

## **Women in Gliding – October 20017, Kingaroy QLD**

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Lisa Trotter was handed at very short notice the task of running this year's WIG Week at the Kingaroy Soaring Club and did an outstanding job of getting 11 female glider pilots, 2 instructors and 2 tug pilots organised for a full week of flying (21-29 October 2017). We flew every day with sometimes challenging conditions and made the most of the wonderful soaring conditions in that part of the country. Because of the enormous amount of rain in the preceding weeks, we were under strict instructions not to outland – or else, the glider would be stuck in a bog for at least a week. No one outlanded, but even Lisa admitted it cramped her style as she had to take thermals she would not normally bother with. For me, it was the opposite: for the first time in 10 years, I practiced what I had been taught at GlideFast weeks and could almost hear my coach Martin Feeg's words "Leave this one now and go for another cloud". And I had fun doing it! After a check/orientation flight in the Duo Discus, I was assigned a Discus which I flew the rest of the week, sometimes in company with Leonie Furze who was flying her own Discus.

Besides the normal routine of morning briefing after preparing the gliders, then towing the gliders to the launch point, we also had information sessions on instrumentation, weather apps, sport psychology, and the all-important "secret women's business" of dealing with fluids during long flights. Thanks to all the presenters and the very helpful pointers everyone was willing to share.

Unfortunately, not everyone could stay the whole week, but most people did and achieved some notable milestones. In particular Ada Lim, after a few flights in the Duo Discus, was allowed to have her first flight in a single-seater and she promptly went on her first cross-country flight, then did her 5 hour flight and 1000m height gain – so she is well on her way to her Silver C – and she received the "Most Improved Pilot" award. Leonie Furze, who flew every day, won the "Most Dedicated Glider Pilot" award. I came home with the "Most Meritorious Flight" award, a beautiful artwork created by Jo Wooler, who also flew almost every day and shared the Astir with Ada. My flight was not the 300 km flight I had hoped to achieve during the week (only 169 km) but, given the conditions, I was very happy with it. For my first flight in the Discus the day before, I had only attempted part of the task that was suggested, but finding myself at 5000' back at Kingaroy after flying Kingaroy-Wondai-Kumbai-Kingaroy, had done an extra leg to Wondai and back. The next day, we were given the task Kingaroy-Jimbour-Macalister-Kingaroy, and I wasn't sure I would even get to the Bunya range, much less go to the other side. It turned out I was the only one who actually attempted to cross the range that day, but I didn't know that. When I reached the Bunya, I was comfortable working the mountain lift and went up to 7500', so I proceeded from cloud to cloud until I reached Jimbour – rather low. Working the lift under some nice clouds, I was very relieved to see the very long friendly Jimbour runway so I relaxed and finally gained enough height to attempt turning back towards the range. The leg back was more challenging than the leg out, as I sometimes couldn't quite see the horizon on the other side of the range but I found enough good thermals to reach the gap, then Kumbia, then the airfield at Kingaroy. That was only a 3 hour flight, but it did seem much longer!

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