
Submission to Senate Enquiry into the Administration of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority {CASA} and related Matters

Introduction

I have been a participant in the General Aviation Industry in Australia for the last 50 years and during that time I have been an executive member of the past General Aviation Association representing the commercial General Aviation Industry including successfully acting on behalf of the GA Industry in the Arbitration Commission with the consolidation of the award system handling the integration of 4 pay scales and two awards into one award with all pilots work values taken into account.

I have also previously operated my own Flying School and Charter Business.

I have also been on the wrong end of mismanagement of the certification of an aeroplane which crashed due to a design fault resulting in the death of 6 members of one family!

The subsequent investigation attempted to cover up the real cause (*the design fault and mismanagement of the certification*) and blame the pilot I was monitoring, however the coroner failed to agree with this proposition after hearing the evidence at the inquest.

I did not discover the design Fault and certification mismanagement until after the Inquest.

This was in the days when the accidents were investigated by a branch the Authority (*the Authority changed names at least 3 times during the time before settlement*) since the accident in 1978.

I agreed to a settlement out of court 13 years later after conducting my own investigation after the threat of the withdrawal of my Legal Aid Funding.

The present system of a separate Accident Investigation Unit at ATSB from CASA is better, however, this could be further improved by making the ATSB reportable to the parliament directly

Therefore I feel that I have a reasonable background to make the following observations!

Let me state that the effectiveness of the so called “administrative reforms” undertaken by CASA since 2003 and the effectiveness of its governance structure have in my opinion only been self serving to justify the size and cost of a top heavy bureaucratic Casa empire. i.e. According to Casa’s Annual Report 66% of all Casa staff are in the employment classification “Corporate Services” with the majority of these based in Canberra.

This situation has not only been happening since 2003 but has been compounding for the last 30 + years from my observation.

Any Enquiry into the operation and function of CASA needs to be able to cover the whole period of operation from the time of the past separate Department of Civil Aviation (DCA)

“Ways to strengthen Casa’s relations with the Industry”

For “ways to strengthen Casa’s relations with the Industry” Casa needs to become relevant to the General Aviation Industry I suggest the following

Empower the General Aviation Industry rewrite and simplify the Aviation Rules for incorporation into practical legislation. A suggested start point would be to use the Air Navigation Regulation as at 1988 and modify these to reduce the Red Tape. The excess amount of paperwork only adds to costs not safety.

“Safety cannot be legislated, Safety it is an Attitude”

{I would be happy to advise and participate if required and could suggest additional suitable participants }

Remove Casa’s ability to Micromanage General Aviation Businesses. Reducing the size of the bureaucracy will reduce the justification for a so called cost recovery requirement which only increases the requirement for a bigger bureaucracy to administer the actual cost recovery

This alone would reduce the size of the bureaucracy and allow the Casa to operate within a practical budget which should be able to be funded by only fuel excise revenue without the myriad of various extra charges.

Require Casa to operate within a budget derived from income from the Aviation Fuel Excise collected

Recognize Pilot and Engineers Qualifications which are to remain permanently valid as the basis for the ability to operate a business rather than a Casa employee's subjective decision for renewal

Pilot Qualification together with Currency and recency together with medical status should be the basis of capability to operation rather than the requirement to maintain operating capability.

Medical assessment should be realigned to civilian realities not based on a method for the military to cull candidates into a reasonable number.

DCA had it right in the 70's when I obtained my Flying School AOC all within a week of applying.

No Aviation Approval should take more than 10 working days to process.

Accept country of origin Airworthiness directives without additional requirements!
Again Casa are generally only generating bureaucratic justification.

Revert to the Previous Instructor Rating System i.e. Basic C Grade Instructor Rating, then a Senior C Grade Instructor Rating, then a B Grade Instructor Rating & then an A Grade Instructor Ratings as follows,

C Rating- being basic qualification requiring 50 Hours instructional training.

i.e. equivalent to current Grade 3- Instructor Rating

Senior C- requiring instructor ratings Grade 3 for at least 6 months + 200 hrs ab/initio instructing plus 50 hrs navigation instruction plus Flight Test

i.e. equivalent to current Grade - 2 rating

B Grade - held C - Grade rating at least 12 Months + 750 hours total

Instruction including 500 hours ab/initio instruction+ pass in principles of learning and recommended by chief flying instructor and pass flight test by approved test officer i.e. equivalent to current Grade 1Rating with the following privileges-

Automatic approval to act as a Chief Flying Instructor and instruct Trainee Instructors with A grade instructor supervision

A Grade - held B rating at least 12 months + 1500 hours total instruction including 1000 hours ab/initio instruction with the additional privilege of automatic approval to train trainee Instructors

7- Remove requirement for an Air Operating Certificate i.e. the Qualification is the only requirement to operate either Charter or Instructing.

8- Remove requirement for Approved workshops to conduct aircraft maintenance i.e. completion of approved apprenticeship or approved factory course is qualification to operate.

“Casa will meet community expectations of a firm safety regulator”

when the General Aviation Industry is operating in an environment where the attitude of “Them and Us” no longer permeates throughout the General Aviation Industry.

Incorporation of the essence of my suggestions should go some way to achieve this Goal

SAFETY can not be legislated

SAFETY is an ATTITUDE

I am happy to answer any of your questions if required.

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