



Section/division **Accident and Incident Investigations Division**

Form Number: CA 12-57

LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

Reference Number	CA18/3/2/1551						
Classification	Serious Incident	Date	18 May 2026		Time	1200Z	
Type of Operation	Private (Part 91)						
Location							
Place of Departure	Bothaville Airfield (FABO), Free State Province		Place of Intended Landing		Bethlehem Airfield (FABM), Free State Province		
Place of Occurrence	On Runway 13 at Bethlehem Airfield (FABM), Free State Province						
GPS Co-ordinates	Latitude	28°14'42.0" S	Longitude	28°19'45.0" E	Elevation	5 498ft	
Aircraft Information							
Registration	ZS-LUZ						
Make; Model; S/N	Ayres S2R-T34 (Serial Number: 6013)						
Damage to Aircraft	Minor		Total Aircraft Hours	15 044.6			
Pilot-in-command							
Licence Type	Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL)		Gender	Male	Age	62	
Licence Valid	Yes	Total Hours	16 376	Total Hours on Type		16 104	
Total Hours 30 Days	21.2		Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days		139.5		
People On-board	1+0	Injuries	0	Fatalities	0	Other (on ground)	0
What Happened							
On Monday afternoon, 18 May 2026, a pilot on-board an Ayres S2R-T34 aircraft registered ZS-LUZ took off on a private flight from Bothaville Airfield (FABO) to Bethlehem Airfield (FABM), both in Free State province. The flight was conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) and under 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 in accordance with (IAW) the aircraft Pilot's Operating Handbook (POH); no anomalies were noted. The aircraft contained approximately 460 litres (L) of Jet A-1 fuel in the tank. After boarding the aircraft, the pilot started the engine which operated within the prescribed limits. The engine parameters indicated a temperature of 760° Celsius and an oil pressure of 58 pounds per square inch (psi). Take-off was conducted at approximately 1110Z in a north-easterly direction and at an airspeed of 80 knots (kts). During the take-off roll, the engine rotational speed indicated 2 150 revolutions per minute (rpm). After rotation, the aircraft climbed to approximately 5 800 feet (ft) above mean sea level (AMSL). After levelling off the aircraft, the pilot maintained a cruise speed of 156 kts.							

At approximately 1200Z, the pilot commenced with the approach for landing at FABM; he elected to land on the grass Runway (RWY) 13; this runway was temporarily closed due to maintenance works. On final approach, the aircraft was travelling at approximately 80 kts; it touched down on RWY 13 and rolled about 100 metres (m), during which the pilot applied the thrust reverser and, later, toe-brakes. This input caused the landing gear wheels to skid another 90m from the grass-covered runway to the soft ground beyond the runway. As a result, the main landing gear sank into the soft ground, and the aircraft decelerated. The nose pitched down, and the propeller struck the soft ground; subsequently, the aircraft nosed over. The aircraft sustained minor damage; the pilot disembarked from the aircraft uninjured. He later stated that he had forgotten that RWY 13/31 was closed despite having received the relevant Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).

The serious incident occurred during daylight at Global Positioning System (GPS) co-ordinates determined to be 28°14'42.0" South 28°19'45.0" East, at an elevation of 5 498ft.

