



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

President's Report to the 54th Annual General Meeting of AOPA NZ, 2025

It is with great pleasure to present to you the annual AOPA NZ President Report for the AGM in Hawera on the 8 March 2025. As ever, I wish to thank the Executive Committee and our sub committees for their support and work to ensure that AOPA NZ is serving the membership well, making good progress in all key areas of focus and of course adhering to best practice. I also wish to thank my husband Gerald for his understanding and support over the last 12 months.

2024 AGM in Timaru and the AOPA NZ Charitable Trust

The AGM in Timaru was on the 9 March 2024 where 46 members attended and much convivial conversation took place. The Executive was very pleased to see the AOPA NZ Charitable Trust proposal supported so enthusiastically by the members present. The key difference to the proposal put forward in 2023 was that the trust is to be a separate entity to AOPA NZ, although clearly there will be links between the two. The four founding Trustees were introduced to the meetings and their biographies were published in the AOPANZ magazine. The meeting also agreed to a seed fund being established for the trust to enable them to get projects underway in the next 12 to 24 months.

There is a great deal of work being done by the trustees to ensure that the Trust has the right administrative and governance structures in place, and they have been working on frameworks for receiving donations/bequests, and also mechanisms for distribution. The aim being to ensure that the vast majority of funds received are used to help more people get into GA - right across the spectrum. The trust will be communicating via the campaign branding "Think Aviation" which some of you may have seen. More about all of this soon, from the trustees themselves.

AOPA NZ Executive and support roles

We were very pleased to have Tim Pearce join the Executive Committee as a replacement to Chris Hoffman at the start of 2024. Tim has organised this 2025 Air Safari and is a valuable contributor to the AOPA NZ Executive team. I'd like to thank Chris for his valuable contribution on the Executive, and to thank him for remaining active as a sub committee member to the Advocacy portfolio.

The Executive Committee held a very good strategic planning session on 18 October to discuss the future of AOPA NZ over the next 5-10 years. Conducted by our elected facilitator and Executive Committee member Roger van der Zanden, the meeting's focus was on key initiatives and strategies to enhance the association's role in advocating for pilots and promoting general aviation in New Zealand. Priorities are to the advocacy portfolio, safety (as always) and membership number growth.

Existing portfolios and priorities will largely remain in place, noting the decision to work closely on RMA issues with NZ District Councils. Advocacy held a meeting with AIA and it is confirmed AOPA NZ can collaborate on the nature and impact of District Council RMA restrictions around aviation activities. Tony Michelle of AIA has been doing a great job updating our advocacy team of district council RMAs.

Constitution updates to meet the Incorporated Society Act for AOPA NZ has been coordinated by Geoff van Asch and Geoff has presented robust financial statements with professional recommendations for investment and spending allocation for our Association.

Many of you will have had contact with our member services person, Karen Williams, who started with us on 1 December 2023. Karen has been supporting the Executive Committee and meeting the day to day needs of AOPA NZ members. Karen is based in the Wairarapa and she has extensive experience in Safety Culture and interpersonal relations.

Advocacy - representing our membership on a range of issues

Warbirds Over Wanaka took place on 29-31 March 2024. AOPA NZ held a booth within the NZ Aviation Federation Marquee where the charitable trust was introduced to members and the simulator was operated and supervised by LearntoflyNZ Flight Instructors. There were good levels of interest in both.

As representative of AOPANZ, I attended the IAOPA Assembly in Washington DC during 6-11 May 2024. This assembly provided a unique opportunity for affiliates, aviation and industry leaders, government officials, and key stakeholders to come together, share insights, and discuss the latest challenges, opportunities, and developments impacting general aviation globally. Chris Hoffman accompanied me as co-opt executive member of AOPANZ.

IAOPA announced the appointment of Darren Pleasance taking the 6th President and Chief Executive role for AOPA USA as of 1 January 2025. As New Zealand President, I am pleased to have been selected to be on the Nomination Committee of IAOPA for the election of officers for the period 2025-2028.

