OC260681

10 September 2026

[redacted]

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Thank you for your email received by the Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (the Ministry) on 14 August 2026, requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

> "I would like to refresh my request for all communications for the period 2026 as the last bundle of information was up to and including Jan 20 2026.
>
> I can see the minister sought information and received advice from Ringa Hora. We did not receive a copy of the Ringa Hora submission and would appreciate that.
>
> - including advice provided to Minister Meager about the student loan cap on pilot training.
> - the basis on which the conclusion was reached that the risks remained substantially unchanged, and the underlying data or information relied upon for loans.
> - Whether the data for pilot training was segmented into degree or diploma students and if it was a copy of that data,
> - the risks identified in 2013 when the cap was imposed and the data upon which the decision was made to impose the cap.
>
> In reviewing the documentation I can see that no information was forthcoming on data sets etc used to create the policy setting for 2013 but they must exist as I can see a reference to the 2017 data. Perhaps this is held by TEC/MoE"

This request is a follow-up from the Ministry's previous response to you which can be found here: https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/OIA-response/StudentLoanCapforPilots.pdf

In line with our previous response, we have interpreted this request as a request for "all advice provided to Minister Meager on the student loan cap on pilot training".

On 27 August 2026, we advised you that the following parts of your request were transferred to the Ministry of Education:

> "All communications for the period 2026 as the last bundle of information was up to and including Jan 20 2026.
> - including advice provided to Minister Meager about the student loan cap on pilot training.
>
> In reviewing the documentation I can see that no information was forthcoming on data sets etc used to create the policy setting for 2013 but they must exist as I can see a reference to the 2017 data. Perhaps this is held by TEC/MoE"

I have identified two documents within the scope of your request and am releasing them to you in part as listed in the document schedule attached as Annex 1. Certain information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. Some information in these documents has also marked as out of scope of the request.

With regard to the information that has been withheld under section 9 of the Act, I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding the information at this time are not outweighed by public interest considerations that would make it desirable to make the information available.

There is one further briefing in scope that relates to the Ringa Hora report; however, it has already been released to you under the previous response dated 2 April 2026.

The Ringa Hora report on addressing the needs of the aviation workforce is publicly available online at: https://ringahora.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Aviation-Workforce-Action-Final-report-to-Aviation-Council.pdf

If you would like to discuss this decision with us, please do not hesitate to contact us at OIA@mcert.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work, the Ministry publishes our Official Information Act responses and the information contained in our reply to you may be published on our website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Nāku noa, nā

CC Durrant

Dr Carolina Durrant
Manager, Aviation
Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport

Annex 1: Document Schedule

#	Date	Reference	Title of Document	Decision on request
1	20 March 2026	OC260113	Aviation Industry Association New Zealand Meeting and Parliamentary Event 25 March 2026	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a). Some information marked out of scope.
2	28 May 2026	OC260383	Meeting with Christchurch Helicopters (CHL) Group on 4 June 2026	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a). Some information marked out of scope.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
TE MANATŪ WAKA

EVENT BRIEFING

20 March 2026 OC260113

Hon James Meager
Acting Minister of Transport

AVIATION INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION NEW ZEALAND MEETING AND PARLIAMENTARY EVENT 25 MARCH 2026

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Snapshot

You are meeting with Don McCracken, Aviation Industry Association New Zealand (AIANZ) President and Simon Wallace, AIANZ Chief Executive ahead of the AIANZ Annual Parliamentary Event on 25 March 2026. This briefing provides you with background material to support both the meeting and your attendance at the Parliamentary Event.

Time and date	**Meeting: 12:45 – 1:15pm, 25 March 2026** **Parliamentary Event: 6:00 – 7:30pm, 25 March 2026**
Venue	Meeting: Your office Parliamentary Event: Galleria, Parliament Buildings
Attendees	Meeting: Don McCracken, Chair of the AIANZ and Simon Wallace, Chief Executive of the AIANZ Parliamentary Event: Up to 80 guests expected; largely aviation industry leaders, and some Government officials.
Officials attending	Ruth Fairhall, DCE Policy Siobhan Routledge, Director Aviation Dr Carolina Durrant, Manager, Aviation
Media	Some media have been invited to the Parliamentary Event, but they do not normally attend.
Speaking notes	Speech notes for the Parliamentary Event were provided separately. Q&As are provided in Annex 2.

