



# **FLIGHT TRAINING PROSPECTUS**

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**TRAINING@WANAKAHELICOPTERS.CO.NZ**

**WANAKAHELICOPTERS.CO.NZ**

# OUR MISSION

To provide **superior flight instruction**  
and produce skilled pilots who are  
**dedicated** to making **good decisions**  
for a **successful aviation career**.





# WELCOME TO WANAKA HELICOPTERS

We are a family-owned flight training school and commercial helicopter operator offering scenic, commercial, charter, agriculture and training flights year-round in one of the world's most breathtaking locations.

We are New Zealand's premier and most experienced helicopter flight school. Established in 1992 we've produced more NZQA approved helicopter pilots than any other in the country. We offer private (PPL) and commercial (CPL) as well as tertiary training and advanced professional training.

Founder and Chief Flying Instructor, Simon Spencer-Bower is New Zealand's most experienced helicopter flight instructor, recently achieving 24,000 flight hours. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the Queen's Service Medal for services to aviation and the Helicopter Association International Flight Instructor of the Year 2015 award.

The New Zealand Diploma in Aviation equips students with knowledge, skills, and practical experiences that commercial operators want to see in applicants, but which are rarely found among private trainees. It lays the groundwork for a future path toward flight instruction, ATPL, Air Traffic Control or becoming Air Operators themselves.

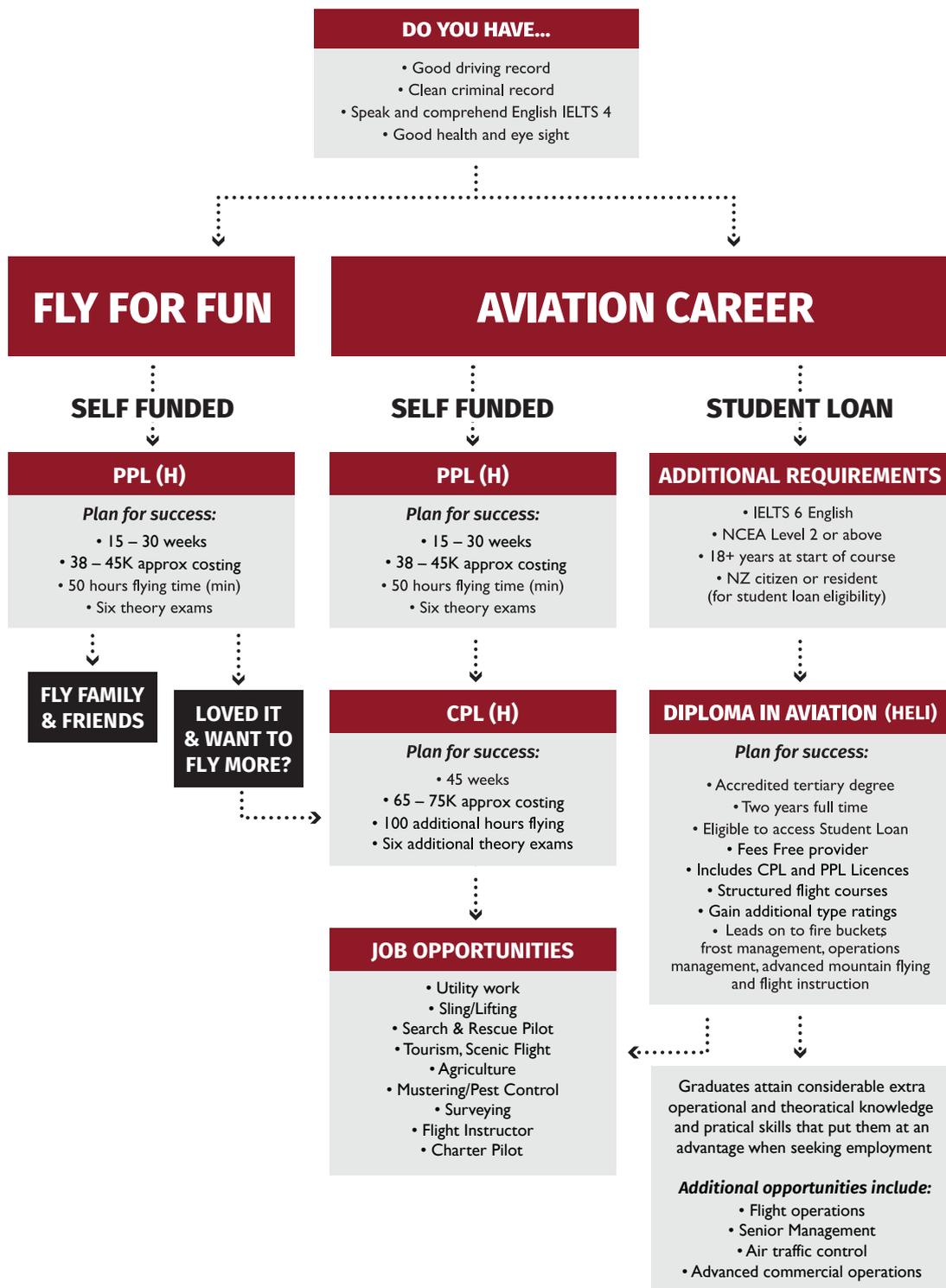
We also offer New Zealand's top Advanced Helicopter Mountain Flying course and highly sought-after specialist training in helicopter safety, sling, type ratings, and pilot recurrency.

