

## **MAAA Presidents Report 2024**

As I reflect on my tenure as President of the Model Aeronautical Association of Australia, it's with a profound sense of pride and a touch of regret for the tasks left unfinished. These past three years have been a remarkable journey, filled with substantial progress in promoting and enhancing our sport of aeromodelling. We have worked through Covid, and welcomed our first female Federal Secretary.

We've spearheaded numerous initiatives, such as the impactful Club Assistance Scheme, which allocated over \$300,000 to improve the infrastructure of more than 135 clubs. This investment has significantly bolstered the facilities available to our members, enhancing both safety and accessibility. We have initiated the Club Activity Program, to encourage clubs to promote general awareness and interclub activity. This has been well received and is another means to help clubs promote their activities. Such achievements are testaments to our community's dedication to maintaining high standards and promoting the sport vigorously.

We also have confirmation now from CASA that the MAAA can resume using Commercial Instructors for the recreational flying of model aircraft. Further details and a reactivation of the MOP will be resolved at Conference.

Despite these successes, we've encountered considerable challenges, particularly in navigating the complexities of regulatory engagements with CASA. I managed to negotiate the "Like for like" renewals - this has enabled many clubs to resume/continue flying. It has also eased the backlog of area approvals, but the slow pace of new approvals continues to be a thorn in our side. This highlights the ongoing need for robust advocacy to ensure that regulations align with the practical realities of aeromodelling. Likewise, the inconsistency appearing in instrument's further highlight the importance of regular conversation at management level with the Regulator.

Our governance structures and procedural documents, notably the Manual of Procedures, urgently require updating to reflect the latest technological advancements and the evolving needs of our sport. These updates are crucial not only for enhancing operational efficiency but also for ensuring that our governance framework can support the dynamic nature of aeromodelling into the future. Moreover, the accreditation process for heavy model inspectors has uncovered inconsistencies that must be addressed through a more standardized national approach. One state has chosen to appoint their own Inspectors, removed from the MAAA System, that ensure national consistency and removes elements of nepotism and endorsements issued to a favoured few. This will ensure that all inspectors across states meet the rigorous standards necessary to maintain the integrity and safety of our sport. Council should operate as a collaborative/ collegiate body so it is disappointing when a state president openly states..."I shall continue to agitate for "better" from within my role as (State) President"

Looking to the future, it's clear that our sport needs a renewed commitment to inclusivity and engagement. The strength of aeromodelling lies in its community. Our

sport is built on its members, and without public visibility and recognition, it's challenging for the broader community to understand and value what we do. To grow our sport and enhance its public visibility and relevance, we must become more inclusive, not just of aeromodellers but also of enthusiasts from related disciplines. Inclusivity extends beyond our immediate community to encompass like-minded hobbies and enthusiasts. By embracing a broader spectrum of related interests, we can bolster our numbers and enrich our community, ensuring the survival and relevance of our sport in an increasingly competitive recreational landscape.

In this spirit, I call upon each member of our community to become more vocal and engaged in all pulling in the same direction, if we allow the vocal minority to segment us further it will be to everyone's detriment. Support your local clubs, your state associations and our national body. Embrace and welcome new enthusiasts with open arms. Our sport's survival, strength, and relevance depend on our collective action and visibility.

As I pass the torch to Carl Bizon, the incoming President, I am confident in his capabilities to lead our association forward. Carl's fresh perspective and seasoned experience will be invaluable as he tackles the challenges ahead. I wish him the very best and offer my support in any way I can assist to further aeromodelling.

In closing, I am conscious of my critics, yet proud of what we have achieved. "History will ultimately be the judge of my contributions to model aviation. All I can do is give my best, strive for excellence, and leave behind a legacy that reflects my dedication and passion for this incredible sport that has given me so much."

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your President. Let us continue to strive for excellence, ensuring that aeromodelling in Australia remains a safe, vibrant, and thriving sport for future generations to enjoy.

Tim Nolan  
President  
13 May 2024