

**PUBLIC SUBMISSION  
TOWARDS A NATIONAL AVIATION POLICY**

**From**

Keith Morgan  
CEO Flight Training Group  
54 Kittyhawk Lane  
Parafield Airport SA 5106

[kmorgan@ftgroup.com.au](mailto:kmorgan@ftgroup.com.au)

**ADDRESSING SKILLS NEEDS IN THE AVIATION INDUSTRY**

**Q. What strategies should the industry adopt to attract, retain and plan for their future skills needs to remain competitive in a tight labour market, and how can these be improved?**

**Some thoughts:**

**1. Provide funding.**

Very little is achieved without a budget. A funding pool could be established to allow for industry to support Government in solving the industry manpower issues. For example, AOC holders, approved maintenance organisations and other aviation industry employers could contribute a modest amount (such as percentage of profit subsidised by a taxation benefit) to an industry training levy administered by Govt and/or an autonomous industry body (Lets call this the Aviation Industry Assurance Group or AIAG) I believe this happens already in some industries. Transparency would be an essential element of any such arrangement.

**Select a Champion**

A process is needed to appoint an industry champion to work with Government. Resource requirements could then be identified and put in place to formulate and implement policy for awareness, attraction, recruitment and retention in key industry areas.

**2. Formulate policy and plan for departmental approval.**

**3. Implementation, validation and improvement.**

**THE PLAN**

Any plan should consider the following:

**Awareness and Attraction**

Awareness and opportunity should be developed and provided from primary school onwards. There should be common national educational opportunity to study industry specific subjects in Government and private education systems with incentives provided to include/participate in vocational training at school. Students should be allowed to commence apprenticeships or licence qualifications in industry specific schemes. Perhaps such a scheme could be run initially at nominated specialist institutions and or schools, with selected industry partners.

Collective/centralised industry awareness advertising (eg CPAs and CAs in the accounting industry) should be considered with centralised and managed funding.

Schemes outside of the primary and secondary education systems should also be considered. Singapore has an excellent government funded model, The Singapore Youth Flying Club, at Seletar Airport. <http://www.syfc.sg/>

Industry can be incentivised to provide similar schemes. One good example is the Cathay Pacific Airway sponsored program in Hong Kong called "I can Fly" .  
[http://www.cathaypacific.com/cpa/en\\_INTL/aboutus/community/aviation](http://www.cathaypacific.com/cpa/en_INTL/aboutus/community/aviation)

## **Retention**

Schemes could be developed involving end users and training organisations to provide structured career paths that, based on appropriate performance, manage career development with guaranteed outcomes. Consideration to subsidising the cost of training should also be given. An example involving flying instructors is a program offered by Cathay Pacific and Flight Training Adelaide (FTA). Cathay and FTA fund the majority of a selected candidate's pilot training fees for training that includes Commercial Licence, Instrument Rating and Instructor Rating. In return the individual remains at FTA as an instructor pilot for up to four years with an assurance of a fast track entry to Cathay on completion of the term at FTA. This provides certainty and sustainability for both organisations.

The use of taxation and training incentives, regional benefits and other incentives or strategies to attract and retain people in critically manned segments of the aviation industry such as maintenance engineers, pilots, flying instructors, check pilots, ATOs and Chief Pilot/CFI positions should be considered.

### **Q. What are the long term training needs for the Australian aviation industry? Where will the future pressures lie? How do we insure the industry remains internationally competitive in retaining key staff and in attracting new entrants to the workforce?**

An AIAG could gather data on existing resource and training capability. To forecast within a realistic growth range could be one function of such a group. It would seem historically the industry has grown at an average of around 5 to 6%. Targets for school applicants could be established and strategies to achieve these targets could be planned and actioned based on sensible growth forecasts.

To remain internationally competitive data could be gathered on what the international market is offering. Internal industry customer surveys would form a large part of such a data collection activity. Advice to industry sectors on benchmarking and industry expectations might take some of the subjectivity out of the rumour mill mentality. Objective industry recommendations and industry feedback to an AIAG would help improve information, communication, planning, implementation and validation of any agreed policy. Proactive recruitment and training will form the most significant part of any solution, however there are other tactical opportunities.

Overseas marketing, streamlining of activities and migration assistance should all be considered. Duplication of security screening, language testing and other administrative barriers should be removed with Govt departments being tasked to put priority to

harmonising these activities to assist industry. Currently it seems that our borders are being protected by many more than one Govt. agency to the detriment of a realistic flow into Australia of appropriately skill workers.

**Q. How should the Australian Government and Industry work together to ensure the needs of the aviation industry are taken into account in its broader skills framework?**

One would imagine appropriate Government departments work with their industry sectors and a level of adjudication/prioritisation exists above that to serve the national interest. It is essential that the adjudication/prioritisation is effectively communicated and sold to stakeholders with feedback and redress options made available, which have a clear and decisive authority and end point. Clearly there will be competition for human resource and each industry sector has a responsibility to sell itself at the junior and senior school level.

**Q Are proposals such as a national industry run flying school to train flying instructors worth investigating and, if so, how might such a school operate?**

Yes. Of course, the devil is in the detail. I have seen over the years several industry training organisations (associations, committees etc) start and fail because of parochialism and self or commercial interest.

Given an environment where Public Private Partnerships are being considered by Government I would consider, in the first instance, options around shared civil military resources to meet a common national goal. The training of flying instructors is an area where this may have applicability. RAAF Central Flying School could be used to provide opportunity and incentive for civilian testers and checkers to remain in General Aviation. The sharing of Flying Instructor Courses, Flying Supervisor and safety courses with GA could be considered.

To stream some of this military best practice backwards to GA would be a great outcome. The opportunity was missed with the first round of commercialisation at Tamworth with the ADF flying training contract. These days however both the military and industry are, I would hope, somewhat wiser for the experience and a less adversarial approach would now, I believe, be possible.

Parallel to the above activities, a tender could be run with shared Govt and private equity to establish a benchmark instructor training facility for perhaps more than one aviation industry sector. Flying instruction and the various levels of testing and checking would be a good place to start however. A purely commercial business case would need to be underwritten by industry commitment. Some subsidy/assurances to ensure at least a successful start up may be necessary.

Keith Morgan  
CEO Flight Training Group