

**5TH FAI WOMEN'S WORLD
HOT AIR BALLOONING
CHAMPIONSHIP**

NORTHAM WESTERN AUSTRALIA



OFFICIAL PROGRAM 2023

What's On in the Shire of Northam

Northam Festival of Ballooning

When: Saturday 2nd September

Where: Bernard Park, Minson Ave, Northam

Cost: Free

Details: The Shire of Northam will officially open the 2023 FAI Women's World Hot-Air Ballooning Championship with the Northam Festival of Ballooning, a family friendly event, incorporating the Official Opening Ceremony, live music, entertainment, a variety of food trucks, interactive stalls and balloon displays and demonstrations.

Balloon Spectator Opportunities

When: 2-9th Sept

Where: Various locations

Info: www.northamballooningevents.com

Cost: Free

Details: You will be able to see hot air balloons from all over Northam, from 6 - 8 am each morning, and again in the late afternoon, weather permitting. Discover the launch point for each day by visiting the event facebook page.

Info: www.northamballooningevents.com

Northam Heritage Centre

Where: 425 Fitzgerald Street, Northam

Call in to learn about the History of Northam and look around the beautifully preserved railway displays. \$5 Adults \$3 Concession \$2 Child

Northam Lions Markets

When: Saturday 2nd Sept 8am-12pm

Where: Bernard Park

An exciting range of local produce, home baked goods, knick knacks and arts and crafts galore.

Northam Farmers Show

When: Fri /Sat 8th & 9th Sept

Where: Jubilee Oval, Northam

Come and enjoy the 2023 Northam Agricultural show and immerse yourselves in country life.

Tickets: www.northamshow.com.au/tickets/

History of Ballooning Display

When: Open 7 Days 9am-4pm

Where: Northam Visitor Centre
2 Grey Street, Northam

Contact: 08 9622 2100

tourist@northam.wa.gov.au

Open 7 Days 9am-4pm

Bilya Koort Boodja, Centre for Nyoongar Culture & Environmental Knowledge

When: 9-4 Daily

Where: Minson Avenue, Northam (next to Visitor Centre)

Contact: (08) 9622 2170

Details: This cultural centre offers an innovative insight into Aboriginal culture and the local environment through a fully immersive, interactive storytelling, along with a variety of workshops and exhibitions throughout the year

Morby Cottage

When: Sundays 11-3

Where: Katrine Road, Northam

Contact: (08) 9622 2100

Visit Northam's first house, home of pioneer John Morrell, Gold Coin Entry

Star Gazing in Northam

Where: Bert Hawke Reserve

When: Wednesday 6th Sept

Enjoy the beautiful night skies of Northam presented by StarTracks Astro Events and Astro Tourism WA . Limited tickets.

Tickets: via eventbrite.com.au
search "star gazing in Northam"



Shire of Northam
Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle

5TH FAI WOMEN'S WORLD HOT AIR BALLOONING CHAMPIONSHIP



NORTHAM WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Contents

Minister's Welcome	3
Shire of Northam Welcome.....	5
Northam, Heart of the Avon Valley	7
When to see the Balloons.....	8
About the Championships	9
Introducing your Pilots	11-15
Officials.....	17
Northam's Balloon.....	18
The Northam Airfield, History	19
In Honor of Northam's Record Setters	21-23
Organiser; Patron.....	25

Photograph by Michelle Blackhurst

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity and support of our Sponsors. Please take a moment to read their information and advertisements in this program and lend your support to them.



**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**
WALKING ON A DREAM



Avon Valley Toyota



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- Immerse yourself in Noongar culture on an Aboriginal tour – discover the cultural significance and ancient stories of this region.
- Soak up the sun and relax in one of the world's largest inner-city parks, Kings Park & Botanic Garden.
- Discover Rottnest Island / Wadjemup, where you'll be greeted by 63 wondrous beaches and the world's happiest animal, the adorable quokka.
- Discover our 'many stories' at WA Museum Boola Bardip, then explore the Perth Cultural Centre.
- Explore Optus Stadium's Halo Rooftop Walk or Matagarup Zip+Climb.
- Watch Mother Nature paint a fiery sunset over the sparkling Indian Ocean at one of Perth's 19 beaches.
- Cycle or walk along the Swan River / Derbarl Yerrigan and experience Perth's unique flora and fauna, or canoe or kayak and become immersed in the beauty of the natural world.
- Feast on the local flavours and feel the indie vibe at one of the many restaurants and cafes in Fremantle / Walyalup, or 'Freo' as it is affectionately known.

Follow us at @WesternAustralia | #WAtheDreamState



**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**
WALKING ON A DREAM

WESTERNAUSTRALIA.COM

Welcome Message

from Hon Rita Saffioti MLA, Deputy Premier; Minister For Tourism
and Hon Don Punch MLA, Minister For Regional Development

5th FAI Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championships 2-9 September 2023

The Western Australian Government is a proud sponsor of the 5th FAI Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championships through Tourism WA's Regional Events Program.

The program enables the Government to support medium to large events in regional Western Australia to boost tourism and local jobs, increase community vibrancy and participation (including outside of the typical tourist season), and further develop regional areas.

It also plays an important role in positioning Western Australia as an exciting destination to visit and a great place to live by showcasing and promoting a region's unique points of difference and diverse attractions, particularly through media coverage of events.

Tourism is a key part of the State Government's plan to diversify the economy, create jobs and develop business opportunities, through helping regional economies and communities to grow and thrive.

Events are a vital part of this plan, with the Government sponsoring a range of sporting, cultural, arts and culinary events across the State, through Tourism Western Australia, to attract visitors and encourage them to stay longer, disperse further and do more while they are here.

We hope everyone enjoys this event and takes the time to explore the dreamlike Wheatbelt region.



Hon Rita Saffioti MLA
Deputy Premier
Minister For Tourism



Hon Don Punch MLA
Minister For
Regional Development



**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**
WALKING ON A DREAM



Northam Festival of Ballooning

Women's World Hot-Air Ballooning Championship

BE A PART OF HISTORY

Sat 02 September | 4pm to 9pm

Bernard Park & Minson Avenue

Free Event

Women Rock Stage
(featuring Katy Steele)

Hot-Air Balloon Displays

International Pilots Parade

International Themed Food Trucks

Kids Entertainment

Interactive Markets stalls

**Kids Chill Out Space
and much more...**

Entertainment

Hot-Air Balloon Displays & Glow
Pilot Parade and Opening Ceremony
International Themed Food Trucks
Kids Entertainment
Kids Chill Out Space
Health & Wellbeing Markets Stalls

Women Rock Stage

Featuring:
Katy Steele
Ruby Miguel
Coby Grant
The Gemini Band
Felix



Shire of Northam
Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle



5th FAI Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championship

On behalf of the Shire of Northam, I extend a very friendly welcome to everyone visiting our fantastic part of the world for the 2023 5th Federation Aeronautique Internationale Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championship.

