

**MAAA COUNCIL CONFERENCE 2019**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

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# ***MAAA COUNCIL CONFERENCE 2019***

## ***PRESIDENT'S REPORT***

### ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

It is with pleasure I present my report for 2019.

It only seems like yesterday I sat to write the report for 2018. The years seem to be going quicker and the emails increasing exponentially.

Two members of the Executive have been on a big learning curve; both, the secretary and vice president, took up the roles at the 2018 conference and had to learn much in a short time, this has in turn placed an added responsibility on myself to ensure the MAAA functioned effectively during this period. The Treasurer also coped with the added responsibility of converting the accounting system from MYOB to Xero.

Over the past twelve months the MAAA Executive have held eight Executive Meetings.

In accordance with Council direction, the sum of \$48,619.00 was paid for club assistance. Funds available for this initiative are decreasing and Council will need to decide how much is available for distribution in 2019-2020, if any.

The workload with CASA increased exponentially in respect to the issuance of new flying regulations and the registration of Model Aircraft not to mention Part 149.

Liaison with CASA over the past twelve months has been productive. The MAAA Secretary has formed a very good business relationship with CASA. Several face to

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face meetings has taken place and a revised risk assessment template has been developed.

Several major aeromodelling events were attended by both the President and Secretary in addition to several overseas trips to Switzerland. One by the President and two by the Secretary.

Discussions took place with the President of Model Flying New Zealand Mr. Len Drabble. concerning the possible re-vitalisation of a Trans-Tasman competition and other events. An invitation has been extended to the MAAA President and Secretary to attend the New Zealand Nationals in December 2019.

I attended three major aeromodelling events towards which the MAAA provided financial support, namely the F3U World Cup, Alice Springs Masters Games and Dawn Patrol in Adelaide.

During the year I visited the two Alice Springs clubs, Blue Lake Aeromodellers (BLAM) Float plane event at Lake Leake and the Ring Master event at the South Hummocks, Port Wakefield.

The Executive convened a meeting of all Senior Flying Instructors (SFIs) to further discuss the implementation of the 2018 Council Motion, retraining of Instructors, further consideration of the training syllabus and other issues of concern.

Approval was given by the MAAA Council for the purchase of two MAAA owned flying fields in South Australia, Reeves Plains and Finnes. The property at Reeves Plains is now finalised, Finnes is still subject to planning appeals.

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The Executive dealt with two complaints from members in respect to MOP 041, Member Protection. These are mainly dealt initially by the President and Secretary and do take a substantial amount of time and on most occasions are unresolvable.

Recently the Secretary asked Ordinary Members to provide details of their succession plans. Some Ordinary Members requested the same from the MAAA. Ordinary Member representatives are the MAAA Council, the question is asked "what is the Councils succession plans for the MAAA?"

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### **EXECUTIVE**

#### **Secretary**

The 2018 conference resulted in the appointment of our current Secretary, Tyson Dodd and the election of Mr. Bruce Hoffman to the position of Vice President. Both brought to the Executive a wealth of individual aeromodelling knowledge and experience; Tyson Dodd being involved in aeromodelling for many years and the former President of the MAAQ; Vice President Bruce Hoffman being involved in aeromodelling for many years and the President of Control Line Association, New South Wales.

Since the appointment of the Secretary, I have on several occasions spoken to him in respect of his performance, not in a negative manner but to determine if there were any issues, he was finding difficulty with and his overall satisfaction with the job. On occasions I sensed, to refer to a common analogy, like the duck, *“appeared calm on the surface but paddling like crazy underneath”*. I don't say this as a criticism but an expected outcome considering the demands of the job. My overall impression is that Tyson has adapted well and is performing well.

Tyson has several wins on the board, the most important being the negotiations with CASA in respect to federal registration. The success of

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these negotiations demonstrates the worth to an organisation of a full-time employed secretary.

I have also been very mindful of the fact the Secretary is a paid employee. The Executive, Council and our entire membership, must be very aware the MAAA is bound by employment principles including fair and equitable working conditions, hours, leave, occupational health and safety and bullying to name a few.

