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# German paraglider hits back at authority

By Will Hine - The Southland Times | Saturday, 02 February 2008

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WILL HINE/Southland Times/Image ID 119346  
HIGH FLIER: German man Gerry Mayr power paraglided over Mt Cook on January 16.

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**A German paramotor pilot under investigation by the Civil Aviation Authority yesterday defended his record flight over Aoraki Mt Cook.**

Gerry Mayr's flight on January 16, made him the first person to fly a powered paraglider over the country's highest peak.

The Civil Aviation Authority is investigating Mr Mayr's flight, partly because he lacked a New Zealand pilot's licence.

Now back in Germany, Mr Mayr said he was critical of the authority questioning his flight.

"It's bulls\*\*t," he said.

"When you are flying in Germany the whole of Europe accepts Europe certification." Authority spokesperson Emma Peel said New Zealand's unique climate meant everyone wanting to fly here needed to be certified locally.

She acknowledged the New Zealand Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association might not have communicated this to Mr Mayr effectively.

The Authority was also investigating Mr Mayr's lack of communication with other pilots.

"He entered a mandatory broadcast area and wasn't making the required radio calls. What that



does is put all the other aircraft in the area into a dangerous situation," Ms Peel said.

However, Mr Mayr said he had encountered radio trouble.

"I asked the airport three times `I want to land here, is it possible?' I didn't receive an answer... and I thought that's the way they do things here in New Zealand." Certification and radio problems aside, Mr Mayr had stern words for those criticising his flight into turbulent air on the leeward side of Mt Cook.

"I have two or three European certifications. I went to school and knew what to do on the other side of the mountain." New Zealand Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association chief executive Ross Gray said anyone flying into a "leeside rotor" on the back side of a mountain was asking for death.

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