

AMROBA®inc

ADVOCATE OF THE AVIATION MRO INDUSTRY

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Over-regulating GA

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With a new Board and CASA “under a new manager”, there is a great expectation of GA recovering. There is also great expectations that CASR Part 61 will be amended to include more flexibility to attract more new pilots.

Why/when did GA start to decline? Why did private flying become so hard? Is it security added at airports? Is it the loss of flight instructors at rural airports? Is it the unreal enthusiasm of bureaucrats to continually rewrite rules?

So when did the decline start?

We only need to go back to the late 1980s industry complaints about micro-management by government and the subsequent ‘challenge’ for a new CAA to “give power to” industry.

In maintenance, rule changes in 1991 changed a successful GA “cottage maintenance industry” into a “controlled environment” based on airline requirements.

The next major change that was “botched-up” was the devolvement to an ATO system. If the FAR system had been copied, then the project would have had a chance of success.

The worst change was the transfer of the pilot training licencing system under the ANRs to a AOC system under aerialwork in CAR 206. The AOC brought all the organisational aspects that did not exists for the large number of licenced flight instructors under the ANRs.

If we don’t have CASA approved flight instructors at rural airports, then the local young people have no where to go to learn how to fly.

Rural Australia provided the largest aviation employment pool for pilots and LAMEs. Most of Australia’s airline pilots came from the bush in that era. It provided a line of employment for many young country person.

Part 61 must clear up the pilot licencing system so that there are new avenues for young people to start flying. Associations like RAAus fly to similar rules to the old system so why differentiate for those wanting to learn in VH aircraft.

This raises the question, why is there differences between VH and non-VH sectors?

Who built the regulatory walls & why?

Many rules protect the commercial viability of non-VH sectors and remove, what must be unnecessary, requirements imposed on the VH GA sectors.

Some of those non safety barriers must be removed so the whole industry can grow.

The other issue is why are so many aircraft not flying? Most would suggest it has to do with airports (security) and a government devolvement process that adds costs & controls detrimental to those that actually have businesses on the airports.

Since the creation of the CAA in 1988, every major regulatory change has added a nail in the coffin of GA. Private VH aviation and the small business sectors are declining. The challenge to CASA is to reverse the trend and the new Board & DAS of CASA have already stated they want to see a prosperous and safe GA.

2015 is the turning point for CASA, get it wrong and GA will decline further.

Mark Skidmore states CASA will change and he will change the culture of CASA so it will be more responsive and adopt a more collaborative consultative approach to regulatory change. We are yet to see that in practice.

Sadly, those in CASA dealing with industry still have an ingrained attitude which will take considerable time to change. Can the industry wait for the “cultural change”? It will be costly to resurrect the disappearing foundations that have been badly eroded over the last decade.

Deregulation/red tape reduction is currently a political statement with no real visible commitment at present. Remove 50% of prescriptive requirements and remove those not safety associated and CASA will get support from industry.



How many legal requirements has CASA imposed that are not safety related?

This has started many discussions recently and the one mentioned below with regards AME training clearly demonstrates how easy it is to implement an 'industry practice' into regulation.

Many in industry have lobbied for regulations to stop CASA applying the requirements differently from inspector to inspector.

For example, AMOs usually employ LAMEs, AMEs and also, we hope, apprentices.

If the AME is a qualified tradesperson, then they should be responsible for, and able to perform and certify for maintenance tasks, covered by their qualifications.

The LAME provides maintenance "quality control" by carrying out "stage" inspections.

The LAME is not only accountable to his/her employer to ensure aircraft are 'airworthy' but is also regulatory accountable under law by holding an AME licence.

It is important to aviation maintenance safety that this international principle is understood.

CASA is now amending their MoS to adopt this global obligation of the LAME to be responsible to his/her employer and also regulatory responsible under law.

The faults in Part 42 have to be changed.

To remove a large proportion of the red tape that has been introduced is to change the micro-management mindset of CASA staff and then change the requirements.

Australian aviation industry is, on a world standard, very mature and the proper empowerment without CASA micro-managing, is what regulatory reform set out to do post the government enquiry in the late 1980s.

CAR 30 was mature, CASRs are immature.

The organisation's application includes the management structure and supply of the names & qualifications of key managers is the international accepted practice.

"Approval" by CASA is not. As part of the assessment, qualifications are found to be acceptable in the same manner as the facility is found to be acceptable but the onus must remain with the employer to employ persons with the right qualifications at all times. CASA should not be "approving" management replacements, the onus must remain with the employer.

The EASA Form 4 is used to keep the NAA informed as to who are the organisation's key managers. NAA "regulatory oversight" monitors this employment of appropriately qualified staff. The employer must be accountable, not CASA.

AME Licensing

One of the greatest travesties in AME training happened many years ago. The airline sector's, under a union agreement, created three streams in the aeroskills training system. Avionics, mechanical and structures.

This never assisted the non major airline sectors that still rely on two streams, avionics and mechanical, like many other NAAs.

What changed, post moving DCA to Canberra and the birth of the CAA, is that Regulations were unwittingly changed to impose an 'industry practice' and not aligned with international aviation training standards.

Ever since, AME training has not helped GA. It really became a major issue when CASA imposed the EASA two stream licencing system without undoing the 'industry practice'.

Government must direct the Australian Skill Qualification Authority (ASQA) to provide AME training courses that comply with ICAO promulgated international training standards, just like they were pre CAA.

Skill Councils like MSA cannot change the training model because they are accredited to develop courses based on 'cost' restrictions not education requirements.