Following the success of the fifth time the National Hot Air Ballooning Championships were recently hosted within the Shire, this is the first time the Women's Worlds have been held in the Southern Hemisphere. This reinforces our Shire as the Hot Air Ballooning Capital of Australia.

The country around Northam is mainly Nyoongar Boodja. I acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional custodians, the Ballardong and Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar nation. Please treat this environmentally sensitive land with respect.

I thank all of the event organizers, volunteers and event participants for making this event possible.

The Shire of Northam is a fantastic place to either live or visit. While you are here, I encourage you to enjoy our beautiful landscapes from many vantage points, examples being Mount Ommaney near to townsite of Northam or Centenary Hill on Southern Brook Road. Enjoy a walk around the river, over the historic, and longest in Australia, pedestrian suspension bridge, spot our white swans and visit the wonderful Bilya Koort Boodja Centre. Enjoy our local shops, cafes, pubs & hotels, and take in our numerous heritage buildings.

I urge you to be attentive, and to travel safely on our roads. Several vantage points are located on roads where the speed limit is 110kph. Great care needs to be taken. I want you to remain safe, both during and after the championships.

Enjoy this great event, and we look forward to welcoming you again in the future, with open arms – for whatever reason, perhaps not only to visit for many of our Shire attractions, or even to stay for a longer period.

Thank you,

Chris Antonio

President

Shire of Northam



Shire of Northam



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everyday!*



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Northam

Heart of the Avon Valley and home to ballooning in Western Australia

Located in the picturesque Avon Valley, within an easy drive of Perth, the historic town of Northam is the Western Australian host to the oldest and purest form of flight, ballooning.

The sheltered valley provides the ideal conditions for hot air ballooning, and ballooning competition events; protected from the strong easterlies found across the state, and not affected by the Perth 'Fremantle Doctor' sea breezes.

Balloons were first seen in Northam in the early 1970's, when a group of pilots from Hong Kong came to Western Australia to make some promotional ballooning flights for Cathay Pacific. They were looking for a location away from the controlled airspace over Perth, with plenty of open spaces for ballooning - the small island of Hong Kong not being ideal! They discovered Northam and the Avon Valley and a keen group of enthusiasts at the Northam Aero Club willing to assist; which led to a number of successful National & World Record attempts.

A few members of the Northam Aero Club were instantly captured by aerostation (ballooning) and in turn instructed in the skills of flying balloons, with some locals attaining their British Balloon Pilot Licences – and so being amongst the first balloonists in Australia to gain officially recognised qualifications, as there was as yet no Australian licensing system.

Western Australia, and in particular the protected valley where Northam is situated, is an ideal place for record attempts in balloons as it is on the western side of the continent, with a strong jet stream wind that flows from west to east. Many balloon records have been set in Western Australia since the early 1970's and Northam has developed a reputation as the ballooning epicentre for world record attempts.

Northam skies are still to be seen adorned with colourful balloons, with regular flights by both Windward Balloon Adventures, and the enthusiastic numbers of private balloonist members of the WA Balloon & Airship Club.

Northam is well qualified and prepared to conduct the 5th FAI Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championship. The Australian Balloon Championships have been held in Northam on five previous occasions, in 1981, 1984, 2015, 2017 & 2023.

This championship is proudly supported by Tourism WA, Shire of Northam and Bendigo Bank Community Bank Northam. This is the first time that the Championship has been conducted outside Europe; and it is time once again to show off our beautiful valley and the warm hospitality that Northam people can offer.

The Balloonists of Northam extend a hearty welcome to our visiting teams of pilots & crew from overseas, and also to the many of you who will be visiting our town to enjoy the opportunity of witnessing the majesty of the massed balloons, and to admire the endeavours of some of the World's most skilled Women Balloon Pilots. Nothing will quite prepare you for the spectacle of so many balloons taking to the air, and we can promise that the effect will be just breathtaking!



Photograph by Michelle Blackhurst

When to see the Balloons

The team at Northam Ballooning Events, along with the Northam Aero Club and the Shire of Northam, are delighted to once again WELCOME members of the public from locations across WA, Australia, and the World - who are here to experience the visual spectacle of the massed balloons taking to the air in a colourful and breathtaking display.

Practice flights will take place, weather permitting, at sunrise on **Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd September**.

The competition flights will take place, weather permitting, at sunrise each morning and late each afternoon, from **Monday 4th to Friday 8th September**.

(Balloon flights do not take place throughout the duration of the day. They are scheduled to take place for one to two hours early at sunrise, and for an hour or so late afternoon).

At sunrise on **Saturday 9th September** there will be either an additional competition flight if needed to complete the required number of tasks, or a balloon "Fly-in Finale" (details will be posted on facebook after the pre-dawn flight briefing)

Weather & Cancellation

The protected Avon Valley offers the best conditions for ballooning in Western Australia, however balloon flights are always weather dependent; wind speeds in excess of about 10 km/hr on the ground may result in cancellation for safety reasons. Optimum conditions are usually found in the morning, after the cold nights keep the wind conditions still, down in the valley.

Where can I see the Balloons?

The balloons do not always launch from the Northam Airfield; depending on the wind conditions they often launch from other locations. You can check our facebook page for updated daily launch detail, which will be posted after the Pilot Briefing each morning at approx 6 a.m., and after the Pilot Briefing each afternoon at approx 4.00 p.m. (If you do not have facebook, our helpful volunteers will be in attendance at our information marquee outside the Competition Centre at the Northam Recreation Centre from 6-7 am each morning).

In addition, during the remainder of the day, the friendly staff at the Northam Visitors Centre have been well briefed to answer your questions.

Following the Balloons

We need to remind all our visiting spectator vehicles to follow the ROAD RULES of Western Australia, be courteous to other drivers on the road by not holding up traffic whilst looking at balloons, and not blocking any roads or driveways by parking inappropriately.

