

MODEL AERONAUTICAL  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.  
**N e w s l e t t e r**  
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#### **M.A.A.A. Council Conference**

Every year the M.A.A.A. Council meets in February to set the path for the year. As in the recent past the meeting was held in Melbourne over the weekend of February 23 and 24. The Council is of course made up of representatives of all the State Associations and is in effect the Board of Directors of the MAAA.

One of the most important decisions taken at the meeting, and which has an impact on every member, is the setting of fees for the next membership year. This commences on July 1.

One of the major factors that influence the fees are the three insurance policies that the M.A.A.A. takes out for its members. These policies are, Public Liability, Personal Accident and Directors and Officers. As I noted in 2001 Newsletter No. 3, the collapse of HIH cost the M.A.A.A. some \$41,000. This was due to the need to take out a new policy to cover us for the remainder of the year and that the cost of the insurance policy with a new company cost an additional \$2-00 per member. Naturally neither of these amounts were budgeted for as the fees had been set before the collapse of HIH. If the MAAA had not used its reserves to cover these additional costs it would have had to increase the fees last year by over \$4 a member.

As you no doubt have read in the press there has been considerable turmoil in the public liability insurance business. There have been many examples of massive fee rises in this and other fields of insurance, in some cases to the point where the activity is not economically viable. Naturally we expected that it would affect us and we were not wrong.

One of the problems that confronted the Council was that they were unable to obtain a fixed quote for the 2002/2003 year. All the insurance companies that were contacted gave the same comment, that they would not give a fixed quote so far out from the starting date of the policy, July 1<sup>st</sup>. The company that we are currently covered by provided us with a tentative quote that will be fixed closer to the starting date of the policy. This quote was significantly higher than last year, the equivalent of \$6 per member compared to the amount that last years fees were actually based on.

They noted that if our accident history changed then the "quote" would change. This put the Council in the awkward situation of not having a fixed quote on which to base the fees. With last year's loss due to undersetting the fees fresh in their minds, they decided that an insurance contingency of \$2-00 should be added to the fees. This is to cover the situation if there is an increase in the insurance quote of up to that amount before the start of the policy. It was agreed that this contingency fund would be identified in the next financial statement. If it is either not required this year, or only partly required, the balance would be used for the same reason next year if needed.

The Council set the M.A.A.A. fees for the 2002/2003 year at Seniors \$50, Pensioners \$50 and Juniors \$20. This is only the M.A.A.A. component. The increase of \$10 per Senior Member and \$5 per junior member has been entirely due to insurance cost increases. It will be noted that this year the Pensioner and Senior fee is the same. The criteria to obtain Pensioner fee in the past has been the possession of Social Security pensioner card. Over the years the difference in rate between the two classes had reduced to a small amount. The Council felt that with the increasing age of our members and the number of these cards available to all age groups it was appropriate that the Pensioner and Senior rates should be brought into line.

The MAAA cost is one element of your fee and you also pay a State Association fee as well. This varies from State to State. You will be advised by your State Association of the total fees for the 2002/3003 year in the near future.

#### **Insurance**

Over the past three years M.A.S. N.S.W. decided not to take out the person accident policy for their members. This was to keep their fees lower. All other State Associations have had this policy. Recently their membership decided that they would like to also have this cover and so for the 2002/2003 year they will have this policy This now means that all M.A.A.A. affiliated modellers have the same insurance cover.

If you are involved in a situation that you believe will, or could at a latter date, give rise to an insurance claim, you should immediately contact your State Secretary who will send you Accident Claim forms to be completed and sent to the insurance company.

### **M.A.A.A. Hall Of Fame & FAI Air Sports Medal**

At the annual Council meeting members may be inducted into the M.A.A.A. Hall of Fame. This year four people were inducted into the Hall. These being Chris and Kevin Callow, for winning the world F3D Pylon Racing Championship and also setting a new world record, Richard Blackam for third place at the Free Flight World Championship and Len Surtees for setting two world records.

Congratulation to Chris, Kevin, Richard and Len for their great achievements and for being inducted into the M.A.A.A. Hall of Fame.

