



**LEARN TO
FLY IN THE
KIMBERLEY**



ABOUT AUSTRALIAN HELICOPTER ACADEMY

Australian Helicopter Academy (AHA) is a specialised helicopter flight training facility located in Kununurra, Western Australia. Affiliated with HeliSpirit, AHA provides Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) training with the aim of employing students on completion. Training is conducted alongside the day-to-day operations of HeliSpirit, with students gaining a first-hand insight into one of Australia's most successful and exciting helicopter businesses.

With new facilities, including a study room and modern classroom which overlooks the busy maintenance facility of HeliSpirit, it is an exciting place to learn to fly. AHA operates a fleet of immaculate training helicopters including the Robinson R22 and R44.

The AHA is very fortunate to have one of the most spectacular training environments anywhere in Australia with a great diversity of terrain and an unlimited number of off-field landing sites right on the doorstep of the airport.

AHA instructors are experienced professional helicopter pilots whose daily work includes; check & training, aerial survey, aerial-ignition/firefighting, remote charter including various government departments, VIP multi-day adventure flights, tourism, and much more. They will share their industry knowledge with students through quality instruction as a result of the thousands of flight hours under their belts.

The Australian Helicopter Academy use only highly experienced instructor pilots to train students in one of the most spectacular yet challenging environments in Australia, with the intention of offering employment to them at the completion of their training.





ABOUT HELISPIRIT

HeliSpirit currently operates 25 helicopters from the Robinson R22 to the Airbus Helicopters (formerly Eurocopter) AS350 Squirrel. It employs approximately 35 helicopter pilots each tourist season (from March to October) to primarily conduct scenic flights from remote bases around the Northern Territory and Western Australia, making it one of the largest employers of new pilots in Australia.

For more information on the wide range of services offered and locations, visit **helispirit.com.au**

HeliSpirit's selection criteria is based on flying skills, attitude, professionalism, teamwork and an overarching commitment to high levels of safety. Well developed people skills and friendly customer service are attributes necessary in HeliSpirit commercial pilots. Australian Helicopter Academy will shape you into a safe and skilled pilot in a very rewarding and satisfying environment.

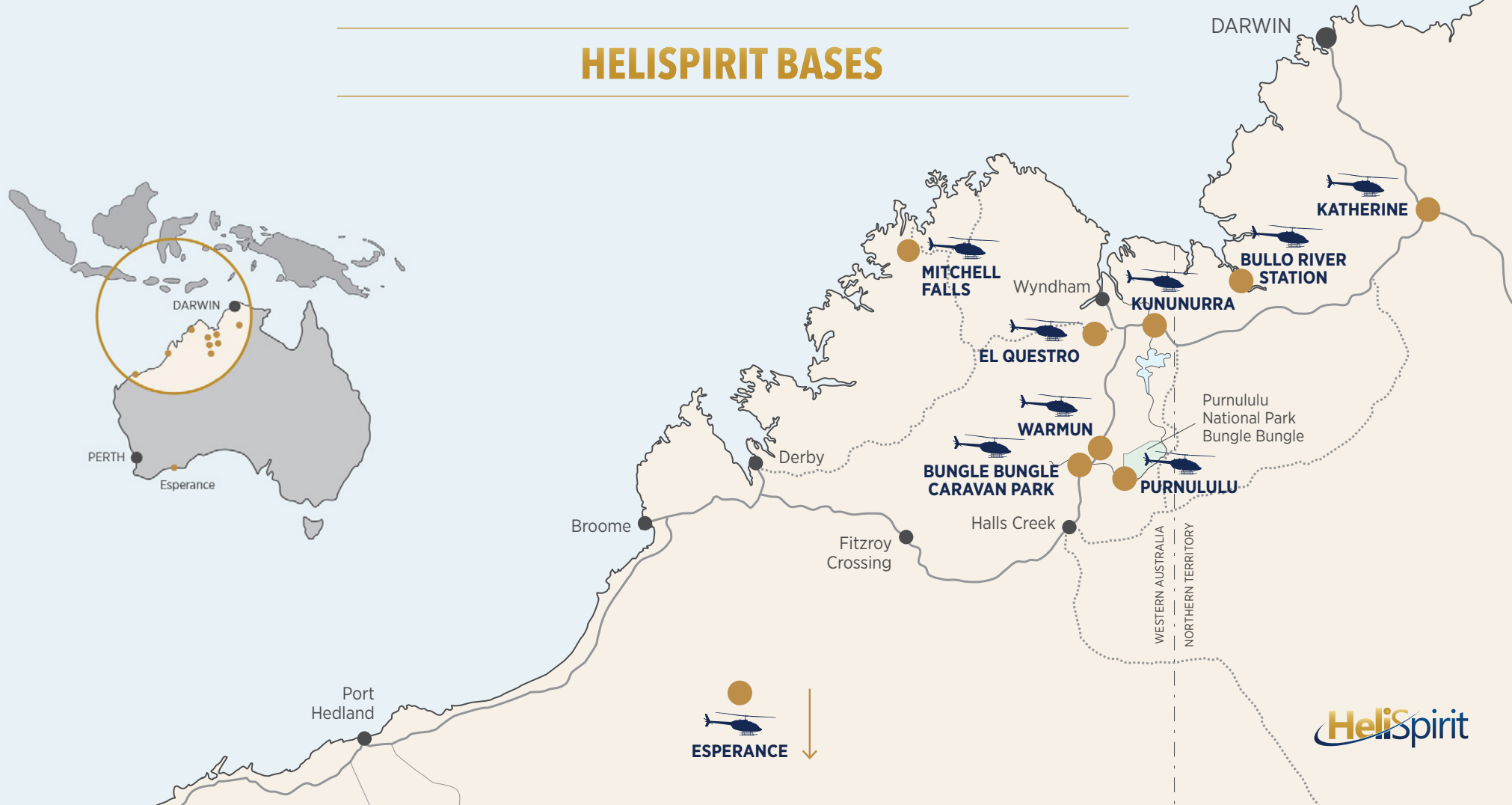
When you graduate you will be ready for employment, with a fully comprehensive skill base that will be seen by prospective employers as a cut above the rest. Our instructors also have many contacts within the helicopter industry to help you pursue other employment opportunities.