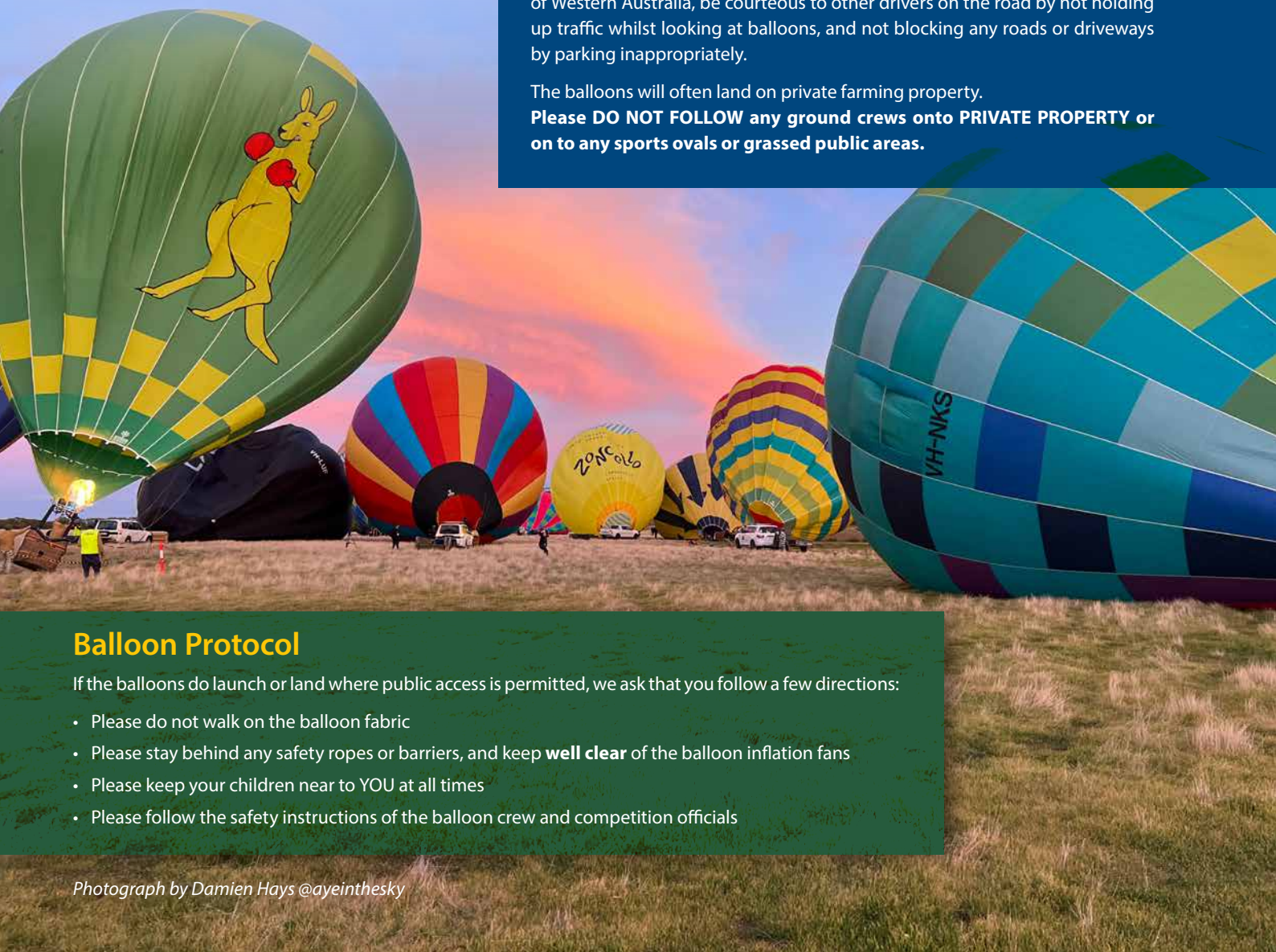
The balloons will often land on private farming property.

Please DO NOT FOLLOW any ground crews onto PRIVATE PROPERTY or on to any sports ovals or grassed public areas.

Balloon Protocol

If the balloons do launch or land where public access is permitted, we ask that you follow a few directions:

- Please do not walk on the balloon fabric
- Please stay behind any safety ropes or barriers, and keep **well clear** of the balloon inflation fans
- Please keep your children near to YOU at all times
- Please follow the safety instructions of the balloon crew and competition officials



About the Championship

Pilots representing their country at the 5th FAI Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championship have been nominated by their National Aero Club or sports aviation governing body. They were then invited to attend by the Organiser, Northam Ballooning Events, who was sanctioned to run the event by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI).

Competition ballooning is conducted using standard rules as published by the FAI. These rules set out the tasks that can be used during a competition and how a Champion pilot will be decided. World Championships are conducted every two years.

Ballooning competitions are **not a race**; the competition flights (consisting of one or more tasks) require pilots to exercise skill in manoeuvring their balloons to goals & targets, within scoring areas and time & distance limits. Good results are achieved using the variation of winds at different altitudes to fly in the direction of a goal and accurately approach the target. Balloons do not land on the target. Pilots of the balloons drop markers (small sandbags with streamers attached) onto or as close to the target as they can fly. In addition, each balloon carries an electronic logger which records the position & altitude of the balloon at all times. If no marker is dropped the logger can be used to determine how close the balloon was to the target - sometimes the target is not even a physical target on the ground, but a virtual three-dimensional target in the air. Points are awarded for each task, and the balloon with the highest aggregate score wins.

Some of the tasks are

Judge Declared Goal: The Event Director declares a goal and a measuring team will place a target at this position. The balloons launch from a common launch site and fly to the goal to drop a marker closest to the target.

Pilot Declared Goal: The pilots declare their own individual goals, usually road intersections, before take-off.

Fly In: The pilot selects a launch site at a set minimum distance away from a target nominated by the Director. This is often combined with a Fly On task.

Fly On task: The pilot selects a goal during flight a set minimum and maximum distance from where they drop their previous marker.

Hare & Hounds: A 'hare' balloon will launch from a common launch site, and after a specified period of time, all the other balloons will launch and set off in pursuit. When the 'hare' lands, the pilot of the 'hare' will set out a target and the other balloons will try to fly over the top and drop a marker on the target..

Watership Down: The 'hare' balloon will launch at a declared time and location. The others will launch at a location of their choosing, at a specified minimum distance from the 'hare', and try to follow the 'hare', who will again set out a target after landing..

Hesitation Waltz: The pilots must reach one of a number of alternative goals set by the Director. They will usually choose a preferred goal, and if conditions change, they can select an alternative. The success at one goal is scored

3D Task: A task may be set in which the pilot must fly to a set position or area in the air, this goal may be several hundred feet above ground. The pilot must fly to this point or area, registering their position on an electronic logger



Please do not touch or move the markers, as this may adversely affect the score and results of the pilots.

Steering a Balloon

There is no mechanism to steer a balloon. The pilots have control of altitude by climbing & descending and will use the wind directions at different altitudes to manoeuvre the balloon. By skilfully moving up and down into these different wind directions, the pilot can catch a wind travelling in the desired direction.

