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Submission on the

25-01 Part 107 Research and Development Organisation Certification

25-02 Part 101 Gyrogliders and Parasails, Unmanned Aircraft (including Balloons), Kites, and Rockets Operating Rules

27 July 2025

About us

1. The Aviation Industry Association (AIA NZ) is the peak membership body that represents the interests of the commercial aviation industry in New Zealand. Founded in 1950, its overall goal is to and support a safe, sustainable, and resilient sector in New Zealand. So, while safety is front and centre of everything we do, we also enable our members and the wider aviation sector to grow and innovate.
2. The membership of the organisation includes more than 200 operators from small to large who operate aircraft in many sectors of the industry. They include flight and ground training, agriculture, scheduled and charter air transport services, freight, photography, search and rescue, surveillance, and tourism. Our membership also includes companies that service, maintain, design or manufacture for these sectors, including engineers. In more recent times, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones have become an important part of AIA NZ's diverse membership.
3. New Zealand has the most aircraft per capita in the world that are integral to our economy and for traversing NZ's terrain in a brief period. The high number of helicopters, for example, have been vital to the swift response to Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023 and the Kaikoura earthquake in 2016. There are 4,600 aircraft and 900 helicopters operating in New Zealand. This represents one aircraft for every 1,120 people and one helicopter for every 5,700 people.
4. Our role is primarily a policy one that is supported by evidence-based advocacy and lobbying to Government and their agencies. We support members in regulatory matters, advancing professionalism in all safety matters while being recognised as the voice of the country's commercial aviation industry.
5. The Association itself is organised into six divisions which are:
 - New Zealand Agricultural Aviation Association (NZAAA)
 - New Zealand Helicopter Association (NZHA)
 - Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Association (UAVNZ)
 - Training and Development
 - Supply, Service and Engineering that includes the Aircraft Engineers Association (AEANZ)
 - Operations (including scheduled airlines and tourist flight operators).



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UAVNZ Submission on NPRM 25-01 and 25-02 – Advanced Aviation Reform

6. This submission is made on behalf of UAVNZ, a division of the Aviation Industry Association of New Zealand (AIANZ), representing New Zealand's commercial UAV operators, maintainers, manufacturers, and training providers. UAVNZ members conduct a wide range of operations across infrastructure inspection, environmental monitoring, survey and mapping, agriculture, film, emergency response, and commercial logistics. This submission reflects our technical expertise, operational insight, and commitment to a safe, innovative, and practical regulatory framework that enables sustainable sector growth.
7. UAVNZ welcomes the opportunity to comment on NPRMs 25-01 and 25-02. These proposals represent a significant step forward in modernising the regulatory framework governing UAV operations in New Zealand. We acknowledge the substantial effort by the CAA and MoT to consult with industry and to propose rule changes that reflect current technologies, operational practices, and risk-based oversight principles. However, we are also mindful of the compressed timeframe for stakeholder input and the complexity of translating regulatory intent into effective, enforceable rule language. As such, this submission outlines targeted recommendations, based on extensive engagement with operators, technical experts, training providers, and certification holders across a range of sectors.
8. Our submission is structured in two parts. First, we provide general commentary on overarching issues of principle, definition, and implementation. Second, we comment on specific proposals and rule changes within NPRMs 25-01 and 25-02, including the supporting draft Transport Instrument (CATI 101.17).

General Comments

9. UAVNZ supports the intent behind NPRM 25-01 to introduce a new certification pathway (Part 107) for research and development operations. We believe this is a pragmatic and future-focused initiative that could support innovation and early-stage testing of new platforms and concepts. However, the utility and credibility of the Part 107 framework will be significantly undermined if no reporting requirements are implemented. The current proposal (NPRM 25-01, section 107.57) does not require operators to provide operational data to the CAA unless explicitly requested. This contradicts the CAA's position as a risk-based, intelligence-led regulator and removes the evidence base required for continuous improvement. We recommend that Part 107 operators be required to maintain flight



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records and provide operational summaries either periodically or upon request, consistent with other experimental frameworks.