We as an organisation have been in the past spoilt. Past federal secretaries have given more than expected and we have taken this as the normal. We can't do this any longer. We must be mindful of the fact past Secretaries have generally been retired and have had more time to devote to the organisation. Our present Secretary is much younger, has a young family and must quite rightly allocate his time. As such on a few occasions, I have instructed the Secretary to take leave, close the MAAA office and not answer the MAAA phone. I will continue this practice to ensure the MAAA is not exposed to negative industrial issues.

Modern communication practices have caused members to expect immediate results, in other words when an email is sent to the MAAA office members expect immediate attention. The closing of the MAAA and non-answering of telephones has not gone down well with some however, they will have to get used to it.

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Many members seem to prefer contacting the MAAA direct, bypassing Ordinary Members, others do go through the State Association but also contact the MAAA for verification or in some cases a different answer. Enquires to the MAAA that can be handled by the Ordinary member will be referred to the respective Ordinary member for attention.

Some affiliate members have questioned the amount of remuneration paid to the Secretary. The Secretary is responsible for the day to day operations of the MAAA. A recent survey on wages by a respected associations organisation indicate the MAAA Secretary is paid well below others in similar positions. We as an organisation are well served by our Secretary and are receiving value for money especially considering the expectation of members and scope of work requirements.

On behalf of the MAAA Executive, I acknowledge the efforts of our past secretary Mr. Kevin Dodd in assisting Tyson during his induction period. It is through Kevin's efforts that the changeover of secretaries created very few problems and costs were substantially lower than estimated.

#### **Vice President**

Council elected Mr. Bruce Hoffman as Vice President in 2018. Since his election, Bruce has shown a real interest in the running of the organisation and actively participates in all issues and discussions. Bruce brings with him a wealth of knowledge being involved in aeromodelling for many years, participating in several different disciplines. Although being overseas earlier



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this year he continued to answer emails and participated in Executive meetings via digital media.

#### **Treasurer**

Mr. Gary Pope in his role of Treasurer took on the task of changing the computer-based accounting system from MYOB to Xero. This system has proven to be more user friendly and all Executive members now have up to date access to financial data. Gary has proven himself to be a competent Treasurer who ensures he dots the "I's" and crosses the "Ts" before decisions are made. The MAAA is being well served by his experience and efforts.

#### **Safety Manager**

Kevin Dodd has reviewed the requirements under Regulation 149 and developed a draft position profile for a Safety Officer whose role is to oversee Safety Management Systems. Until such time as CASR Part 101 is amended, we can move no further on this issue, nor can we appoint a person to this position. Kevin has intimated he will be standing down from the position of Safety Manager at the conclusion of the 2019 conference. If Council desires, the position will remain unfilled until part 149 is clarified and expositions prepared.

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#### **Executive Meetings**

Over the past twelve months the MAAA Executive have held eight Executive Meetings. The July Executive meeting was conducted face to face in Sydney during which priorities for the year were determined and allocation of Club Assistance funding. All but one other was conducted utilising conference call facilities.

As the Vice President was overseas in February, the Executive agreed to trial the online conference program "Zoom"; this program although, there were some teething problems proved successful. The Secretary has been tasked to investigate this conferencing facility from a financial perspective.

All minutes of meetings have been circulated to Council Members.

#### **CLUB ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

In accordance with Council direction, the sum of \$48,619.00 has been paid for club improvements under the terms of the Club Assistance Scheme, MOP 011.

As we are aware, the money utilised for club assistance purposes is derived from interest earned on investments. Due to the fall in interest rates and amounts currently available for investments, the amount available for club assistance is diminishing.

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When first introduced, the Club Assistance Scheme was designed to be a money sharing venture involving the MAAA, Ordinary Members and Clubs. Although at the time Ordinary members agreed, this process has not eventuated. Clubs and the MAAA have been the contributors to the scheme with the MAAA inputting most of the money.