Contacts

Name	Telephone	First contact
Dr Carolina Durrant, Manager, Aviation	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Natalie Howell, Principal Adviser, Aviation		

AVIATION INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION NEW ZEALAND MEETING AND PARLIAMENTARY EVENT 25 MARCH 2026

Key points

1 Out of Scope

2

3 Simon Wallace represents AIANZ on the Aviation Council. Simon is a co-chair of the Workforce Working Group alongside John Hall from the New Zealand Air Line Pilots' Association.

4 AIANZ has indicated it would like to discuss the following topics:

Out of Scope

- The Aviation Action Plan with a focus on workforce matters, including follow up to the discussion at the Aviation Council meeting on 19 March 2026.

Out of Scope

5

6

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Background information on meeting agenda items

Workforce matters

7 The aviation sector workforce, in particular pilots and engineers, faces well-documented challenges including worker shortages, a fragmented workforce pipeline, and uncoordinated incentives across the workforce ecosystem. AIANZ considers that shortages of pilots are driven in part by the student loan borrowing cap which applies to pilot training.

8 AIANZ successfully advocated for the Interim Aviation Council to prioritise aviation workforce issues in its Aviation Action Plan. One of the four priority ambition areas in the Action Plan is for aviation to be a desirable career path and for the sector to grow by having the talented and skilled people it needs. To make progress towards this ambition, the Action Plan contains six actions. Progress to date on each of the actions is outlined in the table below.

9 AIANZ presented three papers to the Aviation Council at its 19 March 2026 meeting, and copied the papers to you. The Ministry's view on each paper is also noted in the table below.

Lead	Action	Status
Ministry of Education (MoE)	Provide advice to Ministers on issues related to training in the aviation sector and how they contribute to workforce challenges in civil aviation, and develop options for policy changes that address these issues.	MoE advised its Ministers in December 2025 and is now carrying out additional analysis of pilot graduate outcomes. You have written to the responsible Ministers seeking an update on this work. An MoE representative attended the Aviation Council meeting on 19 March 2026. She agreed that MoE would join the Workforce Working Group. She reiterated that MoE wants to ensure not only that graduates have jobs, but that they are able to repay their student loans and have good employment outcomes. She told the Council about the additional analysis MoE is working on, using Statistics NZ's integrated data infrastructure (IDI).[1] AIANZ submitted a paper to the Council on Flight Training Survey Results. The survey shows that approximately 80% of graduates surveyed have secured employment within the aviation industry, the majority of which (75%) entered charter and general aviation roles. This is a positive statistic however the survey is self-reported and needs to be reconciled with the results of MoE's analysis.
Ringa Hora	Improve the relevance of the qualification for airlines by updating the pilot qualification, in consultation with the sector, by the end of 2025. This involves developing an airline-approved training programme that: • can be delivered over a shorter period	Ringa Hora emailed flight schools in December 2025 proposing changes that could be made to their training programmes to better align them with industry needs and enable the programmes to be delivered more quickly. Further work on this action depends on flight schools deciding to redesign their programmes.

[1] The IDI is a large research database that holds de-identified microdata about people and households – including information about education and income.

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	• better aligns training to airlines' needs.	In response to a paper by AIANZ entitled Proposed 12-Month Commercial Pilot Training Timeframe, Council members agreed that a 12-month training timeframe is not always appropriate or achievable, and the focus should be on training that delivers good graduate outcomes and meets employers' needs. The Ministry agrees.
Ringa Hora	Work with industry partners, Aviation Council, and Transport, Immigration and Education officials to develop an aviation workforce package of options to address persistent challenges in the training and retention of aviation workforce – by end 2025.	Ringa Hora published a report in December 2025 which outlined a set of coordinated, industry-led recommendations to address long-standing workforce challenges and position the aviation industry for long-term viability. The co-chairs of the Workforce Working Group presented their advice on next steps to the Aviation Council at its 19 March 2026 meeting. The Council broadly supported the proposals. Next step: the Council asked the Workforce Working Group to further explore how they could be sequenced and implemented in practice. AIANZ presented a paper on the Aviation Maintenance Engineering Workforce - Addressing Challenges and Shortages. MoT does not have a policy position on this paper. We think it is more appropriate to defer to Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and Ministry of Education (MoE) views on the suggested solution. The Council agreed that it is important to consider all trade groups, not just pilots.
Industry	Collaborate on joint employment promotion activities to ensure aviation is seen as an attractive, diverse and rewarding sector for young people – by end 2026. Report to the Council on options for the Council to help coordinate aviation graduates' placement and progression in the workforce – by end 2025.	The Workforce Working Group advice covered options to help coordinate aviation graduates' placement and progression in the workforce. The next step is as above.
Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)	Work with the advanced aviation industry to identify projected skill set needs for the next 10 years and recommend next steps – by end 2025.	There is nothing new to report on this action. Last year the Ministry prepared a report summarising findings and outlining recommended next steps, in consultation with MBIE and relevant stakeholders. The report concluded that the advanced aviation industry is too nascent to determine its future needs. Minister Collins agreed to pause this work and revisit it in a few years.
CAA	Progress potential opportunities with like-minded partners and other States, where appropriate, to put in place mutual recognition agreements for licensing systems, licences, and the movement of aviation personnel.	CAA is continuing to discuss the potential for new or extending existing mutual recognition agreements for licensing with like-minded countries.