To date, 100% of students who have completed their CPL through the Australian Helicopter Academy and applied for employment with HeliSpirit have been successful.





HELISPIRIT BASES





WHY TRAIN WITH THE AUSTRALIAN HELICOPTER ACADEMY?

✓ Highly experienced instructors

The team who are all operational pilots utilise scenario-based training from the thousands of hours of industry experience.

Our instructors are also part of the HeliSpirit Check and Training team maintaining the high standards both AHA and HeliSpirit are recognised for throughout the industry.

✓ Training environment

We're very fortunate with the training environment we have here, with the Kimberley region offering a great diversity of terrain and unlimited number of off-field landing sites right on the doorstep of the airport. Kununurra aerodrome is non-towered, which greatly reduces time wasted waiting for clearances and traffic. For the controlled airspace portion of the flight training, some will be simulated at Kununurra but most will be conducted at Darwin which is a military-controlled Class C international airport.

✓ In-house maintenance

You'll have exposure to a large commercial helicopter company where we encourage students to interact with our company pilots and engineering staff. This allows you to gain valuable contacts and help with aircraft servicing to get a better understanding of how the helicopter works.

✓ High chance of employment

One of the biggest hurdles in a pilot's career is finding their first job after leaving flight school. In Australia, it's not uncommon for prospective pilots to drive around the country, stopping at every scenic flight company on the way for a year or more before landing their first job and even then it's often a ground-based role for another year or two prior to being offered a flying role. The primary reason we established AHA is to ensure mutual benefit by delivering high-quality training that continues to support both pilots and the company, while maintaining a high standard of safety at HeliSpirit. While we can't guarantee positions every year, so far all AHA students who have completed their licence with the intention of gaining employment with HeliSpirit have achieved exactly that and are now well on their way to a successful career as a helicopter pilot.



BECOMING A HELICOPTER PILOT

The flight training portion takes most students around 12-14 weeks to complete. Rather than the common flight school structure of only coming in for your allocated training period each day, AHA students are generally here during business hours Monday to Friday.

There is always in-house study to do when not flying and often opportunities to learn more about the mechanical side of the helicopter in the hangar.

While conducting your training, subsidised student accommodation is available at our fully furnished house located in Kununurra.

Please note, as part of our Drug and Alcohol Management Policy, you will be required to complete a standard pre-employment drug and alcohol test in Kununurra at the beginning of your flight training.





