



September 2026
Number 198

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Dedicated to the preservation and continued airworthiness of
Vicia and AESL Airtourer and derivative series aircraft

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Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter should be submitted directly to the Editor at the contacts listed above. Contributions and or advertisements for the next issue need to be received by 21 October 2026. Advertisements are free for Association members.			

Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Publishers, the Airtourer Association or the Airtourer Co-operative Ltd.

Cover: Royal Australian Air Force CT-4A A19-077 at RAAF Base Point Cook, Victoria, the day before its retirement on Thursday 18 June 2026. In 1982, 077 was the last CT-4A delivered to the RAAF. Photo: LAC Jonathon McCaffrey, RAAF.



From the President

by **Deb Evans** (Victa Airtourer 115, VH-IOF)

Welcome to the beginning of spring. The year seems to go quicker and quicker each year!



Unfortunately, Rick and I were unable to attend Stan Tilley's memorial service on 31 August, but I really appreciate all the Airtourer members who travelled to Hobart to pay their respects. We are hoping to see Bonnie later in the year.

If any members are having difficulty maintaining their Class 2 medical, you may wish to consider the Class 5 medical self-declaration. This allows recreational and private pilots to self-assess and self-declare without requiring a medical assessment. You can learn more at the Merimbula Fly-in with a DAME giving a "Fast and Not So Furious" session on medicals.

For members flying in and out of the Sydney Basin and Ballina areas, significant airspace and flight path changes took effect on 9 July 2026. Please note that there are still additional changes to come for Bankstown. Before flying in these areas, please make sure you are familiar with the latest information from CASA:

<https://www.casa.gov.au/operations-safety-and-travel/airspace/sydney-airspace-changes#BeforeyouflyintheSydneyBasin>

<https://www.casa.gov.au/operations-safety-and-travel/airspace/ballina-airspace-changes>

Congratulations to the winners of the 2026 New Zealand Association of Women in Aviation Victa Aerobatic Trophy:

1. Gillian Phillips
2. Stef Gwilliam
3. Laura Wagstaf

I'm looking forward to seeing you all in Merimbula. The program is spectacular, with a sensational guest speaker, Dee Bond, who has been awarded the 2026 Award of Achievement for Contributions to Aviation by the Ninety-Nines.

There is a more in-depth article on Dee's achievement further in this edition, so be sure to have a read.

Smooth landings,

Deb



Next: President's Fly-in, Merimbula

Friday 9 October to Sunday 11 October 2026

**DON'T LEAVE IT TOO LATE!
REGISTER TODAY**

- Beautiful Sapphire Coast location
- Newly upgraded airport
- Grand Dinner with fabulous Guest Speaker
- Lunch flight to Mallacoota
- Navigation exercise
- Coastal flying
- Formation opportunities
- ***Fast but no so Furious 3*** information sessions
- Frog's Hollow visit
- Pilot Proficiency Programme



Full details including registration on [Airtourer Fly-in Web site](#)



Discounted accommodation at Merimbula Sapphire Waters Motel (ask for AIRTOURER rate).

REGISTER ONLINE TODAY



NZAERO NEWS

CT-4 Production to Restart

After a 14-year hiatus, production of the CT-4 Airtrainer is restarting, amidst growing global demand for military and civilian pilot training.

At Ardmore Airport on Friday, 21 August, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul (himself a pilot) and New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon witnessed the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding with Hamilton's NZAero and Thailand's Top Flying Co Ltd. The ceremony, at the NZ Warbirds hangar in Auckland, included demonstrations of the company's CT-4E Airtrainer and PAC 750XL, as well as a showcase of its E-350 Expedition. There was also a static display of past AESL/NZAIL/PAC products, including an Airtourer T6 and the prototype CT-4 Airtrainer.



Prime Ministers Luxon and Anutin in NZAero's CT-4E ZK-JDZ

The new agreement strengthens a long aviation relationship with Thailand, and could represent tens of millions of dollars of export revenue for NZAero over the next three years.

The MOU focuses on comprehensive support for the Royal Thai Air Force's CT-4 fleet, including maintenance, engineering assistance for aircraft upgrades, spare-parts and supply-chain management, knowledge exchange and training. It also covers the development of future capabilities intended to ensure that Thailand's CT-4 aircraft can continue operating safely, reliably and efficiently.

