



GlidingVicTas






VSA NEWSLETTER MARCH, 2026

GLIDING AUSTRALIA EGM 30th March 2026

**EXTRAORDINARY
GENERAL MEETING**
30TH MARCH 2026

Gliding Australia members will vote on proposed constitutional changes at the Extraordinary General Meeting on 30 March.

A single page has been created with everything you need:

-  Key documents
-  Webinar registrations
-  EGM registration
-  Information about the proposed changes
-  Start here:

<https://glidingaustralia.org/egm2026/>

GLIDING CLUB OF VICTORIA

VALE NORMAN JAMES "JIM" BARTON (AM)

It is with great sadness that we advise of the passing of one of the "greats" of the gliding movement and a long serving past president of GCV, Jim Barton.

The funeral to celebrate Jim's life will be held at the Springvale Botanical Cemetery, Renowden Chapel, on 19th March 2026 at 10.30 am.

Obituary to Jim Barton – Gliding Club of Victoria

Jim was born in 1931. He commenced working at a bank at 17 years of age and then joined the Gliding Club of Victoria (GCV) in 1948 to fly gliders and later become instructor and tug pilot.



60th cake, Jim Barton

December 1999

He then gained his commercial power licence and then power instructor rating. With his qualifications, he was then able to secure flying jobs in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

With this experience, he scored a job with TAA and flew DC3, F27, DC9 and 727 and flew until he retired at 55 years of age.

Jim and his wife, Judy had 3 children, Tim in 1958, Anne in 1963 and Suzie in 1965.

Jim became President of the Gliding Club of Victoria in 1958 and remained in this position for 36 years until 1994. During Jim's tenure, the club underwent a massive transformation, evolving from a small group into one of Australia's premier soaring hubs.

Major Milestones (1958–1994)

One of the most significant events under Jim's leadership was the club's permanent relocation to Benalla. This move provided the club with the vast, open thermal conditions necessary for world-class cross-country gliding.

Jim oversaw the modernisation of the fleet and the transition from traditional wooden and fabric gliders, such as the ES52 Kookaburra, to high-performance "glass-fibre" sailplanes and during this era, infrastructure growth developed with its own hangars, workshops, and accommodation facilities, turning Benalla into a destination for pilots from across Australia and overseas.

Under his presidency, the GCV became a frequent host for the Australian National Gliding Championships, solidifying its reputation as a centre of excellence for competitive soaring and the club claimed the status of the largest gliding club in the Southern Hemisphere.

Jim Barton's leadership as President of the Gliding Club of Victoria (GCV) was the driving force behind Benalla hosting the 1987 World Gliding Championships and the subsequent establishment of the State Gliding Centre and his visionary leadership spearheaded the successful bid to bring the World Gliding Championships to Benalla.

To host the World Gliding Championships in 1987, and to meet international standards for the 1987 event, Jim was instrumental in securing investment and coordinating the construction of the State Gliding Centre facilities at Benalla Aerodrome. His efforts resulted in world-class infrastructure, including the "fantastic" clubhouse, often cited as second to none in Australia, expanded hangars and maintenance workshops designed to support both local and international fleets.

By transforming the club's local grounds into a state-designated centre, Jim ensured that Benalla remained the "largest cross-country club in the country" with permanent, top-tier training and competition facilities. Due to his operational management and leadership skills, he oversaw the massive logistical challenge of hosting over 100 international pilots and their crews. The event's success, under his watch, established Benalla as a premier global gliding destination, later leading to a second World Championship in 2017.

Toward the end of his presidency, Jim identified the need to preserve the club's (and the nation's) rapidly disappearing wooden glider heritage. This directly led to the 1998 founding of the Australian Gliding Museum in conjunction with Graeme Barton and Alan Patching, and the initiation to save vintage aircrafts.

Member of the Order of Australia (AM)

Jim Barton was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) on June 11, 1990, Queen's Birthday Honours for his service to the sport of gliding and Co-founder of the Australia Gliding Museum.

