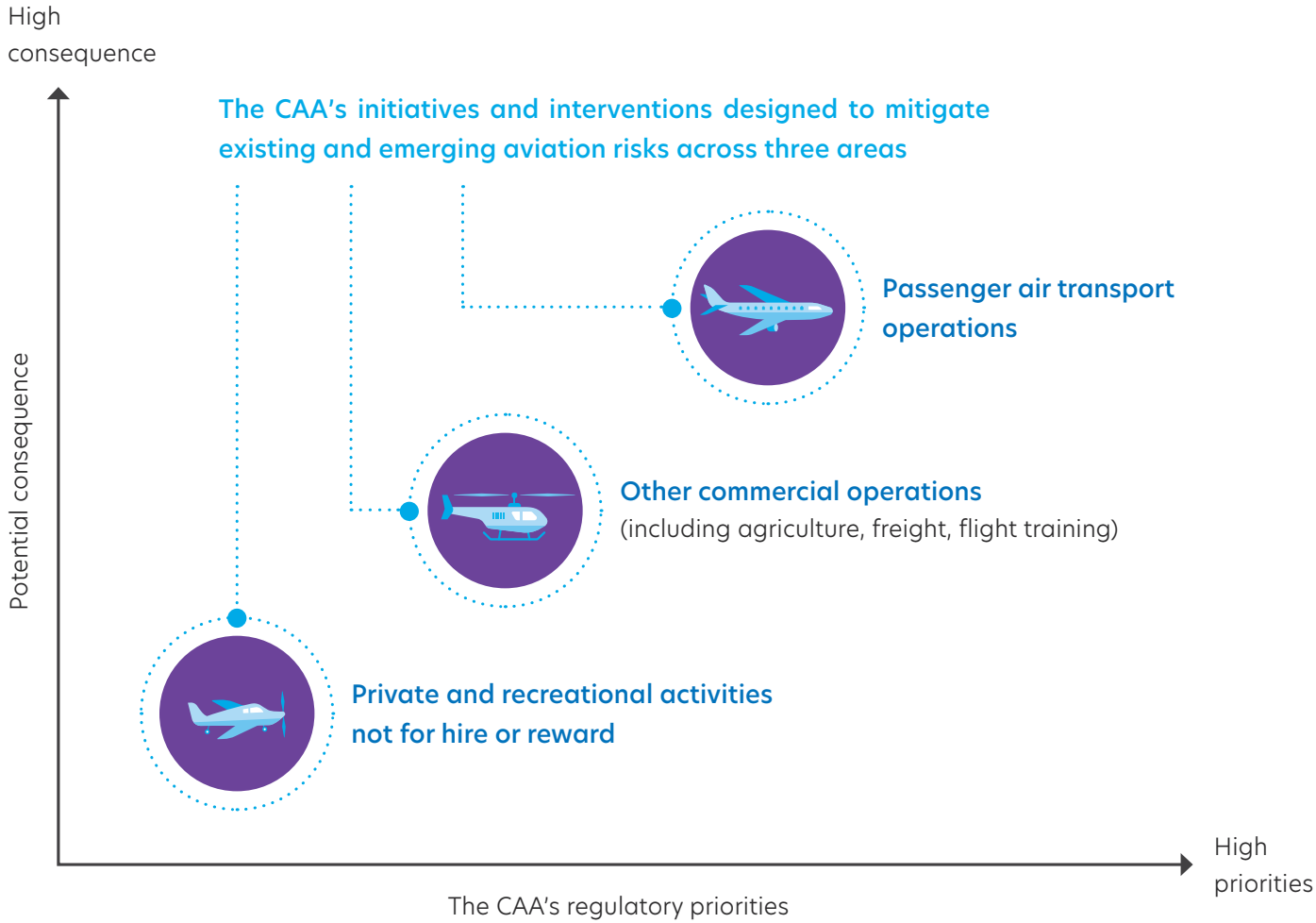
As the regulator, we need to prioritise where we allocate our time, effort and resource. We can’t be everywhere all at once. Using data, evidence and insights, we focus our resources where there is the greatest risk to the aviation system, and where we can make the biggest impact on facilitating safety and security.

We have more pilots and aircraft per capita than the United Kingdom and Australia. There are 102 aircraft for every 100,000 people in New Zealand. This is very high compared to Australia (60) and the UK (27).⁹



⁸ Data from IATA published reports on the value of aviation to the New Zealand, Australia, and UK.
⁹ Aircraft data from 2023/24 annual reports for each CAA and population data from the World Bank.