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Out of Scope

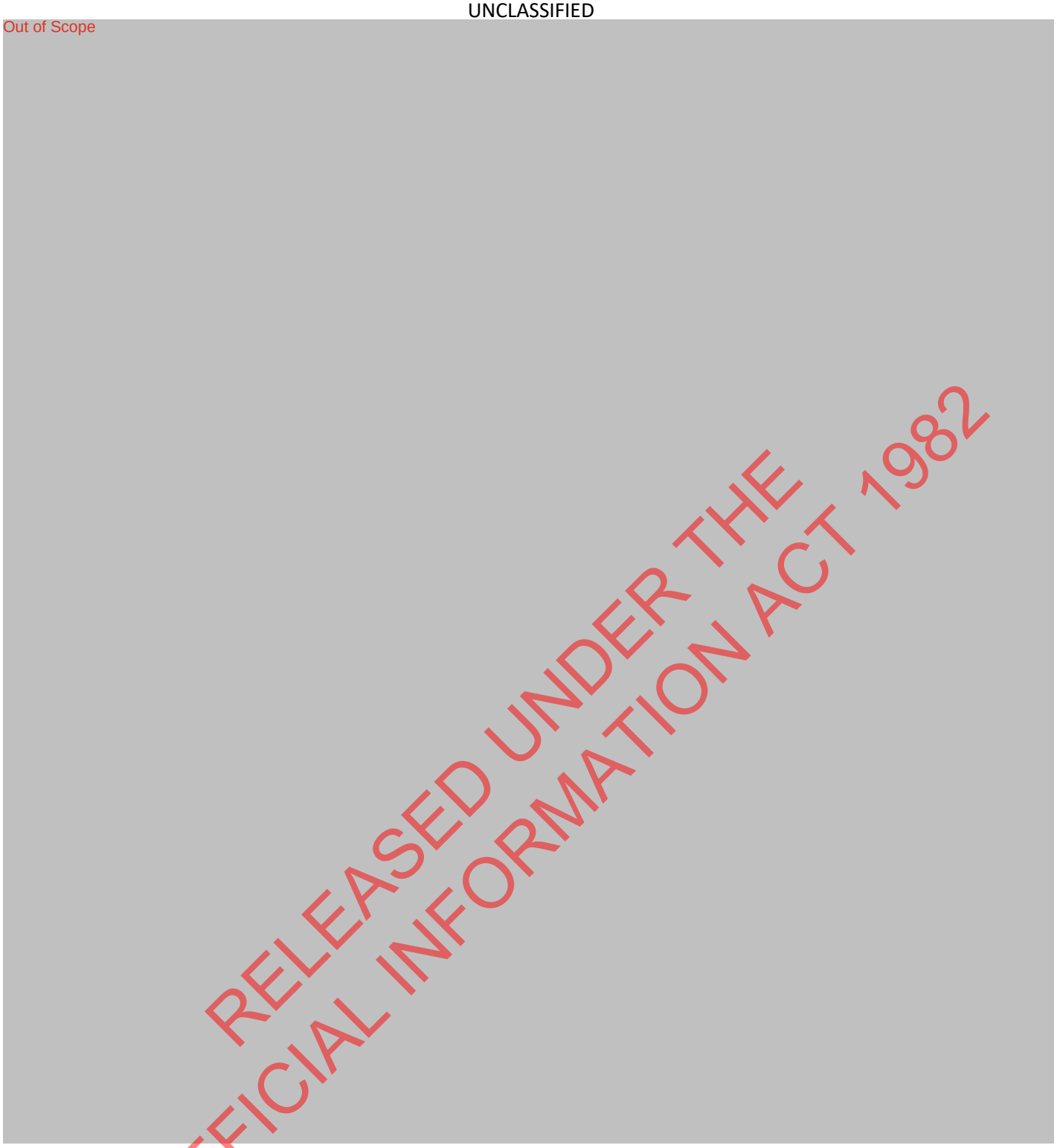
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ANNEX 1: Biographies



