



North East Victorian Hang Gliding Club Inc.

P.O Box 317
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President's Report, 2009

The year since the last Annual General Meeting has been marked by significant events for our flying community, both within our club and on a national basis.

Within our club we have undergone:

1. The first full year of the new club membership fees levels,
2. The completion of the Mystic Launch surface and protective barriers,
3. The commissioning of the Mystic LZ amenities
4. Impact due to the 2008-2009 fire season,
5. Ongoing negotiations with Hancocks regarding the trees adjacent the Mystic landing paddock
6. An upgrading of our membership administration to a more on-line oriented format,
7. The tragic loss of one of our local flying identities, Michele Baptiste,
8. The loss overseas of one of our regular visiting pilots, Mile Randjelovic

National issues that have impinged on this club include:

1. The divisive and often bitter debate surrounding the Special General Meeting moves,
2. The present atmosphere of uncertainty regarding funding possibilities under the new regime,
3. A new management within CASA and ASA promoting a hardline approach to airspace control.

Our sport tends to be somewhat introspective at times. This dynamic can sometimes promote apathy in regard to issues that are best addressed by us collectively. It is noteworthy that nearly half of the HGFA membership voted on the SGM issue, somewhat of a record, but the subsequent HGFA board election (just as, if not more important) only attracted the usual mediocre voter turn-out.

Looking back over the past year, I have seen instances where our club community rallied, something I find very encouraging. Nevertheless, it is important that we not become complacent about what NEVHGC is. It is not just a Mystic administration system. There are other sites which have been neglected over the years, and only within the last season or so received some long overdue attention. It is important that we continue this push for these other sites (Mount Emu, Tawonga Gap, Mount Buffalo, The Pines). The pilots who have put the time in have been very engaged, but it is important that more people be brought into this. All of these sites (Mystic included) represent a heritage built up by the pioneering hang gliding community in the late seventies and early eighties.

The keys to a site's survival are usage and appropriate maintenance. Both of these require people, not just funds. Not only do we need to continue to attract new people to our sport, we also need to attract them to our club.

I would like to thank the members of the outgoing committee:

Secretary:	Bill Brooks
Treasurer:	John Greenwood (whose firm approach has seen an improvement in the club finances)
Communications:	Barb Scott and Brian Webb (who took over Membership duties from John Greenwood and set up the present on-line membership system)

Competitions/Events: Bill Oates (who took over from myself during the year)
VHPA Rep: Jo Rainczuk (who also put in some legwork in the negotiations with Hancocks regarding the trees next to the LZ)
Committee Members: Ollie Barthelmes and Rod Oldfield

During Paul Harrison's presidency (some 7 years ago) it was suggested that a manual of procedure which documented "how to do it" be formulated. This would contain everything, ranging from basic committee procedures to useful telephone contacts for a given issue. With the number of committee members not standing for re-election, myself included, this project has been revived. It is important that a repository of past committee experience be maintained. It is still up to an incumbent committee to decide for themselves whether or not they follow these procedures, but at least the knowledge is there for reference.

In the meantime, as part of the handover process, the key members of the outgoing committee are still very much going to be available for new committee members to contact if they need advice or information.

I urge club members to put themselves forward for election. It is important for the long term health of this club that we don't have the same people doing these jobs year in, year out. Previous experience is not an absolute requirement for any of these positions, merely a desire to contribute to your club and help keep it running. Anything else is easily learnt "on the job". Using the eMail caucus approach (via the committee eMail forum), the majority of committee deliberations and decisions can be made on-line which lessens the need for committee members to come together – and lessens the tyranny of time and distance entailed.

A significant challenge that the club faces is the resolution of the issue of the trees adjacent the landing zone – these endanger the viability of the present area. We have now got to the stage where Hancocks is agreeable to a land swap. A search is now on (via Simon Jones of the Alpine Shire) for crown or shire land that would be suitable for this.

Another challenge the club faces is the original long term goal of having Mystic become a site accessible to anyone who is an HGFA member (not just for NEVHGC members). A draft memorandum has been published on the members' forum and the concept will be presented to you tonight. Although it was to have been underpinned by the now defunct SARSIG arrangements, the present HGFA board has indicated that the proposal still merits their consideration.

Yet another challenge that the club faces is the Albury airspace issue – which restricts flying over The Pines and in the vicinity of the Myrtleford/Mudgegonga area. A proposal has been put to Alan Bridges of CASA which would gain 1000 feet of height allowance over The Pines, and an extra 2000 feet in the vicinity of Myrtleford Hill/The Pinnacles. Action is continuing on this, let's hope that we have something concrete in time for the Bogong Cup.

My three year tenure as president has been a wild ride at times. I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who provided support or input to this club. Even though I will no longer be on the committee, I will stay on as Senior Safety Officer – I'm certainly still going to be around for the club, just not full tilt.

This club, its sites and its flying community belong to us all. Our collective input to this club will bring us the club we collectively deserve.

All the best,

Karl Texler
President (2008-09)
North East Victorian Hang Gliding Club