

GLIDING AUSTRALIA

Issue 75 May - July 2026

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TWO SEAT NATIONALS



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TECH WEBINAR - LSA TUG FOR GEELONG**

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GLIDING AUSTRALIA

MAGAZINE

No. 75 MAY - JULY 2026

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A NEW CHAPTER FOR GLIDING AUSTRALIA GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

MEMBERS APPROVE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AT EGM

At the recent Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) held on 30 March 2026, members of Gliding Australia voted to support a major constitutional reform – paving the way for the organisation to transition from an incorporated association to a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) which will support our application to the Australian Sports Commission to achieve National Sporting Organisation accreditation.

This is a significant moment in Gliding Australia's history, and the outcome reflects both strong engagement from members and a view for modernisation.

THE VOTE: A CLEAR OUTCOME

The motion required a high threshold to pass under the current Constitution – both a majority of regions, at least 75% of total votes in favour and a minimum of 100 voters (refer to Sect. 25, Constitution Ver. 7).

The Secretary's official voting report was scrutineered, with the following outcomes declared:

- Total votes cast: 452
- Votes in favour: 360
- Votes against: 92
- Overall support: 79.65%
- Regional majority: Achieved (4 out of 5 regions carried)

State-by-state results showed strong support across most regions:

- SA/NT: 98% in favour
- QLD: 94% in favour
- NSW: 97% in favour
- VIC/TAS: 90% in favour
- WA: 19% in favour

With both the regional majority requirement, the three-quarters overall vote threshold and the minimum requirement of 100 votes met, the motion was formally declared CARRIED in accordance with Version 7 of the Gliding Australia Constitution. Importantly, independent scrutineers confirmed the integrity of the process. While a small number of votes were excluded due to ineligibility or late submission, their inclusion would not have changed the outcome.

WHAT DOES THIS CHANGE MEAN?

For some members, the phrase "Company Limited by Guarantee" will sound like a fundamental shift in the way Gliding Australia operates.

In practice, the change is about governance structure – not about changing the core purpose or day-to-day operation of gliding in Australia. The Gliding Australia Executive Team and Heads of Departments are unaffected by the change, and daily operations of Gliding at both member-level and club-level are unaffected. In summary:

PREVIOUS STRUCTURE: INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

Under the previous structure, Gliding Australia operated as an incorporated association governed by state-based

legislation, specifically within Victoria. This model is generally suited to smaller or state-focused organisations and has supported the organisation well over time, however it can present limitations when operating nationally across multiple jurisdictions.

NEW STRUCTURE: COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE (CLG)

Under the new structure, Gliding Australia will operate as a Company Limited by Guarantee under national corporate law. This is a widely used model for national not-for-profits, including sporting bodies and charities. Members do not hold shares but instead act as guarantors, and there are no dividends or shareholders, with any surplus reinvested back into the organisation to support its ongoing activities and strategic objectives.

WHY MAKE THE TRANSITION?

The move to a company limited by guarantee is about aligning Gliding Australia with modern governance standards and supporting its national role.

The change is also about funding eligibility. As many members will know, there is currently no National Sporting Organisation (NSO) for Gliding in Australia. This occurred after the Air Sport Australia Confederation (ASAC) relinquished the NSO accreditation for all aviation sporting organisations in 2025. There were several immediate impacts: minor issues around international teams representation, but more substantially, eligibility for state government core funding. Multiple regions were expected to fail eligibility criteria during future grant applications, due to there being no recognised NSO for Gliding in Australia. Regions use this funding to deliver benefits for members. This most notably includes courses, but also training, simulators, club resources and more.

THEREFORE, THE KEY BENEFITS ARE

- NSO eligibility: Organisations applying for NSO accreditation under the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) are required to have a company structure
 - Funding eligibility: NSO status both maintains current and increases future funding eligibility at both state and national levels
 - National consistency: A single regulatory framework across all regions
 - Stronger governance: Clear director duties, independence and accountability requirements under federal law
 - External credibility: Often preferred by regulators, insurers and Aviation/Sports industry partners
- Just as importantly, the change does not alter the fundamental purpose of the organisation. Gliding Australia will remain a not-for-profit, continue to be member-based, and exist to support and grow gliding in Australia in accordance with its constitutional Objects and Strategic Plan.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

With the motion passed, Gliding Australia moves into the implementation phase. This involves:

- Registering the new company structure with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC).
- Setting-up three (3) new committees, several processes and reporting channels to comply with the new constitution.
- Submission of our NSO application to the ASC.
- The Gliding Australia Board operates under the Transitional Arrangements documented in the new constitution, as preparations continue for restructuring to take place at the November 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- For the first time, at the November 2026 AGM, ALL members will have the opportunity to democratically elect independent Board members to sit on the Gliding Australia Board.
- Any significant updates will be communicated to members and clubs during this process. Members can expect ongoing updates as this process unfolds.

A DECISION BY THE MEMBERS

With over 450 votes cast, strong regional participation, and a clear majority in favour, this was a decision made collectively by the gliding community.

While not every region supported the motion, the overall outcome reflects a broad consensus that change is needed to support the future of the sport.

IN SUMMARY

The motion to change Gliding Australia's governance structure has been passed with strong member support, receiving approximately 80% approval across the country.

IGC PLENARY MEETING LAUSANNE 2026 KEY OUTCOMES

The annual International Gliding Commission Plenary meeting was held in Lausanne, Switzerland in early March 2026. The meeting resulted in a number of rule changes and announcements of significance to the gliding community, with most rule amendments taking effect from 16 April 2026 and others from 1 October 2026.

RULE CHANGES EFFECTIVE 16TH APRIL 2026

6.1.5 — The 25th birthday rule has been adjusted to clarify eligibility for Junior World Gliding Championships. The change addresses pilots who would have qualified to fly in a JWGC during a Northern Hemisphere summer season, allowing them to also compete in a Southern Hemisphere championship held the following January, February or March.

6.2.9a — A secondary flight logger may now be used to remove any non-PEV penalty that might otherwise have applied.

6.2.9b — A further amendment permits the use of undeclared and non-IGC-approved devices to produce a complete flight trace specifically in cases where GPS jamming has been confirmed. These two changes are practical responses to an increasingly recognised problem in competition flying.

6.2.13 — The penalty framework for dangerous and hazardous flying has been revised. Previously a single penalty of 100 points applied; under the new structure a



As a result, the organisation will transition to a company limited by guarantee and proceed with its application for recognition as a National Sporting Organisation.

While this represents an important step forward in governance and positioning for the future, it does not change how gliding operates day-to-day for members or clubs. Instead, it provides a stronger, more sustainable foundation to support the continued growth of gliding in Australia. This is a change which is shaped by members, for members.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at secretary@glidingaustralia.org or alternatively send your correspondence straight to the Gliding Australia Board at board_members@glidingaustralia.org

Safe flying.

JAMES NUGENT

SECRETARY GLIDING AUSTRALIA

first offence attracts 10 points, with subsequent offences carrying a penalty of the offence number minus one, multiplied by 50 points, escalating ultimately to disqualification. The intent is to introduce a more proportionate graduated response while retaining the most serious sanction for persistent or extreme behaviour.

RULE CHANGES EFFECTIVE 1ST OCTOBER 2026

6.1.3 — Tow planes at IGC events will be required to carry and operate proximity awareness transceivers from October onwards. This brings tug aircraft into line with expectations that already apply to competing gliders and reflects the broader push across aviation to improve situational awareness in the circuit and tow environment.

6.1.6 — Turn point geometry for racing tasks has been given greater flexibility. Competition Directors will be able to choose between the traditional 500 metre cylinder configuration and a keyhole configuration, though whichever geometry is selected must be applied consistently across the entire event rather than varied from task to task.

11.3.2 — The 24th FAI European Gliding Championships at Ostrow has been granted permission to trial the new cylinder start method, subject to validation by two independent external scorers.

MANDY TEMPLE

IGC REPRESENTATIVE AUSTRALIA

GA CALENDAR

Use the **Contact GFA** menu at glidingaustralia.org to send event details to the GFA

40TH WORLD GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS

18M, 20M, OPEN
16 - 30 May
Poland Czestochowa
wgc2026.eu

GRAMPIANS WAVE REGATTA 2026

ARARAT VIC
5 - 14 June
Contact Brendon Lovell GSC
Secretarysecretary@grampianssoaring.club

14TH JUNIOR WORLD GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS CLUB, STD

1 - 15 August
Germany Aalen-Elchingen
wgc2026.org

BUNYAN WAVE CAMP

19 - 27 September 2026
Canberra Gliding Club, Bunyan AD, Cooma NSW
Spring soaring and possible high altitude wave soaring in the 'Weather Factory' in NSW high country, weather permitting. Fun flying for all.
Some clubhouse bunk accommodation, O2 refills available.
Coordinators: **Drew McKinnie 0447 655 717** gliderdrew@gmail.com and **John Young 0417 292 784** johnyoung4450@gmail.com

QLD STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS DARLING DOWNS SOARING CLUB

4 -11 October 2026
Contact president@ddsc.org.au

ROOGLIDE 2026 NARROMINE GLIDING CLUB

14 -10 November 2026
Contact Rhiaan Bennett krisaan200@gmail.com

NARROMINE CUP NARROMINE GLIDING CLUB

21 - 28 November 2026
Contact Beryl Hartley amie.hartley@gmail.com

NSW STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS NARROMINE GLIDING CLUB

28 November - 5 December 2026
Contact Beryl Hartley amie.hartley@gmail.com

WOMEN'S RACE WEEK NARROMINE GLIDING CLUB

6 - 12 December 2026
Contact Melysha Turnbull melysha.turnbull@gmail.com

HORSHAM WEEK GLIDING COMPETITION HORSHAM VIC

6 - 13 February 2027
Further information registration and local rules are available on the event website. horshamweek.org.au



FAI GLIDING BADGES

TO MAY 2026

1000KM DIPLOMA
MATTHEW ATKINSON - LAKE KEEPIT GC

750KM DIPLOMA
JOHN GRANT - NARROGIN GC

DIAMOND GOAL, DIAMOND DISTANCE, GOLD HEIGHT, GOLD DISTANCE, SILVER/GOLD DURATION, SILVER HEIGHT, SILVER DISTANCE
SIMON MARKO - BEVERLEY SS
KEITA YAMASAKI - TOCUMWAL SC

DIAMOND GOAL, DIAMOND DISTANCE, GOLD HEIGHT, GOLD DISTANCE
SHOGO TAKADA - TOCUMWAL SC

DIAMOND DISTANCE, GOLD DISTANCE, SILVER/GOLD DURATION, SILVER HEIGHT, SILVER DISTANCE
TIM HUTCHERSON - BEVERLEY SS
TIM KULLACK - BEVERLEY SS

DIAMOND GOAL, GOLD DISTANCE, SILVER/GOLD DURATION
MILLIE WILLIAMS - WARWICK GC

DIAMOND GOAL, GOLD HEIGHT, GOLD DISTANCE, SILVER/GOLD DURATION
YUICHIRO MARUYAMA - TOCUMWAL SC

DIAMOND GOAL, GOLD HEIGHT
CHARLES FRECHEVILLE - TOCUMWAL SC

DIAMOND GOAL, GOLD DISTANCE
BRIAN THOMAS - LAKE KEEPIT GC

DIAMOND DISTANCE
TOM LENNON - TEMORA GC
HIROTOSHI SHIMIZU - TOCUMWAL SC
EDDY KERKHOFS - WARWICK GC

DIAMOND HEIGHT
JAYDEN BASHFORD - SUNRAYSIA GC

GOLD DISTANCE
PAUL KNIGHT - BATHURST SC
CLIFFORD HOLDOM - NARROGIN GC

GOLD HEIGHT
STEFAN KREMER - BATHURST SC
PAUL RODGER - GEELONG GC
PAUL BRODERICK - LAKE KEEPIT GC

SILVER DISTANCE, SILVER HEIGHT, SILVER/GOLD DURATION
SKY KUMATA - TOCUMWAL SC
JOHN HUTCHERSON - BEVERLEY SS
CONNOR ABRA - LAKE KEEPIT GC
RICHARD ROLES - LAKE KEEPIT GC
TAMATEA CHANCERELLE - NARROMINE GC

SILVER DISTANCE, SILVER HEIGHT
ANDREY MAKARENKO - MOUNT BEAUTY GC

SILVER/GOLD DURATION
MAX JENKINSON - MURRAY VALLEY SC

SILVER DISTANCE
HENRY ELLIS - AAFC GTS

FROM THE ARCHIVES

From Issue No. 1 of *Gliding Australia* July 2011. This issue features articles about the Australian Sailplane Grand Prix qualifier at Lake Keepit, Hunter Valley Vintage Rally and much more.

GFA NEWS
NEW TEACHERS TAKE OFF

During the first week of May, ten trainee instructors, five Level III instructors, five gliders, two tugs and our RTO/OPS Chris Thorpe convened at Benalla Airfield for a week of intensive lectures, presentations and tuition in ab initio pilot instruction. All participants were aiming to qualify as Level I instructors.

The ten trainees were from the Gliding Clubs of Victoria at Beaufort, Bendigo, Geelong, Melbourne Motor, Mt Beauty and South Gippsland. A further participant from Southern

just over 30 hours, amounting to about 10 or so flights per trainee. The gliders on hand were two ASK21s, a PW-6, two Astir and an IS-2882. With stalls and spinning high on the agenda, the PW-6 and IS-2882 worked well. With some weights applied, the ASK21s helped demonstrate the essential rule that speed close to the ground should be no less than 1.5Vs + 1/2 VV.

Another course next year is expected at about the same time in May 2012, and all clubs are invited to nominate participants. The more people we can involve, especially women who are under-represented generally, the better the sport will be for everyone. Both the Level II instructors and potential Level I instructors deserve recognition for devoting a week of their time to training. The clubs and members stand to benefit

from a greater pool of instructors prepared to promote gliding safely.

MAX SPEEDY SOUTH GIPPSLAND GC

Andrew Evans of Mt Beauty Gliding Club gained his Level I instructor rating at the course. Andrew is shown here with his first student candidate, 15 year old Laura Subhan of Mt Beauty in the club's IS28-WLU. Laura is being trained under the club's Junior Training Program.