A small helium-filled balloon is released before take-off and the pilot monitors the wind directions as it rises.

Balloons take time to react to increases in heat (to rise) or releases of hot air (to descend) so the skill is to judge how long to travel at a certain height, how much heat to add or lose, and how long it will take to get the reaction needed.

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Introducing Your Pilots

1



Agne Simonaviciute

LITHUANIA

VH-EXW 'Antic Pants'

I began my ballooning journey as a competitive pilot, and placed 2nd in the 2018 Women's World Championships, following on from 3rd and 5th places in previous Championships. I eventually became a flight instructor and recently I have started flying commercially with Group D balloons. My passion for aviation is not limited only to balloons, as I also work as an aircraft design engineer. I find joy in every flight and love sharing the excitement that hot air balloons bring with others.

2



Nicola Scaife

AUSTRALIA

VH-NKS 'Flow'

I have been ballooning for 17 years. I started as retrieve crew on commercial balloon flights and gained my PPL a year later. I fly as a commercial balloon pilot in the Hunter Valley NSW and have been competing in events for 10 years. My best achievements include winning the Women's World Championship twice in 2014 & 2016, and placing third in 2018. I also placed 9th in the open World Championship in 2018. I am currently ranked 17th on the FAI world ranking and the highest ranked female pilot. I love the challenge of competition flying and the community that comes together from all walks of life to enjoy this unique passion.

3



Georgia Croft

AUSTRALIA

VH-ZUW 'Zoncello'

I am a happily retired commercial hot air balloon pilot.

My flying career began in 2017 with Global Ballooning Australia in the Yarra Valley, Victoria and after 5 years within the commercial world, I am now a happily retired professional pilot living a quiet country life in Mansfield, Victoria.

Looking forward to taking to the sky on a world stage, alongside my trusty pals and fellow balloon enthusiasts, Bronni Bowen and Natasha Buckley.

4



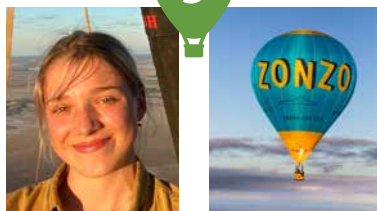
Alana Kahl

AUSTRALIA

VH CVX 'Wattle Happen'

I am a private pilot originally from Queensland and now residing in Canberra. While still relatively new to ballooning, having achieved my licence in 2018, competition was always my focus. I crewed and navigated at the 2017 Junior world championships and the 2018 USA Women's Nationals, and competed at the recent National Championships in Northam. I am looking forward to flying my little green and gold racer "Wattle Happen" in my first Women's World Championships.

5



Scarlett Saunders

AUSTRALIA

VH-ZOW 'Zonzo'

I come from an aviation family and started flying balloons at the age of 15, after being dragged around Australia and the world on my father's ballooning exploits. I hold a commercial balloon pilots licence and fly passengers in Victoria. I have flown my balloon near and far, including flights over the Snowy Mountains, the Warrumbungles and the Gulf of Carpentaria, and a Womens Australian record flight to 23,700 feet over Deniliquin NSW. This will be my first World Championship event, so look out for some fun from the little blue ZONZO racer dancing around the sky.

6



Josie White

AUSTRALIA

VH-XYT 'Thambula'

I have been part of the ballooning community since 2015, and have been a private hot air balloon pilot since 2019. I have been supported by the Balloon Association of Victoria, where I served as President for 4 years. The 5th FAI Women's World Hot Air Balloon Championship will be my second competition, having previously competed in the Canowindra International Balloon Challenge in NSW in 2022.

Introducing Your Pilots

7



Elisabeth Kindermann-Schoen

AUSTRIA

VH-85S 'Sea Shepherd'

I had my first balloon flight in 1990 at the age of two, together with my dad, who was one of the first balloon pilots in Austria. I started flying when I was 13, and got my licence at the age of 18. I have been flying commercially for 16 years. In 2014 I took over my fathers' company and we fly passengers in different areas of Austria. Competition ballooning is my hobby and I have been flying in several National and International competitions since 2008.

8



Lais Pinho

BRAZIL

PP-ZXR

I am from Torres, a city in southern Brazil that has hosted one of the country's largest ballooning events for 33 years. I entered the sport as a crew member and at 18, became the youngest licensed pilot and the first woman pilot from Southern Brazil. Since then I have taken part in numerous championships and festivals. I represented Brazil at the 5th Junior World Ballooning Championship in Leszno Poland, 2021. Passionate about air sports, I am a skydiver and once launched a hang glider from a balloon. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to compete in the Women's Championship.

9



Aline Kalousdian

GERMANY

VH-BVJ

I was born in Brazil but I am now flying for Germany. I have been ballooning all my life. I owe my passion to my parents, who have been flying and manufacturing hot air balloons for over 30 years. My two brothers are also pilots. From an early age I have participated in balloon competitions and festivals around the world as a crew member and then as a pilot after gaining my license in 2014. I have flown in many countries such as Brazil, Peru, Japan, USA, Armenia, Poland & German Each flight is full of new adventures & meeting interesting people. Most importantly, you are close to nature experiencing it in a unique way.

10



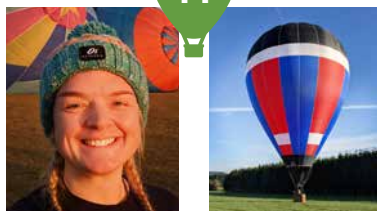
Susanna Obieglo

GERMANY

VH-BJF'

At the age of 17, after taking part in a youth camp, I dedicated myself to ballooning. In 2018 I got my license and have since spent several hundred hours in the air. In addition to various countries in Europe, I have discovered parts of India, Saudi Arabia and the United States from above. I crewed several times at competitions before starting to compete, myself, in 2021. Participating in the 5th FIA Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championship is a big honour for me, as is my first time visiting Australia as well as flying a competition with female pilots only.

11



Chloe Hallett

GREAT BRITAIN

G-CKMH 'Hebe'

I was bought up in a ballooning family; with my mum, Lindsay Muir, (also competing), being one of the first female competition pilots to compete at a high level. In 2011 I gained my private license on my 17th birthday, becoming the youngest pilot in the UK and in 2017 went on to gain my commercial licence. I have competed at four World Championship events - both Junior & Women's World Championships in 2016 & 2018 as well as two Women's European Championships in 2015 & 2017. I am now training to be an Air Traffic Controller at a busy London Airport.

