



CAASA Newsletter



The Commercial Aviation
Association of Southern Africa

September 2026

Content Guide

Discover the latest news, insights and developments from across South Africa's aviation industry. In this edition, our CEO reflects on how Africa's rich heritage can help shape the future of integrated transport, connecting where we have come from with where we are going.

We also look back at AAD 2026, explore the opportunities it presented for general aviation businesses, and look ahead to the CAASA Awards 2026.

Plus, discover the latest industry opportunities and learn more about becoming part of CAASA's unified voice for aviation in Southern Africa.

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FROM OUR CEO

From Heritage to Horizons: Connecting Africa's Past to Its Future Through Integrated Transport

We speak a great deal about heritage in this country. We speak about our history, our traditions, and the routes that built our economy.

But I have a question for you: what is the point of heritage if we are not prepared to build upon it? It is not merely good enough to convert one culture with another.

What does it take to really build, to create the future we wish for ourselves and, more importantly, our children? The time has come to let go of the past, stop blaming the past, and focus on the future – all we can do is move forward.

South Africa's aviation story did not begin in a boardroom at Lanseria. It began on the trading routes that crisscrossed this continent long before runways were laid – routes that moved gold, spices, people, and ideas across vast distances.

Our skies were forged by trade, by the movement of people and cargo. But more importantly, they were forged by the movement of ideas. And yet, here we are, talking about that heritage as though it were something to be preserved in a museum, rather than a launchpad for the future. Think of the dream once to build a railway from Cape to Cairo – that old advert for Rolux Magnum, the word that ties it all together: “build”.



At CAASA, we believe heritage is not about looking back. Yes, we must learn the lessons from the past and value the good and the bad. South Africa has enough bad, but if we focus on the good and what we can leverage – that's the holy grail, the foundation upon which we build.

And as we prepare for the Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) 2026 – Africa's only aerospace and defence expo combining a trade exhibition and an air show – we are asking every stakeholder across this continent a difficult question: Are you honouring that heritage by building the future, or are you simply preserving the past?

AAD 2026 is being managed through a powerful partnership between CAASA, Armscor, AMD, and the Department of Defence. But partnerships mean nothing without action. So let me ask you directly: what are you doing to connect Africa?

Aviation is not an industry. It is an enabler.

We have a habit in this sector of speaking about aviation as though it exists in a vacuum. It does not. Africa's aviation sector is a tool – perhaps the most powerful tool we have – to unlock Africa's economic potential, notably through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

When we speak of connecting Africa to global markets, we are not speaking about aircraft. We are speaking about farmers in the Cape Winelands whose perishable produce requires fast turnaround times and efficient logistics. We are speaking about tourism operators in the Kruger National Park whose livelihoods depend on safe flight corridors. We are speaking about the 60 percent youth unemployment that faces this nation, and the hope that connectivity brings.

Aviation moves cargo. But more importantly, aviation moves ideas. It moves investment. It moves opportunity.

The relationship between air, sea, road, and rail – why does it matter?

I will tell you why. An aircraft can carry a high-value shipment from Johannesburg to Lagos in a matter of hours. But if that shipment cannot get from the airport to the last-mile destination because the roads are congested or the rail network is disconnected, what have we really achieved? Nothing.

Industry cannot function in isolation. We must stop thinking in silos. The Cape Winelands aviation development, which I have described as a “fantastic and vital initiative”, brings alternative international gateway potential to the Cape region. Charters want to fly directly into regions like the Cape Winelands because it is tourism-driven. But we cannot stop there.



Add rail access, general aviation infrastructure, and cargo handling, and an airport becomes a regional economic driver. We need integrated transport corridors that connect our ports to our rail networks, our rail to our airports, and our airports to that final mile where goods reach the people who need them.

Ask yourself: when was the last time you saw a transport plan that genuinely integrated air, sea, road, and rail? If you cannot answer that question, you are part of the problem.

AAD 2026: A showcase of Africa's capability – but a showcase is not enough

AAD is the premier platform for collaboration between government, industry, and international stakeholders. It is where we showcase Africa's growing aerospace, defence, and mobility capabilities. At AAD 2026, commercial aviation and drone technology will be high on the agenda. We will showcase the Milkor 380 – the largest unmanned aerial vehicle designed and built in Africa.

We will remind the world that South Africa produces some of the best gliders in the world in Jonker Sailplanes. We will demonstrate that we build components for Boeing and Airbus.

But here is my challenge to you: a showcase without strategy is just theatre. At AAD 2026, we aim to promote the policy development of aviation, ensuring it remains a thriving sector for growth. We are not just displaying capabilities – we are building the frameworks that will sustain them.

