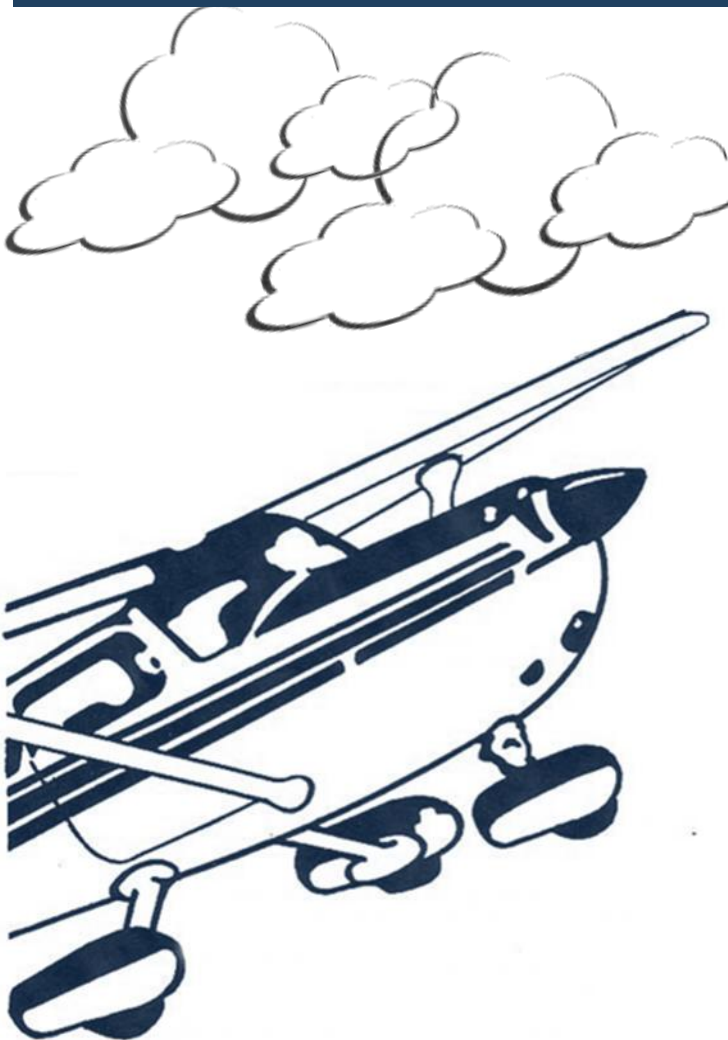


Fly About

NORTHAM AERO CLUB (INC.) NEWSLETTER

Vol. 56 Issue No.10



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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

WELCOME TO NOVEMBER FLY ABOUT

Claude Meunier's memorial was very well attended and it is a credit to what Claude achieved over his lifetime. Thank you to all the people who helped present the memorial. We had a pilot fly up from Jandakot with the original Aero Star that belonged to Claude all those years ago when he flew around the world and do a fly past during the day, Bernie and the new owner organised the momentous event and we are greatly appreciative. The day was spent chatting to all other pilots and sharing stories about Claude and his life around Northam and around the world. His love of flight is shared by many but Claude wanted to share the stories of every pilot that dreamed of flying beyond their own horizon. We will always have a special place in our heart for Claude Meunier at Northam Aero Club, he will never be forgotten.

I was lucky enough to attend the Serpentine Open Day and all the pilots would have enjoyed those incredible flying machines as much as we did. Another great fly in and catch up with like minded souls.

It is always enjoyable to catch up with other pilots and to have a chin wag. Bernie Hush caught up with his friend from CASA. They have advised us that they are very keen to do a seminar at Northam Aero Club so will advise all of the date in the New Year.

Eddie Saunders in the Zoncello balloon has just won the SAGA Ballooning in Japan and the first Australian to do so. The SAGA International Ballooning Fiesta is the most prestigious event in the World. Eddie and his team won the 2023 National here in Northam, well done. He is also the first southern hemisphere pilot to win this event.

The November Flying Comp was held and was great to see the pilots that participated and once again a very enjoyable morning with pilots flying in from down south. Always good to see them.

We have our Christmas lunch on Sunday 14th December at 12.00 noon. Please let Sue, Heather or myself know if you are able to attend for catering reasons. Once again, Happy Flying in this glorious weather.

Errol

CLUB CAPTAINS REPORT

CAPTAIN'S REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2025

This month's Competition was a thirty minute triangular NAVEX to Hagboom Lake, Meenaar and return with a Glide approach. Four pilots took part on a blue sky day, with a bit of light turbulence, the wind favouring 14.

Everyone found all the Way Points, some passed enroute targets on the wrong side which separated the winners from the others. Once again everyone got 100% for their radio calls.

Landing was a Glide approach touch down on the second stripe. VH JXI was a meter long and Foxbat 42 a meter short. VH PGL touched down in the middle of the stripe and then bunny hopped over the third stripe. Jabiru touched down on the threshold at the 32 end... Not quite, that's a slight exaggeration!