12



Stephanie Hemmings

GREAT BRITAIN

VH-VFN 'Doonyart'

I have been involved in hot air ballooning since a young age and gained my pilot licence in 2010. I have been competing since 2012 and have participated in every British Nationals since then; my highest rank finish was 2nd in 2021. Internationally, I have competed at two Junior World Championships (2012, 2014), two European Championships (2015, 2019) and three World Championships (2016, 2018, 2022). I have also been lucky enough to fly in some amazing countries, including Madagascar, Japan and over Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Introducing Your Pilots

13



Lindsay Muir

GREAT BRITAIN
VH-EXT

I am a commercial balloon Pilot, 3200 flying hours, since 1986. Achievements include only female British National Champion (twice), Women's World Cup Champion (4 times) & Women's European Champion. I competed in 9 World Championships & 3 World Air Games; in Battle Creek USA, Saga & Tochigi Japan, Luxembourg & Canada. I have flown events in 15 other countries. I hold the British distance, duration & altitude record & World duration record. I have held senior positions on the British BBAC committee, and the CIA ballooning commission of the FAI. Proud mother of young competition pilot Chloe Hallett.

14

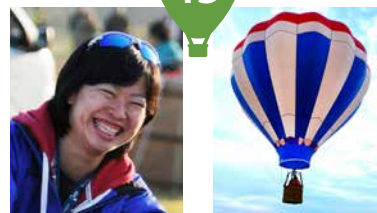


Rita Becz

HUNGARY
HA-928 'Red'

I have been a hot air balloon pilot for almost 30 years. Actually, I got my pilot's licence in 1994. After that, in 2003 I also succeeded in becoming a hot air balloon instructor. Since then, I have been an active commercial pilot who regularly participates in Hungarian and national competitions. My total flight hours are 900 hours. My best achievements are the Women's World Cup in 10th place in 2018, 1st place in the Women's Central Europe Cup in 2019, 3rd place in the Central Europe Cup in 2022 and 2nd place in the Hungarian National Championship in 2018 and 2022.

15



Eda Mutsumi

JAPAN
JA-A-1155 'Doronpa'

I began ballooning in 2010, got my license in 2011 and have over 330 hours flying hot-air balloons.

I participated in the 2nd FAI Junior World Hot Air Balloon Championship in France in 2014. This is my first time participating in a Women's World Championship.

16



Tomoko Kurahashi

JAPAN
JA-A-1674 'Prizm II'

I have represented Japan in previous Women's World Championships in Poland and Lithuania, and have competed in the Japanese Honda Grand Prix series for more than ten years. This will be my third competition event in Northam, participating in the 2015 & 2017 National Championships.

All times we have enjoyed the hospitality of our kind Northam host family.

17

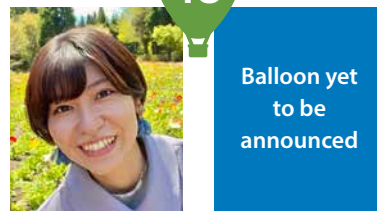


Rieko Shingo

JAPAN
JA-A-1618 'Snow White'

I started ballooning when I was a university student. My classmate at high school introduced me to the hot air balloon club at the university telling me that flight is very interesting. So I joined the balloon club. Actually my first flight was very, very interesting and I have continued to do ballooning. I have been a hot air balloon pilot for almost 30 years, achieving my pilot's licence in 1994. I am looking forward to the Championship and Western Australia because this is my first trip to Australia.

18



Suzuna Tomizawa

JAPAN

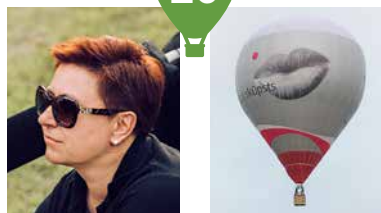
I have been a balloon pilot since 2016 I have 200 hours balloon flying time.

My main flight area is Saga, Japan.

Saga hosts a famous international balloon festival each year with over 100 balloons.

Introducing Your Pilots

20



Kristine Vevere

LATVIA

YL-013 'Air Kiss'

I started my ballooning as a crew and competition observer in 1995. In 2000 I achieved my pilots licence and have gone on to be a five-time winner of the Latvian National Championships.

I am a Mom of two; the founder and leader of the largest hot air balloon sports club "99 gaisa baloni" in Latvia.

Flying is freedom!

21



Renata Narbute

LITHUANIA

LY-VNO 'Vilnius'

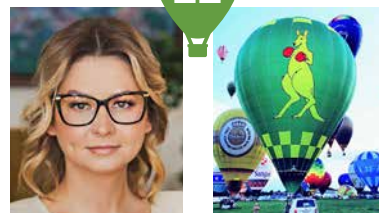
Most of the flights during my ballooning life have been in sporting competitions.

I started 15 years ago.

Still, each event, each flight, brings new lessons, experiences, amazing views and new friends.

And I don't want it to end!

22



Julija Romanovskaja

LITHUANIA

VH-RAU 'The Roo'

I have been in the balloon world for 20 years. The beginning of this adventure was decided by chance. My first balloon flight was a gift from my Dad for my 18th birthday. Vilnius was the same inaugural image seen from the perspective of a wicker basket. Back then, I didn't even think it would be my passion. Dad started learning to fly balloons. We started to go to competitions and I got involved in this colourful adventure. Then in 2007 I also got my license to pilot a hot air balloon. It can be said that passion found me at the right time.

23



Iris Broeders- van Ham

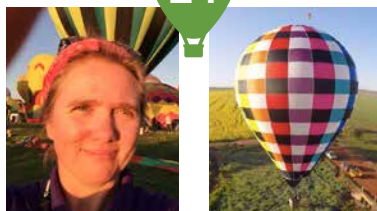
THE NETHERLANDS

VH-KCD

My Name is Iris Broeders - van Ham (43). I am married to Henk and we have a little girl named Geesje who is 4 years old.

I have held my balloon licence since December 2019. I fly both private and commercial for other balloon companies. I made a record flight on 28th January 2022 in our Ultra Magic 77 racer, a Dutch distance record of 337.018 km, set in 7 hrs 27 min. This will be my first World Championships for Women. I flew in 2022 during the Coupe D' Europe and came 2nd in the female rankings.

24



Sanne Haarhuis

THE NETHERLANDS

VH-UED 'Huey'

A family history of hot air ballooning. In the footsteps of my uncles and aunts I got my license in 2013 and love competition flying.

After living in The Netherlands for more than 45 years I just recently moved to the USA.

25



Kate Pepper

NEW ZEALAND

VH-ZKU 'Kiwi'

From Hamilton New Zealand, I have been flying balloons for the past 15 years. Trained to fly when I was a teenager, by my father who is also a pilot. I love travelling to ballooning events around the world, with my partner and my ballooning family - the Australian Balloon Team; crewing, flying and adventuring in different countries.

