

THE NATIONAL AVIATION CONFERENCE 2026

SPEAKER PROFILES

6-7 May 2026 | EMPERORS PALACE

Innovating Aviation for a Sustainable Future:
Harnessing Technology and Resilience
of the South African Skies

Speaker Profile

Ms Barbara Creecy | Minister of Transport *Department of Transport*

Ms Barbara Creecy was appointed as Minister of Transport from 3 July 2024, in the new Government of National Unity. Ms Creecy served as the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment of the Republic of South Africa between 2019 and 2024. In November 2019, Ms Creecy was also elected as the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN).

Ms Creecy is one of the leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) and currently serves as a member of the National Executive Committee and National Working Committee. Ms Creecy was one of the longest serving Members of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature. She joined the legislature in 1994, and until 2004, served in different portfolios including Deputy Chief Whip as well as Chairperson of the Social Development and Education Committees.

2004 – 2009 Member of the Executive Council for Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture.

2009 – 2014 Member of the Executive Council for Education.

2014 – 2019 Member of the Executive Council for Finance.

Minister Creecy holds an Honours Degree in Political Science from the University of the Witwatersrand and a Masters Degree in Public Policy and Management from the University of London.



Ms Barbara Creecy

Speaker Profile

Poppy Khoza | Director of Civil Aviation *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Ms Poppy Khoza is the Director of Civil Aviation at the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), currently serving her third term in the role. A distinguished aviation regulator and strategic leader, she has guided the SACAA to sustained organisational excellence, with the Authority receiving the Best Performing Institution in Transport Award on four occasions and achieving eleven clean audits over thirteen financial years from the Auditor-General South Africa, reflecting strong governance, effective regulatory oversight, and institutional stability.

Ms Khoza is internationally recognised for advancing transformation and gender equality within the aviation sector. Under her leadership, the SACAA has achieved a workforce comprising 51% women and 50% female representation at Executive Management level. In partnership with ICAO, UNESCO and UN Women, she played a leading role in conceptualising and hosting the first Global Aviation Gender Summit in South Africa in August 2018, reinforcing South Africa's contribution to global efforts promoting diversity, inclusion, and the development of future aviation leaders.



Ms Poppy Khoza

Programme Director

Leanne Manas

Leanne Manas is a multiple award-winning broadcast anchor, media personality, businesswoman, communications specialist, and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador. A distinguished leader in South African media, she has interviewed some of the world's most influential figures, including Oprah Winfrey and Nelson Mandela, and has been at the forefront of breaking news for over two decades.

Her contributions to journalism and humanitarian efforts have earned her global recognition, including a knighthood from French President Emmanuel Macron, who awarded her the French National Order of Merit. She was also named Standard Bank Woman of the Year for her exceptional contribution to the media and broadcasting industry, and Glamour Magazines ICONIC Woman of the Year for her outstanding career achievements.

As the face of South African morning television, Leanne has anchored Morning Live since 2004, delivering hard-hitting news, in-depth interviews, and compelling storytelling. She has been at the helm of the country's most significant news events, including: The passing of Nelson Mandela, The resignation of President Jacob Zuma, The death of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Five general elections, Five provincial elections and Four presidential inaugurations

Being part of such a dynamic, ever-changing industry with a news agenda that shifts by the minute is what drives her. She has witnessed and adapted to the evolution of journalism and the broadcasting platform, from the rise of digital media and social platforms to the integration of artificial intelligence and cutting-edge technology into newsrooms. Her ability to stay ahead of industry trends while maintaining journalistic integrity has solidified her as a trusted voice in media.



Leanne Manas

Speaker Profile

Aaron Munetsi | Chief Executive Officer *Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA)*

Aaron Munetsi serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA). Before his tenure at AASA, Mr. Munetsi held various commercial management roles at South African Airways, including Regional Manager for Africa and the Middle East, and Acting Chief Commercial Officer. During his time in Dubai, UAE in the early 1990s, he gained significant insights into network carriers and identified opportunities for African airlines.

