Gliding Australia

The Gliding Federation of Australia
Inc. trading as Gliding Australia

Safety Management System
Safety Bulletin
No. 04/23   November 2023

Safety Policy and Priorities

2023 has been an eventful year. Gliding Australia has transitioned to a new structure, with a Board Chair replacing the President position, plus a new Chief Executive Officer leading the Executive team and taking on the CASA-prescribed role of Accountable Manager. We are on the cusp of a CASA decision on our Part 149 transition application, with Safety Manager, Executive Manager Operations and Executive Manager Airworthiness taking on key safety responsibilities. We have new Panel Chairs heading Operations and Soaring Development departments.

Much work has gone into updating our MOSPs and supporting manuals, to better define policies, systems and processes to achieve safety outcomes.

These updates include a renewed focus on supporting members and clubs, competitions and events, maintainers, inspectors, and approved maintenance organisations. We face challenges with our older demographics and the need to develop new talent, with introducing new technologies, electric propulsion, new glider types, along with supporting ageing sailplanes. Mixing it safely with other gliders and airspace users is becoming more complex, which in turn drives the need for high operational standards and improvements to the integrated training system.

A new MOSP Part 5 Safety Management Systems has been completed and agreed, supported by Emergency Response Plan ERP templates. Further work will be done in 2024 to condense club and competition templates, to make them easier to use. A huge effort has gone into a Gliding Australia website and IT systems upgrade. In 2024 members should see an easier document search system, with better safety linkages to access important information. The IT upgrades will also enable SOAR and SDR system improvements to be developed, at the front end when reporting occurrences, and improving feedback.

The Gliding Australia Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer have signed a revised Safety Policy Commitment, superseding the 2022 version issued under SB 03/22. A copy is attached below, for reference by members, clubs, regional associations, GFA departments, executive and board.

This document is a one-page summary statement of Gliding Australia's commitment to safety outcomes, principles, risk-based systems, standards, continuous improvement, resourcing, culture, and behaviour to achieve better safety outcomes. References are made to reporting, emergency response, safety reviews, and key factors describing our risk appetite.

The Policy notably describes some safety priorities, aligned with CASA's state aviation safety program, also closely correlating with SOAR occurrence data. These give us insight into required education and awareness activity, improvements in training, operations, and airworthiness.

Those priorities are:

- Aircraft / Glider Control,
- Aircraft / Glider Separation and Collision,
- Runway Events,
- Airframe Occurrences, and
- Terrain Collision / Hard Landing Events.

No-one sets out to have accidents or make errors. It's significant that human factors, biases, flawed decisions, oversights, unforeseen threats, drive many of these occurrences. Regrettably, we have seen deaths arising from gliding-related mid-air collisions (MACs), plus high incidence of near collisions, near misses, airprox occurrences. These events have been devastating for the pilots, families, friends, and clubs involved.

A key safety focus in 2023-24 will be "mixing it safely with other airspace users", involving the gliding community, general aviation, other sporting aviation, as well as the commercial and military aviation sectors.

This is inextricably linked with situational awareness and vigilance, knowledge of where and how we operate, our knowledge of where and how others operate, plus changes in airspace, air routes, surveillance, and electronic systems.

Other occurrence categories are still important! Risk reduction measures should be pursued at both National and club levels.

This policy statement forms part of MOSP Part 5 SMS, at Section 4. Best practice for all organisations is to have a safety policy commitment, signed by the club President or event Director. Clubs are encouraged to develop safety policy commitments along similar lines, tailored to their local environment, and shared with members.

Wishing you all a fun and safe festive and soaring season.

A.R. (Drew) McKinnie
Safety Manager
21 November 2023

Attachment: Gliding Australia Safety Policy Commitment October 2023

GLIDING AUSTRALIA BOARD SAFETY POLICY COMMITMENT

The Gliding Federation of Australia Inc (GFA), trading as Gliding Australia, an Approved Self-Administering Aviation Organisation, supports clubs and members in pursuing safe, accessible, and enjoyable sporting aviation with a simple vision – **ONE TEAM – ONE SPORT – ONE GLIDING.**

Our purpose is to provide the safest practicable environment for all people to experience the thrill of gliding, provide opportunities and foster excellence in all areas of the sport whilst recognising our responsibility to the wider aviation community. We wish members to achieve lifelong enjoyment through development, inclusion, training, and leadership.

