

Executive Summary

This quarter has been a busy one for the division, with efforts beginning on various streams of work developed out of our director one-on-ones.

Staffing Changes

This quarter saw multiple major changes to VATNZ leadership positions – Cam Tyson was appointed as our Deputy Division Director, and Oliver Gregory was appointed to the Events Manager position. Toward the end of this quarter, we also unfortunately bid farewell to our Events Director, Tom Lyall.

Cam has a long history of staff involvement across the network – including previous Director roles within VATNZ and VATPAC, as well as time spent as a VATSIM Supervisor. His skillset will be incredible valuable as we continue to develop and iterate as a division.

We're pleased to have promoted Oliver Gregory to the position of Events Manager, reporting to the Events Director. The Events Manager position is a Senior Staff position responsible for the day-to-day execution of event planning and conduct within the division, assisting the Events Director in delivering high quality events for our community. We're excited to see the impact Oliver makes in this position.

Unfortunately, we also bid farewell to our Events Director, Tom Lyall. Tom has been a key part of our division over the past few years, having held the portfolio since 2022. Tom has led the Events department through a plethora of successful high-profile events and has consistently strived to elevate New Zealand's standing as an exciting and engaging destination. We wish him all the best and look forward to continuing to see him around the network.

We will be advertising for the Events Director vacancy shortly.

Membership

The membership of the Division currently stands at 1,167 members – composed of 380 active and 787 inactive members. This marks a decline in membership compared to the previous quarter, and I will be seeking to understand this further over the upcoming reporting period.

Ongoing Work Streams

During the Q4 2025 Board Meeting, I delivered my findings from the various director one-on-ones held at the end of the year. Out of this, several work streams were developed and agreed upon – seeking to fix some of the biggest pain points for our departments.

The VATNZ Board will be meeting this upcoming weekend where these will be discussed, and the minutes published.

Tom Kilpatrick

Division Director

Deputy Division Director

Joining the Division

This quarter, I took on the role of Deputy Division Director (DDD). As DDD, I work in many different parts of the division, giving an outside view on important issues and helping with initiatives that involve more than one portfolio. Right now, I'm in charge of the Community Engagement and Events portfolios until those positions are filled.

I also help make sure that Board decisions and initiatives are in-line with the Division's strategic goals, as well as the needs of the community – something I will be working close with Tom to ensure.

Facebook Screenshot Competition

This quarter was also the first edition of the VATNZ Facebook Screenshot Competition. The purpose of the competition is to boost community engagement and show off the community's creativity. The winning screenshot is selected to be the VATNZ Facebook cover photo for the following month. Additionally, other screenshots could be used in VATNZ promotional and marketing.

Thanks a lot to everyone who took the time to send in their entries. This month's quality was amazing, and it's great to see how creative and hard-working everyone is.

Interested in taking part? Ensure you are a VATNZ member, then join our Discord community - vatnz.net/discord/. The winner is announced on the last day of each month.

Community Survey

A key initiative currently underway is the development of a community survey. This survey is designed to gather meaningful feedback from members, better understand their experiences, and identify areas for improvement across the division. The insights gained will help guide future decisions and ensure we remain aligned with community expectations.

Looking Ahead

Overall, Q1 for me has been focused on onboarding, engagement, and establishing foundations for future work. Moving forward, I plan to build on these initiatives, review survey results once collected, and continue developing ways to strengthen community involvement. If you have any ideas that you think could benefit the wider VATNZ community, please get in touch with me either via email using cam.tyson@vatnz.net or vatnz.net/feedback.

Cam Tyson

Deputy Division Director

Operations Department

Although Q1 is usually a quieter time of the year for changes, this year was an exception with two AIRAC cycles delivered with one of those being outside the usual cycle to accommodate the Wellington (NZWN) EMAS project implementation.

Standard Operating Procedures

The quarter saw only a couple of commits to the site which were related to AIRAC cycle changes. As it stands there are currently 22 open issues, with no issues closed or completed this quarter. There are a couple of issues that are going through review which should be released in Q2. The SOPs have slowed down a bit, but we will look to review what gaps remain and prioritise the implementation of anything missing over the course of this year.

Controller Datasets

Cycles 2602 and 2603 were completed this quarter with only minor changes in 2602, and a revamp of all Wellington (NZWN) SIDs in 2603 due to EMAS project changes.

Work progressed this quarter also on some dataset maintenance quality of life features to simplify and reduce time taken to implement changes required each AIRAC cycle.

Many thanks to our provider, Aeropath for continued access to the ANR data package ahead of its release.

Staff Members

No changes to staff this quarter.

Name	Position
Operations Director	Richard Bywater
Airspace Manager	Vacant
Operations Team Members	Connor Sumner
	James Stuart
	Adam Baikie

The quarter has been a quiet one due to real-life commitments which continue to reduce the amount of time available. However, I am hopeful there is light at the end of the tunnel and that we can work together to finish the remained of the outstanding SOPs project and look to what else might be possible in the future.

Richard Bywater

Operations Director

Training Department

Staff Members

Currently, the Training Department consists of nine trainers. Five are VATSIM instructors (I1) or senior instructors (I3).

The department remains understaffed, with a critical shortage of at least three mentors.

Consequently, the wait time to be assigned a mentor is around 12-15 weeks (unchanged). During the period one I1 resigned, and two mentors are on leave, leaving the department with seven productive trainers.

There is a standing call for expressions of interest to train as mentors. The minimum qualification is an S3, but there are not enough S3 trainees graduating at this time (unchanged).

Students

- **Theory:** 28 internal students and visiting applicants are enrolled across the syllabus. A further 13 students have completed theory requirements and are awaiting mentor assignments.
- **Practical:** 28 internal and visiting applicant students are undertaking practical training across the syllabus. There were no students purged from training during the period.

The following ratings have been awarded during this reporting period:

Rating / Endorsement	Number Awarded
S1 (Developing Controller)	2
S2 (Aerodrome Controller)	0
S3 (Terminal Controller)	0
C1 (Enroute Controller)	0
Tier 2 Endorsement (Procedural Tower)	0
Tier 1 Endorsement (Oceanic)	1

Policy

The revised training policy is still a work in progress, with no estimated completion date currently.

The departmental Strategic Development Management Plan is still a work in progress, but many of the features required of a plan of this nature have been identified and developed. Hopeful of a Q2 2026 completion date.

The S1 training rating syllabus remains under review. The major finding of the review has been that S1s have worked towards the solo qualification rather than the S2. This has been identified as a major weakness in the concept. Accordingly, the department is no longer issuing solo aerodrome control privileges to S1s while the review continues. Once again, hopeful of a Q2 2026 completion date.

Activities

SweatBox training files are continually updated and aligned with specific training exercises concurrent with the training refresh project. The training files are being migrated into a GitHub repository. The new exam files and associated scripts are complete. Each practical exam conducted provides data for continuous improvement of these files and scripts.

The project to upgrade the training materials into a more modern format is on hold while all options are considered. The department's administrative functions are not part of this upgrade (no change).

We are working with our VATPAC friends to develop a differences course. This work is being led by them, for which we are grateful.

The annual review of the theory examinations has started and should be completed in Q2 2026.

Closing

As always, there's a lot left to do, but we're continuing to work hard on improvements.

Thanks go once again to the trainers, who give up their valuable time to train our prospective controllers. It can feel thankless, but your work does not go unnoticed. A special mention to Fenton Loveday, whose support and knowledge have helped steer the department immeasurably.

Gary Parata

Training Director

Events Department

Due to the position currently sitting vacant, no report has been prepared for the Events Department.