The Secretary has advised clubs the Club Assistance Scheme is open for applications; the Council must decide the amount of finance available and perhaps, whether we continue to fund this successful initiative.

### ***CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY AUTHORITY (CASA)***

#### **Liaison with CASA**

Liaison with CASA over the past twelve months has been productive. The MAAA Secretary has formed a very good business relationship with CASA representative that allows both parties to discuss issues freely and frankly. The CASA representative, Mr. Mark Lewis recognises MAAA member needs and on many occasions has proven extremely helpful when negotiating Instruments etc.

Several face to face meetings have taken place between CASA and MAAA Executive to ensure the MAAA's views were properly represented.

A revised improved Risk Assessment process has been agreed and will be incorporated into MOPs soon. The revised process should make it easier for members to develop acceptable risk assessments.

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#### **Part 149**

The implementation and transition to part 149 seems to have stalled (again), however we have been assured the process is being reactivated and will be finalised shortly. We eagerly await the outcomes.

#### **Registration**

A great deal of time has been devoted to the CASA the registration of all remotely piloted aircraft process.

The Secretary represented the MAAA's on CASA's Technical Working Group (TWG).

This group consisted of representatives including, recreational drone associations, Boeing, DJI, National Drones, AMAS and other private and commercial aircraft operators. Tyson's representation and negotiation skills largely contributed to the outcome obtained for our members. During this process, it became quite evident that those involved in the working group had little or no knowledge of model aircraft operation or the MAAA procedures.

The MAAA's major objective was to have CASA accept the MAAA registration system as the federal registration system for our members. In other words, if members operated in accordance with MAAA MOPs and carried their current MAAA membership card, they could fly at any location. CASA did not accept this proposition. They did, however, agree to

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our proposition that MAAA members who flew from MAAA recognised flying sites, situated away from their normal club location, e.g. float plane flying sites, would be exempt from Federal registration at those sites. Non powered RPAs are exempt from the registration process.

#### **Communications with CASA**

In accordance with the above-mentioned agreement, CASA has issued Instruments exempting clubs from specified sections of the CASA Directive.

It must be pointed out these instruments are issued in the name of the MAAA, not the specific club. It is the MAAA's responsibility to ensure compliance with the terms of each instrument. It therefore follows the Ordinary members (State Associations) as members of the MAAA, the Directors of the MAAA must also take responsibility to ensure compliance.

Ordinary Members must in future take a more active role in ensuring clubs compliance. CASA has intimated they may in future conduct "ramp checks" at selected MAAA Clubs to ensure compliance. Any noncompliance will reflect on the MAAA and Ordinary Members' ability to regulate members. Remember, what CASA give us they can take away.

CASA has quite plainly stated in correspondence "*CASA reserves the right to invoke its enforcement related functions against the MAAA in accordance with the CASA Enforcement Policy.*"

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To ensure the MAAA is compliant, it is imperative any correspondence with CASA must be forwarded through the MAAA Secretary. Notwithstanding directives issued by the Secretary, some members persist in communicating with CASA direct. CASA is aware of our policy and will not process any application if not forwarded through the Secretary. They will re-direct any member to the MAAA Secretary. Ordinary members should adopt the same policy and require any communications with the MAAA should be forwarded through the Ordinary Member secretary.

### ***OVERSEAS VISIT/LIASION***

#### **World Drone Conference**

The FAI conference in Lausanne, Switzerland was an eye opener and demonstrated, like it or not, unmanned aerial vehicles are a thing of the future. The conference was conducted over two days. Although extremely informative and the networking useful, the conference focused more on the commercial activities of drones than the sporting aspect. Although the FAI have invited the MAAA to attend this year's conference, I have declined the invitation.

#### **New Zealand Model Aircraft Association**

I recently had the opportunity to meet the President of Model Flying New Zealand, Mr. Len Drabble.

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A meaningful discussion took place with view of forming a closer alliance, both in the area of competitions and administration. Len was particularly interested in restoring a Trans-Tasman competition. The New Zealand political scene is like Australia's in respect to recent model aircraft restrictions, close liaison may prove beneficial to both organisations.