The Southern Alps provide an exceptional flying environment perfect for developing all-around flying skills, and Wānaka Airport comes with the benefits of having uncontrolled airspace with nearby dedicated training areas. This ensures more productive and cost-effective training in mountain operations – the hallmark of why Wānaka Helicopter pilots are so valued around the world.

Our team operates in and around our mountains daily in our fleet of Robinson R22, Guimbal Cabri G2, Robinson R44, MD500E and Airbus AS350 "Squirrel" helicopters, all of which are used for training, scenic and commercial work. Other aircraft types are available for specific training requirements.



# PATHWAYS TO BECOMING A PILOT





## MEET OUR TEAM

We are family-owned and directed by the Spencer-Bower family. Simon, Carolyn, Chris, and Pete offer superior training and commercial services. Flight-training is more than a business for us, it is a family legacy.

Experienced instructors are involved in your training from your first enquiry to the day you become a pilot.

We are dedicated to your success and can answer questions about course planning, enrolment, and Wānaka life. Each pilot brings their operations experience and training skills to each and every Wanaka Helicopter trainee. Trainees engage with a single instructor for some skill areas, but every trainee flies with several instructors to benefit from their decades of diverse working backgrounds.



### **BRIAN PAAVO**

Brian is Wanaka Helicopter's Academic Coordinator, looking after all of our Diploma students and maintaining most of our private trainee records. In addition to programme applications, enrolment, scheduling, and student finance assistance, Brian participates in several theory courses and leads Wanaka Helicopter's responsibilities as a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International and Domestic students.



### **SIMON SPENCER-BOWER**

Simon leads the instructor team at Wanaka Helicopters, offering guidance and assistance to all students. With extensive experience spanning over 50 years and accumulating more than 24,000 flight hours, Simon is a seasoned expert in helicopter operations. Holding an A category flight instructor rating and serving as a general aviation flight examiner, he exemplifies leadership in every aspect of the aviation industry.



## FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS



### **CHRIS SPENCER-BOWER**

Chris co-leads Wanaka Helicopters' flight training, providing comprehensive guidance across all training aspects and leading multiple theory courses. As a B category flight instructor, Chris plays a pivotal role in both commercial flights and instructional sessions across various helicopter types. Specialising in advanced training, he offers extensive expertise and support to students in all flight aspects.



### **GREG KEILY**

After six years as a mechanic in the NZ Army, Greg earned his commercial license in the UK. There he gained extensive experience in air ambulance operations, mining, scenic flights, surveying, and with the National Police Air Service. Greg returned to New Zealand to share his skills with our trainees and now co-leads Wanaka Helicopters training, holding a B category flight instructor certification.



### **PETE SPENCER-BOWER**

Pete, our Director and CEO, is a highly experienced commercial pilot with extensive flight experience in New Zealand and Canada. In addition to his leadership roles, Pete actively pilots commercial flights, instructs across various helicopter types, and directs operations at our sister company, Backcountry Helicopters. He holds a B category flight instructor certification.



### **DEAN WILLIAMSON**

Dean has flown in many environments and countries around the world and brings a wealth of knowledge and instructional expertise to trainees. Dean is a senior B category flight instructor and also flies scenic and commercial operations.



## FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS



### **NICK MILLAR**

Nick is an experienced transport and agriculture pilot having worked extensively throughout Otago, Fiordland and Southland for over twenty years. He is a senior B Category flight instructor and airline flight examiner.