+ Obtain a Medical Certificate

To become a commercial pilot, you will need a Class 1 Aviation Medical Certificate, renewed every 12 months. It is advisable to obtain this certificate before starting your training to address any potential issues. You can find a list of CASA Designated Aviation Medical Examiners (DAMEs) here: casa.gov.au/licences-and-certificates/aviation-medicals-and-certificates/medical-and-eye-examiners.



To complete the medical examination, you will need an Aviation Reference Number (ARN), which you can obtain via the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) website: casa.gov.au/licences-and-certificates.



+ Conduct an interview

While a bit unusual for a flight school, being accepted as a student with AHA is subject to an interview. This is because we only wish to train people who have the attitude and ability to be employable at the end of their licence, whether with HeliSpirit or elsewhere in the helicopter industry.

+ Complete your theory training

As well as completing the minimum flight hours, CASA also requires applicants to complete the seven commercial theory examinations. Unlike most flight schools, we require students to complete their theory exams prior to commencing flight training.

This ensures you have a solid foundation of knowledge for us to build on right from your very first flying lesson and increases the chances of finishing your flying training as close as possible to the minimum hours.

There are a number of dedicated theory schools in Australia whose sole focus is preparing students for the CASA exams. They all offer full-time courses which take about 3 months, or self-study options where you can go at your own pace. A quick online search will show you the various options available and one we recommend is Advanced Flight Theory (AFT).

More information can be found on their website at: advancedflighttheory.com.au.

+ Complete your flight training

The minimum number of hours required for a commercial helicopter licence in Australia is 105 but is subject to the following conditions:

- You must complete the last 30 hours within 90 days.
- You can only train in a maximum of two different helicopter types.
- If training is conducted in more than one helicopter type, you must do a minimum of 20 hours in each type.
- The first 15 hours must be conducted in one of the two types.
- At least 40 hours of dual flight training must be conducted across the two types.
- At least 25 hours of solo flight training must be conducted across the two types (not including cross-country training).
- At least 10 hours solo cross-country training.



DID YOU KNOW?

Most students complete the majority of the training in the R22 to keep the cost down and then a minimum of 20 hours in the R44.

It's also important to be aware that, while the R22 has a maximum weight limit for each seat of 109kg, due to fuel loading it is very difficult to train students weighing more than 90kg in that aircraft and you may need to consider training solely in the R44.

The upside to the extra cost is more practice and experience in the aircraft for your flight test, and early career.



HIGHLY EXPERIENCED INSTRUCTORS

Instructors at the Australian Helicopter Academy have a vast and wide range of experience, with an extensive number of flying hours between them.

Their experience includes having flown for commercial operators throughout Australia and overseas in a large scope of operations including charter, filming/photography, firefighting/aerial ignition, mining exploration, power-line inspections, and flight training, just to name a few!

This can give you a distinct insight into many facets of the aviation industry.

Our instructors are also part of the HeliSpirit Check and Training team maintaining the high standards both AHA and HeliSpirit are recognised for throughout the industry.

During training, our instructors will highlight the skills needed to perform operations and the Kimberley region offers great diversity to build your skills.

We endeavour to help guide you on the journey to attain your goals and aspirations as a professional helicopter pilot and give you a head-start in your pilot career.





TRIAL INSTRUCTIONAL FLIGHT

There's no better way to experience the life of a helicopter pilot than by taking a trial flight!

Duration	Approximately 45 minutes
Helicopter	Robinson R22 (subject to student weight)/R44 (subject to student weight)
Location	Kununurra HeliSpirit Base

Includes:

- ✓ Pre-flight briefing on the primary effect of controls, explaining which flight control does what
- ✓ Pre-flight briefing on the hand-over and take-over procedure of the flight controls
- ✓ An overview of the helicopter
- ✓ Instructor starts the helicopter, taxis and departs the aerodrome
- ✓ Instructor demonstrates the effects of each primary control
- ✓ The student flies along a defined course at a constant airspeed
- ✓ Instructor invites the student to take each control separately then multiple controls and eventually all controls together to fly the helicopter straight and level at a constant airspeed
- ✓ The student flies the helicopter around an area descending and decelerating to a slow speed at low level
- ✓ The student attempts to hover
- ✓ The student flies the helicopter back to the aerodrome, makes an approach to the landing area and once again attempts to hover the helicopter





LIFE IN THE KIMBERLEY – STUDY/LIFE BALANCE

The vibrant town of Kununurra is a great place to be while studying. There is a strong sense of community in the town and a plethora of things to do and see in your free time.

