



The Art of Flight Festival 2026 – Event Information

8th December, 2025

1. **Event Name - The Art of Flight Festival**

Incorporating;

Australian National Hot Air Balloon Championship
The Art of Flight International Balloon Championship
Australian Balloon Grand Prix Round 1
Art of Flight Balloon Glow
Art of Flight Festival Fly In

2. **Event Dates**

Monday 6th April 2026 to Sunday 12th April, 2026

Competition Flights - from the morning of 7th April to the morning of 11th April, 2026

Balloon Glow - Saturday 11th April, 2026

Fly In - Sunday 12th April 2026

3. **Location**

The event headquarters are based at the Gliding Club of Victoria, 35 Samaria Road, Benalla Airport, Victoria, Australia. The flying area is located to the north of Benalla around the silo art towns of Goorambat, Devenish, and St James.

4. **Organiser**

Balloon Association of Victoria (BAV)

5. **Officially Recognised by**

Australian Ballooning Federation (ABF)

6. **Administrative Supporters**

Visit Victoria, Benalla Rural City Council.

7. **Sponsors**

Engie, Kavanagh Balloons, Taylored Insurance, Goldrush Ballooning, and others

8. **Schedule** * This schedule is subject to change.

Monday, 6th April	06:00	Official Practice Flight
	14:30	Master Briefing
Tuesday, 7th April to Friday, 10 th April:		
	05:00	Competition task Briefing
	15:00	Competition task Briefing
Saturday, 11th April	05:00	Final Competition Task Briefing
	16:00	Awards
	19:00	Balloon Glow
Sunday 12 th April	05:00	Fly-In Briefing



9. **Headquarters and facilities available**
General Briefing, Task Briefing, Competition Operations Centre – Gliding Club of Victoria, 35 Samaria Road, Benalla, Victoria.
10. **Pilot Invitations**
 - a) All Australian competitive pilots for the National Championship
 - b) All international and Australian pilots for the Art of Flight International Balloon Championship
11. **Entry Qualifications**
 - 1) Private Pilot Permit or equivalent
 - 2) Pilot flight experience 50 hours minimum as a PIC at the time of your entry. Pilots with more than 30 hours PIC and 12 months or more since their check flight are also invited and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - 3) Balloons - Airworthiness Certificate, Certificate of Registration, valid annual inspection.
 - 4) Insurance Requirements - Competitors are required to have insurance coverage of a minimum of \$5 million for third parties. Please contact your insurer and advise them.
12. **Prizes**
 1. **Art of Flight International Balloon Championship** - Open for all competitors
 - 1) 1st place - Art of Flight Champion
 - 2) 2nd place - Art of Flight Runner Up
 - 3) 3rd place - Art of Flight Highly Commended
 - 4) 4th to 10th place - Art of Flight Commended
 - 5) Art of Flight - Best Crewing Award
 - 6) Art of Flight - Best Rookie Pilot
 2. **Australian National Championship** – For Australian competitors
 - 1) 1st place - Australian Champion
 - 2) 2nd place – Second Place Nationals
 - 3) 3rd place - Third Place Nationals
 3. **Australian Balloon Grand Prix Round 1** – GP Teams registered with ABF will accrue points towards the Australian Balloon GP.
13. **Pilot Entry**
 1. Visit www.watchmefly.net and find the Art of Flight Festival
 2. Complete the Registration Form and read and agree to the Pilot, Document, and Media agreements
 3. Pay the entry fee
 4. If any of your credentials, balloon, or insurance details change in the meantime please notify paul@art-of-flight.com



14. **Entry fee and inclusions**

1. Competitors entry fee \$500 AUD. Please deduct 20% and pay \$400 if you pay by 16 January 2026.
2. Please pay entry fees by electronic funds transfer to **BSB: 013 148 Account: 172 158 373 Account Name: Balloon Association of Victoria** . A credit card facility is available on request from Lu Michell; lumichell1965@gmail.com
3. Includes international Flight Director, maps, social events, and as much free stuff as the event can budget in its first year.

15. **Entry deadline** COB 23 February 2026

16. **Event information in brief**

1. All competitors will need a Balloon Live Sensor (BLS) to compete. Please bring your own BLS. ABF has a limited number of BLS for rent - details to follow.
2. The map for the event will use a UTM grid, be 1/50000 scale and is based on the VicMap 2024 edition.
3. The AoF Balloon Glow will be held Saturday. Pilots that participate will receive an allowance.
4. We will use WhatsApp for the Recall Procedure. Telstra and Optus networks work in **most** of the flight area.
5. The CFA Fire Danger Period **may** be active during the event, in which case you will need to carry a CFA Schedule 4 Permit and operate in accordance with its conditions. Permits cost nothing, are available online, however may take up to 14 days to be issued. Please apply at - <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-permits/fire-danger-period-permits>.

17. **Refuelling**

High quality propane is available at Benalla Airport from the dedicated balloon refuelling facility. Baskets must have their pilot's competition basket banners securely fastened and displayed. Procedures are in place to ensure safe and expeditious refuelling – failure to follow the procedures may result in your crew needing to refuel elsewhere.

18. **Social Events**

Wednesday 8th – Welcome Reception – 6pm
Friday 10th - BAV Party for Officials - all welcome – 6pm
Saturday 11th - Art of Flight Presentation – 4pm
Sunday 12th – Farewell Breakfast – 9am

Event Information provided is subject to change and amendment. Please check the event's Electronic Notice Board on WatchMeFly for the latest event information.

Paul Gibbs
Event Chairman
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