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News Release



Pilots Say Govt Transport Policy Plan Ignores Major Air Safety Issue

The country's pilots say the Government's just released Transport Policy Direction "Connecting New Zealand" ignores the biggest issue for the aviation sector – that New Zealand is failing to meet international minimum safety standards and our rules are falling further behind the rest of the world.

Technical Director for the New Zealand Air Line Pilots' Association, Stu Julian says for New Zealand pilots this failure means that the rules they follow to fly here may not be as safe as they should be because they are out of date and don't meet the international minimum standard.

International aviation is governed by the Convention on International Civil Aviation. As a party to the Convention, New Zealand has very clear obligations including having a comprehensive safety and security regime based on the standards and recommended practices prescribed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Stu Julian says the [Ministry of Transport's website](#) spells out the serious consequences of non-compliance saying: "Non-compliance with these obligations risks exclusion or restriction on operating in the international aviation system and the consequential economic impact on trade, travel and tourism".

In 2006 an ICAO audit of aviation safety standards found New Zealand had not fully implemented minimum international safety standards and was therefore not complying with its obligations to the ICAO and to anyone who travels by air.

"The CAA agreed to fix the problems identified by this audit so that New Zealand would not only meet the minimum standards, but would then stand some chance of keeping up with the changes to international standards."

"This agreed fix started six years ago however that compliance plan was removed from the rules program and done so without any consultation, leaving New Zealand to fall further behind international standards. So we're now in a situation where even the minimum international standards haven't been put in place here."

"For the flying public, air traffic controllers and pilots, keeping New Zealand up with the ICAO standards is critical. We should also strive to achieve all of the recommended practices. Failing to do so and letting the gap get wider and wider is a serious concern."

The Government's failure to set compliance with ICAO standards as a [key action](#) (p4) in the Transport Policy Direction document is a serious omission. The Minister says ([p34 para 5](#)) that Government 'is not complacent' about safety standards, but the ongoing failure to fully implement international safety standards suggests otherwise."

Stu Julian says New Zealand has an obligation to meet all the ICAO standards and each year New Zealand is falling further behind them. “The Transport Policy Direction released tonight is silent on this issue so New Zealand’s aviation safety standards, which are not fully implemented, will continue to fall behind the rest of the world.”

Captain Julian says NZALPA will be sending a briefing paper to Government setting out a plan to ensure New Zealand is once again meeting the international safety standards.

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NZALPA Technical Director, Stu Julian is available for interviews on:
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About NZALPA:

Stu Julian is NZALPA’s Technical Director and a Captain flying wide body jets. The New Zealand Air Line Pilots’ Association is a professional union for New Zealand pilots and air traffic controllers. Established in 1945, NZALPA is an internationally affiliated professional trade union for New Zealand pilots and air traffic controllers. Our diverse membership includes General Aviation and commercial pilots, flight instructors and approximately 400 of New Zealand’s air traffic controllers in the employ of Airways NZ. [Read more about us here.](#)

NZALPA was one of the 15 founding states of IFALPA - the [International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations](#), an organisation founded to represent the interests of over 100,000 pilots worldwide. IFALPA membership is dispersed through 101 Member Associations who work together as the ‘global voice of pilots’.

In 1989 the Air Traffic Controllers joined NZALPA. NZALPA is now one of 130 Member Associations affiliated to the [International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers’ Associations](#) (IFATCA), which represents 50,000 air traffic controllers worldwide.