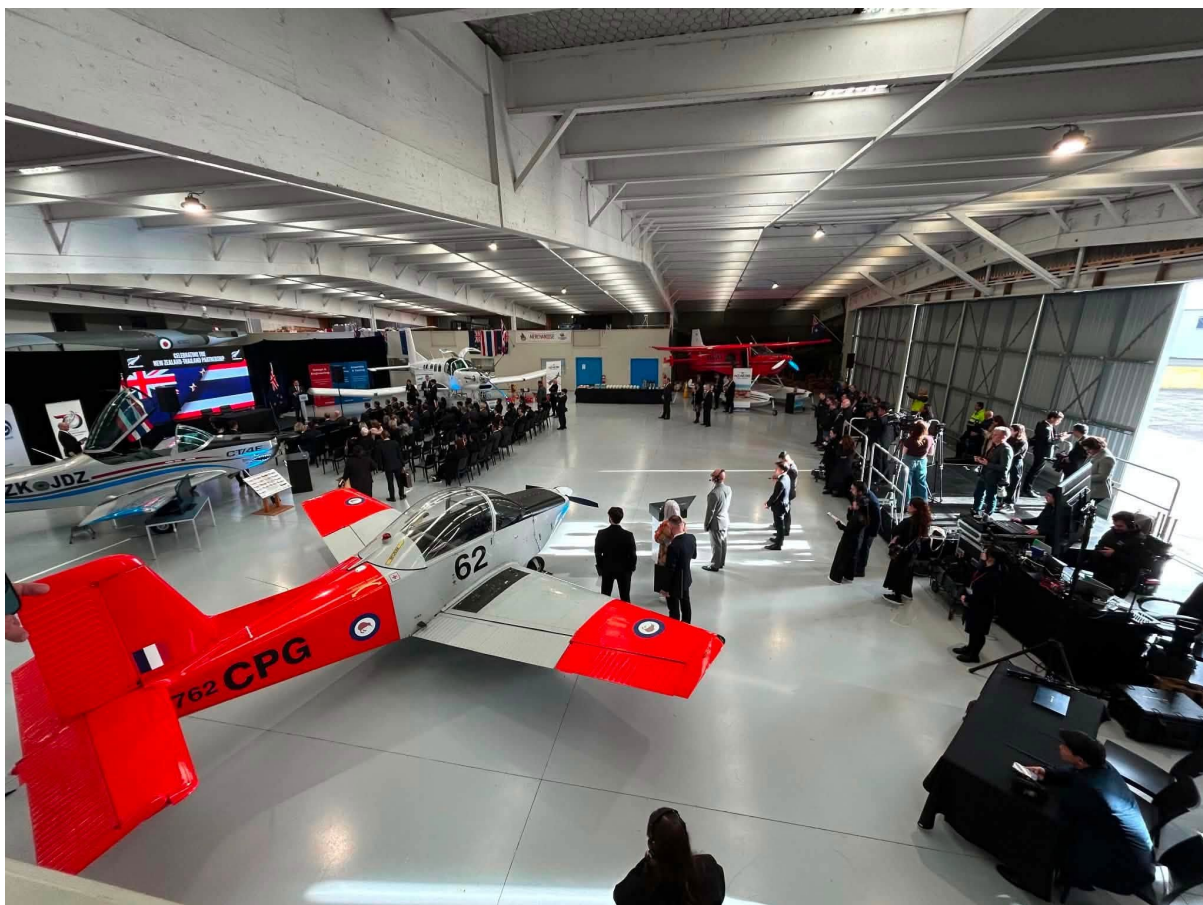


Additionally, NZAero announced it has begun building five new CT-4G Airtrainers, the first new aircraft of the type to enter production since 2012, following growing interest from both military and civilian pilot training organisations.

The company is also investigating opportunities to work with Kiwi tech firms to use AI to analyse flight and cockpit data generated by the new-generation aircraft, creating a more advanced training system that can identify safety risks and improve pilot performance.

NZAero CEO Stephen Burrows says flight training organisations face growing demand as the aviation sector works to train the next generation of commercial pilots.

Boeing forecasts the global commercial aviation industry will require 674,000 new pilots over the next 20 years, with Southeast Asia alone previously forecast to require around 62,000 new commercial pilots through 2044.



Ex-RNZAF T6/24, ZK-CPG, on display at the ceremony. Photo: Kim Parker, NZ Warbirds

Burrows says this will increase demand for specialist training aircraft needed to develop pilots before they progress onto more sophisticated platforms.

“The CT-4 occupies a specialist position at the introductory end of the pilot training pathway, providing trainees with an aircraft on which to develop core flying skills before progressing to significantly faster and more technologically complex aircraft”.



Burrows says the combination of expanding pilot demand, a limited number of competing aircraft in the category and new technology being incorporated into the CT-4G creates an opportunity for New Zealand to secure international market share.

“There are only a small number of aircraft which compete directly in this category and the competing designs are also relatively old.

“What we have is a proven aircraft which is now being brought back into production with a modern glass cockpit, flight data capture and significant safety and performance improvements.

“The CT-4 provides that important first step in a pilot’s development. It allows trainees to establish core flying skills in an aircraft that is straightforward and forgiving to operate before progressively introducing the speed, technology and complexity of more advanced platforms”, he says.

The agreement builds on NZAero’s existing relationship with Thailand, where the CT-4A, B and E Airtrainers have been used to train generations of military pilots. An estimated 3,500 Thai pilots have undergone basic flight training on the CT-4 at least once since the aircraft was introduced into service in Thailand in 1973.



PAC 750XL and CT-4 prototype ZK-DGY at Ardmore. Photo: Kim Parker, NZ Warbirds

The new MOU is expected to broaden aviation cooperation between New Zealand and Thailand across areas including maintenance and sustainment expertise, personnel development and training, technical support, knowledge sharing and long-term planning for spare parts and engines.

“The agreement is an important endorsement of what our team in New Zealand has been able to deliver and provides a platform for us to deepen our aviation relationship with Thailand,” Burrows says.

The Royal Thai Air Force currently operates 25 CT-4 aircraft, including 19 CT-4Es which NZAero is in discussions to modernise. Thailand’s training model sees pilots progress from the CT-4 through increasingly sophisticated aircraft, allowing them to build core aircraft-handling skills before moving onto advanced military platforms.





The latest shark mouth addition to ZK-JDZ. Photo: NZ Warbirds

The proposed Thai modernisation programme would replace ageing instrumentation with modern electronic avionics and incorporate a range of safety, reliability and performance enhancements.

The programme remains subject to Thai Government budget approval. If approved, Burrows says the resulting work could lift Thailand from around 10% of NZAero's business currently to approximately 20% within the next year.

NZAero currently has 10 positions being advertised across areas including quality, safety and logistics, with some of the additional capability being developed to support its growing Thai exports.

Increasing international interest has also prompted the company to restart CT-4 production without confirmed buyers for the first five aircraft.

