



SAFA
Sports Aviation Federation of Australia



**A FUTURE
FOR OUR
SPORTS**

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Preface

Various forms of Sports Aviation disciplines* are administered and managed throughout Australia by the SAFA, a Company Limited by Guarantee, supported by a number of affiliated Regional Associations and Sports Clubs.

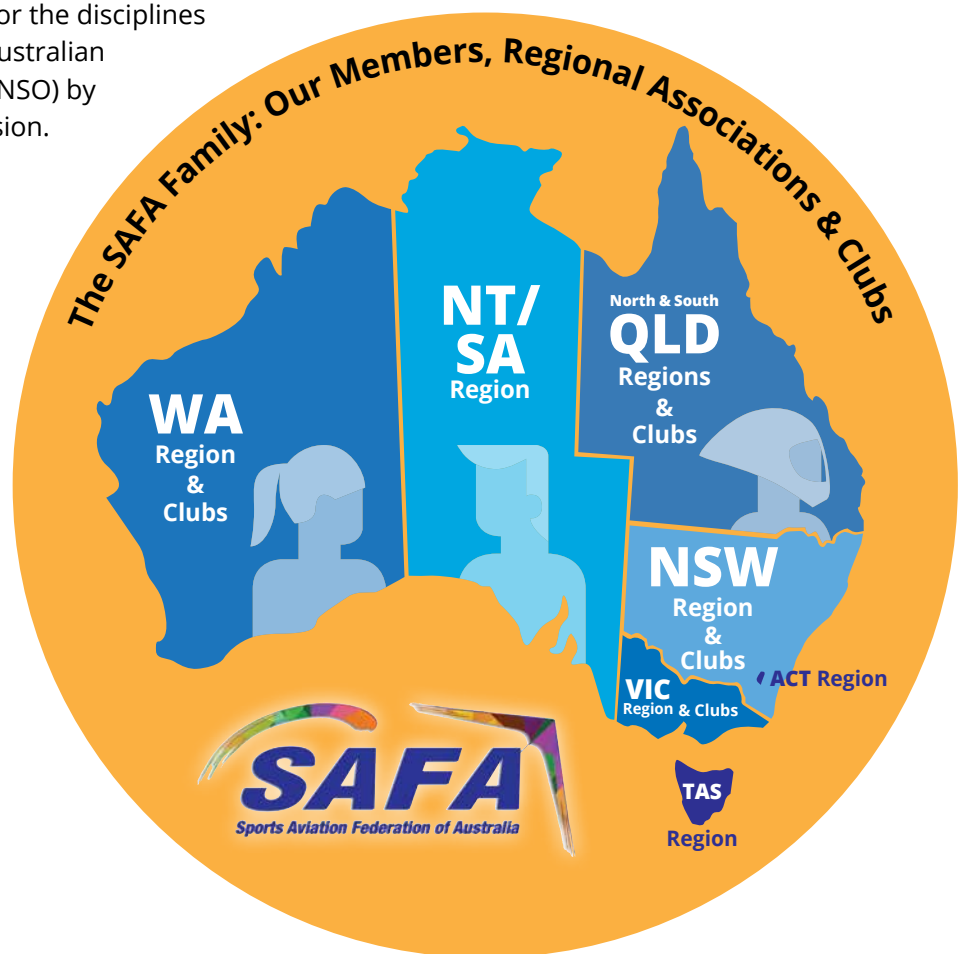
SAFA is an organisation formed by its members, to provide the framework to administer the disciplines in line with our obligations to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and the national laws and regulations that allow our aviation activities to operate.

SAFA is the peak sporting body for the disciplines we administer as a recognised Australian National Sporting Organisation (NSO) by the Australian Sporting Commission.

The SAFA employs a small number of staff who administer the sport and manage its operations.

SAFA through its Board has past, present and future responsibility for our sport. It's the guardian of our legacy, the custodian of our present and responsible for envisioning and ensuring a sustainable future in which our sport and its participants are able to achieve their full potential.