Len advised the New Zealand Nationals has found a resurgence with more members wanting to take part. Several new initiatives have been utilised and have proven popular.

President Len Drabble has extended an invitation to both the MAAA Secretary and myself to attend the New Zealand Nationals in December 2019. I believe attending this event may assist the MAAA in our endeavours to assist in progressing our own Nationals program and perhaps entice New Zealand members to attend the MAAA Nationals.

### ***MAJOR EVENTS***

#### **F3U World Cup Adelaide**

For the second time a round of the FAI Drone Racing World Cup (F3U) was held at the Adelaide Royal Show. This event was conducted at night under lights. Unlike the previous year some qualifying events were run during the day off site, major rounds were run at the showgrounds. Participation was on par to the previous year however it did not attract any overseas

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competitors. Members from Queensland and New South Wales also competed.

In accordance with FAI World Cup rules a world cup event must attract competitors from other countries. Whilst in Lausanne for the World Drone Conference, we had the opportunity to discuss this rule with FAI officials who agreed that due to the tyranny of distance in Australia, if members attended from a different time zone, the event would meet world cup criteria.

#### **Masters Games**

Model aircraft were included in the Alice Springs Masters Games, a first for aeromodelling and I hope the first of many to come. Congratulations to the Alice Springs Radio aeromodelling fraternity for organising and making this event a success. A big thank you must also go to the Master Games Organisers, Alice Springs Council and the Northern Territory Government for recognising and including aero modelling in this wonderful event. Events flown were F5J, IMAC and Old Timers. Camaraderie between all competitors demonstrated what aeromodelling is about, having fun, learning from others and socialising.

It is interesting to note that Alice Springs is situated 580 meters, 1902 feet, above sea level. Consequently, the air is thinner, and the models perform differently, a unique experience for all the "sea side" pilots.



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The event concluded with a novel "Runway" dinner, attended by over 50 people. Unfortunately, a large thunderstorm disrupted the event; all had to move to the pit shelters where event winners were presented with the Master Games medals. I must say John Oliver had great difficulty trying to speak above the noise of the pelting rain. Comments were made about getting out the lawn mowers after the down pour.

#### **Dawn Patrol**

To celebrate the 100-year anniversary signing of the Armistice, 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2018, the South Hummocks Model Aircraft club, and the Scale Aircraft Society (supported by the MAAA and MASA) paid tribute to those who did not return from the great war. The concept of the event, to fly as many World War 1 aircraft as the sun rose; a formal military mess dinner was held on the Saturday night. An empty table was set for the unknown soldier.

Members as far as Alice Springs, Victoria, Kangaroo Island and Ceduna were amongst the attendees

Sunday morning saw another influx of "day tripper" aeromodellers and at dawn there was in excess of 40 aircraft on the flight line. An official Remembrance Day Service was conducted at 100 hours and concluding with a minute's silence. A fitting tribute to our past heroes. Overall, between 60-70 people, including 45 registered pilots, attended

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#### ***CLUB VISITS***

During the year I visited the two Alice Springs clubs, the Blue Lake Aeromodellers (BLAM) Float plane event at Lake Leake in the south east of South Australia and the Ring Master event at the South Hummocks Model Aircraft Club, Port Wakefield (SHMAC).

It was my intention to attend the West Wyalong Nationals and the Wagga 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Military Scale day. This was not to be however due to personal circumstances. I understand both events were highly successful.

The Ring Masters control line event is a worldwide yearly event, held on the 6th and 7th October. The purpose of the challenge is to see how many Ringmaster control line aircraft flights can be achieved world-wide over the entire weekend. This event was also conducted in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

The Fly-A-Thon is in honor of one of the most popular U-Control models flown during the 1950s and 1960s. The Ring Master was originally powered by a .15 to a .19 engine, now most are fitted with .25s.

World-wide in 2017, 738 pilots managed 4359 flights, this year's, 2018, 633 flyers achieved a total of 5119 flights, well done guys.