We met with the CAA Board in October to discuss various matters. Notably, we raised concerns about CAA management (principally that many in key management roles within CAA are non-aviator orientated). We were expecting a report back within a month and we did not. In the meantime the round of redundancies (and the accompanying process staff are going through) has taken effect. The date to finalise the restructure of CAA is 7 April 2025.

Other advocacy work during the past 12 months includes:

- AOPA submitted on both rounds of the Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), a CAA process of consultation on proposed rules changes. The NPRM included a series of restrictions concerning cost sharing, specifically requiring a Class 2 or higher medical, and a limitation on the type of aircraft which could be used for a cost sharing flight. After two rounds of submissions, both limitations were removed from the final rule set recommended to the Minister. This is a good example of continual regulatory creep, which if we do not push back, will continue to constrain aviation activity. Supporting initiatives to keep airfields and airports open to GA.
- Having input into District Council Plans to ensure the continued operation of private airstrips around New Zealand.
 - We are awaiting an outcome to the Timaru District Council Plan regarding an overly restrictive set of rule provisions in the Proposed District Plan. Other District Plan activity has included Mackenzie, Waitaki, and working to resolve an appeal with Queenstown Lakes District. Actioned by Executive Committee member John Evans.

- Ground lease negotiations continue between the Ashburton District Council and many of our members, with a successful outcome of an agreed square meter rate. Thank you to all of those on the advocacy team who have contributed to this, and especially to Neville Bailey for leading the charge.
- Both Ashburton and Timaru councils are proving to be catalysts for airport and private land use for the remaining 60 councils throughout New Zealand - hence our focus on these two councils.
- AOPA NZ has offered support in retaining Turangi aerodrome.
- In collaboration with AIA, input into (or reaction to) District plan updates affecting General Aviation.
- AIA Conference participation in August 2024. This was attended by Executive Committee member Ian Sinclair.
- At the NZ Aviation Federation AGM in Wellington during December 2024, Myself along with Scott James of RAANZ, was appointed to the NZAF Committee. This role is to assist the NZAF President and VP to action points for the council of NZAF.
- During February 2025, the DOC concession was granted renewal for AOPA NZ to access Milford Sound with 100 landings per year for a 10 year duration, replacing the 6 concessions previously administered by AOPA. There are a new set of conditions including each concessionaire being a signatory, through our online form system, which is being communicated to members.

I thank John Evans, Neville Bailey, Shaun Gilbertson, Nigel Griffith, Chris Hoffman and Reuben Hansen in particular for their commitment to our advocacy work.

Safety - ensuring that safety is at the heart of everything we do

A big thank you on behalf of AOPA NZ and all of our members to the safety group who have put many hours in to all things safety over the last 24 months. The group consists of John Evans, myself, Geoff van Asch, Dave Paterson, Neville Bailey, Reuben Hansen and Ivor Yockney

Also, congratulations to John Evans on the safe arrival of daughter Sophie in September. We're still looking for the "standard operating procedures manual for parenthood" John, and when we find it we will pass it to you!

As we have said many times, the safety culture is a critical component of every aviation gathering, and AOPA NZ Fly-ins are no exception. No matter which destination AOPA NZ chooses to host at, there are always risks that must be managed through risk registers, the development of robust group cultures, and ongoing communication about the importance of staying current and following joining procedures. These systems are functioning well, and I believe that safety at our Fly-ins continues to improve.

The low level ADSB stations are researched and tested and are ready to launch into the ADSB network. Gliding NZ has joined in collaboration with AOPA NZ with their already released PureTrack system to broaden the tracking app profile and in conjunction with FR24. Locations and installation of ADSB stations are now to be identified and funded. This will enable aircraft in strategic 'shadow' areas below 3000ft to be tracked successfully and AOPA NZ considers this a safety advantage to the GA community.

