

# Aerospace Auckland Inc.

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The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)  
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Aotearoa New Zealand Aerospace Strategy. We welcome MBIE's leadership in developing the Aerospace strategy and the suggestions and recommendations below are intended to help strengthen the strategy to address sector needs more fully.

*Aerospace Auckland Inc.* is an incorporated society that acts as an independent industry body to nurture a thriving aerospace sector in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and Aotearoa New Zealand through fostering connectivity within the ecosystem and between the ecosystem and other hubs of activity in New Zealand and beyond. Founding members of *Aerospace Auckland Inc.* represent companies and organisations based in Auckland and wider North Island actively involved in the development of the aerospace cluster in Auckland. Such as The University of Auckland and Auckland University of Technology, the Auckland Council's economic development agency Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, advisory companies MartinJenkins and Rotoiti, Bank of New Zealand (BNZ), Outset Ventures and a wide range of aerospace businesses from sector leader Rocket Lab to startups of various stages such as Astrix Astronautics, Argo Navis, Dotterel Technologies, Zenith Tecnica and Zenno Astronautics.

*Aerospace Auckland Inc.* promotes enduring relationships across people, organisations, and sectors, and across Aotearoa New Zealand, the world, and – one day – across space.

To facilitate building of a thriving ecosystem we focus on:

- Bringing all aerospace-related people, organisations, and sectors together in a community committed to mutual trust and the sharing of knowledge and networks.
- Remaining neutral and open to all who are prepared to contribute.
- Doggedly pursuing diversity and inclusion.
- Working with Mana Whenua and tangata whenua to develop our understanding and application of Te Ao Māori and mātauranga Māori.
- Being fleet-footed and supporting the unexpected ways in which the community may seek support.

Our key activities include:

- Managing events, with support from partners.
- Building partnerships and sponsorships to support events and other activities.
- Cultivating networks, relationships, and connections.
- Creating content to foster interest in the space sector (e.g., articles, interviews, presentations).
- Developing an online presence for knowledge sharing, like including a website and social media accounts.

Warm Regards,

Catherine Qualtrough

Secretary of the Board

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# Submission on developing the Aotearoa New Zealand Aerospace Strategy

## Your name and organisation

<b>Name</b>	Catherine Qualtrough / Kevin Jenkins / Konstantin Selitskiy
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Aerospace Auckland Incorporated

## Overview of the Aerospace Strategy

<b>Question 1:</b>	Do the four areas above provide the right basis for the Aerospace Strategy?
<b>Question 2:</b>	What are the critical factors that you see for aerospace sector development?
<b>Question 3:</b>	How would an Aerospace Strategy help you?

**Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.**

Q1. Overall, the four areas covered in the draft strategy provide the right foundations for developing the Aerospace Strategy. However, the draft document requires critical attention to a systemic work on building productive ecosystem that would facilitate development of the space sector.

Q2. There are few critical factors that should be covered in the strategy. The draft document does not pay enough attention and does not offer clear mechanism of productive collaboration between central and local governments in building a dynamic ecosystem that facilitate development of such nascent sectors as space. The role of local government in supporting emerging clusters is not explicitly acknowledged either.

The document also does not identify areas of strengths and/or opportunities for New Zealand regions with latent skills that can be developed. It is important to avoid duplication that we know has occurred in other sectors.

Q3. *Aerospace Auckland Inc* is an aerospace industry organisation in Auckland working on developing a thriving aerospace cluster in Auckland and wider North Island. We would like to align our activities with the national strategy.

## Area One - A strategy for building our aerospace sector

- Question 4:** Is the 2030 Future State set out in a way that enables New Zealand to build on its existing advantages to develop a leading place in the global aerospace economy?
- Question 5:** Will the 2030 Future State support your ambitions for growth and participation in the sector?
- Question 6:** What barriers are there to optimising sector growth?
- Question 7:** How could the government and the sector work together to achieve the 2030 Future State?
- Question 8:** How can the Government enable Māori ambitions for the sector?

**Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.**

Q4. We feel that the offered draft strategy is a too high-level document. The 2030 Future State contains mostly high-level and generic statements that may be applicable to multiple sectors as opposed to making it clear how those involved specifically in the aerospace sector can see their work aligning with the strategy.

Q7. We believe that the Aerospace Strategy should better identify areas of strengths and opportunities for NZ regions and work together with the regional economic development agencies on building strong ecosystems tailored for supporting the aerospace sector. It is important to acknowledge existence of fast-growing aerospace clusters in Christchurch and Auckland and together with sector organisations and other stakeholders in the regions focus on the support and further development of these clusters.

