

GLIDING NEW ZEALAND NEWS

This column is intended to give readers an ongoing insight into the activities of the GNZ Executive and its Committees. Rather than a detailed report on matters currently under consideration, here are some recent items of significance.

NEW MEMBERS Excluding visiting foreign pilots, 86 new members have joined our ranks in the 6 months since the AGM last June. 11 of these are Juniors. Unfortunately, 117 members resigned in the same period! As at mid-January we had 759 flying members.

2012 LAUNCH STATS The numbers are now in – once again, it's a mixture of good and bad, depending on your viewpoint. Overall there were 17,414 total launches; up nearly 6% on 2011, but 2011 was a bad year due mainly to weather. Youth flights were up 3%, and trial flights were down 11%.

NEW FACES Martyn Cook (Wellington) became National Airworthiness Officer in August 2012, and is already making his mark with a fresh look at how we are doing things. Martyn has had a couple of very useful meetings with the CAA. Then in January, Hadleigh Bognuda (Auckland) became our webmaster. Hadleigh has some great ideas for improving services to GNZ members and to enable more efficient and prominent marketing of our sport through technology. We await these developments with great interest.

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM After a few fixes and some improvements, this had bedded down very well, with all clubs but one now actively using the system. It has greatly streamlined the administration of the Central database, and I'm sure that clubs are also finding it extremely useful – Laurie Kirkham reports that she is getting less and less membership enquiries and magazine returns have virtually dried up.

GNZ UMBRELLA TRUST Nearly all of the trustees of the various GNZ trust funds have recognised the clear advantages of transferring their funds to the care of the GNZ Umbrella Trust and the process is well under way. I will report fully on this at the AGM in June.

NZ BID TO RUN A WORLD GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIP There was considerable debate during the multi-class Nationals at Omarama regarding the merits of NZ bidding for another WGC, in 2016, 2018 or 2020. In reality, we were far too late to mount a bid for 2016 and we have since learned that the 2016 flapped classes will be held in Australia, which is really the next best thing for us. Since the WGC for the unflapped classes has just been held in Argentina, any bid by NZ for a further Southern Hemisphere WGC in 2018 seems unlikely to succeed. Realistically, our focus will have to shift to 2020 or beyond.

MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION In February, the Executive met with the Director of Civil Aviation and his senior management team. This meeting was at our request, as a number of issues of concern to us for some time were not progressing. On our shopping list was:

- Reduce the medical requirement for commercial gliding to Class 2.
- Allow RPL holders to tow gliders.
- A return to full GNZ control of glider aerobatics, as we used to enjoy years ago.
- On-condition maintenance of towplane engines.

We also talked about the flimsy justification for proposing to control the Mount Cook airspace above FL 175, and learned that there were 67 submissions against and only one for! It was a good meeting, with the CAA agreeing to take a fresh look at the various matters raised. We now await the CAA decisions with great interest.

NEW ADVISORY CIRCULARS Three new ACs have been added to the GNZ web site:

- AC 3-16 Notes on Use of Tech 22. This one is for the GNZ engineers.
- AC 2-06 Aerobatic Flight in Gliders. This one is to try and unravel the complexities of the current CAA rules around aerobatics, which also applies to gliders unfortunately.
- AC 2-13 Mountain & Ridge Soaring Safety Principles. This one goes hand-in-hand with a new OPS 11 BFR form, and recognises that accidents in mountain and ridge soaring tend to have the greatest consequences in terms of pilot injury and wrecked gliders.

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM This is a heads-up that our annual symposium and AGM will be held in Wellington 8-9 June.

I always welcome your feedback – contact me if you want to discuss anything here, or indeed anything in previous editions of this column – from the home page, navigate > About > Executive News.

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