

Flight Training at Paraparaumu (1958 – Present) – A Brief History

Pilot training at Kapiti Coast Airport (previously known as Paraparaumu Aerodrome) has a rich history extending from 1958 to the present time. Several flight training organisations have operated from Paraparaumu at various times since 1958, with most of them located in buildings located along Kapiti Rd. During the 1970's, 80's and 90's Paraparaumu was the second busiest airport in New Zealand, largely due to flight training, skydiving and gliding club activities.

The Kapiti Districts Aero Club has the longest history having been formed in 1983 and is now the only flight training organisation still operating at the airport.

The following summary outlines the organisations that have offered flight training since 1958.



Wellington Districts Aero Club (1958-1983 at Paraparaumu) - the Wellington Districts Aero Club (formed in 1929) first moved to Paraparaumu in mid-1958 after being banished from Rongotai during the last 6 months of the redevelopment of Wellington Airport.

Although it subsequently returned to Rongotai, the Wellington Districts Aero Club continued a branch at Paraparaumu from the late 1960s.

The Wellington Aero Club is still very active and operates from its club rooms and hangar at Wellington Airport.



Central Flying School Ltd (1964-1965) - was formed in about 1964 when the Auckland Flying School established a new Central Flying School at Paraparaumu and was set up by Jim Bergman.



The Sinclair Flying School Ltd (1964-1968) - Bob Sinclair established this school in 1964 and it was located near the Paraparaumu Flying School until about 1968



NZ Aerosales Flying School (1965-1966) - NZ Aerosales Ltd was largely an organisation that sold aeroplanes but it expanded its operations into flight training at Paraparaumu under the name *NZ Aerosales Flying School Ltd*. The school was set up by Paul Legge in 1965, and one of its instructors, Harry Jenkins, went on to start the *Paraparaumu Flying School* in 1966 when *NZ Aerosales Ltd* was sold.



Paraparaumu Flying School (1966-1970) - as noted above, *Paraparaumu Flying School* was established by Harry Jenkins in 1966.



Christchurch in 1982/83

Associated Aviation (1975-1981) - was started by Harry Jenkins in 1975 and offered flight training and limited charter work from Paraparaumu. Harry expanded his involvement in aviation at Paraparaumu, establishing Associated Air Charter, which offered air taxi flights to Auckland from 1981, and scheduled flights to Auckland, Nelson, Blenheim and



Gold Coast Air Ltd (1990-1992) - provided training and charter services from Paraparaumu from about 1990. In 1992, Richard Bull, Brian Davidson, Richard Joel and Richard Baldwin formed Welair Ltd when they took over Paraparaumu based *Gold Coast Air Ltd*.



Kapiti Districts Aero Club (1983-Present) - In 1983, as part of a restructure, the Wellington Districts Aero Club offered to sell the Paraparaumu branch to Kapiti-based members who took up the opportunity and formed the Kapiti Districts Aero Club, which in 2025 was renamed the Kapiti Aero Club (KAC).

The Aero Club was originally located in the old NAC terminal building and aging hangar alongside Kapiti Road. Given the age and state of the old hangar, it was decided to build a new one which was built in 1985. When the then airport owners subsequently developed plans for the now large commercial area along Kapiti Road in 2013, they moved the new hangar across to the western side of the airport and assisted with the setting up of new clubrooms for the club.

KAC is currently very active with more than 300 members and a fleet of twelve aircraft and a flight simulator.



Paraparaumu Flight Training Ltd (1988-1995) - was established by Ron and Shenna Pownceby in 1988 and operated close to several of the other training organisations at the airport.

Wellington Gliding Club - This was a very active gliding club based at Paraparaumu for a number of years. It offered members the opportunity to fly in a wide range of conditions suitable for gliding and provided great opportunities for people wishing to learn to fly gliders. With the lease on its facilities at Paraparaumu running out, and with increasing costs and restrictions on flying from a commercial airport, the club decided to relocate to Papawai, east of Greytown in the Wairarapa in 2016. The club joined with the Wairarapa Gliding club and is now known as the Wellington Wairarapa Gliding Club.