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Easter 18, 19, 20th April 2014

Media Release - New Sport Aircraft display at WOW

Wanaka: An Airborne Trike, a Team Rocket and a homebuilt Murphy Rebel are three of around 25 sport aircraft heading to Wanaka next Easter, but organisers of the Warbirds Over Wanaka International Airshow are looking for more.

Microlights, ultralights, experimental aircraft, replicas and others were being sought as part of an aim to show people how inexpensive it can be to enter the world of aviation for work or pleasure, event manager Mandy Deans said.

"We have about 25 sport aircraft registered already, but we'd love to have up to 100. It is a really interesting sector, fantastic for entry-level aviation, full of Kiwi ingenuity and easy to get into. Sport aircraft are a lot of fun."

A hangar would be dedicated to the widely variant types and demonstrations would show building techniques for homebuilt aircraft she said. Suppliers of parts would be displaying the tiny engines and components used by the aircraft and experts would be available to discuss the sport with visitors.

Ms Deans said a flying display of an array of sport aircraft was also scheduled into the main programme of the three day event. Potential pilots would have an opportunity to take rides and possibly fly some of the machines at a special 'Rides Day' on the Monday following the airshow.

"The idea is basically to get people into flying. Sport aviation is an entry point for potential pilots who perhaps can't afford conventional aircraft. Some would hopefully go on to larger aircraft and eventually, if we provide a career path for them, onto warbirds."

The airshow's sport aviation facilitator, Graham Taylor, said people would see not only current options for construction of sport aircraft but also what the future direction will be. He said modern construction methods using wood, metal and composites was making flying relatively more affordable as well as more reliable. The range of sport aircraft available was vast, the cheapest costing around \$50,000 and the most expensive up to \$1M.

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"There are some very quick, smart little machines around these days and you can fly them on a simple licence that's easy to get." He said modern sport aircraft were built light but were quite robust and safe to fly. "There is a lot more substance to them than first appears and so long as you treat them with respect and maintain them, they are reliable, safe and a lot of fun to fly."

The initiative was being supported by both the Sport Aircraft Association and the NZ Warbirds Association.

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