



Airborne Systems expansion at Oceania Aviation

MOST AVIATORS, at least of the rotary type, will be aware of Oceania Aviation's growth from parts supplier to maintenance provider and beyond. As they became more involved in maintenance, customers started to ask for modifications to be developed. These were undertaken with the company's usual enthusiasm and dedication to task, resulting in the build up of an impressive inventory of Eurocopter, MD, Bell and Schweizer role equipment, offered under the Airborne Systems brand, then a division of Oceania Aviation.

Extending the reach

Earlier this year, Oceania re-launched the Airborne Systems brand as an independent trading company with the intention to look further afield for international role equipment business. The company is also extending its scope toward the development and production of helicopter engineering support products including special maintenance tooling, much of which was developed for Oceania and is now available to other companies.

Design and fabrication resource has also been increased with a team of four now dedicated to manufacturing.

The team is lead by Technical and Sales Manager Russell Goulden, familiar to many on the NZ aviation scene from his 23 years at Airwork, the last 5 as Manufacturing and Training Manager. Russell moved to Filtration Development Co. in California in 2007 and during the last couple of years has gained a lot of experience in dealing with FAA STCs (Supplemental Type Certificates) and certifications. This has provided an ideal founding for his new role at Airborne Systems where much of this knowledge can be applied towards obtaining internationally transportable STCs for the range of Airborne Systems products currently available in New Zealand as modifications.

Other Airborne Systems team members include Ray Brown, an experienced toolmaker and machinist, Andrew Miles, an experienced welding engineer, and Gary

Williams, an aircraft maintenance engineer specialising in 3D CAD modelling.

STCs and Part 148 manufacturing

Russell says that the team have assembled a good range of light engineering fabrication equipment and that they are well on their way to becoming a NZ CAA approved manufacturing

ongoing and international sales potential. These currently include their carbon fibre spray system for the AS350, cargo hook swing frame and seat slider kit for the AS350/355, as well as their spray system and cargo pod for the MD500.

Product development

The existing Airborne Systems product offering covers a broad range of AS350/355, MD500, BK117, Bell206 and Schweizer role equipment. This includes spray gear, cargo pods, EMS equipment, cargo hook frames, seating adjustments, additional lighting systems, frost lights, skid shoes and more. Visit the website www.airborne-systems.co.nz for more details.

Although busy with the Part 148 and STC programme, new product development continues. With an intention to aim at market niches rather than enter into direct competition with other providers, current new development is focused on creating a fire bombing option for their AS350 spray tank.

The extra resource and capability of Airborne Systems also provides an opportunity for customers with the desire for new equipment to approach the team with their ideas.

Pilot customer comments

Richard Stening has been an Airborne Systems customer for several years, flying with an AS350 spray system and other mods. He has also been a user of a variety of other brands of role equipment and offers his opinion that Airborne Systems is "some of the best gear around".

Richard says the important difference for him has been "the ability to work with the engineers to develop mods specifically around what we need. The guys are really good at listening and producing good quality user-friendly gear - and it's lightweight too."

For more information

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AS350 role equipment includes a Carbon Fibre Spray System, Seat Slider and Cargo Hook Swing Frame. The latter two are also suitable for the AS355.



MD500 equipment includes a Spray System and Cargo Pod. Many other products are also available for a variety of helicopter types.

organisation operating under Part 148. This will allow Airborne Systems to certify the products they produce for sale throughout New Zealand and the USA. Design certification will continue to be achieved in partnership with both Flight Structures and Techair, both Part 146 Design Organisations.

Russell and the team are also working to obtain STCs for several of Airborne Systems existing modifications that have