"The more people we can involve . . . the better the sport will be for everyone."

Riverina also attended for a Level II upgrade. Each day, clear skies and little or no turbulence brought weather conditions that were ideal for training. The stable air helped everyone identify the critical points of the skills the instructors demonstrated.

The GCV provided the two tugs, one of which was a new E-Tug capable of a 55k tow and climb at about 500ft/min with an eight minute turn around from a 3,000ft release. The group completed 111 flights in

Come and Fly with US!

Lake Keepit Soaring Club is a great place to fly... A 7 day a week club operation with a relaxed, fun atmosphere. LKSC has a modern, well maintained fleet and launches are by aerotow and winch. The region's varied terrain from plains to mountains with plenty of safe out-landing opportunities and year-round good conditions make LKSC ideal for pilots wanting to fly further, faster... sooner.

If you want to learn to fly gliders, get cross-country training, fly badge flights, work towards a GPC, or be part of the best gliding club in the country, come to Lake Keepit.

Tel: (02) 6769 7514
Email: manager@keepitsoaring.com
www.keepitsoaring.com

Advanced soaring made easy
Bernard Eckey

Edition 4.1
new update

This latest edition by Bernard Eckey is a 'must have' for any Glider pilot who's interested in honing their skill and knowledge.
Available from the Gliding Australia online shop \$75 + postage tinyurl.com/

AROUND THE CLUBS



Australian Air League

Manly Squadron recently took part in another outstanding gliding camp, with cadets, officers and parents all taking the opportunity to experience winch-launched gliding. It was a fantastic weekend focussed on aviation exposure, building confidence and giving cadets hands-on experience in a real gliding environment. Many thanks to the dedicated instructors and members at Southern Tablelands Gliding Club for their continued support and for helping make the camp such a valuable experience for our squadron.



Beverley Soaring Society
 Congratulations to BSS's newest glider pilot Eoghan Rogers, sent solo by instructor Sid Dewey in February.



South Gippsland Gliding Club

Andrey Makarenko and I successfully completed the AEI training course at Bacchus Marsh yesterday and owe a special thank you to the L3 instructors, Chris Thorpe, Noel Vagg, John Rule, Alan Payne, Phil Organ and Peter 'PK' Kingston. Congratulations to Vitaliy Bashlykov and Alex Bolek from Geelong Gliding Club and Andrew Murphy from Mt Beauty Gliding Club who successfully completed the course, too.

Narrogin Gliding Club

RIGHT: Morgan Walker has successfully completed his first solo today. Well done, young man. He was the fourth pilot in the Club to go solo in the past two weeks.

BELOW: An amazing abinitio course comes to a close with solos achieved by Tamika Hart and John Browne on the last day. A wonderful experience for both but especially for Tamika who only commenced her flying early March 2026.





Alpine Soaring Mount Beauty
LEFT: Well done to Craig Docherty for going solo after a long break from gliding. A busy morning with training circuits and some magic air on the hill on an overcast afternoon for the Libelle and Hornet!

BELOW: Training session in the morning after the fog dispersed and then more ridge flying with Mach. James and Craig Docherty both had solo flights on 17 April



Darling Downs Soaring Club
 A great week in April at Darling Downs Soaring Club with four new students taking to the skies. Plenty of laughs and some awesome progress as they kicked off their learn-to-glide journey.



JoeyGlide was a fantastic experience for me, as it was my first competition and a very good one at that. Entering the competition was stressful, as I had to obtain a GPC without much experience. Credit is owed to my local CFI for putting in a lot of work to make it happen. I achieved my GPC a week before the first day, giving me the ability to compete in my first comp at 16!

The comp itself came with a huge learning curve and a lot of information to take in. I utilised the practice day to get my bearings and fly the LS-4 that I would be competing in, with a good two-hour flight to end the day and settle the nerves before the first official competition day.

Going in, I had only set personal goals to achieve this time because I had no idea what level of competition the other pilots would be bringing to the table. Trying to really compete is a goal that I will be attempting at the next JoeyGlide so I can further advance my personal skills.

The overall weather pattern during the comp was not bad, although some days were very challenging. One day completely shut off while I still had about 180km to get home, and we had 38-degree blue days where some areas only gave

you a 1,000 to 3,000ft AGL height band to keep pushing on with. It gave me lots of experience in different conditions and the confidence to climb out from nearly outlanding multiple times.

My favourite thing about the competition was the little bits of teamwork you would experience here and there, whether flying with someone else to get back home or just passing them in a thermal. It was really cool to see people come together to help each other out.

Lots of help was available along the way, especially funding-wise. The Uncles Foundation had made it possible for me to compete through their financial aid. Their support made a huge difference to me and is on offer for all NSW people under the age of 25 attending any gliding event in the future. A special thanks also to my Dad, who was a fantastic crew member considering considering that he had no prior experience in gliding or flying at all.

Overall, it was a fantastic experience to take part in, with lots of aspects and memories to remember for a lifetime, like redesigning gliders, taking part in banter, or finding the right pilot to fly with to make it home. It was all a huge success for me and something I am looking forward to giving another crack next year.

Charlie Abercrombie



Hunter Valley Gliding Club
 A huge congratulations for Tom Archbold's first solo flight. We are incredibly proud of your achievement and we look forward to being a part of your gliding journey.

Sunraysia Gliding Club
 First Solo is one of the big milestones for a pilot - but surely the first flight with one of your kids would be a close second. Well done, Daff and Tilly.



THE HIDDEN TRAP OF LATE LANDING CONFIGURATION

LESSONS FROM LOW-LEVEL SAILPLANE ACCIDENTS

BY CHRISTOPHER THORPE



Landing is universally recognised as one of the most demanding phases of any flight. In sailplane operations, this workload intensifies dramatically due to the absence of power, requiring continuous energy management, vigilant traffic awareness, precise positioning and timely aircraft configuration. Any mismanagement of these elements, particularly configuration tasks, can quickly lead to loss of control — often at a height from which recovery is no longer possible.

Several Australian fatal gliding accidents — VH-GKU (Narromine, 2012), VH-GOV (Benalla, 2015), and VH-GZA (Benalla, 2017) — starkly illustrate the catastrophic consequences that may result when landing configuration is delayed until dangerously low levels.

Despite differences in pilot experience, glider type and operational circumstances, a consistent and entirely preventable pattern emerges: late undercarriage extension, divided pilot attention, degraded control precision, and insufficient height to recognise and recover from destabilised flight. Together, these cases present an unequivocal safety message: landing configuration in sailplanes must be completed early — well before the aircraft is committed to the final approach.

THE UNDERESTIMATED WORKLOAD OF LOW-LEVEL CONFIGURATION

The physical act of lowering the undercarriage is often underestimated. In most high-performance gliders, flight controls are centre-mounted, airbrakes are operated by the left hand, and the undercarriage lever is positioned on the right-hand cockpit wall. Lowering or raising the gear therefore requires the pilot to momentarily fly with the non-dominant left hand while reaching across to operate the gear lever with the right.

This arrangement introduces multiple hazards, particularly when attempted at low level:

- **Reduced Control Precision:** Flying left-handed, even briefly, compromises fine pitch and roll control just when stability margins are smallest.
- **Pitch Instability:** Without proper trim, swapping hands can inadvertently pitch the nose down.
- **Divided Attention:** Configuration tasks at low level compete with the pilot's primary duties: maintaining glidepath, monitoring speed, scanning for traffic and managing environmental factors such as wind shear or unexpected sink.

When performed under height and time pressure, these divided workloads become intolerable.

FORENSIC EVIDENCE: TWO BENALLA CASE STUDIES

Detailed analysis of two Benalla accidents provides unique insights into the dangers of late configuration.

VH-GOV (BENALLA, 2015):

Investigators determined that the pilot was holding the control column with his left hand at the time of impact, as the grip was found in his left hand. As the pilot was known to be right-handed, this strongly suggests he was flying left-handed while using his right hand to operate the undercarriage lever immediately prior to the loss of control. During the low-level right turn, this divided attention -- combined with reduced control authority from the non-dominant hand -- likely contributed to a wing-drop event from which recovery was not possible.

VH-GZA (BENALLA, 2017):

Injury patterns to the pilot's left hand indicated forward contact with the instrument panel while still holding the control

column. As a right-handed pilot, this too suggests left-handed flying while operating the gear with his right. Flight data revealed the pilot had flown too far downwind of the airfield before attempting to return. Unable to safely glide back to the field, he attempted to stretch the glide while already under heavy cognitive load. It appears that under this significant pressure, the pilot delayed lowering the undercarriage until final approach, compounding the workload at the worst possible time. The glider impacted during an outlanding attempt after control was lost at low altitude.

These forensic findings reveal a dangerous workload compression pattern, where even highly experienced pilots may fall into the trap of deferring configuration under pressure.

COCKPIT DESIGN: ERGONOMIC ASSISTANCE — NOT IMMUNITY

While cockpit ergonomics can help, they cannot substitute for disciplined procedures.

Many sailplanes, including the LS8 and Nimbus 2 involved in these events, place the undercarriage lever on the right-hand side, necessitating left-handed flying during gear operation. Some modern types (such as DG Flugzeugbau models) position the gear handle on the left, adjacent to airbrake and flap controls, allowing pilots to keep their dominant hand on the stick while configuring.

Although these designs reduce workload, they do not eliminate the underlying hazard: low-level configuration remains intolerant of any misstep or delay.

PRE-LANDING CHECKS: A VERIFICATION — NOT A TASK LIST

A longstanding cultural problem within gliding operations has been the tendency for some pilots to treat pre-landing checks as a "to-do list" to be completed while already established in the circuit — or worse, on final approach.

Modern Gliding Australia training — specifically Glider Pilot Certificate (GPC) Unit 15: Break Off and Circuit Planning — firmly teaches that pre-landing checks are a verification of a configuration that is already fully complete.

Prior to reaching downwind or circuit joining height, pilots must have:

- Fully extended and locked the undercarriage.
- Set flaps as required.
- Trimmed to the correct approach speed.
- Tightened harness straps.
- Dumped any water ballast (if carried).
- Set the radio correctly to CTAF, with volume and squelch confirmed.

By the time the aircraft is abeam the aiming point, configuration should be complete and verified. The pilot's sole task from that point forward is to safely manage the approach and landing energy state, traffic separation and glidepath control.

ACCIDENT SUMMARIES: THE MARGIN LOST

VH-GKU (Narromine, 2012): The pilot conducted a straight-in competition finish with minimal energy margin. Configuration was likely delayed until low level, and the glider struck trees on very short final, resulting in a fatal crash.

VH-GOV (Benalla, 2015): While attempting to reach a landing site, the pilot entered a low-level right turn while flying left-handed to lower the gear. Control was lost during the manoeuvre.

VH-GZA (Benalla, 2017): After flying too far downwind and

unable to return, the pilot attempted to stretch the glide under extreme pressure. Gear extension appears to have been left until final approach. Loss of control occurred while attempting an outlanding.

WHY LOW-LEVEL CONFIGURATION FAILS

At circuit height or below, even momentary distractions carry deadly consequences:

- Unexpected sink can instantly eliminate glide margin.
- Hand-swapping may create uncommanded pitch changes
- No time exists for recovery from any wing-drop, stall, or spin entry.
- Cognitive overload compromises both decision-making and fine motor control.

Loss of control can occur in 2–4 seconds, with altitude losses exceeding 300ft per spin rotation — unrecoverable near the ground.

EARLY CONFIGURATION: THE ROBUST DEFENCE

Gliding Australia's GPC Unit 15 establishes a simple and effective defensive protocol:

- Transition mentally and procedurally to landing pilot early.
- Complete all configuration before reaching circuit joining height.
- Use pre-landing checks solely for verification.
- Adopt safe approach speeds (1.5 Vs plus half wind) below 1,000ft AGL.

By configuring early, the pilot frees cognitive resources to safely manage the high workload of the landing sequence, where situational awareness and stable energy management are critical.

Importantly, many of the key lessons from the Narromine and Benalla accidents directly informed the development of the revised GPC Unit 15: Break Off and Circuit Planning, published in 2022.

The structured guidance now embedded in the GPC syllabus was shaped by analysis of these real-world events to strengthen both training and operational safety for all glider pilots

CONCLUSION: A FULLY PREVENTABLE CHAIN

These accidents highlight a recurring, entirely preventable sequence: delaying configuration compresses workload, reduces control precision, and erodes the safety margin at a critical phase of flight.

While cockpit design features may help reduce workload, the key defence remains disciplined early configuration combined with verified pre-landing checks. These simple and universally applicable habits form a robust safeguard against loss of control, regardless of aircraft type or pilot experience, and should remain a constant feature of safe gliding operations.

Configure early. Verify high. Free your mind to fly the circuit.

Aviation punishes procrastination. Configuration delayed may become configuration denied. Fly safe.

About the Author:

Christopher Thorpe is the former Executive Manager Operations for Gliding Australia and has extensive experience in aviation safety, training and gliding operations management.

This article is provided as an educational resource for the gliding community.

GEELONG GLIDING CLUB EUROFOX

BY DAVID MERIDITH



Geelong Gliding Club (GGC) is based at Bacchus Marsh and operates off of long, flat runways with grass and sealed surfaces. It's a busy site with lots of other aviation activity happening daily. Most members fly the club fleet, while around 10 members own private gliders. Few members carry ballast. The club does a lot of training and normally has 10 to 15 pre-solo students in its membership.

A FINANCIAL DILEMMA

In FY 2023 we had a \$26K 100 hourly service on our Pawnee SSO – a combination of many little things and several cracked

pots. This, after the pandemic shutdown, caused the club some financial stress. FY 2024 was a better year financially and the situation improved - flying hours were up and new members joined. Unfortunately, the surplus of 2024 was quickly cancelled out by another \$26K bill for SSO's 100 hourly, which includes the ongoing spar inspection process. All of this means that the cost per minute of aerotow had doubled in 15 years and the cost of going solo is \$1,000 higher than it was 5 years ago. The spars then failed inspection, so the club was facing the prospect of spending at least \$80K on the Pawnee to get it back on line.

OPTIONS

A subcommittee went to work considering several options. The choices boiled down to either investing in the 50 year old Pawnee, purchasing a Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) or both. We had to decide what would serve us best for the next 20 years. The factors considered are in the table to the left.

