

## Expressions of interest. Gliding training for those with disabilities

Gympie Gliding Club (GGC) is located at Gympie airfield, Kybong, about 12Kms south of Gympie. We normally fly on Wednesdays and Saturdays and try to organise an overnight "social" weekend and flying on Sunday about every 6 weeks.

**The club is considering applying for a grant to have our two seat trainer, VH-GFB a world renown ASK21, fitted with controls that would enable flying training for paraplegics.**

If you are no heavier than 110kg's (or heading there) and are interested, read on.

For those not aware of the basic controls of an aircraft, the hands normally control the elevators (pitch) and the ailerons (roll) whilst the feet control the rudder (yaw). This naturally means that potential pilots who do not have full use of their legs are unable to fly the aircraft in a "balanced" state, as a combination of all three axis are necessary for controlled flight - a desirable objective. Use of the rudder (control of yaw) is even more important in gliding than in controlling a powered light aircraft. An interesting article can be read at;

<http://glidingaustralia.org/mag/GlidingAustralia-Issue-21.pdf>

This article is from Gliding Australia magazine and details the efforts that have been made by the club at Cunderdin, WA in an effort to get disabled fliers airborne. There are other clubs all over the world that have the capacity for disabled flyers. Here is a link to another.

<http://www.walkingonair.org.uk/>

Interestingly, gliding is probably one of the few sports where we think that a paraplegic pilot, (with some extra ground support), could compete on a State, National and even international level and not be disadvantaged. Cross country flying and long distance duration flights obviously require intense concentration whilst being strapped into a confined seat for many hours. Sound familiar to some of you!

Of course not everyone wants to compete. This is very much the case with our club members, whose aims and interests vary greatly. Some love to fly cross country and compete. Others are happy to soar the Mary Valley, one of the most scenic areas to fly in Queensland.

Potential costs. All glider pilots must be members of the Gliding Federation of Australia.

Membership of GFA \$244 per annum

Membership of GGC \$260 per annum. Students <25 \$145

Joining Fee. Once only \$50

Bond. A once of fee of \$400 is required to be paid to the club as a bond. This can be paid up front or on a monthly basis.

Flying Training. Our instructors provide their time free of charge. Training rates for our two seater are \$1 per minute. At Gympie we currently conduct all launches by winch. This keeps cost to a minimum and we are presently charging \$18 per launch. Once solo, you can therefore have an hours flying for \$78. Definitely the cheapest form of aviation these days in a fixed wing aircraft.

If you would like to try gliding as a taster we are prepared to offer you an Air Experience Flight at club rates. A 9 day membership is available for \$30. This is a Gliding Federation of Australia fee that covers insurance and normally gives you the opportunity to fly 3 days (Saturday, Wednesday, Saturday)

(normally the flight and membership is \$115 for 20 to 30 minutes).

In order that we may assess the viability of submitting a grant application and fitting out the aircraft with a "hand" rudder control, we are seeking expressions of interest from potential trainees. If you think you may be interested, further information may be sought from our Chief Flying Instructor, Trevor Burke. Trev can be contacted at:  
5485 1895 Mob 0400 348 711 Email. [trevor.burke@bigpond.com.au](mailto:trevor.burke@bigpond.com.au)  
Club website is: [www.gympiegliding.org.au](http://www.gympiegliding.org.au)

Last year I took a group to GGC from Sailability Sunshine Coast. One of those who flew was Richard Thomas aka "Wheels". Richard is a paraplegic and from memory had no trouble getting himself in and out of the cockpit. If you would like to talk to "Wheels" about his experience he's happy for you to contact him at: [skylarrikin@yahoo.com.au](mailto:skylarrikin@yahoo.com.au)

If we obtain enough expressions of interest then letters of support will be sought.

Many thanks

Alan Winter

Secretary

GGC