



Strategic Plan July 2025



**Shaping the
Future of Flight**

Executive Summary

This Strategic Plan outlines the vision, mission, and key priorities guiding the future of the Sports Aviation Federation of Australia (SAFA).

SAFA is the national sporting body responsible for administering hang gliding, paragliding, powered paragliding (paramotoring), and weight-shift microlights across Australia. Operating under delegation from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), SAFA provides the legal and operational framework that enables individuals to participate in these aviation activities. With SAFA's certification and oversight, we make it legally possible to fly these aircraft in Australia.

The organisation supports clubs, instructors, and pilots by providing training and certification pathways, maintaining safety standards, managing operational regulations, and fostering a connected and inclusive flying community.

This plan sets a clear direction to ensure the sector remains safe, accessible, and inspiring for current and future generations of pilots.

Looking ahead

SAFA is focused on enhancing safety practices, strengthening governance, expanding training pathways, and increasing public awareness of sports aviation.





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The SAFA Strategic Plan describes the direction for our organisation.

This plan aims to:

- > Provide a focus for coordinated decision making by the SAFA Board.
- > Provide strategic guidance for SAFA employees.
- > Communicate the direction SAFA is taking to members and other stakeholders.

The plan is arranged in four parts:

Part 1

Strategic Objectives

describes SAFA's mission and our five strategic objectives for the coming years.

Part 2

Measures

implements key measurements that help the organisation understand how we are changing over time.

Part 3

Implementation Principles

provides principles that can help guide how to implement the strategic objectives described in Part 1.

Part 4

Background

provides a summary of our organisation, current operations, and history.

Operations Today

Thousands of SAFA Members take in a bird's-eye view of our country each day.

More than
3,000
Australian members
across all disciplines.

8
affiliated regional
associations aligned to
states and territories.

Over
30
affiliated clubs
operating across
Australia.

Over
35
flight training facilities
(schools) providing
training across all our
disciplines.

Over
180
open flying sites
registered in the
national site guide.



Part 1

Strategic Objectives

SAFA Mission and Vision

Mission

To enable
members
to fly

Vision

Develop and
grow our flying
community

Strategic Objectives

The Sports Aviation Federation of Australia (SAFA) is committed to achieving excellence through five interconnected strategic objectives that will guide our organisation towards sustainable growth and enhanced performance.

Strategic Objective 1 Safety Excellence

SAFA will maintain the highest safety standards by developing and implementing robust safety management systems that comply with all aviation laws and regulations. We are committed to protecting members, the public, affiliates, and the broader aviation community through a proactive safety culture built on care, diligence, and shared responsibility. This includes providing the framework for world-class training programs that emphasise safety as the foundation of all aviation activities. Our comprehensive accident and incident management protocols will meet regulatory requirements and inform members with safety frameworks regularly reviewed to incorporate best practices and emerging technologies.

**Foster a
comprehensive
safety culture
that protects all
stakeholders through
world-class systems
and continuous
improvement.**



Focus areas

Safety Communications

Delivering timely and proactive communication to ensure rapid dissemination of critical safety information across all member groups and stakeholders

Safety and Training Committee (STC) Excellence

Developing the STC as a centre of excellence, providing oversight of safety initiatives while maintaining strong operational connections with training delivery

Safety Reporting Culture

Creating an environment where members feel confident reporting incidents and safety concerns, prioritising learning over punitive responses

Safety Officer Development

Increasing the quality and number of Senior Safety Officers (SSO), Safety Officers (SO) and AIRS managers through standardised training programs that ensure consistent competency standards

SSO Network

Establishing quarterly online SSO conferences to share safety knowledge, discuss emerging trends, and foster collaborative problem-solving among safety professionals

Collective Safety Responsibility

Developing a culture where members actively look out for each other through mentorship, peer support, and shared responsibility

Strategic Objective 2 Training and Knowledge Development Excellence

SAFA will deliver comprehensive training pathways supporting participants at every stage of their aviation journey through high-quality certification programs emphasising: safety, regulatory knowledge, and technical skill development. We will implement progressive training frameworks accommodating diverse learning needs, supported by regular curriculum review and strategic investment in training resources, facilities, and qualified instructors.