ASSESSING PERFORMANCE

While the economics of the change were straightforward to calculate, the performance differences were harder to assess. We went to Tasmania and flew with the Soaring Club of Tasmania (SCOT) to try their Eurofox 141HP tug. Seeing was believing. 200kg of pilots in a Twin Astir climbed consistently at 700ft/min. On the strength of this experience - and info from Hunter Valley - we decided to go down the LSA route.

A presentation made by James Nugent on this topic provided further detail. To summarise his presentation, performance is a function of Power, Drag, Thrust (propeller efficiency) and weight. Let's consider power first. The Pawnee has lots of power – 235 to 260 HP in most cases. This is almost twice the power of the 141 or 160 HP LSA.

So, the Pawnee starts with a really big power to weight advantage:

	Single Seater – 350kg	Twin – 600kg
Pawnee	$P/W = 235/(1100 + 350) = 0.162$	$= 235/(1100 + 600) = 0.138$
LSA	$= 141/(500 + 350) = 0.165$	$= 141/(500 + 600) = 0.128$

However, an LSA:

1. is more aerodynamic, creating less drag.
2. uses a modern prop, creating more thrust.
3. is 600kg lighter.
4. uses a turbocharged engine, with no degradation with high temperature and altitude.

TO CONCLUDE

1. The Pawnee has a slightly better Power/Weight ratio when towing bigger gliders, so it will accelerate better. Therefore, for obstacle clearance on a short runway with a heavy glider, you need a Pawnee.
2. For overall aerotow performance, a modern LSA towplane is comparable and even superior in climb rate, cycle time and cost (except for the obstacle scenario). The SCOT Eurofox was comfortably launching 800kg gliders at Joeyglide in 30 degree + heat with a tail wind.
3. A Pawnee is strong, proven and more stable than an LSA. But is it worth the \$30 per launch premium?

MANAGING RISK

Modern design methods enable an LSA to keep the weight off, but existing tug pilots express concern over the robustness of the airframe, cross wind performance and the relatively heavier gliders pulling them around the sky. The decision to purchase was not unanimous at GGC, but after a vote, we have all become focused on our new world and accepted the risks associated with an LSA. The risk will be managed by:

1. Carefully assessing situations where heavy gliders are being towed and clearance is limited.
2. Manufacturer warranty. We are lucky to be close to the Australian agents for Eurofox and Rotax, who have a great deal of knowledge and expertise if needed.
3. Purchasing the Rotax Care warranty program, and monitoring engine performance for early warning of issues.
4. Monitoring and learning from other operators. 16 Eurofox 915s now operate in the UK and two in AUS. Also, as data is received from users, Aeropro continues to tweak the design.
5. Purchasing the trike option. This reduces problems experienced with prop strikes and tail wheels – the main issues experienced at Hunter Valley to date, where they have the tail dragger version).
6. Sufficient familiarisation/training with the Eurofox by our club's tug pilots.

CHOOSING THE LSA

There were three main contenders, the Eurofox 915, Bristell and the WT9 Dynamic. All three are beautiful aircraft, recently designed in Czechia or Slovakia and proven tow planes. The latter two have the 916 engine. We ended up choosing the Eurofox

915 because we know it does the job, it won't be the only one in Australia and it had the lowest cost of all three.

Our final bill was \$290K (at an exchange rate of 0.56). All three options are well supported in Australia and customer service has been good. The Bristell is metal, around \$320K and the Dynamic is composite and around \$400K. If money was not an issue, we would have picked the Dynamic given the 160 HP engine and greater performance/comfort. All prices are ex GST.

DELIVERY

The Eurofox was ordered at the start of June and Aeropro started on the frame two weeks later. We spent a fair bit of effort with Horsham Aviation, the agent, working out the best mix of options for us. This helped to keep the cost down. We continue to seek photos of the aircraft as it progresses. We were hopeful that it would arrive in time for our Christmas camp.

FINANCING THE PURCHASE

The club had some cash reserves and sold a glider to get the first milestone payment made. We then borrowed bridging finance from several of our club members for the remainder of the purchase. Once we have the tug earning, we will draw down a loan from Gliding Australia and pay that back over 5 years.

GAus offers a great scheme for clubs to access funding, but I can't stress enough that many of the boomers around your club have savings that you can use. Geelong offered a rate a bit higher than what banks are charging for term deposits, so it wasn't a problem to find the cash we needed at an affordable cost.

THE FUTURE

We are confident that we will retire our debt over 5 years and then be in a much stronger position. In June 2025, our fuel bill was \$2,800. The equivalent fuel cost for the Eurofox would have been \$600 – this saving alone will cover our repayments. Good luck with your tug upgrade plans.



DARLING DOWNS EASTER REGATTA



PART 2 – IT'S NOW HERE AND OPERATING

The Order to Delivery time was eight months, with five months to build, two to ship and three weeks in customs - very frustrating. Horsham Aviation were brilliant when they got it, taking just 4 days to build it and get the aircraft Permit to Fly. Don, one of our club members, spent the week there helping and learning about the aircraft. He will shortly get his L2 maintenance rating and do the majority of maintenance. Total cost was \$291,000.

The first weekend of operation was excellent with 5 hours of flying and 36 launches done. Martin our tug master is now systematically training up our tug pilots to fly 2252.

Discussions with Ian, who got his conversion to 2252 on the first weekend, recognised that it is certainly lighter than the Pawnee and the glider position has a larger influence on speed control. The glass panel and engine controls will require a bit more time to get used to. But he reckons it's fun to fly and he looks forward to his next rostered day.

The majority of launching for the first weekend was two seaters and times were slightly better than our old Pawnee SSO - ie 8 to 10 minutes for a 3,500ft AGL tow. The fuel usage averaged out at \$30/hour, equalling the budget. With an 80l fuel capacity, there is no need to fill up during the day.

We have drawn down the GAus loan and paid back the bridging finance borrowed from five of our club members. Repayments to GAus are \$2,425 for 60 months. After that we will own the aircraft.

We have not altered our towing charge. The savings in fuel and maintenance will more than cover the cost of repaying the loan.

THE NOSE WHEEL LEG INCIDENT

Just prior to delivery of 2252, we were using the Soaring Club of Tasmania's (SCOT) Eurofox - identical to ours, which was on its way back home after supporting Joeyslide. While taxiing the aircraft, the nose wheel leg broke - a result of a cracked weld. AeroPro immediately investigated the incident and revised the manufacturing process for the leg. They have also strengthened the assembly and we now have a replacement fitted to 2252 by Horsham Aviation, two weeks after the incident.

For some people, this description is all the proof they need that the entire aircraft is no good. For some people, it's proof that we have a responsive and serious supplier. Which camp are you in? What would be your response to a weld failing on a Pawnee, Callair or any other established type?

STILL TO COME

GGC has seen the benefits of the Eurofox, but we have kept the Pawnee, pickled and down the back of the hanger... just in case. Worst case, we can find money to change the spars and bring SSO back online - but it will be charged out at over \$12 a minute to pay for the spars. We continue to monitor 2252, aiming to confirm it delivers the promised financial and operational performance. **GA**



BY PETER STEPHENSON

I belong to the Caboolture Gliding Club (CGC) and have been a member since the club first began in 1990. CGC members have gone regularly out to Darling Downs Soaring Club (DDSC), often to attend the Club's week-long course called Caboolture Week in September/October each year. I first attended in 2001 when I was coached by the late great Alan Latemore, and attended again multiple times, culminating in some 300km flights.

I soon heard of the Easter Regatta, a fun type of competition that was held inland from Brisbane - but I was never in a position to attend. I believe our Club even hosted the Regatta one year at Dalby. I have recently changed my work schedule to three weeks on and one week off. Well, this year, that one week off coincided with the Regatta. More importantly, it also coincided with my brother in law's 70th birthday in the UK where my wife was to be a surprise guest!

I did not want to actually enter the Regatta, as I had not flown cross country for many years, so I volunteered as ground crew. I owed Sarah Thompson a retrieve, as she had retrieved me and the Ventus on her first ever solo retrieve and I knew that she would be at the Regatta. Outlanding is an integral part of gliding, and retrieving is all part of the fun. I am an L2 gliding instructor at CGC, a non cross country club, but I still prepare my students to be cross country pilots. I am always very pleased to see our members spread their wings and go cross country.

Every day of the Regatta started with morning briefing at 9:30 am. They were full of humour and camaraderie.



Following on, we pulled out the gliders, and I helped with the DIs. Then Contest Director Jenny Thompson quickly put me to work as the Launch Controller. I had only expected to be hooking on and running the wings and retrieving!

Soon after the fleet had launched, we retired to a covered area beside the runway to watch the real-time maggot race (flight traces) on the pureglide app. Watching the flights was riveting, as I experienced empathy with the

pilots, remembering my challenging flights of yesteryear.

We had our first outlanding on Easter Saturday. I wanted to go but everyone took off, leaving me behind. Those that went out had a party in the paddock - with photos to prove it! The next day we had another outlanding and guess who



was the pilot in command - Sarah T. But this time, I made sure I was in the car pulling the trailer and, as the day before, everyone again attended and helped de-rig the K21b2 in the same party atmosphere.

There was only one other outlanding at the end of the competition. It was a PW5 with tiny wings that was so easy to de-rig. The local farmers helped, and I just held the torch! When we returned, the final dinner was all set up in a magical atmosphere with the delicious smells of a BBQ in the air. Before the dinner, the presentation ceremony was held, all in the same atmosphere of mateship that started each day of the Regatta.

So it is true. The Easter Regatta is an event not to be missed, whether you are a competitor or a volunteer on the ground.

DARLING DOWNS EASTER REGATTA DARLING DOWNS

3 - 11 APRIL 2026

1 Geoff Brown	Temora GC	JS1 TJ 18m	5,182
2 Jo Davis	DDSC	ASW 20	4,126
3 Mike Codling	DDSC	ASW 20	3,645

Full results at soaringspot.com tinyurl.com/4vcxpvd

LAKE KEEPIT REGATTA

BY BRUCE TAYLOR



COACHING

The annual Lake Keepit Regatta took place in February in a good weather window. Coaching was an important part of the regatta, where Bruce Taylor, Ian Steventon and Allan Barnes all flew with different pilots each day. Here, Bruce talks about the critical skill of passing training on to the new generation of pilots.

COACHING AT LAKE KEEPIT REGATTA 2026 BRUCE TAYLOR

I have some comments to make about our current coaching organisation and about the actual method of passing valuable training on to pilots chasing an improvement in their technique and cross-country speed. Having recently attended the Lake Keepit Regatta as a fine example of a long-standing and very successful coaching event, I should start with some history and to explain the latest, even better incarnation of that event.

The idea of a coaching week run in conjunction with a friendly competition was suggested quite some years ago, maybe back in the early 2000s, not too long after the Gulgong Regatta ceased to exist, and it immediately became quite a popular event. It introduced the now common coaching practice of attracting experienced cross-country pilots who could help by giving lectures during a briefing in the morning, and then take some of the starters for a coaching run in a two-seater.

EVOLUTION OF COACHING FLIGHTS

In earlier days, some lead and follow flights were done with one of the coaches in a single-seater and one or two 'ducklings' tagging along behind. But, as the number of

excellent two-seaters, such as the Duo Discus and the DG1000, became more available, all coaching flights evolved into two-up flights, which is a much-preferred method of training. Being able to speak directly to the student and to demonstrate from within the same cockpit is a valuable asset in transferring ideas.

Last year Kel Burgess and Dave Pickles must have assembled their thoughts while sitting quietly in a back corner, giving each other shared hard times about their respective cross-country abilities, and they decided to put some fresh effort into revitalising the Regatta. This year's highly successful event was due mostly to this pair and their diligent groundwork. The week ran smoothly. As far as I could see everybody gained a lot from the coaching, both the morning lectures and the shared in-flight learning, and it was incredibly successful as a social event.

KEEPING SAFE AT KEEPIT

An important element of this year's Regatta was a very solid grounding on the whole safety aspect of operations at Keepit. It related particularly to the Regatta and close flying in company, but more generally to any aviation operations. Kel pushed these concepts hard, right from the beginning, and they became a regular and much more readily accepted part of the daily briefing. This was an excellent initiative from Kel and Dave, and a wonderful display of a very professional but friendly approach to safety culture modification.

ALL ABOUT STUDENTS, NOT COACHES

Another change is a move toward more recognition of those doing the learning, rather than the teaching. Some years back one of the higher ranked coaches won the event, but when he was presented with the trophy he immediately passed it on to the pilot who had placed third, Justin Smith, in recognition of his large improvement and future potential.

The event was not seen as another opportunity for the established pilots to win a trophy, but more about the coaching and progress made by other entrants. As it turns out, Justin has now become one of those doing some coaching and has a lot to offer. This idea has followed on with coaches being considered as invalid entrants in the competition.

COACHING - A HUMAN PROCESS

After many years of involvement in the coaching game, all the way from pre-solo to helping world comps entrants to lift their game, it feels to me that some comment should be made about the process. We are in the game of education, and to my mind there is too little emphasis on the human side of that game. As coaches or instructors, we are told and tested on our ability to know WHAT to teach, and very little on HOW to teach it.

We all understand by now that people learn new ideas in different ways. Some work best by hearing the idea, by being told, while some like to watch and see the technique demonstrated to them.

Others understand better if they are doing it themselves, accompanied by verbal instruction or corrections. Furthermore, everybody is different in how they prefer to hear praise or corrections to their technique.

None of this is easy, and of course, as coaches we should also have learned some things... the first one being how to teach! To successfully pass on an idea or an improvement in technique is hugely satisfying from my point of view, and likewise hugely frustrating if I cannot figure out how my student needs to have this idea presented to actually understand the changes required.

FROM INTUITION TO INSTRUCTION

Personally, my greatest challenge is converting an intuitive decision into easily understood words for my student. So one of the really neat things that occasionally comes about is landing after a flight with the feeling that you have learned at least as much about coaching as your student has learned about cross-country flying! That experience really is satisfying.