* Part 103, primarily sub 70kg category



OUR VISION:

To inspire Australians to free fly.

We aspire to be the sport of choice for adventure seekers whatever their circumstance.
We seek a sustainable, inclusive future with more flying and enhanced safety.

OUR 6 PILLARS:

Pursuing our goals and desired outcomes

Safety & training

A proactive safety culture of care and diligence supported by world class training



International sporting success

Build our regional capacity for competition opportunities to develop World Class pilots



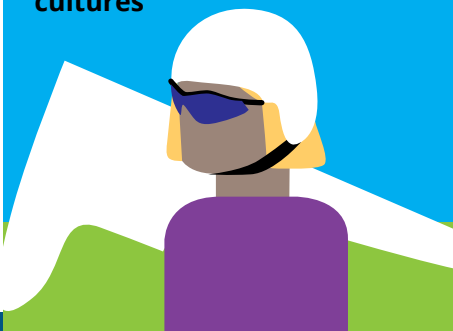
Operational excellence

Our effective, modernised administration is run by engaged, motivated and valued staff



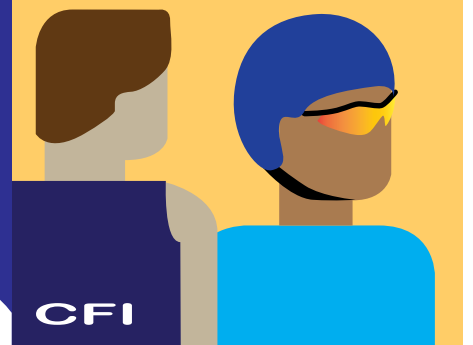
Participation

Removing barriers to entry and participation by embracing a diversity of ages, genders, abilities and cultures



Partnerships

Enhance collaboration with members, clubs, associations, land managers and regulators



Governance

Embrace best practice and aim to become an effective co-regulator with CASA



OUR MISSION:

To enable all of our pilots to safely enjoy flying operations, whilst providing a sustainable and inclusive future for this to occur.



Photo: Bruce Agnew

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Enduring Vision, Values and Mission

Our vision is to inspire Australians to fly. We seek a sustainable, inclusive future with more flying and enhanced safety. We want aviation to be the sport of choice for adventure seekers whatever their circumstance.

Core values help drive the way we operate. They are:

- **Safety:** Above everything because this sport can be dangerous without controls.
- **Adventure:** New experiences every time we fly enrich our lives.
- **Fun:** As the dream of flight pushes us beyond our earthly realm.
- **Freedom:** When we step into the air our world expands and we are free to explore.

The enduring mission of the SAFA is to enable pilots to safely enjoy flying operations, whilst providing a sustainable and inclusive future for this to occur.

- **Enable pilots** – because that is our core business; pilots helping other pilots.
- **Safely enjoy** – because it is only fun when it is safe.
- **Flying operations** – encompasses all disciplines.
- **Sustainable future** – because without this, all of the foregoing is at risk.



Photo: Ben Targett

Central Strategy

The SAFA's central strategy is 'Inclusive growth that delivers a sustainable future'.

Our central strategy is supported by six pillars:

- **Safety and training** – A safety culture of care and diligence that exceeds our responsibilities to all stakeholders and which is supported by world class training.
- **Participation** – Recruiting and retaining more participants is what makes our sport grow. Remove barriers to entry and increase participation.
- **Partnerships** – Enhanced collaboration with members, associated organisations, clubs, regional associations (RA), land managers and regulators.
- **Governance** – Our governance embraces best practice and meets Australian Sports Commission (ASC) mandatory requirements for an Australian National Sporting Organisation (NSO), we become an effective co-regulator with CASA and operate an effective and financially sustainable company.
- **Operational excellence** – Enhance operational effectiveness. Our administration is modernised; our staff engaged and motivated, operational initiatives are pre-planned and well executed and our members are well served and supportive of the direction of their sport and the manner in which it is managed.
- **International sporting success** – World leading, well known competition pilots across all disciplines provides the marketable brand success that supports a sustainable future.

