



THE GLIDING FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

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“STRUCTURING SUCCESSFUL GLIDING IN AUSTRALIA – A DISCUSSION PAPER”:

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Foreword:

Having a clear understanding of what Australian gliding is and what makes it successful is important for glider pilots and stakeholders alike, as we approach a significant turning point in the administration and regulation of sport and recreational aviation.

Soon, when Australian aviation law introduces Part 149 concerning self-administering aviation organisations, and in turn recognises the GFA; the aviation regulator will rely on the GFA to take a more direct responsibility for the regulations surrounding gliding in Australia¹.

Australian gliding origins are based on determining what is best for gliding in Australia and it has self-administered those best interests for over 70 years.

Because the Part 149 processes will consider and approve the organisational model of entities seeking self-administration entitlement, we, the members need to be very clear in our understanding of what we do, why we do it, and how it is best structured. This Discussion Paper seeks to articulate Australian gliding as it is today. I ask that you carefully consider this Discussions Paper and let us know your thoughts. It's important that we get this right, as it will underpin and provide a framework for the documentation necessary under Part 149, such as our manuals and procedures.

Anita Taylor – President
The Gliding Federation of Australia

¹ **Notice of Proposed Rule Making Recreational Aviation Administration Organisations** Proposed Part 149 of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (CASR), Extract: Objectives:

- Provide a formalised rule set to regulate the relationship between RAAOs and CASA whereby sport and recreational aviation activities will be devolved to be administered by approved organisations to the maximum possible extent.
- Provide for recognition under Part 149 of existing and future sport and recreational aviation self administering bodies.
- To formally empower RAAO procedures manuals (however named) as the approved standards for the conduct of recreational aviation activities.

Preamble:

GFA's Board Meeting at Benalla in November 2013 resolved that the VP bring forward a discussion paper relevant to how GFA could enhance success within its existing structure.

Success connotes different things to different people because everyone view things from their own particular perspective.

Importantly, defining and measuring success is a vital part of GFA's governance role and rests at the heart of its principle purpose for being, its mission and its key objectives. To carry this further, as we delve deeper into the complexion of all those things that success may look like, then logically strategy and tactics unfold and guide us to how we apply ourselves to achieve success.

It is a well-proven principle of management planning that sound structuring is an important ingredient of success. If applied correctly, interests become aligned, accountability rests where it should, risk is managed by those best able to mitigate and manage it, resources are arranged effectively and efficiently and unity of purpose provides energy and enthusiasm. Then, functional teams must be shaped so their internal capacity and capabilities exceed that which external demands exert on the organisation. Otherwise failure is assured.

Theoretically, this is all very simple. The tricky part is defining what success looks like, deciding how to measure it and then organising how to deliver it. This is GFA's *"raison d'être"*.

Key performance indicators carefully crafted to identify the success factors important to the future of Australian Gliding are vital to GFA in assuring effective governance of gliding's core business.

This discussion paper is framed to identify our important cornerstones and structural arrangements essential for our continued success.

Four Cornerstones underpinning Australian Gliding:

Australian gliding is what happens when glider pilots take to the air 365 days a year at seventy or more gliding clubs and aerodromes spread across the entire width of Australia. Ultimately, the “success-buck” starts and finishes with each and every glider pilot-in-command independently achieving a successful gliding mission everyday. This is the incontrovertible bottom line to successful gliding in Australian.

In other words, the weak link in the Australian gliding chain is that flight that doesn't succeed.

GLIDING CORNERSTONE 1:

PRIMACY OF PILOT ACCOUNTABILITY: The glider pilot-in-command is primarily accountable for successful flying missions.

The prime focus therefore is how to enhance the prospect that each flying mission is successful.

Australian gliding evolved more than seventy years ago from groups of like-minded individuals wanting to fly gliders. Clubs were formed, systems evolved, regulatory frameworks were agreed and structures formalised. The result is our club-based Australian gliding system of today where every pilot must be a member of a gliding club to fly a glider. Importantly, because tomorrow is inevitably different to yesterday, club structures need flexibility to evolve and adapt whilst ensuring guiding values and success factors are retained.

It is this club-based system that nurtures the development of each glider pilot for independent flight activities and to ensure every flight is successful. Simultaneously, club-based airworthiness specialists (and some private airworthiness maintainers too) ensure the efficacy of the craft each glider pilot flies. Pilots then need to daily assure the craft they fly meets these efficacy standards prior to take-off.

