

# **OMARAMA SOARING CENTRE**

## ***PRESIDENT'S REPORT Nov 2006***

A small, but hopefully effective, innovation during the year has been a landowner relations exercise. For some time we have been hearing complaints from landowners dissatisfied with the attitude of some glider pilots landing on their property, airstrips in particular. Basically, the landowners expect glider pilots to contact them to advise of their presence and to seek permission for the retrieve, whether it be via road or aero tow. Recompense, although never sought, is clearly a good idea in the interests of ongoing goodwill – even just a bottle of wine or a dozen of beer.

Many of the farmers owning airstrips of strategic importance to gliding also own aeroplanes and occasionally call in to Omarama – where they pay a landing fee! Not any more – we have written to them all and offered free landing at Omarama. OSC and Omarama Airport Ltd have each agreed to fund 25% of the cost of this, with the expectation that Glide Omarama and Southern Soaring will pick up the balance. Hopefully, this will go some way to improving landowner relations – it is now over to all glider pilots to build on this. We are putting a contact list together and talking with Glide Omarama and Southern Soaring to ensure a common approach to landowners, so there will be no excuse.

I am also pleased to say that our mountain-top VHF repeater has been upgraded, thanks to Rod Ruddick of Wellington. Unreliability should now be behind us. Our thanks are due to Mike Thomas for allowing access over his land to the repeater site. Because of the tenure review process, this will soon be DOC land so we have written to DOC to request ongoing access.

While on radio things, I should mention that we have been considering the installation of a wireless LAN to provide internet coverage for the terminal, campground and chalets. Unfortunately, the Omarama telephone exchange is at full capacity and we cannot get an ADSL line until it is upgraded. Meanwhile, Glide Omarama has indicated that its LAN is available for a small fee, provided large downloads are not attempted.

For this season we are experimenting with the hire of a portable EFTPOS facility for camp and competition fees. We think the operating costs will be outweighed by the convenience factor for everyone.

You will all be aware how useful it is to have a data projector for briefings, showing competition results etc. Over the last year or two, we have used Glide Omarama's projector, which has done the job admirably – thankyou Gavin. However, your committee feels the time has come to buy one that can be mounted permanently in the terminal. To get one bright enough and with the necessary features, we will have to spend about \$5,000. We are in the process of applying to the NZ Community Trust for support.

Our thanks are due to Tom Shields of the Otago Gliding Club (recently re-incorporated) for overhauling our photocopier - this has saved us quite a bit.

Committee members have had another busy year with ongoing maintenance of the campground, including a few incremental improvements around the place, such as extra shelving in the kitchen, wheelibins, new shower curtains and mats, new signage etc. Some trees have been removed and a lot of pruning done around the campground.

It is pleasing to note that we are in a sound financial position, but costs are steadily rising (eg rubbish dumping fees up 40%) and we have significant expenditure coming up for irrigation. This has been deferred to dovetail with a proposed airfield irrigation upgrade. Accordingly, we have had to increase the camp fees by \$1/day.

There is one annoyingly grey cloud still sitting above us – the chalet site leases are still not available. This is due to matters outside OSC control. Suffice to say, it is the lawyers who are holding us up (again), and the recent subdivision of land on the south side of the entrance road has been a factor in this. I have ceased making predictions as to when the leases will be available!

In closing, I would like to thank all those volunteers who continually put their hands up to run the competitions, which simply would not happen without them. Thanks also to our hard-working committee members, many of whom can often be seen doing practical things around the site – there is more than paperwork involved in committee work! Special thanks are due to David Laing, who is standing down from the committee this year. During his tenure, David has made a very worthwhile contribution.

Happy Soaring!

Max Stevens  
President

11 November 2006