### **JASON LUSH**

Jason began his flying career in the RNZAF, spending 15 years in uniform before transitioning to his first love, the commercial helicopter world. Jason has had extensive experience in commercial and scenic operations on the West Coast and he is the Safety Manager for Wanaka Helicopters. Jason is a B category Flight Instructor.



### **TRAVIS CHAMBERS**

Travis is an experienced pilot and licensed engineer who has worked across New Zealand as a commercial pilot and instructor. Prior to his training, Travis was in the NZ Airforce and his career since has seen him work in a range of commercial operations and instructing roles. Travis holds a C category flight instructor rating.



### **HENRY MENZIES**

As our lead pilot at our sister company, Backcountry Helicopters in Makarora, Henry is also a valuable member of the Wanaka Helicopters training team. Henry is a C category flight instructor and an experienced pilot who has worked throughout New Zealand and Australia across a range of commercial operations.



## OUR FLEET

Wanaka Helicopters operates an extensive and modern training fleet of piston and turbine helicopters. Our fleet is maintained to the highest industry standards and includes:

- Robinson R22 (2 place)
- Guimbal Cabri G2 (2 place)
- Robinson R44 (4 place)
- MD500E (4 place)
- Airbus AS350 B2 (Squirrel) (7 place)
- Several other types may be available to meet specific training requirements

Diploma training includes three type ratings (R22, G2, R44) which is of great benefit to students entering the commercial environment.

We pride ourselves on the presentation of our fleet, so that during training and commercial operations students and passengers are able to enjoy a safe and comfortable experience to focus on the task at hand. All of our aircraft are used day-to-day in flight training and commercial operations.

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“ We’ve been training flight instructors since the early 1980’s. We are passionate about flight training and pride ourselves in **producing exceptional pilots** ”

– Simon Spencer-Bower (Owner/Director)





## PRIVATE PILOT LICENCE (PPL)

This requires a minimum of 50 hours of flight training of which at least 20 hours is flown dual with an instructor and 15 hours flown solo.

Your first 15 to 25 hours training covers basic air exercises and generally learning to operate the helicopter before you can complete your 'first solo' flight.

After a few hours spent flying on your own to get comfortable you will progress to compulsory advanced exercises including 5 hours mountainous terrain flights and 10 hours of cross-country (navigation) flying.

In conjunction with the flight training, six theory exams have to be passed including air law, meteorology, navigation, air technology, flight radio and human factors. A spoken English examination is also required.

Private training students undertake self-directed study and schedule their own theory examinations. In addition to our online learning resources our staff

will help you identify materials students can purchase to prepare or provide guidance for study techniques to be the best pilot you can be.

Navigating the regulatory environment can be a challenge but we stand by our trainees, helping guide them through each stage culminating in an official log book review and flight test with an examiner.

Every trainee and training schedule is different, but we pride ourselves on a high flight test success rate for trainees with 50-60 flight hours of consistent experience. Age and training flight frequency are important components for success so we support a personalised approach to training programme design.

Wanaka Helicopter can arrange a Public Trust or full-time flying schedule (20+ hours per month) to help you achieve your goals most efficiently.

We welcome trainees from anywhere in the world for private training. The official global language of aviation is English, so spoken English and English comprehension standards apply.





## COMMERCIAL PILOT LICENCE (CPL)

A minimum of 150 total flight hours of training is required, of which 35 hours must be solo flight. Similar flying exercises are covered as in a PPLH, but to a higher standard and in a broader range of environmental conditions. Additional operations including more mountain training (10 hours) and external loads (sling 10 hours) are required and one of the reasons why Kiwi pilots are so highly regarded internationally.

Post PPL advanced manoeuvres and techniques are introduced as your abilities grow. We incorporate (where possible) your career goals into exercises as you conduct mountain, sling, and new type rating operations. Your practical flight skills must meet increasingly higher standards as does your flight planning and preparation.

Six additional CPLH examinations must be passed with advanced topics in aviation law, meteorology, navigation, helicopter principles of flight, helicopter technology, and human factors. Helicopter principles of flight and helicopter technology are two separate

exams in the commercial licence as opposed to one for the private licence. A PPLH flight radio pass suffices for CPLH licensing.

CPL training culminates in a local and mountain flight test with an independent external examiner.

