

Royal Aeronautical Society New Zealand Division

Project Summary Young Aerospace Professionals Programme

February 2026



1. Executive Summary

The Royal Aeronautical Society New Zealand Division (RAeS NZD) is establishing the Young Aerospace Professionals programme to address one of the most significant challenges facing New Zealand's aerospace sector: developing a sustainable, skilled, and future-ready workforce.

This strategic initiative aims to inspire, attract, and support individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 who are interested in undertaking a course of study or employment in the aerospace sector. It aligns closely with the New Zealand Government's aerospace strategy and directly supports the New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority's (NZCAA) and International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) 'next generation of aviation professionals' (NGAP) strategy, both of which emphasise the urgent need to build an aerospace-capable workforce. The programme also has been reviewed and endorsed by the Royal Aeronautical Society UK.

The Royal Aeronautical Society is a not-for-profit organisation and exists for the benefit of all those associated with the aerospace industry, professionally or as an enthusiast, across all career and interest pathways. Due to its volunteer structure, RAeS NZD requires external support to fund this programme.

The programme will be implemented over 18 months. First, a national digital advertising campaign will raise public awareness of RAeS NZD and increase student and young professional membership. In parallel, corporate sponsorship is sought to establish a dedicated 'Careers and Outreach Coordinator' to manage programme delivery as membership grows. The intent is for the programme to ultimately operate sustainably with multiple funding streams. This summary outlines the value of the initiative, the duties of the 'Careers and Outreach Coordinator', anticipated costs, and a timeline for scheme implementation.

2. Present State

RAeS NZD's strength lies in its diverse national membership, which represents a broad cross-section of New Zealand's aerospace sector. There is significant unrealised potential to link the vastly experienced membership with those interested in aerospace careers and also to provide guidance and advice to those in the early stages of their careers.

While the Society maintains relationships with university students and young professionals, engagement is mainly limited to engineering disciplines. Society membership has expressed a desire to broaden outreach across all aerospace career pathways, and also to engage more diverse audiences. The Society does not currently have the finances to realise this ambition and therefore intends to seek additional funding through a mixture of community funding and corporate sponsorship.

Recent engagement with the University of Auckland, Massey University, and the University of Canterbury has revealed a strong student interest to connect with the Society, but many students are unsure as to how to go about this. Additionally, the Society contributes and assists with some local and national school initiatives, and by enhancing its offering to school leavers and those at the start of their careers, it will enable the Society to remain engaged and relevant across the entire education timeline.

3. The Young Aerospace Professionals Initiative

The aims of the Young Aerospace Professionals programme are:

- To address the New Zealand aerospace industry's growing need for skilled professionals and ensure a sustainable future workforce. The programme aims to bridge the gap between the increasing demand for aviation professionals and the limited supply of skilled workers by inspiring and attracting aerospace professionals to sustain New Zealand's aerospace sector.
- To enhance the quality and relevance of the aerospace education programmes. This objective seeks to ensure that aerospace professionals possess the necessary skills, competencies and knowledge to perform their roles effectively by focusing on the development and implementation of harmonized education programs that align with the evolving needs of the industry.
- To create a Young Persons' Network which provides support, resources, networking opportunities and access to continued professional development (CPD) events. Additionally, the scheme will provide professional recognition and registration as required during career advancement.
- To provide a central online location young people can access for information on national programmes, career pathways, and networking and mentorship opportunities.
- To foster a sense of community and collaboration among young aviation enthusiasts and professionals in New Zealand.
- To mentor young aviation enthusiasts to develop into aviation professionals.
- To support and assist the New Zealand Government in its policies.
- To support the NZCAA and ICAO NGAP strategy.

4. Careers and Outreach Coordinator Role

RAeS NZD is a volunteer-run organisation and will require a dedicated position to manage the programme and provide feedback to the society committee and membership. This position - the 'Careers and Outreach Coordinator' - will lead national outreach strategy by facilitating industry pathways and opportunities, coordinate internships and mentorships, build partnerships with tertiary institutions, and create a centralised information hub for young people pursuing aerospace careers. The role is expanded on below.

4.1. Objectives:

- **Grow and Manage RAeS NZD Membership Engagement:** Ensure effective membership management, communications, and engagement strategies that foster a strong and active student and young professional community.
- **Facilitate Industry Pathways and Opportunities:** Develop and manage services that connect students with internships, mentorships, and work experience opportunities within the aerospace sector.
- **Strengthen Stakeholder Relationships and Sponsorships:** Build and maintain partnerships with tertiary institutions, industry stakeholders, and sponsors to support current and future outreach initiatives.

- **Enhance Visibility and Brand Presence:** Promote RAeS NZD through aligned communications and outreach activities, improving recognition among students, industry, and media.
- **Ensure Continuous Improvement and Reporting:** Establish feedback loops, track progress, and provide regular reporting to ensure initiatives remain effective and aligned with strategic goals.

4.2. Responsibilities:

- Membership and Database Management.
 - Set up and maintain the Young Aerospace Professional's membership and networking database.
 - Track and promote Student Affiliate memberships, aiming for high uptake across tertiary institutions.
 - Manage ongoing communications with members, mentors, and partners.
- Internship and Mentorship Programme Coordination.
 - Develop and manage an internship and work experience service in collaboration with tertiary providers and industry.
 - Establish and coordinate a mentorship scheme for young aerospace professionals.
 - Collect and implement user feedback to continuously improve these services.
- Outreach and Communications.
 - Create and maintain Young Aerospace Professional sections on the RAeS NZD website, ensuring clear signposting and accessibility.
 - Develop content and campaigns to advertise Young Aerospace Professional initiatives in line with the RAeS NZD communications strategy.
 - Engage with local media to promote Young Aerospace Professional activities and success stories.
- Partnership Development and Sponsorship.
 - Actively engage with universities, polytechnics, and aerospace organisations to foster relationships and seek sponsorship opportunities.
 - Support fundraising initiatives that enable the delivery of the Young Aerospace Professional's programme and other future focused programmes.
- Monitoring and Reporting.
 - Provide monthly progress summaries to the RAeS NZD Council.
 - Identify resource needs (e.g., communications support) and work with the Council to plan for future resourcing.

5. Funding Requirement

Projected cost for the first 18 months programme is \$80,000. This will be obtained through a mixture of community funding, corporate sponsorship, and membership subscriptions as membership grows. This cost is broken down as below:

- Advertising: \$20,000
- Careers and outreach coordinator: \$60,000, consisting of;
 - Contractor remuneration: \$50,000
 - Operational costs: \$10,000
 - Website and communications, outreach materials, travel, etc.

6. Timeline

October 2026

- Advertising campaign begins.
- Corporate sponsorship search.

March 2027

- Advertising campaign completed.
- Advisory group formed (consisting of corporate sponsors, the Careers and Outreach Coordinator, and select members of the RAeS NZD Council).
- Employ contractor to facilitate the program.

June 2027

- Develop database of training facilities and support for young professionals.
- Setup mentoring framework.
- Start discussions with aviation employers, tertiary institutions, training providers and government organizations.
- Develop a sustainable funding plan for the program.

September 2027

- First Young Aerospace Professional's national event.

7. Conclusion

The Young Aerospace Professionals programme represents a key role in developing a sustainable, skilled, and future-ready workforce for New Zealand's aerospace sector. Establishing this program will lay the foundation for a coordinated national talent pipeline. Community funding support and corporate sponsor participation will be instrumental in turning this vision into a reality. RAeS NZD welcomes the opportunity to partner with organisations that share this vision and are committed to strengthening New Zealand's aerospace capability.