We have suffered for decades by government bodies not imposing international training standards now used by EASA, North America, most of Asia, India, NZ etc..

At last, we have a government and CASA that is listening & we know that **Infrastructure** must direct ASQA to adopt the ICAO AME international training standards.

AME piston engine training

Do our maintenance organisations and maintenance personnel have the skills to maintain and/or overhaul aero engines being used mainly in non VH registered aircraft?

These engines are also used in many Experimental VH registered aircraft.

Though they have the same technology used in type certificated aircraft, most are smaller HP and need experience and specific skills to maintain them.

Most GA LAME's have experience in Lycomings, Continental, etc., and these types of engines also need similar enhanced skills to keep them serviceable and reliable.

There is a need for AME engine training to also take into account the types of piston engines used in micro lights, trikes, gyros, etc. as they will become more popular in the future.

RA-Aus fleet average rate 1.98 engine occurrences/10,000 flight hours but VH-registered privately operated aeroplanes had an average rate of 1.27 engine failures or malfunctions per 10,000 flight hours.

There is a need to increase our skills to help lower these rates.

Pictured below are ASE MPE 750 and Rotax 912 Aero Engines.



Resurrecting the GA "Cottage Industry"

If the FAR system can allow many GA maintenance organisations to operate without FAA approval, then why can't we return to the approved GA AMOs that only had to comply with the requirements that were once contained in CAOs?

For instance, most of these approved AMOs operated quite well under "direct supervision" and compliance with requirements specified in the CAOs.

It was a way that the US FBO system was implemented in Australia and it worked.

Engine, propeller and avionic component shops were required to have different controls so they could employ component specialists though most were also LAMEs.

A staged system like CAR 30, but with the small GA AMO that only has to comply with CASA promulgated standards, is needed.

There are provisions in FAA AC 159-5190.7 with regards the US FBO system that can be adapted for use in Australia.

CASA needs to adopt FAR Part 43 to underpin the aircraft maintenance industry. The 'performance rules' in this FAR has been missing from the Australian regulatory system since the changes from ANRs to CARs and the 1991 amendments to the CARs.

The ANRs & CAOs provided a similar approach taken in the USA for the GA sectors. Except "approvals" were granted to small organisations, sometimes one or two man organisations, that only had to comply with basic requirements mainly contained in a CAO Schedule. Time to resurrect.

However, changing the maintenance rules is only one part of changes needed. The most important requirement is adopting the FAA independent flight instructor system.

* Become a Member *

The adage "there is strength in numbers" is absolutely true when it comes to influencing government regulations and policy. No one company, no matter how big or successful, can keep up on all the regulatory issues directly impacting businesses.

AMROBA is dedicated to serving the businesses that are responsible for the in-service continuing airworthiness of aircraft and aeronautical products, including the manufacture of replacement parts for in-service aircraft. This segment of the industry has never had a dedicated advocate until now.

AMROBA membership form is available from the AMROBA website: amroba.org.au/become_a_member, or print the membership form amroba.org.au/print_a_form

Fees are stated on the application forms — BSB preferred method.



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CASA Culture Change

Though there is a new DAS managing CASA, we do not expect the entrenched culture to change quickly. Most believe that the entrenched culture that has endured under past DASs will outlast this DAS and not much will change.

The team needs rebuilding just like any football team that is not successful — it can only succeed with new key position players to lift the performance.

Most of our members state they have yet to see the change or any benefits from the new "CASA" we hear about.

At the top political level, it is accepted that the commitment is in policy and people dealing with the face to face members of CASA, including their regulatory change project managers, have not yet seen any change.

CASA continues to state they will adopt "best practice"; but *best practice* for who? Industry or CASA or the community?

"Best practice" is 'a commercial or professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective'. Best practice obviously means completely different things to the "users" in industry and the opinion of CASA.

It has been a long time since any regulatory change has improved safety. All regulatory change has done in the last couple of decades has added to the cost of doing business.

Ever since CASA & its predecessors used "best practice" to justify developing rules by which the GA industry has to comply, GA has been declining. Best practice should see a reduction in red tape and unnecessary regulations that will enable GA to grow and prosper.

Sadly, the opposite has happened and GA has been under unnecessary regulatory pressures that has seen the use of private aircraft decline.

"Best practice" should mean a prosperous GA as it is in NZ and the USA. Before GA completely folds, this regime of CASA may be the last chance to remove prescriptive requirements and return to performance based requirements.

The Aircraft Maintenance Engineers/Technician Creed

Worth Remembering

"UPON MY HONOR I swear that I shall hold in sacred trust the rights and privileges conferred upon me as a qualified aircraft maintenance engineer/technician. Knowing full well that the safety and lives of others are dependent upon my skill and judgment, I shall never knowingly subject others to risks which I would not be willing to assume for myself, or for those dear to me.

IN DISCHARGING this trust, I pledge myself never to undertake work or approve work which I feel to be beyond the limits of my knowledge nor shall I allow any non qualified superior to persuade me to approve aircraft or equipment as airworthy against my better judgment, nor shall I permit my judgment to be influenced by money or other personal gain, nor shall I pass as airworthy aircraft or equipment about which I am in doubt either as a result of direct inspection or uncertainty regarding the ability of others who have worked on it to accomplish their work satisfactorily.

I REALIZE *the grave responsibility which is mine as a qualified aircraft maintenance engineer/technician, to exercise my judgment on the airworthiness of aircraft and equipment. I, therefore, pledge unyielding adherence to these precepts for the advancement of aviation and for the dignity of my vocation."*