The world is a challenging place right now. But at AAD 2026, business is the order of the day, not chaos. Defence and civil aviation leaders are reshaping their industries at unprecedented speed. Traditional structures are being disrupted. The question is: will Africa be a participant in this transformation, or a spectator?

Regional transport corridors – the arteries of African growth

Africa cannot develop in isolation. It requires a cohesive industry and public-private partnership. Regional transport corridors are not just about moving goods. They are about moving people to jobs, tourists to destinations, and emergency responders to crises.

Consider the challenges we face. Protected areas have annexed airspace 2500ft above the highest point within their boundaries. This restriction, if not resolved, can jeopardise flight safety, insurance validity, and tourism operations. It is a clear example of two government-approved acts working against each other. We are working with park management authorities to create a uniform approach and find viable flight corridors that meet both environmental and operational requirements. But we cannot do this alone.

We must move beyond lip service. The regulator must partner genuinely with industry.

Why collaboration is not optional – it is survival

Regulation cannot operate in isolation from economic realities, operational feasibility, and industry input. Overly cautious or siloed regulatory approaches – driven by risk aversion without proper economic analysis – can stifle competitiveness, increase costs, and slow down beneficial technologies. Many rules are developed without meaningful engagement with aviation professionals – airlines, pilots, engineers, MROs, and airport operators. Consultation periods are too short. Documents are too technical. Feedback mechanisms are underused.

We need to shift from a model of regulating over the industry to regulating with the industry. That includes using technical committees, secondments, and transparent working groups – not only for consultation, but for co-creation. With the support of Africa's regulators and leaders, we have the opportunity to unlock the skies, cut through bureaucracy, and make connectivity simpler, faster, and more effective for all.



Looking beyond borders – towards a connected African transport network

Africa's future is not defined by its borders. It is defined by its connections. Integrated transport improves trade, tourism, emergency response, and economic development. But it requires us to think differently. It requires us to ask uncomfortable questions.

Are we building airports that connect to rail networks? Are we designing ports that feed into logistics hubs? Are we creating last-mile delivery systems that actually serve communities? Are we investing in the skills and infrastructure that will make all of this possible?

The Aviation Africa Summit in Kigali issued a continent-level communiqué with concrete policy recommendations and showcased transformational technologies – most notably eVTOL and pilotless air-taxi demonstrations – that signals a rapid shift in how African transport systems will integrate low-altitude and urban air mobility. These are not distant possibilities. They are immediate regulatory challenges and commercial opportunities.

At AAD 2026, we are bringing together the people who can answer these questions. We are creating a platform where government, industry, and international stakeholders can collaborate. Where we can move from talking to doing.

Where we can build a launchpad for Africa's airspace and defence future.

Your role in this future

I do not write this article to inform you. I write it to challenge you.

What are you doing to connect Africa? Are you building partnerships or protecting your silo? Are you investing in integrated transport or just paying it lip service? Are you preparing for AAD 2026 as a spectator or as a participant?

South Africa's aviation heritage was built around trade, movement, and the exchange of ideas. But heritage without action is just nostalgia. We need regeneration. We need integration. We need to connect our ports, our rail, our logistics, and especially that last-mile delivery that supports Africa's growth. AAD 2026, a declared government national event, will be staged at its spiritual home – Air Force Base Waterkloof – from 16 to 20 September 2026. More than 300 global exhibitors and 30,000 trade visitors are expected. The economic impact is estimated at R500 million.

But numbers are not the point. The point is what we build together.

I invite you to be part of that building. Not as an observer. As a partner. As someone who understands that Africa's future depends on how we connect – not just our transport networks, but our people, our ideas, and our ambition.

The horizon is waiting. The question is: are you ready to move toward it?

Our heritage tells the story of where we have come from. Integrated transport will help determine where Africa goes next.



– Kevin Storie, CEO

AAD 2026

A look back at AAD 2026

What a week it was at Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) 2026.

Held at Air Force Base Waterkloof, AAD once again brought together the aviation, aerospace and defence industries for five days of exhibitions, discussions, demonstrations, networking and engagement.

As a Lead Partner, CAASA was proud to be part of an event that provides such an important platform for showcasing the capabilities of South Africa's aviation and aerospace sector to both local and international audiences.

For CAASA, AAD has always been about more than simply being present at one of the continent's major industry events. It is an opportunity to bring people together, strengthen relationships and ensure that the commercial aviation sector has a strong presence within the wider aerospace landscape.