As a Ministry of Education approved Private Tertiary Organisation, Wanaka Helicopter can report CPL credentials to appear on your official academic record. Trainees find that earning their CPL from Wanaka Helicopter opens doors to employment through our industry reputation and trainees regularly take advantage of instructor references to gain their first position.

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“ What I was taught was **beyond the standard** level of instruction, and I really benefited from the **practical approach** our instructors took in lessons ”

– Remy Lewis (Dip in Aviation)





## CAREER ADVANCEMENT & CURRENCY TRAINING

### PROFESSIONAL TRAINING CENTRE PROGRAMMES

Wanaka Helicopter instructors and examiners help licenced pilots keep their skills sharp, up-to-date, and meet compliance requirements.

**MOUNTAIN** – Many international pilots visit for one to three weeks to undertake Advanced or recurrency flights amongst the Southern Alps, Mount Aspiring and Mount Cook National Parks. Wanaka Helicopters are the New Zealand specialists in mountain training. Our instructors operate flight training and commercial operations in the mountains on a daily basis to help you refresh or gain key safety skills. We offer CAA approved advanced instruction for CPL pilots with the 10 hours of building mountain skills. This is a non-compulsory course that can be taken at the end of a student's CPL or is available to existing CPL's looking for more experience.

**TTMRA** – Australian CPLH pilots aiming to work in New Zealand can obtain a New Zealand licence through the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Action (TTMRA). Ten hours each of dual mountain and sling operations will bridge the ANZAC syllabi

differences while also providing a great skills refresher and local references that New Zealand operators are looking for.

**BFR/FCCC** – As a licenced pilot, a Biennial Flight Review is required to keep your licence current or anytime you fall out of currency. Commercial pilots often integrate BFR and Flight Crew Competency assessments into one training plan

**RSAT** – Robinson Safety Awareness Training currency is required for any pilot operating an R22 or R44 in New Zealand. We offer a CAA-approved half day course and theory examination each month and coordinate the flight demonstration (typically taking 0.7h) to take place on the same day (weather permitting).

**HELICOPTER SAFETY** – If your organisation has staff members participating in helicopter activities as part of their on the ground or in the air work, it can be wise to incorporate safety training into your inductions. We can deliver an NZQA-approved Working Safely Around Helicopters course (including academic credit) for groups as small as three persons. This includes approved hover entry and exit procedures.





## DIPLOMA IN AVIATION

Train for your aviation future amongst Wānaka's stunning mountain landscape. Study core flight theory, plus professional aviation subjects for commercial operators. Acquire superior flight skills by training in a mountainous environment with highly experienced flight instructors during the two year, full-time qualification. All courses are taught at Wānaka Airport where trainees actively participate as support in daily commercial operations as part of their training.

Wanaka Helicopters' Diploma includes everything you require for a commercial licence, plus extra flight opportunities, ratings, and invaluable ground operation experience to prepare you for your commercial flight test (typically 150-152 flight hours). Unique among providers, our programme is designed to build up excellent pilots from students with no prior flight experience right through their CPL flight test with several additional skills and endorsements included within the 150-hour requirements.

### OVERVIEW

The New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (NZDipGA) has been developed by the aviation industry for both fixed and rotary wing pilots. Also unique among providers, Wanaka Helicopters partners with our sister-company, Learn to Fly NZ, to deliver the Diploma in the world's most popular training aeroplane, the Cessna 172. Either qualification is administered under NZQA. Theory is covered in mostly joint ground courses giving students a broader educational base perfect for a career in mixed-aircraft GA operators after graduation.

The Diploma results in candidates graduating with a commercial pilot licence and a Diploma in Aviation. The Diploma comprises more than 25 unit standard courses and modules combined into one, two-year qualification. These courses encompass topics and aspects of aviation over and above those required for a basic commercial pilot licence. The Diploma is structured to start a professional pilot on a career path including safety management systems and principles. Graduates will attain considerable extra operational and theoretical knowledge and practical skills that put them at an advantage when seeking employment as commercial pilots. A detailed course catalogue and application packet is available on our website.

### AIM

The purpose of this qualification is to provide the General Aviation sector of New Zealand with graduates who have attained knowledge and practical skills to operate as commercial pilots and act as support staff for flight planning and aircraft operations.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

After successfully completing the course, rotary graduates will be a qualified commercial helicopter pilot, with type ratings for three single-engine piston helicopters, able to exercise the privileges provided for by CAANZ in New Zealand including ground operations, flight planning and assisting operators with their safety management systems (SMS). Fixed wing graduates will be qualified in single-engine piston VFR, night VFR, and IFR operations.