So, after all these years I would like to make a request that those in charge of organising coaching either put more effort into helping us to be teachers, or focus more on this quality than on personal competition prowess when selecting coaches. The best coaches and instructors I have had the pleasure of working with are rarely those who are the fastest or most efficient pilots - they are the best communicators.

RELEVANT SKILLS

I am typically frustrated by the requirement to demonstrate to the coaching hierarchy some skills that I honestly believe to be irrelevant to the job at hand. This



undoubtedly leads to a number of possible coaches becoming so frustrated that they make themselves unavailable. Given the difficulty in getting suitable coaches with something to offer, I feel that the requirements for coaching registration need to be addressed.

At the end of this year's Lake Keepit Regatta there were so many things to be thankful for. The weather played a huge part in making the whole event work - this aspect is so important and yet completely out of our control. One day was cancelled, but apart from that, there were only a very few outlandings. I'd also like to thank all the participants. They were a lovely group of people, always helpful, appreciative and full of fun. The Keepit Regatta has to be a highly recommended event.

LAKE KEEPIT REGATTA LAKE KEEPIT

21 - 28 FEBRUARY 2026

3	Cam Tunbridge	LKSC	ASW20	4,651
4	Craig Taylor	LKSC	LS8	4,542
5	James & Hurst	DDSC	Duo Discus XL	4,432

Full results at soaringspot.com tinyurl.com/4ujudyd6

HORSHAM WEEK

HORSHAM WEEK 2026: SIX TASKS OVER THE VICTORIAN MALLEE

Horsham Week ran across eight days in the first half of February, drawing pilots from gliding clubs spread across Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia to the flat, sun-scorched plains of the Wimmera district. The competition was split into two classes — Club and Open — and ultimately produced six scored tasks apiece, with two days lost to weather mid-week.

STRONG START

Flying began on Saturday 7 February and the first four days delivered four consecutive tasks before conditions put competition on hold on 11 and 12 February. Racing resumed on the 13th and closed out on 14 February, which proved to be the final scoring day for both classes.

Tasks were set over the broad, flat country north and west of Horsham, using turnpoints at places like Wooroonook, Watchupga, and Jeparit. Opening task distances for the Open Class reached well over 300 kilometres on the declared leg total on day one, with pilots given 2 hours 45 minutes to work the course. The final task on 14 February was a more compact 240 km for the Open class, while Club pilots flew a variable-distance task with a declared band of roughly 114 to 250 km, nominally 180 km, over two hours.

JACK HART TAKES THE CLUB CLASS TITLE

Jack Hart of Temora Gliding Club flew a Pegase 101 throughout the week to finish in 1st place overall in Club Class with 4,462 points. He scored maximum points on Day 2 and topped the standings on Days 1 and 4 as well, giving him a lead that held even after a more difficult final two days. His consistency across the week, rather than any single dominant performance, was what ultimately separated him from the field.

CRAIG VINALL AND MIKE DURRANT FIGHT IT OUT IN OPEN CLASS

Craig Vinall of Waikerie Gliding Club won Open Class with 4,441 points, flying an AS33Es in 18m configuration. Craig's week was built on reliable high placements rather than a string of daily wins. He took maximum points on Day 2, finished 2nd or 3rd on most other days, and did not drop to lower than 6th place across the six tasks. That steadiness proved to be enough.

HORSHAM WEEK

HORSHAM

7 - 14 FEBRUARY 2026

CLUB

1 Jack Hart	Temora Gliding Club	Pegase	4,462
2 Steve Jinks	Bendigo Gliding Club	Mosquito	4,168
3 George Schuit	Outback Soaring	Cirrus	3,582

OPEN

1 Craig Vinall	Waikerie GC	AS33Es/18	4,441
2 Mike Durrant	Bendigo GC	Jantar 19m	4,232
3 Richard Traill	Melbourne GC	ASG 29 E 18m	4,076

Full results at soaringspot.com tinyurl.com/horsham26



ASHLEY BOYLE TAKES WAGA TITLE IN BEVERLEY

Ashley Boyle has won the Western Australian State Championships.

The Western Australian Gliding Association's 2026 State Championship wrapped up at Beverley on 14 February after ten days of competition that ultimately delivered five valid tasks over the Wheatbelt. When the scores were tallied, Ashley Boyle of Narrogin Gliding Club had claimed the title with 4,470 points. His consistent flying across five all five tasks effectively held off Karsten Bojesen of the Beverley Soaring Society on 4,396 and Greg Beecroft, also from Beverley, in third on 4,346.

What made Ashley's win noteworthy was the aircraft he flew to it, the Jantar 2b — a Polish design from the late 1970s with a handicap of just 1.005. Karsten flew a JS3 TJ (handicap 1.11), Greg an ASG 29 18m (handicap 1.1), and several others brought similarly competitive recent gliders. Ashley's result reflects a combination of solid thermal selection, disciplined pacing and an ability to extract the best from a glider that gives away a significant handicap advantage to its rivals.

WAGA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS BEVERLEY

5 - 14 FEBRUARY 2026

1 Ashley Boyle	Narrogin GC	Jantar 2b	4,470
2 Karsten Bojesen	Beverley SC	JS3 TJ 18m	4,396
3 Greg Beecroft	Beverley SC	ASG 29 18m	4,346

Full results at soaringspot.com tinyurl.com/wagastate



MAX HEDT AWARD

Aside from the crowning of our champions in Open and Club Class, two other awards were announced at the final night's Presentation Dinner.

A notable and relatively new award, the Max Hedt Award, is named after one of the founding members of Wimmera Soaring Club/Horsham Flying Club. Max passed away in late 2025. Aside from being a founder of the club, Max instigated the Horsham Week competition as we know it today.

The award is presented to a person attending Horsham Week as a pilot, crew member, organiser or volunteer. The awardee is recognised for their contribution to the event as a whole, being friendly and welcoming, willing to get stuck in and lend a hand and bringing enthusiasm to their fellow pilots, crew, organisers and volunteers.

After consultation with his fellow operations team and senior members of the Horsham Flying Club, our Competition Director Craig Dilks handed the Max Hedt award to Leonie Furze from Temora Gliding Club.



TWO SEAT NATIONALS NARROMINE

BY TERRY CUBLEY
PHOTOS JENNY AND SARAH THOMPSON

Ahead of the Two-Seat Nationals, scheduled for 8 – 15 March 2026 at Narromine, Matt Gage suggested that we fly together. It was a timely invitation as, after finally conceding that my sore back was no longer able to handle the glider alone, I had just sold my glider. I had decided to sell and look into doing some 2-seat flying.

We booked a Duo Discus from Narromine Gliding Club. The Duo from our own club is more expensive, and by hiring locally, we wouldn't have to derig and transport the

glider. Meanwhile, Beryl Hartley at NGC put us in touch with a local home owner who was prepared to rent out a granny flat. Matt and I had previously rented her main house at a comp a few years ago, and knew it was in a great location. Caroline and Vicki enjoyed trips to Narromine and Dubbo, while Matt and I enjoyed some good, challenging conditions.

INTO THE MIX – GLIDERS, PILOTS AND TASKS

The solid entry list of 17 gliders comprised four Arcus, two ASG32, six Duo Discus, three DG1000, a DG500 and a DG505. Seven of the competitors were previous national champions. A few clubs use the event as a means of providing coaching for some of their pilots, whereas others just want to fly with friends.

The DG505, with a wingspan of 22m and therefore a much higher performance and handicap, was flying Hors Concours (HC), but the Bennet/Bennet team enjoyed every day.

A large number of women pilots were competing – Lesley Scott, Amber Davison, Ella Campbell, Kylie Bennet, Jo Davis, Sarah Thompson and Jenny Thompson. All had good days and enjoyed the racing.

The tasks assigned were a mix of AAT with a number of Distance Handicap Tasks (DHT). DHT is a recently introduced format where the distance to be flown by each pilot is prescribed by the task setter, based on the glider's handicap. Each pilot is given their own task file, which tells them where to turn.

FAIR AND ACCURATE

I was a bit sceptical of the accuracy of the tasks, but the experience at Narromine showed that the tasks are both reasonably accurate and fair. The best pilots were typically the winners (who would've thought?), and although the higher performance gliders still had a small advantage, they were not winning every day.

Day 1 was a 335km fixed task – 74km out to Parkes – 90km to Tullamore – 70km to Nevertire. 335km was assigned to the ASG32 and Arcus, and 307km to the DG1000 and the Duos.

Lumpy Paterson and Joergen Thomsen finished in 1st with 134.61 km/h scoring 788 points. Brad Edwards and Bruce Taylor came 2nd at 134.74 km/h, earning 776 points, and 3rd place winners were David Jansen and Lesley Scott with a speed of 129.30 km/h gaining 717 points.

Lift was to 6,000ft with maximum climbs to over 7,000ft with a 5kt average.

CLASS DIVISIONS

On Day 2 we flew a 3.5 hour AAT via Tooraweenah and then on to Wellington, Peak Hill, Trangie and Narromine. Cumulus ran up the first leg, followed by occasional cu from there. All gliders started within 15 minutes of each other but thermal heights of 6,000 to 8,000ft provided enough separation, giving us only occasional glimpses of other gliders.

Matt and I turned just south of Tooraweenah and then flew downwind directly towards Wellington over the edge of the scrub. We found excellent glides and had a great run along the ridge line next to Wellington, which meant fewer climbs. Some wisps of cu encouraged us to continue to the western edge of Peak Hill. Heading north to Trangie, we flew into wind, but by carefully selecting good air we were able to complete the task without taking another climb. We finally completed the task, winning the day at 128kph over 448km.

A clear division formed between the Arcus' and ASGs, which included the top list of finishers, and the DG and Duos representing the bottom scorers. Matt and I took first place followed by David



Jansen and Lesley Scott finishing 2nd, followed by Paterson and Thomsen in 3rd place.

MICROWAVE TOWER

The Day 3 task was a DHT in which the high performing gliders were to fly 460km, while the others flew 430km, travelling to Forbes and then out west to Bobadah Road, coming home via the microwave tower. The wind was 15 to 20kts from the west and made the second leg rather slow, but the trip home was very nice with a good tailwind. Climbs went up to 9,000ft at 5-7kts.

Four gliders did not finish. Dave Boulter and Jenny Thompson landed near the first turnpoint at Bogan Gate and called on the help of Stewart and Tam, who were on holiday at Narromine on their way back from Tahiti and stayed for the comp to help on the ground – great work, guys!

The other three gliders – Jacob Bloom/Richard Frawley, Ed Marel/McIlroy and John Jurotte/Dominique Brassier – couldn't get enough height as they came home and missed out on getting to the microwave tower – very frustrating

ABOVE: Vicky and Terry Cubley enjoy the Narromine evening with Brad and Kerrie Edwards.

BELOW: Jenny and Sarah Thompson on the grid.

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Jacob and Richard visited some airspace. Marel/McIlroy found a paddock southwest of Narromine, while Jacobsohn/Steventon flew over Marel/McIlroy and decided to return to Narromine as the day died. Paterson/Thomsen got too low SE of Gilgandra and had to fire up their engine and fly home. Jurotte/Brassier decided not to fly and drove home to Bathurst.

In contrast, Brad Edwards and Bruce Taylor had a good day, winning the task at 114kph, well ahead of the opposition. They had a couple of climbs to 7,000ft but got down to 1,500ft AGL just south of where Marel /Mcilroy landed, but a good climb saved them.

Alan Barnes/White placed second in the DG1000 at 104kph, and Dave and Lesley were 3rd in the ASG32 at 108kph.

Day 5 was another blue day with lift to 6,000 to 7,000 feet. A 2-hour AAT sent us to Peak Hill, Albert and Trangie. All pilots started between 1,440ft and 1,458ft, as no one wanted to get caught by another early finish to the day. Lumpy Patterson and Joergen Thomsen won the day at 128kph. Barnes/White were second and Gage/Cubley came in 3rd.

after a long day. Top scorers for the day were David Jansen and Lesley Scott.

TOO BLUE

Day 4 took us on a 3-hour AAT via Gilgandra – Wellington – Cumnock Road – Control point South – Trangie. We had a blue day that was not going very high as we headed north into the higher country.

EXCITABLE CROWD

The final Day 6, Sunday 15 March, brought an expectation of cu and a 3-hour AAT set to Nyngan, north along the highway, then south to Tullamore before heading back to the highway at Trangie and then home to Narromine. The cu started just before 2pm and gradually got higher and stronger.

The pre-start conditions were quite congested, as some pilots found a short lived thermal and climbed well above others before slowly sinking down to the same level. This excited the crowd when they suddenly saw people higher and didn't want to miss the opportunity to start.

At 2.06, first to start was Dave Jansen who was in the lead overall but only 130 points ahead of Bruce and Brad. Most people started between 2.30 and 2.35 with thermal heights above 6,000ft, which then increased to 7,000 and then 8,000ft by 3.30pm. Thermals were still difficult to work resulting in a few people getting lower than comfortable.

Matt and I were with Jenny and Dave at 3,000ft when Jenny pushed to a couple of willy willies and we were rewarded by 6kts, which took us to 7,000 and then 8,000ft. The line of cu heading south were looking good so we turned a little earlier and headed that way. This was very reliable and resulted in good climbs.

The aim was to avoid climbing but not come home early. As it worked out, the higher performing gliders finished a few minutes early whereas the Duos and DGs were 1 to 3 minutes over time. Winners for the day were Lumpy and Joergen at 141 kph, again lamenting their engine start on Day 4. Alan Barnes came second at 128kph, and equal 3rd were Taylor/Edwards and Jansen/Scott at 133ph. Worth a mention are the two ladies Amber and Ella in the DG1000 at 119kph.

DELICIOUS FINISH

The Presentation Dinner, held outdoors at the clubhouse, featured great food prepared by Beryl and Arnie, and a chatty group of participants. The unanimous opinion was that the comp had been a huge success with great flying.

