



# THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF AIR SAFETY INVESTIGATORS

PO Box 399  
Bowral

NSW 2576

[www.asasi.org](http://www.asasi.org)

## *Rob Lee*

**To all ASASI members:**

**I am very saddened to inform our members of the passing our long term ASASI member, colleague and friend, Dr Rob Lee. Rob unfortunately passed away on 27 April after a battle with cancer.**

Rob will be remembered as a great friend with an infectious smile and wonderful talent for getting people together. Many of us will fondly remember being entertained by Rob and the other musicians who made up the band (Mid-life crisis).

Rob is survived by his wonderful partner, Sue.

Rob's contribution to aviation safety will be a truly lasting testament to his work.

Rob was the former Director of the Australian Bureau of Air Safety Investigation (BASI) and was a pioneer of the application of human factors and system safety concepts to air safety investigations. He transformed BASI into an innovative, multi-skilled organisation that concentrated equally on air safety investigation, proactive accident prevention and safety enhancement.

In 2000, Rob set up his own consulting business and has worked extensively in HF and accident investigation around the world. Many may not be aware that Rob also worked as a reserve Group Captain in the RAAF, where he passed on his extensive knowledge of aviation psychology, human factors, risk management, and safety systems and air safety investigation methodology through his association with DDAAFS.

In a long and distinguished career, Rob achieved innumerable, significant enhancements to safety. In his work, Rob always demonstrated a keen understanding of different operational contexts and the Human Factors associated with them. Many members of the public (and the ADF) are safer today, as they go about their day to day work thanks to Rob's input and proactive approach to Safety. This will continue to be a lasting testament to Rob's work.

**Rob's funeral service will be held at 11 am this Friday, the 4th of May at the RMC chapel, Duntroon, Canberra ACT. Members, friends and colleagues are welcome to attend.**

I have included a brief CV of Rob's career and achievements below so that you can join me in remembering a truly wonderful person and to mourn his passing.

Best regards,

Rick Sellers. President ASASI

May 1 2018

**Brief CV - Dr Rob Lee, AO, BA (Hons) (ANU), PhD (St Andrews), FRAeS, FCILT.**

**Group Captain, RAAF Specialist Reserve**

*Dr Lee graduated from the Australian National University in 1970 with First Class Honours in Psychology, winning the Australian Psychological Society Prize. In 1974 he completed his PhD in Psychology at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. His research was concerned with human performance in complex man-machine systems, with particular reference to aviation.*

*In 1976, Rob was appointed Senior Psychologist, Operational Command, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). He became the first RAAF psychologist to serve as a human factors specialist on RAAF accident investigation teams, involving aircraft types ranging from F-111's to Iroquois helicopters.*

*In 1983, Rob joined the Bureau of Air Safety Investigation (BASI) as the Bureau's first human factors specialist. Rob established and developed the human factors, data analysis and research group within BASI. He became the Director of the Australian Bureau of Air Safety Investigation (BASI) in 1989, a position he held until 1999. Under Dr Lee, BASI became a leading international agency in pioneering the innovative application of advanced human factors and systems safety concepts to air safety investigation and proactive accident prevention, working in partnership with the domestic and international aviation industry, as well as the Australian Defence Force.*

*BASI adopted the Reason Model of Systems safety, and Rob established a long-standing collaborative association with Professor James Reason in the development and application of the Reason Model in air safety investigation. The outcomes of the systemic approach to air safety investigation, which became an ICAO Standard in 1994, were key drivers in the development of safety management systems within the aviation industry.*

*During his period as director of BASI Rob worked extensively towards developing greater communication and cooperation on aviation safety issues in the Asia Pacific region. He negotiated and signed memoranda of understanding to increase practical cooperation in air safety investigation with Indonesia, Singapore and Taiwan. He also represented Australia at the ICAO Accident Investigation Group (AIG) Divisional meetings in 1992 and 1999, at which significant changes and improvements were made to Annex 13 of the Chicago Convention, the document which specifies the ICAO international standards and recommended practices for accident and incident investigation.*

*He was a keynote speaker at the 1993 IATA technical conference on human factors, a landmark meeting that emphasized the increasing need to consider human performance at the systemic, or organizational, level, as well as that of the individual.*

*Rob was a Group Captain in the Royal Australian Air Force Specialist Reserve, in which capacity he was a consultant on aviation psychology, human factors, systems safety, risk management, accident/incident prevention and air safety investigation to the Australian Defence Force (ADF). He also developed and delivered lectures on human performance, accident investigation and systems safety on ADF training courses. These courses include the annual International Aviation Safety Officer Course attended by members of military aviation personnel from many countries, ranging from Asia to the Middle East.*

*He was a specialist adviser to the Boards of Inquiry into the RAN Sea King accident that occurred in Indonesia in April 2005 and the Army Blackhawk accident that occurred on HMAS Kanimbla off Fiji in November 2006.*

