
SACAA PRESS STATEMENT

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Transport Minister approves designation of a new recreation aviation body to oversee, administer and issue licences for microlights, gyroplanes and light sport aircraft.

Johannesburg. The Minister of Transport, Honourable Jeff Radebe, has formalised the designation of the Recreation Aviation Administration South Africa (RAASA) as an entity that will perform an oversight role of the recreational aviation sector on behalf of the South African Civil Aviation Authority. This designation is in line with the provisions of Section 22.1(g) of the Aviation Act, 1962 (Act No. 74 of 1962) and the Civil Aviation Regulations. The Act and Regulations empower the Commissioner to designate a body or institution to carry out certain functions, the major part of which is to establish safety standards relating to recreational aviation. Various models in other countries were considered in a quest to find a structure that will work within the South African environment with our wide variety of recreational aircraft.

The Aero Club of South Africa has to date been carrying out certain of the functions that RAASA will be responsible for, but this arrangement presented various challenges and therefore couldn't meet the mandate of the SACAA. Certain shortcomings were identified in the original arrangement between the SACAA and Aero Club such as the diversity of the types of sport aviation that the Aero Club represents which made it difficult for the body to reach consensus on issues.

The efficiency of voluntary organisations is often limited by their very nature. Resources are seldom readily available and the voluntary officials are unpaid. This creates delays in service delivery and often inadequate support for the very members the organizations are there to serve. The SACAA wishes to thank the Aero Club for the role it has played over the years and its input into the creation of RAASA.

"This new partnership was three years in the making and we are pleased that the Minister has now approved the designation of RAASA in compliance with PFMA requirements.

RAASA will start carrying out its official duties from February 2009, and in the meantime is putting the necessary structures in place to hit the deck running” said Captain Colin Jordaan CEO / Commissioner for Civil Aviation.

RAASA will operate as a Section 21 Company, i.e. an Association Not For Gain incorporated in accordance with the corporate laws of the Republic of South Africa. The entity will be governed by a seven member Board of Directors made up of two SACAA officials, three other industry experts plus two senior officials from the Aero Club. The names of the Board members are as follows: Mr. Stan Oliver – Chairman of the Aero Club; Mr. Neil de Lange – GM of the Aero Club; Mr. Chris Booysen – Chairperson of the SA Power Flying Association and a Chartered Accountant; Mr. Johannes Lok – Aircraft Maintenance Engineer; Mr. Robert Gassmann – a businessman with vast experience in the industry; Mr Obert Chakarisa – GM Aircraft Safety at the SACAA and Mr. Anton Richman – GM Air Safety Operations at the SACAA. The Commissioner will not serve on this body.

The duties of RAASA will include, amongst others, the issuing of Authorities to Fly for light sport aircraft and the issuing of national pilot licences for microlights, gyroplanes and light sport aircraft. The entity will be funded by fees collected from users and by the SACAA for the oversight role that it will carry out on our behalf. It will exercise administrative control over recreational activities within the Non Typed Certified Aircraft (NTCA) group. At this stage it will not conduct oversight on non-powered recreational flying activities which will continue to be administered by SACAA designated Aviation Recreation Organisations (ARO’s).

Notwithstanding the funding from the SACAA, the industry will retain their influence in the development of standards and establishment of a regulatory framework.

In support of this initiative the SACAA will create a new section within the Authority that will ensure the quality and standards of oversight administered by this new body. RAASA will operate from Rand Airport in Ekurhuleni.

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