Mr. Munetsi is also a founding member of the Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce, where he served on the board for a decade. In 2018, he joined the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) and contributed as the Director of Government, Legal, and Industry Affairs. Known affectionately as “Papa Africa” for his dedication to the African aviation industry, Mr. Munetsi has extensive experience across the continent, having lived and worked in more than seven countries. Throughout his career, he has actively participated in African Aviation Aeropolitical and Business forums, furthering the industry’s development.



Aaron Munetsi

Speaker Profile

Kim Macaulay | Senior Vice President: Information and Data & Chief Information and Data Officer (CIDO) *International Air Transport Association (IATA)*

With over 20 years of experience, in the financial services and banking sectors, she successfully executed strategic IT initiatives around data and digitization by implementing technologies across both investment and private banks including Investec Bank, Standard Bank and African Bank in South Africa, and Standard Advisory in London. Outside of the financial sector, Kim worked with Ellerines Holding Limited (EHL) to enhance a credit platform for lending opportunities through furniture retailing across Africa. With a career spanning multiple continents, Kim has played a pivotal role in building IATA's integrated data ecosystem and strengthening collaboration across airlines, partners, and regulators.

Her leadership has been central to the development of shared data architectures, governance frameworks, and next-generation analytics capabilities—initiatives that are critical to the advancement of IATA's digital future. Kim frequently engages global audiences as a speaker, offering insights on digital transformation, data governance, and emerging technologies shaping the aviation landscape. She holds advanced qualifications from the University of Johannesburg, Gordon Institute of Business Science and certifications in Agile Methodologies, SaFE, Business Analysis, Project Management (PMP).



Kim Macaulay

Speaker Profile

Dr Lize Weich | Senior Lecturer: Department of Psychiatry & Addiction Psychiatrist *Stellenbosch University*

Lize Weich is an addiction psychiatrist at Stikland Hospital and a senior lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University. She is responsible for coordinating addiction services for the psychiatric hospitals in the Western Province. She also coordinates pre- and postgraduate training in addiction care at Stellenbosch University, including the Postgraduate Diploma in Addiction Care, Certificate in Addiction Psychiatry, and MPhil in Addiction Psychiatry programs.



Dr Lize Weich

Speaker Profile

Dr Mirriam Kganya | Clinical Psychologist

Mind Your Health

Dr Mirriam Kganya is a Clinical Psychologist with nearly two decades of experience across South Africa's public, private, and academic sectors, and has been in independent practice since 2008. She is based in Pretoria.

She holds a PhD and Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University and the University of Limpopo (MEDUNSA Campus), and graduated cum laude in her Honours degree. Her training is further complemented by qualifications in Supervisory Development and Human Resources Management.

Dr Kganya has held leadership and academic roles, including Clinical Psychology Unit Manager at Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMH) and postgraduate lecturer and Master's Programme Coordinator at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU). She has contributed to several key professional bodies, including serving on the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) Health Committee and South African Civil Aviation Authority Aeromedical Committee (AMC), where she was involved in advancing the integration of mental health into aviation medical frameworks.

Her clinical work focuses on psychotherapy, psycho-diagnostic assessment, and the management of depression and anxiety, with a growing focus on mental wellness in high-performance environments.

As a speaker, she brings a grounded, contextually relevant perspective—linking psychological wellbeing, resilience, and safety within the realities of the South African aviation landscape.



Dr Mirriam Kganya

Speaker Profile

Kevin Storie | Chief Executive Officer *Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa*

Kevin Storie is the CEO of CAASA and was the previous GM of the AeroClub of South Africa. His 26 years' experience in General Aviation and recreational aviation along with the regulatory development within South Africa is widely known. He has assisted other countries with regulatory development not just within RSA. He has served on many executive committees and ARO's with longstanding one being SAHPA and currently MISASA. He has been the AM for numerous UAS companies and ATO's. He is a qualified a Protem investigator, aviation lead auditor and remains intimately involved in general and sport providing consultation and services. He developed with the regulator and established the first DTO in RSA which continues to date.

