

Airwork wins contract for Europe's largest helicopter rescue service

Global niche helicopter operator and maintenance specialist Airwork NZ is expanding into Europe through a contract with Germany's largest motoring organisation, The General German Automobile Club (ADAC).

Based in Munich, ADAC is one of Europe's largest operators of helicopters for emergency air rescue services which are among the range of mobility services provided to its 18 million members throughout Europe.

The ADAC contract provides for Airwork to purchase 14 BK117 helicopters as ADAC have decided to exit the type in preference for the new Eurocopter EC145T2 model. Airwork will use its recently gained European Aviation Safety Agency Part 145 certification* and its existing relationship with Eurocopter to provide an hourly support plan for the BK117 helicopters which ADAC will continue to operate.

The contract is the first helicopter ownership and support contract undertaken in Europe by Airwork and adds to its operations throughout Asia, Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

Airwork Holdings Chief Operating Officer Chris Hart says "the purchase of the ADAC aircraft and support contract is a significant milestone for the Company's general aviation business."

"Our goal is to be the world's contract aviation suppliers of choice and to build on our established reputation as one of the leading BK117 service centres in the world. Airwork's ability to offer innovative aviation solutions will further extend our helicopter fleet and support contracts."

A significant amount of the engines, dynamic components, avionics equipment and instruments for the ADAC contract will be provided by Airwork from its principal helicopter maintenance facility at Ardmore, in Auckland. Airwork will also work with Eurocopter and ALT (ADAC's maintenance division) to provide spare parts and rotables.

BK117 helicopters are familiar to many New Zealanders as the helicopters operated by the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

The ADAC contract will provide Airwork with additional opportunities to lease or sell the helicopters as they are released from the ADAC fleet.

"The BK117 fills an important niche in the mining and oil and gas sector as well as the emergency services sector. We have steadily seen mining and oil and gas customers upgrading their requirements to twin engine helicopters and the BK117 is very competitive with rival aircraft such as the Bell 212," Mr Hart says.

Airwork is also a recognised for its maintenance services for the Eurocopter Squirrel, MD500 and Robinson helicopters and owns a fleet of 35 helicopters in addition to the 14 acquired from ADAC. Helicopter maintenance, leasing and operations comprise approximately half Airwork's business. In addition, it maintains and operates a fleet of 17 fixed wing aircraft, including nine Boeing 737s, which are primarily used to provide freight capacity for organisations including NZ Post, Toll Holdings and charter operations.

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*EASA Part 145 certification designates Airwork NZ as an approved organisation for helicopter maintenance, covering inspection, repair and overhaul. Airwork NZ gained the certification with the support of New Zealand Trade and Enterprise who shared the Company's vision of creating a centre of excellence in helicopter maintenance in New Zealand. Certification is an extensive programme that requires the initial auditing of the Company's manuals and processes and regular further audits. EASA certification is widely recognised by other aviation safety authorities including the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand, Transport Canada and the Federal Aviation Administration in the USA.

ABOUT AIRWORK

Since Airwork was established in Wellington in 1936 it has adapted to meet the constantly changing aviation market. It has now evolved to be recognised for providing innovative aviation solutions throughout the world. The Company operates in two divisions; helicopter leasing, operations, engineering and support for which it is recognised as one of the world's leading providers, and fixed wing operations and engineering.

ABOUT ADAC

The General German Automobile Club (ADAC) has become the leading mobility service provider in Germany and Europe. It delivers the classic themes for a motoring organisation such as roadside assistance, air ambulance, assistance abroad, and travel and traffic information. It is also intensely committed to individual mobility, and safer and more environmentally friendly travel at affordable costs.

The club was founded in Stuttgart in 1903 by 25 enthusiastic bikers as German Motorcyclist Association (DMV). The number of members increased as fast as the types of vehicles. In 1911 the name was changed to General German Automobile to reflect this.

In 1965 the club's former dream threshold of one million members was exceeded. After the reunification in 1990, the 10 million mark was skipped. Since then the club has grown steadily to more than 18 million. Its success is due to the numerous benefits it offers to its members, especially the quality of roadside assistance, air ambulance services and the excellent facilities provided to club members.

Today, ADAC operates from 35 stations in Germany with 49 emergency rescue and medical helicopters. It also operates from stations in Austria and in Groningen (Netherlands) . Every year, the yellow angel service completes more than 47,000 often life-saving missions.