AIR NEW ZEALAND TRIALS WORLD-LEADING ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY

News / Airlines

Air New Zealand is working with Christchurch-based robotics company Invert Robotics to trial wall climbing, camera mounted robots to carry out remote inspections on its aircraft.

The technology, originally designed for use in the dairy industry, uses remote-controlled inspection equipment to detect damage inside milk tanks beaming back high resolution footage in real time.

Air New Zealand Chief Operations Officer Bruce Parton says the airline first started to explore the use of robotics after recognising the shape of a milk tank closely resembles an aircraft fuselage.

“Currently to inspect the top of the fuselage, as we do following incidents such as lightning strikes, engineers need to work at heights of up to eight metres.

“Using technology that can identify defects not immediately visible to the human eye and do so from the ground has the potential to make aircraft maintenance safer and more reliable.

“Exploring the introduction of robotic technologies supports the airline’s innovation strategy and if

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we can help pioneer an aviation application for this technology it could create a significant new commercial opportunity for this home grown Kiwi business.”

Invert Robotics Chief Executive Officer James Robertson says it’s hugely exciting to be working collaboratively with Air New Zealand on this project.

“While initially designed as a dairy solution our patented robot has proven versatile lending itself well to aircraft deployment.

“We look forward to continuing to work with Air New Zealand to develop the airline application for this technology so that it can potentially be rolled out across the global aviation industry.”

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