10. We note that the draft rules refer to restrictions on using Part 107 operations for “hire or reward” (NPRM 25-01, Rule 107.13(b)(1)). However, “hire or reward” is not defined in Part 1. Nor is “research and development”. The absence of clear definitions creates a risk of inconsistent interpretation by operators and inspectors alike. We recommend explicitly defining both terms in CAR 101.3 and at the beginning of Part 107, supported by examples. Additionally, we recommend deleting or consolidating duplicate or unclear definitions in CATI 101.17 (e.g. “indoor BVLOS”, “Airshare”, “model aircraft”) to prevent overlapping or contradictory interpretations. Clarity at the definition level is essential to avoid enforcement gaps or compliance uncertainty.
11. Referring to CAR Part 1 for the definition of “aerodrome” instead of the current definition in CAR 101 significantly expands the geographic scope of applicable rules. The CAR Part 1 definition includes any area of land or water intended or designed for aircraft operations, whether or not it is listed in the AIP. This results in CAR 101 aerodrome-related restrictions applying to thousands of sites across New Zealand, rather than the ~167 officially promulgated aerodromes in the AIP. Such a change would mean that almost the entire country could be interpreted as falling within 4 km of an “aerodrome”, undermining regulatory clarity and overburdening operators with unnecessary permissions. UAVNZ strongly recommends retaining the existing CAR 101 definition: “an aerodrome that is promulgated in the current AIPNZ.”
12. The term “active”, as applied to aerodrome runways and movement areas, has historically created ambiguity for both manned and unmanned operators. We recommend defining “active” within CAR 101.3 (NPRM 25-02, p. 4) as “in use or imminently to be in use by an aircraft”. This aligns with CAA oral guidance to date and reflects common operational sense. Making this definition explicit will improve safety and reduce disputes between UAV operators and aerodrome personnel.
13. The issue of aerodrome “boundaries” remains a persistent point of confusion, particularly near large or open water bodies. We recommend standardised definitions be inserted into CAR 101.3 (NPRM 25-02, p. 4) to distinguish between:
 - Land-based aerodromes: boundary defined by the security fence or perimeter fence separating land- and airside operations, unless otherwise stated on the aerodrome plate in the AIP.
 - Water-based aerodromes (lakes): boundary defined by the natural shoreline, unless otherwise stated on the aerodrome plate in the AIP.
 - Water-based aerodromes (harbours): boundary defined by the published aerodrome reference point (ARP) and radius, unless otherwise stated on the aerodrome plate in the AIP.



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Such standardisation will remove ambiguity, ensure consistent treatment across the sector, and allow appropriate operational flexibility where aerodrome-specific variations are published.

14. We recommend the development of a formalised licensing system for UAV pilots, to be prescribed and overseen by the Civil Aviation Authority. This system should clearly define minimum training standards, competencies, ratings and operational privileges. A standardised national licensing framework will help raise professional standards, improve safety outcomes, and ensure consistency across the sector. We also recommend that the licensing model be delivered through Part 141 certified training organisations to ensure quality assurance and auditability of training providers
15. We support the introduction of a requirement for digital flight logging for operators conducting complex operations under CATI 101.17 (sections 7 and 10). However, we strongly caution against naming any specific platform or service within the regulatory text. In particular, the use of the term “Airshare” within rule instruments is inappropriate. Airshare is not necessarily an adequate or universal method for ensuring operational safety. The regulation should instead focus on specifying the minimum information required in a flight log (e.g. area of operation, altitude, date/time, operator, and any hazards or constraints), leaving operators free to choose tools that best suit their operation. We also recommend requiring documentation of the flight area or operation zone as part of pre-flight planning.
16. We recommend the inclusion of shielded and low-level BVLOS operations within CATI 101.17 (sections 5–7) as an alternative to the proposed indoor BVLOS framework, which raises jurisdictional and practical concerns. These modes of operation are better aligned with established best practices and observed safe operations as demonstrated by multiple part 102 organisations. Shielded BVLOS should be defined as flight that remains within 100 metres horizontally of a shield, as defined under the current Part 101 Rules. Additionally, we suggest introducing a form of low-level BVLOS, allowing operations below 50 feet AGL where the remote pilot retains line-of-sight awareness of the surrounding airspace, even if the aircraft itself is beyond direct visual line of sight. Both shielded BVLOS and low-level BVLOS should require appropriate ratings delivered by an approved Part 141 training organisation, with the rating requirements and authorisation process set out in the associated transport instrument. These changes would enable safer, more flexible operations while maintaining appropriate oversight.
17. We support the proposed reduction in the helipad proximity radius from 4km to 2km (CATI 101.17, section 6), as it better reflects the lower operational footprint and circuit dimensions associated with helicopter pads. This change is long overdue. However, UAV operators must still undertake due diligence where operations intersect with the approach or departure paths of helicopters. We recommend that proximity-based permissions include mitigations for vertical separation and right-of-way considerations.