Our future will be assured when our sport, our brand and our participants are regarded by all stakeholders as a valued national asset.

Our Goals

The SAFA is focused on achieving the goals* of:



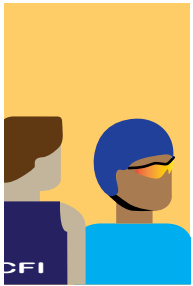
Goal 1 – Continuous Safety Enhancement

Further develop our safety system and improve accident and incident management.

Goal 2 – Increased Participation

Embrace alternate recruitment and retention strategies; including increasing the average skill level of our membership and initiating programs to increase participation of under-represented groups; females, youth, non-English speaking, disabled, and others; increase the 'funnel' for new pilots and reduce barriers to entry.

Goal 3 – Partnerships



Ensure regular collaboration, and communication, with key stakeholders; SAFA members, clubs, regional associations and regulators CASA/ASA. Roll out a national relationship management strategy to build relationships with key national stakeholders.

Goal 4 – Good Governance

Deliver better organisational performance through improving our governance; including activities to improve our national strategy and improve operational administration.

Goal 5 – Operational Excellence



Ensure our staff are well managed, well cared for and ensure they value the contribution they make for our NSO; ensure sub-committees are more accountable and productive; ensure our record keeping across all areas is effective and secure and ensure operational initiatives are pre-planned and well executed; ensure we are well positioned for growth and succession.

Goal 6 – Financial Sustainability

Invest in strategies that deliver financial and brand success; review SAFA assets, financial and non-financial, to find performance improvement, national consistency and better outcomes for our members; include activities that develop sites and deliver infrastructure capability; develop new revenue streams that lessen dependence on member subscriptions; invest in pursuing public and private sector funding opportunities and develop a sponsorship proposition to support this; aim to have all our national teams self-sufficient.

Goal 7 – Competition



Review and upgrade our competition structures; create alternate competition formats such as a two-yearly multi-discipline test series against NZ; build an academy style program to develop competition pilots across all disciplines; seek to leverage opportunities such as the Invictus games; gain more from our FAI relationship; investigate developing a stadium format for PPG and a competition format suitable for TV or live streaming.

* Desired outcomes and related projects are listed in 'Strategy Initiatives'.



STRATEGY INITIATIVES

Desired Outcomes

Goal 1 – Continuous Safety Enhancement

An improved SAFA Safety Management System (SMS) increases safety overall

- Develop safety initiatives and implement same – seminars, reports, clinics, SkySailor, Airwaves
 - Better educated pilots are safer pilots
 - Improves the culture
- Promote the SMS and its features with regular contributions in SkySailor and other media
 - We should always aim to achieve safety best practice
- Progress the development of a Fallen Flyers support service
 - We should always be trying to support those unfortunate pilots who come to grief
- Negotiate a better annual safety levy distribution from CASA
 - CASA is reviewing safety levy distributions and the SAFA is well deserving of an increase. Additional funding will enable us to deliver more safety support and training across Australia
- Operational identification (SAFA logo work wear for Duty pilots/SO/SSO)
 - Will provide a consistent point of reference at all sites across Australia

Increased use of the Accident and Incident Management improves safety

- Rectify any problems with the Accident and Incident Reporting System (AIRS). Improve reporting ease and enable quality, useful and timely reports to be created
- Encourage greater use of the AIRS through greater awareness of its benefits
 - We learn
 - CASA expect it
 - Our members deserve it

Greater focus on recruiting and developing our frontline safety troops

- Review and improve our training and support structures for SOs, SSOs and AIRS managers
- Encourage and make it easier to identify and recruit SOs and SSOs
- Increase our capacity to provide training and endorsement services in remote areas
- Review, identify and eliminate unnecessary barriers to entry for providers of Instructor and Training support services
 - Our members deserve it
 - Our sport demands it
 - CASA requires it

Successful implementation of Part 149

- Support our Safety Management Officer to drive change, champion safety and implement the regulatory changes inherent in Part 149

Part 149 is a significant aviation regulatory reform package that benefits existing and potential members which in turn helps drive growth.

