

Aero Club of South Africa – Chairman’s Report – 2026 Annual General Meeting

The 2025 year and the first quarter of 2026 have been busy and it was a challenging period for the Aero Club with global and national factors that continue to influence general and recreational activities in South Africa.

A more or less stable exchange rate and an oil price of \$60 during late 2025 and in early 2026 augured well for a general improvement and the possibility of a positive outlook for 2026. This all came to an end with the US / Iran war at the end of February. We are now faced with oil hovering at over \$100 and the strong possibility of paying more than R 35 for a litre of avgas, with no idea where the price will be in the future.

On the local front the year started well with an agreement being reached between industry representatives and the SACAA on the 12-year engine overhaul matter. After a few marathon meetings and many consultations, an engine condition monitoring program was agreed upon. This program was accepted by the CAA’s CARCom and is now formally an appendix to Part 43 of the technical standards. However, this still has to be formally promulgated and, at this stage, we do not know when there will relief for the owners of aircraft that have an engine older than 12 years. An application for an interim exemption was refused by the CAA.

The Aero Club continues to be an active member of the FAI. Rob Jonkers and I had a meeting with Greg Principato, the president of the FAI. I was also invited to the quarterly meeting of the board of the FAI. Both these meetings were virtual. From these meetings it is evident that, globally, as in South Africa, recreational and sport aviation is facing the challenges of increased costs, and an aging and declining membership. There is also a global tendency for regulators to apply ICAO standards to aspects of recreational aviation. The FAI and the Aero Club of South Africa have a good long-standing relationship.

The Aero Club was invited to the annual general meeting of SASCOC. I attended on-line. This is a relationship that needs to be improved in the future.

The yearly Aero Club awards dinner was held in November 2025. It was a well-organised event that was well attended by guests and members. The awards that were presented are a showcase of our member’s dedicated participation in recreational aviation. Awards were presented for: lifetime achievements and service to the Aero Club, special contributions were recognised, FAI records and participation in international events and gold and silver wings for many years of service. The broad spectrum of all recreational aviation disciplines was recognised.

On the Wednesday before Airweek no one would have thought that Airweek was going to happen. The weather with rain, low cloud and wind had set in. Notwithstanding this, many members left the plane in the hangar and drove to Middelburg. The weather cleared a bit on Friday afternoon and Saturday was better. Although some had understandably not arrived, Airweek 2026 was a resounding success. A concise summary of this year’s Airweek will be that it was a prime example of a group of dedicated people getting together to share a common interest at a very well organised event. The planning committee has already

held a debrief meeting and planning for 2027 will start soon. Thank you to the Aero Club members and Middelburg Aviation Club for the organisation and all who attended and to those who could not attend.

Participation in advocacy related matters has increased. During 2025 there were 93 meetings and since January 2026 there have been 31 meetings. This ever-increasing participation in advocacy comes with a mixture of success and frustration.

The 12-year engine issue has been mentioned. In addition, the amendments to Part 96 – commercial use of non-type certified aircraft – has finally been sent for promulgation. This amendment was debated over a number of years and, although not all our suggestions are in the amendment, the final accepted amendment is much better suited to the NTCA commercial operator than the initial submission of the CAA. The CAA accepted our proposal on the increase of certain fees relating to recreational aviation.

A cause of frustration is the slow progress seen in rewriting Part 149. We have seen some movement with a newly established workgroup that should commence its actual work in the near future. The future functioning of AROs is dependent on the outcome of the proposed amendments to Part 149.

During 2023 the use of air traffic controllers at special air events was curtailed by changes to the regulations. A new process has been negotiated and ATNS have submitted a document to the CAA which should formalise the activities of ATCs at recreational aviation special air events.

The overflight of protected areas such as national and other parks is an ongoing issue. Recently we have been alerted to a heavy-handed approach by certain Provincial Nature Conservation Authorities that appear to have made rules regarding the overflight of protected areas without the prior participation of the Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment, ATNS and of course industry. We have commenced engagement on this.

The above illustrates that the engagement of the Aero Club in advocacy matters, although it consumes time and effort, is necessary and that there has been some success in advancing the interests of our members.

Internally the Aero Club has also faced changes. The former elected chairman, Goitse Daile, resigned in October 2025. With no new additions to the exco, the workload of the normal day-to-day management of the Aero Club left little time for the exco to initiate strategic plans that had been proposed. The main strategic plans are: the development of a new membership model for the Aero Club, the formalisation and implementation of a protection of information policy, the development of a drive to retain and attract new members.