He was one of founding directors for Mayday SA and led the successful industry-developed Safety-First Aviator campaign, which focused the industry and the regulator on self-developed safety initiatives. AS CEO of CAASA, he is the lead for the 2026 African Aerospace and Defence exhibition and has been the Civilian airshow director for the 2016 and 2018 editions, which showcases the prowess of South Africa's expertise in the AEROSPACE and DEFENCE and soon SPACE sector.



Kevin Storie

Speaker Profile

Themba Thabethe | Executive: Accidents and Incidents Investigations *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Themba Thabethe brings 28 years of experience in the aviation industry, specializing in safety excellence and strategic leadership. As Head of Accident Investigation in South Africa, he leads the development and implementation of aviation safety management systems, risk assessments, and mitigation strategies.

With 14 years of executive management experience, Themba has held pivotal roles including Executive for Product Support, Head of Quality, Executive for Product Development, Accountable Executive.

A seasoned collaborator, he works closely with international organisations, regulatory bodies, and industry stakeholders to advance aviation safety and share best practices. Themba's expertise is reinforced by executive leadership programs such as:

- Post Graduate Diploma in Management
- Management Advanced Program
- Final-year MBA candidate
- Specialised aviation certifications in aviation safety and management

As a member of the AIG Panel, Themba champions regional collaboration to raise safety standards across the SADC region. He has been recognized with the Aviation Excellence Award for his tireless contributions to aviation safety and operational excellence.

Passionate about leadership development, cross-border collaboration, mentoring, and coaching, Themba is committed to advancing aviation safety and excellence on a global scale.



Themba Thabethe

Speaker Profile

Obert Chakarisa | Executive Manager: Standards and Compliance

Flysafair

Mr Obert Chakarisa is currently employed by FlySafair Airline as its Executive Manager: Standards & Compliance. The key responsibility of Mr Chakarisa in this role is that of ensuring that the airline complies with all the Applicable Regulatory Requirements and also ensuring the maintenance of the airline's regulatory approvals (AMO, AOC , ATO, IOSA etc). He further provides Executive Management oversight for the following portfolios;

- Quality Assurance;
- Aviation Safety;
- Aviation Security, and;
- Continued Airworthiness.

Mr. Chakarisa has over 36 years of aviation experience having entered the aviation industry in 1990 as an Apprentice Aircraft Engineer. Upon graduating 1995 as an Aircraft Engineer, Mr. Chakarisa worked for Foster Webb Aviation and Nationwide Airline as an Aircraft Engineer. He then joined the SACAA in 1998 as an Airworthiness Inspector and rose the ranks to a position of General Manager: Aircraft Safety, a position he held until 2012.

Mr. Chakarisa is a holder of a Master Degree in Aircraft Airworthiness amongst other professional and academic qualifications.



Obert Chakarisa

Speaker Profile

Mpumi Mpofu | CEO

Airports Company South Africa (ACSA)

Mpumi ZamaZwide Mpofu is the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, member of the Social and Ethics Committee and the Board Investment Committee at Airports Company South Africa. She was appointed Chief Executive Officer from 1 February 2020. She is the ACI (Airports Council International) Africa Board Member, ACI World Member of the Governing Board and was nominated its Vice-President.

Mpumi is a qualified Urban, Regional and Town Planner who joined Airports Company South Africa from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency where she was Director-General. She previously held three other positions of National Director-General in the Departments of Defence, Department of Transport and Department of Housing and her extensive experience spans over 25 years.

During her tenure as Director-General in the Department of Transport, Mpumi ensured the development, implementation and monitoring of transport policies and strategies in fields including aviation, rail, maritime, road transport, search and rescue. She played a leading role in the following projects: Gautrain, Bus Rapid Transit programme particularly Rea-Vaya in Joburg, Taxi recapitalisation, King Shaka International Airport amongst others. She was also the leader of the Government Transport Plan and implementation for the FIFA World Cup 2010 and oversaw Airports Company South Africa's airport development and redevelopment programme.

