

As most members will know we have been moving forward in an attempt to 'future proof' the organization. With an ageing flying membership that is somewhat more risk averse and sensitive to change this is a difficult and ongoing task.

Luckily, we also have many members who are willing and able to support others in this endeavor, people who look to the future and want to help. The fact that we are maintaining our membership numbers, after many years of slowly decreasing is one sign that we are heading in the right direction.

One of the very positive things that has changed in the last few years is the support of the Executive and Board in this endeavor. Historically the Executive and Board have strongly looked to protecting their regions, this has not always ensured a good outcome for the organization as a whole. Now although these members are still looking to ensure their regions are not overlooked, largely now they are looking to the big picture and making quality decisions based on the best outcome for all.

Some recent figures I have seen has indicated that we have grown the under 30 year old membership from 5% to somewhere in the region of 20%, if you can't see them around your club, perhaps you need to change something to make it more youth friendly. Female participation is a particular focus at the moment and have expanded from 2% to 5% of our membership, this is nowhere near enough, but it is a start. Hopefully, soon there will be enough female members to self-support in some clubs soon.

Some of the positive aspects of our approaches are the Soaring to the future (S2F), Simulator introduction both portable and 'fixed', and the formation of an investment group in this era of low bank interest. The introduction of pre course documentation for airworthiness, and refresher courses for both Airworthiness and Operations is a large step forward, and the upgrading of the airworthiness training systems by using video's is also a good step.

However, we are still plagued by too many regulations, some at GFA level, and some at club level. We must remove unnecessary rules and regulations as they are impediment to our members ability to do what they can and want to do.

Thankfully the new Part 149 may assist us in this area, whilst I have indicated to CASA that we will be one of the last to undertake this, it is very clear from some recent meetings with CASA that we will have to separate out the rules and regulations from the 'advice' documents if we are going to minimize the complexity and keep this document down to any sort of reasonable size.

Each and every one of our members needs to ask "how am I going to make it easier and simpler to go gliding", for only when everyone is engaged will we be truly able to grow.

While mentioning CASA, we were advised that CASA was going to change the funding distribution of the nine sports and recreational RAAO's, with us losing \$48,000. There are some losers and some winners, we have fought this through our own, ASAC, and AGAA efforts. I do not pretend to know the outcome, but we are expanding our political clout, both in the aviation sector and in the political sector, something we have not done for a long time. This will cost some money for travel and accommodation, indeed it already has, but if we cannot convince the larger aviation sphere and the general population that we deserve to exist, should we exist as an organization.

You may have heard that we cancelled our 'presentation evening', and wondered why?, at the time of the decision there was only 1 person booked in to attend, and no nominations for the many Trophies available to our membership. We are willing to spend your money for things that are reasonable and achieve good outcomes for our members, but we are not willing to waste money or expend the efforts of our volunteer officers (such as the trophy officer) unnecessarily. Therefore as a result I have asked the Vice President to review the methods we use for trophy selection and distribution, if we should have a presentation evening or do it another way, and if we should continue to rotate Executive and Board meetings between the regions, given the huge cost of these and considering we have already minimised face to face meetings from 5 to 3, and have many electronic meetings programed if, and when necessary.

We also elect many specific officers for the regions at our AGM, I continually hear that its hard to get people to volunteer, honestly if this is the case, we should not waste members time and effort if they don't feel valued.

We are just starting an IT review, you will be able to go to the website soon and have some input on what you think should happen in the website, the database, or the communication systems that we use. Do not waste this opportunity, don't just say it's terrible, be specific, and your efforts may be rewarded.

To conclude, I believe we are moving ahead well, but there is so much more to do, we need everyone to be willing to change, to assist where they can, and perhaps, just perhaps, in 20 years' time we will see 2018-2019 as a pivotal period in the evolution of the gliding movement.

Peter Cesco

President

Gliding Federation of Australia