Photo: Jasmine Colville



Photo: Marnie Jane

Goal 2 – Increased participation

New memberships increase

- Social media, marketing, publicity based on international competition success, public information events run locally by clubs and supported by the SAFA and regional associations
- Develop and conduct nationally coordinated recruitment and inclusivity drives, supported by marketing and involving regional associations and clubs
 - Increased numbers create greater capacity to provide the necessary infrastructure to secure our future
 - Provides greater opportunity to grow our commercial operator capacity and generally assists their efforts
 - Helps us keep growing our membership and interest in our disciplines

A pipeline of junior pilots supports our efforts to increase participation

- Every successful sport owes its sustainability in part to a pipeline of juniors

- Identify locations to participate in a junior development program
- Develop strategy and infrastructure to support the program
 - Developing a junior program helps us achieve growth and sustainability.
 - It may help introduce more volunteers to our sport
 - Helps us achieve the aim of being recognised as a valued community asset

The number of pilots leaving the sport decreases

- Identify strategies to enhance recreational development – more local club days, more social interactions, greater use of social media to set up pilot networks
 - Recruitment and retention are the building blocks of a sustainable future
- Conduct state-based conferences for club executives
 - Conferences will help better engage with our members and gain support for our plans for our sport – gets the arrows all firing in the same direction

- Survey members to gain input into benefits they value
 - We need to know what members want in order to provide it
- Value our heritage
 - Develop protocols/qualifying criteria for recognising long time pilots who might form a 'Council of Elders' (Pioneers/Pathfinders, etc.) and identify how we might better engage with them and utilise their experience
 - Establish a website based SAFA Hall of Fame with a broad range of categories and historically significant events (e.g. pilots, disciplines, volunteers, administrators, sites, technology, etc.) – anyone or anything whose involvement made a significant contribution to the development and success of our sport
 - Give custodianship of the Hall of Fame to the Council of Elders



Photo: Gavin Penfold

If we want our pioneers to retain an ongoing interest in the sport, we need to value the legacy they've created. Their risk taking and pioneering deeds deserve such.

Pilot skill levels increase

- Create and implement pilot development strategies to support the general pilot population including XC Clinics and skill development workshops.
 - Pilots focussed on skill development are more likely to enjoy the sport and remain engaged with it
 - More skilful pilots equate to safer flying operations
- Encourage more RA/club events conducted locally to promote a healthier pilot development culture

- Develop and provide regional associations and clubs with greater resources to assist pilot skill development
 - Encourage more RA/club events conducted locally to promote a healthier pilot development culture

The general community has a greater appreciation of our flying

- Support our recruitment drives with promoted recreational flying events
 - Greater awareness leads to greater acceptance and helps position our sport as a valued community asset
- Run more local club competitions or organised flying events
 - Greater numbers of localised events provide greater local media opportunities



Key national sites are secured for future use

- Research ways to heritage list (or similar) sites that are of national significance to our sport (e.g. Stanwell, Rainbow, etc.)
 - This secures access to sites that we don't own but which form a significant part of the historical development of our sport

Growth opportunities for new participants are identified and developed

- Support and budget for initiatives to encourage women pilots in all disciplines
- Encourage initiatives/events such as 'Let's get you in the air', 'Women with Wings', 'Fly like a girl' and 'Altitude with Attitude'
 - Women, disabled, youth, non-English speaking and others, are underrepresented in our sport and represent a huge growth opportunity for our class of flying, and self actualisation for the participants

- More members engaged with our flying activity equates to greater leverage for access to external infrastructure and funding support

Membership categories are reviewed and changes proposed

- Consider creating different classes of membership and/or create ways to reward long term participants – other sports have many classes of membership to suit the different ways members seek to engage with the sport and its management. We could embrace different classes of membership with different benefits associated with each
 - Membership arrangements should be regularly reviewed to enhance our culture and encourage all members to remain engaged with the sport and its management
 - This should be done in such a way that does not compromise the financial sustainability or management of the sport

