

Executive Summary

The past three months have seen consistent output across departments, alongside steady membership trends.

Our permanent Division Director, Mark Richards, remains on a leave of absence as he focuses on some ongoing health matters. The Division continues to wish him all the best and looks forward to welcoming him back to the Chair in due course.

Staffing Changes

Over the course of this reporting period, we also had two shifts in Board-level positions within the Division.

In early April the Division bid farewell to our Community Engagement Director – James FH. James had been a key member of the Division for many years, including a substantial amount of time and effort dedicated to guiding members through the training pipeline, at all levels of ratings. The Community Engagement portfolio is currently being reviewed and will likely see an evolution before being advertised for.

In early May the Division also bids farewell to our Operations Director – Mikey R. Mikey was previously a Mentor, before moving into the Events Director role, and then into the Operations Director role. Mikey has overseen a continued growth in the capabilities of the Operations Department during his tenure and leaves the Department in a very healthy place.

We are pleased to announce that Richard B has been appointed as the new Operations Director. Richard was previously the department's Airspace Manager and brings a strong depth of experience and capability to the role.

Membership

The membership of the Division currently stands at 1,198 members – composed of 379 active and 819 inactive members. This marks a 1.4% increase in inactive members compared to the previous quarter.

Division-level Collaboration

The Division continues to maintain a strong and productive relationship with VATPAC, with ongoing alignment around Letters of Agreement and operational standards. Discussions are continuing to align the Visiting Controller Letter of Agreement between the Divisions, including a substantial amount of work ensuring the differences between controlling methodologies are accurately captured.

Looking Ahead to Q3

A handful of key initiatives will be driven through the third quarter –

- **Core Divisional Policy:** This policy was started in Q1 2025, however was put on hold due to competing responsibilities of the Deputy Division Director. Work is shortly to be resumed on this, codifying the administrative functions of the VATNZ Board.
- **Review of the Community Engagement portfolio:** Substantial work has already occurred in this space and will be continued over the coming quarter. The intent is to revise the portfolio's responsibilities and ensure that the role is more efficient and effective – particularly where crossover exists. This will culminate in this portfolio being readvertised by September with a renewed mandate.
- **Codification of the Training and ATS Policy:** The Training and Operations Departments will resume development of their overarching policies to align expectations, responsibilities, and progression standards.
- **Codification of Event Department Business Rules:** The Events Department will be directed to formalise the Event management and planning pipeline.
- **Continued Succession Planning and Upskilling:** As a smaller Division, VATNZ often faces challenges in attracting and retaining skilled individuals to drive initiatives - which can lead to stagnation if not actively addressed. All Directors will be expected to identify leadership contingencies and work proactively to upskill and mentor prospective successors.

The Division enters Q3 with renewed focus and a clear set of priorities. While challenges persist, our community remains resilient, and the groundwork laid in this period will support longer-term stability, engagement, and growth.

Kind Regards,

Tom Kilpatrick

Deputy Division Director

Operations Department

Q2 was a productive quarter for the Operations Department. Two AIRAC cycles were completed within the quarter, with no revision cycles.

Standard Operating Procedures

This quarter we have made 12 commits to the site and added Christchurch Special Conditions notes pertaining to operations on the varying apron areas. As it stands, there are currently 24 open issues and 3 issues were closed or completed this quarter. Currently, SOP pages are updated manually to match the latest AIRAC data and associated changes. A solution is being developed to detect any out-of-date procedure names or information that has not been carried over from AIRAC cycles.

Controller Datasets

Cycle 2504 and Cycle 2506 were completed this quarter. Cycle 2504 was standard, with a handful of changes made to our datasets. Cycle 2506 saw changes to Ohakea, Dunedin, and Kerikeri. Our vatSys dataset received over 1,000 code additions and 873 code deletions for these two cycles.

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

Multiple ATIS Connections

On the 14th of March, we made a change to support multiple ATIS connections for vatSys and EuroScope, following popular requests from Division members. A plugin has been made available for vatSys, meaning we could finally move to support multiple ATISes within the Division. A policy change was made to align VATNZ with global policy on ATIS connections. Feedback has been positive, and controllers are enjoying the ability to create multiple ATISes for aerodromes under their control.

Staff Members

The Board welcomes our new Operations Director, Richard Bywater! Richard has moved up from the Airspace Manager role to fill the vacancy that became available following my resignation. Richard's skill and knowledge of operations prior to his appointment made him a great fit for the role and the division have welcomed Richard as he transitions into his new role.

