

Meeting opened: 5:10PM, Friday 17th April 2009 at Rydges Hotel, North Melbourne

Board Members present: Javier Alvarez (JA), Stephen Clark (SC), Paul Coffey (PC), Don Cramer (DC), Mark Mitsos (MM), Brian Webb (BW), Geoff White (GW). Apologies: Bill Moyes, Also present: General Manager, Chris Fogg (CF)

1. ATTENDANCE OF LEGAL COUNSEL:

The HGFA Legal Counsel attended the meeting to address Board members and to confirm and clarify advice previously provided regarding specific items and areas of concern as raised by Board members prior to the meeting.

After a lengthy discussion followed by a question and answer session, it was confirmed that the Board has acted properly, ethically, with propriety and in accordance with the Board's fiduciary responsibilities in dealing with all member issues brought forward during the life of this Board.

Meeting adjourned: 6:55PM

Meeting re-commenced: 09:00AM, Saturday 18th April 2009

Board Members present: Javier Alvarez (JA), Stephen Clark (SC), Paul Coffey (PC), Don Cramer (BC), Mark Mitsos (MM), Brian Webb (BW), Geoff White (GW). Apologies: Bill Moyes, Also present: General Manager, Chris Fogg (CF)

2. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBER:

Content redacted as the matter is to be referred to tribunal.

Motion 09-01:

<p>DISCIPLINE OF MEMBER: <i>content redacted as the matter is to be referred to tribunal.</i> CARRIED (unanimous).</p>
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3. SARSIG PROJECT:

Both PC and SC spoke of the difficulties and frustrations of completing and implementing the SARSIG project. Minimal input has come from most of the SARSIG representatives so it looks like the best way forward may be to just give them the documentation we require for affiliation and accountability and that required for them to apply for funding.

It was agreed that PC, SC and CF would liaise to finalise the documentation we require and forward it to the SARSIG representatives for completion ASAP.

It was also agreed that SARSIG affiliation would need to be renewed annually.

Action 09-01:

<p>SARSIG PROJECT: <i>PC, SC and the GM, CF will liaise to finalise the documentation we require and forward it to the SARSIG representatives for completion ASAP.</i></p>

4. CASA ISSUES:

(a) Coroner's Inquest:

As a result of findings from the Coroner's inquest following the Mareeba accident, CASA has moved to implement the recommendations regarding only allowing one RAAO to administer trikes in Australia. Both HGFA and RA-Aus were invited to submit their case to be recognized as the single overseeing organization.

The GM, CF and MM attended a meeting with RA-Aus and we now have a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations that will allow each to retain their members and separate identities but will allow all trikes to be operationally the same. The MOU is to allow be a single register of trikes, a single standard syllabus of training and a single standard maintenance requirement for all microlight aircraft.

(b) Member Allegations:

A letter containing a series of allegations about the Board, the GM and specific Board members regarding the operation of the Association was submitted to CASA. A meeting was held between Greg Vaughn of CASA and the GM, CF and President, JA.

It was quickly demonstrated to CASA's complete satisfaction that the letter submitted was nothing but a catalogue of untruths, misconceptions and misinformation. CASA has since contacted the author of the letter to notify their findings.

Motion 09-02:

CASA ISSUES: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION:

Moved: PC; seconded: MM; that we make application through FOI to find out the name of the author of the letter. CARRIED (unanimous).

5. CONSTITUTION:

The Constitution we have been operating under is not the Constitution which is registered with the Department of Fair Trading. Because the 2002 update was not registered at the time, we are still operating under the 1996 document. This needs updating ASAP.

Action 09-02:

CONSTITUTION:

The GM will remove the incorrect version of the Constitution from the website and the correct version will be posted. All Board members will become familiar with this earlier version. The Constitution will be updated ASAP.

6. REPLACEMENT BOARD MEMBER:

It was agreed that no replacement Board member would be appointed at this time.

7. MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT:

Just as all instructors are required to sign an agreement to abide by the Instructors' Code of Conduct, it was agreed, in principle, that the HGFA should adopt a Members' Code of Conduct which will become a requirement for membership.

Action 09-03:

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT:

Secretary, PC, will research a suitable Code of Conduct document and submit it to the Board for approval and possible adoption.

8. PUBLISHING BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

During last evening's meeting, our legal counsel strongly recommended that Board Meeting minutes not be published to the membership.

However, Board agreed that, as minutes have historically been published, this Board will continue the practice of publishing minutes after they have been ratified at the following Board meeting. If, as mentioned by legal counsel, the minutes contain sensitive content, the Board has the option of redacting that content.

