

ATR 72-500 - ZK-MCJ



JNP Aviation Training - Education Base Tauranga

Te waka rererangi | Training Aircraft: A story about it's life and purpose...

One-of-a-Kind Training Resource

At JNP Aviation Training (JNPAT) we're proud to offer a one-of-a-kind training resource - Te waka rererangi - a hands-on decommissioned Air New Zealand aircraft (ATR 72-500, ZK-MCJ) - that now serves as a hands-on training tool for our aviation learners. This aircraft gives students the unique opportunity to practice ground operations and service procedures in an authentic, industry-replica environment - the only one of its kind in New Zealand.



The ATR 72-500 (ZK-MCJ) newly repurposed and seen here in use with students .

Operational Career

- Entered service with Air New Zealand's regional fleet at the turn of the millennium.
- Operated thousands of flights across Aotearoa, serving key provincial routes and connecting regional communities to major hubs.
- Last scheduled passenger flight: 4 February 2020, operating Rotorua → Christchurch.
- JNP Aviation Rotorua proudly completed the final ground handling, loading, marshalling, and dispatch of ZK-MCJ on its last revenue service before retirement.
- Removed from service shortly afterwards during Air New Zealand's ATR fleet renewal programme.



Dave Paull photo



On the Apron at Christchurch Airport



In service as a commercial aircraft for Air NZ Link Service then for ANZ Link Scheme

End of Service & Preservation

- NZ Registration cancelled: 8 March 2023, officially ending its airworthiness certification.
- Airframe stored at Christchurch following retirement.
- March 2023: Aircraft disassembled — wings and tail removed — and transported by road to Tauranga Airport.
- Reassembled onsite with the support of Classic Flyers volunteers, Tauranga engineers and Air NZ Aviation Engineer and JNP Aviation Training contract specialist, Graeme Howden [Howdy].



Preparation for transport and repurposing begins

Dismantled, Relocated, and Reimagined...



Classic Flyers NZ

A huge thank you to the
experts & engineers of
Classic Flyers



Dave Paull photo



Dave Paull photo



Dave Paull photo



Peter Layne photo



Peter Layne photo





The Classic Flyers Engineering Division team, whose craftsmanship and dedication rebuilt the ATR after its journey from Christchurch, preparing it for its new life as an educational training resource.

Rebirth as a Training Aircraft

Now owned and operated by the JNP Aviation Training School, ZK-MCJ - te waka rererangi, has been transformed into one of New Zealand's most comprehensive hands-on aviation training assets. Parked outside the JNP Aviation Training Education Centre and Engineering Hangar for educational use, and moved to the apron for work-based training.

Te waka rererangi now supports workplace training in:

- Ramp operations & aircraft dispatch
- Servicing and walk-around inspections
- Safety and smoke simulation training (vented through both engine inlets)
- Engineering familiarisation
- Cabin environment & emergency training
- Digital, VR, and CBT modules developed by JNP Aviation Training in conjunction with JNP Aviation subject matter experts (SMEs)



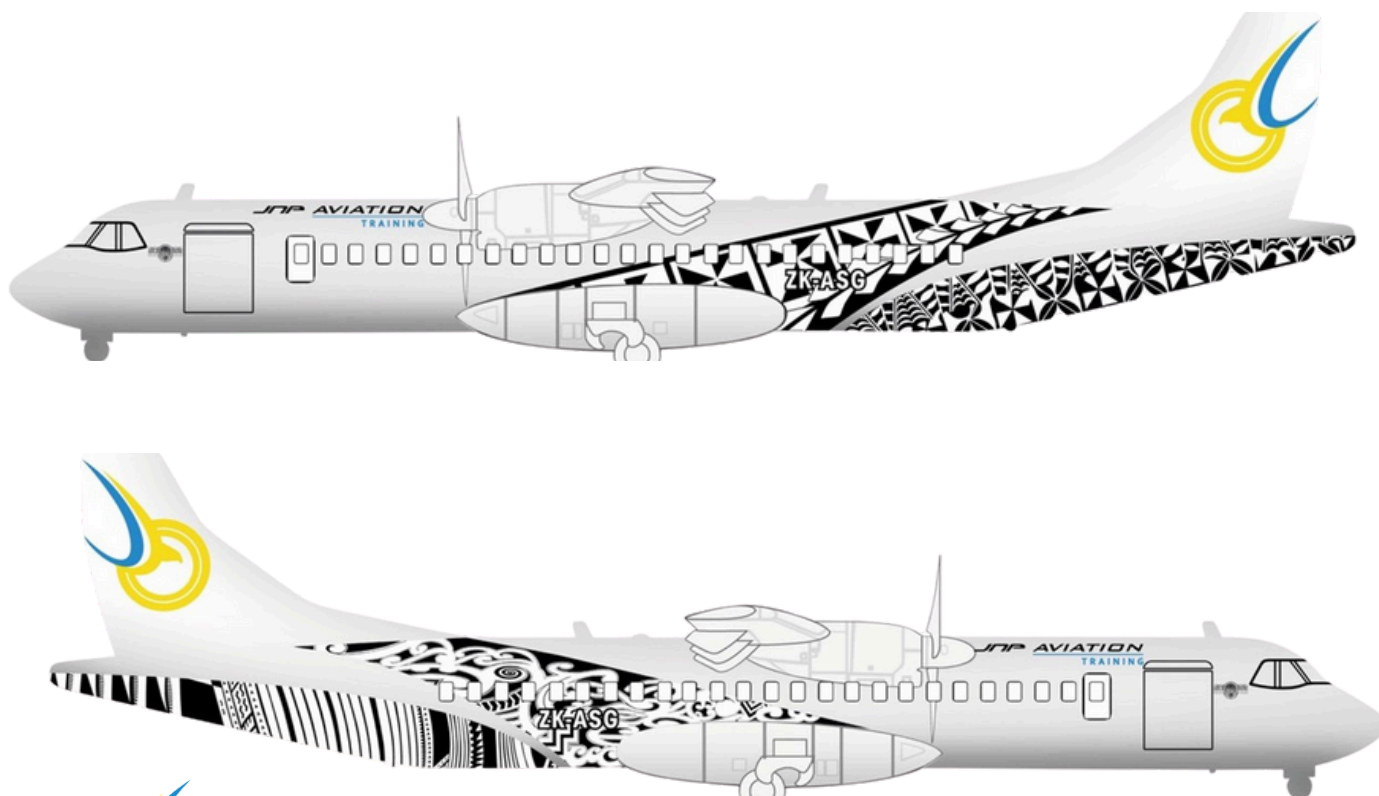
The forward fuselage has been intentionally left open to expose real aircraft wiring, avionics pathways, and structure for educational purposes, while the aft cabin is being reinstated to original spec with a training element for immersive passenger-environment drills.