Provide the framework for exceptional training and certification programs that develop skilled, knowledgeable, and safety-conscious aviation participants.



We will implement a strategic training system development project built on four integrated pillars

Enhanced Foundation Training

Modernising current systems for ab-initio pilots through updated examinations, workbooks, on-line learning courses, and standardised syllabi

Innovative Training Solutions

Developing new approaches to address declining school and instructor numbers, particularly in regional areas, including by studying successful international models and systems from other aviation sports

Excellence Development Programs

Enhancing the framework for advanced training including specialised skills development, competition training, and instructor development

Integrated Systems Alignment

Developing synergy between training systems and operational manuals for seamless integration

Immediate focus areas

Safety Officer Training Program

Developing a comprehensive, standardised curriculum for effective safety management

Enhanced Self-Learning Resources

Expanding learning platforms with interactive content and flexible learning pathways

Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) Conferences

Re-establishing professional development forums for CFIs to share best practices and maintain currency

Strategic Objective 3 Participation Growth and Engagement

We will attract and retain our core membership while developing programs to increase participation among under-represented groups, including women, youth, culturally diverse communities, and people with disabilities. Our approach includes fostering events and enhancing competition structures.

Expand participation through targeted recruitment and retention strategies while removing barriers to entry and creating accessible participation pathways.



Focus areas

Targeted Communications Strategy

Implementing comprehensive communication approaches through multiple channels to reach diverse, targeted audiences and maintain strong engagement

Organiser Support Package

Providing resources, training, and assistance to competition and event organisers including planning tools and risk management frameworks

Junior Initiatives

Implementing targeted programs introducing youth to aviation sports

Mentor Development

Creating tool kits supporting experienced pilots in mentoring newcomers, including through the Duty Pilot framework

Operational Systems

Establishing robust frameworks supporting sustainable participation growth

Events Program

Establishing and publishing a comprehensive calendar of recognised competitions and events providing clear participation pathway opportunities across all disciplines

Competition Support

Assist in securing grants and sponsorship to enable broader participation and reduce financial barriers

Retention Programs

Developing strategies to re-engage pilots who have left the sport

Annual Conference

Hosting a flagship event bringing together the aviation sports community

Strategic Objective 4 Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

SAFA will strengthen its position as a leading voice in Australian aviation through enhanced collaboration with members, clubs, regional associations, landowners, and regulatory bodies. We will implement regular, structured communication with key stakeholders including CASA and Airservices Australia, focusing on mutually beneficial partnerships that support growth and sustainability while ensuring effective representation of member interests.

Build and maintain strong collaborative relationships with key stakeholders to advance aviation sports interests in Australia.



Focus areas

Presidents Quarterly Meetings

Conducting regular meetings with regional association presidents for direct communication and collaborative initiatives

Best Practice Governance Pack

Developing comprehensive governance resources supporting clubs and regional associations

Relationship Documentation

Publishing clear documentation illustrating SAFA's stakeholder relationships and engagement protocols

ASAC Framework

Communicating the structured framework for SAFA's relationship with the Australian Sport Aviation Confederation

Strategic Objective 5 Governance and Operational Administration Excellence

SAFA will maintain the highest standards of organisational performance by meeting Australian Sports Commission requirements while implementing best-practice frameworks ensuring: accountability, transparency, and effective decision-making, including co-regulatory relationships with CASA. We will modernise administrative systems to improve efficiency and member service while ensuring employees are well-managed and engaged. We will maintain conservative financial management by balancing operational cashflow with strategic reserves, investigating diversified revenue streams, and ensuring long-term viability through prudent financial management.

