



IAN HOGBEN

# Winds of change

## New rules allow balloonists to conduct minor balloon maintenance.

HOT AIR BALLOON pilots now have unique maintenance privileges, following the recent approval of a new rule. Previously, the privileges were regulated by rules written with fixed wing aircraft and helicopters in mind.

But the growing popularity of hot air balloon flight has made it necessary for CASA to write rules tailored to the balloon industry.

Ian Hogben, operations manager of the Australian Ballooning Federation, welcomed the changes, saying it had been a long battle to get regulators to recognise that balloonists had different needs from fixed wing pilots.

“The issue of pilot maintenance is a significant gain,” he said. “We’re very happy that we are gaining ground through the consultative process.”

Hogben said commercial ballooning was a significant part of joyflight charter, with operators carrying an estimated 100,000 people each year in Australia.

The new instrument allows private balloon pilots to carry out post-assembly, daily and pre-take-off inspections, as well as other minor balloon maintenance activities, including adhesive patch repairs, minor sewn fabric repairs and the removal or installation of scoops and skirts.

Private and commercial pilots are also now allowed to replace baskets, make minor repairs to basket trim materials, re-varnish or re-oil basket wicker and remove or install storage pouches.

On the balloon burner system, pilots can clean the liquid pilot light regulator, clean or replace seals in hose couplings, remove, clean or install pilot light or burner jets, tighten burner parts, and lubricate, remove, replace or adjust the peizo igniter system.

For a full list of the new pilot maintenance privileges for hot air balloons, download Instrument of Authorisation, CASA 566/03 at [casa.gov.au/avreg/rules/miscinst/](http://casa.gov.au/avreg/rules/miscinst/) or phone CASA Airworthiness

## Asbestos bans

FORMS OF asbestos used in some aircraft and components will be banned under new federal government regulations.

The workplace ban on the use of chrysotile asbestos (white asbestos) has been extended to other forms of the mineral, including amosite (brown asbestos) crocidolite (blue asbestos) actinolite, anthophyllite and tremolite.

Government regulations will ban the import, export and use of these materials. If aircraft and aircraft components contain these materials, a modification should be developed to use an alternative.

However, if continued use of the asbestos is essential to safety of an aircraft, you can seek an exemption from the prohibition from the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission.

You can get guidance on the exemptions from the Comcare website: [www.comcare.gov.au](http://www.comcare.gov.au)

## Enforcement effect

CASA'S NEW enforcement procedures came into effect on February 21. The reforms include a demerit points scheme, enforceable voluntary undertakings, protection for self-reporting of inadvertent breaches, automatic stays of most suspension and cancellation decisions, and federal court review of CASA decisions to suspend an authorisation in cases of serious and imminent safety risk.

Further information is available on the CASA web site at: [casa.gov.au/hotopics/action](http://casa.gov.au/hotopics/action).

A booklet summarising the changes can be obtained from local CASA offices or downloaded from the web at the enforcement site mentioned above.

## Drug tests review

THE DEPARTMENT of Transport and Regional Services and CASA will investigate the safety benefits of introducing a drug and alcohol testing program to the Australian aviation industry.

The investigation follows recommendations in an Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) report relating to the investigation of a fatal accident on Hamilton Island in September 2002.