AIR TRANSPORT

Air New Zealand is an associate member of Aspa, and its operations training chief is a consultant for the South Pacific area training needs study

South Pacific prepares for a faster world

BRISBANE

The Fiji-headquartered Asso-
ciation of South Pacific
Airlines is about to set up a
training programme to serve
its member airlines, and is
considering a number of other
ways in which it can help
improve air transport links
across this vast oceanic area
scattered thinly with small
centres of population.
Warren Goodman reports
from Aspa's December meet-
ing in Brisbane.
Aspa was founded in 1979
at the request of the Civil
Aviation Council of the
South Pacific Forum (an
organisation of heads of
governments in the area). Its
role is to foster co-operation
among the airlines based in
the area extending from
Tahiti and Western Samoa in
the east to Papua New Guinea
in the west, and from
Norfolk Island (between
Australia and New Zealand)
to the south and Kiribati
(formerly the Gilbert Islands)
and the Marianas in the
north.
The 12 countries in the area
range from single islands (like
Nauru with a population of
about 5,000) to archipelagoes
with 300 or more islands and
populations in six or seven
figures. The 18 airlines based
in those countries operate
aircraft ranging from the
Aztec, Islander, and Queen
Air to the 747.

The area is also served by a
number of large airlines based
elsewhere, some of which have
close management ties with
the South Pacific airlines.
Among these, Air New Zeal-
and, Qantas, and UTA are
associate members of Aspa.

George Faktaufon, secre-
tary general of Aspa, told
Flight that the organisation
had been fairly inactive for
about three years prior to his
appointment in November
1986. It had had no staff of its
own, and the personnel
from member airlines
assigned to work on Aspa
matters in their "spare time"
found that they had no spare
time. As a result, scheduled
meetings often lacked a
quorum and there was no
follow-up on those which
were held.

Since his appointment,
Faktaufon has established a
headquarters in the office of
the hotel reservations service
he runs at Nadi International
Airport in Fiji. Since the
August AGM Faktaufon has
been working with the United
Nations Development
Programme (UNDP), Icao,
and lata on setting up the
Aspa co-operative training
programme.
Aspa has received a
US$30,000 grant from the
UNDP, through Icao, for a
study of the specific training
needs of its member airlines.
It also has been assured of a
$600,000 grant to implement
the programme, beginning in
early 1987.
The training needs study is
being carried out by two
consultants selected by
lata: Michael Keogh, head of
training for Aer Lingus, and
Brian Smith, head of oper-
ations training for Air New
Zealand.

Icao and Aspa are already
seeking a training co-
ordinator to run the training
programme for the Aspa
headquarters in Fiji. It is
anticipated that some of the

training will be done there
and some will be done at the
headquarters of other member
airlines.
Faktaufon presented the
Aspa meeting with a
preliminary proposal for
setting up a permanent secre-
tariat in Fiji, with a full-time
secretary general, facilities for
the training co-ordinator, and
secretarial help. The office
would also house $30,000
worth of training equipment
to be provided under the
UNDP grant.
The proposal, still to be
acted on by the members,
would require an increase in
the Aspa budget and in the
dues paid by members (under
a formula similar to Iata's).
In addition to the training
committee, which has
produced the most tangible
results so far, Aspa has
committees working on civil
aviation, scheduling, tariffs,
safety, and security.
The main problem in the
field of civil aviation matters
is that the countries in the
area have varying regulations
and certification procedures.
Some are patterned on the
regulations of the'UK, some
on Australia, some on New
Zealand, and some on the
French regulation. The Aspa
airlines see a need for stan-
dardisation, but there are no
suggestions as yet on how to
accomplish this.
The problem on scheduling
arises out of the fact that so
many airlines are setting up
schedules independently,
making it hard to get con-
venient interline connections.
This is particularly important
in an area where traffic is so
thin that a missed connection
might mean having to wait

three days, or even a week, for
the next flight. A scheduling
committee was formed at the
meeting earlier this month to
consider possible improve-
ments.

Security is not yet a major
problem in the South Pacific,
but Aspa members feel that it
is only a matter of time before
they will have to take steps to
prevent it from becoming one.
As one precaution, they want
to be sure that any new
airport facilities constructed
in the area are designed so
that stricter security
measures can be adopted
without extensive recon-
struction. This is not feasible
at many existing airports
because the climate permits
the construction of simple
terminals without walls,
making it difficult to control
access to operational areas.
John Schaap, chief execu-
tive of Air Pacific (seconded
from Qantas) and the current
chairman of Aspa, told Flight
that he expected the
organisation to play an
important role in attacking
the increasing problems
which will arrive as a result of
traffic growth.
The extent of the growth
expected was pointed out by
Gunther Eser, secretary
general of lata, at a meeting of
the Orient Airlines Associ-
ation in Sydney just a
fortnight before the Aspa
meeting. He said: "The
Asia/Pacific area is one of the
brightest parts of the air
transport picture. ... By the
early 1990s, the Asia/Pacific
region will account for more
than one-third of inter-
national air traffic—more
than the European market-
place."

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