Leo O'Reilly was awarded the FAI Air Sports Medal for services to Australian Aeromodelling. Leo has been actively involved in Australian aeromodelling since 1969. He has been on the executive of two state associations and was President of M.A.S.A. from 1972 until his retirement in 2001. His medal was appropriately presented at the 2002 M.A.A.A. Council meeting. Congratulations Leo.

### **M.A.A.A. Decals and Badges.**

The M.A.A.A. has enamel and cloth badges as well as a decal sheet containing two large and two small decals. Also available are cloth "gold wings". Please contact your State Association for the prices and availability of these badges and decals.

### **M.A.A.A. Web Site**

Please note that the M.A.A.A. has registered a new domain name. Therefore our web site now has a new address. It is [http:// www.maaa.asn.au](http://www.maaa.asn.au)

### **New CASA Regulations – CASR 101 – Unmanned Aircraft and Rockets**

Many of you will have noted that the new CASA regulations that affect our operation will commence on July 2002. Many have read this document and believe that many of the requirements that M.A.A.A. have in place, such as heavy model permits, will no longer be required. **This is wrong.** The issue of CASR 101 is part of a general CASA change of direction. Up to now CASA have put in place the regulations under which sports aviation, including model aircraft operate. Even so the MAAA required its members to operate to additional standards, of which the turbine rules are an obvious example. These were introduced as risk mitigation both to protect our members and the general public, and at the same time assist in limiting increases in insurance costs.

Under the new philosophy CASA sets the absolute minimum standards that they consider essential. They also appoint approved administration organisations, of which the MAAA will be one. These will be National Bodies administering their particular sport. CASA expect, and indeed require, that these bodies will set applicable safety requirements for their activity and be able to respond to change without the bureaucracy of a Government organisation. Currently the M.A.A.A. operates under our Manual of Procedures. Naturally this document will require amendment and this will happen in the near future. Until this amendment takes place, it is still the document that we should operate to. The MAAA will

continue to require that members operate taking MAAA requirements into account in order to be covered by the MAAA Insurance. This is for the benefit of all members by helping to maintain our good safety record. There will be more on the new regulation in future Newsletters.

### **Use of 27 MHz for Aircraft**

The MAAA Executive was recently asked about operation of model aircraft on 27 MHz. For many years the MAAA has recommended this band is not used for model aircraft. The reason is that it shares the frequencies with CB radio, and these operate at much higher power levels. This means that if, for example, a vehicle were to be passing near a flying field and transmitted on the same frequency as a model then the model could get shot down. Even if the aircraft itself was sufficiently light or slow not to cause damage it could interfere with the concentration of someone flying a model that could be lethal.. The class licence covering models on 27 MHz states that a 5 kHz separation must be maintained from any adjacent CB operating channel. Of course with a model aircraft the damage is done before this situation can be recognised. The Executive had no choice but to put in place a policy, until such time as it is changed by Council, that in the interest of safety, aircraft operating on 27 MHz should not be allowed to operate in conjunction with aircraft operating under MAAA guidelines in the 29 and 36 MHz band.

The operation of model aircraft on the 27 MHz band is of course not illegal, but clubs should seriously consider the implications of allowing their use at club fields, which includes the real possibility of non-cover under the MAAA insurance policy due to the risk of interference. This should be weighed up against the very real advantage of encouraging participation by potential new club members who are using the cheap radio control aircraft being offered on the market. As the models known to be available are essentially toys, light and relatively safe, clubs could decide that they can be operated but under different conditions to those controlled by the MAAA. Clubs may already have made such decision with respect to model cars operating on 27 MHz, toy chuck gliders or even kites. Ways they might consider include that a totally separate area could be allocated which has no potential to conflict with MAAA operations, or a period of time could be allocated for their exclusive use. However this is a decision that must be made at club level. The club and its members should assess the risk of injury or accident in their particular situation, including taking into account the size and power of the models and the insurance cover implications. The MAAA can accept no responsibility for aircraft operating in this manner as the conditions are outside its control. It should be noted that operating frequency in no way influences the requirement to conform to CAO 95.21, or when replaced by CASR Part 101.