



## **New Zealand Air Line Pilots' Association**

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **NZALPA Calls on the Government to Restrict Access to Class 3 Lasers**

New Zealand Air Line Pilots' Association (NZALPA) President Glen Kenny is calling on the Government to enact a legislation change banning the importation of Class 3 Lasers to address the serious threat of laser illumination of commercial aircraft (laser strikes). "At best laser strikes are a distraction and at worst they can cause temporary blindness, or even permanent eye damage, and at a critical phase of flight, on approach and close to landing; this is extremely dangerous" says Mr Kenny.

Laser strikes are a trend NZALPA has seen increase over the past couple of years, and it is now high time the Government addressed the issue and introduced regulations and a public education campaign. "It has reached a stage where any member of the public can purchase a commercial grade laser and do what they please with it" states Mr Kenny.

NZALPA is advocating for legislation change similar to the Australian Government's changes that banned the importation of lasers that emit a beam stronger 1mW from July 2008. This change would remove access to the higher powered lasers and remove the access to individuals shining them at commercial aircraft.

There have been several people before the courts charged over their highly dangerous actions with lasers, most recently two teenagers who shone a laser at the Police Eagle helicopter. The public needs to be informed "These guys have made a stupid mistake, however this decision they made could have serious consequences. Laser strikes are not just an attack on pilots; they are an attack on the travelling public and can at best be described as reckless and dangerous" Mr Kenny said.

This is not only a threat for the aviation industry, but as we have seen in a previous case involving the Interislander ferry, lasers pose a threat to all forms of public transport. It's a senseless act that one day could have fatal consequences.

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To arrange an interview with either Stu Julian or Glen Kenny, please contact (09) 255 1500 for more information.

Glen Kenny  
***NZALPA President***

Stu Julian  
***Technical Director***

**About NZALPA** - 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.

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 1965, NZALPA joined the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA), which represents 50,000 air traffic controllers worldwide. NZALPA is one of 130 Member Associations affiliated to IFATCA, and has remained an active member in all aspects since joining.