

RAANZ President's report 2012

I had a quick look back through the exec correspondence over the last year to see what we have done, are doing, or haven't done.

Done:

- **Wings badge.** It may be a small item, but has been well received by members. Special thanks to Phil Paterson for driving this through to completion. At the same time we considered other merchandising such as caps, patches, etc, but previous experience with this proved to be an expensive way to convert members funds into unsold and eventually unsaleable stock.
- **CAA fees consultation.** Through our membership of the NZ Aviation Federation (representing all non-commercial aviation orgs), we had a representative on the 5 person Sector Reference Group that CAA consulted with re fees increases. This was an extended and frustrating exercise- the CAA were directed by government to review their fees with the goal of self-funding, so there was an inevitability about the exercise. CAA's costings were challenged step by step, with minor adjustments, but in the end it was a somewhat one-sided consultation. The Minister has been quoted as saying the aviation orgs were in agreement with the new scale of fees- that is not correct. The Director met with NZAF last meeting and acknowledged the pain the increases are causing, and identified two areas of their operation where they intend to reduce or at least contain costs.
- **Airways TM lobbying.** You will probably have seen the correspondence on this between RAANZ and Airways in the RecPilot magazine. Airways have provided some respite for those non-transponder pilots who were existing users of TM airspace, but those provisions will close as you change aircraft or operations. The future is inevitably Mode S/ADS-B transponders in all controlled airspace and high commercial use MBZs by about 2020. Our recommendation is that if you need to buy a transponder now, get a cheapo Mode C to use until ADS-B finally comes mandatory. At that time fully integrated (encoder, certified GPS, transponder), pocket-sized, low-powered Mode S/ADS-B transponders are likely to be down to sensible prices, and with an Airways subsidy. Don't jump yet. It is much the same scenario as when VHF radios became a virtual requirement in the 80s- it was painful then, but now we wonder what the fuss was about and consider a radio a basic and essential part of our equipment.

Doing:

- **Training Manual flight planning and navigation section update.** RAAUS kindly allowed us to take their very extensive online training manual and adapt the Flight Planning and Navigation section for our own use. Thanks also to Peter Collins for casting an editorial eye over it. Following the suggestion from some of our Instructors that it is bit too comprehensive for the average weather/time/fuel planning and finger-on-map pilotage microlight pilot, we will probably mark the 'essentials' bits the pilot needs to know, and the 'advanced' bits a top-gun pilot should know. Next step after that is to build the question pool around that material- any offers?
- **Online examination system.** The current online exam delivery system was a first step along the path to a fully online system. Next step is to close the loop with the student getting the results immediately on completion. We have purchased a third party online exam system and are adapting it to suit our requirements. The aim is to have full exam pools available for anyone to do practice runs and review their answers, and then a secure instructor and student sign-in and sign-out live exam

with questions randomly drawn from the pools. On completion the student may review their answers against the correct ones, will get immediate confirmation of the results online and by email, and the results be captured in the RAANZ member database. This will eliminate the mailing and processing delays that currently exist. If we have time in general business I can give you a sneak preview of the system.

- **RPL under Part 149.** In conjunction with the NZAF we are discussing with CAA the possibility of taking on the administration of RPL issuing and renewals. We have the organisation, people and processes in place, which could be used to process and generate an RPL certificate as easily as a microlight certificate. Set up costs would need to be covered by CAA or the NZAF, and ongoing costs covered by the RPL issuing fee, but we are confident we can provide a service at a significantly lower cost than CAA. This does not affect RAANZ microlight pilots, but may help to cover some of our administration overheads and keep fees down. Longer term- maybe it helps pave the way for a broader recreational pilot certificate where you get a rating for one of the many classes of microlights, LSAs, gliders, etc
- **MetFlight-GA lobbying.** It is fair to say that MetService's decision to charge for MetFlight-GA has been an underwhelming flop- only a small percentage of previous users have registered with them. Along with other orgs via the NZAF, we have lobbied, emailed, met, and argued with MetService and the Ministry of Transport, and have largely been met with folded arms and blank stares. I don't hold out much hope on this one- MetService are seriously commercial, and say they need to see \$100K a year from someone to cover costs. I bet they are not seeing that from users at the moment.

Haven't done:

- **Extended question pools for Navigation/Flight Planning, Technical, and Gyro.** As I alluded to earlier, when the new exam system comes online we are going to need a few hundred questions for these pools, so we can make the question available for practice, and draw from them for the real exams. There is a lot of time and care needed to generate these questions- making sure they cover the syllabus, are clear and unambiguous, and fair. Best done collaboratively with a final pass through a subject matter expert. Any takers? We have two members (Peter Collins and Tony Unwin lined up for the gyro questions).
- **Fix the declining membership issue.** This is the biggy, with no easy answers. The exec has spent considerable time on this issue, largely driven by Evan Gardiner. This issue is mission critical, and it rests on you and your club as much as on the exec to find ways to arrest the decline and bring the enthusiasm back into the sport. Part of your job today in General Business is to help with that, and give the incoming exec some ideas and direction....and assistance.

Other stuff

- **Motueka fly-in.** Thanks to Al Hart and his crew for an enjoyable weekend with no significant dramas. The national fly-in is the highlight of the RAANZ calendar- particularly when the organising, the weather and the pilots all deliver on the day. The trip home across the Straits from D'Urville to Kapiti was smooth and quick for me with 30 knots up the tailpipe, but I hear those braving the Kaikoura route south weren't exactly sitting back enjoying the scenery.
- **President's role.** I reluctantly accepted the role last year to provide some continuity while the exec got their feet under the table and someone else got up to speed. But it is difficult wearing multiple hats and being judge, jury, executioner, and the accused. If not for the experience and wisdom of people like Evan, Colin and Bill I would have jumped ship a number of times. But I am jumping now- I am

not a political animal, and life is too short to put up with some of the crap that gets shovelled the President's way. I am happier working in the background on the systems and processes to make things more immediate and accessible to members.

- I must acknowledge all those who contribute to RAANZ- our **exec, instructors and IAs, and our pilots**. Like any voluntary organisation, they do what they can- which is appreciated- and don't do what they can't- which is understood.
- Thanks also to guys like the **Director, Rex Kenny and others in CAA** who understand and support the philosophy behind microlighting. It is easy to fire pot-shots at the bureaucracy without realising that behind that facade are people who are actually working in our interests. One of the rules of life is to honour your sponsors, lest they decide you are not worth the effort.
- In summary, my view is the same as most of you- simple, affordable, accessible flying with the minimum of restrictions and red tape. We enjoy considerable freedom to do so under our Part 149 delegation, and the new Director has indicated his view that provided we stay under his radar (ie we don't bust airspace, we don't crash into things, we don't kill our passengers, we don't give the media ammunition to hit him over the head with), he is happy to let us get on with it, and even widen those freedoms. **Long may that continue.**

Watch your six!
Stuart.