As the gateway to the magnificent Kimberley region, Kununurra offers a wide variety of outdoor activities. Boating, camping, fishing, four-wheel driving and hiking are just some of the ways you can spend your downtime.

With World Heritage-listed sites and national parks at your doorstep, it is an ideal place to explore while you complete your pilot training.





STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Harry McGinn

Harry McGinn undertook CPL training with the Australian Helicopter Academy in 2024.

"I spent 7 years working around helicopters on the ground before finally committing to getting my CPL. When I asked other pilots 'where should I do my training?' the highest recommendations were for AHA. I am very happy to say that AHA lived up to its reputation. The quality of training I received has been second to none. Working with experienced instructors who are also still very much involved with the day to day operations of a busy and successful commercial operation like HeliSpirit, you are taught to think about more than just how to fly the helicopter, you are given an insight into real world situations and how to deal with them. The Kimberley is a beautiful and ideal training ground with consistently good weather and no controlled airspace to contend with, meaning that more of your time in the helicopter is spent building skills and not waiting for clearances. I cannot think of a better way to have started my career flying helicopters."

Harry successfully gained employment with HeliSpirit upon the completion of his Commercial Pilots Licence. He is currently a line pilot at HeliSpirit's Purnunlulu (Bungle Bungle) Base.

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Callum MacKellar, WA

Callum MacKellar undertook CPL training with the Australian Helicopter Academy in 2022.

"I came across AHA by chance while travelling and was immediately sold on the idea of doing the training with them.

The idea of training and living in the Kimberley was all I needed to sign up, it was a bonus that AHA are some of the best in the business. I couldn't recommend AHA highly enough. The training environment fully immerses you in the industry which helps endlessly in learning all that is required to get your licence.

The people involved in the training and the HeliSpirit employees made the entire process an unforgettable experience."

Callum successfully gained employment with HeliSpirit upon the completion of his Commercial Pilots Licence. He is currently a line pilot at HeliSpirit's El Questro Base.





STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Elliott O'Brien, QLD

Elliott O'Brien undertook CPL training with the Australian Helicopter Academy in 2023.

"I had done a considerable amount of research into flight schools around the country before I came across Australian Helicopter Academy (AHA). AHA immediately stood out as the best fit for me. I felt there was a level of care that went into their students over and above the norm. The head of operations was extremely helpful in answering any questions I had about the industry and career opportunities.

Living in and flying around some of the most beautiful parts of the Kimberley was a highlight. The opportunity to land in any number of remote areas with incredibly experienced instructors using real-world scenarios was great. To top it off, being able to speak with current working pilots and engineers in the hangar each day helped me to build a great network and learn so much beyond what is covered in the syllabus.

I absolutely recommend AHA — the approach to training, instructors and lifestyle all surpassed my expectations and have given me a strong foundation to continue my flying career."

Elliott successfully gained employment with HeliSpirit on completion of his training. Elliott is now flying Bell 206 Helicopter's at the Mitchell Falls.

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Harry Shaw, ACT

Harry Shaw undertook CPL training with the Australian Helicopter Academy in 2022.

"I am Harry an electrician from Canberra. I heard about AHA when I went for an incredible scenic flight over Katherine gorge with HeliSpirit and was talking to a previous student (now pilot's) experience and how he went about getting his licence.

I started my training with AHA in September after completing all the theory at AFT.

I decided to go with AHA after extensive research into different schools on the East Coast and talking to as many people in the industry that I had connections with. The main deciding factor came down to a job prospect at the end of my training, as well as the quality and detailed training provided by the school.

Living in the Kimberly was incredible. Every weekend had new opportunity to explore the surrounding areas of Kununurra, either going up the Ord River cliff jumping or 4wding into remote cascades or heading to Lake Argyle & El Questro.

Highlights of the training has to be the training areas available to AHA. There is everything from open paddocks to tight gorges to remote pinnacles everywhere is stunning and with a bit of rain waterfalls pop up everywhere.

I would 100% recommend AHA to people looking to get there CPL. Being in the Kimberley means you don't waste any time with controlled airspace, get to explore stunning areas and have top tier instructors as well as the added bonus of working with HeliSpirit where you gain an understanding of how a commercial operator works and the potential for employment straight out of training!"

Harry successfully gained employment with HeliSpirit on completion of his training. Harry is now base manager at HeliSpirit's base in Mitchell Falls.







For more information about starting your career as a helicopter pilot please visit:

australianhelicopteracademy.com.au

or follow us on  Facebook or  Instagram



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