



AIA Conference Week in Summary

Contributed by Bob Feasey

THE 60th anniversary conference was the largest ever hosted by the AIA and if you weren't at Conference Week you really missed out on what is fast becoming The commercial aviation industry Event of the NZ calendar year.

Over 600 members, customers, stakeholders and aviation industry supporters gathered during the week. This included participation from members of GAPAN, RAeS and the Air Force.

Some statistics:

- Over 300 delegates can claim fame for breaking into Tui's and joining the Tui's ladies and "Bruce's" on two frantic nights of great fun, music, food, and refreshments - this was the largest break in ever staged at Tui's and for some it also included breaking out when security forgot there was 150 Ag boys and girls in the brewery. How could they!!!!

- Over 240 delegates enjoyed visiting Ohakea Air Force base - does the Air Force make a mean cheese cake and chocolate desserts? Too right.

- Over 70 invited speakers spoke throughout the week on a wide range of topics.

- 40% growth over last year in the trades area with over 68 trade stands during the week.

Conference week is also a time to recognise industry leaders in safety, training, and overall contribution to the industry. This year's recipients were:

The Director's awards - Skyline Aviation and Bob Guard of Air Nelson – incidentally Bob is retiring shortly and we wish him well.

The ATTTO Ambassador awards - Mary Anne Sievers, Airways Corporation; Dean Hill, Safe Air Ltd; Wattie Solomon, Hawkes Bay Aviation.

The AIA awards - Company of the year, Airwork Limited. Individual, Bob Guard - no this was not in any way a

collusion between ourselves and CAA, but recognition of the incredible contribution Bob has made to pilot training and the airline industry in New Zealand.

The AEANZ awards - to Peter Lacy (the longest serving LAME in NZ). Peter also received his new CAA license denoting him as LAME No.1 .

Peter has practiced for 54 years in this industry.

The Richard Pearse Trophy for Innovative Excellence in the NZ Aviation Industry to Spidertracks presented by a descendant of Richard's.

NZAAA Awards - Paul Wiseman of Rural Aviation and Alan Beck of Beck Helicopters.

Trades display Awards - awarded for best display. AIA, Airwork Limited and NZAAA, Oceania Aviation Ltd.

As with any conference a number of key issues were raised that the AIA will follow up on in the next 12 months:

- The industry remains unconvinced that CAA has and/or promotes an appropriate safety culture. Fears remain that information provided and/or data will be used for punitive purposes particularly directed at the smaller companies with less "wear with all" to fight a major prosecution.

- The government is not serious when it comes to the big issues facing aviation seriously - in fact there's a view that the Emperor simply has new clothes and an impressive ability to slide away from the real issues.

- Doing nothing is not an option. Some sectors in industry remain under intolerable financial pressures and government policy settings are unsustainable e.g. overlapping environmental compliance costs, transfer of business risk from government to SME's e.g. flight training and AA/AR.

- We are not looking for hand-outs but we do need government and industry to have much greater strategic and commercial alignment in terms of the big ticket items e.g. Defence off-set programmes, CAA a

commercial focus.

- Free loading off the activities of the industry association must stop - government agencies, customers and suppliers must buy in and endorse voluntary compliance regimes otherwise the pressures on this industry will be unsustainable.

This year also saw retirement of John Sinclair as President of the AIA. John is taking up the role of Executive Officer with the New Zealand Helicopter Association starting 1 September so for all you helicopter people out there, commercial or private who are not members, John will be on your case.

John Sinclair is replaced by John Jones as President and will be ably assisted by Dale Webb and Ken MacKenzie as Vice-Presidents and John Funnell (Past President) as the Executive of AIA. There were also a number of changes to the Council.

Planning for next year is well underway – with it being election year (a chilling thought) we will be conference 'weeking' in Wellington at the Duxton Hotel, 25-29 July. Now there's a date to put in your diary.



The Trade Expo was very well supported and included over 68 stands during the week.



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