# DECIDING IF WE ARE RIGHT FOR YOU

## THREE STEPS AND YOU COULD BE IN THE PILOT SEAT!

### Step 1

#### GATHER THE INFO YOU NEED!

Do you have the dedication, time and funding?

### Step 2

#### DECIDE TO TAKE THE BIG STEP UP

The first step in starting your career in aviation is choosing the right school and qualification for you.

- Check out our Flight Training guide.
- Contact the liaison team at Wanaka Helicopters.
- If you're at high school, talk to your Career Advisor. Secondary school subjects that can aid your study are English, maths, natural sciences including physics, and industrial technology courses.
- See if your school has a Gateway Programme.
- Talk to people in the aviation industry.
- Decide if private training or the Diploma is the right pathway for you.

### Step 3

#### IF YOU MEET REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for Private Training:

- Good driving record
- Clean criminal record
- Good health and eyesight
- Fluently speak and comprehend English (IELTS score 5 and above)

Additional requirements for Diploma in Aviation:

- At least 18 years of age at programme start date
- NCEA Level 2 equivalent
- English IELTS 5 or equivalent is our minimum level.
- New Zealand citizen or have residency (necessary only if applying for a student loan)

#### READY TO TAKE OFF?

Contact us and we'll help you find your way!

0800 46 36 26

[training@wanakahelicopters.co.nz](mailto:training@wanakahelicopters.co.nz)





# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Wanaka Helicopter is a nationally accredited training provider with the New Zealand Qualification Authority and is a signatory of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

## REQUIREMENTS

Our responsibility to international trainees means that, if you are not a New Zealand or Australian citizen, you must have:

- Medical and travel insurance including insurance for flight operations.
- An appropriate visa or permit to study in New Zealand ([www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz)) for more information.

- An English translation of Justice Department and/or police reports for the CAA Fit and Proper Person application.
- Proof that you have the ability to support yourself whilst in New Zealand (access to \$10,000 per year).
- An IELTS test result 6 for the Diploma in Aviation if English is not your first language.

Wanaka Helicopters can provide assistance to successful applicants with obtaining a student visa. Please note that all mandatory paperwork must be signed (in English) before application for a student visa will be made to the New Zealand Immigration Service.

## TOP 5 REASONS TO TRAIN WITH US

New Zealand's most experienced helicopter flight training school.

Highly experienced and knowledgeable flight instructors.

High altitude mountain flying two minutes away.

Training based within a commercial environment.

Graduate employability and industry networks.





## GRADUATE PROFILE

MAX ROY



Max's journey to becoming a helicopter pilot began with a hunting and fishing trip at the age of 14. On this trip he experienced his first helicopter ride and was instantly hooked. From that moment he knew he wanted to fly helicopters for a living. His passion grew as he researched training options, leading him to Wanaka Helicopters, thanks to a friend whose family owned another commercial helicopter business in the North Island.

Max's decision to train with Wanaka Helicopters was solidified during a family holiday when he convinced his dad to visit the training school. Expecting a brief visit, they were instead treated to a comprehensive tour by Simon, who spent three hours showing them around. The incredible hospitality and thoroughness impressed Max and his father, making Wanaka Helicopters the clear choice. Continued interactions with Brian over the next two years reinforced this decision, as they always received prompt and helpful responses to their questions.

Max's training experience at Wanaka Helicopters was marked by numerous highlights. He valued the sense of family and the incredible environment, with training areas ranging from mountains to the coastal areas. A standout aspect for Max was the opportunity to be involved in the commercial side of the business. Whether driving fuel to the coast, assisting with lifting jobs, or washing helicopters,

he enjoyed every moment and found the hands-on experience invaluable when he started his first job.

Max began applying for jobs straight after he graduated from the Diploma in Aviation and he successfully landed a job with PHI Aviation within a couple of months.

Max is now flying a Sikorsky S92 for PHI, transporting personnel to offshore oil and gas platforms in Western Australia. He is grateful for the strong training foundation that he received throughout his training which helped prepare him for this role and the commercial aviation world.

He believes the varied and challenging training environment around Wānaka honed his flying skills, allowing him to adapt to different operations and focus on the job at hand. One day Max would love to be able to fly in and around the mountains again, but for now is loving the invaluable experience and opportunities he is presented with.