Goal 3 – Partnerships

Relationships with key stakeholder organisations are developed and/or improved/made more productive

- Identify those key relationships that direct or control or may influence our activities and develop an active and ongoing management process to protect and manage our interests:
 - National
 - State
 - Region
 - Peripheral
 - Ensures a consistent national approach and provide tools and resources to enable clubs and regional associations to carry out these activities potentially providing better outcomes for progressing our interests
 - Continue with RA President teleconferences to drive this
- Identify other users of outdoor recreation assets with whom we might partner or joint lobby with to further our site interests

- These include rock climbers, orienteers, horse trail riders, motorcycle trail riders, mountain bike riders, XC runners
- Regular communication direct with members through media articles (Airwaves, SkySailor, etc.)
- Regular communication with clubs and regional associations
- Regular contact with regulators (CASA/ASA, others)

Goal 4 – Good governance

This SAFA strategic plan is approved, implemented, reviewed and assessed against predetermined benchmarks

- Improve our planning capacity across strategic and operational areas – develop, implement and maintain a strong planning focus to guide our organisation
 - Essential for any enterprise and particularly pertinent to the SAFA to remove ad-hocracy from decision-making
 - Ensures available resources are productively focussed, budgeted for and utilised in a planned manner which contributes to creation of the future our members deserve
 - Enables us to measure performance against predetermined benchmarks which leads to continuous improvement
 - Need to see beyond ‘Business As Usual’ operational issues and embrace a wider responsibility to grow our sport and manage the SAFA in the national interest of all members, recreational or sport
 - Need to ensure our sport is relevant and is achieving its share of the sport and recreational funding market in Australia

SAFA governance processes are modernised and focused on performance

- Maximise our CLG structure
- Modernise governance, policies and procedures
- Ensure policy and constitution are separated/ maintain separation

Goal 5 – Operational excellence

Efficient operational administration functions deliver value for members

- Continue to review policy to ensure the content is current and appropriate. Continue to modernise/ refurbish our administration
 - Much of our back office and our supporting documents are outdated and need upgrading
- Ensure the Safety & Training Committee and the Competitions Committee are engaged with and productively using the new organisation wide project management and administration system
 - Ensures that the SAFA national body is able to effectively oversee the areas it delegates management to
 - Ensures that appropriate planning, record keeping and management practices are being applied in all sub-committees
- Develop a secure document storage facility that minimises, if not eliminates, any risk to the security of our records
 - Ensures that archived records are not lost

Provide a workplace environment that our staff are proud of

- Conduct an assessment of staff development needs and develop and implement a program to progressively provide the same. By supporting our people and ensuring they are motivated and well trained, efficiencies and productivity gains will follow
- Ensure our HR practices meet modern standards and our social policies are aligned to current community expectations. Ensures that we are supporting our staff in the most appropriate manner and ensures the Board is taking all necessary steps to recognise the value our staff bring to our NSO



Photo: Roger Ranty

Adopt a more strategic position in relation to our staffing structure

- Conduct a review of staff functions, management protocols and current HR requirements and make changes to ensure our sport continues to be managed effectively and our staff are vocationally stimulated and engaged with our NSO
 - Ensures appropriate resourcing is pre-planned and takes account of significant issues such as the implementation of Part 149
 - Ensures succession planning as opposed to management by surprise

Independent review provides impartial professional guidance to our Board and our SAFA members

- Invest in an independent review into all aspects of our organisation and our sport. This should seek to cast as wide a net as possible to enable members past and present to have input into the direction our sport should take. It should also seek to understand what our international associations are doing as well as other similar sports aviation groups. The purpose of such a review is to gather input, seek innovative reform and

provide advice to the Board and our members that can form the basis of a restructured strategic plan for our organisation. This review should also include the following matters:

- The sports funding market in Australia and what the SAFA should be doing to maximise our share of it
- How should a sport like ours succeed in transitioning to a semi or fully professional sport for our leading competition pilots

Drawing on external and independent expertise is essential if the SAFA is to contemplate and/ or achieve successful change. Over reliance on volunteer administrators, no matter how enthusiastic and diligent they may be, carries significant risk and our members deserve to have the best available advice.