Mpumi was responsible for the development and approval by Cabinet of the South African Airlift Strategy and the National Airports Infrastructure Strategic Framework, which sought to assess the country's airport infrastructure and capability, expand air transport services and to apply a holistic approach to global aviation opportunities to support South Africa's national interests.



Mpumi Mpofu

Panel Moderator Profile

Sam Twala | Founder and Managing Director

Ntsu Aviation

Sam Twala holds a bachelor's degree in electronic engineering from the University of Pretoria and completed his master's degree in aviation at Massey University, New Zealand, in 2016. He began his career at the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) in 2011 as a Certification Engineer, later transitioning to the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) department. Sam has served as a special adviser to the South African representative on the International Civil Aviation Organisation's UAS Study Group and was a member of the RPAS Panel from its inception until 2016. He also contributed as a member of the Joint Authorities for Rulemaking of Unmanned Systems (JARUS).

In addition, he worked as a Senior Systems Engineer at ATNS, focusing on Communications, Surveillance, and Navigation (CNS) systems. In 2017, Sam founded Ntsu Aviation Group, where he is the CEO. The company specialises in drone consulting, compliance, training, skill development, and sales.

Sam is a recipient of the European UVS International Catherine Fargeon award, recognising his contributions to the aviation sector.



Sam Twala

Speaker Profile

Thobile Masooa | Executive: Human Resources *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Ms Thobile Masooa is a seasoned Executive with 28 years of experience in Human Capital Management across both private and public sector organisations. Of these, 19 have been at an executive level, including 10 within the Aviation sector. She currently serves as Executive: Human Capital at the South African Civil Aviation Authority.

A passionate mentor, coach, Ms. Masooa is deeply committed to talent development with a particular focus on leadership, youth, and women empowerment. In her role at the South African Civil Aviation Authority, she is entrusted amongst others, with the overall human capital strategy, including regulator's contribution towards cultivating the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP). Central to this is building a strong and sustainable pipeline on aviation professionals to address both current and future skills shortages.

Ms Masooa has spoken and contributed to numerous conferences and summits on skills development and gender-related topics.

She holds a Bachelor of Social Science in Industrial Psychology, a Post-Graduate Diploma in Human Resources, an Executive Leadership Development Certificate, and a Master of Management in the field of Business and Executive Coaching. Her guiding philosophy is: "your attitude determines your altitude".



Thobile Masooa

Speaker Profile

Vaughn Gruneberg | Manager: Flight Safety & OHSE *Solenta Aviation*

Vaughn Gruneberg is a Flight Safety and OHSE Manager for Solenta Aviation with expertise in SMS, regulatory compliance, and operational risk management. He serves as President of the Association of Non-Scheduled Operators (ANSO), an affiliate of the Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa (CAASA), and is actively involved in advancing aviation safety standards.



Vaughn Gruneberg

Speaker Profile

Given Shingange | Aviation Security Risk Management Specialist *South African Civil Aviation Security (SACAA)*

Given Shingange is an Aviation Security Risk Management Specialist in the Aviation Security Division of the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), where he is involved in risk-based oversight and the integration of cybersecurity into aviation regulatory frameworks.

His background spans aviation security, national security, and cybersecurity policy, with experience contributing to national-level security governance through inter-governmental committees including cyber response and border security operations. He currently serves on the Border Management Authority's Border Security Operations Committee.



Given Shingange

Speaker Profile

Nhlanhla Mabaso | Chief Information Officer *Air Traffic & Navigation Services (ATNS)*

After completing his Bachelors degree in Computer Science & Applied Maths, Nhlanhla worked as a software engineer. This was followed by courses and work in a wide range of technology areas within and beyond the aviation community ranging from systems administration, applications development as well as policy advice. He later completed his Masters program. By this time he had moved into the area of strategic management of technology within the private, academic and public sectors. Here he headed the ICT function as well as a range of strategic initiatives in several entities. He has and continues to do some academic work and to serve in a board and advisory capacity on a few local and international bodies.



