Good morning ladies & gentlemen.

I’m delighted that Queenstown was chosen as the venue for this year’s Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation Asia Pacific Conference.

Queenstown is one of New Zealand’s prime tourist destinations while Queenstown Airport showcases the technological advances rolling out across New Zealand’s air traffic management.

Last night I was pleased to officially turn on the new lights at Queenstown Airport that will allow long-awaited night flights to commence.

The extended operating hours will offer new job opportunities for residents and increase the number of tourists who come to enjoy what Queenstown offers in the winter months. Trans-Tasman tourists will be able to spend a weekend in Queenstown, arriving on Friday and leaving late on Sunday evening.

In 2012, Queenstown Airport had 1.1 million passenger arrivals and departures. In 2015, the number has grown by 400,000 visitors to 1.5 million.

Providing the capacity to handle increased numbers to our prime tourist destination, while managing the environmental impact, underlines how important advances in air traffic management are to New Zealand’s economic prosperity.

Few countries depend on international air services as much as New Zealand. Aviation facilitates tourism, business connections and trade. Our growing network of air services agreements means most major airlines in the world are able to operate in New Zealand without restriction.

Tourism is one of our largest foreign exchange earners, contributing a total of $11.6 billion a year to New Zealand’s GDP.
Air transport is a vital engine of our economic growth. The Asia Pacific region in particular is highly significant for the aviation market in terms of international traffic.

Asia and Oceania made up 71.5% of overseas visitor arrivals to NZ in the year ending February 2016. In addition, for New Zealand’s economy, in 2015 exports to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries accounted for $47.2 billion of our total exports.

The Air Traffic Management industry plays a critical role in making sure aviation is safe, efficient and sustainable.

The level of aviation growth would not be possible without the work of CANSO globally across safety, operations and policy and we value the work they do.

**New Southern Sky**

As a Government, we’re supporting airspace and air navigation initiatives through New Southern Sky, which is our 10-year programme to bring New Zealand’s airspace and air navigation systems in the 21st Century.

New Southern Sky will enable shorter journeys, improved safety and lower carbon emissions for more than 15 million passenger departures every year.

The new technologies enabled by New Southern Sky are expected to contribute nearly $2 billion of benefits to our country over the next 20 years. These benefits will come through fuel savings, lower aircraft operating costs, and efficiencies for airlines.

The programme itself is expected to provide direct benefits of $178 million over the same period.

It means New Zealand can move from ground to satellite-based navigation and surveillance in a safe, cohesive, and resilient way.

Our current focus is on introducing Performance Based Navigation (PBN) and Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast (ADS-B).

New navigation technologies allow aircraft to navigate more precisely and directly, reducing fuel burn.

Queenstown has been a key beneficiary of this modernisation. Those of you who flew into Queenstown on jet aircraft will have flown a path that required the use of modern procedures, advanced aircraft equipment and crew expertise. It has also improved Queenstown’s aircraft handling capacity and reduced delays.
We also recognise the benefits of using satellite surveillance technology to replace our ageing radar network. By the end of 2021, all aircraft flying in controlled airspace in New Zealand will be making use of satellite surveillance.

This will see New Zealand right in step with our regional and global aviation partners. We’ll be working with the sector to make sure the transition is smooth and safe.

Currently, the CAA and the Ministry of Transport are working to produce and update rules, which will support the modernisation of our navigation and surveillance systems. I expect to approve the making of these rules this year.

**Commitment to reducing emissions**

Another area we are focussed on is reducing emissions.

Transport is obviously a key area to get right because it accounts for almost 17% of New Zealand’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Globally aviation accounts for around 2% of total CO2 emissions.

Modernising our airspace and air navigation system will help introduce flights that use less fuel. The air traffic management industry is critical to this development.

The Ministry of Transport is developing New Zealand’s Aviation Emissions Action Plan in collaboration with the aviation industry.

The Ministry expects to submit the Action Plan to the International Civil Aviation Organisation before the 39th (ICAO) Assembly in September this year.

Enabling legislation for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

We’re also looking at how we can better support innovation and new technologies.

New Zealanders are keen and early adopters of new technological innovation and we have a history of innovation in transport.

Last year we announced enabling and world-leading UAV regulation.

These new rules allow innovation while making sure their use is safe and responsible.

Airways, the CAA, Callaghan Innovation and the UAVNZ industry body, have risen to the challenge of this new industry and sparked a rethink of airspace operations with the launch of Airshare.co.nz.
Airshare is a world-leading online interactive platform helping UAV operators understand their safety responsibilities as they fly their aircraft. The website is widely used by UAV businesses and recreational flyers and growing rapidly.

**Space activities**

Space activities are another emerging area for New Zealand. We have operators looking to launch into both near and outer space. Uses include high altitude balloons, rockets, and in the future, even space tourism.

Space operators are interested in New Zealand’s relatively uncongested airspace, our geographic isolation and a national appetite to support emerging technology.

In New Zealand, Airways is at the forefront of this and has the experience, strong systems and procedures required to support R&D balloon and rocket projects.

Already, Airways has helped organisations like Rocket Lab, Google and NASA. NASA launched a super pressure balloon just over the Crown Range in Wanaka last year, and is looking to achieve a longer flight this year.

**Asia and the Pacific**

As well as supporting New Zealand aviation, we are committed to playing our part in the Asia Pacific region.

New Zealand is Lead Shepherd (Chair) of the APEC Transportation Working Group.

The Group plays a valuable role in helping build capacity and best practice for other APEC members in all transport modes, including aviation.

One recent example was assistance for Mexico and Indonesia to help implement performance-based navigation.

Our neighbours are important to us and Government is providing funding and support for Pacific aviation.

Currently Airways is working with both MFAT and the World Bank funding agencies on a number of initiatives including implementing a satellite communications system, updating the region’s charting, airfield lighting, surveillance and other essential infrastructure.

The annual flight inspections programme has been provided to the Pacific Islands for over 50 years. The inspections are conducted in 11 nations including Tonga, Niue, Samoa, Cook Islands and Vanuatu. Airways also manage the upper airspace for Tonga, the Cook Islands and Niue.
This CANSO conference is a good opportunity to explore global trends and challenges and look for opportunities to work individually and collectively in the Asia Pacific region.

**Closing**

In closing, there’s a lot of exciting work happening in this space.

I appreciate the work you do to ensure the safe and sustainable growth of air transport so it continues to be at the heart of economic growth.

I wish you all the best for a good conference.