

Adelaide University Gliding Club

President's Report for AGM – April 2017

The past year

In the last year the club enjoyed consistent and safe training operations from Stonefield. Two flying camps away were held, one at Wilpena Pound in the Flinders Ranges and one at Khancoban at the base of the Snowy Mountains. Both camps were safe and enjoyable, with the Flinders camp in particular well attended with members old and new enjoying the great flying conditions there.

In October the club's airfield was really put on the map when a flight of 18,400ft in mountain wave was recorded by a club member from a winch launch, the flight being sufficient to achieve an FAI diamond height gain. This and other extreme flights of long duration and distance recorded during the soaring season highlight how wonderful a location the club has at Stonefield and how it can support a pilot's development to a high level in the sport.

In January the clubs at Stonefield received a windfall in the form of an exceptionally generous donation of a large hangar, accommodation units, briefing room and new winch from the former operator of Fly Down Under. This solves the club's hangarage problem for the long term and gives us a more solid base to work from in terms of club development.

Airworthiness

During the year the club's motor-glider was returned to service after a very long period of work by members in restoring it to airworthiness. The club also completed work on the 2nd Ka8b single seater and introduced it to service. Work continues on re-fabricing our first K13 two-seater. An allowable cockpit weight increase was granted on the second K13 which allows more people to fly.

I would like to encourage members to take interest in airworthiness activities. Not only do we need to share the significant burden of maintaining our fleet between more than just the two or three hard working people that currently do it, but being involved in working on the aircraft can bring significant benefits in terms of learning aircraft structures and systems hands on – great for those studying engineering and aeronautics. It can also be satisfying seeing your work fly and be enjoyed by others. And it undoubtedly makes you a better, more confident pilot and daily inspector, knowing every nut and bolt on the aircraft you are flying.

Marketing

With thanks to the AU Sports Association the club held a very successful O'Week display in conjunction with volunteers from the AIAA. A fair amount of interest was generated from this and other recruiting events such as 'Clubs in the Hub' that is gradually being converted to AEF flights and membership.

Our newsletter output is still at a standstill however the club has been active this last 12 months on social media, with updates about the club's happenings being posted on a regular basis throughout the year. Many members have kindly been contributing fantastic photos to this end. The updates have been seen by hundreds and have generated a significant amount of contacts to the club.

Social

The club's social scene has remained disappointing this year but I thank those who have made the

effort. We should not be discouraged and give up in this area. This coming year will be more positive, with more off-airfield events and lectures it will eventually gain momentum again. The completion of the West Beach club's hub will be a boost here.

The future

For the future the club has significant challenges. The membership base needs to grow, in particular from AU students. Training ops are being carried by only two hard-working instructors, Derek Spencer and Redmond Quinn and although another is soon to start instructor rating training, this will be an ongoing concern.

The club has improved its administration and financial handling from recent times but care and vigilance here will be key for the future.

To ensure longevity of the club and its future success, the incoming committee will need to work harder in terms of planning, club development and marketing. This could involve significant changes and recognition that the way things have been done in the past may not be compatible with changes in technology, people's attitudes and society in general. The club needs to work towards better providing for and even exceeding what people expect from their club experience and our wonderful sport if it hopes to gain new members and more importantly, retain them for the future.

Thank you

Thanks goes to Derek Spencer, Redmond Quinn, our CFI Catherine Conway and the rest of the committee for the phenomenal amount of work put in during the year with instructing, airworthiness, administration and other things in the background that keep the club running.

Leigh Stokes
President
Adelaide University Gliding Club