**Deliver
best-practice
governance and
operational administration
for effectiveness and
financial sustainability.**



Focus areas

Strategic Plan Implementation

Implementing this strategic plan to guide organisational direction

Audit and Finance Governance

Strengthening financial and audit governance through the active support of the Audit and Finance Committee

Workplace Excellence

Creating a positive work environment attracting and retaining high-quality staff

Governance Education

Developing resources helping members understand governance principles and organisational structure

Board Performance

Enhancing effectiveness through performance evaluation and governance training

Policy Streamlining

Reviewing and streamlining policies to reduce bureaucracy while maintaining safety standards

Administrative Systems

Implementing efficient systems that streamline processes and enhance service delivery

Governance Participation

Increasing member engagement in governance activities through mentorship and skills development



Part 2

Measuring our Performance

Strategic Objective 1

Safety Excellence

1a. Safety Incidents Involving Injury (Leading Indicator)

The rolling number of reported safety incidents involving injury over the previous 12 months (based on incident date).
Report quarterly on the first day of each quarter.

1b. Safety Officer Coverage (Capacity Indicator)

Percentage of full members holding current SSO or SO qualifications.
Report monthly on the first day of each month.

1c. Safety Reporting Rate (Culture Indicator)

Total number of safety incidents reported (including near-misses) per 1,000 members over the previous 12 months.
Report quarterly on the first day of each quarter.

Strategic Objective 2

Training and Knowledge Development Excellence

2a. New Pilot Development (Growth Indicator)

Number of new full members completing ab-initio training programs in the previous quarter (excludes returning pilots and overseas transfers). *Report quarterly on the first day of each quarter.*

2b. Pilot Progression (Development Indicator)

Number of members achieving PG4 or HG4 qualifications in the previous quarter, having progressed from PG3/HG2. *Report quarterly on the first day of each quarter.*

2c. Training System Engagement (Quality Indicator)

Percentage of training providers with current CFI participating in professional development activities in the previous 12 months. *Report annually in July.*

Strategic Objective 3

Participation Growth and Engagement

3a. Active Membership (Core Indicator)

Total number of current full members plus active life members. *Report monthly as at the first day of each month.*

3b. Event Participation Opportunities (Engagement Indicator)

Number of declared competitions and events commenced in the previous six months. *Report twice yearly for Jul-Dec and Jan-Jun periods.*

3c. Member Retention Rate (Sustainability Indicator)

Percentage of members who renew their membership from the previous membership year which ended on 31 Aug. *Report annually as at 30 Sep.*

Strategic Objective 4

Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

4a. Internal Stakeholder Engagement (Relationship Indicator)

Number of formal meetings conducted with Regional Associations, Clubs, plus SSO and CFI conferences in the previous six months. *Report twice yearly for Jul-Dec and Jan-Jun periods.*

4b. External Partnership Development (Influence Indicator)

Number of formal engagements with CASA, Airservices Australia, and other key external stakeholders in the previous 12 months. *Report twice yearly for Jul-Dec and Jan-Jun periods.*

Strategic Objective 5

Governance and Operational Administration Excellence

5a. Process Simplification (Efficiency Indicator)

Total page count of SAFA's ASAO exposition and formal SAFA manuals (reduction indicates streamlining success). *Report twice yearly for Jul-Dec and Jan-Jun periods.*

5b. Financial Sustainability (Stability Indicator)

Operating cash flow as a percentage of annual revenue, and months of operating expenses held in reserves. *Report quarterly on the first day of each quarter.*



Part 3

Implementation Principles

These principles guide the SAFA Board and employees in how to execute our strategic objectives and make operational decisions:

Safety-First Decision Making

Always prioritise safety considerations in all decisions, processes, and communications. When faced with competing priorities, safety requirements take precedence. Ensure all initiatives comply with aviation regulations and incorporate safety assessments.

Member-Centric Service Delivery

Design and deliver services based on member needs and feedback. Before implementing new processes, ask: “How does this serve our members better?” Maintain regular communication channels with members and respond promptly to their concerns.

Simplify and Streamline

Continuously eliminate unnecessary complexity from processes, documentation, and systems. If something requires multiple steps or creates confusion, find ways to simplify it. Make participation easier, not harder.

Collaborative Implementation

Work with stakeholders—members, clubs, regional associations, and external partners—rather than imposing solutions. Seek input early, communicate changes clearly, and provide support during transitions.