Throughout the week, we had the opportunity to connect with CAASA members, Board Members, industry partners, stakeholders and colleagues from across the sector. These conversations are an important part of what makes an event such as AAD so valuable.

Whether discussing current industry challenges, exploring new opportunities, reconnecting with familiar faces or meeting new people, each interaction contributes to a stronger and more connected aviation community.

AAD also provided an important opportunity to showcase the depth and diversity of expertise that exists across our industry. South Africa has a long and proud aviation heritage, but events such as AAD also remind us that the sector continues to evolve. From established aviation businesses to emerging technologies and new ideas, there was plenty to see, discuss and learn throughout the week.



The public air show weekend brought another dimension to the event, welcoming thousands of aviation enthusiasts and families to Waterkloof. Beyond the impressive displays in the skies, events such as these play an important role in bringing aviation closer to the public and inspiring interest in an industry that offers an extraordinary range of careers and opportunities.

Most importantly, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make AAD 2026 such a memorable week.

To the AAD team, thank you for the enormous amount of work that goes into bringing an event of this scale together. To our CAASA Board Members, members and partners, thank you for your involvement, support and continued commitment to both CAASA and the broader aviation industry. And to everyone who visited, connected with us, shared ideas and contributed to the conversations throughout the week – thank you for being part of it.



Events may last only a few days, but the relationships, conversations and opportunities they create continue long after the exhibition stands have been packed away.

We leave AAD 2026 with renewed connections, valuable conversations and plenty of momentum for what comes next.

Thank you for being part of AAD 2026. We look forward to seeing you again soon.















You are cordially invited to
join us for our Annual

CAASA Awards Dinner & Year-End Celebration

In what promises to be a night to remember, please unite
with us in acknowledging, applauding and celebrating our
members, affiliate partners & peers.

Date

30th October 2026

Time

18:00

Date

Indaba Hotel Sandton

Dress

Formal



[Click here to RSVP](#)

What AAD 2026 Offers General Aviation Businesses

CAASA CEO Kevin Storie explains how general aviation operators, AMOs, ATOs and other aviation businesses can approach AAD 2026 as a trade opportunity.

AAD 2026 gives South African and African general aviation businesses direct access to a wider aerospace, government and international trade audience.

CAASA's stronger focus on GA highlights commercial opportunities for operators, AMOs, ATOs, helicopter businesses and other aviation companies whose capabilities extend across civil, specialist and emergency operations.

General aviation will have a deliberate and stronger focus at Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) 2026, with the Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa (CAASA) encouraging operators, training organisations, maintenance businesses and other civil aviation companies to approach the event as a trade opportunity rather than simply an aerospace and defence exhibition.

Kevin Storie, CEO of CAASA and Chairperson of the AAD Executive Committee, told African Pilot that the intention goes beyond increasing the number of GA aircraft on static display.

CAASA wants general aviation businesses to use AAD to engage with international delegations, governments, defence organisations, humanitarian and emergency-response organisations, aircraft manufacturers, technology companies, regulators, training organisations, maintenance organisations and other aviation businesses.

For Storie, much of the value lies in bringing organisations that would normally operate in different environments into the same place.





GA Is More Than Private and Recreational Flying

CAASA's position is that general aviation is often underestimated, particularly in the African context.

Storie pointed to the range of work already undertaken by GA aircraft and helicopters, including emergency medical services, search and rescue, humanitarian relief, disaster response, firefighting, agricultural operations, infrastructure inspection, mining and energy support, business transport, pilot training, aircraft maintenance, tourism, conservation, security and aerial survey work.

For him, that breadth is important because GA frequently operates where conventional airline networks or other forms of infrastructure cannot provide the same flexibility.

Africa's distances, terrain and uneven transport infrastructure create demand for aircraft that can move smaller numbers of passengers or specialist equipment, operate from short or less-developed airstrips, deploy quickly and perform more than one type of mission.

Storie also pointed to the COVID period, regional humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters as examples of where aircraft capable of operating independently of major airline infrastructure have proved useful. He referred to the KwaZulu-Natal unrest several years ago as another example of circumstances in which flexible aviation capability became particularly valuable.

That wider utility is why CAASA does not see GA simply as the smaller end of the aviation market.

For operators, there is also a commercial argument. An aircraft capable of supporting several viable roles gives its owner or operator more opportunities to keep it productively employed.

Storie said, "An aircraft not flying is an aircraft dying."

What Is in AAD for a GA Business?

A fixed-wing operator may meet a delegation looking for aircraft capable of operating into remote areas. For commercial GA operators, Storie sees access as one of the main opportunities.

