

On-the-Step

Newsletter of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the year draws to a close I would like to express my thanks to the SPAA Committee for a job well done. An experienced and professional team has worked seamlessly together for your association throughout the year. Vice President Kevin Bowe, along with Secretary Paul Cummins and Treasurer Wendy Robinson formed a strong executive nucleus. Newsletter Editor Keith Clark has had a lot on his plate, whilst Training Coordinator Duncan Miller and Waterways Access Officer Lars Larson have been very busy in their respective areas. SPAA's Social Cyclone Donna Handley has done a fantastic job coordinating the details of every SPAA gathering throughout the year. Committee member David Geers reliably linked the regular SPAA Skype meetings, whilst general members Phillip Dartnell, Bill and Lyndal Coote and Chris Hooper have all volunteered when necessary. To all members: many thanks to you for your efforts throughout the year!

The year commenced with the very sad loss of SPAA member Peter Lynch and his partner Endah Cakrawati when Peter's Grumman Albatross impacted the Swan River on Australia Day. The ATSB retrieved the wreckage from the water, and is conducting a full investigation into the accident. The final report should be released early in the new year.

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The March 2017 Lake Boga fly-in was well attended by SPAA members, and the images posted on the SPAA Members Facebook group show that everyone had a great time. It is certainly worth joining that Page to keep up with activities. On another note, there were a large number of complaints about irregular seaplane activity whilst SPAA members were at Lake Boga. This is worth considering whenever we congregate at a venue and represent all SPAA members.

I have been busy at work, and hence I have missed some recent SPAA events. All the reports have indicated that the 'Splashdown 2017' Conference, the Rathmines Catalina Festival and the SPAA Christmas Party at Grafton were all very successful. My thanks go to the SPAA members who organised and supported those key events.

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SPAA's biennial Seaplane Pilot's Conference in late October was a resounding success. Speakers from around Australia and overseas joined with SPAA members to celebrate and learn more about flying in our unique aviation and marine environment. The evening speeches and events were also entertaining and popular.

My congratulations and sincere thanks go to everyone who volunteered to make our SPAA conference such an educational and fun time for all. It was especially pleasing that some of our new members were able to attend. The partners program was also particularly well received. I would like to extend a special thank you to Donna Handley for keeping the pilots' partners engaged and entertained throughout.

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SPAA's waterways officer Lars Larson communicates regularly with local and state authorities to facilitate Seaplane access on waterways around Australia. There has been another recent report of a Seaplane operating on a waterway where it shouldn't have been.

This is a timely reminder that good planning and proper coordination can prevent embarrassment, and will also assist SPAA with our negotiations on behalf of ALL Seaplane Pilots. If you have any questions about access requirements for a particular waterway, then please contact SPAA in the first instance.



SPAA members and their aircraft participated at the Rathmines Catalina Festival again this year. The weather was very warm, with a strong afternoon sea-breeze. The RAAF Roulettes kicked off a fantastic show with some beautiful aerobatics, followed by a myriad of other air displays. On the ground, members of the public looked with interest at the nice variety of Seaplanes on display. The HARS Catalina suffered an engine failure enroute to the show, but the crew managed to land safely at Maitland Airport. The popular festival supports the establishment of a flying boat museum and seaplane hangar at this former WW2 Air Force Base.

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Although the weather conspired to restrict the numbers that could fly to Grafton for the SPAA/Grafton Aero Club Christmas Party hosted by the, those that made it were treated to some fabulous hospitality and amazing feasts courtesy of the Aero Club. They certainly know how to make us feel welcome and share the Christmas spirit. A very big thank you and Christmas best wishes to the members of the Grafton Aero Club for making such a special weekend. I for one hope that we can do it again, only next time with good forecasts and many able to fly in.

*Have a Great Christmas
and
Fly Safely!*
Malcolm Burns
0448 744 763

SPLASH DOWN

2017

SPAA CONFERENCE



This year I attended the SPAA Conference at Rathmines and had a great time meeting other pilots and learning about seaplanes.

When I first arrived at the SPAA Conference I wasn't quite sure what to expect. Even though I have my PPL I have only completed one training flight in a seaplane which led me to wonder how much I would actually be able to follow. But I enjoy learning and am really interested in seaplanes so thought why not give this a go.

