

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 MID-DAY, 31 OCTOBER 2013**Aviation industry frustrated over continued absence of mandatory drug and alcohol testing in safety sensitive aviation workplaces**

“It is totally unacceptable that random mandatory drug and alcohol testing has still not been introduced across the aviation industry for all those engaged in safety sensitive roles” Irene King, Chief Executive of Aviation New Zealand, said today.

She was commenting on another tragic accident investigated by the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC), where one of the causative factors was attributed to the consumption of performance impairing substances.

“All scheduled carriers in New Zealand, along with the majority of our larger general aviation companies randomly test, on a mandatory basis, employees holding safety sensitive roles. Employment agreements and individual contracts provide the basis for testing”.

“Despite these regimes being in place for many years – 10 to 15 years in some cases, there remain elements in the wider sector that simply do not recognise the serious impact of using performance impairing substances in safety sensitive roles, and the reputational damage it does to the brand”.

Ms King said: “We accept that education is an integral part of enhancing safety but we can only do so much. Without the ability to test all working in safety sensitive roles, it can be difficult to detect the presence of these substances – for this reason alone regulation is essential.”

“We advocate testing of all involved in safety sensitive roles – this includes the many owner operators, contractors, their executives and staff, irrespective of whether they are directly involved in day to day operations”.

Mandatory random alcohol and drug testing provides transparent assurance to the public that all sectors of aviation operate at the same zero tolerance level. The travelling public, including our valuable tourism industry, has the right to expect that we will deliver exemplary safety standards and be accountable.

“Regrettably, despite our best efforts over a very long period, we have been unable to move all providers to the same standard – legislation is now the only alternative to assure substance abuse is not tolerated in the industry,” concluded Ms King.

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More information:

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About Aviation New Zealand

Aviation New Zealand is the trading name of the Aviation Industry Association. It is the major aviation industry association in New Zealand with 400 company members and 200 individual members, representing over 90% of all aviation activity by hours flown in the country.

Aviation New Zealand’s mission is to grow the presence and positioning of ‘Aviation’ in the New Zealand economy, and to create opportunities for growth and wealth creation for its members.

Our Strategic Directions 2016 is based on five themes:

- Building the brand and telling the story
- Growing the market (domestically and internationally)
- Accelerating growth through supportive regulatory structures
- Building tomorrow’s industry through a focus on R&D and investment
- Providing value to members