Our regulatory priorities in relation to the nature of aviation operations and activities



Passenger air transport operations provide scheduled passenger services on large and medium sized aircraft. These operations require large infrastructure such as airports, air traffic management and meteorological services to operate.

Other commercial operations use aircraft to carry out a wide range of operations such as crop spraying and top dressing, freight, flight training, tourism and adventure, logging, search and rescue, and air ambulance services.

Private and recreational operators fly for non-commercial reasons and fly a wide range of aircraft including gliders, microlights, hot air balloons and unmanned aircraft.

What impact will we make?

We will work with the aviation sector to sustain safety and security, which provides the foundation for innovation, productivity and economic growth

Impact	What does success look like?
Strengthen system safety and security	We collaborate with participants to ensure New Zealand is resilient and prepared for changes when they occur, so the system can sustain good safety and security outcomes. To achieve this, New Zealand is aligned with international standards, we work with participants to mitigate areas with the highest potential for harm, and we take a balanced and data-led approach to how we use our regulatory levers.
Enable innovation	We keep pace with changes in the aviation system, ensure we are not a barrier to innovation, and collaborate with the sector to support the safe and secure integration of new technology in aviation.
Drive efficiencies and deliver value	We optimise the delivery of our services to ensure our operations are efficient, cost effective, and that the regulatory burden on participants is safely reduced (where applicable). This is achieved by taking an intelligence-led, risk-based approach to our certification and licencing activities and applying a Regulatory Framework which is flexible and responsive to the changes in systems requirements and participants' activities.



Where will we focus our effort?

Alongside delivering our core role, we will make improvements in five key areas. These improvements will drive efficiency and timeliness in the delivery of our functions (especially certification and security screening), ensuring that we perform our core role effectively and provide value for money.

Our efforts are focused on the delivery of activities that enable us to meet demand effectively and to respond to risk efficiently. This is important if we are to strengthen the system so it can sustain good safety and security outcomes, enable opportunities for economic growth, and provide value for money to those who use our services.

The table below outlines how our current focus areas will improve service delivery over the next two-three financial years:

Focus area	How will this improve service delivery?
Rules	We will accelerate bringing aviation rules up to date and modernise how we will maintain those rules. This will allow us to: - strengthen safety and security through improved alignment with international standards - ensure rules are resilient and agile to support innovation and can be more easily updated to keep pace with the sector - remove unnecessary burdens where rules do not achieve a clear safety or security purpose.
Business transformation	We will transform our business processes. This will allow us to: - ensure our infrastructure is fit for purpose and robust - optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of our safety and security functions - maximise benefits from our implementation of AI and new technologies - reduce costs to provide better value for money for participants.
Cost-base	We will actively manage our costs and complete a first principles funding review. This will allow us to: - identify potential cost savings - reduce costs to provide better value for money for participants - operate as efficiently as possible - ensure we have a sustainable and resilient funding model - reduce costs to provide better value for money for participants.

Focus area	How will this improve service delivery?
Enablement	We will work with the sector to understand its requirements, emerging issues and risks. This will allow us to: - influence positive safety and security outcomes - strengthen the sector to sustain good safety and security outcomes - support the safe integration of new technologies into the system - reduce harm by addressing the right risks at the right time - enable innovation, productivity and economic growth.
Culture	We will work with the sector and our people to create a positive culture that builds on what we already do well. A strong and positive culture is the foundation that will enable us to succeed. This will allow us to: - build trust, credibility, and confidence - support improved engagement and collaboration on shared goals - enhance our adaptability, foster innovation, and continuously improve - celebrate the great work we do.



How will we know we are achieving our goals?

We will measure the impact of our role to effectively facilitate safety and security outcomes, the reduction in risk or harm, and the economic contribution of aviation to New Zealand. We will measure timeliness of service, the quality of our decisions and the cost to serve.

If we are effective in the delivery of our core business, the sector will consistently:

- sustain current safety and security levels,
- operate within an up to date and internationally aligned regulatory framework,
- experience consistent and efficient decision making, informed by intelligence and risk,
- see value for money from our safety and security functions, and
- collaborate with CAA to progress innovations for aviation.

Further to the above, our [Statement of Performance Expectations \(SPE\)](#) outlines our intended performance in each financial year.

Known as an ‘accountability’ document, the SPE sets performance measures for CAA that test:

- the cost of our services,
- the quality of our decisions,
- if required safety and security outcomes were achieved, and
- if we remain within the timeliness targets for certificate / licensing applications and airport passenger queues.

Together, the SPE measures show if we are achieving our goals and if we are making a difference. Our performance against these measures is assessed each quarter, enabling us to adjust our approach and make operational improvements in areas where our performance is not yet at the required level.





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