The overall winners were David Jansen and Lesley Scott, with Brad Edwards and Bruce Taylor in 2nd place and Alan Barnes/Harry Medicott/Andrew White coming in 3rd. **GA**



**TWO SEAT NATIONALS
NARROMINE**

8 -15 MARCH 2026

2 SEAT

- 1 Jansen & Scott
- 2 Edwards & Taylor
- 3 Barnes & Medicott & White
- 4 Gage & Cubley

- KingaroySC
- LakeKeepit
- LakeKeepit
- GCVBenalla

- ASG32M 5,001
- ASG32M 4,873
- DG1001 4,814
- DuoDiscus 4,616

Full results at soaringspot.com tinyurl.com/2seatnat

RUSHING MIGHTY WINDS

BY JOHN CLARK



I was visiting Ian Downes at Tocumwal in the Ximango and went through another rushing mighty wind event. Thunderstorms can be great fun to fly near if you're careful, but they can be really nasty on the ground. If your glider never leaves its hangar, then you're probably wasting your time reading this. But if you fly away from your home strip and have to leave your glider out in the open for any reason, this article will hopefully be worth reading. No aircraft were damaged in the following events.

BIG WIND

The first really big wind I saw on the ground was at Wentworth when flying through to Clare Valley in a safari. I'd launched first, to see if it was flyable. It was always difficult to get Geoff Sim in the air before afternoon tea time so I went up as wind dummy and, of course, there was lots of lift. So when I overflowed Wentworth, I was 20 minutes ahead of the other three gliders. Geoff radioed me and asked what it looked like on track towards Clare. I replied, "I can't see any problems." That was mainly true but, in fact, it was so grey and gloomy up ahead that I couldn't really see anything.

Geoff, who wasn't steering on that day, was sitting in the back seat in typical Mr. Gloomy style, looking at the Origin Energy storm tracker website... which was all sparks. The decision was made to land at Wentworth but by the time I got there, all the good tie-down spots had been taken by the other gliders, leaving me with the sole option of tying down on the field.

For some reason, they'd ploughed the entire Wentworth airfield that week. Instead of just a surface scratch, they

had left behind a deeply ploughed gash, turning almost all of the strip into a fluffy crumble. The pair of two-seaters – the ASH25 of Ian Barraclough and Geoff Sim, and the Arcus of Harry and Wendy Medlicott – and Al Giles' ASH26 were tied down by a variety of means on a slight mound off to the side of the strip where the ground hadn't been ploughed and was fairly solid. My DG-808 was tied down about 100m away near the boundary fence in the fluff.

SUDDEN APPROACH

We watched the thunderstorm approach from the west with a local called Dale, who has a house and hangar close to the strip and took most of the pictures below. We then went off to the RSL for dinner. About an hour later, Dale called us and said we'd better get back to the strip. The storm was just crossing the field when we arrived. We parked the car but the wind and rain were so strong that it was almost impossible to breath. As the air was so full of flying dirt and debris, it was also almost impossible to see. We had to get back in the safari Tiguan and watch.

The DG is just visible on the left of the picture opposite. Other pictures show more flying debris – there was heaps of it. The windsock shows the minimum wind speed, depending on whether the windsock is the low wind or high wind design, something only windsock fans have time to check. Regardless, it was like standing in the blast of a jet engine.

I've been at sea in 55 knots of wind. It sucks the air out of your lungs and the rain hits so hard it stings. If you're lucky enough to have long hair, it lashes your face and your eyes and most of what you do is done by feel. I guess the windspeed at Wentworth was in that region for five or ten

minutes and there was little we could do. That evening, I got a real lesson on the power of a thunderstorm.

BLOWN AWAY

In another storm last week in Tocumwal, I was packing up the glider and doing the usual checks ready for an early departure the following morning. Somehow I didn't notice the weather. It had been a nice sunny CU day some time earlier so I didn't feel any cause for alarm. While sitting on the wing organising the baggage, the wind suddenly hit hard along with driving rain. The aircraft started to rock violently on its wheels and I was alarmed to see that one of the wing tip tie downs had blown off. I should have put the tie down ropes a lot further inwards on the cables.

The ailerons started flapping noisily and I struggled to hold the stick with one hand while trying to find a way of securing a rope to the stick with the other. In the end, the only solution I could find was to jam a bag between the stick and centre console to stop the movement. I opened the airbrakes and locked them with a seat belt and went to secure the wingtip. While I was there, the whole aircraft rolled forwards a few metres, so I ran back to put the brakes on. There wasn't much more I

could do. I estimate the wind strength to be at 40 - 45 knots, enough to fly the Ximango but not enough to blow it away.

So far as I know, there was no damage at either event, which was surprising. What follows are suggestions based on these experiences as well as lessons learned from a lot of safari flights, tying down on remote air fields.

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PREPARATION

I think a lot of luck is involved in whether or not a glider tied down survives a big storm. I wouldn't guarantee any of the methods mentioned below. You can see what works and what doesn't, but that doesn't mean that next time, the same method won't fail. The main thing is to be prepared. 50% of that preparation is the equipment you carry and the other 50% is making sure you recognise an incoming storm like Mr. Gloomy and do something about it.

If you're airborne near thunderstorms, watch the shadows on the ground. If you think it's better to land, do it early. The shadow of the spread out from thunderclouds can move incredibly fast and you may easily find yourself on the ground, unable to outrun a storm and with no time to properly secure the glider.

In the case of both of these Tocumwal storms, there was no way one could have stayed airborne and flown around them. They were just too big. I was on the ground during the storm at Mount Borah where the Czech paraglider pilotess set her world altitude record. One minute, three storm cells could be seen separated by tens of kilometres and the next, one giant storm was covering half the sky. While she survived, a Chinese pilot died a few hundred metres away.

ALL DIRECTIONS

In a thunderstorm, the wind will come from all directions, not just the one you expect, swinging 180° as the storm passes. So pointing gliders into the wind (as we happened to do at Wentworth) or against the wind (as at Tocumwal) won't make much difference. There may be a lull followed by wind coming in from a different direction just as strongly a while later, as happened at Wentworth.

It's my opinion that the best way to stop the glider flying is to get the airbrakes out. This isn't normal practice with some types of gliders, where the manufacturer advises taping the airbrake covers shut to keep out the rain. DG only recommend draining the airbrake boxes after rain, so perhaps, hopefully, the bearings are sealed. Since my DG has a Piggott hook

(which all self launchers should have) the airbrakes can easily be locked open.

Perhaps the biggest drawback to open airbrakes is that the drag of the glider increases. As a result, as in the case of the Ximango, it's more likely to blow away, although a parked Ximango has plenty of cross sectional area. But in theory at least, open airbrakes spoil the lift and reduce the chance of a wing trying to fly.

Be careful about putting anything like a plastic bag on a probe. A strong wind will easily bend or break a probe if it's got the added area of a plastic bag.

TIE DOWNS

A secure tie down setup is made up of three parts – what goes over a wing, what connects that to the ground and what the ground connection is. Ideally, your wingtip has a secure method of attaching a rope so you don't need a strap of any sort. The only reliable rope in my opinion is Spectra, with low stretch and high strength. The best ground connection is ring or loop concreted into the bitumen, but you're unlikely to have this option and anything else is suspect.

Solid tie down rings are nice if you are near them, but most gliders will take up two sets of tie downs. At a busy airport, that won't make you popular if someone else arrives late.

On the face of it, cables seem like a good idea but in fact, they're not very secure. Most are fairly loose and will allow a wing to lift or the aircraft to roll forwards so the angle of the tie downs on the wingtips changes. This can be a real problem if the tie downs get in the way of ailerons or flaps, which can get damaged.

Screw-its. I'm no big fan of screw-its since they're impossible to use in most of Australia (the hard bit in the centre), and the last set I bought broke very quickly due to second-rate welding... Surprisingly, however, they held at Wentworth. The next day, in fact, when the ropes were removed, a single screw-it could be easily pulled out from the fluffy dirt.

The Screw-it instructions say that two screw-its should be used and a rope passed between the rings horizontally to pull

the two together, and that held. I think this is interesting and might explain the fact that the Screw-its held. See the wingtips in the picture of the DG in the lake. This held better than the alternatives, and would almost certainly improve the performance with star picket type stakes.

Stakes. Several of the other gliders had either star-picket stakes or round plates with holes for pegs. These worked 60% in that on the two seaters, one wing pulled the stakes out of the ground. That's a poor failure rate. Probably, two stakes cross-braced with a horizontal rope would work better. However you do need a mighty hammer in the glider to whack these things into the ground at many strips. As you'd expect, Al Giles carries a mighty hammer in the cockpit.

Rope. Don't let rope become the weak point in a tie down setup. A 6mm Spectra (UHMWPE) rope will lift your whole glider... in its trailer. 8mm Spectra will lift the glider, the trailer and the tow car. Spectra doesn't degrade like Bunnings and Aldi rope which can dissolve into a peculiar powder after a season in the sun. Don't run rope over wings or winglets, especially thin cord like Spectra.

Seatbelt webbing is your man for going over wings and tail booms. You should have a few webbing loops in your tie down kit. You can always use them for lifting the tail boom or towing your glider off the strip without hurting your back.

The wingtip loops on the Ximango have a small additional strap to make sure they don't move inwards and damage the ailerons. Either the Ximango moved or the cable moved (both did, in fact) or I didn't secure the ropes to the cable well enough. Nevertheless, the rope went slack allowing the loop to blow off the wingtip. The ropes should angle well inboard and not be able to slip outwards.

Ideally, these loops should be properly sewn up with polyester yarn of suitable thickness... V132 or more. Most sailmakers have the webbing, sewing machine and thread though you can sometimes get a good walking foot industrial machine off Gumtree if the Authorities are not looking.

Wing fittings. Really, gliders should have proper fittings on the wing for tying down. Looping a strap over a winglet doesn't really constitute a proper fitting. It's a fairly simple matter to design wingtip wheels wise ie down hole. Aircraft with folding wings are probably safer with the wings unfolded and secured. Trying to fold wings in any wind is dangerous and unless secured, folded wings can easily flip over in a gale and possibly damage the hinge or the wing.

Wingtip Socks. Jim Staniforth sent a picture of some wingtip socks from the USA. I think these are promising. Like Jim, I have reservations – the webbing is too short and should spread the load better in the sock, the material might not be very good for UV stability and probably being more flexible would also help spread the load... if winglet fittings are actually strong enough.

BRAVE SIR ROBIN RAN AWAY

At some point during a big storm, there is nothing worthwhile you can do. Sitting in a glider cockpit that is suddenly upended is dangerous. I have no idea if a glider has even been flipped upside down with someone is sitting in it. But being trapped upside down in a glider cockpit somewhere in the bush isn't great.

There's little you can do if a wingtip really decides to lift... and you may be holding on to the wrong tip. My opinion is that you do everything you can to secure the glider before the storm hits and then at some point, you run away. Replacement gliders are available, while a replacement you is not.

GA



TOP: Oddly, the screw-its held but not the horizontal line pulling the individual screw-its inwards. Without this, the following day they pulled out with one hand but the glider was hull down in the mud, which secured it nicely.

MIDDLE: The stakes didn't hold, nor did the disc with tent pegs. Judging by the slack rope on the tie down behind, something has moved there too, possibly the whole glider.

BOTTOM: The tie downs have held but they're loose, possibly because the glider moved. The strap around the tail is a good idea but should be longer to avoid the rudder being blown around.

AUSTRALIAN TEAMS PREPARE FOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS



WGC POLAND

The 40th FAI World Gliding Championships will be held at Rudniki airfield near Czestochowa, Poland, from 16 to 30 May 2026. The competition will contest three classes - Open, 18m and 20m Multi-Seat.

14th Junior World Gliding Championships in Club and Standard classes will take place at Aalen-Elchingen Germany 1 - 15 August

THE AUSTRALIAN TEAM

Australia's team for Poland comprises Lumpy Paterson and Norm Bloch in the 18m Class, David Jansen in the Open Class flying a JS5, and Adam Woolley with Keith Gateley flying together in the 20m Multi-Seat Class. The team captain is Phil Ritchie.

Amber Davison and Max Scutchings will represent Australia in the Junior WGC in Germany with Mandy Temple as team captain.

SQUAD WEEK

In February the Australian teams gathered at Tocumwal Soaring Centre for a week of training. Following are some of the pilots' comments before they head off to the big challenge.

PHIL RITCHIE - TEAM CAPTAIN WGC POLAND

Squad Week was held for the team going to the World Gliding Championships in Czestochowa in May, in conjunction with the juniors who are going to Germany in August. All the pilots met together with the Team Captains

at Tocumwal from 22 February for one week. Run by Pete Temple over the course of the week, joined by guest speaker James Nugent on two days, the discussions went through the many aspects of flying at this level.

The Open Class, 18m and two-seat pilots all have experience of flying at this level - Lumpy Paterson and Norm Bloch once each, and both David Jansen and Adam Woolley multiple times.

Mandy has taken the role of Team Captain, Comps Director and Steward at this level, not to mention crewing for Pete at multiple world championships, giving her a wealth of experience.

I have flown one world championship but this is my first time as Team Captain. The juniors Max Scutchings and Amber Davison (plus Ethan Blunt who elected to start his university education instead of competing) are new to this level. I am confident that we all benefitted a great deal from the week.

Pete Temple had a very full program that involved talks and discussions in the morning and flying in the afternoon if the weather suited, which it did for five of the days. Squad Week focused heavily on team concepts. In the past, teamwork between pilots and crew depended very much on the individuals finding a way to work together. This week was aimed at better structuring with more consistency, and looking at ways to improve Australia's overall standing at international level.

The topics began with reviews of recent world championships, then team flying, communication in the air,



communication between pilots and the ground crew, managing the daily routine, planning, ethics and fair play, review of the rules (there are differences at this level compared to Australian competitions), playing the gaggle game, safety and competition, site specific factors plus a long list of small details that still matter and influence results.

A huge thanks to Pete Temple for organising the whole week and his inventive tasking with challenges that managed to trip up such experienced pilots. Also, thanks to Lumpy and his team at Tocumwal Soaring Center for hosting us.

NORM BLOCH

Both team captains attended, as the event served as practice for them as well. During classes, we covered many topics in discussions run by Peter and Mandy Temple, plus James Nugent for the first few days.

