

The Kapiti Aero Club Story

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 returned to Rongotai, the Wellington Districts Aero Club continued to operate a satellite club at Paraparaumu from the late 1960s.

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 Club initially had access to a range of light aircraft including Cessna 150 and 172, Grumman Cheetahs (bought from the Wellington Districts Aero Club), Auster, Piper Cub, Victa 150 and a Tiger Moth.

KDAC was initially housed in the old NAC terminal building at Paraparaumu aerodrome in Kapiti road and used a hangar nearby, but these buildings were eventually in need of repair and refurbishment. An approach was made to the airport company about demolishing the clubrooms and rebuilding. The airport company at the time was owned by Sir Noel Robinson, a property developer who had decided to move another building onto the western side of the airport to develop an aviation precinct, with plans to develop commercial property on the Kapiti Rd side where the club rooms were located. It was decided to build a new, larger 185 sqm clubrooms on a new site, which the airport company generously contributed to a fit out of the new clubrooms, and also paid for a new hangar built in 1985 to be relocated. A concrete pad was prepared near the new clubrooms and the hangar was transported to the pad overnight in December 2013 by three big rigs from Britton's House Movers.



Kapiti Aero Club Hangar being relocated in 2013



Kapiti Aero Club building and Hangar 2026

The KAC, now has over 300 members and focuses on providing both basic and advanced pilot training, including private and commercial pilot licences (PPL & CPL). The Club is staffed by a team of experienced instructors, an office manager and volunteers, and over the years has trained thousands of pilots with many going on to have successful careers with airlines such as Air NZ and Sounds Air.

The Club has a fleet of 12 aircraft including Cessna 152 & 172, Piper Tomahawk PA38 and a Piper Archer PA28. They also have a Garmin G1000 Simulator. The Club rooms include a reception area/office, briefing and class rooms, a lounge that also includes flight planning and study desks, a kitchen, bar and the Garmin Simulator. The lounge is also used for talks and presentations to members by guest speakers on pilots' nights.



Several of the KAC Fleet outside the Club Rooms



Garmin G1000 Simulator



KAC Lounge & Kitchen



KAC Training Room



An aerial view of the KAC, with its fleet on display as well as several visiting aircraft

KAC members have the opportunity to enjoy social activities during the year including Pilots' Nights when guest speakers give talks and presentations on a range of aviation topics. The Club also arranges "flyaway" trips to various places around the country such as Hanmer Springs in the South Island (for a dip in hot pools), Durville Is, Foxpine and Omaka (Blenheim). Fly-ins are also held when other clubs and aircraft owners outside Kapiti are invited to "fly-in" to Kapiti Coast airport for the day and enjoy the hospitality of the the KAC.



KAC Fly-in July 2025

KAC supports youth in aviation through a non-profit Young Eagles Programme, backed by Flying NZ, the national body representing aero clubs across New Zealand, dedicated to promoting sport and recreational aviation, flight training, and safety. The programme is designed to introduce young adults to aviation and provide them with an opportunity to experience and gain knowledge of the different sectors within the aviation industry. Supported by volunteer members, the Young Eagles experience a wide range of aviation activities such as free local and cross-country flights in club aircraft, visits to the Wellington Air Traffic Control Tower, the LifeFlight base, Ohakea airforce base, engineering workshops and more.



Young Eagles inside the KAC Hangar

The Club also supports the NZ Police Blue Light "Take a Kid" Flying programme, which has been running for nearly 10 years and is a collaboration between the Blue Light Charity, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPS) and the police. Each year, around 30 young people are invited to events around the country, with the Kapiti event being held at Kapiti Coast Airport, hosted by the Kapiti Aero Club. The programme aims to reward young people (often from the Horowhenua/Kāpiti region) and give them a memorable experience, sometimes acting as a positive, behavior-focused reward.



NZ Police Blue Light event at Kapiti Coast Airport

From time to time, aero club members provide voluntary search and rescue assistance in coordination with local authorities. Members have assisted in high-profile searches, including searching the Wellington South Coast for a missing kayaker and monitoring shorelines for missing orca pods. Assistance has also been provided to those affected by civil defence emergencies with club aircraft ferrying essential items to those in need.

The Aero Club is committed to minimising noise impact in the local community, and it works closely with the airport company and Kāpiti Coast District Council to ensure its operations follow all applicable rules in the district plan. As such, the Club is a member of a [Community Liaison Group \(CLG\)](#), which works to improve communication between residents around the Kāpiti Coast Airport, airport users and Council.

Open days are held during the year and provide a great opportunity for people to visit the Club's aircraft fleet or even go on a trial flight or try out the Simulator. Visitors can also meet with the instructors, visit the club rooms and its facilities, and enjoy a BBQ put on by Club members.



Open Day at the KAC