



Dion Weston

---

January 31, 2014

Messrs David Forsyth, Don Spruston and Roger Whitefield  
Aviation Safety Regulation Review Panel  
c/- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development  
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Sirs,

I am a Glider pilot and a member of the Gliding Federation of Australia [GFA] (██████████).

I also hold a private pilots licence (██████████).

I wish to indicate I support the Part 149 Approved Organisation model for governance of gliding operations in particular, and sports aviation generally, in Australia going forwards.

From the first GFA Manual of Standard Procedures [MOSP] drafted by Bob Muller over fifty years ago to the present the GFA has lead the way in development of best practice self-regulatory sports aviation training, operations and administration in Australia. This legacy is valuable not only in terms of its cost effectiveness to the public purse but also in terms of the safety outcomes achieved. And while there is no room for complacency in requiring the GFA to adapt and improve its capabilities to match 21<sup>st</sup> century international benchmark safety standards I am not aware of internationally any more effective means of providing safety oversight of a recreational flying activity than by Government working cooperatively with the practitioners themselves.

Insofar as the GFA has relieved and will continue to relieve Government of a significant amount of administrative cost and operational resources burden to oversight Australian gliding air operations, I urge the Review Panel to acquaint themselves with the current complicated and tortuous means by which CASA currently audits the GFA's activities annually with a view improving the audit process through better consultation with the GFA. Improvements can be made to current practice that would reduce significant wastage of time and effort. Gliding is a unique, sophisticated form of recreational flying that enriches the Australian aviation landscape. It deserves better treatment by Government than it has received in recent years. Contradictory and apparently fickle shifts in regulatory commands from CASA over the past three to four years in particular have lead to delays and significant reworking of safety management effort.

Furthermore, heavy-handed interventions by CASA into the GFA airworthiness delegations in 2013 I believe served neither the public interest nor gliding safety well. Closer cooperation rather than direct intervention would have and will in future deliver better outcomes going forwards than was achieved by these recent actions.

To a significant degree it is inadequate funding of the GFA's self-governance processes by Government that has led to these costly and inherently wasteful interactions.

Ultimately I urge the Review recommend to the Minister that Departmental policy evolve to direct CASA to adopt a more supportive rather than confrontational approach to its relations with the GFA in order to promote safe flying not only within the gliding operations itself but also in terms of interaction between gliding and other aviation operations.

Thank you for this opportunity for commenting on the future governance of a recreational activity that I passionately hold dear and enjoy enormously. And I thank you for your consideration and appreciation of the importance of the GFA in the sport and recreational aviation sector.

Regards



Dion Weston