A lifelong aviation enthusiast, he co-founded the Australian Gliding Museum in 1998, which is dedicated to preserving vintage gliders.

The collection has grown to include approximately 70 vintage gliders, making it the largest collection of its kind in Australia.

His dedication to museum work earned him a Special Commendation Award for volunteering from the Australian Museums & Galleries Association.

Jim Barton's contributions to gliding span over seven decades, focusing on leadership, preservation, and the promotion of the sport's history. A true Legend.

Fly high and soar with the eagles, Jim.

For the full obituary to Jim Barton and his extraordinary contribution to the sport of gliding, please see the [Facebook link](#)

AIRWORTHINESS

Attention: Registered Operators

The rigging of gliders and the connection of controls are activities in which we all regularly take part. These are critical activities which have a direct impact on the airworthiness of our gliders.

Worldwide there is a growing trend of gliders being flown (or attempted to be flown) while improperly rigged or with controls either not connected or improperly connected. In Europe, each year there are between 3 and 4 fatalities from this cause alone, and Australia is not immune. In recent years there have been several incidents resulting from incorrectly rigged aircraft and improperly connected controls.

This is not a new phenomenon; GFA/GAus have had AN178 in place for years and in 2019 the European Aviation Safety Authority (EASA) issued a Safety Information Bulletin on the subject (SIB 2019-07). EASA has recently updated that SIB to SIB 2019-07R1 which contains further information and guidance. GAus has published that SIB as a new version of AN178 which is now on the GAus website.

All Registered Operators, pilots, Daily Inspectors and maintainers are strongly encouraged to read this new document, and clubs should highlight this document to all members. The document can be found at: [AN 178 - SIB2019-07R1](#)

David Villiers
Chair of the Airworthiness Panel
Gliding Australia

GLIDING AUSTRALIA SAFETY FORUM – BRISBANE 2026



**Safer Skies,
Stronger Clubs**

Gliding Australia Forum Brisbane 2026

The Pavilions
Allan Border Field, Brisbane
Sat 18 & Sun 19 April 2026

GLIDING AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIAN CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY AUTHORITY
CASA

Book now

Victorian Soaring Association

LAST CHANCE! Junior Funding Applications

Closing date for applications: 30th March 2026!

Want to accelerate your training? Want to gain that GPC? Want to advance your competition goals? Ready to Go Further?

The Victorian Soaring Association (VSA) is offering funding support to help Junior pilots take the next step – whether that's cross-country milestones, competition flying, advanced training or skill development.

If you've got the drive, we've got your back.

Don't let cost hold you on the ground. Apply for VSA funding and turn your soaring ambitions into achievements.

The Victorian Soaring Association (VSA) is committed to backing the next generation of glider pilots – and that could be you. Whether you're aiming to:

- ✓ Achieve your Cross Country Endorsement
- ✓ Complete your first 300km flight
- ✓ Train for State or National competitions or even the JWGC at Lake Keepit in 2029!
- ✓ Upgrade your qualifications
- ✓ Or take the next big step in your gliding journey

VSA funding is here to help turn ambition into altitude.

Because the sky isn't the limit... it's just the beginning. [Apply Now!](#)

Victorian Junior Racing Program

A new initiative is being started to aid those who wish to improve their cross-country racing capabilities. ***The Victorian Junior Racing Program*** will be led by some of the finest coaches in the state who are ready to help juniors reach their cross-country goals whether that be working towards the World Championships, or simply becoming more confident in their cross-country abilities. The program aims to bring juniors together and provide some of the most comprehensive coaching we've seen to date!

Further information on the program can be found in the following application form, which will close EOD 1st March 2026.

<https://forms.gle/7LBDrHUgzRFfxDU47>

Amber Davison
Program Coordinator

AROUND THE CLUBS!

Grampians Wave Regatta 2026: - 5 June -14 June 2026



After a year on the sidelines, the Grampians Soaring Club Wave Event is back and it's ready to soar higher than ever!