Burrows says the civilian opportunity is being driven in part by demand for upset prevention and recovery training, known as UPRT, which teaches pilots how to recognise and recover from unusual aircraft attitudes and loss-of-control situations.

Many aerobatic aircraft traditionally used for this training have tailwheel configurations which can be more demanding for inexperienced pilots.

The CT-4 uses a tricycle undercarriage and side-by-side seating configuration, allowing an instructor and trainee to operate alongside each other and making the aircraft more accessible earlier in a pilot's training.



“The civilian market is particularly interesting because there is a shortage of suitable aircraft for this type of training globally.



Highlighting the Airtourer connection. Photo: Thai Official

“The same characteristics which have made the CT-4 successful as a military trainer for more than half a century also make it relevant to a new generation of commercial pilots,” Burrows says.

The new version will retain the proven airframe but introduce recording technology that can capture aircraft position, engine parameters, avionics information and video during a training flight, with data able to be transmitted back to base for instructors to review.

Burrows says AI could add another layer to this information by helping identify patterns that improve training outcomes and safety.

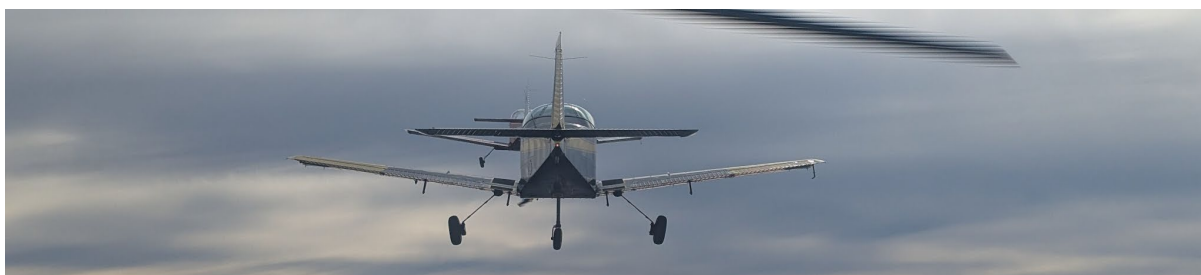
“The technology gives instructors access to significantly more information about each training flight. If AI can be used to interrogate that data, there is potential to identify areas where pilot training and safety can be improved.

“There are New Zealand tech companies already working in areas such as synthetic training and data capture, so we are investigating how that local capability could be combined with the aircraft to create a wider New Zealand-developed aviation training solution,” he says.

This year also marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and Thailand, while approximately 70 New Zealand-manufactured aircraft have been exported to Thailand during that period, including Airtourers, CT-4s, Fletcher aircraft and 750XLs.



THE LATEST NEWS



Vale Jon Peak

Jon Peak was an aircraft enthusiast of the highest order, with a particularly strong love of the Airtourer. He came from an Airtourer family: his parents Pat and the late Bob Peak, and his brother Chris, were long-time Association members. Whenever you saw Jon, no matter what the occasion, he was more likely than not to be wearing an aviation-themed shirt, often collected from his many trips to Oshkosh.

Growing up around his family's Airtourers VH-MOA, MRE, and finally EQG, Jon was a regular at our gatherings. Even after Bob's passing in 2015, he continued to join us, most recently at the Bathurst Convention in 2024.



Our thoughts and condolences go to Pat, Chris, and Jon's son Josh and family.

Vale Gerry Lawson

Gerry Lawson was known in the Airtourer community for his cartoons (featured in many past Newsletters), and his Victa 100 VH-MTI, which he owned for over 38 years (from March 1986 to June 2024).

Gerry passed away in July, aged 93. From a very early age, his passion was flying. As a young man he taught people to fly in a Victa, and did aerobatics and formation flying in Victas. When he decided on purchasing a plane it had to be a Victa Airtourer. Gerry was a man of many talents. He started his career as a commercial artist. Being creative, he designed the family home, built a wooden ski boat, and built



a car (based on a Ferrari) by hand, a project that took seven years. Gerry was a devoted family man and had a witty sense of humor, which showed in his cartoons.



Gerry pictured with his Victa 100 VH-MTI at Temora in 2004. Photo: Doug Stott

CT-4 Decommissioning

The 18th of June 2026 was a momentous day in CT-4 history, being the day on which the RAAF formally retired the last of its Airtrainers, 100 Squadron's A19-077. This concluded over 50 years of RAAF CT-4 operations, which started in 1975 with the delivery of A19-027. The Airtourer Association was represented at the Decommissioning Ceremony by Julian Szaters, Murray Gerraty, Ian Close, Sue Harris, Andrew Merrett, Angela Stevenson, and Tony Self. Strong winds put paid to the plans to fly in four or five Association aircraft, but Jules braved the weather to bring his CT-4B VH-PGH from Lilydale. NZAero was represented by Stephen Burrows and Kelda Burrows.

Number 077, the last CT-4A to be delivered to the RAAF, will be transferred (along with seven other aircraft) from 100 Squadron to the History and Heritage Branch which will determine the final disposition of the aircraft. The RAAF Museum will retain the first of its CT-4As, A19-027. More on page 22.



Dropping in across the ditch

One of the benefits of being part of the Airtourer Association family is being able to drop in on the “relos”. Here, NZAero’s Stephen Burrows is seen popping in to visit James Greenfield at Central Coast (centre), with a ring-in (Kiwi Cessna 206 owner) Kevin Jensen on the right.



New Paint on YCM

Warnervale-based CT-4B (c/n 108) has been given a fresh paint job, losing its old BAe scheme (with added teeth) in favour of a RAAF CT-4A “Fanta Can” scheme. YCM was the last of the CT-4Bs built specifically for BAe Ansett Flying College at Tamworth, having come off the production line in March 1992. It was purchased by Gary Thomas in 2020.



