

**SACAA WRITTEN RESPONSES TO THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT (PCOT):
FROM THE PCOT VIRTUAL MEETING OF 18 MAY 2020**

RESPONSE DEADLINE - 22 MAY 2020

No.	Inquiry	Question	Response
1.	Hon. Sithole	Industry Transformation – no progress on this. Most pilots still white. What application criteria is being used?	<p>The SACAA's mandate as the Regulator is limited to aviation safety and security. As part of its function to regulate, it issues aviation personnel licences and is able to report on statistics. The legislation dealing with transformation applies across the board to all entities hence the SACAA has ensured that it is a transformed entity. The challenge is mainly in the industry which has not prioritised transformation as expected.</p> <p>Ordinarily, those wishing to join the industry enrol themselves in privately-owned Aviation Training Organisations and these schools are accredited by the SACAA. For a student to qualify for any of the aviation licences e.g. Student Pilots, Private Pilots, Commercial Pilots and Airline Transport Pilots, Aviation Maintenance Engineers and cabin crew, they are required to write examinations set and administered by the SACAA. So, all licences are issued by the SACAA.</p> <p>The challenge is that the industry is quite broad and to achieve meaningful transformation industry-wide requires coordination at the level of the Department of Transport. To this end, a draft Transformation Strategy was developed, and the Department is taking the process forward.</p>

			<p>Pilot training is quite expensive and costs an average of R1m for a Commercial Pilot Licence which can be obtained over a period of about 20 months on average, depending on the progress of each student. Students enrol privately and only come to the SACAA to write exams and get issued with their respective qualification. Some legislative intervention becomes necessary to compel the industry to transform.</p> <p>In a bid to contribute towards industry transformation, the SACAA launched a Bursary Scheme in 2014 to assist previously disadvantaged students with funding especially for technical qualifications such as Piloting, aeronautical engineering and aircraft mechanics, electricians, instrument and radio technicians. To date the Regulator has funded over seventy (70) students of which twenty-seven (27) of them are studying or have completed their pilot training. The SACAA funded five (5) pilot cadets to study in Toulouse, France. It is extremely challenging for Black (African, Coloured and Indian) students to qualify for a pilot licence in South Africa and when the SACAA investigated the causes many of these students complained of discriminatory practices in the schools. A state-owned aviation academy can assist in prioritising the transformation agenda in this industry that by the look of things is refusing to transform. Currently we have more than 200 training schools and each one of them has no developmental agenda and so intervention is required to ensure the industry transformation.</p>
2.		The number of vacancies is not going down. Why?	<p>The aviation industry competes for critical and scarce skills globally. The SACAA as a Regulator invests millions of Rands training inspectorate and they get recruited by local and international organisations with very competitive salaries. The industry has seen a high attrition rate of critical and scarce resources to Asia and the Middle East and given the high profile of SA's licences, the SA trained</p>

			<p>resources are in high demand. The personnel with technical skills join Regulators for a short time because many of them want to be in the field as opposed to being bogged down with administrative functions and this is a world-wide trend.</p> <p>Whilst the Regulator recruits more than the number of resources we lose each year, this number is never stagnant and changes on an ongoing basis. The recent COVID-19 Pandemic is not helping the situation as the SACAA has halted its recruitment drive until the situation normalises. As at the end of the financial year 2019/20 we recorded a vacancy rate just below 7% which is not far off from the 6% industry norm. There are policies in place for retention of the resources at SACAA.</p>
3.	Hon. McDonald	<p>Is the DOT going to help SACAA with funding of the FIU aircraft? It was noted that there are plans by SACAA to lease an aircraft.</p> <p>When is the report going to be finalised?</p>	<p>The SACAA was operating one aircraft at the time of the FIU accident. The Board and National Treasury approved the purchase of a replacement FIU aircraft.</p> <p>The purchase process is currently halted due to the high exchange rates as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. The SACAA has enlisted the services of a service provider to calibrate navigational aids in all SA airports and to the Regulator's clients in the Region.</p> <p>The preliminary accident report was produced and distributed within 30 days by the Accidents and Incidents Investigating Department (AIID) after the accident as required by the law. The AIID reports directly to the Department of Transport on aircraft accidents.</p> <p>The Minister of Transport is appointing an independent body to investigate the accident to give assurance with regards to the independence of the investigation. It is not known how long it will take to conclude the investigation, because the investigation into a complex accident like this</p>

