

Get, set and fly: Jetpacks ready for manned flights

New Zealand developers have created a personalized jetpack and have been issued a flying permit for manned test flights

► It is the brainchild of inventor **Glenn Martin**, who began working on it in his Christchurch garage more than 30 years ago

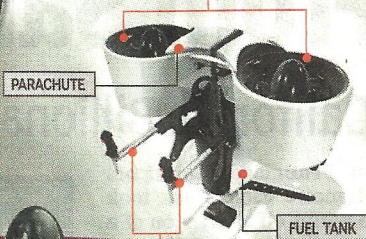
► It is inspired by Martin's childhood TV shows such as 'Thunderbirds' and 'Lost in Space'

► Martin set out to create a jetpack suitable for ordinary people with no specialist pilot training

CLEARED FOR TAKE OFF



The jetpack consists of a pair of cylinders containing propulsion fans attached to a free-standing carbon-fibre frame



The pilot backs into the frame, straps himself in and controls the wingless jetpack with **two joysticks**

Max speed	74km/hr
Max take off weight	330kg
Flight time	30min
Range	30km

Estimated price
\$150,000-
\$250,000

► A specialized version designed for the military and 'first responder' emergency crews such as firefighters is expected to be ready for delivery by mid-2014

► A simpler model aimed at the general public is expected to be on the market in 2015

Source: AFP Martin Airpack Company

Wellington: The New Zealand developers of a personalized jetpack said on Tuesday that aviation regulators have issued the device with a flying permit, allowing for manned test flights. Martin Aircraft chief executive Peter Coker said the certification was a significant milestone in the development of the jetpack, which the company hopes to begin selling next year.

"For us it's a very important step because it moves it out of what I call a dream into something which I believe we're now in a position to commercialize and take for-

ward very quickly," Coker said. The jetpack is the brainchild of inventor Glenn Martin, who began working on it in his Christchurch garage more than 30 years ago.

Inspired by childhood television shows such as "Thunderbirds" and "Lost in Space", Martin set out in the early 1980s to create a jetpack suitable for everyday use by ordinary people with no specialist pilot training. His jetpack consists of a pair of cylinders containing propulsion fans attached to a free-standing carbon-fibre frame.

The pilot backs into the

frame, straps himself in and controls the wingless jetpack with two joysticks.

While the jetpack's concept is simple enough, Time magazine likened it to two enormous leaf blowers welded together, fine-tuning it into an aircraft that is safe and easy to use has been a lengthy process. Coker said the latest prototype, the P12, incorporated huge design improvements over earlier versions.

"Changing the position of the jetpack's ducts has resulted in a quantum leap in performance over the previous prototype," he said. AFP