Evidence-Based Action

Base decisions on data, feedback, and measurable outcomes rather than assumptions or feeling. Track progress against objectives and adjust approaches when evidence shows better alternatives.



Part 4

Background

Organisational Overview

The Sports Aviation Federation of Australia (SAFA) is our national peak body that administers and coordinates hang gliding, paragliding, powered paragliding and weight-shift micro-lighting within Australia.

Our **Aviation Authority** comes from CASA. The Sport Aviation division of CASA regulates our activities as one of several self-administering organisations. This allows us to conduct training, issue authorisations, and undertake flying operations.

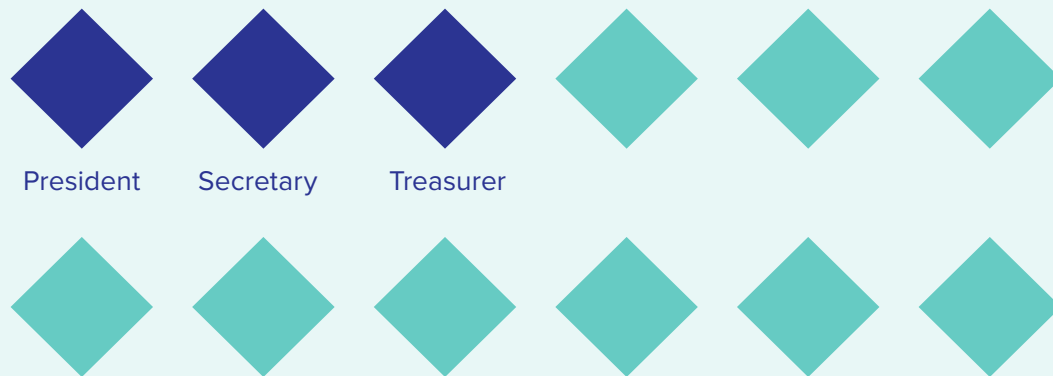
Our **Sporting Authority** comes from ASAC. SAFA maintains membership of the Air Sport Australia Confederation which is the body that represents our interests

on the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) and maintains National Sporting Organisation (NSO) status through the Australian Sporting Commission. This allows us to conduct competitions and events and be part of the global flying community.

Our **Administrative Authority** comes from the SAFA constitution as a Company Limited by Guarantee. This creates a framework for membership and enables us to administer our aviation and sporting authorities.

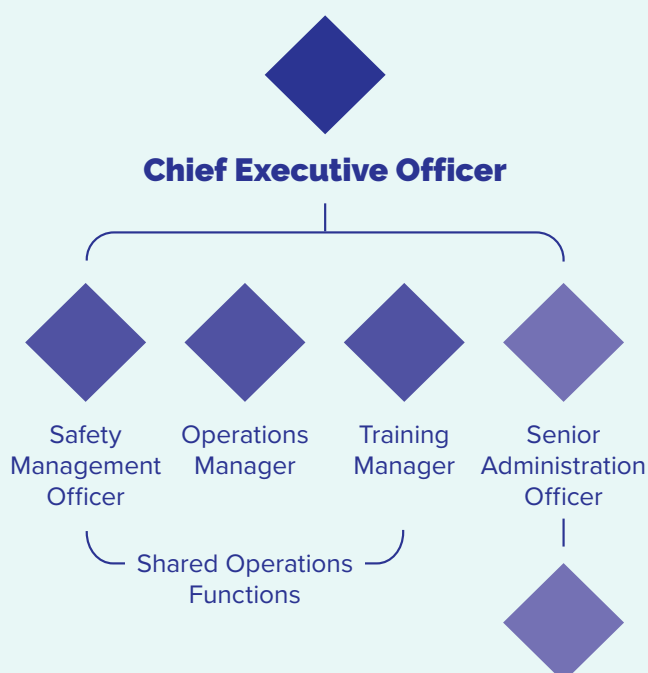
What is SAFA?