Review FTF operational criteria

- Challenge the status quo by reviewing/ considering alternate flight training structures
 - We need to remove participation barriers and increase the reach of flight training facilities without compromising safety



- This is necessary to ensure that we are pursuing the growth of our sport by encouraging multiple entry levels and opportunities to our sport

Part 149 is successfully implemented

- Carry out a risk assessment and engage with the CASA implementation support structures to ensure Part 149 is successfully inculcated within our sport and its management structures
- Identify any areas of risk to our disciplines and our sport generally and ensure we have strategies and plans to mitigate these

Goal 6 – Financial sustainability

Financial strategy principles

Our financial strategy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Investments of both the operating surplus and capital reserves should support the SAFA strategy – ‘Growth’
- In time, this will further increase revenue (from increased numbers of members) and allow for further growth

Operating capital

Operating Capital is needed to maintain cash flow. The SAFA is required to maintain a higher operating capital than similar organisations because most membership revenue is received around the same time each year.

Based on past years we expect that most membership revenue will have been received by the end of Q1 (30 September). This represents the time in the financial year when bank assets usually reach their apex. At that time the SAFA COO will consult with the Board to determine what proportion of bank assets should be invested, and what proportion should be earmarked as operating capital for the remainder of the financial year.

Introduce an incentive program for Schools/CFIs to encourage greater throughput of students

- Review/consider strategies to introduce greater numbers of new entrants to our flying activity
 - We need to embrace strategies that encourage and reward commercial operators for contributing to the growth of our membership

Address the training and development needs of remote area pilots across all disciplines

- Construct a model that enables the SAFA to provide services to remote locations
- This further encourages and rewards instructors for contributing to the growth of our membership

Ensure CASA regulatory support for a Club Instructor proposal

- Construct a diversified instruction model that enables training and participation at all locations and at all levels throughout Australia



Photo: Peak Pictures

Strategic capital

Strategic capital provides the opportunity for the SAFA to invest in our future by pursuing growth opportunities. It also provides a reserve to account for the unexpected consequences of risk events that insurance does not cover.

The Board remains committed to making funds available via loans to clubs and/or regional associations for investment in a 'Infrastructure Loan' program. Grants are to be made available to initiate programs that support inclusivity growth.

- Loans may contribute to the costs of site infrastructure such as real estate, facilities, works, or weather stations
- Over the longer term, our retained strategic capital needs to grow through exposure and ownership of low risk growth assets. Currently our retained strategic capital is invested in cash and vulnerable to effective depletion through inflation. We need to get better performance as well as grow the amount of reserves to cater for our infrastructure needs and the expected growth in membership through the activities in this strategic plan

Non-financial assets

The SAFA will review non-financial assets:

- Conduct an inventory and review of all SAFA non-financial assets
- Develop structures for these assets that support the national body's strategic plan and resource accordingly to ensure appropriate management and ownership

Financial management is aligned to strategy and we invest in the financial future we desire

- Roll out our reserves and surplus strategy; grants and loan policies
 - Need to make the most efficient use of available resources to maximise benefits for our sport and our members
 - Need to pursue a more sustainable future for our sport by acquiring sites and infrastructure

- Upgrade and implement effective management procedures to actively manage our reconciliation process at regular intervals
 - Aids transparency and compliance
 - Financial management is not management if it isn't active management; inspect what is expected
- Invest in revenue diversification and growth by appointing a dedicated resource to assist in developing and implementing a well-planned commercial strategy for the SAFA
 - We need to sensibly invest in the strategies that will deliver our overarching objectives
 - Develop sport wide sponsorship and public sector funding proposals and pursue the same – aim to have all national teams self-supporting in time
 - We must reduce our dependence on member subscriptions and increase our revenue from other sources to grow the sport
- Conduct an independent review of current SAFA funding sources and seek guidance to maximise our share of the sport funding market nationally
 - We must reduce our dependence on member subscriptions and increase our revenue from other sources to grow the sport