It was surprising how much of the information I could relate back to my 'land' flying. Presentations about not flying beyond your limitations, setting expectations with passengers and online data such as the new Graphical Area Forecast and RAAus knowledge centre were all good topics to build on and refresh my aviation knowledge. I enjoyed the presentations specific to seaplanes and found it particularly interesting to learn about some of the considerations for seaplane landings like choosing a suitable area, the impacts of glassy water and the need to give way to all vessels. That could definitely make landing a bit harder than on the clearly marked out runways I'm used to. The discussions about lifejacket use and preparedness for a water escape were also interesting to me as I had recently flown over Bass Strait to Tasmania.

I really appreciate the pilots who took me flying during the conference. First I flew in the Super Petrel. The view from the cockpit was definitely different to anything I had experienced before. It would take some getting used to with no propeller in the front and water which seemed to be almost up at the side windows on takeoff. Then on landing it felt more like a

speedboat. In contrast was flying in the AirCam which provided great views of the area from its open cockpit and a nice stable slow flight.

One thing that really impressed me during the whole conference was how welcoming and friendly all the members of the SPAA were. After the initial introductions I felt a little inexperienced, however, I found that everyone was happy to listen to each other irrespective of being an experienced airline pilot or flying for recreation. I really enjoyed hearing about the adventures from the many skilled people at the conference. In particular, Michael Smith's story of his around the world flight was fascinating especially as I was able to view and sit in his plane "Southern Sun". The talk and videos of the Catalina was also really interesting.

On the last day I helped out in the SPAA area for the Catalina Festival. The SPAA tent provided a nice shady view of the flying displays and parked seaplanes. It was great to chat to people who came by. I myself first found out about the SPAA at an airshow stall several years ago so hopefully I was able to help the SPAA continue to share that passion for flying and seaplanes to other future members.





Failure to finish lectures on time meant punishment in the special seaplane stocks in front of the class.



Some flew great distances to get there

.... others unfortunately didn't quite make it.

Early Days Remembered

As the Founder, and now Patron of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia it is probably incumbent on me to tell you a bit about my "early" days of private seaplane flying in Australia.

During the war, as soon as I turned 18 I tried to join the RAAF but because of "crook" knees ended up in anti-aircraft on 3.7" and BOFORS 40MM Anti-Aircraft Batteries.

Eventually, after we had shot down most of the Japanese aircraft I was retrained for Infantry Intelligence, learnt the Japanese language and eventually ended in Hiroshima and the Occupation Force.

Before they dropped the atom bomb I was in New Guinea, Wewak/Aitape, mostly using the Catalinas and their crews to service the outposts behind the Japanese lines.

It was these CATS and their crews that got me interested in seaplanes but also helped a bit by my cousin Bobby Gibbes who operated Gibbes Sepik Airways (after winning the DFC and a few other medals for shooting down Messerschmitts and Heinkels in the Mediterranean)

After the war I came back to my original home town, Port Macquarie. There was no Pacific Highway in those days and I wrecked a couple of cars driving up and down to Sydney on the corrugated country roads.

Enter the Sunderland flying boats! There were no airports close to Port Macquarie, so I hired the T.O.A. Sunderland flying boat to operate off the coastal rivers (Manning, Hastings and Clarence Rivers) with PG Taylor and Bryan Monckton. They had purchased and civilianized the Sunderlands from Rathmines to operate around the Pacific – but Qantas objected because they had exclusive rights for overseas areas (Lord Howe Island is not overseas because it is part of NSW).

They considered these coastal towns, uneconomical for a large flying boat, so together with my brother Roger we started the Port Macquarie Clipper Pty Ltd and chartered the Sunderlands on a regular basis from T.O.A.

PG Taylor was a regular skipper on our weekly flights. He enjoyed mixing with passengers and sometimes left me cruising in the co-pilot seat.

He said to me one day, "You're a natural pilot you should go to Bankstown and get a proper licence."

By this time, I had already started manufacturing and importing business with the electricity utilities importing porcelain insulators and equipment for the overhead power lines (and coming from the Port Macquarie/Wauchope area supplying power poles and marine piles from our eucalyptus forests.)

