

## Submission to the Aviation Safety Regulation Review 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission to the review panel.

I am an active glider pilot, a member of the Gliding Federation of Australia (GFA) and a committee member of Southern Cross Gliding Club, the largest gliding club in New South Wales and one of the largest in Australia.

Since starting in this sport some 7 or 8 years ago, I have been impressed with the particular focus on safety which permeates our gliding club, and the Australian gliding community as a whole. In my time with the club I have yet to see any serious incident, and accidents across Australia are few and far between.

The high safety standards of gliding in Australia are clear when compared to some other sectors of the Australian aviation community (such as hang gliding), and when compared with gliding in some other parts of the world.

I believe this is in large part due to the GFA's structure and role, by which standards and processes are developed and promulgated by the GFA, with safety being the primary concern. As a specialist sport with specialist equipment, specialist procedures and specialist requirements, the GFA is best placed to understand, develop and implement safety standards and processes which are effective, realistic and achievable.

While greater oversight by CASA throughout the aviation industry seems inevitable, the primary focus of that oversight should be to achieve a safe environment in the most practical way possible, commensurate with costs and other administrative constraints. That can be best achieved by putting the responsibility for implementing and managing the safety of the gliding environment in the hands of those with the greatest understanding of what can be achieved in that environment, and of how.

This can be done either by building that capability within CASA (which currently has little if any specialist expertise in gliding), or by continuing with the GFA shouldering the responsibility.

Given the particular nature of gliding, I would argue that developing the requisite technical capability within CASA is both impractical and not cost-effective. Most of the technical capability would have to come from the current gliding community, which is already employed (in an entirely unpaid capacity) within the GFA.

If CASA were to attempt to regulate gliding without that technical capability, the only way an appropriate level of safety could be achieved would be to regulate gliding to a large extent out of existence, which is not commensurate with CASA's remit to foster aviation.

Given that the GFA, and in particular, the technical and regulatory functions within it, are run on the smell of a proverbial oily rag, the most cost-effective way for CASA to develop and maintain a safe aviation environment in gliding is to continue with the current funding model in which subsidies are provided by CASA to the GFA to carry out these functions.

It is worth noting that gliding is held in high regard by those who value safety greatly, namely the RAAF. The Air Force maintains its own cadet gliding initiative, and many young school-age glider pilots go on to careers in the RAAF and in commercial aviation.

Australia has been awarded the right to hold the 2015 Junior World Gliding Championships in NSW and the 2017 Flapped World Gliding Championships in Victoria. These two competitions will focus the world gliding community's attention on Australia, and the Australian public's attention on gliding. I would hope that in the years leading up to these championships, CASA's oversight of safety in gliding would have allowed and empowered the GFA to maintain and enhance its current high standards of gliding safety in Australia; it would be a shame indeed if, rather than this, the world saw a gliding environment in Australia in which CASA's regulatory actions saw gliding hamstrung and constrained, with safety being achieved by ensuring that gliding as a sport was regulated out of existence.

Michael Brandon

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