A fish biologist by trade, I work as a Senior Biodiversity Officer for a regional Council.

Introducing Your Pilots

26



Joanna Biedermann

POLAND
SP-BAG 'Lassa'

I am a member of the Polish Women's National Hot Air Balloon Team and will be flying my nice Kubiček balloon "Lassa". I am a member of Aeroclub Nadwislanski & Balloon Club of Grudziadz. I placed 15th at the 3rd FAI Women's World Hot Air Balloon Championship at Nalęczow Poland in 2018. I am also glider, airplane pilot & instructor and participated in the World Women's Gliding Championships in Spain, July 2023. Flying with me is Maria Kowalska. The other two team members are my husband Andrzej Ogonowski and Maria's father Miroslaw Kowalski, both very experienced aviators.

27



Malgorzata Bilska-Nowakowska

POLAND

SP-BPM

I am representing Poland. I have had a balloon license since 2017 and have 155 hours as a pilot.

This is my third season as a competition participant, but the Women's World Championship is my first such a big event.

Ballooning is a family sport for me.

28



Kimberly Whiteman

USA
N324RC 'Flame Buoyant'

My love for balloons started with a surprise balloon flight at 12. I already knew I wanted to be a pilot & own a balloon! I started by crewing & finally got my licence in 2004, moving on to commercial flying in 2010. I spent a season as crew chief of the Energizer-Bunny shape, travelling to 22 balloon events all over the US. In 2021 I made my dream come true & got my very own balloon, thanks to my grandpa US Army veteran Ray Campbell (so the star on top of my balloon). I have competed in US Nationals & placed top 10 in the Great Reno balloon race. Now I can add a Women's Worlds to my list!

29

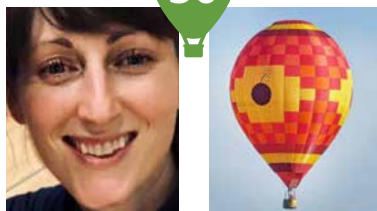


Kelli Keller

USA
N8004K 'KC'

I began ballooning in 1994 and have 750 hours flying hot air & gas balloons and have flown in 20 of the US states plus 6 countries. My husband Tom & I have flown balloons together since we met, & have been in magazine shoots, commercials, television shows, movies, summer camps, churches and schools. 6 years ago we retired our Balloon Ride business so I could go competition ballooning & recently sold our home in California to travel full time in our motor-home. My achievements include 1st & 2nd places in US Women's National Championships & Rookie of the Year in US National Open Championship.

30

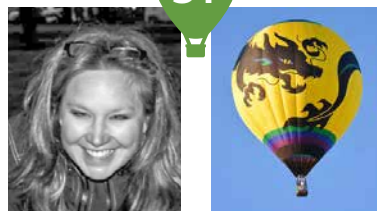


Holly Pfeifer

USA
N9025C 'Cherry Bomb'

I found ballooning at age 3 when my family crewed for Owen Keown at the US Nationals in my hometown Indianola. I travelled as a crew to many major events across the country, training along with my brother in competitive flying. I got my pilots license in 2002 while working on my Pharmacy doctorate. Ballooning is still a family affair, my sister is crew chief & husband, son & twin daughters make up the team. In 2019 I entered my first US Women's Nationals & won + Rookie of the Year. In 2022 I won again, in my home town. I am very excited to compete in my first Women's Worlds.

31



Meg Skelton

USA
N1231M 'Maharani'

My first basket-over landing in corn was at 11, my first solo on my 14th birthday, 4 years later I missed senior prom to finish 2nd in my 1st balloon competition. 2012 brought the rumour of a possible Women's World Championship - maybe in Australia? Here we are 11 years & almost 800 hrs later, at my third Women's World Championship. I was top female pilot at the US Nationals twice. Ballooning has taken me to Costa Rica, Switzerland, Lithuania, Poland, Canada, Dubai & Italy; most importantly, sharing the adventure has given the gift of inspiring ballooning friends around the world.

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**This World Championship Event is being organised by Northam Ballooning Events Inc.
and is sanctioned by the FAI/CIA.**

The Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, FAI - The World Air Sports Federation, was founded in 1905. It is a non-governmental and non-profit making international organisation with the basic aim of furthering aeronautical and astronautical activities worldwide, ratifying world and continental records and coordinating the organisation of international competitions.

All FAI ballooning international championships, competitions and record activities are conducted under the direction of the FAI Ballooning Commission (CIA). CIA stands for "Comité International d'Aérostation"

Event Competition Officials



Director
Gary Lacey
AUSTRALIA



Assistant Director
Leslie Purfield
UK



Steward
Garry Lockyer
CANADA



Steward
Hiromori Soejima
JAPAN



Safety Officer
John Wallington
AUSTRALIA



Meteorologist
Don Whitford
AUSTRALIA



Chief Scorer
Steve Ireland
AUSTRALIA



Assistant Scorer
Rhonda Pritchard
AUSTRALIA



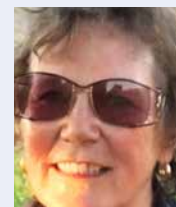
Operations Manager:
Gren Putland
AUSTRALIA



Jury President
Debbie Spaeth
USA



Jury Member
Hiromi Furukawa
JAPAN



Jury Member
Ruth Wilson
AUSTRALIA

Other Competition Officials

Target Team OIC
Windsonde

Ian & Carol Benning
James Robertson

Technical Support
Farmer Liaison

Andrew Robertson
Brendan Parker & Gerard Sermon

Northam's "Doonyart" Balloon



Emblazoned with the words **Wandju** (Welcome) and **Northam Western Australia**; 'Doonyart' made her first appearance in Northam at the National Ballooning Championships in May 2023. This new Northam-branded balloon was a collaborative project by the Shire of Northam and Windward Ballooning, with a vision to use this very visible tool to raise the profile for Western Australia's home of hot air ballooning.

'Doonyart' first took a short detour to Canberra in March, for her maiden voyage at the Enlighten Festival. This was closely followed with a spectacular flight over the city of Melbourne and the MCG. The 'money-shot' already, in her first few weeks of work!

During the Women's World Championships 'Doonyart' will be flown by accomplished young English Pilot, Stephanie Hemmings.

Affectionately named "Doonyart" the local Ballardong Nyoongar word for the 28 Parrot, Windward and the Shire embraced the opportunity to give the balloon a name that acknowledged Northam's traditional owners and also pays tribute to a very special member of our team, taken from us too soon.