Nevertheless, I took PG's advice and in 1948 enlisted in the NSW Royal Aero Club to learn to fly. The first thing I realized was there was a lot of difference in flying a Tiger Moth and a Sunderland flying boat.

Not to worry, I could see a real need for Australia to utilize aircraft of all types in its largely unpopulated expansive areas.

So in 1948, I started commuting around the countryside, firstly in an Auster but subsequently acquiring a Percival Proctor selling power poles, insulators and cables to the electricity supply authorities. Most of this material was locally made in Sydney but I decided to de-centralise and move my factory and business to



Wyong which meant a 2 hour drive daily each way from my home in Sydney.

After having been booked, and known to the highway police I decided there must be a better way to commute than driving up and down the highway every day – but there were no aerodromes at Port Macquarie or any of the other coastal towns.

The answer – flying a seaplane.

I joined the Seaplane Pilots Association in USA and finally acquired a Piper Cub on Edo Floats (my home was then on the Lane Cove River and the factory was in Warnervale near the Wyong River.

In the early days (1948) being a seaplaner I had to operate out of Rose Bay, the official formal Seaplane Airport. My Piper Cub on floats was registered with the Maritime Services Board as a speed boat and I had a speedboat driver's licence so I used to alight at Rose Bay and taxi on the water to my waterfront home in Greenwich on the Lane Cove River. There was no speed limit on the harbour so I would taxi on the step, flat out.

There were always some waves and rough water around Circular Quay and under the Harbour Bridge, so I would accidentally become airborne again, if only for a few metres.

DCA was sympathetic to my problem and arranged to put a VHF repeater at their Goulburn St address, so I could alight on the Lane Cove River. There was one condition for this! I had to be able to see and clear the approach path to Runway 16 at Mascot! Most times, when I was given a clearance, there was a ferry or a cruise boat right in front of me, so I had to wait for another opportunity.

It was a great relief when in the mid 80's, Dick Smith became influential with DCA and created the R405 transit lanes from Parramatta down to the Heads, over water at all times and clearing the Southern Bridge Pylon at 500ft. Once at the Heads the offshore "Victor One" transit lane operated at 1000ft from Palm Beach in the North to Bundeena in the south.

These "lanes are used extensively by helicopters and seaplanes becoming more useful and numerous.

Over the years I went from a Cub to a "Super" Cub and eventually a Helio Courier, all on EDO straight floats.

I now enjoy a Cessna 180 on Edo 2870 floats (VH-BNJ) and operate off the Lane Cove River outside my kitchen door and have a property in Central Tilba on the far south coast bordering on Lake Tilba (midway between Narooma and Bermagui.)

In the early days I was joined in my seaplane operations by a couple of other private pilots operating privately Cessna 172's. These guys lived near the Middle Harbour and operated privately. Kevin Weldon was one of the 1st private seaplane owners and he was accompanied by David Hooker (L.J. Hooker's son) . Another bloke also had a Cessna on floats at Bankstown aerodrome.

After a couple of visits to Oshkosh where I had teamed up with J.J. Frey, I decided we needed a Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia to educate the authorities on the safety and necessity for seaplanes in Australia. The SPA in USA gave me permission to use their logo and operating rules and they have welcomed and supported us ever since.

Now at a young 93 years of age, you might say I have been flying, mostly seaplanes for around 70 years!

Phil Dulhunty OAM

PS For further information please refer to my book "Never a Dull Moment"



Phil Kirk welcomes SPAA members

As far as flying goes I'm a sunshine and blue skies kinda girl. When I heard what weather was forecast for our Seaplane Christmas Party Fly In at Grafton I became very nervous.

Errol was so keen to attend that he was prepared to give me the final option to decide whether we fly or drive. With this in mind we planned a day on either side so as to give us more favourable flying opportunities.

However the Weather Gods had a plan of their own!

News headlines – Doom and Gloom!

Worst weather front in 40 years moving into Victoria.

I was beyond panic but as usual Errol kept a cool head saying, "That's Victoria, it's far away from where we will be flying."

That is true but my logic says, what's in Victoria usually moves up into NSW.

On the Friday, our planned departure date, an SMS ping on Errol's phone wakes us. I open the curtains, one look and I know I will not fly in this weather.

