

AIRCARE – industry-wide safety strategy

The pre-eminent strategic objective of the AIA is to assist its members, on the ground and in the air, to deliver safe passage every day and all day. To achieve this we have developed the AIRCARE safety strategy.

History and Background

1. AIRCARE is the trademark-registered brand of the Aviation Industry Association's safety strategy within the Australasian region. *(AIRCARE is trademark-registered as a brand in both Australia and New Zealand and has its own domain registered, but no operative website)* Its aim was to achieve a 25% measured reduction in general aviation accidents within three years of its inception and a 25% reduction thereafter. *(In the first three years of the strategy being fully operable CAA was reporting reductions of around 40% in some of the GA areas and an across-the-board reduction of 30%)*
2. AIRCARE originated as a vision of John Funnell, president of the AIA from 2002-2007 and in response to the ever-increasing accident rate the general aviation (GA) industry experienced in the years immediately prior to 2000. Industry safety forums were held in 2001, with invited participants, to analyse the causative factors behind 40-fixed and 48-rotary accidents.
3. A number of members of today's council participated in those forums, which were held in both the north and south islands. Using the specialist skills of a risk analysis consultant the industry concluded that the primary causes of accidents were:
 - Poor understanding of risk
 - Poor decision making skills
 - Poor understanding of organisational safety culture
4. From this analysis emerged a decision to approach CAA and ACC to come on board in a tripartite partnership to foster and develop an industry wide safety programme covering all aviation document holders. *(AIRCARE was established as a charity with three trustees. The trust deed document needs to be updated to reflect changes to the Charitable Trust Act and the three trustees need to be approached again to reaffirm their involvement)*
5. The CEOs of CAA and ACC supported the initiative on the basis that there was a joint and shared responsibility for improving/enhancing safety across the industry. While the primary focus of the strategy was intended to be GA the initial three aspects of the strategy, i.e. the three bullet points above, affected everyone. The CEOs endorsed the concept of a co-ordinating committee being appointed with equal representation from all parties.
6. Seed funding was obtained from the Airways Corporation and subsequently CAA, ACC, Kauriland and MetService all contributed to the project along with approximately \$500,000 of funding in cash and kind from the industry
7. The appointed co-ordinating committee of CAA, ACC and Industry commenced operations in early 2005 and agreed a strategy of industry-wide education on the three key causative factors of accidents, with a subsequent decision that once the three causative factors had been addressed there would be industry-specific issues which had emerged from the risk analysis also being addressed, but at a later date. *(In all eight or nine DVDs were going to be produced. Three covering the whole industry and then sector-specific DVD,s with the next one addressing agricultural aviation and the specific hazards risks)*
8. It was also agreed that the primary mode of communicating information would be via DVDs and some 30,000 DVDs have been produced addressing risk management and decision-making. Funding for the third DVD is currently stalled, although some work has already been undertaken on this.
9. During the period when AIRCARE was particularly active (2003-2006), the accident rate in GA trended down significantly and while all the safety gains could not be attributed to this strategy the fact that the industry and the regulator were working as a collaborative effort did not go unnoticed.
10. A crisis in confidence emerged with AIRCARE, not so much because of the strategies it was pursuing, but a shift in philosophical direction within government agencies away from a collaborative approach, to re-establishing regulatory salience over the industry. AIA submitted information that demonstrated the value-adding nature of the AIRCARE programme, audited financial information, clear governance management of the strategy and addressed all issues raised.
11. The previous Minister of Transport Safety, as late as 3 November 2008, reaffirmed his support of the strategy, but pointed out that this was an operational matter for CAA's board and director to determine. The in-coming government supports the concept and is most anxious to inquire of the previous government as to why a safety strategy, which produced significant benefits to industry, was derailed.
12. There is no indication from the present minister as to whether he supports, or otherwise, the AIRCARE programme however, CAA have indicated they no longer wish to continue the partnership. They will however, give consideration to sponsorship of the programme and assess sponsorship alongside other proposals received. This, for the industry, is disappointing, as the industry itself has invested considerable time, effort and money into a project, which was having the desired results. AIA is determined to meet this challenge.

Revitalisation of the AIA Safety Strategy

13. Revitalisation is built around four key elements:

- Establishing formal links with the globally-based Flight Safety Foundation
- Development of an industry-wide safety committee
- AIRCARE, the umbrella safety strategy for the industry
- Development of safety recognition awards

Formation of New Zealand advisory committee to regional office of the Flight Safety Foundation

14. The Asia Pacific Safety Foundation is establishing partnerships in the Asia Pacific region. Officially launched on 12 March 2009, this organisation will provide independent, impartial and international information and commentary on all aspects of aviation safety www.flightsafety.org (*this link to open in a new window*)

15. Development of an industry-wide safety committee – this committee will become the New Zealand advisory committee to the regional office of the Flight Safety Foundation based in Melbourne. The committee is led by voluntary leaders of the industry in New Zealand and comprises:

- Ashok Poduval, Chair. General Manager Massey University School of Aviation
- Toby Clark, representing the New Zealand Helicopter Association. Helipro
- Don McCracken, representing engineering. General Manager The Vintage Aviator
- Joe Cave, representing agricultural aviation. Chief Pilot Superair

16. The Committee is assisted by a part-time secretary, Maurice Manttan, who can be reached at maurice.mantt@iaa.org.nz

17. For more information on the work of the safety committee go to (*insert link to ? document*)

AIRCARE re-branding

18. The focus of AIRCARE in its recent past has been in the GA sector of the industry. However, with the introduction of safety management systems into aviation and the need for there to be a more integrated, but not necessarily one-size-fits-all, approach to safety, the decision has been made to widen the contribution of the AIRCARE programme to all operators on the ground or in the air.

19. The AIRCARE programme is supported by:

- Training manuals - the first two have been developed and submitted to NZQA for approval so that the training programme can go onto the qualification framework
- Educational literature and seminars – such as the recently-held SMS symposium in Auckland (*link to programme*)
- Regulatory – identification of particular safety issues and discussion dialogue with the two regulators, ACC and CAA
- Prevention strategies – much of the work with ACC involves education on avoiding back injuries, slips, trips and falls

20. Click here for more information on AIRCARE (*make link to*)

Safety Recognition Awards

21. These awards cover:

- Commercial flights only, except where coverage also includes private operators/owners, as in the case of members of the NZHA
- Flights of aircraft to, through and within New Zealand, i.e. they do not cover flights that do not, at some point, touch New Zealand
- The awards are time-based and recognise the safety performance of individual operators through the avoidance of serious injury to self or crew.

22. For further information on the awards (*insert link to awards*)

23. To apply for an award (*insert link to application form*)

24. A safety recognition certificate will be issued stating

- The safety performance criteria awarded
- The operator's AOC number, or certificate number, where appropriate
- Appropriate airworthiness certificates for aircraft used in the operation
- Date of commencement of operations for the company
- The license of the individual pilot or engineer to which the award pertains
- Optional information - the number of hours flown, or years of service, if an engineer or engineering company so desire