The Aero Club has weathered tough times in the past. This was due to the effort and support of the members. We thank all who have been and are involved in an active role. But we need more members to be involved. We have many experienced members with a massive pool of recreational aviation knowledge. Please volunteer your expertise.

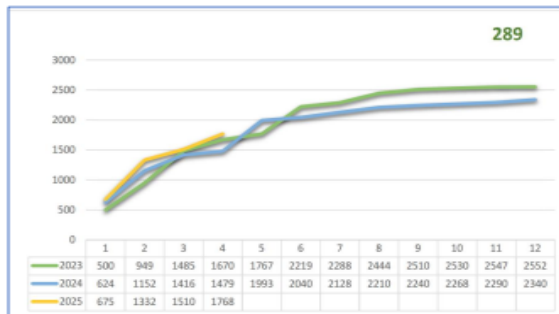


Membership

- Membership has seen a decline since 2021, our budget target of 2500 was missed by 160
- Multi-Section membership is in place
- Good progress has made on 2025 renewal campaign – Budget planned for 2500 members to match 2023

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2017	711	1513	1723	2177	2459	2675	2918	3066	3151	3213	3284	3805
2018	736	1481	1727	1900	2559	2829	2951	3145	3258	3323	3412	3479
2019	523	1143	1640	1847	1963	2099	2755	2963	3016	3115	3157	3204
2020	318	798	1269	1610	1710	1866	2106	2360	2574	2626	2713	2723
2021	498	1041	1510	1766	2058	2686	2716	2767	2867	2934	2952	3009
2022	542	1109	1730	1901	2414	2499	2596	2664	2702	2745	2772	2772
2023	500	949	1485	1670	1767	2219	2288	2444	2510	2530	2547	2552
2024	624	1152	1416	1479	1993	2040	2128	2210	2240	2268	2290	2340
2025	675	1332	1510	1768								

Section	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aero Club	4331	4634	4264	3805	3479	3232	2723	3009	2772	2552	2340	1768
AHASA	12	24	48	39	38	38	21	20		1		0
ASSA	80	68	64	39	47	46	33	27	39	34	37	48
BAFSA	45	44	43	48	45	48	44	46	43	43	41	40
DAASA	10	11	12	12	21	21						0
EAA	337	448	396	418	377	339	293	308	340	342	282	288
MISASA	1013	1058	967	879	789	676	506	474	425	452	367	298
PASA	622	639	607	606	579	560	440	494	492	437	455	194
SAC	83	88	88	78	74	94	85	95	89	81	76	59
SAGPA	194	220	202	217	197	169	131	138	139	153	125	113
SAMPFA	668	636	812	684	657	522	525	619	452	428	161	113
SAMAA	3745	3600	3294	3254	3433	3347	3192	3365	2644	1857	1704	1620
SAPFA	395	458	383	377	312	298	180	249	196	167	159	168
SSSA	480	418	408	439	434	421	394	420	405	396	353	279
RAA								7	6	9	16	15
AeCSA							157	243	292	442	350	223



One of our member services is the Aero Assist facility whereby we assist with the renewal of authorities to fly. There was a slight decline in the number of ATF renewals from 224 in 2024 to 217 in 2025. This was due to the 12-year engine rule. This service assists our members, making it a lot easier to do ATF renewals.

AUTHORITY TO FLY APPLICATIONS: SUMMARY STATS			
Application not ready to process			4
Application form still being completed			4
Application form submitted by client, awaiting payment			0
Application form submitted by client and EFT payment done, awaiting confirmation			0
To be verified by Aero Club			0
Application form submitted by client and Paygate payment done / EFT payment confirmed			0
Corrections submitted by client			0
Ready to send to CAA/inspector	0	To be attended to by CAA/inspector	16
Application form completed by Aero Club	0	Application sent to CAA	6
Verification of application/corrections done	0	Inspector assigned by CAA	10
Aero Club resolved issues reported by inspector	0	Application corrections sent to inspector	0
Awaiting client feedback	0	Completed	991
Issues referred back to client	0	Approved by CAA: ATF issued and sent to client	991

AUTHORITY TO FLY APPLICATIONS: COMPLETED APPLICATIONS						
2026						66
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	
8	15	21	22			
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	
2025						217
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	
14	19	17	16	18	27	
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	
21	9	12	27	22	15	

I want to thank the Council for their support and assistance. And a special word of thanks to the exco and our Aero Club staff. Council, exco and our staff stood together during a difficult year and yet managed to achieve success in serving the members.

We look forward to an even better 2027.

Regards

Walter Doubell, Acting Chairman