SAFA Board



The Board is made up of 12 directors (four elected directors and eight regional directors). Three of the directors fill the positions of President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Employees



External Support

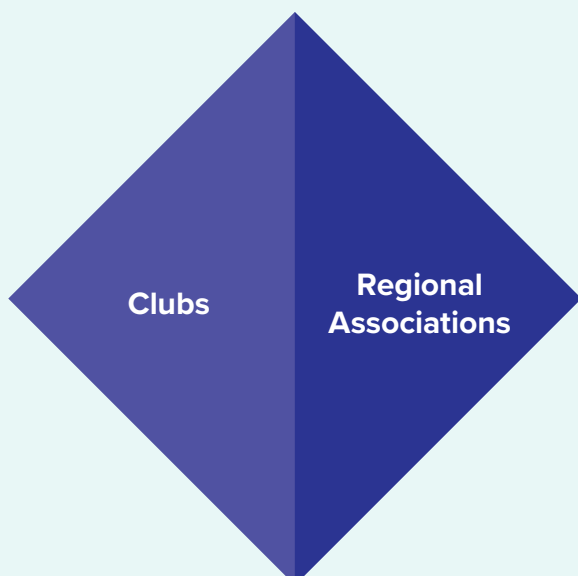


What is SAFA? (continued)

Members of SAFA



Affiliated Entities



Other



History

Our sport has a colourful history from water towed delta wing kites in 1963 and the subsequent birth of foot launched hang gliders, to soaring parachutists launching from Australian hills in 1982.

Paragliding with purpose-built paragliders became popular in the late 1980s. Instruction for hang gliding and paragliding grew as the activities matured and the number of participants grew.

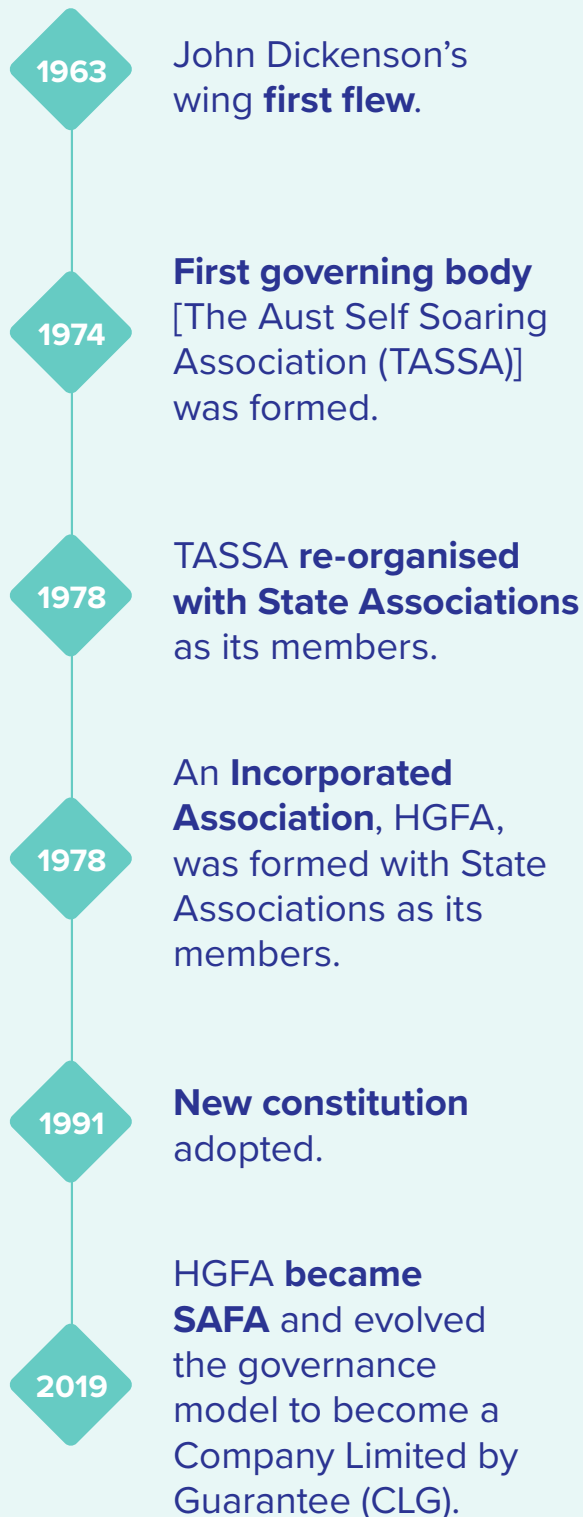
The first world championships (foot launched) were held in 1975 and Australia won one gold medal and two bronze. Performing on a competitive world-stage further ignited the spirit of adventure back home and the catalyst to soar to greater heights was unveiled with the development of Weightshift Microlights and more recently, paragliding and powered paragliding