Nhlanhla Mabaso

Speaker Profile

Dr Nombulelo Lekota | Chief Technology Officer

Nkechi Consulting

Dr Nombulelo Lekota is the Chief Technology Officer at Nkechi Consulting, bringing over 26 years of experience in Information Technology and security in both private and public sectors. She is also an aviation cybersecurity researcher and policy analyst dedicated to improving incident response governance frameworks across sub-Saharan Africa. Her current work involves situational awareness and response in Automatic Dependent Surveillance–Broadcast (ADS-B) systems through aviation cyber resilience projects, establishing her as a leader in safeguarding emerging aviation technologies. As a panel moderator, she facilitates engaging discussions that promote practical solutions for regulators and industry leaders, making her a key figure in the field.



Dr Nombulelo Lekota

Speaker Profile

Dietmar Marggraff | Cybersecurity Consultant

Bluefare Consulting

Dietmar Marggraff is a cybersecurity consultant at blueflare Consulting with a specialist focus on Operational Technology cybersecurity. His experience spans multiple industries, including aviation, where he works at the intersection of cybersecurity and real-world operations. Dietmar has authored several practical guides on airport and OT cybersecurity, as well as penetration testing. As part of a multidisciplinary engineering team involved in airport design, he is responsible for ICT, giving him deep technical insight into how airports function operationally. This combination of hands-on airport design experience and OT cybersecurity expertise allows him to bring a grounded, practical perspective to protecting aviation environments from evolving cyber threats.



Dietmar Marggraff

Speaker Profile

Siphamandla Bheki Mhlanga | Senior Manager: Flight Operations *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Siphamandla Mhlanga is a distinguished aviation leader with nearly three decades of experience in the industry. Currently serving as the Senior Manager of Flight Operations at the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), Siphamandla has dedicated 23 years of his career to the authority, playing a pivotal role in maintaining safety and operational standards within South African airspace.

A rare “dual-threat” professional, he holds both a Pilot License and an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer License, providing him with a 360-degree perspective on aviation safety and technical compliance. His academic foundation includes a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, which underpins his technical expertise. Throughout his 29-year journey in aviation, Siphamandla has bridged the gap between complex engineering requirements and flight deck operations, making him a vital asset to the national aviation regulatory framework.



Siphamandla Bheki Mhlanga

Speaker Profile

Shaun Ledlie | Board Member, recently re-appointed as a member of the TETA Aerospace Chamber *Drone Council South Africa*

Shaun Ledlie is a senior aviation consultant and institutional strategist with extensive experience across South Africa's civil aviation, training, and regulatory environments.

He serves as President of the African Aviation Training Organisations Association (AATOSA), Director of CAASA (CAASA), Founding Director of the Drone Council South Africa, Director of the Africa Aerospace and Defence Youth Foundation (AADYF) and a committee member supporting SACAA's regulatory and industry-development initiatives.

Shaun has led major accreditation, quality assurance, and strategic communication programmes for national partners, with a focus on strengthening aviation training standards, UAS integration, and sector transformation.

He is also the founder of Kershal Aviation, where he advises on operational compliance, organisational strategy, and future-focused aviation capability development.

His work centres on bridging regulatory intent with practical implementation, advancing safe, secure, and innovative aviation ecosystems across the continent.



Shaun Ledlie

Speaker Profile

Prof Angelo Dube | Chief Executive Officer *Flying Jurist*

Prof Angelo Dube (Commercial Pilot) is the Chief Executive Officer of Flying Jurist and the founder of the Aviation Indaba. He also serves as President of the Society for International Aviation Law. In academia, Prof Dube is a Professor of International Law and Acting Director of the School of Law at UNISA, where he leads the Aviation Law Working Group – a consortium of pilots, aviators, researchers, and lawyers engaged in cutting-edge aviation law research. He writes here in his personal capacity.