Max's advice to anyone considering training with Wanaka Helicopters – "It is the best decision I have ever made. The people are incredible, the places you will see are amazing and they truly want to see you succeed and will do everything they can to set you up for a successful career."



## GRADUATE PROFILE

### JEREMY INGLE



Jeremy was lucky to grow up around aviation so it is no wonder he decided to later study the Diploma in Aviation. Both of his parents worked as air traffic controllers which meant he was exposed to a range of different aircraft from a young age. "I've always loved anything to do with aviation, I was always going to do something along that line, however helicopters were always the main attraction for me."

Pursuing a career as a helicopter pilot was made possible with the ability to apply for an interest free student loan, eligible with the Diploma programme. Securing this funding, Jeremy enrolled in the Diploma in Aviation and transferred to Wanaka Helicopters in 2015 after starting training with another training school, "I had heard about Wanaka Helicopters' level of training before and I was instantly very keen to finish my training there."

Jeremy most enjoyed sling load flying. "Sling was a highlight of my training, the best part of Wanaka Helicopters training is the emphasis on practical training. I believe that makes you very employable

because it means you can arrive at your first job ready to work." After graduating with his Diploma in December 2015 Jeremy moved back to Christchurch for a short time.

Jeremy heard through Wanaka Helicopter's industry networks about a job opening in Australia. Within a week he was on a plane heading for a work trial which culminated in a job offer to begin his piloting career flying Robinson 44 helicopters. After only six months he was offered a rating to fly H130 helicopters. Jeremy has steadily built his flight time to over 500 hours, an important employability milestone in any pilot's career.

"The thing I love most about flying is that you are in an ever changing office, whether it is where you are flying on any given day or the weather conditions you are flying in."

Jeremy's dream is to eventually return to the South Island, to fly passengers in and around the spectacular Southern Alps.



## GRADUATE PROFILE

### CHARLOTTE NEWBOLD



Charlotte remembers the day her aviation career began, undertaking a trial flight at Wanaka Helicopters. Foregoing her plan to study a Masters in Dietetics at Otago University, she made the decision to become a helicopter pilot and has never looked back. “I always had an interest in aviation as my grandfather was a pilot in the Pacific during WW2.”

Charlotte undertook private training at Wanaka Helicopters to gain her commercial licence and was determined to have a job she loved. Wanaka Helicopters was an obvious place for her to train, being from Queenstown. However, the opportunity to learn to fly in the mountains and with experienced instructors was a big factor. “My research told me Wanaka Helicopters is the best training provider in New Zealand. Not only that you are flying around one of the most beautiful places. When you are not training you are enjoying everything Central Otago has to offer skiing, hiking, boating and so much more!”

After completing her commercial license in 2015 Charlotte worked at Heliworks Queenstown Helicopters/Southern Lakes Helicopters, Volcanic Air Safaris and then moved back to the South Island late 2019 to work for The Helicopter Line based in Franz Josef Glacier. Charlotte then moved within the company to fly for their base in Queenstown in 2020.

Charlotte describes her typical day: “To start most days all of the pilots catch up for a coffee

to discuss the day, bookings, weather and any safety related matters. A great way for us to communicate and discuss how the day will run. I then preflight my assigned helicopter for the day, followed by checking the weather and looking at any forecasting and webcams that will help me have a clear picture on what the weather is doing. I then speak to the office staff for any extra details for the day ahead.

My days are rarely the same. I can do a day's flying and not go to the same place twice. Some days I might be carrying out scenic flights around Queenstown, or a flight into Milford Sound with a glacier landing on the way in followed by a landing up at Lake Erskine to enjoy a glass of champagne.

We also do a lot of private charters, sometimes in a group of 15+ helicopters. Flights can often mean us landing at luxury lodges, west coast beaches, alpine lakes, high country stations and international airports. The weather is very changeable around Queenstown and especially Fiordland so you are always evaluating the weather and your options.

Charlotte would eventually love to get involved with search and rescue or a medical helicopter pilot role.

If you are thinking about becoming a helicopter pilot she encourages you to do a trial flight and talk to people in the industry. “Most pilots live and breathe their job so it's not a decision to be made lightly – you need to really love aviation, it's a journey not a sprint.”

**START YOUR AVIATION DREAM  
WITH NEW ZEALAND'S  
MOST EXPERIENCED  
FLIGHT TRAINING SCHOOL**





## CONTACT US

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