The majority of the exterior lighting has been reinstalled to the aircraft to ensure that it remains visible whilst on the airfield. The lighting also provides an authentic training experience for our students when conducting aircraft ground handling operations.

Our newly installed smoke machine that pumps smoke through to the engines and propellers, enables ground handling staff, flight crew and emergency services the opportunity to identify and deal with real time emergencies in a safe, controlled environment.



Our waka rererangi embodies the spirit of opportunity, collaboration, and connection that defines JNPAT. Already adorned with JNPAT's logo, the aircraft will soon have additional artwork added, created by Chris Sio ([siodesign](#)), which blends Māori, Samoan, and Tongan motifs – a contemporary expression of traditional values and shared identity.



Our logo features the kārearea, the New Zealand falcon – a symbol of strength, courage, and agility. It's a powerful representation of our kaupapa: to help people rise strong, no matter where they start. The kārearea reminds us – and our learners – that with the right support, they too can rise above life's challenges and forge their own path. This symbolises the journey that our founder had as he reflected upon his humble beginnings starting out in Whakatāne and now resonates in the opportunities JNPAT offers to learners.

Beyond its **cultural significance**, te waka rererangi is a powerful practical training tool. As a static aircraft, it allows learners to train outside the time pressures of live flight operations. This means they can slow down, practice thoroughly, make mistakes, and gain confidence in a supportive environment. Learners experience a wide range of ground operation scenarios, helping them become familiar with the very same aircraft model that Air New Zealand plans to continue to use for the next 30 years.

In addition to serving our learners, te waka rererangi has become a **valuable resource** for the wider community. New Zealand Police, Fire & Emergency NZ (FENZ), and Tauranga Airport's Security, Fire & Safety staff (through Advanced Aviation Services) also use the aircraft for specialised training. This means our decommissioned ATR-72 isn't just a classroom for JNPAT students - **it's a real-world training platform** supporting multiple agencies, helping develop critical skills in aviation safety, emergency response, and operational procedures.

Our waka rererangi represents opportunity itself - a safe, hands-on, and culturally grounded space where learners can prepare for real-world aviation with skill, pride, and confidence.

A Historic Return to the Apron

The 4th December 2025 marked an important milestone for ZK-MCJ as it returned to an active apron for the first time since being deregistered in 2023.

This moment symbolises the aircraft's unique journey from commercial service to preservation and new role as an educational tool - shaping future generations of aviation professionals.



Parked on the apron outside the Tauranga Airport Fire Station.

Available to view between the Air Traffic Control Tower and Fire Station (no need to access the terminal).

In the photo above our te waka rererangi is positioned in its work-based training location on the apron outside the Airport Fire Station where it supports the growing number of groups using it, as the range of training opportunities it provides continues to expand. During school terms it returns to its spot beside Classic Flyers Historic Aircraft Hangar and close to our Education Centre.

Beyond supporting our learners, students and workplace trainees, te waka rererangi has become a valuable shared training resource giving the expanding users access to a safe, real-world environment to build skills and capability.

We are excited to serve as the next caretakers of this aircraft and to champion its new role as an educational tool...

While this ATR 72-500 (ZK-MCJ) first served as a commercial airliner, it has become a purpose-built platform for education and community resilience - proof that an aircraft's final flight is not the end of its story, but the beginning of a new one. Te waka rererangi now lifts people up a different way - teaching, preparing and protecting our community - a second life dedicated to learning, service, and real-world preparedness.