

Gliding New Executive News

By Karen Morgan, President

Many GNZ members were among mourners who joined the families at memorial services for David Speight and Bill Walker, following their untimely deaths in Namibia in December. There are obituaries elsewhere in this issue, so suffice it to say that both Omarama and more generally gliding in New Zealand is the poorer for these losses.

George Rogers has retired as GNZ's representative on the NZ Aviation Federation, serving as committee member, vice president and most recently president. We are pleased that Mike Tucker of Wellington has stepped up to take George's place. Thanks George, for your solid contribution over many years, in this organisation and in lots of other areas, including the GNZ executive and operations.

We have received notice that the Gliding Division of the Hauraki Aero Club has ceased operations for now. Similarly the Southland-Otago club has completed its wind up. This club has had several faces, and most recently was operating as Youth Glide Omarama, however these operations will now take place under the wing of Glide Omarama. The surplus funds from selling the assets have been given to the GNZ Umbrella Trust with youth flying in Southland and Otago as key goals.

Our airworthiness guru, Martyn Cook, has introduced a small hurdle for those renewing their engineering ratings, whereby applicants complete a self directed test regarding acceptable technical data. Feedback is that some engineers will not renew when their ratings expire, but those who have completed the process are advising that it was been a worthwhile exercise for them.

Our voluntary Sailplane Racing Committee has been revamping the competition rules with a deeper rethink on the place of competitions in encouraging newer pilots to head cross country. Flying cross country is seen as a key element in the puzzle of what keeps some pilots in the sport longer than others – and as we are keen to retain membership in gliding, all areas are being investigated. The planned introduction of a coaching system within many clubs also has member retention as a goal.

The investment in junior gliding is bearing fruit in many places, and we were pleased to support a team of four younger pilots in Australia at the Junior Preworlds competition in December. Results were a little mixed but it is all part of building a good basis for the World competition in December 2015. There is also a flapped World competition in Australia in early 2017, and applications for pilots to form a team for this are open at present. Volunteers will also be sought to support the pilots.

On the other hand, our operations team have been experiencing problems in completing their programme of audits of the clubs. Please remember that this is a joint responsibility – your club is as responsible as GNZ is to be well prepared for your audit, and to get these completed at no less than three yearly intervals. Due to limited volunteer time and lack of positive effort by some clubs, we are facing having to create a paid audit position to get the backlog of audits caught up. This expenditure is unbudgeted, and it may be necessary to set a fee per club, possibly for the first visit and certainly if a second visit is required to complete the work due to lack of preparation.

This leads us to budgetary matters. GNZ has funded its operations by way of an affiliation fee paid per flying member for many years. However, many of our expenses are not really incurred on a per member basis. Some costs relate to the number of clubs (audits is an example of this) or relate to aircraft (the more aircraft or engineers we have, the more work is covered by our airworthiness section) or our obligations to CAA, payable regardless of the number of members or even clubs. Our reliance on affiliation fees has also led to a dependence on our clubs to keep membership numbers steady, to give us the revenue we need to meet our legal obligations, but we all know that membership has fallen steadily over the years. The easy solution is just to increase the affiliation fee every few years, but we will be exploring a new funding model over the next year to see if there is a cleverer solution. Any changes will be well signalled – and please write to us or come to the AGM weekend to share your views.

Lastly, there is a new bit on the website that you might want to look at. Under the NEWS header, there is a Doc Change Alert which contains a running log of changes to GNZ's important documents (MOAP, ACs, technical forms etc). GNZ members can register to receive an email alert whenever something is added to the log by clicking the link near the top of the page. We hope that this helps you.