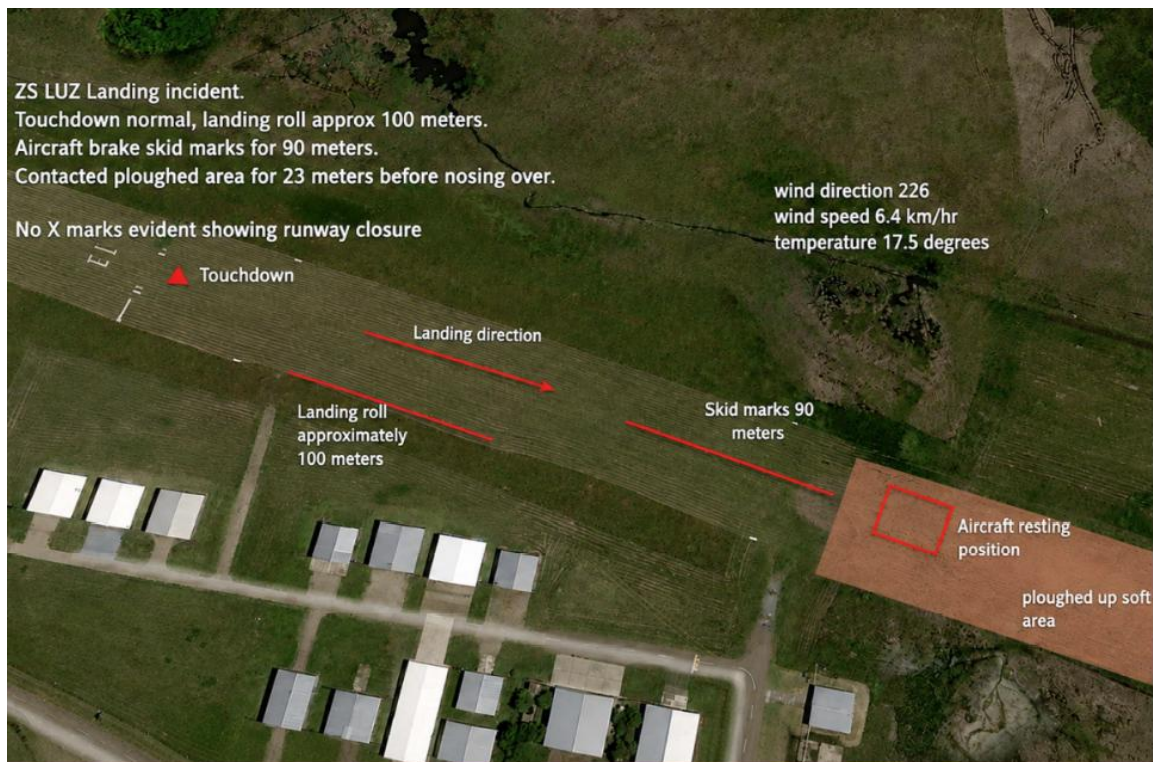


Figure 1: An illustration of the sequence of events during the serious incident. (Source: Pilot)



Figure 2: The aircraft in its final position at the serious incident site. The red arrow points to the damaged blades. (Source: Pilot)

Post-incident Investigation

At the time of the serious incident, there was an issued NOTAM on 18 March 2026 alerting airmen about the closure of RWY 13/31 due to maintenance works. The runway was closed from 25 to 29 March 2026. Due to on-going maintenance requirements, the runway closure period was extended from 31 March 2026 to 13 April 2026. On 28 April 2026, the closure period was further extended by 90 days owing to adverse weather conditions that had hindered completion of maintenance works. On 29 April 2026, the operator of the serious incident aircraft was informed of the extended runway closure period via email.



Figure 3: Temporary closure markings on RWY 13 after the serious incident. (Source: Aerodrome manager)

The investigation found that the NOTAM was issued (active) prior to the serious incident and no physical runway closure markers were displayed due to the initially planned short duration of the maintenance works and the nature of the repairs. RWY 11/29 remained operational. After the serious incident, temporary runway closure markers were placed on RWY 13/31 on 19 May 2026 (Figure 3).

South African Civil Aviation Technical Standard (SA-CATS) 2011, Part 139, Subpart 2, Section 12 states:

12. Closed runways and taxiways, or parts thereof:

(1) An aerodrome license holder shall develop and maintain a procedure to prevent an aircraft entering temporary or permanently closed runways and taxiways –

(a) closed marking shall be displayed on a runway or taxiway or portion thereof which is temporary/permanently closed to the use of all aircraft;

(b) on a runway a closed marking shall be placed at each end of the runway, or portion thereof, declared closed, and additional markings shall be so placed that the maximum interval between markings does not exceed 300 m; and

(c) on a taxiway a closed marking shall be placed at least at each end of the taxiway or portion thereof.

(2) The closed marking shall be of the form and proportion detailed in Diagram 1 when displayed on a runway and on a taxiway.

(3) The marking shall be white when displayed on a runway and shall be yellow when displayed on a taxiway.

(4) When a runway or taxiway or portion thereof is permanently closed, all normal runway and taxiway markings shall be obliterated.

(5) Lighting on a closed runway or taxiway or portion thereof shall not be operated, except as required for maintenance purposes.

(6) In addition to closed markings, when the runway or taxiway or portion thereof closed is intercepted by a usable runway or taxiway which is used at night, unserviceability lights shall be placed across the entrance to the closed area at intervals not exceeding 3m.

