

Executive Summary

Q3 has been a steady quarter for the Division, with departments maintaining their business-as-usual functions while progressing several longer-running pieces of work.

Staffing Changes

Oliver has temporarily stepped down from his role as Events Coordinator for personal reasons. An Expression of Interest is open to members of the existing Events Team to fill the role in the interim. I want to thank Oliver for his contribution to the Events Department.

Membership

The Division currently stands at 1,136 members - 364 active and 772 inactive. This is broadly stable against last quarter's 1,139 members, with active membership up slightly from 361.

Divisional Policy

The new Divisional Policy (POL-DIV-1) was adopted this quarter. Following Board review, the draft was opened for community consultation in August.

The consultation closed without amendments, and the Board voted unanimously to adopt the policy, which came into effect on 3 September 2026.

Training Capacity

Training capacity remains the Division's most pressing resourcing issue. Despite a strong quarter of ratings issued, the wait to be assigned a mentor has grown to 43 weeks, up from around 20 weeks last quarter. Members interested in becoming a mentor are encouraged to register their interest with the Training Department at atctraining@vatnz.net.

Thank you to all our staff for the time and effort they continue to give to the Division.

Tom Kilpatrick

Division Director

Deputy Division Director

Tēnā koutou i tēnei ahiahi whanau,

Screenshot Competition

The VATNZ Screenshot Competition grew considerably in Q3. We introduced monthly themes and gave members the chance to vote on the next theme, which has helped bring fresh ideas to each competition.

Thank you to everyone who submitted an entry. The standard of screenshots continues to rise, and last month 23 members entered, our highest participation since the competition began.

Interested in taking part? Make sure you're a VATNZ member, then join our Discord community.

Community Engagement

The Board and I remain focused on growing engagement across VATNZ. If there's an initiative you'd like to see, please get in touch. I'd love to hear what would help you connect with the community.

Looking Ahead

The Screenshot Competition was my main focus in Q3. I had less time at my computer than I'd hoped, which limited the progress I could make on the wider community engagement portfolio.

In Q4, I plan to explore ways to automate parts of the competition and research other opportunities to grow community engagement. If you have an idea that could benefit the wider VATNZ community, please email me at cam.tyson@vatnz.net or submit it through vatnz.net/feedback.

Cam Tyson

Deputy Division Director

Operations Department

Q3 for the Operations Department has seen both the maintenance of the Controller Datasets and progress on new tooling designed to enhance the controller and pilot experience in VATNZ.

Standard Operating Procedures

Thanks to work by Connor and Adam, this quarter has seen a good push in the coverage of the SOPs site. While there is still more content to add, the gap to completion is now much smaller, with areas like Flight Service, Oceanic, and Pacific now completed. The main bulk of work left is the last remaining Procedural airports, which we hope to complete during Q4.

Controller Datasets

Cycles 2608 and a special 2609 were completed this quarter with continued changes to many aerodromes in NZZC. Work done in previous quarters has helped make the process more streamlined, with a simpler and faster workflow. There are still a few more opportunities for improvement which continue to be worked through.

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

Tooling Development

This quarter saw the progression of internal development of additional functionality for the VATNZ VatSys plugin, bringing the look and feel of VatSys and EuroScope closer together. We're also in discussions about introducing a VATNZ version of OzStrips, which would support both EuroScope and VatSys, and continue working towards the introduction of the new VATNZ Booking Discord bot.

We expect the VatSys plugin changes to be introduced during the quarter, and will provide an update on the availability of the other work once dates are more firmed up.

For EuroScope users, we are also investigating the replacement of VatATIS, which has an uncertain future, with vATIS. While vATIS is not directly integrated into EuroScope, it provides some opportunities to improve how EuroScope users interact with ATIS. This work is currently blocked by an integration issue with VatSys (which is unable to properly parse ATIS produced by vATIS), but we hope an upcoming release of vATIS will fix this and allow us to continue the rollout.

Staff Members

No changes to staff members this quarter.

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

Closing Statement

There is a lot of work going on, and I continue to thank the Operations Team for their hard work. We will continue the push to improve the experience for controllers and pilots within VATNZ, and look forward to announcing that the final SOPs are complete – so watch this space!

Members wishing to seek further details about our projects or anything in this report can visit the NOTAMs channel in [Discord](#) or connect with us directly at operations@vatnz.net.

Richard Bywater

Operations Director

Training Department

Staff Members

Currently, the Training Department consists of five trainers, two of whom are senior managers in the department. A further two are on reduced workloads for the remainder of 2026.

The department remains understaffed, with a critical shortage of at least five mentors. Consequently, the wait time to be assigned a mentor has increased to 43 weeks as of 30 September 2026. The "READ ME FIRST!" link on the training homepage states this more succinctly.

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). The Training Manager will be issuing another call, encouraging S2s to register their interest in advance.

Students

Awaiting course registration approvals: 3 applicants are awaiting approval for course registrations. Action on these applications is delayed due to the extreme lack of human resources currently afflicting the department.