This means doing the right things, to high standards, the right way. The right way means the safest practicable way, in a sporting aviation environment.

Commitment: We are genuinely committed to safety. We do not regard safety as an add-on, rather as an outcome of our collective activities, at national, regional and club levels. We achieve safety through our commitments to resourcing and doing the right things in airworthiness, training, operations, sporting events, administration, member care, all specialist aspects of our sport.

Culture: We wish to cultivate and embed a Positive Safety Culture in gliding activities, encouraging free and open reporting within a Just Culture, with open discussion of safety feedback to members and clubs. We encourage members to seek improvements and support high standards of airmanship, airworthiness, training, airborne and ground operations, personal behaviour, and positive example. We strive to communicate and share our best insights.

Key Factors: Gliding Australia gives highest priority to not harming members, other airspace users and the public, minimising fatal and serious injury accident rates, operating responsibly and safely in a multi-user aviation environment, and cultivating a Positive Safety Culture that encourages open reporting within a Just Culture.

Risk: Risk management principles and processes are intrinsic to specialist panel and club processes, developed over decades through hard-won experience with attention to professionalism in gliding operations and airworthiness. We strive to minimise risks associated with gliding operations to reasonable levels, so we can enjoy freedom to fly in shared airspace, whilst protecting the wellbeing of members, other airspace users and the public. We support using Threat and Error Management in mitigating risks. We share obligations to report and address hazards.

Emergencies: With the best will in the world, things can still go badly wrong. Gliding is an inherently dangerous recreational aviation activity, with obvious risks. We have responsibilities to plan for emergency events, to be best prepared to respond and minimise adverse consequences. We support emergency response planning at national and club levels, including supervisors at operational level. We offer regional and national level support to clubs facing emergencies and serious accidents, particularly in interactions with emergency services, CASA and ATSB, and in supporting their investigations.

Errors: It is vital to acknowledge the inevitability of human errors, that we all sometimes make mistakes. They should be openly admitted, with responses tailored to better prevention, stronger defences against adverse consequences. We must learn from mistakes, report, share insights, talk openly about how we can "do safety better".

Photo: Scott Lennon SL Composites

Policies and Processes: We are all bound by rules, regulations, standards, and obligations to operate as responsible, risk aware aviation participants. We seek to simplify their application wherever possible. We provide online access to them, in the clearest manner possible. We expect members to know and understand them, appropriate to their respective roles and responsibilities. If we find rules and processes impede safety outcomes, we must raise those concerns to responsible officers and panels, preferably with proposed remedies. We strive to maintain freedom to fly and equitable access to airspace. Wilful rule violations and workarounds are contrary to Positive, Just Culture. We willingly support reporting processes.