New Engine for 037

Philip Munro's CT-4A 037 (VH-DMI) has a new power plant! A shiny new Continental IO-360 was installed in June this year. All good for a few more decades!



Congratulations Joe Liao

Association member Joe Liao (who those who participated in the 50 Years of CT-4 President's Fly-in to Tamworth may remember) was selected as a finalist in the Australian Aviation awards for Professional Pilot of the Year.

Joe was instructing with the Singapore Flying College in Tamworth and assisted with the tour of the facilities at the 2025 Fly-in, but his first contact with the Association was at the Bathurst Convention a year earlier. He is currently a Multi Engine IFR and Grade 1 instructor at Quantum Aviation, Cessnock, NSW. More importantly, we're tipping that he is a future Airtourer or Airtrainer owner! Congrats, Joe!



Buy, Swap and Sell

Don't let your unneeded Airtourer and CT-4 bits and pieces collect dust! Put them up for sale here! Or do you need a particular part or instrument? Ask here! Why not try to swap for something you no longer need? Or is it time to re-home your aircraft, or are you looking to buy? Buy, Swap and Sell is your Airtourer and CT-4 marketplace! It's free to advertise... just send your ad to editor@airtourer.asn.au.

Victa Airtourer 100 - VH-MTI

Victa Airtourer AT100, Serial Number 127, built 1965. Registration VH-MTI. 3786 AFHR. Current as at 20 Aug 2026. Reluctant sale due to limited hangar space and new aircraft arrival. Always hangared. Will be sold with fresh MR.



Engine - Continental O200A - 100HP engine, 1651 Eng Hrs running "on condition" due to expired calendar time in accordance with AD/ENG/4 A11. All differential compressions at annual were 74-76 over 80 PSI. Oil pressures high 30's to low 40's depending on oil temperature.

Propeller - MacCauley IA/105/SCM6950 with 1686 engine hours; 514 hours remaining before O/H due in accordance with AD/PROP/1 A2.



Paint 6/10, Interior 6/10 – this is a 60 year old aircraft and shows some signs of its age.

Brand new Trig TY96A Comm and Trig TT31 “ADSB in” transponder with TransCal encoder, Trig TN72 GPS unit and new ComAnt CI-105 transponder antenna. All Pitot/Static instruments serviced and calibrated by Parafield Instruments at previous annual. All fuel hoses renewed by Aviation Engines Parafield at previous annual. Two near new magnetos (approximately 130 Hrs total when fitted) at previous annual. Approximately 468 engine hours before magneto bay service due.

Brand new (Airtourer Cooperative provided) undercarriage bolts fitted at previous annual (approximately 268 hrs remaining). Auto Avia design wing inspection panel kit fitted for AD/VAT/28. All recurring AD’s refreshed this annual. AD’s at previous annual inspection (July 2025) included:

- AD/VAT/10 A6 Landing Gear attach bolt replacement
- AD/VAT/28 A7 Wing and Wing Spar attach fittings – Fuel bladder pliable and in good condition. All new hardware fitted.
- AD/VAT/43 A1 Flapperon operation lever and attach box section inspection

All other required legacy ADs and SBs previously completed and logged. CAO 100.5 pitot static/transponder/fuel calibration carried out at previous annual inspection.

Aircraft comes with brand new lightweight “Punkinhead” personalised canopy cover (\$600 value). Some spares with aircraft. Both steel and lightweight aluminium towbars included.

Aircraft located for viewing at Gawler Airfield (YGAW) South Australia. Price negotiable in the mid to high 30K.

Contact Jeremy Jordan, 0421 182 949, p3stoker@gmail.com.



Victa Airtourer 115 - VH-RQL

Serial number 84, middle of the Australian Victas built in 1964.

TTIS 8369. Low empty weight 502 kg. MR to 20-6-2026.

115HP Lycoming O-235 smooth running with good compressions on condition. New baffles.

- 2 x ICOM IC-A210 radios.
- 1 x GTX 327 Transponder factory reconditioned 2025.
- 1 x new DG.



Passenger side iPad mount. New LED landing and nav lights.

New master cylinder and brake gaskets. One of two Victas with wheel spats.

Original factory paint scheme 4/10 but repainted tail plane and elevator 10/10.

Good canopy seals and new studded Pumpkin Head cover - a reliably waterproof aircraft for outdoor parking.

Contact Robin Hilliard 0418 414 341

(Don't worry we'll still be around, upsizing to a CT4)

Merimbula President's Fly-in is coming up!
Friday 9 to Sunday 11 October.

Discounted accommodation available at Sapphire Waters Motor Inn. *Phone (02) 6495 1999 and ask for a room from the 'Airtourer Block'.*

To register for the fly-in, visit airtourerflyin.com. Full registration is \$275, and Grand Dinner only is \$120.

Enjoy a fun weekend of camaraderie, flying, talking and learning!



Short Stay Accommodation at Yarrawonga

Airtourer Association members who have passed through Yarrawonga in the last couple of years will know that Angela (and Tony) have been busy building two-level accommodation into their hangar. Well, it's finished, and The Aeropartment is now available for short-term accommodation! Stay on the airfield, in a very comfortable and well-



appointed apartment, with your Airtourer/Airtrainer visible in the hangar through the glass doors! Booking is done online, and if you are a current financial member of the Association, you can use one of the three codes AIRTOURER, AIRTRAINER or AIRCRUISER to get a 20% discount! More at <https://aeropartment.lodgify.com/>

Advertise here! Buy, Swap and Sell advertisements for Association members are free!