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18. Several provisions in CATI 101.17 (e.g. section 3 and definitions) refer to “indoor” UAV operations. In our view, the CAA does not have a clear mandate to regulate UAV operations conducted entirely within enclosed, private premises, especially where no airspace or public risk is involved (outside of its jurisdictions under the Health and Safety At Work Act). We recommend that all references to indoor operations be deleted from the rule text or revised to clarify the boundaries of CAA jurisdiction. Failure to do so could expose the Authority to challenge or enforcement overreach.
19. The current drafting of CAR 101.15(c) (NPRM 25-02) concerning agrichemical operations is problematic. The use of the term “agricultural aircraft operation” (as defined in Part 1) will inadvertently capture a wide range of benign UAV use cases such as stock monitoring, pasture mapping, or irrigation planning. We recommend that “aerial chemical application” be positively defined as the airborne application of any non-water substance for cleaning, spraying, spreading, or vertebrate toxic agent applications. These operations should be explicitly excluded from Part 101 and remain within the scope of Part 102 only. Additionally, we note concerns that lobbying efforts have emerged from industry stakeholders seeking to exempt some operators—particularly landowners—from standard licensing requirements. UAVNZ strongly opposes such proposals, as they would reduce safety, undermine professional operators, and create a two-tiered regulatory environment.
19. Training quality and accountability remain core to safe UAV operations. CATI 101.17 (sections 5–8) refers inconsistently to “training organisations” without defining what constitutes an acceptable provider. We recommend that “training organisation” be defined as a Part 141 provider or a Part 102 certificate holder with a Director-approved training exposition. If CAA does not wish to pursue a formal Part 61 Remote Pilot Licence (RePL), then these two mechanisms offer the only viable oversight. We also recommend that the Authority work with industry to develop baseline training syllabi for operations such as shielded flight BVLOS, night operations, and operation near people or critical infrastructure. These syllabi should be competency-based, auditable, and capable of adaptation for micro-credentials or modular endorsements. The current vacuum around training standards risks producing inconsistent outcomes and poor public safety perceptions.
20. UAVNZ supports the reference to EASA C-marking within NPRM 25-02, section 101.202. However, we note that many New Zealand UAV platforms—particularly those developed for bespoke or specialist use—do not fall within these categories. We recommend that the CAA establish a parallel pathway for domestic airworthiness inspection and approval, supported by guidelines or acceptable means of compliance. This will support innovation and sovereignty in platform development without compromising safety.



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21. While not addressed in the NPRM, the existing Part 101 rules do not specify how many aircraft can be piloted at the same time. While UAVNZ is only aware of limited swarming operations currently happening under Part 101, this is an area that should be tightened up given the additional risks associated with additional aircraft being operated by a single pilot. We suggest inserting a new rule, say “A person must not operate more than one aircraft concurrently.” This would then require swarming operations to be conducted under the authority of a Part 102 Operator’s Certificate.
22. While we also support the intent of the addition of CAR102.17(c), we also want to recognise that significant numbers of commercial UAV operators also operate UAVs in a personal capacity. We suggest rewording this new rule to “The holder of an unmanned aircraft operator certificate who exercises a privilege that is authorised under both Civil Aviation Rule Parts 101 and 102 is deemed to do so under the authority of their certificate under Part 102, except where the operation is clearly conducted under Part 101 for personal, recreational, or non-commercial purposes outside the scope of the certificate.”

Conclusion

UAVNZ supports the overall direction of the Advanced Aviation Reform proposals. They reflect the maturity of the UAV sector and attempt to build a tiered, proportional regulatory model. However, without targeted revisions, the rules may inadvertently:

23. Increase confusion due to vague definitions (e.g. “aerodrome boundary”, “agricultural operation”);
24. Reinforce perceptions of regulatory capture through mentioning commercial systems (e.g., AirShare) or including operations that arguably shouldn’t belong in the CARs (e.g., indoor BVLOS);
25. Create loopholes or exemptions that allow unqualified operators to conduct high-risk activities;
26. Undermine training quality by failing to define baseline standards or provider criteria.
27. We thank the CAA for its willingness to engage with the sector and for the effort invested in these reforms. We encourage the Authority to publish a summary of submissions and to clearly outline next steps, including transition timeframes and guidance development.
28. UAVNZ would welcome the opportunity to contribute to future working groups, industry reference panels, or implementation forums convened by the CAA or MoT to support refinement of these reforms. We remain committed to a regulatory environment that



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supports innovation, ensures safety, and enables UAV operators across New Zealand to thrive.

End

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