Don McCracken, President of AIANZ

Mr McCracken has more than three decades of experience in New Zealand's aviation industry and has held senior leadership roles in a range of aviation organisations, including Oceania Aviation, Flightline Aviation, The Vintage Aviator, and Aerosafe. His career spans both fixed-wing and rotary aviation, with a strong focus on safety, sustainability, and operational excellence.



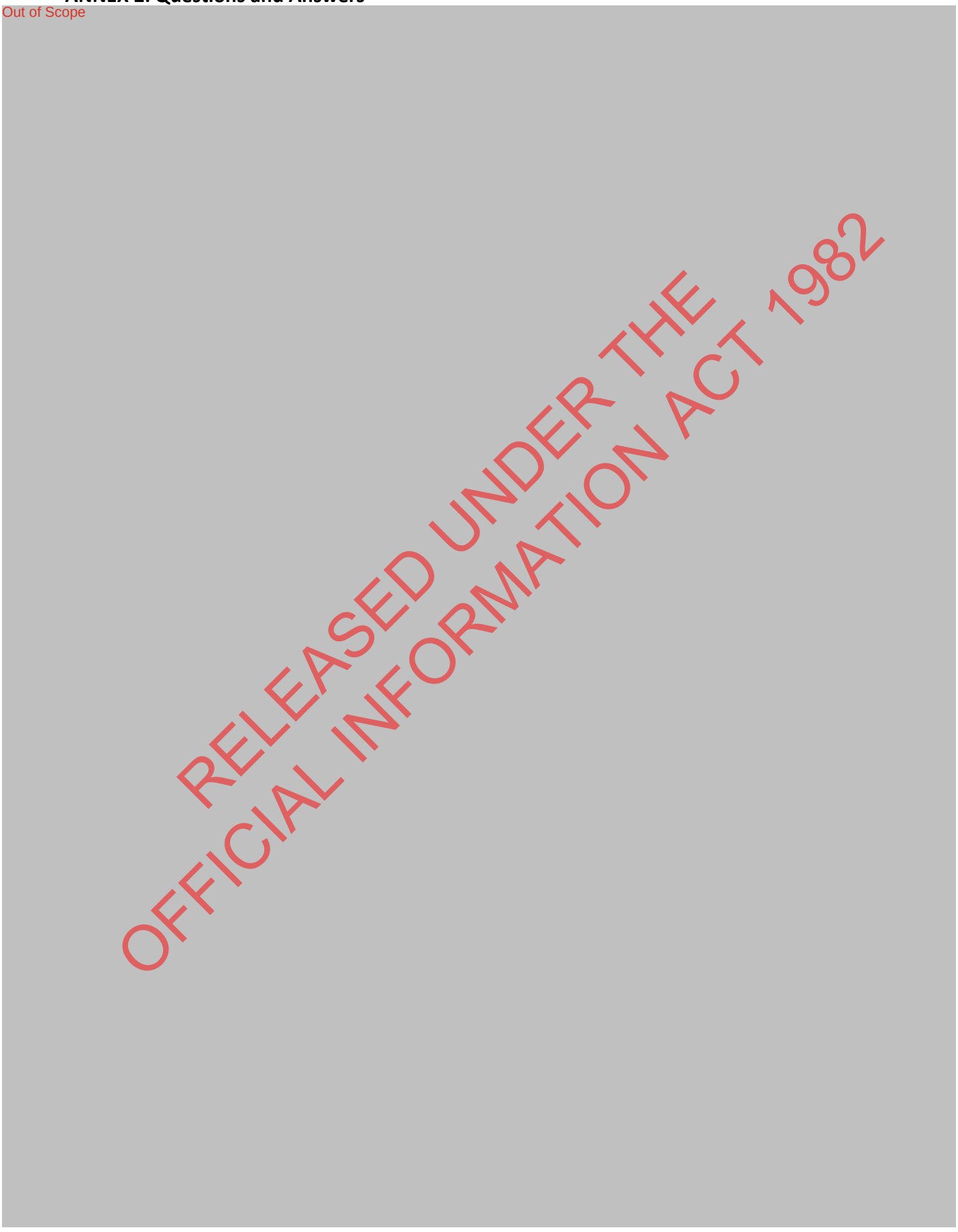
Simon Wallace, Chief Executive of AIANZ

Simon Wallace joined AIANZ as Chief Executive in August 2023. Simon is responsible for all of AIANZ's activities that range from policy, advocacy and lobbying work, engaging and supporting members, managing events and maintaining financial oversight of the organisation. Simon is also the principal media spokesperson. Previously Simon was Chief Executive Officer at the New Zealand Aged Care Association (NZACA). He has also held leadership positions at the Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand (now Tourism Industry Aotearoa).

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ANNEX 2: Questions and Answers

Out of Scope



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Out of Scope

