

Presidents Report: September 2026

As I sat down to prepare tonight's report, I realized that while so much has changed in the wider world this past year, life at the Adelaide Soaring Club carries on, reassuringly constant.

Around us instability and uncertainty are the new normal, with all the madness brought forth by wars, organised crime, Big Tech pillaging our lives in the name of profit, natural disasters, and so on.

As the saying goes.... "May you live interesting times", well unfortunately I think we do.

So what does this mean for our club. Just as for us as individuals, stresses on sports clubs in general and our club specifically presents a constant and growing source of work on the Management Team, to track, manage, and respond with improvements to process and policy. In the last year the most pressing stressors have involved cost, compliance with regulations and liability risk.

Costs have increased across the board, both within the club and without. Cost of maintenance, parts, fuel, as well as contractor costs for getting work done on our facilities. The everyday cost of living has also increased, which reduces money for discretionary spending on things like flying. As a result flying income has fallen and we have experienced lower than usual student numbers, particularly in LSA. Some in the club have said this is because we have set our fees too high. However, our fees reflect the real operating cost of keeping aircraft in the air, without profit and without instructor fees. Any lower than this and we will lose money on every hour flown by club aircraft.

Compliance to regulations seems to only ever become more difficult. This year we have grappled with changes to training rules, and our obligations to supervise and keep safe our junior members when they are at the club. Not only must we do this, but we must be seen to do it in a way that is defensible in court if such a need does ever arise.

We have introduced a new process to keep digital copies of training records for all our students, going forward. This is in response to a need to protect the club, and our instructors, should a future claim arise that we failed to provide competent flight instruction. These changes will be invisible to most members but will impact anyone involved with training or supervising club activities.

The most effective way we have to keep member costs low, is to do as much as we can in house, with volunteers. Counter to this, however, is that regulatory requirements and societal expectations are forcing volunteering to be more like work, and less fun, than we would wish.

But in spite of this, your club asks you to volunteer in whatever capacity you can make a contribution to the club.

To paraphrase JFK "And so, my fellow members, ask not what your club can do for you - ask what you can do for your club."

You may recall the debate about circuit procedures at Gawler. That debate concluded over 12 months ago, at which time we wrote to CASA seeking their endorsement of our changes and to have them published in ERSA. To date we have had No response, so have not implemented the recommendations. Behind the scenes we have been tracking CASA's progress and communicating with them and Gliding Australia for their acceptance. We believe we are now close. When they are in ERSA, then we will start flying circuits in accordance with the FOG recommendations.

On a more positive note, there has been other work happening to upgrade operations and improve efficiency.

Some months ago we launched the updated ASC website. After consulting with members via a survey, we made changes to modernise and refresh the "look and feel" to meet members current expectations. We now have all the information from our old site that visitors and members found useful, but in a more intuitive format.

We also have a new gliding registration App. After years of waiting for a very tardy contractor, and a lot of work from Tom, and some others, the new app was released late August. It is much improved on the old one with some powerful backend features that most of us will never use, that enables visitors to purchase flights on line, and tourist operators to arrange flights for their customers without having to contact the office. For members it will be easier to register and change training times. Well done to Tom for persisting with this over several years.

And of course I must take some time to welcome Cara, our new office administrator. She has big shoes to fill replacing Jenny and Angela, but in a very short time she has picked up all the procedures and tricks of the job and is doing really well. All in all it's been a very smooth transition. Well done Cara, and to Tom and Steve Pegler for managing it.

A few words on why we felt it necessary to restructure from two part time to one full time administrator. This is primarily to cut back on the number of employee hours. As a necessary impact of sharing the role between two people, a lot of time was spent in handover duties to make sure nothing slipped between the cracks. Cara now spends no time doing this, and gets all the admin work done very efficiently. This is generating savings to members, at a time when money is scarce and costs are otherwise rising.

In Other news around the club:

The new J230 – 2260 is now integrated into the fleet and earning its keep, and the old one, 5086 has been sold. The money from the sale is returned into the LSA account ready for whatever new LSA capital project the club decides. Many thanks to Marc Michell and Richard Young for their work in the sale process.

Last December ASC hosted the State gliding championships. It was a very successful competition, well attended, and a lot of fun for all involved. Thanks to Mandy Temple for organising and running the competition.

And on the topic of gliding competitions, ASC was strongly represented in Joey Glide, which is the Australian junior gliding championships. We had 4 participants who all did very well, Liam Doerty, Jai Carston, Max Scutchings and Josh Friend, with Max winning

the championship outright. A fantastic result for gliding in SA and for our club particularly. Because of his success, Max was selected to represent Australia at the world junior championships in August. This was held in Germany, but not to be outdone by the Europeans, Max won that competition as well. Ladies and Gentlemen, Max is the current Junior World Gliding Champion. What an outstanding achievement for a kid from Adelaide to win on the world stage, in Europe, a hotly contested competition. Well done Max.

And we have another winner, Josh Friend, who won the Sir Ross and Keith Smith Scholarship to train for his RAAus Recreational Pilots Certificate. This is the first time our club has been able to offer a scholarship like this. Congratulations Josh.

To the more mundane. Our entrance road is close to complete. I was hoping to say it was, but no, not quite. I will be thankful when it's finally finished and hope we never go through it again!

Runway Refurbishment is an on-going project for the Committee. We have lodged 3 grant applications without success over the past 4 or 5 years. We have now decided to lobby state and federal politicians to try to drum up their support, as well as approaching directly the CFS. Our aim is to gain funding through a special government grant, but this will not be an easy or quick path to success.

So in closing, this has been a mixed year for ASC. We have had some fantastic success against a general background of slow progress in a difficult economic environment that has impacted our club, like all areas of society. Your committee, staff and volunteers continue to work hard to give you the facilities, equipment and resources needed to enjoy safe and fun recreational flying. To keep doing this year after year, needs a constant stream of members to volunteer their time and expertise. Thank you to all our current volunteers. And to those who have yet to volunteer, if you can, please give some time to the club to ensure ASC continues to thrive.

Finally, I'm stepping down as President as of tonight. It's been a privilege to represent ASC and to be involved in the day-to-day operation of the club. I'm sure you will welcome the new President and help them lead ASC to future success.