Victa Airtourer 115 VH-MVF



We are selling MVF! Aussie built 115, serial number 19. MVF was a demonstrator for Victa and was on static display at Sydney Royal Easter Show in 1963.

- TTIS: 8378.6 hrs.
- Engine TSO: 1959.5
- Prop TSO: 341.8

Call or text Mark Barnett for details Ph: 0400 051 528

Members Only Offer!



Punkin Head Air Sports are offering Airtourer Association members a 5% discount on all canopy, propeller and pitot/intake covers for Airtourers and CT-4s. Dianne has the patterns for all models, and can provide covers in different materials and weights. Phone Dianne on 0429 938 426 or visit



www.punkinheadair.com.au



Start warming up for Merimbula

Guest Speaker - Dee Bond

We are very excited to have Dee Bond as our Grand Dinner Guest Speaker. Many people who know Dee Bond as a pilot may not know that she trained as a ballerina, became a speech and drama teacher, and studied at university for a BCA in Accountancy and Commercial Law before she discovered the world of aviation.

Growing up sailing, she thought she would become a ship's captain and sail around the world, but after buying her first aircraft, a LA4-200 Lake Buccaneer (even before she could fly), she ended up flying GA aircraft around the world instead.

Dee joined the Ninety-Nines in 1989 (and is now a Life Member). The Ninety-Nines is an international organisation of women pilots. *[It is so-called because at its formation in 1929, ninety-nine charter members signed up. Reminiscent of Mitre 10... Google it, mate. Ed]* She has twice served as New Zealand Section Governor, currently serves as the Section Membership Chair, has assisted on several International Committees, served on the International Board of Directors 2018-2021, and regularly represents New Zealand at international events including Ninety-Nines Conferences, the Air Race Classic, AOPA, and at the World Precision Flying Champs.



Dee and her partner own and operate a boutique hotel and an airfield in New Zealand with a small fleet of Cessna aircraft, and own New Zealand's only commercial aircraft manufacturer NZAero. Dee is a senior flight instructor with 1900 hours of flight instruction time, and 5,300 hours total flight time acquired mostly in general aviation sport flying.

Reproduced with permission of the Ninety-Nines. The Ninety-Nines is an international organization of women pilots, founded in 1929 by 99 pioneering aviators—including Amelia Earhart. Today, we're a global community across 44 countries, united by a love of flight and a commitment to advancing women in aviation.

While the NZAero connection is the most obvious to the Airtourer Association, Dee will be talking about many aspects of her flying, including her current connection with the Catalina; she is the world's only current female Catalina captain.



Airtourer accidents: common causes

Doug Stott (Life Member, previously Airtourer VH-CTM)

Common causes of Victa Airtourer accidents include fuel exhaustion or mismanagement, runway overruns on wet grass, and low-altitude stalls during manoeuvres and low flying.

Fuel Management and Power Loss

Fuel exhaustion: Inaccurate fuel quantity measurement and poor calculation of fuel consumption have led to unexpected in-flight engine power loss and forced landings. The use of the dip-stick has been highlighted in some fuel related accidents.

Unexplained power interruptions:

Historical investigations into aerobatic flights noted sudden power loss events where mechanical root causes remained inconclusive. One case of engine failure due to fuel exhaustion caused by a creased bladder tank reducing usable fuel capacity (a Dolphin Eveready torch left in the tank bay!).

Landing and Runway Control

Long touchdowns: Landing deep onto short or wet grass strips reduces braking efficiency. Not choosing a touchdown point and arriving there at the correct speed.

Late go-around decisions: Hesitating or applying power late during a compromised landing approach frequently results in runway overruns and fence collisions.

Manoeuvring and Pilot Control

Stalls during low-altitude turns: Misaligned approaches or steep corrective manoeuvres (such as sudden low-altitude turns or "S" turns) have triggered aerodynamic stalls and spin incidents. Use of flaps and side-slipping.



Exceeding weight limits: Operating in challenging terrain or weather - slightly above maximum gross take-off weight strains aircraft performance.

Low flying: Outside of designated low flying area – wire strikes.



23 November 1965. While low flying outside the designated training area, the aircraft (VH-WAW c/n 41) struck a power line which the pilot probably did not observe, dived to the ground and was destroyed by fire.

Merimbula President's Fly-in is coming up! Friday 9 to Sunday 11 October.

Discounted accommodation available at Sapphire Waters Motor Inn. *Phone (02) 6495 1999 and ask for a room from the 'Airtourer Block'.*

To register for the fly-in, visit airtourerflyin.com. Full registration is \$275, and Grand Dinner only is \$120.

Enjoy a fun weekend of camaraderie, flying, talking and learning!

Aircraft Insurance for Members

Agile Insurance have put together a special package for Airtourer, Aircruiser and CT-4 Airtrainer owners. This arrangement is for current Airtourer Association members only. There is a good chance you can reduce your insurance costs with this offer, and there's absolutely no obligation. To get a quote, use your member details to log in to <https://airtourer.asn.au/> and then click the Agile link on the home page.



Calendar of Events

October 2026	President's Fly-in, Merimbula, NSW	9-11 October 2025 Book now!
6-8 November	Formation Camp, Yarrawonga	To get on the waitlist, contact Tony Self at editor@airtourer.asn.au
23-28 Feb 27	Australian International Airshow, Avalon	Details coming...
2027	AGM and Convention, Broken Hill, NSW	Dates TBA
2027	President's Fly-in, Clare Valley, SA	Dates TBA
27-30 April 2028	50th Anniversary of the Airtourer Association Convention	Griffith, NSW. This is the big one! We are returning to Griffith to celebrate 50 years of the Association
22-23 May 2028	Wings Over Shellharbour	Contact committee@ if you're planning to attend!
22 July 2028	Solar Eclipse Flight to celebrate Associations' 50th anniversary	Location(s) TBA

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mY7PbK88zM>



Last RAAF CT-4 Retires

by **FLTLT Holly Ryan** (RAAF)

Nearly five decades after introducing generations of military aviators to flight, the Air Force's CT-4A trainer aircraft has completed its final flight.