Hosted at Ararat Airfield, just 30km east of the stunning Grampians National Park, they're perfectly positioned to tap into some of the best mountain wave conditions in the country.

Set across 10 action-packed days, the event gives members and visiting pilots plenty of opportunities to chase altitude, refine their wave skills, and share the sky with fellow soaring enthusiasts. And if you need a little inspiration, last time they ran the event, pilots climbed to an incredible 23,000 feet. Imagine the views from up there!

Dust off your glider, bring your sense of adventure, and join us for an unforgettable 10 days of wave flying!

While this event is aimed mainly at solo pilots, there may be some instruction available. Please contact GSC directly for more information regarding this.

- Aero towing will be available daily.
- Winch launching will be available if the weather conditions allow.
- We have bunk rooms and camping available at our club for \$15 per night. To book a spot, please email Brendon at secretary@grampianssoaring.club
- Oxygen bottle refilling available.
- Wave flying theory sessions will be held.
- Lunch and dinner will be available daily.

Booking for this year's event will be a little different than in the past. GS ask that you register via Dustdevil.cloud on this link >>>[Booking link](#)<<<

Please share the details of this event within your individual club chat groups!
If you have any questions, please feel free to send Brendan Lovell an email at secretary@grampianssoaring.club

GOVERNANCE & INTEGRITY

GAME PLAN!

Are you using Game Plan yet? What is Game Plan?

Game Plan is a free online platform available from the Australian Sports Commission that allows sporting clubs of all sizes to get insights into their current capability in key areas of club administration, then supports ongoing club development with a suite of tools.

Volunteers are the heart of every club. **Game Plan** makes it easy for club leaders to assess and analyze information about holistic club operations, to make good immediate decisions whilst developing clear plans for the club's future.

Clubs assess and evaluate their own environment, identifying their unique strengths and potential areas for improvement.

Over 7,000 Australian sporting clubs across 78 different sports are gaining key development and capability growth through their use of **Game Plan**.

Check out the [ASC video](#) and utilize the free planning and capability tool to help you club plan and succeed now and into the future.



IT PROMISES TO BE SPECTACULAR!

The Art of Flight Festival and the “Light Up the Night” Balloon Glow!

In support of our fellow VicTas sport aviators and the Art of Flight festival, we advise that this event will be held in Benalla 6-12 of April the week after Easter.

The Balloon Association of Victoria will be hosting nearly 30 balloon teams at Benalla Airfield, who are coming to compete at the Australian National Championships. The festival has attracted some international competitors and officials, and will hold a Balloon Glow in Wangaratta, and a Fly-in to Benalla Airport.

GCV is an Art of Flight festival partner and we aim to highlight all flight attractions on offer, including gliding, to the wider public and will have an Experiential Display to consisting of:

- Flight Simulator Experience - “Take to the Skies—Virtually!”
- Cockpit Selfie Booth - “Sit in a Glider and Take a Selfie”

How do balloon pilots compete?

Hot air balloon competitions are designed to test a pilot’s skill in navigation, precision, reading the conditions and flying them. Pilots use the steerage available in early morning winds to fly to targets and drop physical markers or electronic marks to record a result.

The winner is the pilot with the best overall performance accumulating the highest total score.

You can read more about competition at www.fai.org/page/hot-air-balloons



the ART OF FLIGHT FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

“Across a week of unforgettable moments, enjoy the magic of the Balloon Glow, the thrill of the International Balloon Championship including Fly with the Fleet passenger flights.

Join us at Benalla Airport for the balloon & aircraft Fly-In, book a Glider Flight, and experience the fascinating Benalla Aviation Museum.”

Scan for more
Festival information



the ART OF FLIGHT FESTIVAL

Invites you to experience the wonder of aviation in a spectacular celebration
where the Sky Becomes Art

6 – 12 April 2026
Benalla & surrounding
region, Victoria.
art-of-flight.com