2. Workforce

How will the Action Plan address the aviation workforce shortage, particularly among engineers?

Workforce shortages are a key focus of the Aviation Council and actions are contained in the plan. The Ringa Hora report released in December 2025 was an excellent summary of the issues facing the sector. I discussed this with Simon and Don earlier today [TBC] and I look forward to hearing more about how the Aviation Council recommends this is taken forward.

I'd like to thank Simon Wallace for his membership of the Aviation Council, and for co-chairing the Workforce Working Group which is taken this matter forward on behalf of the Council.

Do you agree that without intervention, the workforce shortage will get worse in years ahead?

The aviation workforce, including the engineering workforce, is critical to the success of the whole aviation system. The Government's goal is that aviation provides attractive, highly skilled jobs in New Zealand and is a desirable career path.

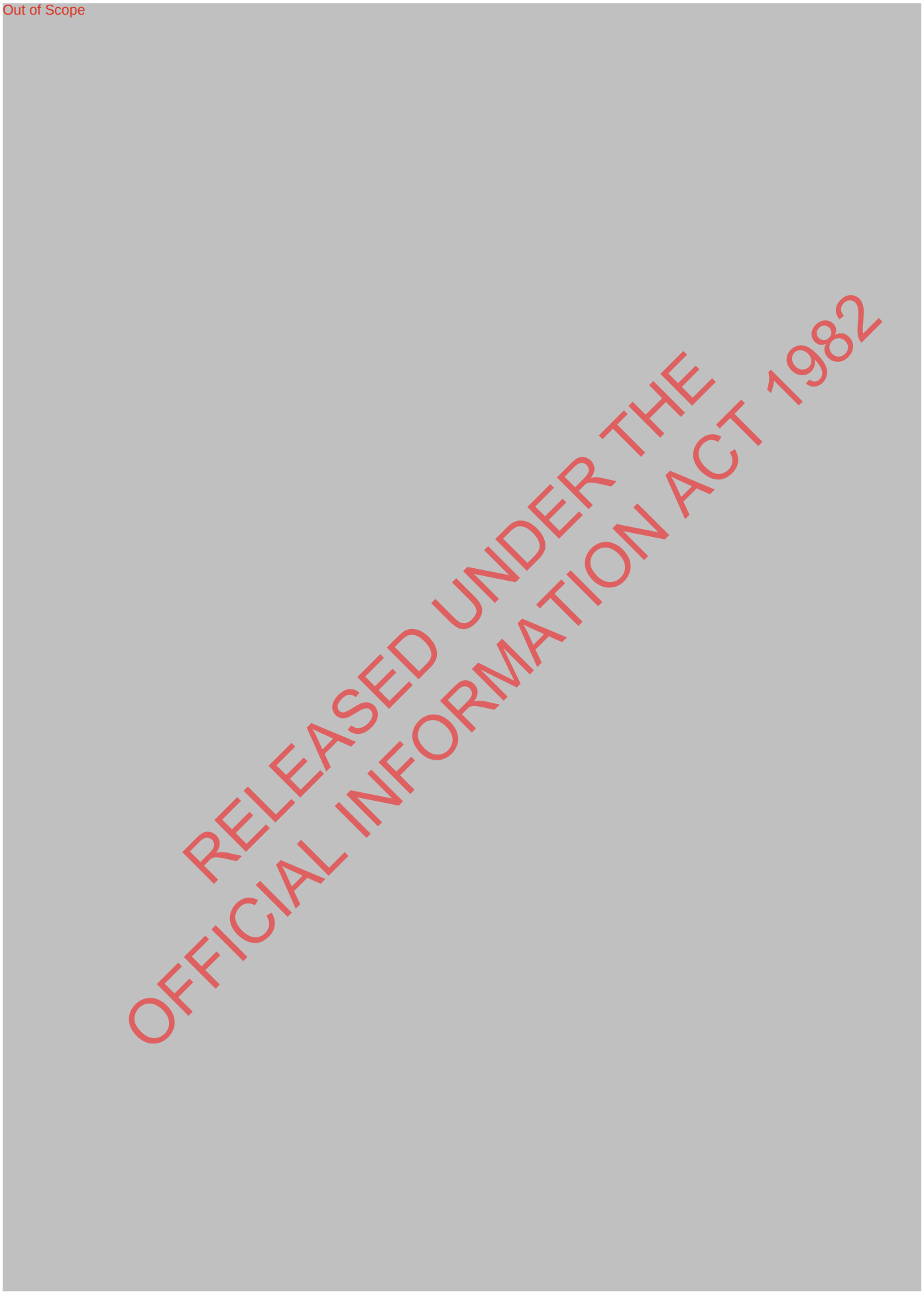
Resolving aviation workforce issues is a priority for me, and I am work ng closely with my colleagues across Government on this.