AAD brings together people and organisations that would normally operate in separate markets.

A helicopter company may engage with organisations requiring medical evacuation, disaster response, firefighting, humanitarian support, infrastructure work or security capability.

The same principle applies further down the support chain.



Who Should Be Looking for What?

GA operators

Remote connectivity, government transport, resource-sector support, humanitarian operations, emergency services, conservation, infrastructure work and specialist missions.

AMOs

Regional maintenance support, component work, aircraft upgrades, avionics, mission equipment, specialist modifications and fleet support.

Helicopter operators

EMS, search and rescue, disaster response, firefighting, humanitarian support, offshore operations, infrastructure work, tourism and security.

ATOs

Pilot, technical and specialist training, as well as longer-term aviation skills development.

Storie believes the international delegations attending AAD are particularly important for South African and African businesses.

Rather than attempting to develop each market remotely, companies have an opportunity to begin conversations directly with representatives who understand their own national requirements.

His view is that the exhibition will be as valuable as exhibitors and trade visitors make it, particularly if they use the delegation programme effectively.

For a business attending AAD, that means arriving with some idea of which markets, organisations and decision-makers are relevant to what it actually offers.

Where Civil and Defence Aviation Meet

AAD remains strongly associated with defence, but Storie sees the crossover between defence, commercial aviation and general aviation as one of the reasons civil aviation businesses should pay attention. Helicopters are perhaps the clearest example.

A helicopter may be used for military transport, emergency medical services, search and rescue, disaster response, firefighting, humanitarian relief, offshore operations, infrastructure support, VIP transport, tourism or security.

RPAS provide another example. Systems used for surveillance or security can also have applications in agriculture, wildlife protection, infrastructure inspection, disaster assessment, search and rescue and environmental monitoring.

Storie also pointed to crossover in satellite technology, avionics, surveillance systems, synthetic vision, communications, aircraft materials, propulsion, autonomous systems and artificial intelligence.



For Africa, he sees particular value in aircraft and technology that can perform more than one role.

A rugged turboprop, for example, may normally transport passengers, cargo or medical supplies and, depending on its , also support humanitarian operations, medical evacuation or emergency logistics when required.

The same principle can apply to helicopters and RPAS.

Storie does not argue that civil and military aviation should lose their separate responsibilities or regulatory structures. His point is that the sectors should better understand where capabilities overlap, how they can be mobilised and how they can work alongside one another when circumstances require it.

A Trade Event, Not Just an Airshow

Perhaps the simplest part of CAASA's message is that general aviation businesses should not approach AAD purely as a place to look at aircraft.

The public may naturally associate the event with flying displays and military hardware, but Storie believes industry visitors should treat the trade element differently. International delegations are high on his list of priorities. Businesses should understand which countries are represented, what aviation requirements they have and whether there is a realistic connection with their own capability.

Visitors should also look beyond an aircraft's primary role. Cargo capability, medevac potential, short-field performance, remote operations, humanitarian work, search and rescue, disaster response or surveillance may be just as relevant to a prospective African customer as the role for which the aircraft is normally marketed.

Helicopters, RPAS, humanitarian aviation, training and maintenance are among the areas where Storie believes the civil and defence sides of AAD can intersect.

Preparing for AAD

For a GA business, Storie's argument can ultimately be reduced to four practical considerations:

- The people and organisations it needs to meet
- The delegations representing markets relevant to its business
- The additional roles its aircraft, people or technical capability can support
- The partnerships that could help it reach those markets

That is the distinction CAASA wants the general aviation industry to recognise at AAD 2026.

The opportunity is not simply to have GA represented at Waterkloof, but to have operators, ATOs, AMOs and other civil aviation businesses visible, engaged and commercially connected.

RECRUITMENT

Join us

JOB VACANCY

AOC Accountable Manager

Starlite Aviation Operations (Pty) Ltd is seeking an experienced AOC Accountable Manager to assume overall executive accountability for the operational activities and performance of its International and Domestic Air Service Licence operations.

The position covers:

Part 127
Helicopter Operations

Part 135
Fixed Wing Operations

Part 101
Remote Pilot Aircraft Systems

Join Starlite Aviation, a SAF Aerogroup company, and take a leading role in a dynamic international aviation environment. Starlite Aviation delivers specialised aviation operations across helicopter, fixed-wing and remotely piloted aircraft activities.

As we continue to develop our operations, we are looking for talented and experienced professionals who want to contribute to our growth, operational excellence and uncompromising commitment to safety.

