**ACTHPA ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019**

I am pleased to present to you all my first Annual Report on the activities of the ACTHPA after my 12 months’ term as president.

I hope you will agree with me that it has been an excellent year, with a high level of enthusiasm for the sport in all its forms, with many new pilots joining the Association and the longer term pilots maintaining their commitment to flying themselves and supporting newcomers both informally on the hill and through our mentoring program.

There is a strong feeling of comradeship between members and a great deal of sharing of experience through club meetings, Facebook posts and personal friendships.

It was especially pleasing to see more women join ACTHPA, all of whom showed a great aptitude for rapid learning and progression in the sport.

The 2018/2019 ACTHPA Committee elected at the AGM in October 2018 comprised the following members:

President: Rene Sedlmaier

Vice President: Jason McGregor

Secretary: Wes Kilham

Treasurer: Allister Higgins

Committee: Alex Chapman

Committee: Ian Leaver

Public Officer: Peter (Chop) Lamont

HGFA (now SAFA) Representative for the ACT and surrounding districts: Alistair Dickie

During the year ACTHPA voted to co-opt Doug Mathie (known as Dug Malcolm) as an additional committee member with the title of Site Development Officer.

The Committee, in close cooperation with the members, has been busy promoting safe, fun and reliable flying in line with the strategic priorities as set out in the SAFA Operating Plan and in line with the priorities set by the Association.

We have been greatly assisted by SAFA and by Alistair Dickie in particular, who has kept us informed, urged us to consider changes to the SAFA structure and to cast our votes in relation to a variety of proposals. We acknowledge the many hours of work Alistair has put in, especially in the re-writing of the constitution. We are the beneficiaries of his devotion to the sport. Alistair has sought our views on insurances, fee structures, the proposed name change and other aspects related to the development of the sport.

I would also like to thank all of the committee members for their hard work in promoting flying, in seeking to improve standards and safety and in supporting newer members.

**Priority 1 – Safety – Promoting and enhancing safety amongst our members and visiting pilots.**

Over the reporting period much has been achieved, including

* Reserve repack nights
* Financial support for First Aid Courses for ACTHPA pilots
* Ongoing review of incidents and accidents at monthly club meetings
* The promotion of a mentoring program for all pilots
* Upgrades and maintenance of flying sites
* Installation of new wind socks at several sites
* Safety Officer and Senior Safety Officer training sessions

In general it would appear that these efforts have been successful, as there was a decrease in the number and seriousness of accidents during the year. There were some events that were reported to SAFA, at least one requiring investigation, but very few locally that required attendance at casualty or hospitalization.

Several pilots had accidents when flying overseas and at other sites.

I wish to commend all members for the attention they have shown to safety matters during the last 12 months. There have been some excellent robust discussions at club meetings about safety and lessons to be learned from incidents have been included in meeting minutes. The awards system continues to be used to good effect and pilots have been more than willing to share their experiences, which have included a close encounter with power lines, landing in the venturi at Spring Hill, failing to connect a harness and more.

Once again, special thanks to Alistair Dickie, for his continuing role in leading the training sessions for safety officers. It is fair to say that the Association has more trained safety officers than in any time in recent history and they span the disciplines of paragliding, powered hang gliding and hang gliding.

**Priority 2 – Flying – Promoting flying activities**

This year has been excellent in this regard, with a large number of new pilots who are eager, enthusiastic and very active.

There is also a solid cohort of older pilots, many now retired or semi retired from paid work, who fly at every available opportunity, meaning that flying is certainly not confined to weekends. There is a group of pilots keen to be on the hill often at dawn (especially at Lake George) and then again after work. The winter flying season was especially good this year.

Pilots were keen also to attend various events such as Floaters in the Flatlands at Forbes, the Dalby Hang Gliding Competition, the XC event at Manilla, State of Origin and the annual fly in with the Skyhigh Club at Corryong. A number of pilots competed in competition flying at Bright, Corryong and Canungra.

Various pilots flew in Europe – Spain, Macedonia, Slovenia and elsewhere.

As president I have been developing the concept of a Club Challenge, which is at an early stage, but hopefully it will serve to help pilots set clear goals for progression.

Kari Ellis represented Australia (and ACTHPA) in international competitions, including the Paragliding World Cup in Europe, again performing with distinction. She remains one of the leading female pilots in the world, with a third placing in her most recent event.

Club meetings were well attended, with an average of around 20 or more pilots attending regularly. The Association also established a monthly presentation on a variety of topics such as the Sea Breeze, hike and fly, reserve deployment, weather forecasting, winter flying and flying PPG. Special thanks to the many presenters, who include Michael Porter and Peter Evans.

Peter Evans is leading the way in the club with expeditionary PPG flight and long solo flights into the local mountain areas.

**Priority 3 – Sites- Maintenance and improvement of local flying sites**

This continues to be a key focal point for the committee and the members.

**Spring Hill:** The Association has provided ongoing financial support and some limited manual labour to assist with road maintenance, weed control and more. Phil Robinson has further plans to improve the launch sites and has commenced work to clear rocks and prepare the ground. This has been hampered to some extent by unfavourable weather conditions (mainly drought).

**Lake George:** The Geary’s Gap North launch site remains closed and there is little likelihood at present that this situation will change.

The south side launch is open and the Association continues to have a very positive relationship with the land owners and land holders involved. A working party made improvements to the low launch.

**Collector:** The ACTHPA continues to have an excellent relations with the land holder at launch and the land managers responsible for the land at the landing zone.

**Lanyon:** Much progress has been made in securing Lanyon as a regular club site. ACT Parks has been most cooperative and supportive of our activities and the site is being used far more frequently than in the past. Johnathan Bishop has led the way in exploring the possibilities of cross country flight from Lanyon.

**Pig Hill**: Due primarily to the diplomatic efforts of Alistair Dickie, flying has resumed at Pig Hill. Access is restricted and occasional, but this is a far better result that having a site permanently closed.

**Hike and Fly sites:** This is a work in progress, but advances have been made in locating launch and landing zones for hike and fly activity, mainly in the Namadgi area. Doug Mathie is leading the way here.

Other sites not directly under ACTHPA control

**Tumut:** ACTHPA members have shown a renewed interest in flying in the Tumut area this year and it seems likely it will become increasingly popular.

**Corryong**: This is an excellent site, now with improved facilities (eg a weather station) that will help to promote flying.

**Weather Stations:** Alistair Dickie has continued to maintain our weather stations and we are hopeful that in the near future we will be able to install one at the Lanyon site.

**Christmas hampers:** Sharon Dowling prepared hampers again at Christmas time for delivery to the land holders, owners and managers who make our sport possible.

**Updating of site guides and website:** Special thanks to Alex Chapman who has worked on our website and introduced better communications on flying days by setting up WhatsApp groups.

**Priority 4 – Administration – Effectively administering the ACTHPA**

This includes ongoing communication with members, supporting members in their learning and training, liaising with land holders, ACT Parks, Access Canberra and SAFA.

**Financial Position:** The Association’s financial position is very sound. Cash assets have increased in the past 12 months, despite spending on site maintenance, first aid training and equipment.

**Operating Plan:** The ACTHPA continues to work in line with the Operating Plan

**Chief Flying Instructor (CFI):** Raphael Esquillaro continues to support the Canberra region, visiting as often as possible. Mike Brady is also approved as a CFI by SAFA and provides excellent support to our members.

Thank you for the support you’ve shown me during the last 12 months.

Rene Sedlmaier

President