The airfield (FABM) was not compliant with the requirements of the SA-CATS 139.02.23, Subpart 12. Although the NOTAM was issued which advised of the temporary closure of RWY 13/31, no physical runway closure marking or signage was displayed on the runway at the time of the serious incident. The required marking or signage was only installed (displayed) after the serious incident.

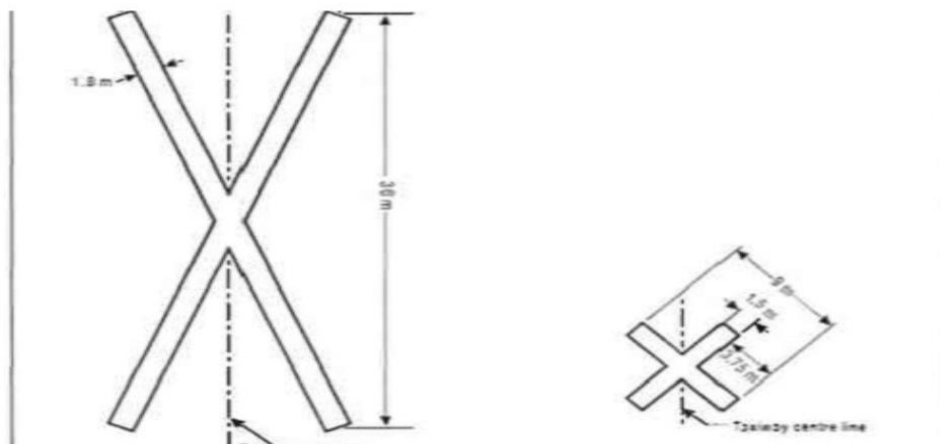


Diagram 1: An illustration of a closed runway or taxiway. (Source: SA-CATS 139.02.23 Subpart 12)

Findings

1. Personnel Information

- 1.1. The pilot had a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 22 December 1986. The licence was reissued on 18 June 2025 with an expiry date of 30 June 2026. The pilot had flown a total of 16 104 hours on the aircraft type.
- 1.2. The pilot had a Class 1 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 20 April 2026 with an expiry date of 30 October 2026. The medical certificate restricted the pilot to use corrective lenses when flying an aircraft.
- 1.3. The pilot opted to land on Runway (RWY) 13 despite the NOTAM's advice of runway closure.

2. Aircraft Information

- 2.1 The last 100-hour mandatory periodic inspection (MPI) of the aircraft was certified on 9 March 2026 at 14 950.5 airframe hours. At the time of the serious incident, the aircraft had accrued 94.1 hours since the last MPI.
- 2.2 The aircraft was issued a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) on 9 March 2026 at 14 950.5 airframe hours with an expiry date of 8 March 2027 or at 15 050.5 airframe hours, whichever occurs first.
- 2.3 The aircraft had a valid Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A) that was initially issued on 23 October 1987. The latest C of A had an expiry date of 31 October 2026.

2.4 The aircraft's Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 24 October 2007.

3. Aircraft Maintenance Organisation (AMO)

3.1 The AMO had a valid AMO Certificate that was issued on 22 August 2025 with an expiry date of 31 August 2026.

4. Airfield

4.1 Bethlehem Airfield (FABM) contravened SA-CATS 139.02.23, Subpart 12 as no visible warning sign about RWY 13/31 closure was displayed during the time of the serious incident.

Probable Cause(s)

The aircraft landed on the runway that was closed for maintenance works despite having received and acknowledged the applicable NOTAM; this resulted in the aircraft entering soft ground which caused the main landing gear to sink and, subsequently, nose over.

Contributing Factor(s)

1. Non-display of runway closure signage or markings.

Safety Action(s)

1. Pilots are reminded to review and comply with all applicable NOTAM during pre-flight planning and before landing.
2. The airfield operator must review procedures to ensure that closed runways are clearly marked to comply with the existing Regulatory requirements as specified in the SA-CATS 139.02.23, Subpart 12.

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 and organisation to compile this limited report. The report has been compiled using information supplied in the initial notification, as well as from follow-up desktop enquiries to bring awareness of potential safety issues to the industry in respect of this occurrence, as well as possible safety actions that the industry might want to consider in preventing a recurrence of a similar occurrence.

<i>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.</i>
Purpose
<i>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.</i>
Disclaimer
<i>This report is produced without prejudice to the rights of the AIID, which are reserved.</i>

This report is issued by:

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