

# TAURANGA GLIDING CLUB

## STRATEGIC FUNCTIONAL PLAN 2025

### INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan is intended as a reflection on the current state of the Club and the goals and objectives that should be considered in both enhancing the Club and promoting the sport of gliding.

Changes in goals and plans are inevitable with changes in social outlooks, Club facilities and equipment, membership and capabilities around those parameters. In recognition of the foregoing, the following is an update on conditions and strategies intended to provide some direction for development for the near future.

Strategic development is somewhat of an evolving/changing exercise and should be reviewed at not more than a five year cycle.

#### 1.0 The Club and Gliding History

The Club was established in the late 1950's at which time it was a pioneering adventure with totally volunteered input into the sport with Clubs having no finance and depending on members with hammers-in-hand to build hangars, club rooms and their gliders. That early enthusiasm is fortunately still alive and well in the country and is reflected in the progression of the Club over time. From the early days in Belk Road, made possible through donated land and member energy in construction, to the current modern facilities the Club has had leadership that recognized opportunities and provided guidance in establishing financial strength and physical development. The Club is now relatively debt free and has well founded investments that will ensure future capability and stability.

Gliding, of course, has come a long way since the first flight by George Bolt over Hagley Park in Christchurch in 1911. Gliding

became popular in the 1920's with a few clubs established in the 1930s. The Gliding Association of New Zealand was created in 1947, now Gliding New Zealand.

Historically, there have always been fluctuations in membership in the sport reflecting changing social attitudes, economic conditions and the visibility of aviation both recreationally and professionally. Social media and online information and demonstrations have greatly increased the exposure of the public to aviation activities and opportunities. Youth membership in the Club has increased significantly in recent years. Fundamental to attracting membership and maintaining membership is providing the ability to progress in the sport through providing excellent aircraft and maintaining good facilities. The Club currently has gliding capability to satisfy the learner as well as the advanced membership with two-Duo Discus, a LAK 17B, a Puchaz two seat trainer and a LS4 single seater.

## 2.0 Gliding in the Western Bay of Plenty

Gliding conditions in the Western Bay offer the pilot opportunities to meet the challenges of thermal, convergence and wave conditions as well as ridge soaring on the Kaimai Range. As members of the Matamata Soaring Centre the Club also has the use of the Waharoa Aerodrome and Clubhouse facilities there which facilitates the ridge soaring as well as extended thermal conditions often apparent. The long term strategy of the Club is to establish a hangar base at Waharoa Aerodrome subject to land availability. The Reserve Management Plan for that aerodrome is currently under review by the District Council and further planning is required to provide to accommodate future development. Any development by the Club there would be subject to favourable land and lease conditions.

The Club currently provides training activities on Saturdays with Trial Flights on Sundays with opportunities for Flying Members on both days. Gliding during the week is optional on the proviso of qualified members being authorized by the CFI. The challenges around operations are typically availability of instructors and equipment failures, that being said the Club is well serviced by engineering expertise for both gliders and tow aircraft.

### 3.0 THE CHALLENGES

#### 3.1 MEMBERSHIP

Historically membership has been declining in the sport as social attitudes, time constraints, competing activities and financial limitations are more prevalent in today's world. Recreational flying is very discretionary and is definitely part of the view of most participants so when situations change so does membership. The emphasis in recent years to target youth is showing results and the Club currently has a significant number teenage flyers. The challenge is retention.

Retention, in fact, does lead to added membership. Students and members that are well catered for tend to continue and relate their experience to others so word of mouth is probably our best advertiser resulting added membership. Mentoring and instruction have a large part in student development and retention so having sufficient instructors is critical to maintaining students. Instructor cognisance is also important as each student develops and progresses in different ways. Probably the next most important factor in retention is affordability. The Club has always been proactive in this respect and must continue to do so.

The Club should continue to provide gliders that provide both instructional capability as well as performance capability for advanced cross country and competition flying.

There appears to be more aviation related information and relatively inexpensive flight simulator software available and it appears some colleges in the region have developed interests around these as Tauranga Boys College have formed a Flight Club and extended that to trial flights with the Club. Extending invitations to other Colleges, on a limited basis, may prove successful in gaining young members. We must always be aware of our instructional capabilities as a lack of instruction will definitely lead to loss of members plus there will always be negative feelings that may extend beyond the Club resulting in some public skepticism. The Club should always participate with static displays at local air shows.

Commercial advertising to attract membership has never been cost effective. Most businesses now depend on websites to attract customers and display products and services. The Club should maintain a well- developed website that provides attractive elements and insights into the sport. This is largely the most effective method of advertising and provides the best vehicle for the Club to display themselves as well as what is necessary to become a qualified glider pilot.

### 3.2 FACILITIES

The Club enjoys excellent facilities however strategic maintenance is important to maintain amenity and value. The airport environment has proven to be relatively corrosive and steel work in the hangar does require scheduled cleaning to remove salt and other residues that may be generated by the

nearby fertilizer works and chemical facilities. The hangar requires twice yearly wash-downs with a salt removal product.

