

CANSO Person of the Year 2026

Nominee: Kelly de Lambert, Head of Air Traffic Services (ATS) Training, Airways International Ltd

Description of why they should be nominated:

- Across the global ATM industry, air traffic control training failure rates commonly approach 50%. By contrast, over more than a decade Airways New Zealand has sustained an average ATC training success rate of approximately 95%, while maintaining rigorous safety and certification standards. Kelly has played a pivotal role in shaping the systems, standards, and governance that underpin these outcomes.
- *A champion of competency-based training* - Under Kelly's leadership, training and assessment at Airways have continued to move toward a fully competency-based framework and have been progressively strengthened into a coherent, organisation-wide system. Through her extensive efforts, standards have been clarified, performance expectations made explicit, and assessment practices applied consistently across both simulator and on-the-job training. Training progression is determined by demonstrated operational performance rather than time served, and all trainees are assessed against the same defined criteria. A key safeguard Kelly has championed is the use of operational examiners from the field to moderate and validate final performance assessments, ensuring that certification decisions are grounded in real operational expectations and supported by independent evidence.
- *Integration of selection and training* - Kelly has been a strong advocate for the effective use of Airways' SureSelect ATC candidate selection system and for its integration into the broader training framework. She has shaped how selection information is used in practice, aligning it with training standards and using it to support more consistent, evidence-based decisions about candidate progression and
- support needs.
- Kelly's work to align selection, training, and assessment has improved training consistency and has contributed to more transparent and defensible decision-making throughout the training pipeline.
- Making a lasting impact - For nearly 15 years, Kelly has played a leading role in strengthening the safety, integrity, and credibility of ATC training at Airways and

across Airways International's global customers and partners. Through her commitment to training excellence, she has helped embed evidence-based training and assessment practices, improve consistency and transparency in certification decisions, and ensure that training outcomes remain firmly anchored in operational reality. Kelly's contributions have had a direct and lasting influence on training quality and, by extension, on operational safety.

- Beyond New Zealand, Kelly has shared and applied this approach through ICAO forums, regional training events, and CANSO webinars. Her leadership has supported long-standing international training partnerships with a range of ANSPs and industry partners from around the globe, as well as ongoing support across the Pacific region. Through this work, she has helped build local training capability and strengthen training systems in a wide range of operational environments.
- Kelly is a deserving recipient of the CANSO Person of the Year Award – in recognition of her sustained leadership and significant, measurable contribution to the safety, quality, and professionalism of ATC training, both within Airways and across the wider ATM community.