9. MICROLIGHT MAINTENANCE OFFICER:

Kevin McNally has been appointed as Microlight Technical Officer. He provides this service at no charge to the Association. It is planned that he will soon conduct a tour of all microlight training facilities to inspect their training aircraft. Costs involved for this will be air fares and accommodation.

10. ADDITIONAL STAFF:

The GM, CF, is at the point of conducting interviews for another part-timer in the office to lift some of the administration load from the Office Manager and the GM.

11. PERCEIVED PROBLEMS WITH WAIVER:

Some members, notably one in Victoria and two in the ACT, have expressed concerns about the efficacy of the HGFA Waiver and the requirement to sign it as a condition of membership. The HGFA will not provide membership without a completed and signed Waiver. It is a condition of insurance provided to the HGFA which is jeopardized without this specific Waiver. The membership benefit from this insurance therefore the waiver was made a condition of membership by, the Board of 2006. Legal counsel has again affirmed the action of implementing the waiver as being beneficial to membership and within the constitutional authority of the Board.

12. EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE SYSTEM:

Vice-President, GW, notified the Board that he is aware of a considerable number of pilots who operate near his training facility flying while not licenced and flying unregistered microlights. He has raised the issue with both his local airport manager and CASA and no action has been taken by either. GW suggested that the HGFA needs to consider adopting some effective discipline system as we, as an RAAO, will become responsible under Parts 103 and 149. The GM, CF, will gather information from GW and raise the issue direct with the senior CASA officer in charge of recreational flying.

13. RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS:

We are in need of volunteers to assist with the completion of a number of projects.

As a first step, it was agreed that we place a giant advertisement in Soaring magazine detailing some of the projects and asking for members with the skills and experience needed to step forward as volunteers.

Board members now need to give consideration to the types of awards and rewards the HGFA can offer these volunteers. It was generally agreed that free membership for one year would be a worthwhile reward.

BW will be submitting an application for an award to be granted to a member who has done enormous work in organizing competitions.

14. MEMBER RETENTION:

It was asked if the global economic crisis has had any noticeable effect on the level of membership retention to date and whether a review of fees in light of the crisis would be justified or possible under the budget. The GM, CF, notified that membership is down slightly from this time last year which could be a direct result from a number of reasons:

- The impact of the economic crisis on current membership;
- Impact of the economic crisis on potential new membership postponing their intention to engage the expense of training and equipment purchase for a new recreation;
- Drop off rate of our more elderly membership;
- Down turn in activity by instructors particularly in HG who are now turning more toward

motorized aviation.

15. VISITING PILOT MEMBERSHIP FEE:

After much discussion about the breakdown of the \$100 cost for a VPM, the reasons for setting the fee at that level and the value for money being offered to visiting pilots, it was explained that the VPM was calculated at \$100 as being approximately one-fourth of the full annual membership fee, which should then be for a period of 3 months. To add value for the visiting pilot, it had been decided to allow the VPM to remain valid for 4 months. To add further value, our insurance offers far higher levels of cover than that of other countries.

A suggestion was put forward to reduce the VPM to \$40 or \$50 and that it only remain valid for one month. The Treasurer, MM, pointed out that this would impact on our revenue to the tune \$20,000 and that he would only favour the reduction if that revenue could be recouped elsewhere — the only realistic option being to further increase fees for our own members. It was decided to leave the VPM at \$100 but to give consideration for setting a “special case” VPM for New Zealand pilots.

16. DOCUMENTATION UPDATES:

The Constitution, Operations Manual, Management Procedures Manual, Strategic Plan and other documents need urgent attention to bring them up-to-date within a reasonable time frame. JA and MM agreed to take on the task with a view to completion within 3 months.

It is noted that these documents will remain on freeze until they are finalized and then a decision will be made regarding distribution over the web. Until that time they remain Works in Progress and will not be distributed.

17. AFFILIATION BREAKDOWN:

President JA noted that when questions came from the membership about the breakdown of the Affiliation Fees of approximately \$112,000 as shown in the Financial Statement, all Board members were in a position to quickly and accurately answer the questions.

It was embarrassing when this did not happen and particularly embarrassing when the same sort of questions were posed by Board members, despite the fact that all Board members had been given a complete breakdown line-by-line of everything in the financials and were even provided with an Excel spreadsheet detailing all income and expenditure. This made the Board look foolish as a simple answer could have (and should have) been provided quickly.

The final breakdown sought was as follows:

The total Affiliation expense recorded for last year was \$111,968 which was broken down to: Total Regional Fees paid to States: \$81,786; Subscriptions to FAI/ASAC \$21,500; CAS: \$900; CIVL Sanction Fees (Competition registrations): \$3,044. The remaining \$4,738 was attributed to the travel costs of the mandated State Association Meeting in March 2007.