The Club rooms generally meet all needs and are in good condition, however some paint work is necessary in the near future. Exterior washes and roof maintenance should be coordinated with hangar maintenance. Part of maintaining building amenity is furniture refreshing when wear presents a loss of appeal and chair maintenance. We are only as good as we look on some days and with high public visibility (trial flights) we need to maintain a relatively high standard of maintenance.

The hangar meets all Club needs in terms of accommodation of aircraft with some ability to take up to 4 private aircraft. Rental space at the airport is at a premium and the Club could look at revenue opportunities.

### 3.3 AIRCRAFT

The current fleet of aircraft including tow planes is adequate for both training and more advanced flights and competition opportunities. There will always be maintenance challenges and refurbishment requirements. The current risk to the Club is the loss of a tow aircraft if AD requirements on the Piper Pawnee become too financially burdening. The Club has been able to operate two tow aircraft for the past 30 years which has been beneficial in terms of both Club operations, support of GNZ competition needs and loans to MSC Clubs when their operations required. The Club is financially capable of operating two tow aircraft and should continue with that

regime to the benefit of the Club and gliding in general. The challenge is what should replace a tow plane for future needs if one aircraft should be replaced. There is a trend to Light Sport Aircraft which have horsepower to weight conditions that adequately tow two seat gliders. Operations at Tauranga require the ability to have a modest ground roll and sufficient climb capability to provide for a safe return of aircraft in recovery from an early release over airport and municipal development. Research into potential replacement options is apparent now regardless of Pawnee inspection outcomes.

The Club has been fortunate to have an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer locally who has provided excellent service to the Club. The benefits in having local expertise are apparent in terms of cost and operational ability. Promotion of local and “in Club” expertise is essential.

### 3.4 TRAINING

Training is the backbone of Club existence. Developing instructors and students is critical and the Club must facilitate the development of instructors by offering incentives to members to fill that need. There is no point in promoting membership if the Club cannot meet instructional needs and member disappointment with training availability and lack of progress will lead to declining membership. Incentives such as reduced rate flying and personal attention to probable candidates as future instructors should be maintained. GNZ offer courses, webinars and courses which should be promoted and well attended by members and instructors.

Having sufficient instructors available will always be a challenge the sport as a significant number of instructors in Clubs

generally are over the age of 55. Instructor development now needs to focus on younger members which will also help attract younger members.

#### 4.0 INVESTMENTS

The Club historically has been well funded and financial constraints on development and operations have been avoided due to investment income and the generosity of members in taking up debentures on major purchases. The ownership of commercial rental property, interest income from First Mortgage Trust and a diversified portfolio with Craig's Investment Partners provides sufficient income to carry out maintenance of facilities and aircraft at the present time. These investments must be constantly monitored to ensure tenancy and property are well serviced and investments generally are being kept within the risk level of the Club. The Club currently has little debt and all facilities and aircraft are debt free.

Historically, the Club has depended on cash reserves, debenture issues and rental income to support major purchases with operating costs met substantially from flying income and trial flight sales. Prior to diversifying the investment with liquidation of some property into equities and other entities, there was little or no borrowing against property or assets. The Club should maintain a similar approach by maintaining the initial level of investment or other words draw only on income from investments and maintain the original value of the portfolio or entity. The Treasurer and a committee member must be assigned to liaise and monitor property and investments. Major purchases should always be from income and support within the Club or GNZ borrowing although this may necessarily change.

Costs will always change and a semi-annual review of expenditure and operating costs should be actioned and fees assessed in relation to these.

## 5.0 ADMINISTRATION

The administrative structure is well defined in the Constitution and there is no apparent need to change that other than to possibly review roles and needs within the structure. Some task and maintenance are either delegated or on a “hands up” basis and this should be reviewed such that individuals are not overloaded. New Committees must now provide additional reporting under the changes to the Societies Act 2021 so further due diligence is necessary. All reporting should be done through our legal representative LOA Law (Doug Lyon). There should be a constitutional review relative to use and maintenance of investments as the diversification has changed the content and administration. We do not have any constitutional guidelines for protection of investments and the availability of capital growth for major purchases.

## 6.0 THE FUTURE

The major longer term concerns for the Club will be stability of operation out of the Tauranga Airport. The current lease with the City expires in 2034 plus there is a Deed of Renewal taking a renewal possible to 2049. The Lease, however, does allow for termination by the City for presumably airport changes. From an operating perspective we have a good working relationship with both the City and Airways and cognizance of this relationship should always be apparent. Ultimately, however, it may be necessary to attempt a move to a less controlled location. Trial flights out of the airport are relatively manageable however, training and club flying are



encumbered by airspace and airport traffic interference. Any failure to manage training under these conditions will ultimately lead to members heading to Piako Club. There should be a constant recognition that ultimately the Club will need to move and with the options very limited there should be a Plan and ongoing investigation of any opportunities to relocate in the future. A move to Waharoa Aerodrome would suggest possible amalgamation, however in the interim the Club should keep an active role in the Matamata Soaring Centre and support the continuance of the Centre there. Should the Reserve Management Plan Review of the Waharoa Aerodrome provide practical space for hangar development and a lease that provides long term security for investment, the Club should plan for a modest hangar for a maximum of three aircraft. This development would provide for significant flying options in uncontrolled airspace and to some extent lessen membership tendency to transfer.