Importantly, Australian glider pilots only earn their entitlement to operate independently from their club's umbrella after learning the skills, earning the ratings that follow and gaining the experience that only the Club-based system can provide.

GLIDING CORNERSTONE 2:

CLUB-BASED GLIDING SYSTEM: Australian Gliding's club-based system underpins success.

Australian Gliding Clubs are therefore the front-line deliverers ensuring pilots are independently competent and aircraft are airworthy. How this is achieved is sophisticated, multi-faceted, mostly performance based and involves proven standard procedures (Manual of Standard Procedures) first written by Bob Muller fifty years ago.

Seventy years of success has forged important processes and retained values that span all Australian gliding sites. During that time resourceful pioneering leaders made important and wise gliding decisions founded on the premise of self-development and administration.

Volunteerism underpins flying operations. If you want to fly on the day, generally, you have to stay on to help out with important operational tasks as need be. Not only does this keep costs to a minimum, but it also engenders ownership, commitment, longevity of membership and a collegial camaraderie linking people together through common interests and a passion for gliding.

Every club has a formalised leadership team and a system of officers responsible for instruction, coaching, airworthiness, launching, safety, oxygen systems, airspace, administration, catering and more. Even though the sport is inevitably individualistic and highly competitive, most often senior and experienced pilots are keen to mentor and take a caring interest guiding the development of newer pilots.

This watchful umbrella of collegial care makes the Australian Gliding club-based system noteworthy and highly regarded within Australian aviation.

Most importantly, the social structure of clubs secures a dedicated core of pilots and airworthiness maintainers that are motivated by pride of airmanship, continuous improvement and betterment. Corporate history and the intellectual property of gliding are thereby safeguarded and secure because it is so diversely shared and held. These comprise the retained values making Australian Gliding the success it is.

GLIDING CORNERSTONE 3:

STRENGTH THROUGH SHARED VALUES: A collegial and egalitarian gliding realm tied together by noble and durable retained values.

Very soon after gliding commenced in Australia, and at about the same time as the inception of Australian aviation regulation, glider pilots recognised the importance of forming an umbrella association to link and tie Australian Gliding together, to provide important shared services and to represent the interests of all Australian glider pilots and their clubs. Accordingly, The Gliding Federation of Australia (GFA) was formed almost seventy years ago.

With the addition of Regional Associations to represent the local interests of glider pilots at State Government level, a governance structure was developed based upon a small core of paid technical and administrative staff located in Melbourne, a network of voluntary officers at Executive leadership level spanning all the functional areas of gliding and regionally elected representatives who, together with the Executive, comprise the GFA Board where policy, governance and important gliding procedures are resolved.

GLIDING CORNERSTONE 4:

GFA - REPRESENTING, SUPPORTING AND SERVING AUSTRALIAN GLIDING:

These four cornerstones represent the foundations upon which Australia's Gliding System resides.

Structure:

Additional to the primacy of pilot accountability for successful gliding is the need to comply with Australian aviation law.

A complex set of rules, systems and processes have been devised by the aviation regulator to "safe-guard" all Australian airspace users and whilst some concessions have been granted to gliding in the past (exemptions), these may soon disappear in favour of something new.

Therefore, a direct link (see Fig 1 below) exists between every glider pilot-in-command and aviation law (via the Regulator). All other gliding entities (CFIs, clubs, regional associations and GFA) are peripheral and ancillary to the contract of compliance that exists between each pilot and aviation law. Structural arrangements linking CASA, GFA, Clubs, Pilots and Regions cannot be allowed to interfere with, usurp or diminish each pilot's obligations and accountability for compliance. This is what self-administration is really all about.

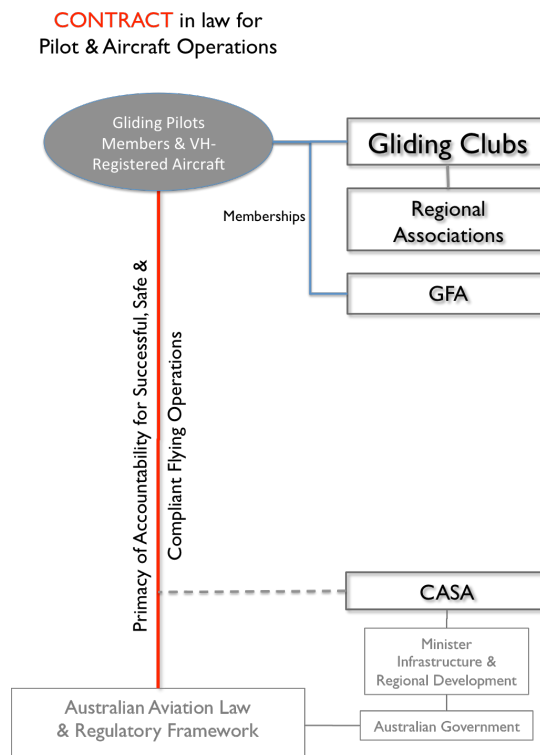


Fig 1: The direct compliance link between pilots and aviation law with all other entities ancillary to that imperative.

