

RAANZ - Ops report 2012

In the beginning there were Trikes, Scouts, Quicksilvers, Mirages, Daks, Thrusters and a myriad of other wonderful flying machines. Some had unconventional control systems whilst others were deemed frightening and strange at the very least. A new realm of sport and recreational flying had been introduced which was thought only for the foolish or very brave.

Most were under the misapprehension that licences were not required. Wrong! The authorities were quick to the task and introduced Part 103. A small number of southern enthusiasts worked in with CAA and basic rules were set up to cover flying training and for the issue of pilot certificates on behalf of CAA under Part 149. MAANZ was born. (later to become RAANZ) The rules then were simple common sense and although seemingly a bit draconian in today's terms, worked well. Did you know that to operate in controlled airspace then, pilots had to have individual written authorisation from the CAA Director to do so and that depended on the pilot's ability and background. Interesting to note that our colleagues across the ditch at the time were severely restricted. It seemed that the Australian authority did really not want to have to deal with these types of flying machines and ruled that they could operate, but not above 300ft agl and were not to cross main roads. The mind boggles.

The last 3 decades have seen an amazing growth in microlighting with the advent of new technology, lighter weight and stronger construction materials and more reliable engines thus making some fantastic aircraft that have become the envy of GA. During this period there was a lot of scepticism by the GA fraternity about our pilot ability and training. RAANZ worked tirelessly with the authorities and being mindful of this often unjustified criticism – mostly sour grapes really – continually modified, improved and built up what we have today. An amazing feat when you consider that this has been carried out by dedicated, enthusiastic volunteer aviators who want to keep things relatively simple but safe and importantly have the backing from CAA. Did you know that microlight aircraft in Australia are prohibited from operating in controlled airspace unless the pilot has a part 61 licence? Aren't we fortunate?

To assist with continuity of standards RAANZ has selected a number very experienced and well respected ATOs. With these people monitoring and mentoring our pool of instructors we are able to deliver a quality product for which we should be proud.

The latter part of this year has involved a fairly hard fought battle to allow some continuation of some approved aircraft being allowed to operate in controlled airspace without transponders but with severe restrictions. To be fair Airways have been very lenient for a number of years considering that all controlled airspace has been transponder mandatory for some time. Hopefully this will allow us to get involved in the future consultation in reviews of many of the control zones with the aim in reducing their size. This is the sort of work that goes behind the scenes and

probably not really appreciated by all as RAANZ attempts to do the best for its members.

Keep safe and fly well.

Bill Penman