Belinda Clements was introduced to ballooning in Canberra in the 1990's. Several years later she married into a well-known Northam ballooning family and continuing with the theme, worked for a number of years with Windward Ballooning. Belinda became a balloon pilot herself, and was pivotal in the formation of Northam Ballooning Events, in particular, its bid to host this World Championship event. Belinda was a much-loved active community member, wife, mother and good friend to many - and was never backwards in coming forwards about her "real" age - which somehow always remained at 28!

The 28 Parrot is referenced as a "happy, communal bird" - reflecting Belinda's nature to a tee! The parrot's distinctive colours are reflected in the balloons design - and importantly, they are also known for their strong flying skills.



Photograph by Suzie Weiss
@suzieweiss



Jamie Owen
General Manager

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Northam Airfield

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Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championship

The 1960's were halcyon days for flying. The Royal Aero Club of Western Australia was expanding and moving from Perth Guildford Airport to Jandakot, interest in flying had spread to rural areas, with Flying Schools at Bunbury & Narrogin, and aerial agriculture was becoming a huge business with large tonnages of fertilizer being spread from the air, this being the only way in many cases with such wet seasons.

At Northam, in 1968, a group of enthusiastic locals inaugurated the Northam Aero Club Inc and soon after, formed a steering committee to find land for an airstrip and flying school. After much ground work, an interim site was identified at Noggojerring on the farming property of Des & Max Smith, who generously made land available while the search for a permanent site continued. Working bees ensured that a strip was mown, suitable markers placed, windsock installed; and a briefing room, fuel shed and toilet constructed. That original old briefing hut can still be found, adjacent to the current Club Rooms.

The first instructor was David Walker, on loan from Narrogin Flying Club, followed soon after by John Douglas AM, Chief Flying Instructor at Royal Aero Club of WA until retired. In the first few months of that first year, 20 members took out student licences, 8 went solo, 2 were granted RPPL's, and 150 training hours were flown. Meantime, a permanent site was found, and the property where the Airfield is now located was purchased

from Mr Lyall Hurley in 1970 jointly by the then Town & Shire Councils, with 50% of the costs funded by the Aero Club. It was then leased back to the Club to foster aviation activities for the benefit of the town and district.

The present club rooms were once the drum stand and offices of the Caltex Depot in Northam (now the Boulevard shopping arcade parking area). Sam Oliver (later club president) was awarded the contract for demolition of the site and recognizing its potential, coordinated the removal and rebuilding at the Airfield. Richard Page made available the enormous windows from his Ford dealership depot, and John Dietrich supplied the suspending ceilings. The Club was fortunate in its membership - plumbers, electricians, builders & building Inspectors being amongst its number; so the building of brick toilets, making of septic, electric & water connections were all done by members. The last major project to be undertaken was the installation of runway lights; one of the most satisfying, for its life saving use by RFDS & Aerial Ambulance in Emergency - a far cry from filling beer cans with sand & avgas to light the strip!

From its humble beginnings, the Northam Airfield has evolved into a busy regional centre for aviation. The Aero Club continues to have an enthusiastic & active membership, hosting monthly flying competitions & social events, and operating a busy flying school with its own aircraft. Flight training & flying competitions continue throughout the year and social & refreshment events fill the club calendar.

The Club now acts as manager of the airfield for the Northam Shire Council, ensuring that facilities are safely maintained for the ever-increasing number of private hangars, as well as substantial businesses that are based here. Northam Air Services is one of the state's most well-respected aircraft engineering companies, servicing aircraft from the wheat-belt & wider rural regions, from Perth metro.

The Airfield is also home to Windward Ballooning, one of Western Australia's premier, and award winning, tourism operators. Also one of Australia's oldest ballooning companies, Windward celebrated 40 years of operations at Northam in 2022.

The Airfield and the Aero Club have come a long way from a tiny tin shed at the old Airstrip, but one thing remains a constant, and that is an ongoing commitment to, and active participation in, the community of Northam.



Errol Croft – President



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Leonie and the Avon Valley Toyota team welcome competitors, support crew, spectators & visitors to Northam for the Women's World Ballooning Championships

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OH WHAT A FEELING

In Honour of Northam's Record Setters

Aeronauts have been descending upon Northam for Balloon record-setting campaigns for decades. The history of activity in the skies above Northam is rich; filled with both colourful balloons, and characters.

It all started in the 1970's with an array of International Pilots from Hong Kong, including Englishman Geoff Green and Australians Ron Taaffe & Paul Gianniotis. They were accompanied in 1978 by Japanese Pilots Sabu & Tonko Ichiyoshi; and then the locals started to get in on the act! Records continued to tumble, and soon Northam Pilots Gren Putland, Adrian Clements & Geoff Tetlow had set altitude, distance and duration records.

Northam's sheltered location in the Avon Valley, within easy reach of Perth, and the upper jet stream winds flowing from west to east across the continent, has made it the ideal starting point for numerous National and World ballooning record attempts. Each and every attempt has had the extensive involvement of local pilots, balloon crew and many other volunteers; assisting with planning, logistics, equipment flight preparation and balloon launch & retrieve operations.

The Record Setters

Geoff Green - Hong Kong/British

Geoff introduced modern ballooning to Northam in the 1970's. Geoff's two records of special note were the World AX6 Altitude Record, 30,500 ft in 'Charlie' in 1977; and in 1980, along with local Northam pilot **Adrian Clements**, Outright World Distance Record, 690 kms from Northam to Zanthus, in the 'Sultan III' balloon.



Sabu Ichiyoshi - Japan

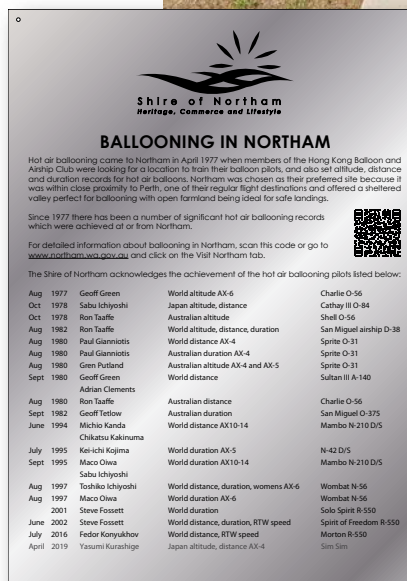
In 1978 Sabu set Japanese altitude & distance records fly from the Northam Race Club to Shackleton.



Bernard Park Plinth

In 2018 The Shire of Northam commissioned a granite plinth mounted with a plaque commemorating the achievements of local and international balloonists, all of which involved the people of Northam.

The plinth can be found in the beautiful surrounds of Bernard Park, on the town side of the Avon River.



