



RECREATIONAL AVIATION AUSTRALIA INC

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The Hon Mr Warren Truss  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development  
Parliament House

Response: Report of the Aviation Safety Regulation Review

The Hon Mr Warren Truss,

Recreational Aviation Australia Inc. (RA-Aus) would like to express its appreciation for the frank and honest assessment contained in the recent Aviation Safety Regulation Review (ASRR) report. We welcome the findings contained in the ASRR report and would like to offer some qualification to our support of the recommendations:

- RA-Aus believes that the ATSB should maintain independence from the CASA. The role of the ATSB is to establish cause and promote safety to prevent re-occurrence. The CASA has of recent years approached accident investigation with the mind-set 'who's at fault'. Investigation to attribute blame will never develop a functioning Safety Management System. Until the CASA can alter its culture there will be no benefit from having the ATSB and the CASA working in a combined capacity and it will compromise all investigations.  
The report states that that the safety rate of RA-Aus pilots and aircraft has been declining when in fact our fatality rate has improved markedly over the period being considered. Furthermore it is our belief that the statistics used to draw conclusions about the accident rate reveal more about the improved reporting rate than the underlying accident rate. This has largely arisen out of a relationship built on trust with the safety investigator and if this trust is eroded by disclosing all information to the CASA we fear that the reporting rate will once again decline and we will have less information on safety matters relating to aviation accidents and incidents.
- Recommendation 29 States "Recreational Aviation Administration Organisations, in coordination with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, develop mechanisms to ensure all aircraft to be regulated under CASR Part 149 are registered". RA-Aus (and indeed, the rest of the aviation industry) has recently had numerous regulatory requirements placed on it by the CASA without appropriate investigation as to the costs and benefits. The effect this has had is a

financial loss to our sector of the industry in excess of \$400K annually not to mention the broader economic implications of such regulation, especially in regional Australia where many of our operators are located. At the same time the CASA is introducing a license that is not ICAO compliant that will directly compete with our organisation. It is worth considering the role of government in terms of providing services that are also provided by the private sector as well as the potential conflicts that may arise from a regulator whose responsibility includes the issue of licences as well as the enforcement of the rules. This is allowed in very few other industries and the closest comparison may be the transport licensing system where rules are made by a body independent of the policing organisations responsible for enforcement.

Although in principle we are not against the introduction of Part 149 we are cautious as to the economic impacts this will have on the industry and would expect funding for RAAO's to be considered prior to the introduction of the policy. Moreover, the effectiveness of the CASA in introducing the new rules is questionable given that this process has been underway since 1998.

Lastly RA-Aus would like to thank the Minister for instigating the review and urges his office and the regulator to take the recommendations seriously and action same. It is clear there are significant problems facing the CASA and changes in senior management and organisational culture are needed. We would also like to highlight that clear conflicts of interest are present in the Self Administering Sport Aviation Organisations Section that should be reviewed.

If RA-Aus can be of any further assistance to the Minister or the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development please contact our office.

Regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Michael Monck.

Michael Monck  
President of Recreational Aviation Australia Inc.