Out comes the Ipad and Oz runways with Errol studying the weather, pings fly back and forth.

Errol tells me that the Wedderburn fellow aviators have decided not to fly as they have commitments on the Monday and the weather predictions show clearing only later in that week.

Late morning and we decide driving is our best option. Of course, as we leave the outskirts of Sydney blue skies and sunshine miraculously appeared. I hear a curse or two coming from Errol re the Weather Bureau but decide to ignore.

A great night stop with friends in Port MacQuarie makes up for all the disappointment of not flying. Driving out of PM the next day beautiful blue skies with scattered clouds and sunshine followed us with more muttering from Errol.

The weather man had certainly got this part of the trip wrong.

My first visit to Grafton and it did not disappoint. We were booked into a motel right on the river banks. I could see why the seaplane guys had chosen this spot, a perfect runway and lots of place to play.

We arrived mid-afternoon at the Grafton Club where it felt more like walking into a crowd of best friends than meeting people for the first time. We were happy to see that some of our seaplane buddies, Harvey and "Delay" had flown in earlier and



Lake landing on the Clarence River

due to weather predictions others had driven in. What a great gathering, sipping drinks on the deck overlooking the airstrip as more and more people arrived.

That evening a smorgasbord of food was produced by the active team members of Kevin Wilson, Peter, Kerrie and Patsy Clement from the Grafton Club. Phil Kirk, the President, made a short speech and welcomed us all. The food was so delicious and I overheard someone say he'd been up for thirds! It was easy to understand why and I was kindly given some of the recipes which I've attached for those who missed out. (see below)

Next morning we met up at the club for a Big Breakfast. Once again the members welcomed us and plied us with food. Once the food had settled a few of the seaplane guys decided to repay our host's hospitality by taking a few of them for a splash down on the river. The rest of us drove back to the hotel to take photos and watch.

Travelling home the predicted weather arrived which caused "Delay" to divert to Luskintyre and me thankful that we were not flying.

A wonderful weekend which went all too fast, meeting old and making new friends, I cannot wait for next year's Christmas Party at Grafton.

BLACK BEAN SALAD

Pkt Black Beans – Cooked

Blanch then cool quickly – Asparagus, Green Beans, Broccoli
Shallots, Red Capsicum, Can of Corn, Celery

DRESSING

1/3 cup olive oil

2 Tabs White Wine Vinegar

1 Clove garlic, minced

1 small Chilli (option)

1 teas sea salt



BEC'S NECTARINE, CUCUMBER & ALMOND SALAD

Prep Time 30 mins

Cooling Time 5 mins

Serves 6

¼ cup vinegar (white wine)

¼ cup lemon juice

¼ cup caster sugar

1 small thinly sliced red capsicum

Small chill (optional)

8 nectarines halved, stone removed, cut into thin wedges

2 Lebanese cucumbers, halved lengthways & thinly sliced

1/2/ cup almond kernels, coarsely chopped

1/3 cup shredded fresh mint

2 tbl spoons olive oil

METHOD

Place vinegar & sugar in a small saucepan over low heat, cook stirring 5 mins until sugar is dissolved. Add capsicum/chill and stir. Set aside and cool completely. Combine nectarine, cucumber, almond and shredded mint in bowl, add lemon juice. Gradually add oil to vinegar mix and whisk until combined. Top with mint leaves and season with cracked pepper (optional)



