

21<sup>st</sup> April 2008

## **Airways hosts the 12th Thales Users Group Conference in Christchurch**

Airways New Zealand hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> Thales Users Group (TUG) conference in Christchurch from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The event has been organised every 18 months since 1991 by customers of Thales's air traffic management activities. Over the years, the TUG conference has proved to be a great opportunity for the worldwide civil aviation authority to share their operational experiences and set the basis for discussions regarding technology progress, service and system functionality, and harmonisation.

Ashley Smout, CEO of Airways New Zealand, says the Thales Users Group Conference provides a unique opportunity for ATM organisations to work together to continue making air travel as safe, efficient and effective as possible for their airline customers.

'This focus on working together is becoming increasingly important, as our industry works to develop ways to cope with some key challenges that are facing us. Costs, security, efficiency, capacity and now environmental sustainability are all converging to make the work that ATM providers and our technology suppliers are doing to face these challenges, of increasing importance to our airline customers and our regulators and owners,' said Mr Smout.

'I would like to recognise the work that Thales puts in to making this forum happen each conference. The relationships that are forged and the exchange of information that occurs here is valuable to us all.'

This year's TUG Conference was attended by 75 Air Traffic Service Provider delegates from 26 countries. The conference programme included 13 presentations by customer representatives and 5 by Thales staff. Workshops are also an important part of the TUG conference format, and this year's conference included sessions on Aeronautical Services, EUROCAT system, Training, Surveillance and Navigation & Airport Solutions.

Rémi Gille, Managing Director of Thales Air Systems Customer Services says : "this 12<sup>th</sup> TUG conference was a great success, thanks to the remarkable organisation by Airways New Zealand, the high number of participants and the quality of presentations and working exchanges between Thales and its customers. TUG has now become a forum where everyone shares the same goals and works as a team to implement common roadmaps and improvement plans, with a very high level of confidence between members."

TUG members made a formal request at the end of the Conference for Thales to implement specific proposals that had been formulated during the sessions. Solutions will be prepared over the next 18 months and presented at the next TUG. This interactive process plays a crucial role in building and maintaining constructive, long-term partnerships and in guiding

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future strategy in the light of the customer feedback. The 7 proposals selected by the customers at this Conference cover a range of topics including communication, products, support and green ATM.

The next TUG will be held in Croatia in October in 2009 and will be organised by Croatia Control Ltd.

## About Airways

Airways new Zealand is one of the world's leading providers of commercial Navigation Services (ANS), responsible for managing all domestic and international air traffic operating within New Zealand's 34 million square kilometres of airspace. In 2003, Airways was voted the best ANS provider in the world for value for money and quality of service, by the International Aviation Transport Association representing 280 of the world's airlines.

Airways' Training Centre in Christchurch regularly hosts groups of international air traffic controllers, and today, Airways is used as a technological and risk management benchmark for many overseas organisations. Information about Airways New Zealand can be found at: [www.airways.co.nz](http://www.airways.co.nz)

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## About Thales

Thales is a leading international group, addressing Defence, Aerospace and Security markets worldwide. Thales's expertise in its core markets spans the entire value chain, providing all the capabilities its customers require, from equipment and systems to comprehensive support services, and including prime contracting on large-scale programmes.

Thales's leading-edge technology is supported by 22 000 R&D engineers who offer a capability unmatched in Europe to develop and deploy field-proven mission-critical information systems. To this end, the group's civil and military businesses develop in parallel and share a common base of technologies to serve a single objective: the security of people, property and nations.

The group builds its growth on its unique multi-domestic strategy based on trusted partnerships with national customers and market players, while leveraging its global expertise to support local technology and industrial development. Thales employs 68 000 people in 50 countries with revenues in 2007 of € 12.3 billion.

Information about Thales can be found at <http://www.thalesgroup.com/airsystems>

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