Of prime importance to me was practicing team flying with Lumpy as we are not allowed to team fly in Australian comps, although it is permitted in world championships. This blend of discussions and flying practice proved invaluable in our attempts to master this very difficult process. Tocumwal even managed to put on some classic European weather for us to practice in. Hopefully it will all pay off with good results later in Poland. Thanks to GFA and all its members for subsidising Squad Week and to Lumpy for allowing us to use Tocumwal Soaring Centre as our base (and a Ventus 2 for me). Also thanks to Pete, Mandy and James for all your insights. I look forward to bringing back useful experiences that I can share with my students in coaching and instructional flights when back in Australia

ADAM WOOLLEY

For the first time in seven years, the Australian Gliding Team met for the Squad Week, kindly hosted by Tocumwal Soaring Centre. We enjoyed challenging soaring conditions at the beginning, which then improved by the end - a perfect simulation of European conditions!

It was great to meet the juniors and build further relationships with my own teammates. The BBQ put on by TSC was a highlight! I look forward to proudly representing you all in Poland.

MAX SCUTCHINGS

We've had some good European-style weather all week, which has made it a perfect training environment. It has been great fun with fast racing and good flying after socialising.

I managed to find a paddock with the LS8 today. Bad routing into a poor area, big gaps between thermals and an incorrectly configured vario all led me to that point, but in the end, I came here to train and learn.

AMBER DAVISON

Squad Week was a transformative experience for the junior pilots, offering a vital bridge between individual skill and international team racing. We were 'blessed' with uncharacteristically difficult conditions, low cloud bases and frequent cumulus days, which provided a great simulator for the tactical challenges we expect to face in Europe.

The value of the squad structure was very apparent during the morning briefings and the post-flight reflections. Having the opportunity to dissect our decisions alongside some of the country's most experienced pilots was invaluable. This synergy peaked for me on the final day while flying with Max - despite the grueling conditions, our communication just clicked.

Beyond the technical training, the week was defined by moments of quiet focus, like watching the sunrise during the daily inspection on the glider. As we look toward the World Championships, my biggest takeaway is the power of our community. I've learned that the most important tool in my kit is the ability to reach out for support. We have an incredible wealth of knowledge around us, and I'm heading to the Worlds feeling far more confident knowing we fly with so much support backing us.

TEAM FOR WGC POLAND

Team Captain - Phil Ritchie
Open class - David Jansen
20m Multi-Seat - Adam Woolley and Keith Gateley
18m - Lumpy Paterson and Norm Bloch

TEAM FOR JWGC GERMANY

Team Captain - Mandy Temple
Club Class - Max Scutchings and Amber Davison

GLIDING AUSTRALIA TECHNICAL BRIEFING KEY SAFETY AND OPERATIONS UPDATE

Rigging and Control Connections

- EASA recently re-issued a Safety Information Bulletin on Sailplane Rigging
- This has been published here as AN178, and it's well worth a read.
- In Europe there are 3 or 4 fatalities each year that can be attributed to mis-rigged gliders and/or their controls.
- In Australia there have been many such incidents as well, but fortunately no recent fatalities (as yet!)



In April GAus held the first All Members Webinar for 2026 by GAus Department Heads. Following are the topics covered for Airworthiness, Operations and Soaring Development.

AIRWORTHINESS - DAVID VILLERS (CAP) ANNUAL INSPECTION PERIODICITY

Annual inspections under the GS Form 2 are required every 12 months or 250 hours time in service, as specified in MOSP 3, section 9.3.4. The 250-hour limit was introduced when it became clear that some gliders were accumulating considerably more than 100 hours in a 12-month period. The default Form 2 maintenance program is designed around an aircraft flying up to 100 hours per year, and is not intended to assure the ongoing airworthiness of a high-utilisation aircraft.

A small number of gliders — around half a dozen in the past year — have exceeded 250 hours in a 12-month period. For these aircraft, alternative maintenance systems are available, including the manufacturer's maintenance scheme as documented in the aircraft's maintenance manual, or a variation of Form 2. Any change to the system of maintenance must be documented in advance in the log book and approved by the Engineering Maintenance Organisation (EMO). Approval is not automatic, and operators of high-utilisation gliders are encouraged to discuss their situation with the EMO directly.

RIGGING AND CONTROL CONNECTIONS

Mis-rigging of sailplanes and misconnection of controls remain serious concerns. EASA has reissued Safety Information Bulletin 2019-07, now at Revision 1, which has been republished in Australia as AN178 and is available on the Gliding Australia website. In Europe, three or four fatalities occur each year that

can be attributed to a mis-rigged glider or incorrectly connected controls — a sobering figure given that many European clubs rig from the trailer each flying day. Australia has recorded a number of similar incidents, though fortunately without recent fatalities.

AN178 contains a substantial body of useful information and should be brought to the attention of all daily inspectors. Connections of particular concern include the horizontal tail and Pintle-type connections, both of which have featured in recent Australian incidents. Anyone who rigs, de-rigs or conducts daily inspections on gliders will benefit from reading this document carefully.

TOST E22 RELEASE AND SMALL RINGS

The Tost E22 is a lightweight tow release fitted to the ASG29 and possibly other types. It is less rigid than some other releases and has a larger gap at the hook point, which means a small tow ring is retained by a relatively narrow margin. There have been at least one confirmed case of a ring falling free before load was applied, and at least one uncommanded release.

The issue appears to be sensitive to the diameter of the steel in the small Tost ring. The manufacturing specification calls for a diameter of 6.7 to 7 mm, but rings wear in service — particularly when used on macadam or concrete surfaces. A survey of clubs has so far covered 71 ring pairs. Of those, seven were found to be outside tolerance, with six measuring below 6.7 mm. While 90 percent of rings measured so far are within specification, clubs are strongly encouraged to measure their rings and report results. Guidance on a formal minimum acceptable diameter will be issued once sufficient data has been collected.

CANOPY LATCHES

A review of uncommanded canopy opening events since 2011 identified 59 separate incidents. While 25 of these appear to result from interrupted pre-takeoff checks, 18 of the 59 — approximately 30 percent — involved Astir types, both single and two-seat variants. This is a higher proportion than might be expected from a latch system that appears straightforward and is generally regarded as reliable.

The Astir canopy latch uses a sliding bar with a red knob that pushes retaining pins through three cylinders — two attached to the canopy frame and one to the fuselage. When functioning correctly it is simple and positive, but a number of defects can prevent the latch from seating properly. These include spring failure, poor lubrication causing the bar to bind, misalignment of the cylinders, a bent bar, corrosion on the pins or bar, contamination from dirt or paint, and thermal effects. A canopy latch that operates correctly in a cool hangar may perform very differently after sitting closed in direct sun on a hot day.

From an airworthiness perspective, the appropriate response is thorough maintenance and functional checking at both Form 2 annual inspection and daily inspection. Any defects found should be rectified and recorded in the maintenance release. An Operational Service Bulletin covering Astir canopy latches across both airworthiness and operations is currently being prepared. It is noted that the Standard Cirrus uses the same canopy opening system, and this is being incorporated into the OSB as well. Contact has been made with the type certificate holder, and an illustrated parts list has been obtained, which may assist clubs in sourcing replacement components by part number.

Regardless of any maintenance action, canopy security is ultimately the pilot's responsibility. Multiple people checking a canopy does not improve safety and may reduce it, because when responsibility is shared it can effectively belong to no one. The pilot must confirm the canopy is closed and locked before flight — every flight.

PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

The Basic Sailplane Engineering manual is in the final stages of revision. The update corrects inconsistencies between BSE chapter 16 and MOSP 3 chapter 13 on release maintenance, amends the chapter on radios and FLARM, adds a new chapter on FLARM and electronic conspicuity, updates the battery chapter, and reorganises the manual so that related subjects are grouped together rather than scattered throughout. The revised edition includes a chapter on safety flashes, which is relevant to pilots considering fitting a strobe to their glider. Publication is expected within a couple of months.

The daily inspection syllabus in GPC Unit 42 has also been revised and has received formal approval from both operations and airworthiness. The new syllabus will be incorporated when the GPC is next updated. Work is also underway on syllabuses for the pilot maintenance modules, several of which are close to completion.

Airworthiness Publications

- Basic Sailplane Engineering is in the process of being updated to:
 - Correct procedures on release maintenance.
 - Chapter on radios and FLARM etc has been amended.
 - A new chapter on FLARM and Electronic Conspicuity devices, etc has been added.
 - Chapter on Batteries has been updated, and
 - BSE has been re-ordered to collect similar subjects together.
- The publication is currently undergoing final review by the Regional Managers Airworthiness and will be published shortly.

Paperwork !!!!

Paperwork isn't the glamorous part of gliding. It doesn't thermal, it doesn't climb, and it never gets a mention in post-flying hangar review. Yet reviews repeatedly show that when paperwork slips, legal protections — slip with it.

- AEF Forms — completed before the flight, not after
- Tow pilots — valid medical and flight crew license and completion of syllabus and formal approval by EMO before commencing operations
- Medicals — all flight crew must have a current medical in JustGo
- Maintenance Releases — filled out correctly and checked each flight

The message is straightforward: paperwork is part of safety. Getting it right enables flying. Getting it wrong stops it. Take the time. Read the instructions. Upload the documents. Fly knowing everything is in order — in the air and on the ground.

OPERATIONS - AARON STROOP (COP) INCIDENT REVIEW

The past season produced 117 safety reports. Of these, 109 involved no injuries, four resulted in minor injuries, two caused serious injuries, and two were fatal. The season opened with four major accidents, including two fatalities occurring two days apart — a deeply sobering start that affected the entire community.

In terms of damage, 44 reports involved some level of aircraft damage, with 34 of those classified as minor and 10 as major.

Landing-related incidents dominated the statistics, accounting for 39 percent of all reports. Ground handling incidents made up 18 percent — a category that is frequently underestimated in terms of the care it demands. Damage sustained in outlandings was low in frequency but high in consequence, with repair costs directly affecting insurance premiums for all pilots and clubs. Airspace infringements and air proximity events accounted for 22 reports, and there was at least one mid-air collision during a competition, though both gliders landed safely. Technical and mechanical issues represented 16 percent of reports.

The key takeaways are that landing safety deserves the most consistent attention, that outlandings carry disproportionate consequences even when they occur infrequently, and that ground handling discipline around the airfield deserves greater awareness than it typically receives.

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Classification	Oct 2025 to end of Mar 2026
Landing related	46 (39%)
Ground handling	21 (18%)
Airspace and airprox	22 (19%)

Classification	Oct 2025 to end of Mar 2026
Launch, tow & winch	16 (14%)
Technical & mechanical	19 (16%)
Outlanding	10 (8.5%)

Key Safety Conclusions

- Landing phase dominates risk
- Outlandings drive consequences not incident counts
- Ground handling is under appreciated

SOAR reports over the soaring season

Aspect	Oct 2025 to end of Mar 2026
Total incidents	117 reports
Damage	44 (38%) (34 reports were Minor damage)
Injury	Nil injury – 109 Minor – 4 Serious – 2 Fatal - 2

INSTRUCTOR TRAINING FORMS

A complete set of new instructor training application and assessment forms has been introduced, covering Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 instructor training. The forms are aligned with the training manual and incorporate a club preparation checklist to ensure candidates arrive at training with all prerequisites in place — including an appropriate medical, a current GPC and any other relevant documentation. It is wasteful for a candidate to complete training only to then spend weeks organising paperwork that could have been sorted beforehand.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMPLIANCE MATTERS

Air Experience Flight forms must be completed before the flight takes place, not after. This applies to every passenger, regardless of how many are flying on a given day. The instructor conducting the flight bears personal responsibility for confirming the form has been completed. This is a growing compliance issue that needs to be addressed firmly.

Tow pilot appointments require valid medicals, a current flight crew licence, completion of the full tow pilot training syllabus, and formal approval from the EMO before any towing commences. Cases have occurred where pilots began towing without the required medical or without EMO approval. Medicals and endorsements must be current and recorded in the JustGo system — this is now the primary means by which Gliding Australia verifies qualifications.

Maintenance releases must be current and checked before every flight. Gliders are being flown with expired Form 2 inspections by people who should know better.

Membership of both the local gliding club and Gliding Australia is a legal requirement to fly gliders in Australia. Pilots who are uncertain about their membership status should contact the Gliding Australia office directly at members@glidingaustralia.org.

A comprehensive insurance guidance document, updated and available in the documents section of the Gliding Australia website under Administration, explains the policies held by Gliding Australia, what they cover, what they do not cover, and how clubs and private owners can arrange appropriate coverage. In particular, tow tugs are not covered under the Blanket Liability policy — operators should read the document carefully to understand their position.

TRAINING AND STANDARDISATION

A panel meeting is coming up to address a range of training and standardisation issues. Topics include solo student supervision, type conversion procedures, and the need to standardise pre-flight checks and flows across clubs. Presently, practices vary considerably between club. Some use card checks, some do not and some use hybrid approaches, and and this inconsistency needs to be resolved.

Rope break training methodology is also under review. When training ropes break consistently at low altitude, unhelpful muscle memory may develop, leading students to turn back instinctively even from heights where a straight-ahead landing is the correct response. The intention is to conduct more of this training at altitude, where the consequences are manageable and the learning environment is safer.

Ground roles for experienced but aging instructors are also on the agenda, including the possibility of a ground CFI designation to support small clubs that do not have the depth to field a flying CFI but should not be allowed to simply disappear from the movement.

SOARING DEVELOPMENT - CRAIG VINALL (CSDP) NATIONAL COMPETITION ATTENDANCE

Attendance at national competitions has been declining and remains a concern. Entries at some events were insufficient to justify running separate classes, leading to the combination of club class with two-seat nationals, and the merging of 15-metre and standard class. The multiclass event at Leeton was better attended, and the experience there suggests that a combination of strong promotion, a reliable annual date, and an accessible location are the factors most likely to produce a healthy field. Clubs willing to host national competitions are encouraged to come forward.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Australia will be represented at the senior world championships in Poland and the junior worlds in Germany. A Squad Week — the first of its kind in several years — was held at Tocumwal and was well attended by selected pilots, team captains and a number of junior pilots identified as likely future representatives. Financial support through the soaring development levy provides approximately \$5,000 per pilot toward the cost of attending world championships, against an estimated total cost of \$30,000 to \$40,000 per pilot.

DISTANCE HANDICAP TASKING

A distance handicap tasking format has been introduced at national level. Rather than setting a fixed course distance, this system assigns each glider a task distance proportional to its handicap, with the intent that all gliders complete their respective tasks in approximately the same elapsed time. This addresses the disadvantage faced by lower-performance gliders on fixed racing tasks, where they may be flying in deteriorating conditions long after the higher-performance ships have finished.