As this is my last quarterly report, I wanted to reach out and say thank you! I've thoroughly enjoyed my time in my various staff roles within the division, starting in training, moving to events and finally ending up in operations. The enthusiasm from the division has been outstanding and watching it grow over the years has been even better. I want to thank all the staff who have worked with me during this time, their passion and commitment to the hobby is what makes it such a great one.

I'll still be hanging around on the network, don't be afraid to say hello!

Best Regards,

Mikey Robinson

Operations Director

Training Department

Staffing and Resourcing

The department currently comprises seven productive trainers: three I1s, two I3s, and two mentors. This is significantly below the projected requirement of 2 I3s, 4 I1s, and 10 mentors. A recruitment drive is underway, with new mentor interest and two returning mentors currently undergoing refresher training. Despite this, trainer workload remains high, and the mentor assignment queue has extended to approximately 12–15 weeks.

Student Activity & Ratings

The Department is actively managing 40 students in theory training and 42 in practical training, including both internal and visiting applicants. An additional 14 students have completed theory and are awaiting a mentor. The following ratings and endorsements were awarded during the quarter:

S1	3
S2	1
Tier 2 Endorsement – Procedural Tower	4
S3	0
C1	1
Tier 1 Endorsement – Oceanic	0

Training Direction & Evolution

Recognising VATNZ's relatively low traffic environment and the limited standalone use of DEL/GND positions, the Department is shifting toward issuing TWR solo endorsements for S1-rated students. This approach is intended to give students earlier and more meaningful access to the network, particularly at non-Tier 1 aerodromes. The endorsement would allow independent TWR control at select aerodromes, with details still under development.

Governance & Policy

A major rewrite of the ATC Training Policy is underway to consolidate and modernise legacy documentation. The new policy will be circulated to trainers, followed by a Board and community review process. Updated role descriptions for both the Training Director and Training Manager have been released, reflecting clearer delineation between governance and day-to-day operations.

Strategic Development

A five-year department development plan (2025–2030) is in draft. The goal is to align training with modern educational standards, support succession planning, and ensure sustainable delivery. This forms part of a broader departmental refresh.

Resources & Assessment

Training guides and simulator exercises continue to be updated and migrated into a GitHub repository. The S2 guide is complete, with others (TMA, ENR, Oceanic) in draft. Assessment practices have been modernised to include competency-based criteria and structured grading. A new trial is also underway using a second trainer to drive simulated aircraft during assessments to improve evaluation quality.

Q3 2025 Priorities

Upcoming projects include:

- Full audit of all written exams (S1–C1, including Oceanic and Visiting Controller).
- Review of the Oceanic and Visiting Controller courses.
- Development of a vatSys transition course and procedural differences course with VATPAC.

Acknowledgement

Thanks are extended to Fenton Loveday (Training Manager) for his continued oversight of operations, and to the trainer cohort for their ongoing dedication and time.

Best Regards,

Gary Parata

Training Director

Events Department

Q2 has been moderately busy, highlighted by two major events: Anzac Parade and Cross the Ditch 28. Cross the Ditch was a standout event, with 618 total aircraft movements.

Christchurch Control (Night Shift)

Christchurch Control has been running well, with good turnouts from both pilots and controllers. The consistency of Enroute Controllers has driven these pilot numbers, with us breaking 100 pilots for the event in April.

<i>Date</i>	06/04	13/04	20/04	27/04	04/05	11/05	18/05	01/06	08/06	22/06	Avg.
Movements	75	87	114	83	90	59	68	97	86	66	82.5

Cross the Ditch 28

Cross the Ditch 28 proved to be a highly successful and busy event for us, recording a total of 618 aircraft movements across our airspace. Key statistics include:

- **Christchurch (NZCH):** 56 departures
- **Wellington (NZWN):** 43 departures, 52 arrivals
- **Auckland (NZAA):** 67 departures, 79 arrivals

We also received significant positive feedback from participating pilots, indicating that the event was well-received and enjoyed by the community.

Staff Members

The Events department is current operating with three members, including the Events Director. Unfortunately, our Events Manager resigned earlier this quarter, with the position not yet filled. Despite the reduced staffing, the team has maintained operational momentum and successfully delivered our Q2 events.

Future Plans

With three major events scheduled for Q4, we are planning a quieter Q3, focusing solely on our regular events. This will allow our team to regroup, maintain quality across our standard offerings, and prepare thoroughly for the larger activities later in the year.