Errol and Ashley had even points after the count back, so the result hinged on the bonus question that was; identify the airstrip in the "reminder to the Flying Competition on the Facebook Post". The correct answer was Corunna Downs WW2 Air Base. Unfortunately for Errol, Ashley knew the answer.

→	1 st place	Ashley Smith	57 points
→	2 nd place	Errol Croft	56 points
→	3 rd place	Bernie Hush	54 points
→	4 th place	Bob Emery	45 points

CLUB CAPTAINS REPORT

Bernie delivered a beaut cake Ling had made which we all enjoyed and found out later he had neglected to notify us his Birthday was this week

“Happy Birthday” was duly sung found it’s way to NAC Facebook!

Thanks also to Ash and Kate for their jam and cream scones which were outstanding again and Marg’s muffins.

Next Competition; Sunday December 14th. Briefing @ 8.30am.

This will consist of three circuits and as it is the Aero Club’s Christmas Party we need to be finished before noon. Please try to be on time and ready to fly.

Dave

REASON TO BE GRATEFUL

The best place I've worked in the 33 years since I left the Navy was the BP Kwinana Refinery, and I'd still be there had it not closed in 2021. The darkest day in the 66 years of the Refinery's operation was December 10th, 1965, when a fire and explosion killed two men. The inquest focused on what happened immediately leading up to the accident, with no focus on root causes such as design of the plant, training or risk assessment procedures. It found "no evidence of negligence", and it made no recommendations. Such an outcome would be unimaginable today, because accident investigation has come so far in the last 50 years.

One of the reasons accident investigation is so much better nowadays is an English gentleman who died earlier this year – Professor James Reason.

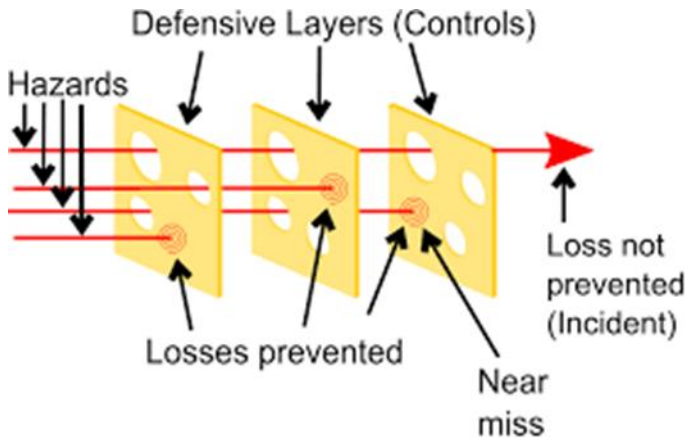
James Reason told a story of the beginnings of his research into the systems that lead to accidents, as opposed to errors by individuals.

One afternoon in the early 1970s, I was boiling a kettle of tea. The teapot was waiting open-topped on the kitchen surface. At that moment, the cat – a very noisy Burmese – turned up at the nearby kitchen door, howling to be fed. I opened a tin of cat food, dug in a spoon and dolloped a large spoonful of cat food into the teapot.

Reflecting on his "spoonerism", he realised his mistake was not intentional but neither was it random. From this insight he developed a theory of accident causation that examined the interaction between human actions, preconditions, and defences, or barriers that stop accidents happening. In aviation these barriers include maintenance systems, standard operating procedures, checklists, pilot licensing, ATC, and airspace design.

Australian safety pioneer Rob Lee coined the term Swiss cheese to describe Reason's model. Each layer of defence is like a slice of Swiss cheese, and each slice of cheese has holes that represent weaknesses in that defence. The holes in the defences open and close, and sometimes line up to allow an accident.

REASON TO BE GRATEFUL



The worst ever aviation accident was a classic example of the holes lining up. Other than the fog, every other factor was human. Some of the slices of Swiss cheese, and the holes, were:

- The airport at Tenerife was suitable for 747s (slice of cheese) but was not suitable for the amount of traffic that was diverted there due to a bomb threat at Las Palmas, meaning Pan Am had to backtrack on the runway (hole in slice of cheese).
- The KLM crew had very strict flight and duty time limits (slice of cheese). They were on the verge of exceeding them, which would have meant staying in Tenerife overnight and organising accommodation for all the passengers, which made the captain impatient to get going (hole).
- The Spanish controller was speaking to the Dutch crew using standard phraseology (slice of cheese) in the international language of ATC, which of course is neither Spanish nor Dutch (hole).
- KLM, like all airlines, had published crew coordination procedures (slice of cheese). The captain was the most senior 747 checkie in KLM, and the FO had 95 hours on type, meaning a very steep “don’t question the boss” authority gradient (hole).

REASON TO BE GRATEFUL

James Reason acknowledged that his Swiss cheese model wasn't a detailed theory of what causes accidents, but it was invaluable as a means of communication. One factor that made his work so influential was that he was good at communicating complex ideas simply, whether it was to astronauts, surgeons, aircraft mechanics or nuclear power plant operators.

