

A New Era in Aviation Events

The Shoreham tragedy was a global game changer. Each country had to look again at how it regulated aviation events, and the way New Zealand has responded is being lauded by many overseas organisations.

Eleven people were killed and 16 injured, when a warbird crashed at the Shoreham Airshow in England, in August 2015.

After investigating, the Civil Aviation Authority (UK) made 32 recommendations, and globally, regulators scrambled to toughen their rules.

But, as a result, many airshows have permanently wound up, organisers saying the harsher regime is just too difficult to comply with.

“But in New Zealand,” says Jeanette Lusty, CAA’s team leader of sport and recreational aviation, and herself, an aerobatic pilot, “the response has been different.

“We believed there was a better way to ensure safety at airshows than just introducing more rules.”

Jeanette says the New Zealand Airshow Association (NZASA), of which she is a board member on behalf of the CAA, felt that the role of display director was key to safety. It developed a manual defining the responsibilities associated with that role.

“We believe we’ve found the right balance. Certainly that’s what other European Airshow Council members are telling us. Even the Royal Netherlands Air Force wants to buy the manual and adapt it for its own use.”

Starting from the 2018–19 airshow season in New Zealand, any NZASA member wanting to organise an aviation event must use a display director approved by NZASA.

The CAA and NZASA will be hosting a conference on 24 May 2018 to review the organisation and conduct of airshows in New Zealand, post-Shoreham.

“The conference will cover the regulatory regime,” says NZASA board member, John Lanham, “and all aspects of display control and discipline.

“It will also look at the development and mentoring of a new generation of display pilots.

“The conference will be open to all those who are thinking about holding an aviation event.”

To attend, email jeanette.lusty@caa.govt.nz. ■