Soaring Development

Australian 2025/26 Season

- December 2025 Club Class at Kingaroy
- January 2026 Multiclass at Leeton
- March 2026 2 Seat at Narromine
- Coaching events in each region
- State Championships in each state and a number of regional competitions

The system requires pilots to load a task file onto their device, either via Wi-Fi or SD card. Assistance is available from the system's developers, and a dedicated website explains the format for both competitors and competition organisers. Pilots with older instrumentation are encouraged to explore the documentation, as the initial learning curve appears to be the main source of resistance to adoption.

Suggestions for changes to national competition rules should be directed to the National Competition Committee, and in particular to NCC Chair Lumpy Paterson.

CANOPY STROBES

The IGC has mandated canopy strobes — or more precisely, conspicuity flashes, which may be located in the fin, near the wheel well, or in the canopy — for international competition. Pilots intending to fly in world competitions or loaning their gliders for that purpose will need a strobe fitted.

In Australia, strobes are encouraged but not mandated for domestic competitions, and there is currently no intention to introduce a mandate. The view is that it is worth observing how strobes perform at international level before imposing a further equipment requirement on domestic competitors. Pilots wishing to fit a strobe should consult the forthcoming revised edition of Basic Sailplane Engineering, which contains a relevant chapter on the subject.

View the full webinar at tinyurl.com/Gaus-web

GA



CANOPIES AND RIGGING



Various incidents have recently caused GAus Safety, Operations and Airworthiness to investigate the issue of canopies coming open in flight. Unfortunately, these incidents have not been limited to Australia. GAus is aware of at least two recent incidents in New Zealand. As a result, SOAR Reports from as far back as September 2011, when the current SOAR system was established, have been reviewed.

From September 2011 until today, a total of 59 incidents of canopies coming open in flight have occurred. The causes are shown in the box opposite.

The causes listed are not surprising. We know that interrupted checks are a major contributor to a range of safety incidents, and failure to properly lock a canopy is perhaps also related to interrupted checks. The other causes are less common, but all preventable.

Of particular interest is that 18 of these 59 incidents (30%) involved Astir types, both single-seaters and two-seaters. Most of these types share a common canopy locking mechanism that appears at first sight to be simple, robust, easily maintained and easily seen by both the pilot and maintainer. However, the evidence indicates that it is not foolproof.

An Astir canopy latch can fail to lock for a variety of reasons. Operator error is an obvious and easily assumed cause, but it is not the only factor affecting Astir canopy locks, and operator error is often the result of design, maintenance and operational factors. It is all too easy to assume that the pilot neglected to ensure that the canopy was locked. Deeper investigation can show that factors such as poor maintenance, wear and tear, heat effects, lack of familiarity with the system, rushed checks or other factors play a part in the incident.

Modern accident and incident investigations look beyond the surface of any incident; we're all familiar with the 'Swiss cheese' model of Professor James Reason. Hence, we should not be relying solely on the CHAOTIC check to ensure a locked canopy.

An additional check by the wing runner has been adopted by some clubs, but this approach risks the problem that, if more than one person is involved in a process, then no-one is ultimately responsible for the outcome. Of course, it is the pilot's responsibility to ensure that the canopy is closed and locked before takeoff, and no additional checks by others relieves them of that responsibility.

However, using the Swiss cheese model, there are other things that can be done to insert additional defences, and some of these are largely related to airworthiness and maintenance.

The Astir canopy latch consists of a rod that pushes several pins through sleeves located on the fuselage lip and the canopy frame. The rod is pushed into the locked position by a small spring and has a red knob for the pilot's actuation. Maintenance-wise, particularly for well-used aircraft, a few problems may inhibit the proper functioning of the latch. These include -

- Misalignment of the three sleeves through which the pins are pushed,
- A bent or deformed push rod,
- Corrosion, paint and other contaminants,
- Poor lubrication (too little, too much or the wrong lubricant
- Heat effects

All of these issues can, and should, be detected and addressed through regular inspection and maintenance. A rigorous Daily Inspection is a good defence in this regard.

A further defence that could be adopted is a painted mark on the canopy rail or fuselage lip that lines up with a similar mark on the push rod - take care to prevent paint from getting onto the pins and sleeves. Checking the alignment of the marks while closing the canopy would help overcome a poorly latched canopy, but would not protect against a canopy that hasn't been closed. The Astir canopy latch can be locked with the canopy still open, and the aligned marks would provide no protection in this scenario.

Figure 3 shows an Astir canopy latch that appears locked - ie, the pin is fully seated in the two sleeves on the canopy



ABOVE: Figure 3, latch appears locked, but is NOT pushed through the sleeve on the fuselage frame.

ABOVE RIGHT: Properly locked.



frame - but is NOT pushed through the sleeve on the fuselage frame. Obviously, in this position the canopy is not properly seated and can open without the locking knob being moved. While this is more an operational than an airworthiness issue, ensuring that the canopy sits properly without applying additional force is a defence that can be assured to work through maintenance.

Finally, canopy locking system checks are required at both Daily Inspection and at the Annual Inspection (Form 2). However, when conducting an Annual Inspection, the canopy is usually the first item removed from the aircraft to be taken away and put in a safe place. It is then not looked at again until it is reinstalled at the end of the inspection.

It is at this point that the canopy locking mechanism should be cleaned, lubricated and checked for easy and correct operation. The operation of the canopy locks can only be properly tested when the canopy is installed on the aircraft. Also, at each DI the canopy is opened and closed multiple times, but there should also be a specific check that the canopy locking system is working properly, is free moving and easily operated.

Another check that temperature variations do not interfere with smooth operation of the canopy locks is also worthwhile. What may work in a shady hangar may not work as well having been soaked for an hour at 45° C on the flight line.

GLIDER RIGGING AND FLIGHT CONTROL CONNECTIONS

This is a perennial issue to which we need to pay constant attention. The potential for a serious incident or accident is always present when we rig a glider and re-connect its controls. Again, the issue is not limited to Australia. Recently the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) re-issued its Safety Information Bulletin SIB2019-07R1 because of further incidents in Europe.

GAus has published this updated SIB as **AN178 Issue 2**, and it is well worth reading. Everyone who holds a Daily Inspection authorisation would profit from the experience encapsulated in this document.

L'HOTELLIER CONNECTORS

The EASA SIB addresses a range of control connectors, but the one which seems to appear most often in SOAR reports is the L'Hotellier connector. Apart from these connectors often being in places where they are hard to see and reach, they are required to have an extra locking mechanism, which can be very difficult to see, reach and check.

The importance of these extra locking mechanisms is highlighted in a YouTube video (see link below), showing a L'Hotellier connector in an airbrake circuit. Note how the spring-loaded tab (or wedge) reacts as the airbrakes are locked and unlocked. Fortunately, this connector has a Wedekind sleeve fitted, serving as the only thing stopping the L'Hotellier from disconnecting as the load is varied.

As well as the routine maintenance requirements for L'Hotellier connectors (see **MOSP3 Section 13.4**), the extra locking systems installed on L'Hotellier fittings are an important defence against disconnection and need to be checked at each DI.

The video, which was recorded in Japan, can be found at: tinyurl.com/5h66cs9e



David Villiers
Chair Airworthiness

Canopy Opening Incidents

- 25 - interrupted checks
 - 10 - Not locked correctly
 - 7 - release manipulated accidentally
 - 5 - worn canopy locking mechanism
 - 4 - canopy replaced. Not fitted correctly
 - 2 - Puchaz AN170 related
 - 1 - canopy strobe fitting fouled canopy
 - 4 - under investigation
- 18 occurrences were in Grob Astir, Twin or Twin Acro types.

SAFETY AND CLUB SUSTAINABILITY

INSIGHTS FROM SAFER SKIES BRISBANE

On the weekend of 18 – 19 April, GAus, CASA, Industry and Queensland Gliding members, plus several interstate members, gathered for the 'Safer Skies, Stronger Clubs' Event in Brisbane.

This was a most welcome and lively gathering, with some brilliant speakers, high energy and plenty of networking and side meetings face to face. AV contractors were also engaged to record presentations for uploading later to Gliding Australia's YouTube channel. Extracts are coming soon on www.youtube.com/@glidingaustralia8510.

SPEAKERS

AIR MARSHAL GEOFF BROWN AO

Geoff gave his insights on 'Building Better Safety Culture and Performance', based on his experiences in both Defence and gliding operations including helicopters, Roulettes, FA18s and high-performance competition. He spoke of the need to be attuned to even slight signs of divergence from safe practices, as some organisations have been slow to perceive normalised risks. He also noted the importance of culture and leadership commitment to learning from mistakes and disasters, plus defensive approaches such as never fully trusting oneself and performing critical actions to prevent the inevitable errors and lapses.

In a gliding context, he acknowledged the serious

pressures of an ageing volunteer base, Covid, economics, Pawnees and others, and the power of a supportive culture in countering these. He highlighted the need for better information flow and learning for all club members, the dominance of human factors issues, plus the benefits of growing humble, disciplined pilots. This set the scene for results-based discussions later.

SIDNEY DEKKER

Professor Sidney opened our second day with a keynote address titled 'Closing the Loop – Safety Performance, Human Behaviour and Future Growth', delivered with his characteristic energy, humour and penetrating challenges to orthodoxy. While acknowledging that we must learn from what goes wrong, the Safety I approach, he reminded us that much more goes well than goes wrong, and that we must cultivate our positive adaptive capacities.

In explaining the Safety II paradigm, he advocated more open safety culture and conversations, and national and club level efforts to remove downward pressures on cooperation. He spoke candidly about tragedies. He sees them as a stress test for clubs that need to explore what could have gone much worse, celebrate the positive capacities where worse outcomes were averted, and drive forward-looking accountability – whose obligation it is to fix issues, who impacted the situation, and what to do now.

His observations on what he calls safety theatre – problems fixed (or not) with hi-vis and posters – drew much amusement. He focussed on GSD or Getting Sh** Done, and building ABC – Alternatives, Balancing and Challenge networks. Stronger clubs could benefit from this, as well as building inclusion, motivation to have fun and excel, and feeling part of something bigger in communal activities.

CASA

The CASA team, led by Wayne Morgan and Andrew Lockett, presented on the Safety Sector Risk profile methodology and ran a consultation workshop on some priority gliding risk areas. They made positive use of the Slido interactive survey and response tool to gather our risk perceptions.

Some excellent contributions were made by Captain Andrew Learmonth from QantasLink, as well as the gliding members present. These will inform a Gliding Sector risk profile and bow-tie diagrams showing key risks and defences. This can give us greater leverage in future in our dealings with other aviation operators.

Steve Fickling, the Manager of the Sport Aviation Section, along with Graham Levitt from the CASA Flight Standards Branch, were also present. We are most grateful for all CASA sponsorship for this event, and their receptiveness to our ideas and inputs.

The CASA presentation and workshop were preceded by Drew McKinnie giving an overview of our occurrence data history and trends, evolution of our data collection

and analysis systems, occurrence types and statistics, recurring and new emerging safety issues, and safety priorities here and overseas. We discussed our obligations to explore what has gone wrong in the past, and learn from worst case scenarios. We aimed to better understand human and organisational drivers of operational and airworthiness tragedies, and then build positive safety and cultural capacities to do better in the future.

ANTHONY SMITH

Anthony's presentation on developments in Pawnee airworthiness generated much lively discussion. He discussed fatigue life and future inspection requirements, engagements with CASA, ANAC, FAA, SSA, EASA and others, and some research efforts to better understand fatigue risks. It was a data-rich and informative presentation, founded on his incredible analytical efforts and research, which will be widely shared.

He also demonstrated a new compact 10x borescope and its capabilities for spar section visual inspections, and other tasks.

JAMES NUGENT

James gave an insightful summary of developments in glider towing options, comparing Pawnee and multiple Light Sport Aviation (LSA) aircraft performance, costs, limitations, opportunities and risks. Some important aspects of takeoff and 50ft obstacle clearance performance, climb performance and efficiency, engine options, airframe robustness, opportunities and risks were brilliantly presented and emphasised with 'Mythbusters'-style summaries. We know many clubs are considering various launching options and the hard-edged economic and safety implications affecting us, hence the decision to engage AV support for later YouTube access.

CEO MARIELA POCKLINGTON

Mariela drew on her broad experiences in other sporting, administrative and community environments, plus her work with GAus Executive members including Club Development Amanda Van Der Waal, to discuss GAus and 'Club Rejuvenation Priorities and Opportunities'. Gliding clubs are the backbone of our niche aviation sport, with passionate participants now challenged to manage in changing environments.

She acknowledged the many realities we and other sporting bodies face, particularly the burdens that handfuls of volunteers in key roles are handling. This led to discussion of organisation design and strategies to rethink volunteer roles, improve outsourcing or task sharing and develop coaching capabilities for volunteers.

With examples, she noted that two aspects – flying and social connection – are critical for club growth, and how building communities and belonging can alleviate pressures on volunteers and grow the talent pool. This drove discussions on defining our niches – training, social and/or high performance, advertising what we offer better, marketing identity and member stories, describing experiences and not just the airframes.

What does it feel like? Tell those stories! So, her view of opportunities for future growth leveraged flexible approaches to volunteering, building a social mindset as



DREW MCKINNIE
SAFETY MANAGER
safety@glidingaustralia.org



LEFT: Safer Skies was well attended by many pilots, including Sophie Curio, Ray Stewart, Miles Gore Brown and seated, Steve Peglar GAus Chair.

ABOVE TOP: Jo Davis with Drew McKinnie.

ABOVE: CEO Mariela Pocklington giving her presentation.





well as flying mindset, projecting a clear identity, and carefully planning to manage impacts of growth. Adaptation can help all sporting clubs to survive and thrive.

SOPHIE CURIO

The rejuvenation theme was cleverly amplified as Sophie presented her insights and experiences of both Australian and European gliding cultures. She touched on many differences but also lessons and opportunities – family- and tourist-friendly clubs, destination hubs and facilities, social and camping opportunities, shade and air-conditioning, all of which make greater family and social engagement possible.

