

# President's Report

Model Flying NZ AGM, Aviation Country Club,  
Auckland, 20 July 2013

Good morning to you all. and welcome to the 2013 AGM. A special thank-you to our guest speakers today, Harley Napier of MA Risk Solutions and Martin Stroud from Dual, our Insurer. I trust you found their presentations, and Q and A session, interesting and useful. There is no doubt that the NZ insurance market is a difficult one nowadays.

Our membership is currently around 2100. This, again, contrasts well with a significant number of other niche sport, hobby or pastime groups that report steadily falling memberships.

Our average age has probably increased a little, but so has the age of all citizens. There is within the full-size aviation community, an awareness this will be a problem for them within the next 10 years or so, in all areas, aircrew, maintenance engineers and manufacturing. I very recently attended a workshop run by the Royal Aeronautical Society that is investigating how young people might be helped to overcome hurdles, and to realize their aviation goals. There are a number of initiatives already in existence, and the RAeS is planning on bringing these together to enhance sharing of plans and projects, and to reduce inefficient duplications of effort.

Our website has had a significant new look this year, and we must thank Richard Race for his great effort in producing a fine site. There have been some outages from time to time, and a new host is under investigation.

The magazine has gone from strength to strength. It was disappointing to see that the first edition from Murray Race was the subject of ill-founded criticism. Even more concerning, a recent article that I wrote was the subject of a serious formal complaint to the NZ Press Council. They rejected the complaint as unfounded. (details were embargoed until today, but the NZPC finding will be in the next mag) It is especially disappointing that a few people can find the time to generate critical material, rather than useful and positive content. And of course, such criticism simply dampens the urge for others to contribute.

There is still a continual debate over the matter of a paper magazine vs an on-line version. There are strongly held positions on both sides, I suspect many might share my view: frankly, I don't mind either, but still prefer a paper version for a number of reasons.

We now have a Parkflyer Code of Practice, and a membership category, that a few people have taken advantage of.

In keeping with our long-standing policy, we had an excellent, and busy, display, with great help from local clubs, at the Omaka "Classic Fighters" air-show over Easter. Once again, we had exposure to a large number of people who had varying degrees of interest in aviation. The crowd on the Saturday was estimated to be 25,000, a new high record for Omaka.

The Council, especially Dave Wright and Colin Kemp, have been working with the new single Auckland council and a consulting firm to produce a submission for model flying in the Auckland region. This will identify the future needs for MFNZ, and will essentially register, for all time, model flying as a worthwhile, valid and permitted (subject to reasonable restrictions) activity within the Auckland "supercity" area. Auckland clubs will be well aware of this activity, after the meeting with them on July 11. The total cost of this project is around \$12,000, significant, but a very sound investment for the future. It is also planned that this work will serve as a template for other cities in New Zealand.

We are still investigating the feasibility of setting up a model flying museum. The problem, is the provision of suitable premises, that are not remote, but are affordable, and can offer guaranteed medium-long term tenure. We have a few promising locations, but work still needs to be done. The exact same problems currently beset the BMFA in the UK, and were experienced by the AMA in the USA. Of course, the economies of scale generated by 300 million residents and very cheap rural land in Indiana eased the AMA's problems. These advantages are not open to us.

On pages 14-15 of the June 2013 "MFW" there was a proposal to establish a charitable trust to support the acquisition and retention of model flying fields within New Zealand. I hope that you have all read and considered it. Kevin Barnes has done some very useful work on this, and will discuss it more later today.

Regrettably, our Patron, Air Marshall (retired) Carey Adamson has had to stand down due to ill-health. I sincerely thank him for the time he spent with us. The matter of a replacement is one for the new Council.

Our treasurer does not propose any subscription increases this year. There have been some comments in various forums about the vastly "excess" monies we hold. In fact, our total assets are around \$230k. This is only 2 years trading and we have professional advice that this is most certainly not an excessive amount. Another viewpoint is that this sum is about \$107 per member. Many clubs have more than that.

I, Jonathan Shorer and Dave Wright, recently attended the Callaghan Institute seminar on UASs. It is interesting to note the very significant activity here in NZ. The rules have now matured and are the subject of an ICAO circular. It is now very clear. Models are flown for Sport, leisure or competition purposes. Anything else is a UAV or UAS or RPA (there are some minor differences in these categories)

FPV models are increasing in popularity, as the technology advances and the cost reduces. It is now very likely that the first FPV fly-in will be held in an existing Danger Area (D522 in the Manawatu) probably in October.

MFNZ, as usual, regularly attends NZ Aviation Federation meetings every 2 months. This gives us a little more say and much more visibility amongst other airspace users. This is a zero-cost activity, as the Federation gives MFNZ a generous grant to cover all costs.

The 65<sup>th</sup> Nationals were held in Kirwee in early January and were a success with 90+ entries, and a small profit, which represents a good result for a South Island Nationals. The 66<sup>th</sup> Nationals will be held at Clareville from the 30 Dec 2013 to the 4 Jan 2014. There are some changes proposed to the timetable and format, but more on this during the SIG AGM.

Our Wings Badge program has been the subject of some debate, and the new Council will be taking a look at it's current status.

In the past 12 months, a number of clubs have found themselves in some degree of difficulty with airspace rules. However, in each case a solution has been managed with the help of CAA and/or Airways NZ. This will be an on-going matter as NZ airspace is much more congested than many believe. However, it is pleasing to see that about 23 Danger Areas have been promulgated for model flying.

I have been on the NZMAA/MFNZ Council for a total, at various times, of over 11 years, the last 7 as President. This is an extraordinary long period, and led to my decision announced 12 months ago to hand-over to "fresh blood" at this AGM. I would like to sincerely thank all those who served on the Council with me, and wish the new Council all the best.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Lennox', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Barry Lennox  
MFNZ President  
20 July 2013.