

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First MD 530N in New Zealand Enters Service with Heliventures NZ

Mt Hutt Aviation restores an MD 520N with the MD 530N upgrade, Rolls-Royce 250-C30 power, and a modern glass cockpit.

MESA, Arizona, September, 2026. MD Helicopters, LLC (MDH) announced that the first MD 530N upgrade in New Zealand has entered service with Heliventures NZ, a commercial and agricultural helicopter operator based in Oamaru on the South Island. The work was performed by Mt Hutt Aviation (MHA), the MDH Authorized Service Center in New Zealand, with the Rolls-Royce 250-C30 engine prepared and supplied by Asia Pacific Aerospace (APA), a Rolls-Royce Authorized Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul Center.

What the MD 530N Upgrade Delivers

The MD 530N upgrade replaces the MD 520N's Rolls-Royce 250-C20R engine with the more powerful 250-C30, giving NOTAR operators significantly improved performance, particularly in hot-and-high operating conditions.

MDH received FAA Supplemental Type Certificate approval for the upgrade in April 2026.

Key benefits include:

- **Rolls-Royce 250-C30 engine** replaces the MD 520N's Rolls-Royce 250-C20R
- **Significantly improved hot-and-high performance** for payload and mission flexibility
- **NOTAR anti-torque system retained**, with its reduced noise and ground safety advantages
- **Compressor inspection interval extended** from 300 hours to 2,000 hours, reducing scheduled engine downtime and long-term maintenance cost
- **FAA Supplemental Type Certificate** approved April 2026

A Full Reconditioning MD 500, Not Just an Engine Change

Mt Hutt Aviation approached the Heliventures aircraft as a full reconditioning rather than an engine change alone. The scope of work included:

- Airframe stripped down, with components removed and individually inspected, overhauled, replaced, or reinstalled
- Aircraft rebuilt and refinished
- MD 530N engine upgrade package with the Rolls-Royce 250-C30
- Garmin glass cockpit
- Complete exterior refinish



“We’ve approached this aircraft as a full reconditioning, not simply an upgrade,” said Mark Kershaw, Chief Executive Officer of Mt Hutt Aviation. “The result is an aircraft that is as close to a new MD 500 as you can get without building one from scratch. What you end up with is a proven MD 500 airframe, effectively remanufactured from the ground up, with modern systems and a new level of capability. It gives the operator the opportunity to retain an aircraft they know and trust, while bringing it to a standard that is genuinely comparable to a new aircraft.”

The Operator: Heliventures NZ

Heliventures NZ has provided commercial and agricultural helicopter services across Otago, South Canterbury, and the Mackenzie Country since 2009 and operates a fleet of MD 520N aircraft. The fleet supports:

- Agricultural spraying, fertilizer application, seeding, and mustering
- Power line and utility work
- Firefighting
- Precision lifting and survey work
- Hunting, scenic, and charter flights

“The 530N upgrade has given us a significant step forward in the capability of the aircraft,” said Craig McMillan, Owner of Heliventures NZ. “The combination of the C30 engine, improved performance, and the potential for substantially reduced engine maintenance makes a real difference to the way we operate. For us, it’s about getting more capability and reliability from an aircraft we already know and trust, rather than replacing it. MHA has done an excellent job bringing the upgrade together, and we’re very pleased with the result.”

The Engine Partner: Asia Pacific Aerospace

Asia Pacific Aerospace, a Rolls-Royce Authorized Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul Center, prepared and supplied the 250-C30 engine for the conversion and is building additional engines for New Zealand MD operators through Mt Hutt Aviation.

“Asia Pacific Aerospace is very proud to be part of the team supplying Mt Hutt Aviation and Heliventures NZ with the M250-C30 engine for this STC project,” said David King, Operations Manager, RR250, Asia Pacific Aerospace. “The engine gives Heliventures an immediate benefit in increased payload capability, with the higher power output allowing less operational change and lower engine maintenance costs. All going well, Heliventures won’t need to remove the engine from the aircraft for 2,000 hours, which means less downtime through the peak summer season ahead in New Zealand. This is one of many engines being built to accommodate what is expected to be a high uptake within the MD market in New Zealand through our chosen MD Authorized Service Center, Mt Hutt Aviation. Any operator looking to convert their aircraft is encouraged to contact Asia Pacific Aerospace and Mt Hutt Aviation about outright purchase or core exchange.”

The Fielded Fleet Upgrade Program

“New Zealand operators work their MD 500s hard, in terrain and conditions that reward every pound of margin,” said Ryan Weeks, Chief Executive Officer of MD Helicopters. “Mt Hutt Aviation, Asia Pacific Aerospace, and Heliventures NZ have shown exactly what the Fielded Fleet Upgrade program is for: taking a proven aircraft an operator already owns and bringing it to a new standard of performance.”

With more than 1,400 MD 500-series aircraft operating worldwide, the fielded fleet upgrades, also known as the Super X upgrades, provide operators with a path to higher performance and improved fuel economy using the aircraft they already own rather than replacing them.

MD 530N Upgrade Availability

The MD 530N upgrade is available now through the MDH global network of Authorized Service Centers.

- **Upgrade details:** mdhelicopters.com/fielded-fleet-upgrades/530n
- **Upgrade inquiries:** upgrades@mdhelicopters.com or 480-346-6300
- **New Zealand operators:** contact Mt Hutt Aviation, the MDH Authorized Service Center in New Zealand
- **Engine supply, outright purchase or core exchange:** Asia Pacific Aerospace

Upgrade Inquiries

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480-346-6300