Reporting: This means all members supporting a safety occurrence reporting and analysis system, that monitors trends and actions, provides safety awareness feedback and education to members. This in turn drives improved operational and airworthiness safety systems and processes, informed by occurrence investigations and member feedback. We acknowledge that occurrences may be driven by pilot and member errors, or design, maintenance and technology failures, sometimes exacerbated by external, systemic, organisational, and cultural factors.
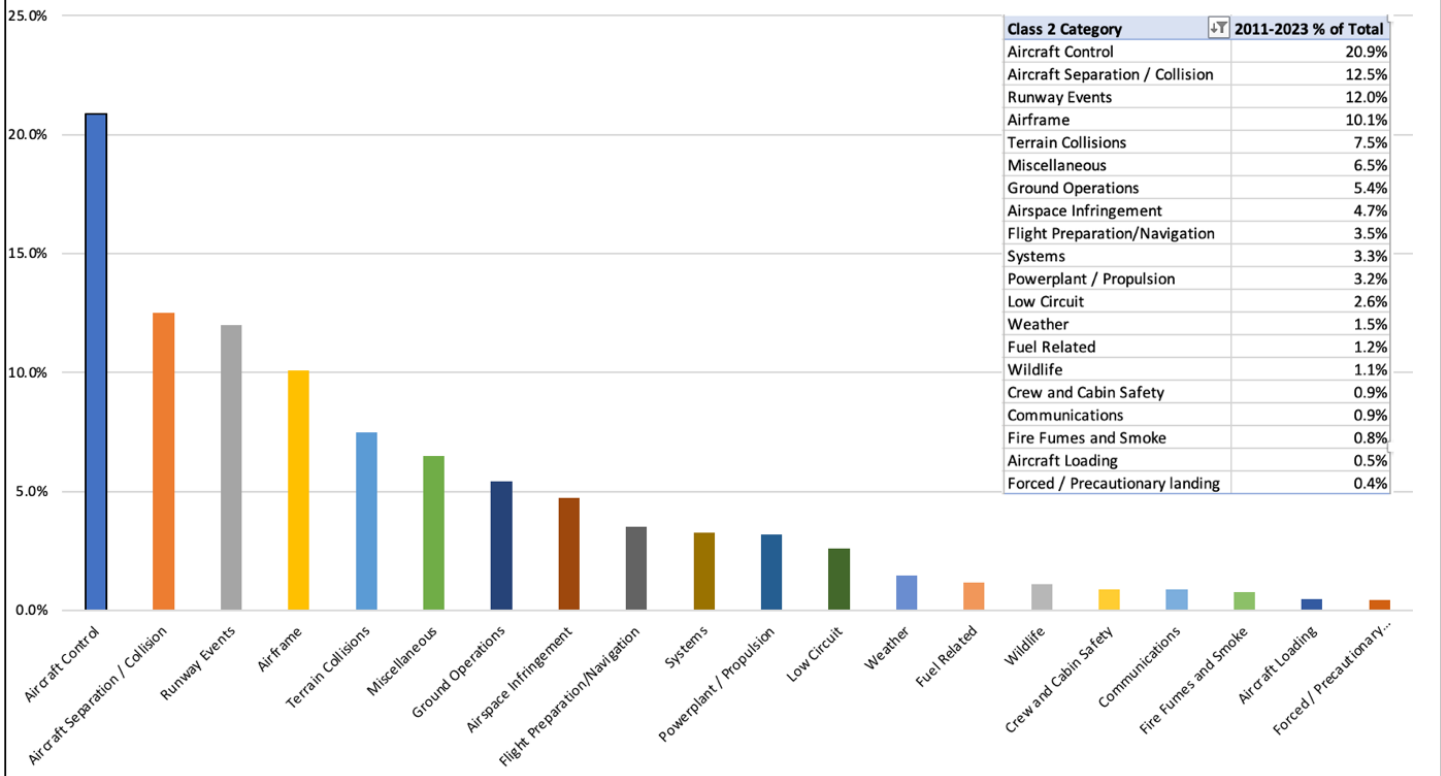
Reviews: We support and implement audits and independent safety reviews, ensuring risk mitigation actions are taken. We must continuously monitor and review our safety performance, adjusting our practices and controls. We encourage all members, clubs and Gliding Australia officials to exercise vigilance, counter complacency, support safety awareness, for our mutual benefit.

Priorities: Gliding Australia priorities for safety improvement, noting Australia's Aviation State Safety Program and SOAR reporting trends, are:
Aircraft / Glider Control, Aircraft / Glider Separation and Collision, Runway Events, Airframe Occurrences, and Terrain Collision / Hard Landing Events.

Doug Flockhart
CEO, Accountable Manager

Steve Pegler
Board Chair
16 October 2023

Class 2 Category % Chart - All Occurrences 2011-2023

Class 2 Category	2011-2023 % of Total
Aircraft Control	20.9%
Aircraft Separation / Collision	12.5%
Runway Events	12.0%
Airframe	10.1%
Terrain Collisions	7.5%
Miscellaneous	6.5%
Ground Operations	5.4%
Airspace Infringement	4.7%
Flight Preparation/Navigation	3.5%
Systems	3.3%
Powerplant / Propulsion	3.2%
Low Circuit	2.6%
Weather	1.5%
Fuel Related	1.2%
Wildlife	1.1%
Crew and Cabin Safety	0.9%
Communications	0.9%
Fire Fumes and Smoke	0.8%
Aircraft Loading	0.5%
Forced / Precautionary landing	0.4%

Aggregated SOAR Data by Category – All Occurrences 2011-2023