- **Theory:** 18 internal students and visiting applicants are enrolled across the syllabus. A further 15 students have completed theory requirements and are awaiting mentor assignments.
- **Practical:** 20 internal and visiting applicant students are undertaking practical training across the syllabus. No students were purged from training during the period.

The following ratings were achieved during the period:

Rating / Endorsement	Number Awarded
S1 (Developing Controller)	4
S2 (Aerodrome Controller)	2
S3 (Terminal Controller)	2
C1 (Enroute Controller)	1
Tier 2 Endorsement (Procedural Tower)	2
Tier 1 Endorsement (Oceanic)	1

This output is testament to the long hours being put in by the five trainers and assessors that remain in the department.

Policy

The revised training policy is still a work in progress, with no estimated completion date at this time (no change).

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. We remain hopeful of a late 2026 completion date, but it is more likely this will push into 2027.

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, which has been identified as a major weakness in the concept (no change). Accordingly, the department is no longer issuing solo aerodrome control privileges to S1s while the review continues, except for those who have completed the S2 training syllabus and are awaiting assessment. This item is the "pacing" item at the moment.

Activities

SweatBox training files are continually updated and aligned with specific training exercises, concurrent with the training refresh project, and are being migrated into a GitHub repository. The new exam files and associated scripts are complete, and each practical exam conducted provides data for their continuous improvement. The latest syllabus nearing completion in this regard is the S3 training scenarios, which Fenton Loveday continues to drive.

The project to upgrade the training materials into a more modern format has recommenced, with Bence Russell picking up some introductory proof-of-concept work. The department's administrative functions are not part of this upgrade.

We are working with our VATPAC friends to develop a differences course. This work is being led by them, for which we are grateful (no change).

The annual review of the theory examinations is underway and should be completed in late 2026.

A targeted survey for the Division's members remains in draft, with no completion date available as yet.

Administrative tasks that can wait are currently on hold while the department's five staff members work to reduce the training backlog.

Closing

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

There are 5 trainers on staff and 67 students enrolled or awaiting approval to enrol. Based on those numbers, the staff-to-student ratio is 13.4:1.

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 once again to Fenton Loveday, whose support and knowledge have helped steer the department immeasurably.

Gary Parata

Training Director

Events Department

The third quarter has been a period of transition for the Events Department, following my appointment as Events Director in June. My initial priority has been to ensure continuity of the department's existing programme while becoming familiar with the team's processes, responsibilities, and longer-term objectives.

The department has maintained a consistent and diverse event programme throughout the quarter, covering a broad range of operations and regions across New Zealand. Events during the quarter included Freight Run, Speed Run: Queenstown, Garden City to Capital City, Bush Pilot Fly In, Cook Strait Chaos, Regional Revival, and the ongoing Off The Beaten Path series. These have given members opportunities ranging from structured, high-traffic operations through to more relaxed regional flying.

A key focus for the department is ensuring the event calendar offers as much variety as possible – a mixture of larger network events, regional events, VFR operations, themed events, and more casual flying, rather than relying on a small number of established formats. We are also looking to distribute events across different days of the week and times, to better cater to members with different schedules and increase opportunities for participation.

Team and Resourcing

Oliver has temporarily stepped down from his position as Events Coordinator for personal reasons. To ensure continuity, an Expression of Interest is currently open to members of the existing Events Team, with the intention of appointing a current team member to the coordinator role during this period. This will allow the department to retain existing knowledge and experience while minimising disruption to the ongoing programme. I would like to thank Oliver for his contribution to the department and look forward to welcoming the successful candidate into the role.

Collaboration and Future Direction

Looking ahead, I would like to place greater emphasis on collaboration, both within VATNZ and across the wider VATSIM network.

Within VATNZ, the Events Department is looking at opportunities to work more closely with other departments to develop events with an operational purpose beyond member engagement.

Collaborative events could provide valuable opportunities for controller training, familiarisation with less frequently used procedures, and stress testing of existing SOPs under higher traffic conditions.

Externally, I would like to develop stronger relationships with other VATSIM organisations and create more opportunities for collaborative events, particularly with neighbouring regions such as VATPAC,

as well as other international divisions. VATNZ's established relationships across the wider Pacific region provide a strong foundation to build on.

The department is also continuing to develop its international event programme, including Oceanic Explorers on 11 October, which will bring activity to the wider Pacific region and engage members across participating organisations. I would like to use events such as this as a foundation for further cross-divisional initiatives.

The department will also continue to support VATNZ's participation in larger network-wide initiatives, including 24 Hours of VATSIM Leg 1 on 3 October. This event will see 26 aircraft operate from Christchurch to Auckland in a structured IFR operation with full ATC coverage along the route.

Summary

Overall, the Events Department has a solid foundation from which to develop. My priority for the next quarter will be to increase the variety and accessibility of our event programme, strengthen collaboration both within VATNZ and across the wider VATSIM network, and ensure that our events provide value not only to participants but also to the operational development of the Division.

Chris Bannock

Events Director

IT Department

IT Department report not received for this quarter.