Peter Armstrong, Ian Sinclair, and Geoff van Asch are researching, installing, and testing low-cost, low-level ADSB stations to address some of the gaps in the Airways NZ network. This work should enhance the effectiveness of our ADSB systems in tracking and flight following.

The safety subcommittee meets regularly—especially leading up to and following Fly-ins—and is always open to feedback or safety concerns from members.

AOPA NZ is continuing to liaise closely with CAA. AOPANZ has signed a Statement of Commitment to the “work together, stay apart” campaign to demonstrate safety within the unattended aerodrome environment.

Social - the heart of our AOPA NZ community

We love it when our members can get together, make connections, share experiences and stories, and fly together.

- A Fly-in at Omarama took place during April 2024 where a decision on the actual date was made a week in advance for a suitable weather pattern. The Fly-In was a great success as ever, with Omarama offering up great aviating options for the Fly-in.
- The Charlie Draper fly-in at Darfield took place 20-22 September 2024, with 30 aircraft in attendance. Despite being a fixed date, the weather cooperated, allowing for a successful gathering. The event welcomed aspiring student pilots and newly qualified CPLs, who all enjoyed the camaraderie and activities.
- The one day fly-ins (ODF) have been popular and have taken place throughout the year. During November and December 2024 for example, there were ODF's in Kokonga (Maniototo), Turangi, Motueka, Blythe Downs (North Canterbury) and Butler Strip in the Hawkes Bay.
- The 2025 new year fly in took place at Lake Heron mid Canterbury on 10-12 January hosted by the Toddhunters. A tenting escape organised by John Evans and AOPA NZ call this a “back to basics” event.
- There was also a fly-in on 19 January at Moana Strip near Lake Brunner, hosted by the Whitmores, the South Island West Coast has proven to be the destination for sun over the Christmas period and it was fitting to celebrate.

Thank you to all of those involved in hosting, planning and organising these events. And a big thank you to all of those who have attended, following our guidance and safety procedures - which are the backbone of these successful events. We know that there is a lot of work involved to get these up and running and keep safety standards high, but equally important is that all of us as members do our bit.

There are of course more events coming up over the next few months, and we will send out alerts about these as they are announced or planned.

Publishing, communications and digital

Approach Magazine is our popular key channel for detailed communications with members. Thanks to the team of Anna MacKenzie (Editor), Ross Millichamp (Editorial Support) and Karen Williams (Advertising and Marketing) for producing four high quality editions over the past year with a great mix of content about our social activities, advocacy, safety and the technical aspects of aviation. Don Ryder has now stepped down from this role after many years, and we thank him for his huge contribution to the success of Approach Magazine.

Our email updates (once “weekly” but now more “as required”) is our core mode of communication for urgent or time-limited issues, particularly where we need you as members to do something. Thanks to Ian Sinclair for his significant continued contribution on digital platforms.

Facebook and Instagram will continue to be a focus to ensure that people of all ages are kept up to date with the activities of AOPA NZ - and its a great way for us to reach the wider flying community.. WhatsApp is

proving to be a valuable tool for communicating with participants at our Fly-ins, and we will continue to use that platform at events with many members.

I am pleased to confirm that in the coming weeks, we'll start to roll out the first of around two dozen video interviews with some of our more experienced AOPA NZ members. The "Pilots Talk" series has been two years in the making (with interviewing and archiving taking place to this point, and production now well underway). These interviews are intended to be candid and not feel overly edited. We aim to build an enlightening and growing channel of member perspectives and stories for all of us to enjoy, as well as providing inspiration to younger people thinking about getting involved in GA. As much as I would like to take the credit for such editing skill, the appreciation of this effort goes out to Mark Sinclair, a communications expert and an asset to the team.

And so to the future

I announced my resignation in the last AOPA NZ magazine issue, perhaps prematurely. I am now in the position to continue as President for AOPA NZ during 2025 which leaves our vice president, Ross Millichamp, to focus on the publishing portfolio, in which role he is doing a fabulous job.

Sue Kronfeld, President, AOPA NZ - February 2025