Some would prefer this depiction arranged differently with Aviation law and the Federal Government at the top and pilots below. However, it is shown thus because glider pilots (and aircraft maintainers), are at the front-line in contributing a wider range of skills, experience and proficiency in the achievement of successful and safe flying missions over and above the imperatives prescribed by way of Regulation.

Only an experienced glider pilot fully understands the sophisticated quantum linking meteorology, airmass, orography, ground sources, a multitude of energy dynamics and the myriad pilot decisions involved in successfully synthesizing and converting everything into gliding speed and altitude. Finally, at the end of each flying task, glider pilots perform successful power-off landings to the home field or some safe alternative.

This in no way diminishes the significance and contribution regulation adds to successful gliding; rather it adds balance and a fuller appreciation.

Training:

Australian gliding is dependant on its club systems and instructors for glider pilot training.

Training plans, proficiencies and a graduated progression of skills occur at a rate dependant on each pilot's personal choice and as flying experience accumulates under the watchful umbrella of instructors, coaches, mentors and peers. This denotes a powerful distributed system of performance based graduated training; and one not replicated elsewhere in Australian aviation.

Similarly, pilots are trained to be proficient as airworthiness daily inspectors clearing an aircraft for its daily flying. They can progress with further training to Form 2 Inspectors with greater airworthiness responsibility and eventually to undertake minor and major repairs/maintenance in keeping with type certification. Finally, certain qualified airworthiness authorisations are awarded to those capable of satisfactorily modifying/approving Australian gliders within the Type Certification under which they are registered and declared airworthiness.

Pilot licensing and airworthiness ratings are awarded under the delegations CASA provides to Australian Gliding's club-based training system with individual endorsements for the exacting proficiencies available and possible within the Australian Gliding System.

Club CFIs, instructors, instructor's panel, safety managers, airworthiness managers, regional technical officers and GFA technical specialists all team together to provide an integrated, seamless and efficient system dealing with operational matters, airworthiness, new aircraft registration, competitions, marketing and development, insurance, administration and much more.

Because clubs reside at the face of gliding on a daily basis, accountabilities within the entire Australian Gliding System are devolved down to club and pilot level. This is where risk-management and supporting system processes must operate comprehensively, effectively and efficiently.

Risk Management:

In the mid-20th century post-war period of economic expansion, measures such as quality control and supervision quickly gave way to a more value-based quality assured and risk-based management style.

Organisations, teams and individuals took direct ownership and responsibility for successful and safe outcomes under applicable international standards (ISO) for risk-

based management. This is far more advantageous and effective than the old system of quality control where supervisors were responsible for satisfactory outcomes, with ever more layers of supervisors supervising the supervisors and so on. In other words, Quality Assurance provided alignment between individual performance and success whilst Quality Control provided little incentive and often achieved the reverse.

Accordingly, global industries became much more process driven with tasks supported by systemised ways of doing things devolved to individuals involved in delivering outcomes.

Modern spheres of aviation and airlines systems are excellent examples of sophisticated computer-driven, automated, avionic process-driven systems almost autonomous to the pilots-in-command; which, when something goes wrong, further processes come into play to remedy the problem.

Fortunately, Australian Gliding involves a balanced approach incorporating mostly performance-based proficiencies supported by a small number of effective processes and systems. The outcome is a sound risk-managed approach to 21st century compliance and certification.

It follows then that oversight within the Australian Gliding System should extend only to regular assurance, that:

1. All necessary risk-based processes are effectively in place,
2. There is evidence that the processes are being comprehensively utilised and
3. A record of independent audits exists verifying all are satisfactorily in place. If remedial action is necessary where deficiencies or gaps are found to exist, then these too are appropriately recorded with follow-up processes in place.

Beyond this, further oversight is neither necessary nor appropriate.

