

New Westland Weather Radar

Pilots flying on the West Coast can now access a wealth of new information, thanks to MetService's new Westland weather radar that became operational in November 2011.

The Westland radar, 7 km east of Hokitika aerodrome, is the fourth of five new radars MetService is installing to supplement the original four weather radars that were established about 20 years ago. The current project has seen new radars installed at New Plymouth (2008), Mahia (2009), and near Rotorua (2010), and will be complete when the Northland radar becomes operational in late 2012.

Each new radar site costs between \$2.5 and 3 million.

Weather radars provide forecasters with powerful tools for prediction of thunderstorms, hail, frontal rain bands, wind shear, turbulence and icing. They also add value to the services MetService provides

to the aviation community through the MetFlight GA, MetFlight Commercial, and MetJet web sites, with:

- » radar images, now updated every 7.5 minutes,
- » airport-centric radar imagery, and
- » user-selectable nautical mile and kilometre range rings.

MetService Observing Network Manager, Tony Quayle, says, "Over the last decade, we have gone from four weather radars scanning every 15 minutes, and automatic weather stations (AWS) that reported just once an hour, to a network of eight radars scanning every 7.5 minutes and an expanded AWS network sending us reports once a minute."

The CAA's Meteorological Authority Manager, Peter Lechner, says, "Pilots in New Zealand now have excellent weather coverage, comparable to the best in the world, at their fingertips via the Internet, to help them with their flight planning." ■

New Rotary Wing Manager

Steve Kern has been appointed manager of the CAA's Rotary Wing and Agricultural Operations Unit.

Steve has nearly three decades of aviation experience. His initial interest

in aviation was kindled by his father, who was a private pilot and part owner of a Cessna at a local airstrip. He started off in industry in 1982, with a maintenance job at Ardmore. After gaining an aircraft maintenance engineer licence, he moved to Wellington in 1992 to manage the maintenance hangar for Airwork (NZ) Ltd.

Steve joined the CAA in 2000, initially as an airworthiness inspector in the Rotary Wing Unit and was almost immediately involved in the implementation of the new Part 135.

He transferred to the Aircraft Certification Unit as an airworthiness inspector in 2009. He was then briefly Acting Manager of the Rotary Wing and

Agricultural Operations Unit in 2010, before being confirmed in the role.

The Unit certifies and audits operators and maintainers in the rotary wing and agricultural aviation sectors. Steve says, "Although my background is primarily in maintenance, several staff in the unit have extensive flight operations experience that I can draw on. The Unit is a dedicated and hardworking team with a desire to continually improve safety.

"The upcoming new Part 137 is an exciting opportunity to lift standards in the agricultural industry, and the Unit will have a strong focus on educating agricultural operators about the new requirements and implementing the rule." ■



Rotary Wing and Agricultural Operations Manager Steve Kern