Prof Angelo Dube

Speaker Profile

George Mothema | Chief Executive Officer

Board of Airline Representative South Africa (BARS)

George Mothema is the Chief Executive of the Board of Airline Representative South Africa (BARSA), Chairman of Aviation Co-ordination Services (ACS), and a Director of the Tourism Business Council South Africa (TBCSA).

George is a lawyer by profession with a robust legal background and extensive aviation experience. He has held key positions including Chairman of the Board of Directors at South African Postal Services, Executive at South African Airways (SAA) in the CEO's office – Legal), Company Secretary of and later, Chairperson of SA Express.

In addition to the above George has worked for Kampherbeek Twine and Pogrand Attorneys, Maponya Inc law Firm, Phillip Silver Sweden Inc and the Estate Agency Affairs Board.



George Mothema

Speaker Profile

Albert Moloto | Senior Manager: Aviation *South African Weather Services (SAWS)*

Education

NHDip in Meteorology – Tshwane University of Pretoria
BSc Degree in Meteorology – University of Pretoria
BSc Honours Degree in Meteorology – University of Pretoria
MBA Candidate – Regenesys Business School

Career

History 2002 – Aviation Weather Forecaster (SAWS)
2009 – Compliance Officer – Aviation (SAWS)
2014 – Manager Meteorological Authority (SAWS)
2023 – Manager Meteorological Services (SACAA)
2026 – Senior Manager: Aviation (SAWS)

International Involvement

ICAO Meteorological Panel (Member)
WMO Aviation Data (Member)



Albert Moloto

Speaker Profile

Dean Khumalo | Executive Aviation Safety Operations *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

I am currently employed as Executive Aviation Safety Operations at SACAA for the past two (2) years with the responsibility of providing strategic direction for the following operational areas and ensure integration with other divisions to effectively support the achievement of SACAA's mandate and strategic priorities: Airworthiness, Flight Operations and General Aviation

I have a career in aviation that spans more than thirty (30) years in general aviation, airline maintenance operations, military aviation MRO operations, and regulatory compliance oversight with SACAA in various capacities. Mr Khumalo is a qualified and licensed aircraft engines & airframes maintenance engineer who also holds a number of academic and aviation professional qualifications which include, amongst others, a Master's degree in Aviation Safety specializing in Aircraft Airworthiness, a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA), and a Diploma in Senior Civil Aviation Management.

Mr Khumalo currently serves on the Civil Aviation Regulations Committee (CarCom) as Chairperson of the Aviation Safety Operations Subcommittee as well as SACAA's Executive Management Committee, amongst other responsibilities as assigned. My objective is to contribute positively to a resilient aviation system where safety is embedded in every decision, every process, and every action – protecting lives and sustaining the growth of our aviation industry.



Dean Khumalo

Speaker Profile

Francois Barwise | Manager: UAS Operations and Airspace Integration

Board of Airline Representative South Africa (BARS)

Francois Barwise is an Air Traffic Management specialist and currently serves as the Manager: UAS Operations and Airspace Integration at Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS). His work focuses on the integration of UAS into national airspace, addressing the regulatory, operational and airspace management challenges that arise as aviation systems evolve toward higher levels of automation and density.

Francois has been directly involved in regulatory development for UAS operations in South Africa and has contributed to multiple initiatives that support the integration of UAS into controlled airspace, including the development of the UAS Regulatory Sandbox. His work sits at the intersection of ATM and UTM convergence, with particular relevance to the management of mixed operations in complex, congested airspace. Through this work, Francois is helping to establish the regulatory, operational, and airspace management foundations necessary to support the future integration of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) and Urban Air Mobility (UAM) into South Africa's aviation system.