			one normally takes between 12 months to 2 years to conclude.
4.		In terms of transformation is there any intervention in relation to the pricing of pilot training for disadvantaged students.	<p>Most PDI students are funded through bursaries or cadet programmes run by various government entities such as the SACAA, TETA, SAAF and airline cadet programmes provided by the likes of SAA.</p> <p>There are currently no discounts offered to PDIs by training schools as they are profit driven.</p> <p>The issue of pricing, as part of driving transformation will need to be interrogated as currently it is left in the hands of privately-owned schools to determine.</p>
5.	Hon. Mangcu	Issues of the regression in supply chain management was raised with reference to irregular expenditure and procurement around COVID-19. Board was urged to keep an eye on this.	The Board and Management has noted this advise and shall ensure that the SCM issues are improved particularly as they relate to the Auditor General's report.
6.		Of concern was the underspend of R 50m on 2018/19 budget. What was the reason for the deferral, are these CAPEX related projects? If so, reference was made to the pronouncements by the Minister of Finance on infrastructure projects and how this relates to that.	The underspend does not have any impact on government infrastructure projects. Included in the budget was capital expenditure for furniture and fixtures of R30 million and ICT Infrastructure for R15 million for SACAA's new head office building which was not ready at the time and the capital expenditure was hence not incurred.
7.	Hon Chabangu	A member enquired as to the causes in relation to the GA accidents.	<p>South Africa maintains a clean record in terms of airline fatal accidents. In more than 30 years there has never been a fatal accident involving an airliner.</p> <p>General Aviation is the sector of the industry where small aircraft are operated either for training, charter and recreational (sporting) aviation purposes. This sector normally operates aircraft with a capacity of less than 19 passengers.</p>

			<p>A significant number of aircraft used in this sector are operated privately. Meaning they are not used for any scheduled commercial operations. Other operations which contributes to the number of accidents in this sector includes aerial work operations (firefighting, crop-spraying, animal cuning, etc.) these are inherently risky operations.</p> <p>There has however been a decline of 10% in the number of accidents over the past 5 years. There are several reasons why accidents are prevalent in this sector and some include the fact that this sector operates amateur and home-built (Non-Type Certified) aircraft that do not enjoy the same stringent approval processes that the Type Certified Aircraft operated by the likes of airlines are subjected to. This is a global norm as regulators put more emphasis on riskier operations such as commercial operations involving a huge number of passengers, cargo and mail transportation.</p> <p>The Regulator monitors behaviour in relation to fatalities in this sector and there were 20 fatalities in 2018/19 and 19 fatalities in the 2019/20 FY. This is a decline of 5% year on year. All these fatalities resulted from about 13 fatal accidents in 2019/20 which has also come down from 15 from the previous financial year (2018/19).</p> <p>The causes of the accidents ranges from poor pilot decision making generally referred to as human error to mechanical faults in the machines operated.</p> <p>The Regulator has developed a 5-year General Aviation Safety Strategy with the implementation commencing in the 2020/21 financial year up to 2024/25 financial year. The objective of the strategy is to improve safety and security standards and reduce accidents in this category.</p>
8.		What happens with the fatalities in terms of insurance etc.	The aircraft owners are responsible for paying for their own third-party insurance and this is not a cost that is paid by

			the SACAA unless the SACAA is sued for lack of adequate oversight.
9.		How are the 40k learners identified? Is there a process of headhunting or is this done through the Department of Education?	The SACAA launched its outreach programme in 2006 and for the first 7 years or so, the SACAA responded to invitations from schools, Department of Basic Education (DBE) district offices, etc. However, the SACAA revised its approach to outreach programmes and develops an annual plan that covers all 9 provinces and an equal spread is ensured in the coverage plan. The selection of schools is done in consultation with a critical stakeholder i.e. the DBE whom the Regulator has a long-standing relationship with at a district level.
10.		What happens to learners once they have completed their studies/courses?	The SACAA Bursary recipients are either absorbed by the SACAA if there are suitable vacancies and trainee positions. The SACAA negotiates and forms partnerships with airlines and maintenance organisations to absorb the pilots, aircraft mechanics, electricians, etc. for On-the-Job-Training (OJT) and possible future employment. Otherwise the students are released to seek employment of their choice.
11.	Hon. Hunsinger	Regarding training schools, consider allowing them to open with conditions/limitations in place, need to allow students to complete their studies. Inspection flights can be organised in a restricted way.	Training schools are allowed to conduct virtual training or operate eLearning under the current Level 4. A proposal has been submitted to the DOT to allow flight training to resume under level 3. There is a proposal to consider allowing inspection flights under level 3.
12.	Hon Mabhena	SACAA was commended for sustaining itself for several months under the scenarios, but what has been done to tap into the various stimulus packages announced by the President. Has SACAA submitted anything to National Treasury.	The SACAA has not applied for funding under the stimulus packages. It has been engaging with National Treasury through the Department of Transport.

13.		There is an opportunity to calibrate airports during the lockdown.	The process of finalising the compliance approval processes for the appointed calibration service provider is ongoing and the SACAA expects that this will be completed in the next two weeks and calibration will then take place whilst the country is still on lockdown.
14.		On the FIU accident, what is the latest update?	The investigation of the FIU accident has been handed over to an independent body and they will produce a report to the Minister once they are done.
15.		A member complained about mail bouncing back from the DCA's e-mail.	The correct email address of the Director of Civil Aviation is as follows: KhozaP@caa.co.za
16.	Hon. Ramadwa	<p>Reference was made to the unqualified audit and 6 findings including the irregular expenditure. Clarity was requested on what has been put in place to prevent this going forward.</p> <p>What is the status of the AG findings?</p>	<p>Controls over SCM compliance has been reinforced and management on contracts has been tightened to ensure that the SACAA complies with all National Treasury requirements specifically where contracts are extended or where the contract spend exceeds 15% of the original contract value, then NT prior written approval is sought.</p> <p>It is worth indicating that the 6 findings which were raised by the AGSA for the 2018/19 financial year were duly closed and AGSA was informed accordingly.</p>