



## AIRWAVES FEBRUARY 2017

Welcome to the February edition of AIRWAVES the bi-monthly e-newsletter of the Hang Gliding Federation of Australia.

In this edition:

- HGFA president Matt Smith give a progress report on upcoming changes to the insurance options for members and welcomes two new members to the National Committee
- AIRWAVES chats to HGFA-affiliated club president Paul Green from the Sunshine Coast Sports Aviators about their success in working with local landowner to fund a facilities upgrade
- Details of the free Manilla XC Camp, 4-11 February 2017

### President's Update

Like all adventure sports enthusiasts HGFA members know the thrill of pure flight can be risky, that's part of the excitement. But we're also smart enough to manage that risk when we can. So it was no surprise that our 2016 poll about insurance prompted the highest response rate we've ever had.

A huge majority agreed that Personal Accident Insurance would be ideal, but there was less consensus on what that cover should offer. Some only wanted basic cover while others were looking for premium cover.

So this year we've been investigating the contractual details of giving our members the option of both. We expect to be able to bring you a full update in March but what I can tell you is that we plan to offer members basic cover **at no extra cost** with the option to pay a premium for a higher level of cover.

I'd also like to welcome two new members to the National Committee. Brodrick Osborne joins as the representative for North Queensland while Paul Green comes on board as the representative for South Queensland. It's great to have Queensland represented at the national level again.

- Matt Smith, President, HGFA

## Sunshine Coast Sports Aviators ‘Ramp Up’ Facilities at Teewah



Members of the Sunshine Coast Sports Aviators Club enjoy some of the most thrilling pure flight in the country. With around 300 active members it's a big club and justifiably proud of showcasing our exhilarating sport to many local and international enthusiasts in this beautiful part of Queensland. Visitors come from as far afield as North America and Europe to enjoy the diverse launch sites, and support the local tourist economy.

“It's a great place to come and base yourself for a flying visit”, says club president Paul Green.

The club looks after facilities for members at a dozen coastal and inland launch sites, each offering a breathtaking bird's eye view of the Sunshine Coast and Hinterland.

Most of the sites are on land owned by one of three local councils, or the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). Sunshine Coast Sports Aviators Club has a long history of working with the landowners to make sure club members and the community benefit from the safest and best possible facilities.

“We are able to operate due to the good grace of landowners, so those relationships are very important to our club”, says Green, “We work hard at building and maintaining them because without them we don't fly”.

Among the most popular sites is Rainbow Beach, rated as one of the top ten coastal sites in the world by ‘Cross Country Magazine’, the international free flying magazine. Rainbow Beach is a sub-tropical paradise located at the entry to the Cooloola Recreation Area in the Great Sandy National Park. It's managed by QPWS, and clubs or commercial operators pay for a permit to operate there, contributing much needed funds for its upkeep.

At the southern tip of Rainbow Beach is the very popular Teewah site. It's mostly a south-east site, says Green, but on a good day, you can fly 30 to 40 kilometres, probably more, up and back over the National Park. Usually, there's plenty of room in the air, and it's a wonderful soaring site.

Back in 2010 QPWS approached the club with some concerns about the public safety of the launch ramp at Teewah. Although the ramp was fenced off, they were concerned it would be a public liability problem and asked if the club would consider pulling it down.

The old wooden ramp at Teewah needed ongoing maintenance and had started to outlive its functionality; it wasn't suitable for all types of glider, and certain wind conditions could pose a problem at launch.

But the club still needed somewhere to fly and didn't have the money to do any work on the ramp. So instead they suggested building a natural ramp if QPWS would commit to funding the project. QPWS agreed, on condition the Club provided volunteers and expert input to ensure the ramp would be fit for purpose and safe for the public.

For a number of reasons it fell off the agenda, but became a priority again in 2016, and QPWS followed through on their commitment for funding. The natural ramp has now been built and the Teewah site official launch is expected to take place at the start of February.

“It's a great example of a government body investing funds gained from permits back in the infrastructure of the area covered by the permits”, says Green. “It improves the entire tourist amenity for this important National Park”.

Thanks to the efforts of QPWS working in conjunction with the Sunshine Coast Sports Aviators, flying conditions at this fantastic site are now optimum. It can support a large number of pilots and provides a great training area for commercial operators.

This cooperation is just the beginning for the club who are now working with local councils and other aviation clubs and associations to get state government support for an upgrade of facilities at council-owned sites in the Sunshine Coast region.

“Councils are realising more and more the benefit our activities can bring to an area”, says Green.

And he acknowledges it’s a mutually beneficial relationship; “the more opportunities for us to provide the kind of solutions landowners are looking for, the more we keep our members flying,” he says.

Members and visitors looking to experience the natural beauty of this part of the world and enjoy the thrill of pure flight our sport has to offer are sure to agree.

## **XC Camp at Mt Borah, Manilla, NSW: 4-11 February 2017**



Get a taste of XC flying at one of the world’s premier paragliding and hang gliding locations.

The Annual XC camp at Manilla in NSW is a free event organised by local paragliding pilot Godfrey Wenness, a former paragliding world record holder, and it’s a great opportunity for novice and expert pilots alike to try their hand at XC flying.

Manilla is a former site of the FAI Paragliding World Championships and boasts four astro-turfed launches for nearly all wind directions. With some of the safest XC flying in Australia it’s a chance to put your skills to the test, and many pilots have flown their XC personal best times here.

There will be daily weather briefings, tips and trick sessions, campfire catch-ups, regular day prizes and scoring updates in all classes (fun/sport/serial). With camping and cabin accommodation to suit every budget you can stay for as many days as you like, fly as far as you can fly, and learn from some of the best XC pilots in the country.

For more information and details about how to register, check out the Fly Manilla website [here](#).

- Matt Smith, President, HGFA.