On June 18 2026, the iconic aircraft took to the skies above RAAF Base Point Cook one last time, closing a chapter in Australian military aviation history at the very place where both the Air Force and the CT-4A's service journey began.



Chief Engineer Tim O'Connor conducts a pre-flight check on A19-077 at RAAF Base Point Cook prior to its last flight. Photo: LAC Jonathon McCaffrey

Its retirement marked the end of an aircraft type that quietly shaped generations of military air power.

Introduced into Air Force service in 1975, the New Zealand-built CT-4A became the first military aircraft thousands of aviators would fly. For decades, it provided the foundation upon which operational careers were built.



Photo: RAAF



Wing Commander David Chaplin, who piloted the final display flight, knows that legacy firsthand.

“There’s a whole lot of air power that has come from this aircraft,” Wing Commander Chaplin said.

“It was the first powered aircraft I flew. I joined the Air Force here at Point Cook in January 1980, and when we arrived on base, all we could see were CT-4s flying around.”



Photo: LAC Jonathon McCaffrey

For many aviators, the distinctive silhouette and bright colours of the CT-4A became synonymous with the beginning of a military flying career, with the aircraft being the catalyst for members to fly some of Australia's most advanced air combat, air mobility, maritime patrol and rotary-wing capabilities.



“Pretty much everybody who came through the services completed training on that aeroplane – Army, Navy and Air Force,” Wing Commander Chaplin said.

'When the commanding officer asked me to conduct the flying display for the CT-4A's final day, it was a little emotional.'

[Dave will still get a regular CT-4 fix: he owns VH-MQA, 061 :Ed]

Left: No. 100 Squadron Commanding Officer Richard Brougham (left) and Wing Commander David Chaplin. Photo: LAC Jonathon McCaffrey

Its final display flight over Point Cook represented a tribute to the instructors who



taught from its cockpit, the engineers who sustained it, the air traffic controllers who guided it and the generations of aviators who took their first steps towards operational service behind its controls.



CT-4A 068 (Garry Hearne), CT-4A 077 (100 Squadron), CT-4A 061 (Dave Chaplin), and CT-4B 059 (Julian Szaters) on the flight line for the ceremony.

Photo: LAC Jonathon McCaffrey

For Wing Commander Chaplin, being entrusted with the final display flight carried significant emotional weight.

“When the commanding officer asked me to conduct the flying display for the CT4's final day, it was a little emotional,” he said.

“After the display, I started thinking about all the people who had trained on the aircraft and all those who had supported it over the years – engineers, administrators, air traffic controllers and instructors.”

Among those reflecting on the aircraft's legacy was reservist Squadron Leader Peter Grieves, who completed his own first military flight in the same aircraft now entering retirement.

“There’ll be a lot of people catching up and sharing memories,” Squadron Leader Grieves said.

“Some of them were stressful memories but still fond memories, especially here at Point Cook which teaches you to fly in just about every type of weather you can get.”





Photo: LAC Jonathon McCaffrey

As the CT4A passed overhead for its final time in service, it served as a reminder that the aircraft's greatest contribution was not the flying it performed itself, but the generations of military aviators it launched into service.

Long after the CT4A's final landing, that legacy will continue to fly.



Photo: LAC Jonathon McCaffrey



Signs of the Times

from **Steven Burrows** (NZAero)

All sorts of goodies are being discovered in the back of the NZAero factory! Tip tanks from the CT-4 prototype, the propeller from the CT-4C, and all sorts of vintage signs!



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SERVICE CEILING	13,000 FT.	13,000 FT.

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AIRTOURER T6/24

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2028 is coming up!

The Association celebrates its 50th birthday with the Convention to be held in Griffith in 2028. The first Convention was held in Griffith in 1978, and the 20th celebrations were also in Griffith. Here's Judy Riddel's report of the 1998 event from AWPA's *AirNEWS*.

Airtourer AGM

By Judy Riddel

With cyclonic conditions moving down the coast, I had a hasty departure from Coffs Harbour through a hole in the cloud then encountered a thick complete cloud cover all the way to Armidale – an exciting start to my flight to the Airtourer AGM at Griffith.

The return trip five days later was similarly eventful. Another build-up of southerly stream weather from Round Mountain 30nm west, and no chance of flying under the cloud, made me decide on 8500ft. The adventure went on to include several orbits

to avoid IFR traffic, diversions around even higher cloud, and a spiral descent 8nm east of the coast to bring us under cloud at 800ft for a clear approach and landing at Coffs. It's not surprising that western pilots dislike the coast!

Colleen Murray, who also flies an Airtourer, joined other members in a safari to Tasmania for a cruise on Eye of the Wind. Returning to Griffith, she won the prestigious trophy for Best Presented Aircraft, which she had helped restore.

Airtourer aficionados gather at Griffith... (left to right) Susan White (Vic), Francis Beckwith (NSW), Jane Morris (Vic), Colleen Murray (NSW) Judy Riddel (NSW), Janette Roberts (NSW), Elaine Sage (NSW) and Lyn Butler (NSW)



Australian Women Pilots' Association – *AirNEWS* June 1998

Rumour File: Phil Unicomb Aviation have just acquired a CT-4B! (The best guess is that it is VH-YAB.)