*In November 2000 he set up his own consultancy company, and was an international consultant in human factors and systems safety, in aviation and in other high technology industries. In 2002, he was a member of a CASA Team which travelled to every capital city in Australia to brief all sectors of the Australian aviation industry on safety management systems, which were to be made a mandatory requirement by the regulator.*

*Rob was also a human factors analyst on the major investigations into the Gulf Air A320 accident at Bahrain in August 2000, the Singapore Airlines B747 runway accident at Taipei in October 2000, and the mid-air collision between a DHL B757 and a Bashkirian Airlines TU154M over Ueberlingen, Germany, in 2002.*

*He was a member of the Expert Panel on Safety Management Systems appointed by the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Waterfall rail accident that occurred south of Sydney in January 2003. In this capacity, he was involved in the investigation and analysis of the rail operator's safety management system, and its role as a contributing factor to the accident, which resulted in seven fatalities. Following the Waterfall rail accident inquiry, Dr Lee was appointed by the Minister to the Advisory Board of the NSW Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR). The new regulator was set up by the NSW Government following the Waterfall accident.*

*Since 1999, Rob was a member the Nuclear Safety Committee of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA). In this capacity he proved specialist advice on human factors, systems safety, and safety management systems.*

*In 2013 Rob led a major independent review of the Airservices Australia Safety Management System. This review involved both on and off-site work, the on-site work taking them to Airservices facilities around Australia. They carried out extensive interviews with individual staff members, including senior executives, as well as conducting focus groups made up from staff members at various locations.*

*In 2016 Rob headed a comprehensive independent review of the Safety Management System of the Changi Airport Group (CAG) in Singapore. CAG operates Changi and Seletar airports. Changi Airport is one of the top airports in the world and is going through a major expansion process throughout which the management of safety is critical. The CAG Review involved considerable on-site time in Singapore, working with CAG, contactors and stakeholders, including the regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS).*

*Following the international conference on safety management systems held at the Singapore Aviation Academy in late 2002, Dr Lee co-designed and developed the highly successful ten-day course on integrated safety management systems that is held twice each year at the Singapore Aviation Academy. Over 800 students from many countries have attended the course since its commencement in 2003.*

*Rob co-developed and lectured on the annual European Association for Aviation Psychology (EAAP) courses on human factors in flight Safety, SMS, risk management and safety investigation. This internationally recognised course has been presented at many locations throughout Europe, and since 2010 in Dubai.*

*Many may not be aware that Rob was a co-author with Reason, Maurino, and Johnston, of the book Beyond Aviation Human Factors (1995). He was also an associate editor of the international journal Human Factors and Aerospace Safety and a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS). In 1989, he won the Henry Wigram Award of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Aeronautical Society.*

*In November 2000, Dr Lee was awarded the Aviation Human Factors Achievement Award by the Australian Aviation Psychology Association. In 2010, Rob was awarded the Australian Bi-Centennial Award by the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators (GAPAN), "in recognition of an outstanding individual contribution to Australian Aviation" and from April 2011 to March 2012 he served as Technical and Air Safety Director of the Australian Region of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators (GAPAN).*

*In the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours, Dr Lee was made an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO): "For distinguished service to the aviation industry, to the development of air safety and accident investigation standards, and to national and international professional associations".*

*In September 2014 at the European Association for Aviation Psychology Conference in Malta, Rob received the 2014 EAAP Award "for his outstanding achievements in aviation Psychology".*

*In November 2015, Rob received the Royal Aeronautical Society's 2015 Specialist Gold Award "for exceptional work that has led to substantial advances in specialist disciplines in the aerospace industry". The award was accompanied by the Roger Green Medal, "which is conferred for a significant and lasting contribution to the*

*theory or practical development of human factors as applied in aerospace. These awards were in recognition of Rob's world-class contribution to aviation safety management, especially his promotion of human factors and a systems approach in the investigation and prevention of aircraft accidents".*

*Rob was a member of the European Association for Aviation Psychology (EAAP), the Australasian Society of Aerospace Medicine, the International Society of Air Safety Investigators, and an Honorary Member of the Flight Safety Foundation.*

*Rob was also a member of the Executive Board of Safeskiies Australia.*

## **Websites**

**ASASI website**    [www.asasi.org](http://www.asasi.org)

Log on :    news    Password: aviator

**ISASI website**    [www.isasi.org](http://www.isasi.org)

Log on            membership number            Password    christian name    (all lower case)

**President**            Rick Sellers            [convergentsafety@gmail.com](mailto:convergentsafety@gmail.com)

**Vice President**            Gerry Gibb            [gerry.gibb@safetywisesolutions.com](mailto:gerry.gibb@safetywisesolutions.com)

**Secretary/Treasurer** Paul Mayes            [asasiexecutive@gmail.com](mailto:asasiexecutive@gmail.com)

**Email : [contactasasi@asasi.org](mailto:contactasasi@asasi.org)**