LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

Reference Number	CA18/3/2/1526						
Classification	Serious Incident	**Date**	31 January 2026		**Time**	1530Z	
Type of Operation	Private (Part 91)						
Location							
Place of Departure	Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA), Eastern Cape Province	Place of Intended Landing	Grahamstown Aerodrome (FAGT), Eastern Cape Province				
Place of Occurrence	Runway 16 at Grahamstown Aerodrome						
GPS Co-ordinates	Latitude	33° 16' 53.06" S	Longitude	026° 29' 40.04" E	Elevation	2 109 ft	
Aircraft Information							
Registration	ZS-SOK						
Make; Model; S/N	Cessna; C210A (Serial Number: 21057658)						
Damage to Aircraft	Minor	Total Aircraft Hours	2 588				
Pilot-in-command							
Licence Type	Private Pilot Licence (PPL)	Gender	Male	Age	50		
Licence Valid	Yes	Total Hours	606	Total Hours on Type	118		
Total Hours 30 Days	7.5	Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days	15.8				
People On-board	1 + 0	**Injuries**	0	**Fatalities**	0	**Other (on ground)**	0

What Happened

On Saturday, 31 January 2026, a pilot on-board a Cessna C210A aircraft registered ZS-SOK took off on a private flight from Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA) to Grahamstown Aerodrome (FAGT), both in Eastern Cape province. The flight was conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) by day and according to the provisions of Part 91 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended.

The pilot stated that he conducted a pre-flight inspection of the aircraft with no anomalies noted. At approximately 1350Z, the aircraft took off from FAPA and routed to FAGT; it reached FAGT after approximately 38 minutes. The pilot flew over the aerodrome to check for traffic in accordance with (IAW) the unmanned joining procedures. Thereafter, he joined the circuit on the downwind leg for landing on Runway (RWY) 16. The pilot followed the pre-landing checklist and selected the landing gear lever to the “down” position. He then noticed that the landing gear was down, but the green light indication did not illuminate.

He then selected the gear lever to the “up” position and all three gears retracted into their respective wheel wells and the red gear up and locked indication light illuminated. The pilot was, therefore, convinced that there was nothing wrong with the hydraulic system and gear down and locked indication/mechanism. He selected the gear lever to the down position for the second time, and the down and locked indication light did not illuminate. The pilot stated that he checked the mirror mounted under the left wing to see if the main landing gear was down. He was convinced that all three gears were down but could not confirm if they were locked in position in the absence of the green indication light in the cockpit. He then turned finals for RWY 16 and the aircraft touched down with the main landing gear first. During the landing roll, the nose gear collapsed; as a result, the nose pitched down and the propeller blades struck the asphalt runway surface. The aircraft skidded for several metres before it rested on the runway.

The pilot was unharmed after the serious incident; the aircraft sustained damage to the propeller blades, lower nacelle of the engine, and nose landing gear doors.

Figure 1: An aerial view of FAGT RWY 16 and the approximate position at which the aircraft had stopped. (Source: Google Earth)

Figure 2: The aircraft on the runway post-serious accident. (Source: Pilot)

Figures 3 and 4: The propeller blade (left) and landing gear doors (right) that were damaged from abrasion with the runway. (Source: Pilot)

Cessna 210 Landing Gear Description and Operation (Source Pilot's Operating Handbook [POH])

The landing gear indication system of this build standard consists of a single green light to indicate that all landing gears are locked down and an amber or red light to indicate all gears are fully up. These lights illuminate when the appropriate micro switches on all three legs are made; when the gear is in transit or at least one leg is not at a limit position, there is no indication light. The aircraft is

fitted with a landing gear warning system. This system is designed to help prevent a pilot landing with the landing gear retracted. The system will activate when engine power is reduced below 12 inches of manifold pressure and the landing gear is not down and locked. When activated, the system emits an intermittent tone through the cabin speaker.

The aircraft maintenance engineers (AMEs) recovered the aircraft from the runway, and the nose landing gear wheel well was subjected to a thorough visual inspection. The AMEs noticed that the nose gear keel (trunnion support) was twisted due to possible previous hard landings; consequently, it prohibited the "up" lock hook from disengaging (or releasing) the nose gear to the down and locked position.

Findings

Personnel Information

1.1 The pilot had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 1 September 2020. The licence was renewed on 28 August 2025 with an expiry date of 31 August 2027. The pilot had flown a total of 118 hours on the aircraft type. The aircraft type was endorsed in his licence.

1.2 The pilot was issued a Class 2 aviation medical certificate on 29 January 2026 with an expiry date of 2 February 2027.

Aircraft Information

1.3 The last 100-hour mandatory periodic inspection (MPI) of the aircraft was conducted and certified on 19 December 2025 at 2 585.3 total airframe hours. The aircraft had accrued 2.7 hours since the said inspection.

1.4 The aircraft was issued a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) on 19 December 2025 with an expiry date of 18 December 2026 or at 2 685.3 airframe hours, whichever occurs first.

1.5 The aircraft was maintained by the aircraft maintenance organisation (AMO) that was issued an AMO Certificate by the Regulator on 23 October 2025 with an expiry date of 31 October 2026.

1.6 The aircraft had a valid Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A) that was originally issued on 18 May 2012. The renewal of the C of A was made on 3 November 2025 with an expiry date of 31 May 2026.

1.7 The aircraft's Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 18 December 2024.

Meteorological Information

1.8 The weather conditions were not a contributory factor to this serious incident.

Probable Cause(s)

The nose landing gear up lock hook did not disengage or release the nose gear after the gear lever was selected to the down position; consequently, the aircraft landed with the nose gear still retracted.

Contributing Factor(s)

None.

Safety Action(s)

None.

Safety Message and/or Safety Recommendation/s

None.

About this Report

The decision to conduct a limited investigation is based on factors including whether the cause is known and the evidence supporting the cause is clear, the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation and that will determine the scope of an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited investigation has been conducted, and the Accident and Incident Investigations Division (AIID) has relied on the information submitted by the affected person/s and organisation/s to compile this limited report. The report has been compiled using information supplied in the initial notification, as well as from follow-up desk top enquiries to bring awareness of potential safety issues to the industry in respect of this occurrence, as well as possible safety action/s that the industry might want to consider in preventing a recurrence of a similar occurrence.

All times given in this report are Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) and will be denoted by (Z). South African Standard Time is UTC plus 2 hours.

Purpose

In terms of Regulation 12.03.1 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011 and ICAO Annex 13, this report was compiled in the interest of the promotion of aviation safety and the reduction of the risk of aviation accidents or incidents and not to apportion blame or liability.

Disclaimer

This report is produced without prejudice to the rights of the AIID, which are reserved.

This report is issued by:

Accident and Incident Investigations Division
South African Civil Aviation Authority
Republic of South Africa