Francois Barwise

Speaker Profile

Carl Bollweg | Simulator instructor on the Airbus A320 and the Boeing 737 *South African Airways (SAA)*

I qualified for SA Air Force wings in July 1983. Spent 12 years in the SA Air Force. Spent 7 years at Comair and 20 years at SAA. Worked at the SACAA for 18 months as a Flight Ops Inspector as well as doing DFE oversights. Presently working as a simulator instructor at SAA on the Airbus A320 and the Boeing 737. Past president of the Airline Pilots Association. IFALPA (International Federation of Airline Pilots Association) Regional Vice President for the AFI South Region. Active Reserve Force member flying the Cessna 185 and the Bosbok at the SAAF Museum.



Carl Bollweg

Speaker Profile

Mary Chirwa | Civil Engineer and Researcher *Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)*

Mary Chirwa is a Civil Engineer and Researcher at Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), with expertise in transport infrastructure, road safety, and regulatory-aligned research. She is currently completing her Master's degree in Civil Engineering at University of the Witwatersrand, where her research focuses on catenary shell structural systems.

Her work spans infrastructure asset management, UAV applications in infrastructure assessment, and contributions to national regulatory frameworks, including participation in aviation-related working groups on unmanned aircraft systems. Mary has authored and presented multiple peer-reviewed papers at leading conferences, including the Southern African Transport Conference, and has contributed to technical guidelines and digital tools used in industry.

Beyond her technical work, she is the Founder and CEO of Kulani-Grow, a non-profit organisation supporting access to STEM education for young learners. She is also an active academic contributor, serving as a teaching assistant and peer reviewer, and has held several leadership roles within the engineering community.

Mary brings a multidisciplinary perspective that bridges engineering, policy, and emerging aviation technologies, with a strong focus on practical impact and future-ready infrastructure solutions.



Mary Chirwa

Speaker Profile

Dikeledi Mzimba | Avsec Risk Management Specialist *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Ms. Dikeledi Mzimba has over 20 years' experience in Information security risk and cybersecurity assessment, identifying, evaluating, and mitigating a wide spectrum of information security risks across IT environments.

Experience in information security appraisals and policy evaluations against established standards like NIST CSF, ISO 27000 series, and COBIT, ensuring robust alignment with global best practices.

At SACAA's AVSEC division, she is responsible for developing and implementing aviation cybersecurity and risk frameworks by embedding risk processes and promoting cybersecurity principles to achieve the sector resilience, posture protection, cultural strength, and proactive threat identification.

Current Chairperson of the ICAO Cybersecurity Panel (CYSECP, 2025–), she drives implementation of ICAO's Aviation Cybersecurity Strategy in harmony with South African national regulations and participate in developing global aviation cybersecurity framework to safeguard aviation operations.

She holds BCom IT, CISA Cert, ISO 27005/27032, AVSEC PMC, and EDTP Moderator/Assessor credentials. Passionate about guiding organizations to gain visibility into their operations, pinpoint risk sources, and select tailored response measures based on exposure unlocking the full benefits of resilient cybersecurity.



Dikeledi Mzimba

Speaker Profile

Nicolaas (Nick) Makey | Port Commander: OT Tambo International Airport Border Management Authority (BMA)

Nicolaas Makey is a seasoned executive manager. His expertise is in civic services, citizenship, immigration, and border management. He joined the South African Department of Home Affairs from 1997 to 2002. In 2002, he joined the diplomatic corps when he was appointed as First Secretary: Immigration at the South African High Commission in Lagos, Nigeria, until 2007. He also served as Consul Immigration at the South African Consulate General in Mumbai, India (2007-2013). 2014-2018, he returned to South Africa as office manager and acting district manager for the Department of Home Affairs in the ZF Mgcawu District Municipality, Northern Cape. In 2018, he was appointed as Deputy Director of Immigration Operations at OR Tambo International Airport. He is currently employed with the South African Border Management Authority as Port Commander at OR Tambo International Airport.