Another area where the Swiss cheese model was extremely valuable was in health care, Reason's primary area of research since 2000. Using his model improved outcomes and reduced the tendency to punish workers for mistakes made under pressure or in poorly designed systems. James Reason examined the idea of a "just culture", meaning a safety culture that encourages people to report mistakes and incidents without fear of punishment. Considering accidents are generally not caused just by one factor, it's important to focus on and learn from systemic issues and to find and fix root causes of problems, rather than blaming individuals. A just culture still holds individuals accountable for reckless behaviour, but the emphasis is on

understanding how systemic failings can lead to errors. All of that applies very well, and is in fact probably better used, in aviation. Medical stuff-ups almost never make headlines because they only kill one person at a time, whereas a major flying accident is guaranteed to meet the typical media "If it bleeds, it leads" criterion.

As Reason's early work was being published, a series of catastrophic accidents captured world attention: Three Mile Island (1979), Bhopal (1984), Chernobyl (1986), the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion (1986), and Piper Alpha (1988). Like the BP tragedy in 1965, each was initially blamed on "human error," but Professor Reason's deeper analysis revealed the complex organisational and systemic factors that made such tragedies almost inevitable.

He was one of those people whose legacy can't be measured, because you can't measure what didn't happen. How many accidents have been prevented, and how many lives have been saved, because of James Reason's work? Considering how relevant his work was to aviation, everyone who flies has reason to be grateful.

REASON TO BE GRATEFUL

A personal reflection

As those who were at the recent memorial service heard, Claude was always very keen for Northam Aero Club to be a flying school. Because of that, he was always appreciative of my involvement with the club. He was also a big fan of my regular FlyAbout articles, and it was his idea to create a page on the club website specifically for them.

To be held in high esteem by Claude – someone who spent his nine decades on earth so well, and who did so much for the club – was an honour, and a memory to treasure. And be assured, the esteem was mutual.

Merci beaucoup, et au revoir mon ami.

Kevin

NEW HIRE AGREEMENT

The criteria for hiring the club aircraft is changing with new conditions being introduced as of the **1st of December 2025**.

A recent review identified that a hire agreement needs to be in place to ensure that the responsibilities of both parties (Northam Aero Club and the Hirer) are clearly documented and understood.

Therefore as of the 1st of December, you will need to :

- Be a club member (New student pilots are exempt);
- Have signed and submitted an Aircraft Hire Agreement (AHA);
- Have provided a copy of your current medical certificate; and
- Have provided a copy of your current Flight Review records.

Noting there is generally no-one on sight when you hire the aircraft, the signed agreement shall remain in force from the date of signature until the 1st of February of the following year

(But this will be 2027 in the first instance).

IN THE EVENT THAT YOUR MEDICAL OR AFR EXPIRES PRIOR TO THIS DATE, A COPY OF YOUR NEW RECORD(S) WILL NEED TO BE PROVIDED TO CONTINUE HIRING THE AIRCRAFT.

If there is no approved AHA, and records of a valid medical and AFR, then aircraft hire will be denied until these criteria are successfully met.

If you have any questions, please contact the club treasurer to discuss.

You can download a copy of the AHA here: [Aircraft Hire Agreement \(AHA\)](#)

AVIATION HUMOUR



BAR

The Bar will be open every Saturday evening from 17:00 — 19:00

LEARN TO FLY

Recreational Aviation Capital of the West



Ph Errol 0428 880 149 or Kevin 0434 000 217
www.NorthamAeroClub.org.au

NEXT CLUB COMMITTEE MEETING

TBA due to XMAS Luncheon

Wanted - Aviation Memorabilia

- Books
- Artefacts
- Photographs
- Old Aircraft Parts
- Signs

If it's old and historic—I'm interested

Adam Price—0428 611 797

NAC Club Aircraft Bookings



Enquiries— Matt Bignell

0407 873 700

CLASSIFIEDS

Northam Aero Club Merchandise

Club Polo Shirts with name and club logo—\$35.00

Club Caps with logo—\$25.00

available at the bar or Postage—\$10.00 per order

Stubbie Holders—\$7.00

available at the bar or

Postage —\$8.00



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NAC Cessna 172 — VH-PGL

Hire Fee Structure

- Private Hire - \$270 per hour
- Dual Training - \$440 per hour
- TIF's - \$220 per 1/2 hour
- Briefing - as required
- Instructor (in owner's aircraft) - \$180 per hour

Pre-paid Discounted Block Rates Available

- 5 hours - less 5%
- 10 hours - less 10%

Student pilots may use the discounted block rate for aircraft hire costs only. Instructor fees remain as fixed price.

For all further enquiries please contact:

NAC Treasurer - nactreasurer@bigpond.com T: 0427 909 412

Aircraft Bookings: **Matt Bignell** - 0407 873 700

NEXT CLUB COMPETITION

9:00 am Sunday 14th December 2025

Club Captain for the day will provide the briefing

