



SMFL HELICOPTERS LAUNCHED WITH MISSION TO REDEFINE ROTORCRAFT LEASING

News / Finance



SMFL Helicopters launches following the merger of two industry leaders, with a vision to transform rotorcraft leasing through innovation and scale. SMFLH has been created by Sumitomo Mitsui Finance and Leasing Company, Limited's (SMFL) acquisition, through SMFL LCI Helicopters Limited, of two respected leasing companies – LCI and Macquarie Rotorcraft Limited (MRL) – and harnesses the strengths of SMFL Group's aviation ecosystem.

Shinichiro Watanabe, Senior Managing Executive Officer at Sumitomo Mitsui Finance and Leasing Company commented: "SMFL Helicopters consolidates the deep sector knowledge and operational excellence of two respected lessors within our aviation eco-system to create a single, powerful platform. SMFL is proud to now be present at scale in this dynamic sector, with a goal of becoming the market leader."

With proven expertise, a global network, and a growing fleet of around 290 aircraft, SMFLH brings together outstanding technical knowledge, financial rigour, and operational depth across six continents. The new lessor is set to deliver new benchmarks in reliability, innovation, and customer service.

As a trusted partner to 52 operators, SMFLH is strongly positioned to deliver efficient and flexible financing and leasing solutions for mission-critical and sustainable aviation operations.

The launch of SMFLH follows regulatory approval from the UK Competition and Markets Authority in November 2025 for the acquisition of MRL by SMFL LCI Helicopters Limited. Following this decision, the integration of the two companies commenced, and is ongoing.

John Petkovic has been appointed as CEO Designate of SMFLH. This is pending completion of

protocols between SMFLH and SMFL, and requirements related to his re-location to Dublin, and it is anticipated that he will formally assume the position of CEO later in 2026.

His role is to lead SMFLH in an executive capacity, with key focus areas including advancing the company's commercial strategy, strengthening its international footprint, driving operational excellence, and building a high-performing, inclusive culture across its teams worldwide.

John Petkovic says: "With the launch of SMFL Helicopters, we have an exciting opportunity to create a lessor that combines the skills and experience of our talented team of people with the financial strength of SMFL to deliver innovative leasing solutions to our customers across the globe."

Crispin Maunder has been named as Chairman of SMFLH. Jaspal Jandu has been appointed a Senior Advisor to SMFLH and will utilise his deep executive experience to help guide the integration of the new business.

Company's leadership team consists of industry professionals with longstanding experience, all of whom served previously at LCI or MRL. Terri Foley takes on an expanded position at SMFLH as Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer, with a key immediate role of providing senior management continuity and leadership during the CEO appointment period. Con Barber has been appointed Chief Commercial Officer, Pdraig Conneely has been named Chief Technical Officer, Ken Dowling will be Chief Financial Officer, and Eric Kataoka has taken the role of Chief Investment Officer.

In addition, Alan O'Rourke will be SMFLH's new Head of Capital Markets, and Trey Wade has been appointed Head of Trading and Portfolio Strategy.

SMFLH is headquartered in Dublin, Ireland, with offices across the globe in locations including Limerick, Ireland, London, UK, and Singapore.

The lessor has a total fleet of around 290 aircraft on order and in service. These include latest generation helicopters from manufacturers including Airbus and Leonardo, which are deployed on mission-critical operations across the globe including emergency medical services, offshore energy, and search and rescue.

The origins of SMFLH were formed in 2020 with the launch of a helicopter leasing joint venture between SMFL and LCI. This was followed by SMFL's acquisitions of LCI and MRL in 2025. SMFLH is underpinned by the financial robustness of the SMFL Group.

SMFL's long term commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, as part of The SMFL Way, is reflected in SMFLH's approach to business, as are SMFL's five core values of Customer First, Proactive & Innovative, Quality, Speed and Team SMFL.

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