We can't do this alone and there is ongoing collaboration with the sector to ensure that we have the talented and skilled people we need for the sector to grow

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Out of Scope



Annex 3 is out of scope of this request.

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MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
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28 May 2026 OC260383

Hon James Meager
Acting Minister of Transport

MEETING WITH CHRISTCHURCH HELICOPTERS (CHL) GROUP ON 4 JUNE 2026

Snapshot

You will be meeting with Terry Murdoch, CEO of Christchurch Helicopters (CHL) Group, and Dr Hamish Campbell, Member of Parliament for Ilam, at CHL Group's office in Christchurch on 4 June 2026.

Time and date	**9:30-10:30am, Thursday 4 June 2026**
Venue	25 Aviation Drive, Harewood, Christchurch
Attendees	Terry Murdoch, Chief Executive Officer, Christchurch Helicopters Dr Hamish Campbell, Member of Parliament for Ilam
Attachments	List of Civil Aviation Rules to be updated as part of the Civil Aviation Rules Update Programme

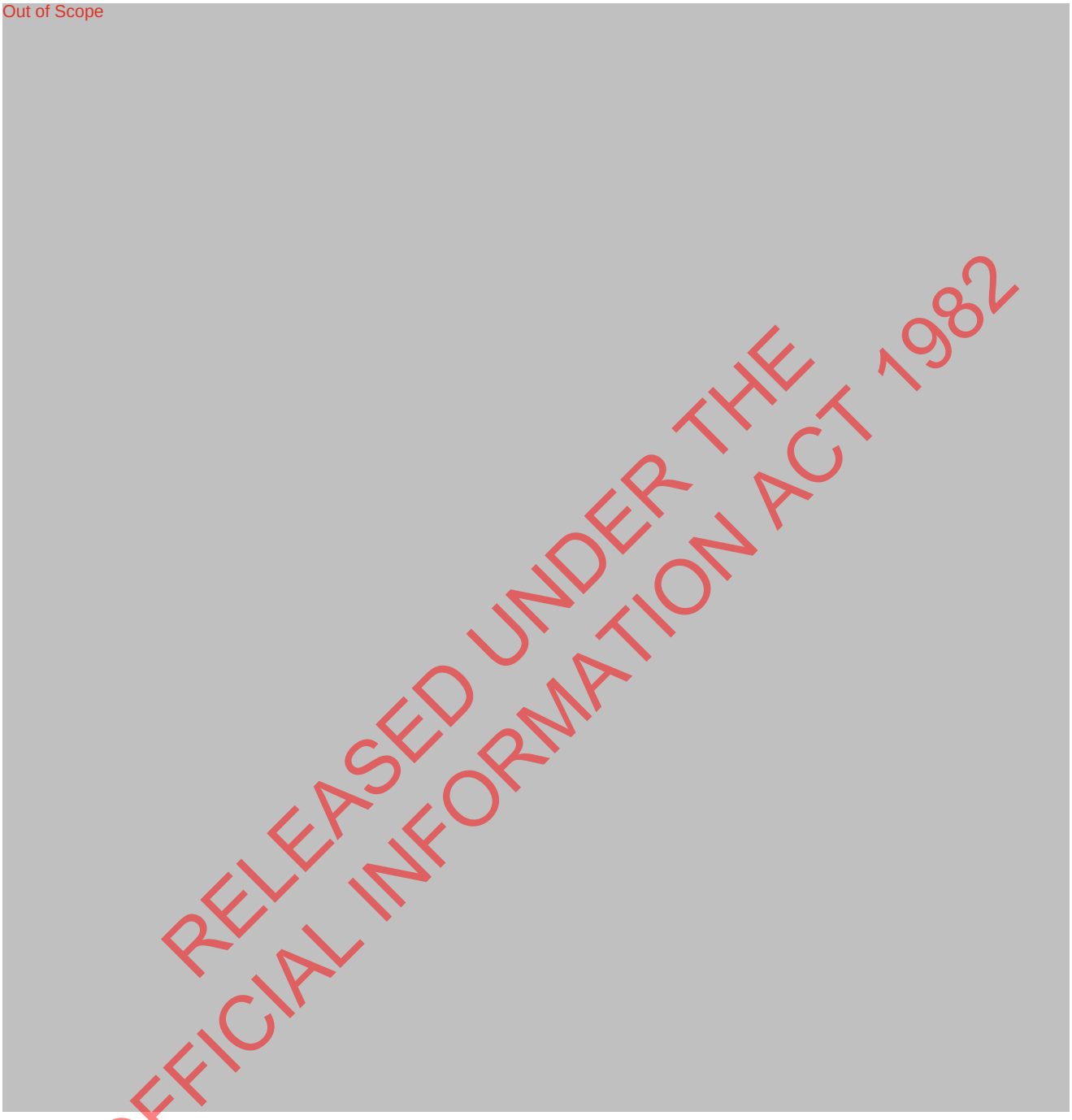
Contacts

Name	Telephone	First contact
Dr Carolina Durrant, Manager, Aviation	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Rachel Chuah, Policy Adviser, Aviation		

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MEETING WITH CHRISTCHURCH HELICOPTERS (CHL) GROUP ON 4 JUNE 2026

Out of Scope



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There are several Ministry of Transport work programmes which may be of interest to CHL Group

Aviation Workforce

7 The aviation workforce is critical to the success of the whole aviation system. The Government released the Aviation Action Plan (the Action Plan) in September 2025. One of its long-term ambitions is that aviation provides attractive, highly skilled jobs in New Zealand and is a desirable career path.

8 As part of achieving this ambition, the Aviation Council is focused on addressing the sector's more immediate workforce challenges, including worker shortages, a fragmented workforce pipeline, and uncoordinated incentives across the workforce ecosystem.

