



## Composites take off

By Phil Whyte

Pioneering the use of composite materials in aviation is the latest development in New Zealand's long history in the industry. In this first of a two-part series we feature Auckland designed and built Composite Helicopters International's KC 518 Adventourer, which has drawn worldwide interest.

As inhabitants of a long, narrow mountainous country, New Zealanders eagerly took to the air after Richard Pearse (or perhaps the Wright brothers) gave man winged flight in the early 1900s. Many of those living in remote areas – such as the East Coast and the Far North – were serviced by aircraft well before adequate roading and rail went in after World War I.

New Zealanders have also long been determined to extend the potential of aviation – aerial topdressing was pioneered here in the 1940s, and ski planes a decade later. Now New Zealand companies are developing helicopters constructed totally of composite materials. Composite Helicopters International's (CHI) KC 518 Adventourer is a 5-seat VIP helicopter which is cur-

rently transiting between prototype and production.

The Adventourer concept began to take place after CHI founder and president Peter Maloney and his wife Leanne sold their previous business in 2009.

Mr Maloney has 39 years' experience in

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**Main picture: Two Adventourers under construction**  
**Above: Just one finger – Leanne Maloney holds up a door made of the Kevlar/carbon fibre composite**

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