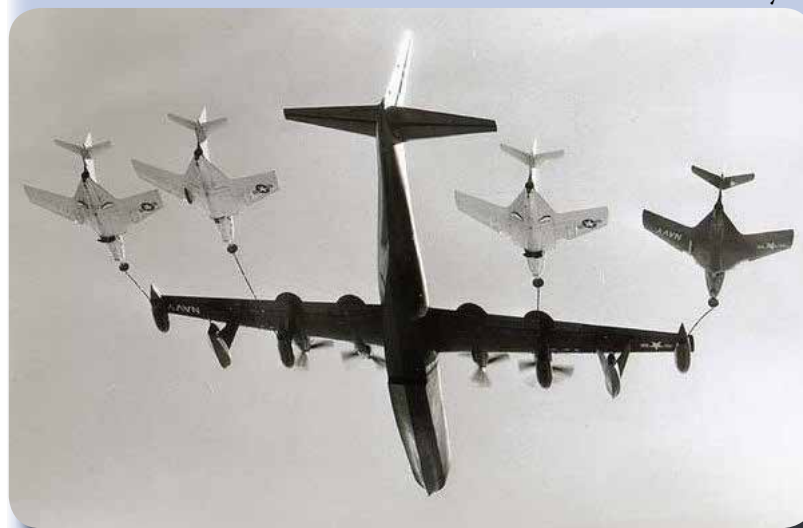
CONVAIR TRADEWIND

The year 1945 saw WWII wind down and each of the armed services try to evaluate the equipment they had fought with. The Navy concluded most of their aircraft had done well. By August 1945, the United States Navy was ostensibly the most powerful and modern in the world. Their flying boats had done well enough, but with the technology developed during the war, the Navy felt this class of aircraft could be greatly improved. What with the development of the turboprop engine and thin, high-lift wings, the Navy could increase payload, speed and effectiveness to a degree unheard of just a few years back.

months because of trouble with the Allison engines. The Navy received its first Tradewind in 1954.

The Convair Tradewind set a record in 1956 when it simultaneously refueled four F9F Cougars in-flight.

The Navy sought to use it as a patrol craft, troop transport, flying ambulance and fuel tanker. As a patrol craft, it mounted 5 pairs of 20 mm guns, two on each side fore and aft, and one pair behind the rudder. The Tradewind could lift 8,000 lbs. (3,629 kg) of stores. It had a range of 3,450 miles (5,552 km) without stores. In this configuration, the Navy called it the "P5Y".



In the troop transport/ambulance arrangement, it was called the "R3Y" and could carry 103 fully armed troops or 92 stretcher patients and 12 Medics. The fuel tanker model was also called the R3Y. It was this model which went into the history books in 1954 when it set a transcontinental seaplane speed record of 403 miles per hour utilizing the jetstream. It again set a record in 1956 when it simultaneously refueled four F9F Cougars in-flight. The speed record still stands.

At various times, the Navy had further plans to use the P5Y as an assault boat, a nuclear powered aircraft and several other configurations. Engine problems ultimately blocked these plans.

In 1945, the Navy approached Convair to see what could be done and Convair came up with the Model 117. It was a very sleek, high wing boat with a single-step hull, four Allison T-40 turboprop engines with six blade, contra-rotating props. Each engine developed 5,100 shaft hp (3,806 kW) and 830 pounds (376 kg) of jet thrust. The stabilizing floats were fixed, as there was no room to stow them in the thin, laminar-flow wing. The boat was named the "Tradewind". It first flew in 1950 after a delay of some

Two P5Ys, five R3Y-1s and six R3Y-2 Tradewinds were built before production was halted. What should have been one of the Navy's best and most beautiful boats was destined to be very short lived. The Allison T-40 engines were troubled from the start and the problems were never adequately remedied. One of the two original XP5Y-1s crashed and the suspected cause was engine failure. Subsequently, several more of the R3Ys were wrecked and it was judged definitely due to faulty engines. Finally, in 1958 the Navy ordered them grounded and sold for scrap.

Specifications: Convair Tradewind R3Y-1

Dimensions:

Wing span: 145 ft 9 in (44.42 m)
 Length: 139 ft 8 in (42.26 m)
 Height: 51 ft 5 in (15.68 m)
 Wing Area: 2,102 sq ft (640 sq m)

Weights:

Empty: 71,824 lbs (32,579 kg)
 Normal Gross: 145,500 lbs (65,998 kg)

Maximum Gross: 165,000 lbs (74,842 kg)

Performance:

Maximum Speed: 388 mph @ 30,000 ft
 372 mph @ sea level)

Cruising Speed: 225 mph

Service Ceiling: 39,700 ft

Combat Range: 2,785 mi with eight 325 lb depth charges

Maximum Range: 3,450 mi without payload

Powerplant:

Four Allison T-40-A-4 rated 5,100 shaft hp (3,806 kW)
 plus 830 lbs. (376.48 kg) jet thrust

Armament:

No Armament on R3Y Versions.