She talked about the different outlanding cultures, urging us to see outlandings as a skill and not a flight

failure, and to normalise the experience and celebrate successful outcomes. Pilots need to practice often, particularly field selection, and know that retrieve help is always planned and on call.

Her constructive ideas on garnering greater junior support, by improving access to gliders, clubs and facilities, were welcomed. She also stressed engagement, spot landing contests, theory sessions, social sessions, bad weather activity, participation in maintenance days and structured education opportunities.

As an experienced, accomplished competition pilot, she saw gaggle flying as a skill to be developed, taught and not feared. Safety results from technique and not counting gliders – it's the unseen aircraft that can get you! She described some European disadvantages – pilot medicals, regulatory audits – and contrasted those with Australian culture, which encourages greater pilot-in-command responsibility, places a high value on empowerment and provides friendly, inviting gliding environments.

The sessions described here were augmented by some summary sessions asking “where to from here?” and exploring what we can “do more of, less of, stop doing and start doing”. Along with attendee surveys, these topics will be reviewed by both GAus and participating clubs. Sidney Dekker described the ‘Kennedy moment’, when it's not just what GAus can do for clubs and members, but also what we can do as members for our clubs and gliding communities

Huge thanks go to all participants and organisers, the sponsors and industry supporters and the many volunteers who gave their time and made this work. The positive spirit of collaborative engagement was contagious. Good on you!

GAUS APPROVED MAINTENANCE ORGANISATIONS



Adelaide SC Workshop	PO Box 94 Gawler SA	08 85221877	maintenance@adelaidesoaring.org.au
Aeroswift Composites	20 Cathie Street Ballarat Vic	0428 399 001	comcom2@bigpond.net.au
Australian Aircraft Kits	Airport Drive Taree NSW	02 6553 8100	aircraftkits@bigpond.com
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Camden Sailplanes	PO Box 163 Camden NSW	0418 681 145	camdensailplanes@bigpond.com
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Jonker Sailplanes	Potchefstroom S Africa	+ 27 82 879 8977	support@js1.co.za
Keepit Glider Tech	Lake Keepit NSW	0417 843 444	keepitglidertech@outlook.com
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Maddog Composites	16 Jacobs Street Dinmore Qld	07 3143 3131	claire@maddogcomposites.com.au
North East Aviation	Wangaratta Airport Laceyby VIC	0408 440 173	neaviation@optusnet.com.au
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RNA Maintenance	Condell Park NSW	0414 867 644	roger.alli@hotmail.com
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Ultimate Aero P/L	P.O.Box 431 Boonah Qld	0421 595 533	nigel@ultimateaero.com.au
Vintage Glider Repairs	Munruben QLD	0412 773 668	lahina2@hotmail.com

Test Instruments: Conrod Bearing Clearance Tester (CGCT) required for 50 hour maintenance of 2 stroke engines
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Occurrences & Incidents

All clubs and GFA members are urged to report all occurrences and incidents promptly, as and when they occur, using the GFA's occurrence reporting portal at glidingaustralia.org/Log-In/log-in-soar.html. This is always best done while all details are fresh in everyone's mind.

You can read the full SOAR report at tinyurl.com/ltmko56

Reports noted 'Under investigation' are based on preliminary information received and may contain errors. Any errors in this summary will be corrected when the final report has been completed.

06/10/25

HK36
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 1962
UNINTENDED FLIGHT INTO CLOUD

09/11/25

HORNET
DAMAGE MINOR
INJURY SERIOUS
P1 HOURS 60
OUTLANDING ACCIDENT

10/12/25

ASG29
DAMAGE MINOR
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 6367
GROUND LOOP

JANUARY - MARCH 2026

6/1/2026

LS8-18
DAMAGE MINOR
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 3508
COLLAPSED UNDERCARRIAGE ON LANDING

11/1/2026

AS33ME
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 22,000+
LANDING UNDERSHOOT AND GROUND LOOP

13/1/2026

JS3 AND ASG29
DAMAGE MAJOR
INJURY NIL
TWO GLIDERS PULLING UP INTO
THERMAL CAME TOGETHER

14/01/26

ASH31MI AND LS8
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 1500

AIRPROX. LS 8 AND ASH31MI PASSED EACH OTHER
WITH 50M SEPARATION.

8/1/2026

PIPER PAWNEE AND LS3NIL
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 500+
TUG ENGINE FAILURE DURING GLIDER AEROTOW

8/1/2026

JS3
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 5930
ROPE HOOKHUP

13/01/26

PIPER PAWNEE AND DG1000
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 1097
TOW PLANE AND GLIDER UNSTABLE ON LAUNCH
FROM AG STRIP.

21/1/2026

ASK21 AND ASTIR CS
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 1100
CONFUSION OF WHERE GLIDERS WERE IN CIRCUIT

23/1/2026

TWIN ASTIR
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 560
CANOPY OPENED IN FLIGHT

1/2/2026

ASK13
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 1900+
UNCOMMANDED HARNESS RELEASE TWICE

24/1/2026

DG-303
DAMAGE MAJOR
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 764
GROUND COLLISION WITH VEHICLE

T04/02/26

LS4 AND ASK21 AND PIPER PAWNEE
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
GLIDER NEAR MISS ON LANDING. LS4 LANDING,
ASK21 BEING TOWED BACK. PAWNEE PARKED.

04/02/26

ASK21
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 2629

AIRSPACE INCURSION

05/02/26
HORNET
DAMAGE SUBSTANTIAL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 116
RUNWAY UNDERSHOOT

07/02/26

ASK21
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 148
UNDERSHOOT ON FINAL APPROACH

09/02/26

SZD 55
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 3025
WHEEL UP LANDING

09/02/26

ASG32
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
ASG32 FUEL VENT LINE KINKED
AND UNEVEN AMOUNTS OF
FUEL IN TANKS

14/02/26

PW5
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 50
SAFE OUTLANDING IN OPEN PIT COAL MINE

14/02/26

DG500M AND ROBINSON R66 HELICOPTER
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 3360
AIRPROX. 500M LATERAL SEPARATION

5/02/26

GROB 102 ASTIR MINOR
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 71
GROUND HANDLING INCIDENT.
TOWING GLIDER HIT OBSTRUCTION.

27/02/26

GROB 102 ASTIR
MINOR
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 68
WHEELS UP LANDING

28/02/26

HORNET STOL
DAMAGE MINOR
INJURY NIL

ALL OUT SIGNAL GIVEN WHEN TOW ROPE
NOT FULLY EXTENDED FROM TOW REEL.
WEAK LINK AT BOTH ENDS BROKE.

28/02/26

TWIN ASTIR
DAMAGE MINOR
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 1884
GROUND LOOP ON LANDING

13/02/26

ASH31MI SUBSTANTIAL
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
GROUND HANDLING. GLIDER HIT TOW
CARS WITH IT'S WING.

07/02/26

ASH31MI MINOR
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
FIRE IN ENGINE BAY. FUEL
INJECTOR LINE NOT FITTED CORRECTLY.

09/03/26

PITTS S-2A AND DG1000
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 73
AIRPROX. PITTS S-2A IN CONFLICT
WITH LANDING DG1000.

12/03/26

GROB 103 TWIN II
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 4500
GROUND LOOP

21/03/26

ASK21
DAMAGE MINOR
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 1200
INSPECTION HATCH LOST IN FLIGHT

07/02/26

ASK21
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 148
UNDERSHOOT ON FINAL APPROACH

21/03/26

SZD-50-3
DAMAGE NIL
INJURY NIL
P1 HOURS 30
LOW APPROACH ON LANDING

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Classified Ads can be purchased from the Gliding Australia website at magazine.glidingaustralia.org Go to Classifieds then click on the link and complete the online form where you will need to provide the text for the ad and any photos, if required. The cost for the ad will be determined by the number of words and any photos you wish to add. You will then be taken to a secure payment area to process your payment. Your ad will be placed on the GFA website for a month from the date of payment. Ads that are financial at magazine deadline (1st of every second month) will appear in the GA Magazine. For any enquiries please contact the GFA office on 03 9359 1613.

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VH-GBX, Standard Libelle, 15/17m 1739Hrs, 1001Launches. Serial No 346, Located Bendigo G C, \$12,000 or offer. Contact **Colin Campbell, 0428509461** or vhgbx@hotmail.com



VH-GQF Mosquito The Glider is setup for competition and is a proven performer.

Recent 4000hrly survey completed and will come with fresh form2. Striefender seals on all surfaces.

V7 vario set up for electronic compensation and XCvario set up on the TE system. XCnav remote joystick for XCsoar,PDA mount for XCsoar,Canopy Flasher, Flarm, Canopy Cover, Cockpit extractor vent, External plumbing, Fuselage flap fences. Easy to rig, two pins (main and tail) Automatic control hookup, Large cockpit weight range. Trailer is well setup for comps and or outlandings his is a great Club Class competition glider or your first cross country glider due to its ease of handling and very effective dive brakes. \$30,000 **Neil Bennett 0435 210 321** njkbennett@gmail.com



VH GYY STD CIRRUS SN 143, 2150 TT

Good condition, ready to go. Just finished QLD State and Australian Club Class comps New fuselage refinish, Wings in good condition, New blue Canopy, New TOST release, New harness, New W&B, Mini oz flarm Dual Axle tailer needs a little work. Form 2 due September If sold in SE QLD will come with the next form two labour included and ongoing maintenance assistance including supervision.

\$15,000.00 Currently hangared in Kingaroy and available for test flights

Silly video here <https://youtu.be/9bK7X5sj8Ms?feature=shared> (the trailer is now fixed, floor and rear frame need some love)

Call **Justin 0421061811** or email justinjinclair@hotmail.com



VH-GOP Standard Cirrus \$15,000 or ono. A fun glider for same owner for last 20+ years. 2231 hours, 975 landings and will be sold with a recently completed FRM 2. Currently in the club hangar at Warwick Gliding Club Qld. Basic Instruments: Winter ASI, Altimeter, Borgelt B-21 audio and mechanical vario, MicroAir 760 radio and Oz FLARM. Tow-out gear, wing walker and tail dolly Trailer registered in Qld until 5th June 2026 and in ok condition, reliable and user friendly

Contact **Les: 0407 986 142** lesmilne@bigpond.com or **Phil: 0419 264 713** phillip.southgate1@bigpond.com

VH-GMX Glasflugel H 401 Kestrel 17M single seat



sailplane serial No86 \$15000

Price includes glider, equipment and trailer.

Log Book 8376 hours. Nil accidents. Original gel coat surface finish good condition.

Pilot weight min 91.0kg, Pilot weight plus cockpit load max 96.9kg. GFA Form 2 maintenance release valid till 24/04/2026. Lithium main battery & charger. Naviter S7 Electronic Variometer. Winter mechanical vario.X-COM Radio with dual channel function. OUDIE 2 GPS Moving Map navigation. Airspeed indicator new face. Altimeter. Magnetic compass. Memory foam safety seat cushion, 8kg lead seat with canvas cover. Mountain High oxygen system with large cylinder. FLARM. Parachute. Cotton covers for whole aircraft.

Tail dolly, tail parachute, ground towing drawbar, wing walker.

Spare trailer wheel, wheel jack, wrench, 2 adjustable tripod trestles for de-rigging.

Comprehensive maintenance history aircraft log book. Flight Manual.

HANGAR SPACE for SALE -- private allocated space at Benalla Aerodrome \$23,000.

Hangar space will be available for sale after Kestrel is sold. Offers to **Charles Day** Phone **0438 341 876** email Charles.Day@bigpond.com

TWO SEATERS



VH GIE Duo Discus 1/5th share in one of only two privately owned Duo Discus in the country and arguably the best presented Duo. She is normally hangared at Warkworth NSW. This is a great cross-country machine that is very capable and a social way of getting around or to just boat around the valley on a Saturday afternoon with a mate. International pilots maybe considered. Very competitive at 20m national level and has regularly attended. Whether you need a two-seater to gracefully age out of the sport or are looking for a share in a high performance 20m two-seater this maybe your machine. It is beautifully set up and easy to rig, Kylie and I rig it on our own most times with no lifting required. All remaining shareholders have interests in other aircraft so access is seldom a problem. Asking price \$42k **Neil Bennett 0435 210 321**

MOTORGLIDERS



ZK-GTI HPH 'Shark' 304MS 2023 with only 6Hrs of flight time. Self-Launch glider with full specification including acrylic paint, oxygen, LX9070 with V8 vario, ADSB, Power flarm, AHRS and much more. Cobra trailer together with single person rigging and ground handling equipment. Company demo aircraft, NZ\$299,000 plus GST, free of tax on export. Contact timhar@xtra.co.nz Tel: **+64 21022 49401**

continued over page

CLASSIFIEDS



VH-GPM SF25C motor glider \$25K Recently returned from Burketown Morning Glory Trip.
 Looks and flies great. 70 knot cruise a 9- 10 LPH (Mogas or Avgas) Located in Kingaroy DOM 1974 Hoffman Fixed Propellor
 Engine 2010 Limbach 1700EA 60HP
 Airframe 4873 hours Engine 611 hours Prop 418 hours Tacho 251 hours
 Recovered in Ceconite 102 in 2012 New Main Tyre and tube 2025 50 Year Survey completed 2022 Annual Inspection due Aug 2026
 Lified Components
 Fuel / Oil lines Feb 2029
 Harnesses March 2032
 ALT/ASI calibrated to Aug 2027
 Magneto service @ 330 hours Tacho
 Contact Kevin – kevin@whitco.net.au **0412 538 469**



VH-GBY ASH25E 1988 model with nil accident history and approx 1300 hours T/T in very good condition. Engine has 29 hours and is in good working condition. LX9000 dual, all Winter mechanical instruments recently replaced. Mountain high oxygen system Aluminium Cobra twin axle trailer in good condition. based in Narrogin Western Australia for sale at AUD 120,000 **Arnold Geerlings** arnold@geerlings.co.za **0450221661**



OPERATIONS COMPENDIUM
 Gliding Australia has published numerous articles from the Operations Department that cover all aspects of gliding safety and operational best practice. Here are many of these articles, taken from issues of Gliding Australia, presented in a single Compendium. Download at magazine.glidingaustralia.org/past-issues



One close call, many lifesaving lessons.

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