## Area Two - Building strong foundations (Three Pillars)

**Question 9:** What do you think of the Three Pillars and do you think they will support the 2030 Future State?

**Question 10:** What else would you like to see in the Three Pillars?

**Question 11:** What actions and initiatives could the sector focus on to support the Three Pillars?

**Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.**

Q9. We see the concept of the Three Pillars as a productive framework for designing a well-rounded and productive Aerospace Strategy that can pave the road to progress for years to come. However, we see one significant deficiency in the proposed framework: it does not offer sufficient vision for expanding and improving education & training for the aerospace sector. There is also little attention to academia and its impact on the sector through fundamental and applied research and development and specialists training and upskilling.

Q 10. We suggest that **education, training, and skills development** is added as the **Fourth Pillar**: from schools to universities to vocational training.

*The Aerospace Skill Gap Survey\** carried out in 2021 by two regional economic development agencies, *Tātaki Auckland Unlimited* and *ChristchurchNZ*, has revealed significant shortages in skilled professionals that aerospace companies can recruit in New Zealand. 8 in 10 respondents rated recruiting from the New Zealand market as 'difficult'. And the most cited reasons employers found it difficult to recruit the people their organisation needs were 'Applicants don't have the right skills and/or expertise'. When asked what businesses plan to do if they can't fill the gaps they have, 65% said their plan involved one or more 'overseas option' i.e., either they were going to 'Recruit from overseas and sponsor migrants into NZ' and/or 'Move certain functions/parts of their business overseas' and/or; 'Recruit from overseas and let their staff work from that location'.

Our aerospace sector is clearly in a 'growth mindset' and find themselves in a situation when local labour market can not meet their demand in skilled and experiences specialist that can provide this growth to the companies. No respondents indicated that their organisation was likely to be reducing staff levels.

\*) ChristchurchNZ and Tātaki Auckland Unlimited partnered to design and undertake this survey, with the work being conducted by the Tātaki Auckland Unlimited Research & Insights team on behalf of the two organisations.

Q 11. Dedicated outreach programmes are also an important tool which should be used to "foster greater engagement and interest in aerospace" as outlined in Pillar Three and to ensure diverse and inclusive participation in aerospace across New Zealand. Such outreach programmes can be jointly designed by private and public sectors and delivered via regional aerospace sector organisations like Aerospace Auckland and Aerospace Christchurch with support of the regional economic development agencies.

### Area Three - Goals for 2030

**Question 12:** What do you think of the Goals for 2030?

**Question 13:** Are the goals framed in a way that will enable New Zealand to build on its strengths and comparative advantages to achieve the 2030 Future State?

**Question 14:** What activities and milestones can help us achieve these Goals?

**Question 15:** Where do you see yourself in realising these Goals?

**Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.**

Q 12-13. The Goals for 2030 focus mostly on the low altitude aerospace sector at the apparent expense of the Space.

We also think that all five goals relate to the first pillar. Therefore, no foundation and means to measure progress in pillars 2 and 3 are provided.

Q 14. The Goals for 2030 are not achievable without critical attention and change in education, at both school and tertiary level. And without tapping into major talent pool of women, Māori, Pacifica and other critically underrepresented groups. More detail around dedicated education and outreach programmes is needed to support these goals and to help ensure more equitable outcomes.

## Area Four - Pathway to the 2030 Future State

**Question 16:** What policies, ideas, actions, and/or initiatives would you like to see in the Action Plan to help achieve the ambitious 2030 Future State?

**Question 17:** What would be the benefits of these actions and how would they help grow the New Zealand aerospace sector?

**Question 18:** How would you like to be involved in the delivery of the Aerospace Strategy?

**Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.**

Q 16-17. As we suggested above, it would be plausible to add the Fourth Pillar to the Strategy that covers Skills, Education and Training.

We propose to extend focus of the Strategy on developing an education programme and on resourcing the education sector to develop and train NZ aerospace scientists and engineers, and related disciplines such as more/specialised data scientists. A lack of sufficient planning to develop a pipeline of skilled workers within NZ will mean continued reliance on international hiring. Increased visibility and promotion of aerospace education pathways could be further supported by public and school outreach programmes.

Q18. Aerospace Auckland Inc. and Aerospace Christchurch are the excellent examples of industry and other stakeholders coming together to facilitate productive collaboration and foster development of thriving regional aerospace clusters.

*Aerospace Auckland Inc* is keen to work tirelessly with you on delivering the Aerospace Strategy, fostering development of the Aerospace Sector in Tāmaki Makaurau, and building a thriving sector ecosystem. We are looking forward to engaging with central government, mana whenua, as well as to strengthening collaboration with our sister organisation Aerospace Christchurch, regional economic development agency Tātaki Auckland Unlimited (that has been providing our young organisation with invaluable support and encouragement), and other stakeholders like community groups, academia, industry, and other regions.