"FLOATS DOWN FOR WATER"

Amphibian pilots chant it every time they descend towards the water. "WHEELS UP FOR WATER". It was, or should have been, drummed into them as part of their water endorsement. But could we be adding "FLOATS DOWN FOR WATER" in the future?

The retractable landing gear is completely ordinary in aviation, and now the retractable float is coming too, by the innovation of an Australian company, Tigerfish Aviation.

The hydroplanes' floats increase the air resistance during cruise, that's the reason why floatplanes can only be economical on short distances (few hundred kilometers).

By retracting, the problem of the landing gears' extra drag was solved quite early. The first aircraft with retractable landing gears appeared in 1917, and such aircraft became common in the early 1930s.

The flying boats are better in this area, but they also need stabilizing under-wing floats (or wing-like projections from the fuselage) for stabilization.

During the design process of the fuselage and the hull, not only the aerodynamics, but also buoyancy has to be considered.

The RAPT (Retractable Amphibious Pontoon Technology) is practically the adaptation of the idea of retractable landing gear to floats.



Since the floats are too big to be retracted to the fuselage, they are retracted to a streamline pannier, so the extra drag during the cruise can be reduced. As you can see it in the second picture, or in the video, it's rather a "packing" than retracting.

During the retracting process the floats are turning inside, so the boat-like shapes aren't exposed to the air stream. In this way the floats' extra drag can be reduced to 10% from 45%.

The reduced drag affects the performance in different ways. According to the statements of Tigerfish Aviation the RAPT system can generate up to 20% fuel saving, increased speed and productivity, significant reduction in emissions and decreased operating costs.

Maybe the fuel saving is the most important in these

days' when the fuel price is constantly rising. But besides the features mentioned above, it would have all the advantages of an ordinary floatplane.

The pannier contains its own undercarriage for landing at airports and for beaching. The disadvantage of RAPT can be its weight, which is more than simple fixed floats cause of the retracting mechanism.

Of course this conception has predecessors. The stabilization floats of the PBY Catalina, a WW2 era flying boat, were retractable too.

A less known experimental plane, the Blackburn B20 had a deployable hull, in order to combine the best features of both flying boats and floatplanes.

The RAPT system theoretically can be fitted to a wide range of aircraft from the small Cessna planes to the C-130 Hercules. The pannier is retrofitted, and has got a different design for each aircraft, which adapts aerodynamically to the fuselage, and contains a fitting undercarriage.

The project is on its best way to realization. In 2007 an 1:6 scale Cessna Caravan model was built in order to test the concept.



Recently Quasar Aerospace Industries invested \$5 million to the project, the next phase of the development will be the modification of a Dornier 228 NG





An Apology of sorts.

You may have noticed that the once fairly regular publication of On-the-Step has faltered over the past year. The editor could make excuses like "SPAA members haven't been supplying me with material for articles" but the real truth is he has been preoccupied with non-seaplane activities namely major holiday house renovations. Focus could not be turned away from the renovation activity due to a daughter requiring it to be available for her wedding. I guess I needed the deadline or it might have drawn on for many years. There has been, however, an upside to this effort (apart from gaining a wonderful son-in-law,) and that was the inclusion of a lakeside garage/hangar. Searey ZRA, or Kittalina, as I like to call her, has now moved into her new home and is loving it. Apart from a view that should delight the heart of any seaplane, she is now getting regular attention from her owner and splashing on the wonderful Mid North Coast lakes. The editor now promises to pay more attention to SPAA matters, unless I am out flying (to gain inspiration for On-the-Step of course). Hope you all have a wonderful Christmas.



One of our longtime members, Jim Moline, is desperately looking for hangar space where he could carry out the final assembly of his Searey DUX after an extensive rebuild. Jim lives on the NSW Central Coast so something in that region is preferable. If you have some space, or know of anyone who might have, please give Jim a call on 0418 235 879.

Seaplane Pilots Association Australia (SPAA) is a not for profit organisation staffed by volunteers.

Its goals are to:

- ***Promote the safe and responsible operation of Seaplanes.***
- ***Advocate for equal rights and access to waterways for Seaplanes.***
- ***Engage with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), Air Services Australia (ASA), industry stakeholders and other interested parties on Seaplane related matters and legislation.***
- ***Foster high standards of Seaplane training and airmanship.***
- ***Provide support and information to its members.***

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