



MetService to continue MetFlight GA Service after funding ceases

From 1 August 2011 the MetFlight GA service will shift to part user-pays, after the withdrawal of CAA sponsorship and no replacement funding being found.

In November 2010, CAA advised industry representatives that due to financial pressures, CAA sponsorship for MetFlightGA would be withdrawn after 30 June 2011. In the wake of this announcement, aviation industry representatives and MetService undertook to ensure the continuation of MetFlightGA by trying to obtain replacement sponsorship or another funding solution.

Following a number of meetings early this year, which included feedback on direct approaches to the MOT, industry representatives have confirmed that no alternative source of funding has been found. CAA has re-confirmed that they will not be in a position to extend the current sponsorship beyond 30 June 2011. Time has run out for industry to come up with replacement sponsorship or funding.

In the current challenging financial climate, MetService is not in a position to fully subsidise this service. However, both MetService and the industry are very aware of the vital nature of MetFlightGA – so MetService has undertaken to continue the service from 1 July 2011 until the user pays gateway is introduced from 1 August 2011 at minimal cost to users. The minimal charges are unfortunately necessary to ensure recreational pilots continue to have the information they need to fly safely.

From 1 July 2011 MetFlightGA will continue to be available to recreational pilots in New Zealand, with a redefinition of who will qualify for access to the service under the new user pays scenario.

Both industry representatives and MetService agree that commercial operators and other profit-making operations (including commercial flight training organisations) should access the more appropriate ‘fit for purpose’ commercial aviation services currently available, and should be excluded from using MetFlightGA.

The new user pays gateway is currently under development and will be tested in May and rolled out in June and July, so that recreational pilots in New Zealand will be able to register on or before 1 August 2011, when the current MetFlight GA site will be shut down.

Between the end of CAA’s sponsorship on 30 June 2011 and the launch of the new user-pays service on 1 August, MetService will bear the total running cost of \$7,955 to continue to provide the existing MetFlightGA for the month of July and will also be subsidising this service to a large extent from 1 August 2011 onwards. Unfortunately, the considerable additional investment being made by MetService to keep the service going and introducing the payment gateway will mean a 6-8 month delay for the planned upgrade of MetFlightGA.

Key Points to Note:

- All current products and features available on MetFlightGA, including a link to the free-of-charge third party plain language translation module, will be retained.
- The current username and password methodology based on the CAA pilots licence details will be retained to provide as much consistency as possible for users.
- All commercial air transport operations, including commercial flight training organisations that have not already done so, will need to shift to the fit for purpose MetFlight Commercial or MetJet websites prior to 1 July 2011. *Those in this situation should contact MetService as soon as possible to arrange a subscription.*
- Small flying clubs will be given access to the appropriate commercial website at a discounted rate, on a case-by-case basis. *Those in this situation should contact MetService as soon as possible to arrange a subscription.*
- Three subscription options (see below) will be offered to recreational pilots in order to keep costs, both for MetFlightGA users and for MetService, to a minimum.
- The planned transition period for recreational pilots to switch from the CAA sponsored site and register on the user pays site is *15 June – 31 July 2011.*
- The planned transition period for commercial operators and commercial flight training organisations to arrange subscription to the appropriate MetService commercial websites is *20 May – 30 June 2011.*
- The MetFlightGA user pays service for recreational pilots will commence on *1 August 2011.*

MetFlightGA user-pays subscription rates effective 1 August 2011:

Bearing in mind that the vendor providing the payment gateway charges MetService for every transaction, from 1 August 2011 subscription costs for MetFlight GA for recreational pilots will be:

- NZ\$95 plus GST for an *annual* subscription (= 30 cents/day over the subscription period)
- NZ\$65 plus GST for a *6 month* subscription (= 41 cents/day over the subscription period)
- NZ\$35 plus GST for a *1 calendar month or 30 day* subscription (= \$1.34/day over the subscription period)

A detailed brief will be released to industry on 20 May 2011, explaining how to access and register for the user pays service and will include a list of FAQ's.

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