18. CLOSE HGFA WEBSITE FORUMS:

Motion 09-03:

CLOSE HGFA WEBSITE FORUMS:

Moved: JA; seconded: PC; that we close down the HGFA website forums for the time being. CARRIED (6 For, 1 Against).

Meeting adjourned: 7:30PM

Meeting re-commenced: 9:00AM, Sunday 19th April 2009

Board Members present: Javier Alvarez (JA), Stephen Clark (SC), Paul Coffey (PC), Don Cramer (BC), Mark Mitsos (MM), Brian Webb (BW), Geoff White (GW). Apologies: Bill Moyes, Also present: General Manager, Chris Fogg (CF)

19. TRIKE MAINTAINERS' COURSES:

The two Trike Maintainer's Courses held in Maitland were a great success. These courses were based on the FAA/LSA standard. The FAA standard for LSA was adopted by CASA but unlike the FAA, CASA has implemented LSA in Australia without a maintenance training standard. The maintenance courses run by the HGFA were an attempt to bring in the FAA maintenance training standard on CASA's behalf.

Action 09-04:

TRIKE MAINTAINERS' COURSES:

The GM, CF, will contact CASA again to apply for similar funding to that provided to RA-Aus to assist in conducting courses in Vic, Qld and WA.

20. HG WORLDS TEAM:

We, as an organisation, do little to support our World Championship teams and we could do more than just provide their entry fee. So they can lobby for further needed funding, it was agreed to suggest to them that they form their own SARSIG for funding in their own right.

21. BID FOR 2013 HG WORLDS TO BE HELD HERE:

It was agreed that we should make a bid and do everything in our power to have the 2013 Worlds held here to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the first hang glider flight in 1963. We should also work to promote the sport by having club and individual events in celebration of 50 years of Hang Gliding. It was recommended that we should fully support someone like Vicki Moyes as organizer of our bid for the 2013 Worlds.

Maybe we could organize the Paraglider Worlds or a qualifier for the PWC to also coincide.

Motion 09-04:

2013 WORLDS BID:

Moved: MM; seconded: JA; that we run a competition right now for the design of a Badge and/or Slogan and/or Symbol and/or Logo to be the focus of and support for our bid

We need something like Don's suggestion: "Hang Gliding: 50 years old — proving that old pricks can still get it up."

CARRIED (unanimous).

22. WORKSHOPS and ONLINE MEMBERSHIP:

The new online membership system will allow members to accrue points for attendance at safety-oriented events and workshops. These points could be used towards a further endorsement or an instructor qualification. Perhaps, points gathered could go towards some small scaling of membership fees, or a badge, or just kudos.

23. INSTRUCTOR COMPLIANCE:

For too long now, some Instructors within the HGFA have been non-compliant in one way or another with the terms and conditions of their facility and/or instructor ratings. Currently, as many as 40% of instructors are non-compliant. Many have not paid their membership fees or instructor insurance while continuing to train students. The Board has decided to draw a line in

the sand and remove instructor ratings immediately if any instructor fails to comply with all conditions for holding an instructor qualification.

The new online membership system has the facility to automatically generate notices to instructors as soon they are past-due for membership or insurance premiums and to flag that information direct to the GM for action.

Motion 09-05:

INSTRUCTOR COMPLIANCE:

Moved: JA; seconded: PC; that any expired and/or non-compliant instructors be advised that their instructor ratings and qualifications are no longer valid, they are no longer to train students and their current students will not be recognized until the non-compliance is corrected and the GM grants reinstatement. CARRIED (unanimous).

24. DONATION OF TIF FORMS:

The Board agreed to donate 20 TIF forms to GW. Geoff has donated the proceeds for 20 TIFs which he will conduct at no charge to raise funds for the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund bushfire appeal. This will raise more than \$3,000 for the appeal.

25. CANUNGRA LOAN NOT PAID:

Despite numerous requests, the Canungra Hang Gliding Club has been in default of loan payments on their 1998 loan from the HGFA. The original loan was \$20,000 of which the final \$3,664 (without interest calculations) is still outstanding and has been outstanding since 2002.

Motion 09-06:

CANUNGRA LOAN NOT PAID:

Moved: JA; seconded: PC; that CHGC be contacted to pay the outstanding amount of \$3,664 within 14 days of notice or be disaffiliated from the HGFA. If payment is not made within that time the Local Councils for all of their flying sites will be contacted to notify them that the CHGC is no longer affiliated and has no site insurance on any of their sites. CARRIED (unanimous).

Action 09-05:

CANUNGRA LOAN NOT PAID:

The GM will take action to implement Motion 09-06.