Ron Taaffe

- Hong Kong/Australian

Ron set a number of Australian ballooning records from Northam, as well as World Altitude, Distance and Duration records in the San Miguel D-38 hot-air airship.



Paul Gianniotis - Hong Kong/Australian

Paul set an Australian duration record in 1980, and in the same year also set the World AX4 Distance Record of 154.68 kms.

Gren Putland - Northam, Western Australian

Australian altitude record 1980, Northam to Green Hills

Geoff Tetlow - Northam, Western Australian

Australian distance record 1982, Northam to Pumpkin Hollow (Jurien Bay)

Michio Kanda & Chikatsu Kakinuma - Japan

Base and operations centre were in Northam with a large crew of locals assembled to assist, including then Aero Club President Claude Meunier and his Aerostar for aerial tracking. In 1994 Michio and Chikatsu flew 'Mambo' 2366 kilometres, Mullewa to Broken Hill, setting a new AX10-14 World Distance Record.



Above: Mambo and Wombat

Kei-ichi Kojima - Japan

In 1995 Northam locals were recruited to help Kei launch from Dalwallinu, flying his small balloon over Beacon and Wialki, on towards Lake Baladjie; a new World AX5 Duration Record of 9hrs 17min.

Maco Oiwa & Sabu Ichiyoshi - Japan

In 1995 Northam teams mobilised, and the now-famous 'Mambo' balloon took off from Southern Cross. After a flight of 41 hours 29 minutes, Maco & Sabu landed at Coolardy Station, with a new World AX10-14 Duration Record.

In 1997 the Operations contingent & Northam base again regrouped. Maco flew solo through the night in 'Wombat' from Southern Cross, landing 15 hours 22 minutes later near Mt Hampton; setting a World AX6 Duration Record.

Toshiko Ichiyoshi - Japan

In 1997 Maco's wife Tonko launched from Merredin in 'Wombat', flew solo through the night and landed west of Tampu the next morning; a feminine World AX6 Duration Record, 12 hours 15 minutes.



Steve Fossett - USA

Steve Fossett was probably the most well-recognised Aviator to select Northam as a base. With a team of balloon and technical experts from the USA to get his massive 653,216 cu ft Cameron R-550 Roziere balloon airborne. Mission control was located at Washington University in St Louis.

In 2001 Steve had made a very windy failed inflation at Kalgoorlie, and after repairs in Northam & England, relocated to Northam. Hangar, facilities and logistics were at Northam Airfield, and dozens of local crew were recruited from the Aero Club, balloonists, SES, and local businesses.

The successful Solo Round the World flight was launched at Northam on 19 June 2002. Steve lifted off in 'Spirit of Freedom' at 1.37 pm, tracking across Australia, the Pacific Ocean, South America, the South Atlantic Ocean, below southern Africa, across the Indian Ocean, and across Australia again to make landing at Eromanga, QLD on 3 July 2002. Steve Fossett had achieved three world records:

Distance: 32,957.44 km, Duration: 355 hrs 57 min & Shortest Time Around the World.

Below: Steve Fossett's take off



Right: Steve Fossett's 'Spirit of Freedom'

Photographs by Robyn Stewart



Fedor Konyukhov - Russia

Fedor had already achieved many notable feats including: First solo sailboat circumnavigation of Antarctica, crossing the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean, in a row-boat, competing in the Iditarod dog race, dogsled expeditions from North Pole to Canada, and across the Greenland Ice Cap, and the first Russian Mountaineer to complete the 7 Summits Challenge.

In 2016 Fedor decided to emulate the flight of Steve Fossett, dedicating his flight to Steve. John Wallington from Canberra (the Safety Officer at these Championships) was engaged to assist in the Northam Flight Ops Centre; and the Northam Team was activated again. Hangar facilities, accommodation, and ground crew were soon in place. Fedor took off from the Northam Airfield on 12 July 2016. He flew solo around the world for 11 days 4 hours & 20 mins, before landing back almost exactly where he started.

In a "billion-to-one chance" quirk of meteorology, after travelling 33,521.4 km around the Earth, Fedor literally flew over his original take-off field, before landing safely near Bonnie Rock a few hours later. A new record for 'Shortest Time Around the World' and World Record for Distance travelled had been set.



Fedor & son Oscar with Fedor's capsule

Yasumi Kurashige - Japan

Yasumi set Japanese records for altitude and distance, launching his balloon 'SimSim' from Northam in April 2019.

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Photograph by Kathryn Soddy @deddams



Organiser: Northam Ballooning Events Inc.

Northam Ballooning Events is a non-profit Community Organisation tasked with planning and coordinating a range of ballooning competitions & events to be held in the Shire of Northam. It's members include the Shire of Northam, Northam Aero Club and ballooning, landowner & local business representatives.

Committee:

Chairman:	Errol Croft, President, Northam Aero Club
Treasurer:	Glen Brayshaw
Secretary:	Margie Putland
Operations Manager:	Gren Putland
Shire Of Northam Liaison:	Ian Kiely
Community Liaison:	Michelle Blackhurst
WA Balloon & Airship Club:	Michael Clements, President
Commercial Ballooning:	Damien Hays
Farmer Liaison:	Brendan Parker
Airfield Logistics:	Matt Bignell
Volunteers Coordinator:	Norm Fox
Member:	Donna Tasker
Member:	June Bairstow
Member:	Sue Clements

Other Volunteer Officials:

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Traffic Management:	Ken Blackhurst Simon Wooding Isobel Wooding Cathy Paterson
Target Team Leaders:	Alison Fox Sharon Bray
Information/Merchandise:	Lena Hinsley

Patron

5th FAI Women's World Hot Air Ballooning Championship

“ Patron: a person chosen,
named, or honoured as a
special guardian, protector,
or supporter. ”



Tonko Ichiyoshi

Northam Ballooning Events is proud to advise that our request to Tonko Ichiyoshi, to be the Patron of this event, was accepted.

Toshiko is an inspiration to all involved in the aerostation community. She is a founding member of The Far East Balloon Club (the first club in Japan). In 1974 she was instrumental in the formation of the Balloon Federation of Japan, and was appointed to the role of Secretary of Planning for that Federation.

Tonko completed training in Germany to fly gas balloons, and devoted many years to training new pilots. In 1997 (from Northam, Western Australia) Tonko set an FAI World Duration Record for Women. This was added to her various Japan National Records.

Tonko, her late husband Maco, and son Shota, have been great supporters of ballooning events around the world; including many visits to Northam over many years, flying record attempts, and to help Shota achieve his Australian Balloon Pilot Certificate.

We are proud to honour Tonko and her achievements at this Women's World Championship event.

Tonko will assist with presentations at the Awards Function at the conclusion of the event.

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