All SAFA assets are employed to maximum effect in pursuit of our goals

- Conduct a review of all SAFA assets and assess performance against developed benchmarks and make changes where necessary
 - We need to be aware of what our assets are, how they are performing financially and what needs to be done to get the most out of them
 - Reduces percentage of revenue attributable to member subs
- Ensures that our strategies are more soundly funded



Photo: Michael Zupanc

We continually make cost gains through ongoing review and challenging the status quo

- Review insurance providers and benefits to seek a better cost outcome
- Continue with the electronic delivery of SkySailor

The more we save without loss of benefit means more can be spent pursuing other strategies beneficial to members.



Photo: Vicki Cain

Goal 7 – Competition

Review and upgrade our capacity to administer and promote competitions across all disciplines

- Improve the operational efficiency of the comps committee and their planning, administration and record keeping by providing greater support and a more functional structure
 - Greater efficiency means more productive outcomes for all
- Make our leading pilots and our competition successes highly visible through greater access via our website
 - Our sport needs national household name heroes
 - Competition flying which creates local and international brands/heroes provides the means to attract funding which can be used for the benefit of all members
- Identify key leading pilots and provide them with media training to represent us at key comps/events
 - Our representatives need to present as articulate, skilled, knowledgeable and engaging
- Set a comps and key events calendar for a rolling three years in advance and promote all named comps/events via marketing
 - We need to tell the outside world about our sports flying
- Separate the four broad functions of:
 - 1) competitions admin management
 - 2) academy style program to produce world class pilots across disciplines
 - 3) professional competition development program, and
 - 4) the commercial strategy for the promotion of our assets and sponsor access to them

Strategise each of these areas and resources to achieve maximum success. This may mean adding to the functional sub-committees we have at the national level and managing them carefully.

Our competition formats have undergone little development at the global level over a long period of time. Modern technology, together with the risk factor inherent in our sport, together with its global reach, provide us with untapped opportunities to move our sport to a professional model with global, national and regional circuits embracing new formats. This may lead to specialist teams in the same way cricket now has test, one day and 20/20 specialist players. This could have particular application for hang gliding and its reinvigoration globally.

Pilot participation in competitions increases

- High Performance Team: Develop a High-Performance Academy style program to identify/create pathways for elite pilot development across all disciplines – aim to produce Oz world champions
 - Developing the competitive side of our sport can arguably do more to aid recruiting, financing and retention than all other strategies. International success based on pilots who become national household names is our most important asset because it can be leveraged to facilitate financial success
 - Developing the competitive side of our sport can do more to aid recruiting, financing and retention than all other strategies. International success based on pilots who become national household names is our most important asset because it can be leveraged to facilitate financial success
 - Having a competition format that attracts viewers provides another means of supplementing funding
 - Attract viewers to a PPG stadium event
 - Contests between Australia and NZ are embedded in our national psyche and our sport needs to leverage this to maximum effect
 - The co-ordination of disciplines and the manner in which national teams are managed and promoted is ad hoc and has no national oversight. Our national teams are a key non-financial asset of the sport nationally and a co-ordinated, well managed and professionally promoted approach is essential
- Select, equip and promote National Coaches for each discipline and facilitate development for each
- Consider engaging with other sports aviation groups (e.g. APF) to seek combined ASC/AIS sponsorship for common academy functions
- Define and implement clear pathways for juniors right through to world class pilots across all disciplines and sub-sets (e.g. acro)
- Review and renew comps format – aim to develop short form comps with high spectator (live or via device) entertainment value
- Pursue development of a national and global circuit (such as WSL) by building direct relationships with other national bodies – Pacific rim nations especially
- Develop and roll out a stadium event – PPG
- Devise a strategy to pursue Invictus, Commonwealth and Olympic Games participation for PG, HG and PPG – ASAC, FAI, AIOC
- Introduce a regular, stand alone, multi-discipline competition (test match style) between Australia and New Zealand
- Develop and own a proactive agenda for the development and management of our brand and the manner in which our competition landscape is managed. Ensure that the national body retains stewardship of national assets and that these are meeting our strategic needs and are optimally engaged
- Make greater demands of our relationship with FAI
 - A productive FAI relationship driven by national bodies is key to achieving global progress for our sport