26. AUDITOR:

A replacement Auditor has been sought but we have not yet been able to identify one. Those contacted to take on the task have declined. In the meantime, the current Auditor has contacted the GM to be allowed to take on the task again to make up for the errors in the last Auditor's Report. The Auditor has undertaken to address the members at the AGM to explain what happened last time. The Board agreed to allow the current Auditor to stay and allow him the chance to vindicate himself before the members at the AGM.

27. AGM DATE:

The next AGM will be held on Saturday 26th September 2009 commencing at 10:00AM as advised at the previous AGM.

28. MEMBERS CONTACTING LEGAL COUNSEL DIRECT:

All Board members were notified that the only ones authorized to contact our legal counsel direct are the GM and the President. Board members are not to disclose the name of our counsel or the law firm. Any direct contact on HGFA matters incurs a charge to the HGFA regardless of who makes the contact.

29. TRIBUNAL ISSUES:

Content redacted as the matter has been referred to tribunal.

Motion 09-07:

TRIBUNAL ISSUES:

content redacted as the matter has been referred to tribunal.

CARRIED (4 For / 3 Against).

30. UNIFORM TRIBUNAL PROCEDURES:

There was much discussion about the way forward for future Disciplinary Tribunals but the case was put that now would not be the time to make changes in the traditional system with two instructors currently facing charges.

It was agreed that a “pool” of volunteers be called for and trained in Tribunal processes before being randomly empanelled to serve on future Tribunals. That way the members of a Tribunal would be better able to fulfill their duties and the whole process would mean less waiting time for the person facing tribunal. It was also suggested that the entire Board act as a sort of “Pre-Tribunal panel” — if required by the GM.

31. OTHER INSTRUCTOR LEVELS:

The Board agreed to investigate other levels of Instructor qualification particularly at the beginner end to allow members to get a taste of training and build their experience level. SSOs could perhaps progress to something like an Assistant Instructor. The Board also agreed that attending Instructor Conferences would remain a mandatory requirement for Instructor renewal.

32. OPTIONS FOR SOARING MAGAZINE:

Board member, BW, has done a lot of work liaising with the GFA and preparing a comprehensive paper of options for the future of the Soaring Magazine. Like us, the GFA are also keen to conduct a review of the magazine with the view to finding out how members view the magazine and what they want from the magazine, Combined with this, we will both be exploring options to reduce costs and deliver a better outcome for our respective members. Member feedback will be sought on the options presented.

BW will distribute the draft of his review to Board members for feedback before publication in the next issue of Soaring. Feedback time is only 10 days to meet publication timelines.

Member feedback on the review will be canvassed via an online survey. BW has already prepared a draft of the survey and Board members are invited to provide input about other survey questions to be put to our members. This can be done via email but BW is keen to have the online survey completed before the Soaring article is published.

33. SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESERVES:

In order for Board members to respond accurately and completely to questions from the membership, SC asked for information about the calculation of sufficient financial reserves to be held by any organization. The Treasurer will prepare and distribute a paper to Board members outlining our current financial position, why our current reserves are not sufficient and how the calculation of sufficient reserves is made for an organization of our size.

Briefly, however, to be in a relatively secure position, reserves should at least match one year’s expenditure which is just over \$750,000 — we are well short of this mark. The GFA has similar expenditure to us but holds \$1.5 million in reserves.

If we were to have a major accident today, the Insurance company would call up our entire annual premiums and our financials would be halved, we would be facing increased premiums next year at a time when most councils throughout Australia as insisting that our 3rd Party insurance be increased from \$10 million to \$20 million which will also add to our premiums.

Action 09-06:

SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESERVES:

The Treasurer will prepare and distribute a paper to Board members outlining our current financial position, why our current reserves are not sufficient and how the calculation of sufficient reserves is made for an organization of our size.

34. EMAIL NEWSLETTER IDEA:

MM presented an idea for the use of an email Newsletter-type publication for the quick distribution of information to the membership without having to wait for Soaring magazine. The idea is that the Board and/or GM could more quickly respond to member concerns, to provide information (and correct misinformation) when needed.

The setup cost was initially \$2,000 but has since been reduced to \$1,336.50 plus \$15 plus 3 cents per email. The program contains an opt-out option for any members who do not wish to continue receiving the newsletter.

The idea of responding more quickly to members concerns has definite merit but the Board made no decision at this time and would like to investigate options of creating our own newsletter in-house at less cost now that we have a computer system capable of this function.

35. AVAILABILITY OF ONLINE MEMBERSHIPS:

The GM, CF, reported that the online membership facility with online payments is very close to being available for member use. Both the Westpac and the PayPal modules are close to completion.

Meeting closed: 5:10PM