

Paraparaumu (Kapiti Coast) Airport Meteorological Office – A Brief History

The New Zealand Meteorological Service (NZMS), set up a Meteorological Office (Met Office) at Paraparaumu Airport in 1947 in the building now occupied by the Kapiti Aviation Museum.



Paraparaumu Meteorological Office alongside the ATC Tower (1947)

The Met Office carried out regular surface weather observations (wind, visibility, precipitation, cloud, temperature and pressure), and from 1950, balloons were launched to observe upper winds (direction and speed). The balloons were tracked visually using a theodolite until October 1984, when they were tracked using a mobile radar facility.

A forecast office was established in the Met Office from 1947 until December 1959 to supply aviation forecasts to National Airways Corporation (NAC), which had to transfer its flight operations from Rongotai while Rongotai was upgraded to international standards.

In 1987, the Met Office moved to a new site located in Tahī Road on the western side of Paraparaumu (Kapiti Coast) aerodrome, and it was named the Meteorological Observatory. This is the current location of the Observatory, which carries out regular weather observations including upper air soundings. The Observatory also includes a fully equipped Workshop to install, maintain and repair New Zealand's 200+ automatic weather stations, ten weather radars, a lightning detection network, an upper air network, and provides support for a growing network of weather infrastructure throughout the Pacific. In 2022/23, the Observatory building was refurbished and extended to provide for greater MetService resilience including the facility to provide a backup forecasting service in the event the National Forecast Office in Wellington could not function for any reason.

In July 1992, Meteorological Service of New Zealand Ltd was established as a State Owned Enterprise, known simply as MetService, and is NZ's national meteorological service.



Meteorological Observatory at Kapiti Coast Airport (2025)