Create a competition format that allows for live streaming and creates revenue for the SAFA

- In conjunction with enhancing our competition capability, develop a format that can be used to attract an electronic audience and that can generate revenue for the benefit of the SAFA
 - Diversifying revenue streams is an essential financial strategy that reduces our over dependence on member subs for our financial sustenance



SPORTS AVIATION FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

The Sports Aviation Federation of Australia (SAFA) is our national peak body that administers and coordinates Hang Gliding (HG), Paragliding (PG), and Weight-Shift Microlighting (WM) within Australia. CASA, through its Sport Aviation division, regulates our activities and the SAFA operates within this framework as one of several self-administering organisations aligned with CASA Sport. The SAFA also maintains membership of the Air Sport Australia Confederation which is the body that represents our interests on the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI).

Overview

History

Our sport has a colourful history from water towed delta wing kites in 1963 and the subsequent birth of foot launched hang gliders, to soaring parachutists launching from Australian hills in 1982. Paragliding with purpose built paragliders became popular in the late 1980s. Instruction for hang gliding and paragliding grew as the activities matured and the number of participants grew. There's no doubt from its very inception there was always an avid dare-devil attitude among Australians.

The first world championships (foot launched) were held in 1975 and Australia won one gold medal and two bronze. Performing on a competitive world-stage further ignited the spirit of adventure back home and

the catalyst to soar to greater heights was unveiled with the development of weightshift microlights and more recently, paragliding and powered paragliding.

The equipment and techniques may have evolved over time but many of the constants remain the same: a fierce mateship among members; a determination inhumanity to feel the freedom of flying; safety remaining at the forefront; and the thrill of pure flight.

Operations today

Today, thousands of pilots take in a bird's eye view of our country each day. More than 3,000 Australian members and their clubs are represented by the SAFA which is:

- Recognised as a National Sporting Organisation (NSO) by the Australian Institute Of Sport (AIS) and its parent body the Australian Sports Commission (ASC)
- Affiliated with the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) through the Air Sport Australia Confederation (ASAC)
- The national representative with policy makers and regulators including the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), and
- The author of a recognised pilot training program
- The SAFA is one of a number of Self Administering Organisations forming part of the CASA Sport Aviation division of Australian aviation

AS A SPORT/PASTIME

- 1963** (September) John Dickenson's wing first flew – its 55 year anniversary was in 2018.
- 1974** First governing body – The Australian Self Soaring Association (TASSA) – was formed.
- 1978** TASSA re-organised with State Associations as its members.
- 1978** An Incorporated Association, HGFA, was formed with State Associations as its members.
- 1991** New constitution adopted.
- 2019** HGFA became SAFA and the governance model became a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG).

Summary: The sport has existed since 1978; the HGFA existed for 41 years in total, 28 years under its former constitution and governance structure. SAFA as a CLG has been in existence since 2019.



Photo: Bruce Wynne



BY DISCIPLINE

Hang Gliding – water launched operations from 1963

Hang Gliding – foot launched from around 1970

Weightshift Microlight – commenced operating late 1970s

Paragliding – parachute hill soaring from around 1982

Paragliding – purpose built PG flying from late 1980s

Paragliding – formal PG training commenced around 1989

Photo: Peter Kovesi

OUR PILOTS

Are around 3,000 members across all of our disciplines.

An estimated 15% to 20% participate in competitions across all disciplines and the balance fly recreationally.

Pilots use sites across Australia, however, very few are owned/part owned by the SAFA, Regional Associations or Clubs.

Participants are overwhelmingly reliant on relationships with National/State Parks and Wildlife and Local Government authorities for site access but in many cases there is no cohesive strategy for managing and/or leveraging these relationships.



Photo: Gavin Hienfold

A FUTURE FOR OUR SPORTS



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