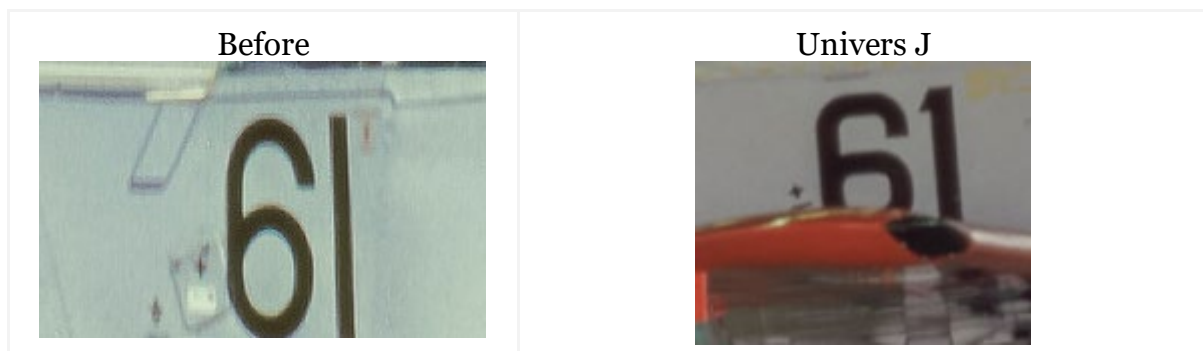
Flashback - RNZAF

Here's a fine period photo of RNZAF basic trainers at Wigram in New Zealand, 26 October 1978. The photo was taken by RNZAF pilot Cliff Jenks, and a big thank you to his son Steve for permission.



The aircraft are, left to right, NZ1760, NZ1938, NZ1762 and NZ1931. You have to look closely to notice that 60 and 62 are Airtourer T6s, while 38 and 31 are CT-4Bs. (Now VH-AMX, ZK-CPG, ZK-JMF and VH-YCU respectively.)

Cliff Jenks made another contribution to RNZAF history by designing the font (Univers J) used on all current RNZAF aircraft.



The Treasury

by **Angela Stevenson** (Airtourer T6/24, VH-FVV)

Hello all my wonderful Airtourer friends!

The Treasury is in the midst of event budgeting for Merimbula. I've even spent some time working on what sort of funds we will need for our big bash - the 50th Anniversary - in 2028. Planning is well underway for Merimbula and somewhat underway for Griffith.

2026/2027 Assn & Coop subscriptions

WOW! You really are an awesome bunch. There's only a half dozen or so overdue membership/co-op subs invoices hanging around that means about 90% have already paid. Rather than name and shame the stragglers here...(I'll be sending out tetchy reminders soon) if you haven't paid yet, then hop to it. I'd be so glad to see a neat ledger of membership fees.

Credit card payments

The new payment system seems to be working well, however, with the introduction of new legislation in October this year, it appears that the 'transaction fee' charged by MYOB, will no longer be able to be passed onto the customer. Treasury will be making some recommendations to Committee regarding our options moving forward.

Healthy financials

Cash in bank is approximately \$29,000.00.

Of this, the Co-operative liability stands at around \$6700.00.

Term Deposit total is approximately \$74,000.00.

Can't wait to see you all at Merimbula!

Happy Airtourerist-ing!

Angela Stevenson
VH-FVV



Anzac Airshow 2026 - West Sale

by **Tony Self** (AESL Airtourer T6/24, VH-FVV)

“The Middle of Everywhere” is the marketing slogan for Visit Gippsland, and the Anzac Airshow was held this year in the middle of Gippsland: at West Sale airport (YWSL). Although billed as the Anzac Airshow, it wasn’t held on the Anzac Day weekend... it was instead the weekend before: 18th and 19th of April.

The display line-up was very impressive. Being close to East Sale, the RAAF were able to send the Roulettes overhead, as well as park a PC-21 within the crowd so people could get a close-up look. 100 Squadron displayed a Tiger Moth, a Winjeel and a Mustang, but the show-stopping warbird had to be Paul Bennet’s Hawker Sea Fury.



Photo: AC Jonathon McCaffrey, RAAF

Also from Paul Bennet Airshows was the Wolf Pitts Pro, and the Edge 540 flown by Glenn Graham. Matt Hall and Kris Sieczkowski displayed formation aerobatics in the Matt Hall Racing MXS-R and Extra 300L.

Recreational and sports aviation was represented by Lorraine MacGillivray in a retractable Bristell, and Paul McCooey in his very quick Lancair IV-PT. Adam Blennerhassett showed off his unusual Steen Rodecker Skybolt, and Andrew Temby danced the skies in his Extra 300L. Gerard Lappin made a Cessna 152 Aerobat do things that a Cessna cannot do.

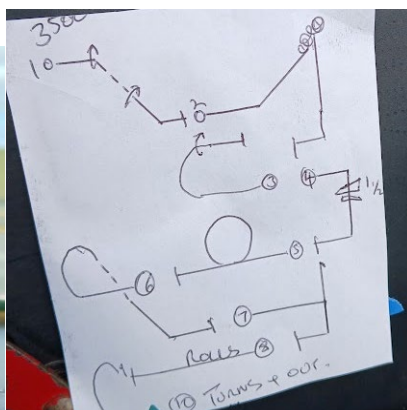
But from a very biased perspective, the highlight of the airshow was Airtourer FVV, (Capt Scarlett), with Andrew Temby at the controls, generating some old-school goosebumps with a vigorous aerobatic display.