Languages

- **English:** High level of proficiency required, both written and spoken.
- **French:** Highly advantageous.
- **Other languages:** An advantage.

Working Conditions

- **Travel:** Regular travel to operational bases, both locally and internationally.
- **Key working relationships:** Business Development Director, AMO Accountable Manager.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic & Business Leadership

- You will provide executive leadership to the AOC organisation and create the structure, resources, systems, processes and controls required to achieve Starlite Aviation's operational and business objectives.
- Your responsibilities will include defining the strategy, objectives and goals of the business, monitoring emerging aviation industry trends, opportunities and threats, and adapting the organisation's approach where required.
- You will also play a key role in ensuring that Quality, Safety, Health and Environmental considerations are fully embedded in operational and business decision-making.

Stakeholder Management

- Liaising with customers, contractors, SACAA and other relevant agencies.
- Building and maintaining strong supplier relationships.
- Participating in supplier negotiations to meet operational requirements at operational bases.
- Maintaining effective working relationships with the Business Development Director and AMO Accountable Manager.

Critical Requirements

- Strong leadership and people management capability.
- A disciplined approach to performance standards, organisational objectives and business goals.
- Strong customer service skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Strong administration and organisational capability.
- Effective written and verbal communication skills.
- Confidence working with multiple internal and external stakeholders.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite.

Operational Excellence & Regulatory Compliance

- Develop and implement effective systems and controls across all areas within the AOC.
- Ensure continued compliance with applicable SACAA regulatory requirements and relevant operational approvals.
- Provide operational, regulatory and strategic input into fleet planning, aircraft additions, aircraft disposals and associated business decisions.
- Ensure that the systems, competencies and behaviours required to maintain aviation approvals and accreditations remain effective.
- Drive continuous improvement and innovation initiatives to improve operational efficiency and competitiveness.
- Ensure operations are executed safely, effectively and in accordance with Company requirements.

Financial Management

- Directing financial planning, budgeting and forecasting.
- Optimising resource allocation.
- Monitoring key financial indicators and performance trends.
- Implementing corrective actions where required.
- Operating within approved financial budgets and delegated authority.
- Planning and executing operations within applicable tender budgets.

Qualifications & Experience

- A Pilot Licence – minimum CPL.
- A Business Management Diploma or Degree.
- Safety and Quality Assurance certification.
- Approximately eight years' experience in a senior management role, including responsibility for teams, budgets, performance management and operational compliance.
- Approximately eight years' senior management-level experience within civil aviation, gained in flight operations, maintenance, safety management and/or quality management.
- A proven track record of achievement in previous senior roles.
- Strong technical and operational knowledge of Helicopter, Fixed Wing and RPAS operations.
- Sound knowledge of the regulations and requirements applicable to the operational environment.

[Click here to apply](#)

CAASA MEMBERSHIP

Your voice. Your industry. Your association.

Join the Unified Voice for Aviation in Southern Africa

For more than 80 years, CAASA has represented, protected, and advanced the interests of commercial and general aviation across Southern Africa.

When regulatory changes arise, industry challenges emerge, or critical decisions are being made, CAASA ensures that the aviation industry's voice is heard at the highest levels.

As a member, you gain access to:

- Industry representation and advocacy
- Direct engagement with government, regulators, and key stakeholders
- Expert guidance on regulatory, operational, legal, and industry matters
- Networking opportunities with aviation professionals and decision-makers
- Exclusive member communications, industry updates, and newsletters
- Opportunities to promote your business through CAASA channels
- Member discounts and benefits at industry events, including AAD and selected aviation conferences
- Access to a powerful network spanning operators, AMOs, flight training organisations, helicopter operators, airports, unmanned aviation, safety professionals, and aviation service providers

CAASA is more than an association.

It is a collective of aviation businesses and professionals working together to protect the future of our industry.

Whether you operate aircraft, maintain them, train pilots, support aviation operations, or provide aviation-related services, your business belongs at the table.

Stronger Together. Stronger Aviation.

Join CAASA today and become part of the organisation that has been championing aviation since 1944.

Melissa Sewgolam

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COME FLY WITH US

Get involved with our monthly newsletter

With 80+ years of legacy and reputation, your contribution can only help us foster growth in your business and across our critically important aviation sector.

Get involved and reap the benefits of getting your business in front of curated, aviation-focused peers pro bono!

All we need from you

01

Your company logo
(JPG / PNG / PDF)

02

Company overview, products & services
(Long or short-form)

03

Significant milestones & supporting images
(JPG / PNG / PDF)

04

Contact details
(Including website address & social media)

Reach out to our General Manager,
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