Stakeholders:

A multitude of stakeholders characterise the realm of Australian Gliding.

They include:

1. Pilots passionate about one of the purest forms of flight in fixed format aircraft,
2. Their families,
3. Gliding club supporters,
4. Councils and all those entities who own/operate/share the aerodromes from which gliders fly,
5. Glider manufacturers,
6. Their Australian agents,
7. Airworthiness inspectors, maintainers, authorised aeronautical engineers, avionics manufacturers/installers and all those who support gliders ranging from the classics to the latest state-of-art,
8. The Aviation Regulator, Federal Minister, Police, the Air Transport Safety Board and all the people who from time to time become involved in addressing the challenges, needs and unfortunate circumstances when occasionally they occur.
9. The international realm of gliding and governing bodies and
10. Gliding leadership. Those committed glider pilots who invariably are also instructors, airworthiness inspectors and hard working club officials working voluntarily on behalf of Australian Gliding in addition to their already abundant home club duties.

Those stakeholders most pertinent to how Australian gliding include:

- ❖ Pilots, their clubs and regional associations,
- ❖ GFA Board (representing gliding governance & leadership),
- ❖ The Executive heads of GFA departmental functions (representing, supporting, servicing),
- ❖ Their departmental operatives,
- ❖ Aviation industry entities (suppliers, maintainers, engineers, aviation specialists) and
- ❖ International & Australian governing and regulatory bodies,

How these entities are linked organisationally will influence structure and success.

Structural Arrangement:

Structural considerations provide insight into how the linkages between key stakeholders (pilots, clubs, GFA, CASA) are arranged and how they individually organise themselves in dealing with each other.

Alignment of interests is most important in designing these linkages and arrangements.

From the viewpoint of Australian Gliding, commonality of interest between pilots, their clubs and GFA must be in precise alignment but structured in such a way that direct pilot obligations for compliance with regulatory requirements is neither diminished nor blurred.

Self-administration by the Australian Gliding System is paramount and is as much sought by the Regulator as it is by Australian Gliding itself.

From the Regulator's viewpoint, its interest depends on the entire Australian Gliding System working effectively, successfully and safely as an integrated unit.

Whilst CASA does not itself want to deal individually with each and every pilot and club in applying what's required to successfully govern sport and recreational aviation in Australia, it does seek to delegate self-administration control and responsibility to sport entities such as GFA to achieve effective, successful and safe aviation. How this is arranged is most important and will make the difference.

If CASA gave this accountability simply and directly to GFA to administer, it would be a grave mistake.

Not only would it detract substantially from the true meaning of devolved self-administration and risk-based management in the 21st Century, it would also take GFA outside of its aligned commitment to the pilots and clubs it represents, supports and services. GFA's role under that scenario would fairly be likened to being little more than the Sheriff's Deputy and at odds with its prime purpose.

The only foreseeably successful arrangement is to have GFA acting as the Self-Administration Facilitator under its "representative" function to work with Pilots and Clubs to implement systems, processes, training, competencies, licensing, ratings, under an auditable Quality Assured self-administrative system as defined with an Australian Gliding System Manual of Standard Procedures. That is, the obligation for compliance still rests clearly with each and every pilot and club with GFA providing the governance its representative facilitation requires.

GFA's role as Facilitator would then be to gather and hold records of audit reports on behalf of pilots and clubs demonstrating overall compliance to the satisfaction of CASA and the intent of its self-administration Delegations.

The legitimacy underpinning this approach is GFA's undisputable success over the past seventy years when only on a few rare occasions has it resorted to stronger action to remedy errant conduct at any level within the Australian Gliding System.

The upshot of this analysis clearly requires CASA and Australian Aviation representative bodies such as GFA to form alliance type arrangements for Self-Administration under approved organisational models in a similar way to how the Australian Gliding System has worked over the past seventy years.

In depicting this in a traditional organisational way, the same departmental GFA structure as presently exists is proposed to continue with carefully constructed linkages to other key stakeholders in an aligned manner.

The only amendments foreseen within the present GFA structure is to reinforce the functions of training, education, audit and human relations within the administrative area of GFA formerly identified as the Secretariat and now proposed to be known as Corporate Services. This change will provide proper expression of accountabilities and performance measurement in these particularly important areas.