The equipment and techniques may have evolved over time but many of the constants remain the same: a fierce mateship among members; a determination in humanity to feel the freedom of flying; safety remaining at the forefront so we can keep flying; and the thrill of pure flight.

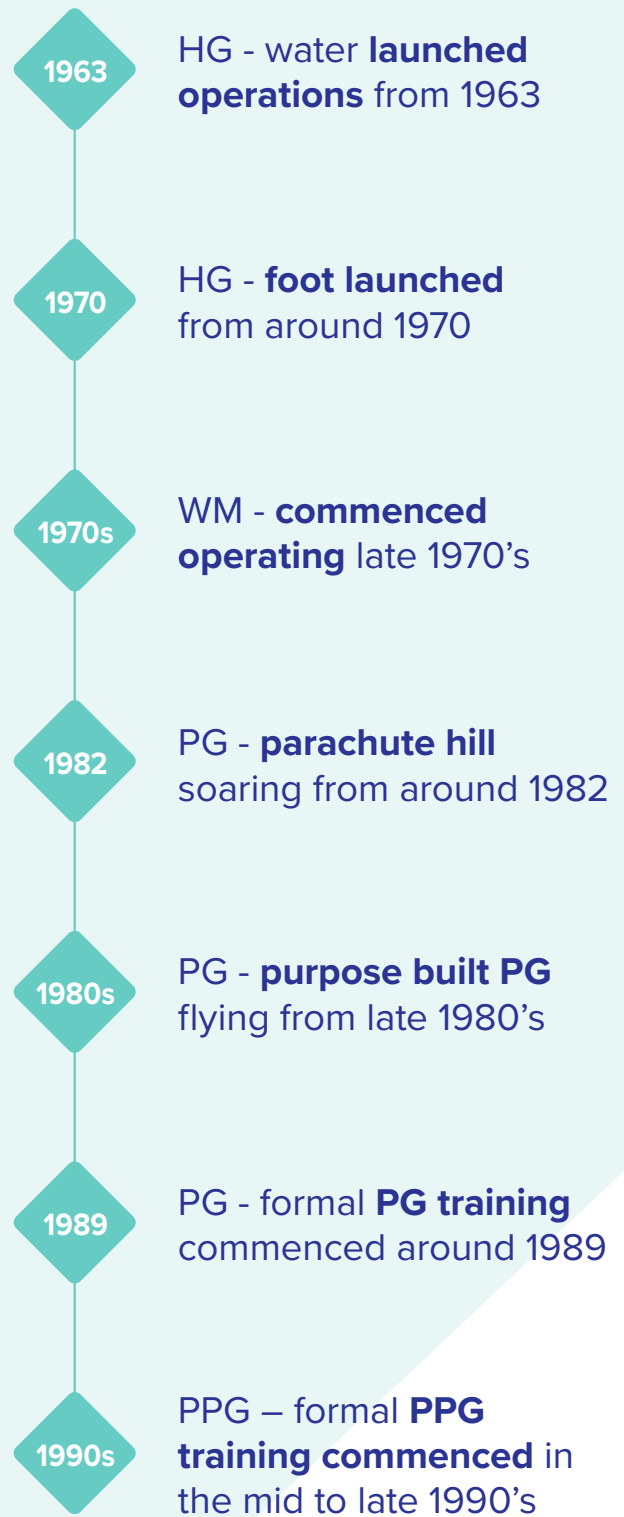
There's no doubt from its very inception there was always an avid dare-devil attitude among Australians.



As a Sport/Pastime



By Discipline





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