What the Ops Team is Talking About
Memo to Club CFI's and other interested parties - 15 May 2018

Here is a summary of the key items discussed at the Ops Team on-line meeting on 15 May 2018. David Moody (Northern), David Hirst (Central), Graham Erikson (South) and Martyn Cook (NOO).

1. Shrinking Clubs: a number of gliding clubs are struggling to sustain regular operations. The new trial Training Program has been designed to provide support for new pilots and Instructors, but there could be other things that the Ops Team could do. An area of concern.

2. Instructor Training: discussion around the best ways to provide this, and where the gaps are. Feedback from several Clubs indicate they need this support. Proposed to hold at least one "instructor conference" in each region where prior feedback from CFIs and senior instructors will be used to address areas of concern or need, and to plan further conferences and/or training courses accordingly. Proposed that these conferences will be mostly club-driven but based around critical basic themes e.g. the basics of sound instruction, how to ensure that critical modules affecting flight safety are taught fully and critiqued adequately, etc.. This type of conference would not necessarily involve flying exercises unless specifically requested. David Hirst is proposing a central region conference in Sept-Oct 2018. DM intends an instructor event in northern region also in Sept-Oct 2018. Grahan Erikson intends an instructor training course in upper South Island later in the year.

3. Recent Additions to Moodle: The draft training program is at gliding.moodle.co.nz. The soaring goal for "Soaring Pilot" has been reduced from 3 hours to 90 minutes after user feedback. Study Guide for "Aviation Law" has been added. The ability to easily correct and update the program was noted. Work is continuing on updating the QGP Study Materials to reflect the current gliding environment.

4. Incident Review: One launch with airbrakes unlocked, one radio failure in controlled airspace, possibly due to incorrectly-set squelch. A number of verbal reports of incidents, including a near-miss when a towplane towed near a thermal that a glider then left. Some OPS-10 forms are slow in coming. The airbrake report has resulted in a change to the pre-launch check sequence in the trial program, with 'canopy' now appearing last. Logic is that with a launch delay the canopy might be left open in hot weather for cooling, or in cold weather to prevent fogging, and all the checks currently on the list after 'canopy' should be done prior. The Australians group 'brakes' and 'flaps' together, and have 'canopy' last. Why shouldn't we? Every incident has a training implication.

5. Incident Feedback: Vector magazine includes incident reports as a way of feeding back such events to the readership. This is interesting and valuable learning. Looking for ways to circulate what is learned, and identify changes to procedures which could prevent repeats. Seen as important that if pilots are to submit OPS10 reports they should also receive feedback on what action was taken.

5. Expressions of Concern: An example was tabled of a club member who expressing concern about something that had happened at his Club. We identified a need to collect "expressions of concern" and consider taking action to prevent them becoming "incidents" later. These expressions would not need to be as formal as an OPS-10, and could even be made by phone or email to a ROO. The submitter's identity would be kept confidential, and the Ops Team would be able to review and respond if we were told about things that people notice - that could affect safety. David Hirst to set up a trial "ticket" system whereby each expression would be allocated an identifying number and logged in the Ops Team database for subsequent review.

6. Instructors Manual: There's a view that this document needs significant work to be useful as a resource for new instructors. It needs to focus on how to demonstrate, teach and critique the exercises in the TP, and how to check for correct understanding. It also needs to include (perhaps as appendices) certain areas of advanced technical knowledge that would be beyond the needs of student pilots, but vital for instructors to understand. For example, Graham Erikson is working on analysing and identifying the risk areas in winch launching.

7. Using Simulation for Advanced Training: There is work being done on improving the way stalls and spins are taught. One idea is to use 3D VR goggles in a flight simulator to try and provoke the effect of "involuntary locking of the control column" as described in Jonathan Pote's latest update to his HF and Av Med paper (now on Gliding NZ web site under Training Syllabus - page 16). This involuntary locking could be a reason why even experienced pilots can succumb to the stall-spin syndrome when distracted and under stress, and 3D VR might be a useful training tool to expose pilots to their own susceptibility. David Moody to follow up.