Figure 2 attached overleaf depicts the proposed organisational arrangement of an approach structured to create a preferred Australian Gliding System Organisational Model.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive:

1. Authorises the circulation of this Discussion Paper for comment,
2. Review feedback and adjust as appropriate the fundamentals underpinning how Australian Gliding structures itself in relation to its important stakeholders.
3. Adopts the outcome of this structural analysis as the basis upon which Australian Gliding strategically addresses its internal and external relationships and future self-determination and recommends accordingly to the GFA Board for endorsement.



John A Summers
Vice-President

Attachments:

- Fig 2: Proposed Draft Organisational Model of the Australian Gliding System,

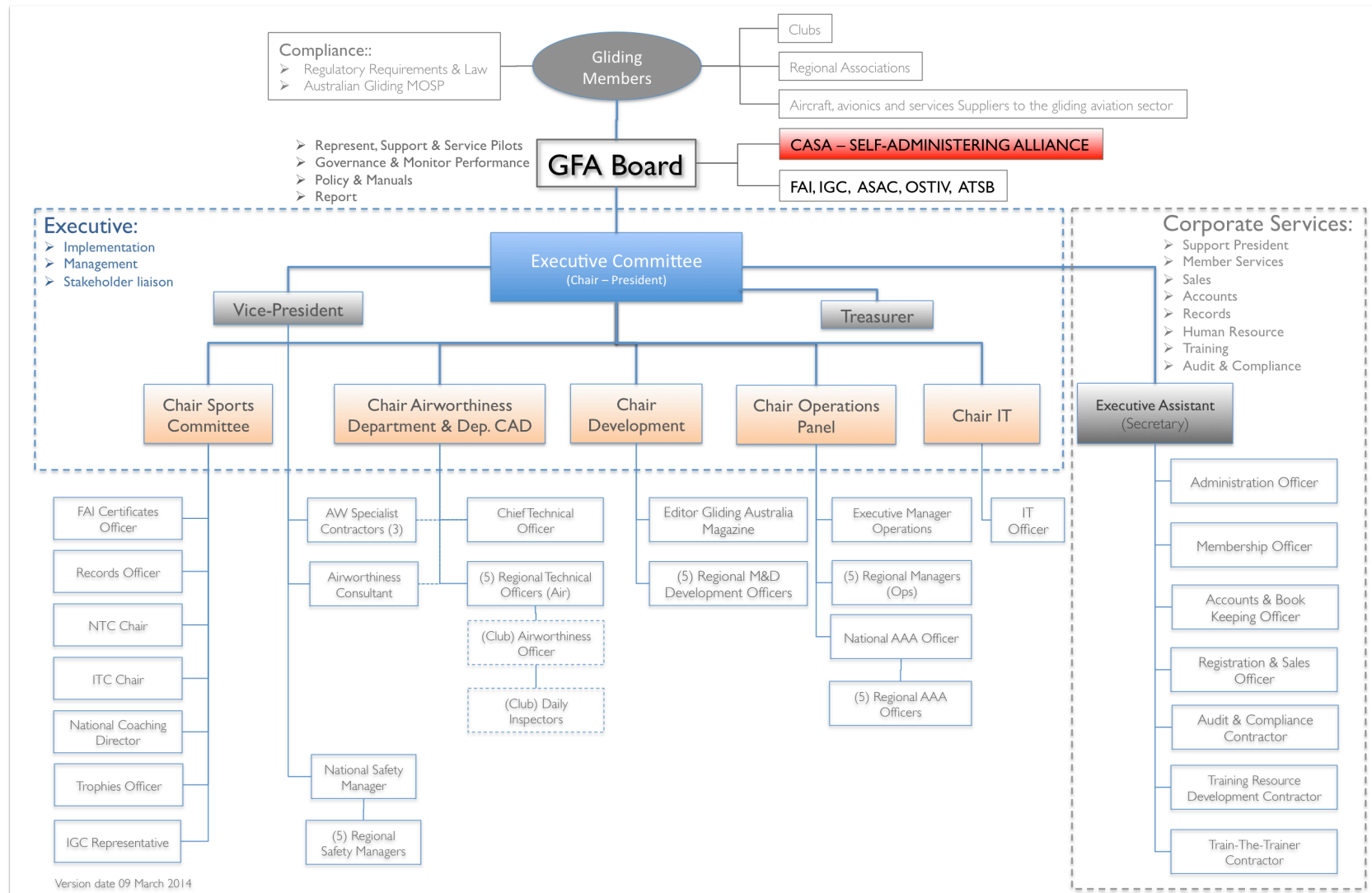


Fig 2: Proposed structural arrangement for the Australian Gliding System.