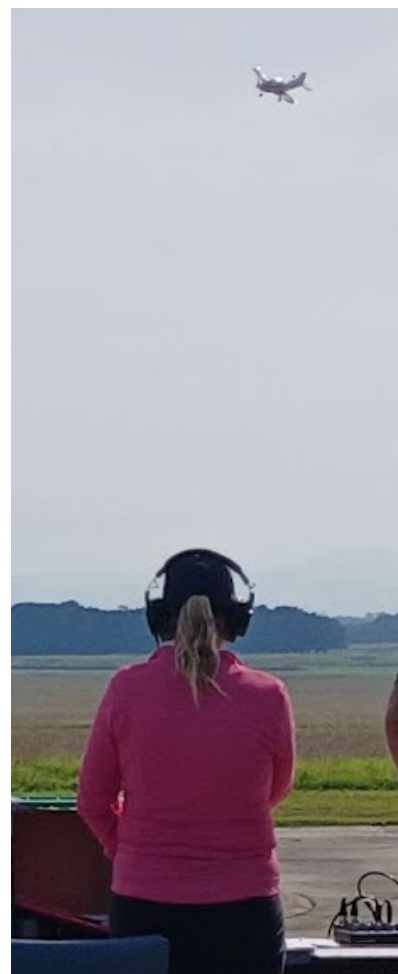
Andrew discovered that a slide-back canopy offered plenty of opportunity for crowd interaction on his return.

Our Association Treasurer was on duty all weekend too, in her other role as airshow commentator. The wind was bitterly, bitterly cold on the Saturday, so much so that the emergency response team had to find her an extra jacket! The Sunday was a lot kinder weather wise, otherwise Angela would probably still be thawing out.



There was a good arrangement of aircraft on static display, including a Pilatus PC-24 executive jet, a Grumman S-2 Tracker, a big Esso Leonardo AW139 helicopter, and a GippsAero GA8 Airvan.

The Airshow has a different vibe to many others... it seemed more of a community show, held together by an army of volunteers and enthusiasts. Try to get to the next one!





The Gippsland Armed Forces Museum is at West Sale, and has an aviation section that includes Macchi and Jet Provost trainers. But an interesting photo on display was the above shot of three generations of RAAF trainers in "Fanta Can" schemes: CAC Macchi 326H, Pilatus PC-9, and CT-4A Airtrainer.

And here are some more gratuitous Airtourer photos with other things in the background.



Keith Fitton

Extract from obituary by Diane Fitton, published in the SMH on 14 Jan 2020

One of the people most responsible for promoting aerobatics in Australia was Keith Fitton, who had a direct association with the Airtourer. And famously, outside looped an AESL Airtourer 150!



Keith Fitton (1937 - 2019) spent the first years of his life at Kogarah, within an extended family and not far from Sydney's Kingsford Smith Aerodrome. His father, also Keith, who had received his wings at Mascot, joined the RAAF in 1941 and the family moved to Wagga Wagga 10 months later.

Keith Jnr was a boarder at the William Thompson Masonic School from 1947 to 1951. He likened it to a concentration camp "without the armed guards" but said that it taught him to be resilient and resourceful.

Called up for National Service in 1957, he went on to join 1 Commando Company and by November 1959 had qualified as a parachutist. He had always wanted to be a pilot and thought

this was the closest he would get to flying.

Having settled into work as a mechanical draughtsman, he married his long-time sweetheart, Dorothy Ellen White, in 1960 and moved into a house at Kirrawee where his daughters were born in 1962 and 1964.

In 1962, Fitton successfully applied for a flying training scholarship being offered by the Royal Aero Club of NSW War Memorial Training Fund. By 1965 he had full-time employment as a flight instructor and, in 1967, with airline work now in his sights, he emigrated to California where his mother lived. He obtained the necessary US licences and ratings but soon realised that his career prospects would be better served in Australia.

Back home he promptly found employment as a flight instructor and put his energies into promoting skilful flying. Over the next three years he was instrumental in starting the Australian Aerobatic Club, which enabled a national competition and eventual entry of an Australian team into the World Aerobatic Championships. His instructional abilities were renowned and he was said to be the best flight instructor in Australia.

Fitton also created the first civilian air show company in Australia (Aerial Promotions Inc in 1969) and was creator and member of the first civilian



professional aerobatic team (with Brian "Black Jack" Walker, an eminent World War II pilot, and Terry Steen, Australian aerobatic champion).

API provided items and/or complete air show packages for aerodromes in NSW and Victoria. The Sydney Air Show (Hoxton Park) on November 9, 1969, was API's most significant event with 40,000 people in attendance and 130 aircraft on show, and it was at this show that Fitton reintroduced the sport of pylon racing.

His own items included an outside loop in an AESL Airtourer 150 and spinning a DHC1 Chipmunk from 10,000 feet.

He held an authority to perform aerobatic flight at air displays and pageants down to 500 feet. Then, late in 1970, with bookings 12 months ahead for air shows but little prospect of making a wage, Fitton accepted an offer to fly with Air Melanesiae in what is now Vanuatu.



Keith, left, and Terry Steen after a forced landing on Fifth Avenue, Austral (near Hoxton Park) on 23 October 1969. Photo: SMH

By the time he returned to Australia in 1979, he had been chief pilot since 1974 and was proud of the fact that the airline (mostly) ran to schedule.

By 1994, his son's avid interest in flying drew him back into the aviation scene and he renewed his licences and ratings. There followed an enjoyable few years working in an industry that had been a huge part of his life, passing on his vast knowledge and crucial skills to the next generation, including a willing and very able pupil in his son Michael.



From the Archive



Not from the Airtourer Archives in this case, but from the National Archives of Australia. *“A model of the Victa Airtourer 100, a low wing, two seater monoplane, designed and built in Australia by Mr H Milicer, Polish born Australian, who planned the Jindivik target plane and the Malkara anti tank missile.”*



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