

Appointment of Chief Inspector of Accidents

The Government announced today (September 10) the appointment of Mr Darren Straker as Chief Inspector of Accidents to head the new Air Accident Investigation Authority (AAIA). His appointment will mark the formal establishment of the new AAIA, which is under the Transport and Housing Bureau and independent from the Civil Aviation Department.

Mr Straker assumes office today. He is recruited under an open recruitment exercise and he will take over the duties and statutory powers in respect of air accident investigation under the Hong Kong Civil Aviation (Investigation of Accidents) Regulation (Cap 448B) from the incumbent Chief Inspector, who is the Director-General of Civil Aviation.

The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, said, "Mr Straker is a seasoned aviation professional with extensive international experiences of air accident investigation and safety management. I have confidence that he will be able to lead the new Authority to rise up to the challenges ahead and bring our aviation safety management to new horizons."

Mr Straker held the position of Chief Air Accident Investigator of the Air Accident Investigation Sector of the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) of United Arab Emirates (UAE) from early 2012 to 2017, having previously held the position of Regulations and Investigation Inspector with the GCAA from 2010. Mr Straker is well-versed in the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in aircraft accidents and incident investigation.

Mr Straker has an extensive background as an Investigator In Charge in leading investigations in UAE, and as an Accredited Representative or Investigation Technical Adviser in investigations in Europe, the United States, Canada and Asia. With his rich international experiences, he also acted as an Adviser to ICAO for a number of safety initiatives in respect of air accident investigation.

The independent AAIA is established to comply with the latest SARPs prescribed in Annex 13 Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation of the ICAO, which requires an investigative authority to be independent from the state aviation authorities and other entities that could interfere with the conduct or objectivity of an investigation. It will take over the air accident investigation function from the Civil Aviation Department.

ICAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations established in 1944 by virtue of the Convention on International Civil Aviation. China is a Contracting State of ICAO and assumes the responsibility for the international rights and obligations arising from the application of the said Convention and the relevant requirements also apply to Hong Kong.

Brief biographical notes of Mr Straker are set out below:

Mr Straker started his career as a commercial pilot. He later joined Airbus and worked in various positions encompassing aircraft design and flight safety management until 2010 when he joined the GCAA of UAE as a Regulations and Investigation Inspector. He was responsible for setting up the new Air Accident Investigation Sector for the GCAA in 2011 and held the position of Chief Air Accident Investigator from early 2012 to 2017. Over the years, he also acted as an Adviser to ICAO for safety initiatives such as the Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organizations (RAIOs) and Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs).