

Press Release

May 9 2006

Helicopter



Tracking system gives peace of mind

Queenstown helicopter company Heliworks is one of the first companies in New Zealand to install an innovative tracking system on all its aircraft.

TracPlus, created by Dunedin company Daestra New Zealand, uses an integrated GPS and satellite telemetry terminal mounted on the aircraft to send information on the aircraft's location and status to a data centre in the South Island, allowing aircraft operators to monitor their entire fleet at a glance.

Heliworks General Manager Dave Kershaw says "While there are several systems in the market place. TracPlus has several advantages and works well for our business. We have all seen over the last year searches costing millions of dollars to locate missing aircraft. It's a basic safety issue and a nationwide tracking solution gives peace of mind to our company and our clients"

"Heliworks flies to very remote locations throughout the Southern Alps, Fiordland and the Sub Antarctic Islands, where there is often little communications coverage, but it doesn't seem to faze the system at all."

"This system gives us enhanced safety for our pilots and clients, and enables us to be more pro-active in search and rescue by way of monitoring flight paths of our aircraft," Mr Kershaw says.

Heliworks and Helicopters Otago have been assisting Daestra in the development of the system over the last four months. Richard Black, the driving force behind the system for Heliworks says "We are very happy with TracPlus and the ongoing support from Daestra. We have watched with interest as the system continues to evolve and improve as our feedback is incorporated."

New developments for TracPlus include integration of data feeds from other tracking sensors and providers, a cellular network option to reduce costs further and “alert” buttons on board aircraft which can signal for immediate assistance, allowing for a significant reduction in emergency response times.

Daestra New Zealand’s CEO Chris Hinch says the demand for real time tracking solutions continues to increase in New Zealand. “There is a lot of interest from both the aviation and maritime industries, and with New Zealander’s being so innovative, there are a number of different solutions coming to market. By building TracPlus around commercial, off the shelf, non proprietary hardware, we are simultaneously protecting our customers’ investment and leveraging massive investment by satellite companies to deliver a cost effective, reliable, and truly global solution that works equally well for both markets”. Interest in TracPlus has been expressed by NZ’s Civil Aviation Authority and Maritime NZ.

“Our product has been significantly enhanced by the superb terrain imagery created by NZ mapping company Geographx, resulting in a product that also looks tremendous.”

“It is both a pleasure and a privilege to work closely with New Zealand’s leading helicopter operators and mapping providers to develop the very best solution possible for use in New Zealand’s most challenging environments. Heliworks, Helicopters Otago and Geographx have been excellent supporters of our efforts, and their enthusiasm, commitment and passion for their work has been inspiring.”

All of Heliworks’ helicopters will have the system installed onboard by the middle of this month.

Contact: Heliworks GM Dave Kershaw
Phone: (03) 441-4011

Daestra New Zealand CEO Chris Hinch
Phone: (03) 477-8656

Geographx MD Roger Smith
Phone: (04) 473-2718