



# LightSpeed Zulu Headset on trial

New Zealand's LightSpeed agents, Special FX Supplies Ltd, recently sent KiwiFlyer their demonstration Zulu headset for us to evaluate. Given the many commendations already bestowed on this product, our expectations were high.

## We weren't disappointed

To start with a conclusion, the Zulu really is very light, very quiet, very comfortable, very capable, and delivers near audiophile quality sound. No wonder Aviation Consumer Magazine named it their "Headset of the Year". That said, in the interests of providing informative commentary rather than gratuitous babble, we'll move straight to the specifications.

## The specifications

Starting with weight and materials, the Zulu weighs just under 400 grams due to being constructed predominantly from magnesium and composite plastics. In particular, the earcups are made from magnesium, said to also provide a more rigid barrier for sound attenuation. The foam earcup seals are covered in soft leather. The headband has a vented headpad and is designed for low side pressure. We can confirm that the whole package makes for a very comfortable headset indeed.

The Zulu offers acceptable passive noise reduction and exceptional active noise reduction. According to LightSpeed, their engineers focused ANR efforts on the parts of the noise spectrum that create the most discomfort. The result of their effort creates a perception of quietness that exceeds the actual decibel numbers quoted.

A Bluetooth compatible wireless phone and music interface is provided and the Zulu can be easily synced (if you follow the instructions) with your Bluetooth device.

The battery box contains all controls for the headset as well as an input for a wired auxiliary device. A switchable auto-mute function can be set to activate for radio and VOX comms. Hardwiring to the panel is also an available option, as is the choice of a helicopter plug and coiled lead..

Anyone who enjoys music in the cockpit will love the Zulu's "Front Row Centre" button and the exceptional audio quality that this and the other audiophile grade componentry provides. Front Row Centre is designed to eliminate the problem

created when the left and right sound channels are completely isolated from each other by headphones. The Zulu provides overlaid sound to the left ear that would normally be heard from the right speaker and vice versa. The result is an audio experience you will not previously have heard anywhere near a cockpit. In fact, you're very likely to find yourself wearing the headset on the sofa at home, listening to your favourite music there as well.

## What other pilots and reviewers say

There are plenty of reviews, both from magazines and individual pilot purchasers that can be browsed on the internet. By far

the majority rave about the comfort and clarity of communications and users are delighted with the Bluetooth interface and savings this makes regarding the traditional tangle of cables. Quite a few people complain that the microphone and lead are fixed to the left earcup. However the earcups are individually shaped and hinged for



left and right which is undoubtedly part of the comfort equation. It seems that if you want the comfort you have to tolerate a left only mic position. Some users have been disappointed with the level of passive noise reduction but the answer to that is surely to put some batteries in it and use the ANR that it was designed with. There seem to be only good experiences reported regarding any service or warranty issues.

## No obligation trials

The demonstration set we tried is available to any prospective purchaser though you may need to book a place in the queue. Special FX Supplies also offer a 30 day refund or replacement policy if for any reason you aren't completely satisfied with the product, providing it is returned in original condition.

## For more information

Given how good everyone says these are and the fact that you can easily borrow the trial set from Phil, anyone in the market for a top of the line headset is doing themselves a disservice not to try a Zulu. At time of print the price is \$1772 inc. gst. Phone Phil Jones at Special FX Supplies on 0800 116 741 or visit [www.specialfx.co.nz](http://www.specialfx.co.nz)

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