He graduated from the University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa (BA, HDE post graduate) and Northwest University, Potchefstroom, South Africa (B Ed (hon)). He has attended numerous courses, seminars, and workshops locally and internationally over the years. Most recently, he completed an online course on Protection in Mixed Movement (October – November 2024). In February/March 2023, he attended the ICAO (TRIP) course in Nairobi, Kenya. Other Border Management and aviation events attended include the Border Security Week, 2023 and 2025, the BARSA Conference 2025, ACI 2025, and the ACSA Leadership Indaba 2026.

My interests are international relations, border management, and migration. Contemporary matters and sports also trigger my fancy.



Nicolaas (Nick) Makey

Speaker Profile

Moses Seroto | Acting Local Airport Manager

Bram Fischer International Airport

Moses Seroto currently serves as the Acting Local Airport Manager at Bram Fischer International Airport, bringing over 21 years of extensive experience in the aviation sector.

He began his career with Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) in 2004 as a Firefighter and steadily advanced through the ranks, culminating in his appointment as Fire Chief in 2014. His journey reflects both dedication and leadership, with a proven track record in operational excellence and safety management.

Moses holds a BA in Disaster and Safety Management and is presently pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma in Risk Management through MANCOSA. His professional development is further strengthened by a range of specialised certifications and training, including: ISO 9001:2015, Safety Management Systems, ISO 45001, ISO 14001, ISO 31000 and Project Management

With his strong academic foundation, technical expertise, and decades of practical experience, Moses continues to play a pivotal role in advancing safety, compliance, and service excellence at Bram Fischer International Airport. His leadership is marked by resilience, a commitment to continuous improvement, and a passion for fostering operational standards that align with global best practices.



Moses Seroto

Speaker Profile

Jaco van der Westhuizen | Chief Executive Officer

Mayday SA

Jaco started his career as an ATC in 1995 and has migrated into specialising in Safety and Human Factors. He is the Chief Aviation Safety & Regulatory Oversight Officer at ATNS and represents IFATCA at the ICAO Mental Health Work Group. Moreover, he is a member of the CANSO Safety Steering Committee as well as the Next Generation SMS Work Group. In addition, Jaco is the CEO of Mayday-SA, a non-profit organisation that aims to promote mental health and wellbeing through peer support amongst aviation professionals in South Africa and beyond. He holds an MBA and a PhD in Organizational Behaviour.



Jaco van der Westhuizen

Speaker Profile

Cathy Teague | Exemptions and Regulations Dev *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Cathy has been with the SACAA since 2003 and is recently appointed as the Manager Airworthiness Engineering. In her previous position as Manager Exemption and Regulation development.

The role combined the development of new regulations, the evaluation of exemption requests from these regulations and the analysis of associated risks posed by these exemptions with business process improvement, policy analysis, regulatory intelligence analysis, reporting and stakeholder management to achieve the desired outcome. As part of this process she has been tasked to lead the development of Risk and Performance Based oversight. The development and roll out of the Risk Based Oversight project relied upon the knowledge and experience gained during the 23 years employed in the SACAA from Inspector Training and development, Avionics Inspector part 135, then Manager Part 135, Manager Exemption and regulation development and now Manager Airworthiness Engineering.



Cathy Teague

Speaker Profile

Vhutshilo Tshitangano | HoD: Quality, Safety and Risk SAAT

Vhutshilo Tshitangano is the Executive Manager of Quality, Safety, and Risk at South African Airways Technical (SAAT), bringing over 25 years of dedicated experience within the aviation repair and maintenance sector. His career is distinguished by a strong focus on enhancing operational standards and regulatory compliance, ensuring the highest levels of safety and reliability across SAAT's technical operations.

Over the past sixteen years, Vhutshilo has been instrumental in the implementation of Safety Management Systems (SMS), Quality Systems Management (QSM), and Risk Management Systems (RMS) for SAAT. His leadership has guided the organisation through numerous audits and regulatory approvals, maintaining compliance with various national aviation authorities. Through his expertise, