



**New South Wales Hang Gliding and Paragliding
Association Inc.**

President's Report

September 2020-2021 Year

John Harriott

On behalf of NSWHPA Committee of Management ("CoM")

Overview

As of June 2021 in excess of a thousand SAFA pilots reside in NSW making us the largest group by State in Australia and we are blessed with many coastal and inland sites, active clubs and an increasing number of keen student pilots.

Many of us have had our flying activities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic - the upside is that this has created the time to consolidate, improve and drive new initiatives for our sport and pave the way for a hoped for epic 2021/2022 flying season.

	FULL MEMBERS		TOTAL	STUDENT MEMBERS		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE		MALE	FEMALE	
2018			1074			
2019	996	55	1051	135	26	161
2020	928	52	980	102	23	125
2021	1012	58	1070	129	26	155

Member numbers have increased slightly year on year as has student participation and the number of female pilots. In general, however full member numbers have varied little over the last four years suggesting that we lose as many active pilots as we train annually.

The NSWHPA is an organisation made up of volunteers that exists to support SAFA regionally and promote the sport directly and through providing deeper levels of assistance to clubs and the NSW pilot population.

Wherever possible NSWHPA support is channelled through the Clubs as we believe that Clubs are the lifeblood of the sport who:

- Act as custodians of sites
- Are the key responsible body for landowners and authorities to engage with
- Welcome, retain and develop local pilots
- Work closely with the instructor community
- Initiate and embrace initiatives

Clubs typically change executives frequently and the degree of training and experience varies on a club to club and year to year basis.

The support provided by the NSWHPA is designed to flex with the needs of individual clubs as these changes occur. On request, assistance can range from proactive guidance and new executive mentoring to passive support for clubs that have clear direction and confident leadership.

Triage and effort focus

The NSWHPA is focused on driving safety and growth in the sport and initiates/assesses/ delivers projects with three audiences in mind:

1. Retention of existing pilots
2. Re-engagement with inactive pilots

3. Attraction of new entrants into the sport

Emphasis and success in these areas leads to benefits to two other audiences who are essential to keeping the sport alive:

- The instructor community
- Equipment manufacturers and local distributors

An example of a project that met many of these objectives is the development work that has been completed and is continuing in the Watagans range mid-way between Gosford and Newcastle. This project:

- opened new launches
- secured closer and safer landing zones with landowner agreements
- commissioned and upgraded sites from HG only to HG and PG
- reduced launch complexity and opened launches to lower graded pilots
- provided new sites for local instructors to train HG/PG students
- provided an inland site with XC potential close to major NSW population centres

Led by the Newcastle Hang Gliding Club, this project was a co-operative volunteer provision and joint financing effort between 3 clubs – Central Coast Sky Surfers, the Newcastle Paragliding Club, the NHGC and the NSWHPA.

Competing applications for initiatives, investments, grant applications, funding guidelines and volunteer support are all assessed on how effectively they will deliver safety, growth and benefit to these five groups.

This triage approach ensures that investments financial or otherwise deliver maximum benefit to as many individuals as possible whilst preserving volunteer effort on the CoM.

Enablers

To meet its goals the NSWHPA has established a number of mechanisms including:

- Sub Committee of Club liaison officers to ensure each club has a direct contact for two way communication flow
- Documented funding guidelines designed to deliver financial support via Clubs and event organisers to identified audiences
- Management support, landowner packs and financial reimbursement to Clubs to ensure site retention arrangements with landowners
- Collated body of documentation representing best practice in reaching agreement with private landowners, Councils, National Parks, State Water, State Forests and governing Territories
- A dedicated SAFA liaison officer who sits on the SAFA Committee
- A female pilot subcommittee and strategic alliance with Women with Wings
- A dedicated Grants officer to deliver ongoing liaison and relationship management with the NSW Office of Sport

Diversity

The NSWHPA has a key focus on broadening the appeal of our sport across the community and has committed to a diversity agenda to secure funding and deliver on our business plan goals.

In 2021 the NSWHPA CoM included 2 females, 2 HG pilots, 4 PG pilots and one PG/HG pilot.

The female subcommittee has recently secured significant funding and has a detailed plan of activities that have been opened to females Australia wide. A detailed presentation will follow the AGM.

The NSWHPA has also provided assured financial support for an event designed to give paraplegics an opportunity to experience the wonders of free flight through an aero tow based tandem HG experience.

At this time PPG and Microlight interests do not have direct representation on the CoM and we welcome interested parties who are passionate enough to get involved.

Funding

Financially the NSWHPA continues to be in a robust position with in excess of \$181,000 of member's equity due to judicious financial management, growing membership numbers, the encouragement of co-operative financing agreements with Clubs on projects and the success in attracting a variety of Government grants to promote our activities. Refer the Treasurers Report.

NSW resident pilots who are SAFA financial in 2020 contributed \$50 annually to the NSWHPA via the Regional Sports Development Levy.

In 2021 the NSWHPA CoM took the decision to not increase this amount in recognition of the impact of COVID-19 on flying time and personal finances.

To supplement this income the NSWHPA has during the last seven years developed an increasingly strong relationship and CoM Grant application expertise with the NSW Office of Sport and this has resulted in significant success in winning funding for specific purposes.

The inflow of these funds has enabled the NSWHPA to year after year spend significantly more money to drive initiatives and support the NSW flying community than is contributed by the pilots themselves from the Regional Levy.

I do thank the Office of Sport and the volunteers of the CoM for their significant efforts in grant application and the required acquittal reporting of the use of these funds after project completion.

Key investments and initiatives in the last year included:

1. Introduction to Hang Gliding

Six months in the planning, the NSWHPA provided financial, management and volunteer support to the four Introduction to Hang Gliding events. These events ran during March and April across the Shellharbour, Canberra, Forbes and Newcastle areas. In excess of 78 members of the public climbed into a harness and experienced the joy of free flight ably assisted by 35 pilot volunteers. Over 40% were females and a number were existing paragliding pilots. As of April, 8 people had formally signed up for a course and in excess of 12 had expressed interest in a future course in Spring 2021.

The enthusiasm of the participants was only surpassed by the grin on the faces of our pilot volunteers who genuinely enjoyed the reaction of the newbies when they left the ground. Thanks to Vicki Cain, Tony Armstrong, Tony Barton and all who give back to the sport that gives us such pleasure.

2. Central Coast Airshow

NSWHPA and SAFA supported the Central Coast Sky Surfers pilots who exhibited hang gliding and paragliding for two days at the May Central Coast Airshow. The event attracted 8-10,000 people each day and many attendees were referred to our clubs and NSW Instructor community.

3. Weather

One of the crucial aspects of our safety is proper decision making of when to fly.

Many pilots hoping to fly start with a high level view of conditions and if that looks positive then drill down using various websites and resources to understand the precise conditions expected for the day in their planned flying area.

During the year NSWHPA published a weather page at nswhpa.org that provides access to a general presentation, the network of Holfuy weather Stations throughout NSW and introduction to the new AUSRASP.

Holfuy network

NSWHPA has for many years provided weather stations at no cost to clubs and continues to guide installation approaches, negotiations with landowners and co-funds mutually agreed installation costs. Upgrades have been implemented at a number of sites including the installation of ultrasonic probes in high wind locations.

- There are currently 9 weather stations in operation – clubs are the custodians of each station in their care. Refer to holfuy.com
- Discussions with landowners are currently underway led by local clubs NHGC and MNCF for up to five additional weather stations in the Watagans range and the Port Macquarie/Bonny Hills area
- Applications are welcome from Clubs for suitable locations

AUSRASP forecast

- The NSWHPA supported and funded the development of enhanced detailed mapping for popular NSW XC sites on the gliding weather forecast AUSRASP site. This replaces the historically popular RASP site that has not been available for some time. Refer to ausrasp.com
- While RASP was unavailable many pilots had subscribed to commercially available platforms charging monthly subscriptions - access to AUSRASP is free Australia wide and is highly encouraged for safety planning and long XC experiences
- Many of us have been using alternate platforms such as Windy and XCskies that have a 25km grid, meaning that their forecast is taking the average of all conditions in a 25km square around the point being looked at
- With this NSWHPA investment the current RASP NSW interpretation will run on a 2.4km grid - the grid spacing determines the accuracy of the forecast on a smaller scale. The smaller the grid the more you can see local effects, like venturis, valley effects, wind gradients and convergence
- Manilla, Dubbo area, Forbes, Lake St. Clair, Blackheath, Stanwell Tops, Spring Hill, Jerilderie areas are included

4. Establishment of a NSWHPA Female Pilot Initiative Subcommittee

The NSWHPA is committed to supporting female pilots in sports aviation and has a 2 year business goal to increase female pilot numbers by 1.5%. To help achieve this goal, we are pleased to announce the formation of a Female Pilot Initiative Subcommittee and strategic alliance to focus on increasing female participation and retention in our sport.

The subcommittee was successful in attracting significant financial support at Ministerial levels for its intentions and we will have more detail in the presentation after the AGM. Thanks to Kaz Waller, Judith De Groot and Natalia Huber for their leadership and drive.

5. Additional activities included

- Site retention reimbursements to:
 - the Newcastle Hang Gliding Club for the State Forests annual fee to fly the increasingly popular Watagans
 - Mid North Coast Flyers for North Brother tree works, signage and LZ landowner access rights
 - Blue Mountains HG Club for ramp improvements and LZ landowner access rights
 - Upper Hunter Yarrowa airstrip for landowner access rights
- Re-negotiated to zero the cost of annual Consent fees to permit flying activities in NSW National Parks
- Financial and volunteer support to develop two new launches, landing zones and the improvement of an existing launch in the Watagans
- Financial support for the State of Origin PG event to ensure NSW pilots participate at no cost
- No loss guarantee for the inaugural Barraba Big Toe HG Competition organisers
- Development, funding and delivery of clinics designed to support females in the sport

- Significant CoM effort resulting in a published Guideline confirming a successful existing arrangement operating since 2011 to ensure that SAFA financial, NSW resident pilots who are financial members of a NSW club can continue to fly for free when visiting other Club sites within NSW
- Financial reimbursement for pilots investing in First Aid, SIV, VHF, Tow endorsement and chute repacking courses.
- New guideline to provide reimbursement for Clubs that incur annual administration costs to assist cash flow and keep costs of membership down
- Support for the Sydney Paragliding & Hang Gliding Club initiative in producing an OoS funded Paragliding Water Rescue video in cooperation with and for distribution to Life Saving Clubs
- Appointment of a Grants Officer volunteer role on the NSWHPA CoM to continue our historical success in applying for and being awarded funds for key activities including female participation, developmental clinics, site development, safety videos and Covid recovery increased participation in Sports programs
- Representation to Air Services Australia on the matter of proposed changes to Class E airspace
- Engagement with SAFA in support of enhanced member consultation.

Governance

The NSWHPA is accountable to SAFA, the Dept of Fair Trading and members for operational and financial reporting. In addition, the Office of Sport requires stringent reporting and the existence of key policies as a condition of considering and extending Grants.

Transparency whilst complying with privacy requirements are key objectives.

The NSWHPA CoM meets monthly via Zoom to save travel costs and impact on volunteer time. Meetings run to a formal agenda and are formally documented, minuted and filed. A physical meeting occurs 2-3 times in a normal year.

The NSWHPA website provides public access to Policies, Guidelines, Constitution, Business Plan, AGM minutes and contact information.

The Committee has reviewed the Business Plan KPI's set for the 2 year period 2019 -2021 and is pleased to report that it has met or exceeded the majority of these measures. Final signoff is expected to be complete in October 2021 and the newly elected Committee will be tasked to set the next set of bi-annual goals.

Succession planning

During the year all documentation and Intellectual Property was moved to Google Drive to preserve corporate memory, drive rigor, streamline volunteer effort, create one repository, deliver effective record keeping and aid succession planning and CoM retention. Thanks to our Secretary Michael Stott for his dedication and patience.

Professional Development

Annually the OoS extends a Sports Development Grant to assist in the administration of Sporting Bodies and a condition of this Grant is that the NSWHPA invested in Professional Development training for CoM members. Two days of training were fully attended and further training is planned in this calendar year.

Culture

At a cultural level the members of the NSWHPA CoM have embraced responsiveness as a key goal. Benefits include:

- Typically by email majority voting the CoM will acknowledge/approve Club requests that meet existing published Guidelines within a 24-48 hour period. This removes delays for clubs and payment occurs in most cases within 48 hours of approval
- Formal monthly meeting by the NSWHPA CoM can then focus on strategic matters rather than transactional and this in turn typically reduces the length of the meetings and impact on volunteer time
- The majority of the CoM members have served for 7-10 years and this experience assist with continually refining the operations of the entity, assists in the optimal initiation of new CoM members and provides a succession plan for future Committee members

The Committee

The 2021 volunteers who served on the Committee working for the benefit of NSW pilots are set out in this table. All will be stepping down as required during this AGM and I thank them for offering themselves for re-nomination.

As of 20 September 2021 the NSWHPA Secretary has received nominations of interest from two NSW pilots and we welcome their interest.

Committee of Management:

SAFA database and Sky Sailor editor confirmed as updated.

Date Committee Elected: The NSWHPA CoM was elected during the AGM on 17 September 2020. All office bearers were elected by the NSWHPA CoM during subsequent CoM meeting held on 14 October 2020

Position	Name	Contact details
President	John Harriott	president@nswhpa.org
Secretary	Michael Stott	secretary@nswhpa.org
Treasurer	Julian Belmonte	treasurer@nswhpa.org
Vice President	Ralf Gittfried	vicepresident@nswhpa.org
SAFA Liaison	Phil de la Hunty	executive@nswhpa.org
Club Liaison	Matt TeHira	executive@nswhpa.org
Marketing/ Comms	Karen Waller	executive@nswhpa.org
Grants/ Prof Devlpt	Judith deGroot	executive@nswhpa.org

New email addresses for 2021 /22 include specific email addresses safaliaison@nswhpa.org, Marketing@nswhpa.org, grantscoordinator@nswhpa.org, nswliaison@nswhpa.org, femalepilots@nswhpa.org

At the last 2020 AGM Melody Braithwaite stepped down from her Treasurer role. We thank her for her dedication and development of robust financial reporting frameworks.

Julian Belmonte took responsibility for the Treasurer role and continues to provide high levels of support in this essential capacity.

Karen Waller joined as our marketing representative and was the instigator and NSWHPA representative for the Female Pilot Initiative Subcommittee initiative. In August Karen relocated to Victoria to pursue her love of our sport and stepped down from the NSWHPA CoM whilst remaining a foundation member of the Women with Wings group.

The Committee welcomed the recent appointment of Natalia Huber as a Casual Member and the lead of the female subcommittee and complement her on the passion, energy and dedication that she brings to the role.

Judith De Groot took on the newly created role of Grants Officer and has driven significant success in our application process and deepened the relationship with the Office of Sport.

I would like to recognise and thank our Vice President Ralf Gittfried for his ten years of selfless contribution and service on the Committee.

Similarly Michael Stott, Matt Te Hira, Phil De la Hunty have all served every year since 2013.

These four people have delivered the stability and continuity needed in a volunteer organisation and remain tireless in their love of the sport and their willingness to give to their fellow pilots.

Conclusion

The outgoing Committee extends its appreciation to the hard working Executives of the Clubs, the commercial operators, equipment suppliers and Competition Directors for all that they do for our sport.

A formal thank you to the SAFA Board and management team and to the Office of Sport and the Hon Natalie Ward Minister for Sport for their endorsement and trust.

We encourage all clubs to discuss your ideas and initiatives with your NSWHPA liaison officer – if anything we don't have enough projects to consider and funds and management support are available for investments that encourage safer flying and more of us doing it.

See you at launch and in the sky.

John Harriott

President

NSWHPA