



# SYLVIA MEINL

## CONTACT

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## Business

Currently:  
Manager HR Department  
Mercedes-Benz Group AG

Experience:  
Project Management  
Transformation Management  
Finance & Controlling  
Contract Management  
Facility Management

## BALLOONING EXPERIENCE

Private Pilot's License since 2003  
Instructor since 2013

~ 300 hours as PIC

Competing in various local and international Competitions

Best results:

- 7<sup>th</sup> place 2<sup>nd</sup> FAI Womens Europeans Hot Air Balloon Championships 2012
- 8<sup>th</sup> place 4<sup>th</sup> FAI Womens Europeans Hot Air Balloon Championships 2017

Competing in three Womens Worlds Hot Air Balloon Championships

Serving as an Official (AX, AA, BX) since 1999 on nearly all positions  
watchmefly certified scorer, CIA approved Event Director, CIA  
approved Entry Level Juror

Extract of participated events:

Event Director

- 2025 German / British Nationals (Germany)
- 2024, 2022, 2021, 2019 German Nationals (Germany)
- 2023 Austrian Nationals (Deputy) (Austria)
- 2021 Balloon Live Contest (Deputy) (Worldwide)
- 2020 Balloon Live Contest (Germany)
- 2018 Hot Air Airships World Championship (Deputy)

Steward

- 2024 25<sup>th</sup> FAI World Hot Air Balloon Championship (Hungary)
- 2023 Central European Cup 2023 and Pre- Worlds (Hungary)

Jury

- 2023 Horber Neckar Cup and UK Nationals (Germany)
- 2017, 2016 Belgian Balloon Trophy (Belgium)

Scoring / Logger

- 2015 World Air Games (Dubai)
- 2015 European Championship (Hungary)
- 2015 Hot Air Airships European Championship (Germany)

Target- Team (Chief Target Team / Target Team Manager)

- 2018 World Championship (Austria)
- 2014 Word Championship (Brazil)
- 2014 Dutch Balloon Trophy (Netherlands)
- 2007 World Air Games (Italy)

Debriefing

- 2012 World Championship (USA)
- 2006, 2004, 2000 German Nationals (Germany)

Observer

- 2016 World Championship (Japan)
- 2010, 2006, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001 Tochigi (Japan)
- 2009, 2007 Saga (Japan)
- 2004 World Championship Gas Balloon (Germany)
- 2004 World Championship (Australia)

# Nicola Cronin (formerly Scaife)

Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia  
Hot-Air Balloon Pilot | 3x World Women’s Champion | Commercial Operator

## Professional Summary

A highly accomplished and award-winning Australian hot-air balloon pilot, Nicola has been hot air ballooning for 20 years. She is a three-time winner of the FAI Women’s World Hot Air Balloon Championship, the only pilot, female or male to win three world championship titles. Starting competitive ballooning in 2013, she rapidly progressed through national and international ranks to become a formidable competition pilot. Her strengths include precision, consistency, focus and leadership. She combines her competitive career with commercial operations and has a strong emphasis on supporting and advocating for women in ballooning.

## Skills & Competencies

- Advanced proficiency in hot-air balloon piloting; private and commercial licences.
- Competition strategy: navigation; executing target tasks; adapting to local conditions, decision making.
- Focus, mental endurance, and consistency over multi-day / multi-task events.
- Leadership & team coordination (crew, event participation, public speaking).
- Ex-business operation: running a commercial balloon operation (Balloon Aloft) in the Hunter Valley, Australia.

## Competition & Achievements

Year	Competition	Location	Result
2023	5th FAI Women’s World Hot Air Balloon Championship	Northam, Western Australia	1st place.
2018	23rd FAI World Hot Air Balloon Championship	Gross-Siegharts, Austria	9th place. Open World Championships.
2018	3rd FAI Women’s World Hot Air Balloon Championship	Nałęczów, Poland	3rd place.

<b>2016</b>	2nd FAI Women's World Hot Air Balloon Championship	Birštonas, Lithuania	<b>1st place</b>
<b>2014</b>	1st FAI Women's World Hot Air Balloon Championship	Leszno, Poland	<b>1st place.</b>
<b>2013</b>	Australian National Ballooning Championships / Canowindra Challenge	Canowindra, NSW, Australia	<b>5th place (debut in competition ballooning).</b>
<b>2015 &amp; 2017</b>	Australian National Ballooning Championships	Northam, Western Australia	<b>2nd place</b>

## Other Relevant Information

- Pilot Licences & Training: Began flying in 2006; earned private pilot's certificate in 2007; progressed to commercial licence in 2009.
- Achieved a World Ranking of 17th in 2023.

## Select Publications & Media

- Australian Geographic [article](#) for the 2023 Women's World Championships.
- Sydney Morning Herald newspaper [article](#), 2023
- Watchmefly Pilot [Profile](#)

## Personal Statement

"Ballooning has taught me more than just the manual and theoretical aspects of flying; it's also about precision, perseverance and people. From entering my first competitive event in 2013 to three world titles, every flight has been a chance to push my limits and fly with integrity. The ballooning community is I'm committed to uplifting the sport, especially for women, and sharing the exhilaration of competition and the beauty of hot-air ballooning with wider audiences."