



contributed by Kevin Oldham and Peter Wakefield

AIRCARE™ audits by Navigatus Consulting

“I’m so glad to find that you’re an Educator...”

IT’S BEEN a year since the Aviation Industry Association re-launched its AIRCARE™ advanced accreditation programme, with Navigatus Consulting as independent auditors. In that time 33 operators have been audited and accredited and there are a further 19 in the process. So how has the programme developed and what has been learned?

The main objective of the AIRCARE™ programme is to help operators to improve safety, quality and environmental performance. Ultimately it’s the sustainability of the industry at stake, as the public becomes less tolerant of accidents, noise and incidents. In some countries whole segments of the aviation industry have been decimated by regulatory controls imposed from the outside.

There are four main streams to the AIRCARE™ programme:

1. Developing industry-led codes based on experience and best practice.
2. Providing resources to help operators meet the standards.
3. Providing independent assurance for individual operators who sign up to the programme.
4. Sound governance to ensure conformance and continuous improvement.

In the last year good progress has been made with parties such as the Department of Conservation. The department will require AIRCARE™ compliance from 1 January for all operators who land in the DoC administered estate, or who supply services to DoC.

Participants in the AIRCARE™ programme are not only getting greater access and improved safety, but are also reporting other benefits. Participants in a workshop held at the recent Aviation Industry conference in Rotorua identified tangible benefits that AIRCARE™ brings to operational standards. A significant number of participants also commented on the greater level of professionalism that AIRCARE™ drives and the resulting improvements to staff relationships and retention.

Over the same period substantial work has been going on to expand the AIRCARE™ programme into new sectors:

- Tourism: Audits started in March 2012, and four operators have now been accredited with more in the pipeline.
- Flight Training: A code of practice drafted by Penny MacKay was adopted by the Flight Training Division and a checklist agreed in March 2012. The first audit has been completed and others are booked.
- Fire Fighting: A Fire Fighting Code of Practice and checklist was developed by John Sinclair in consultation with the industry and with the National Rural Fire Authority, and is now available for accreditation.

Most of the AIRCARE™ accredited operators were initially from the agricultural sector, but the uptake in the new sectors is strong (see separate list at right).

AIRCARE™ is not only about recognising

those who have achieved an advanced standard; it is also about helping others to achieve the same standards. As well as ongoing tweaks and improvements along the way, the programme has been formally reviewed each 6 months to identify where it can be improved. A specific focus has been to identify where most non-compliances occur, and to provide additional resources to help operators in those troublesome areas. This has led to changes to guidance materials and to the checklists, all of which can be



Milford Sound. Photo: Fly Fiordland Ltd - AIRCARE™ accredited tourism operator.

inspected and downloaded from www.aia.org.nz/AIRCARE/AIRCARE+Resources.html. Resources on the AIRCARE™ website are being extended and updated continuously and provide an excellent starting point for operators joining the programme.

One area that trips up some operators is the noise abatement environmental standard. The Chief Pilot needs to have attended the AIA noise abatement course, and

all pilots need to be trained either by AIA or by the Chief Pilot. But this is not enough by itself: the organisation also needs to get AIRCARE™ accredited. Operators need to get onto this now to meet DOC’s 1st January 2013 deadline.

The audits are not just about compliance; the auditors also share industry best practice during audits and in audit recommendations. This is a learning opportunity and the implementation of any such recommendations by the operators is entirely voluntary.

Safety Management Systems are sometimes not well understood but are destined to become an important part of general aviation operations. It helps that the AIRCARE™ programme includes a basic SMS, but the Navigatus auditors are finding that the opportunity for operators to talk one-on-one with an experienced practitioner is helping to demystify SMS.

“I’m so glad to find that you’re an educator, not a policeman” said an operator as Peter Wakefield, the Navigatus Audit Manager, left a recent audit.

For more information

To learn more about AIRCARE™ and becoming accredited, visit www.aia.org.nz or www.navigatusconsulting.com, contact Kevin Oldham at Navigatus Consulting on 021 225 5001 or email: k.oldham@navigatusconsulting.com



The Aviation Industry Association congratulates the following AIRCARE™ accredited organisations:

Marlborough Helicopters Ltd, Super Air Ltd, Amuri Helicopters Ltd, Heliventures NZ Ltd, Otago Airspread Ltd, Ellesmere Helicopters Ltd, Central South Island Helicopters, Airspread South Ltd, Helicopters Otago Ltd, Farmers Air Ltd, Heli South Ltd, Phoenix Aviation Ltd, Anderson Helicopters Ltd, Gisborne Helicopters Ltd, Beck Helicopters Ltd, Amalgamated Helicopters Ltd, Northland Helicopters Ltd, Helicopter Charter, Helicharter Nelson Ltd, Helicopter Services (BOP) Ltd, Rotor Work Ltd, High Country Helicopters Ltd, Helisika Agricultural Ltd, Over the Top Ltd, Southern Helicopters Ltd, Fly Fiordland Ltd, Nokomai Helicopters Ltd, Helicopters Hawkes Bay Ltd, Helicopters Otago Ltd, Northland Emergency Services Trust, Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust, Amalgamated Helicopters, Aerial Sowing Group, Airwork Flight Operations Ltd, Mount Hutt Helicopters Ltd, Lake Districts Air Rescue Trust.