9 Working together, government and industry have already achieved 10 of the 25 actions in the Action Plan since its launch, including:

- outlining a set of coordinated industry-led recommendations to address long-standing workforce challenges, to be taken forward by the Aviation Council
- assisting flight schools to update pilot training programmes to better align with the needs of airlines.

10 Christchurch Helicopters offers a 68-week Level 5 Diploma in Aviation, which includes obtaining a Private Pilot Licence and Commercial Pilot Licence. They also work with their students on individual Career Pathway Plans.

11 Out of Scope The student loan cap was put in place because aviation students were accumulating large debts that they were taking a long time to pay off. More recent data from the Ministry of Education (MOE) indicates that aviation students are still taking longer than many other students to pay back their debt.

12 MOE is continuing to analyse this issue, including undertaking further work on graduate outcomes. Any consideration of increasing borrowing limits should be preceded by confidence that the broader system — covering training quality, qualification pathways, and employment outcomes — is functioning effectively.

Out of Scope

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Out of Scope

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Biography



Terry Murdoch

Terry Murdoch has over 30 years of experience operating a variety of helicopters for varying purposes in a range of flying conditions.

Terry is also an experienced board director, and executive in the general aviation sector. He is currently an owner and director of Christchurch Helicopters, as well as its CEO. He has previously also served on several Boards, including the CAA Board (August 2024 to May 2025) and Airways New Zealand (2009 to 2018).

The remaining pages 7-13 are out of scope of this request.

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