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#### ***INSTRUCTORS' CONFERENCE***

A State Flying Instructors meeting was held in Adelaide on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The purpose to review the revised Instructor Training and re-assessment course for current Instructors. SFIs from all states attended.

All SFIs supported the revised system and re-assessment course. Some Ordinary members, MAAQ, ANSW and MASA are well advanced in refresher training however other Ordinary members were having difficulty in convincing current instructors to attend. I take this opportunity to remind members as per the Council decision in 2018, unless instructors re-qualify by July 2020, the instructor rating will lapse.

It is imperative Ordinary Members support the motion passed as we as an organisation must ensure we have in place professional training systems which provide advice to members on current legislation, safety matters and CASA Instruments. As mentioned earlier, it is not the clubs who will be held accountable for noncompliance with CASA Instruments, it will be the MAAA Council, Executive and Ordinary members.

#### ***PURCHASE MAAA FIELDS***

Approval was given by the MAAA Council for the purchase of two MAAA owned flying fields in South Australia, Reeves Plains and Finnes.

During the revision of the MAAA lease to the Ordinary members, questions were raised as to the commercial value of some past leases. The Executive

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examined relevant leases and concluded there was no standard formula for determining lease charges. On recommendations of the Treasurer, a formula of 0.2% of the total purchase price would be the standard charge.

#### **Reeves Plains**

The purchase of the Reeves Plains property has been finalised; a lease has been signed with the Model Aero Sports SA Inc. (MASA) and a sublease with the host club Concorde Model Aircraft Club. As part of the negotiations, MASA agreed to accept responsibility for the entire property.

A further lease has been forwarded to Mr. Josh Kreig who will share farm the area not leased by the club. A lease agreement of \$88.00 per acres is being negotiated.

#### **Finnes**

Negotiations relating to the purchase of the Finnes Property are still ongoing. Council approval has been obtained for the change of land use however, unfortunately three objections were received from nearby residence. Negotiations are continuing with two of these persons. The matter now has been referred to the State Planning Court for determination. The MAAA Executive agreed to engage legal counsel to represent our position. We are hopeful that by the time of the Council Conference this matter may be settled.

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We are fortunate in this case that the Vendor of the property, Mr. David Ford, is an ex-aeromodeller and is interested in seeing the property being utilised for this purpose. We thank him for his patience.

#### ***MEMBER PROTECTION/DISCIPLINING OF MEMBERS***

The MAAA Executive have been involved in several member disputes and complaints. On each occasion, initially these complaints have been referred through the Ordinary Member to the Club.

These matters are very time consuming for all involved and on many occasions are un-resolvable. The complaints mainly originate from disputes between members and are of a personal nature and unfortunately, the parties involved refuse to give ground, many relate to one's word against another.

The MAAA and Ordinary member attempt to mediate the dispute however unfortunately not all are successful resolved.

In all these issues, club management must take a firm hand and set clear understandable policies and guidelines to ensure members know the parameters. Many Club leaders avoid decisive action due to the "mateship" surrounding club life and the thought of being unpopular. This approach only causes the matters to escalate.

The MAAA has in place policies and procedures referring to bullying, harassment and disciplining of members, MOP 041 and 028. Many of the

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reported actions however do not reach the criteria for the MAAA Executive to take decisive action i.e. suspension or cancellation of membership.

#### **SUCCESSION PLANS MAAA**

Recently the MAAA Secretary requested all members to detail any successions plan in place to ensure continuance of their associations. Some have replied requesting the MAAA to also detail our successions plans. I remind members that as members of Council you are the MAAA and therefore I ask the question "What are your successions plans for the organisation?"

Plans were in place for the past Vice President to take over as President last year. These plans fell apart due to personal circumstances. I advise members that it is my intention to stand down as President in 2021 and as such urge any members of the Council who have ambitions to take over the Presidency to make their plans known. Now is the time to start picking up the threads.

Neil Tank

President

Model Aeronautical Association Australia Inc.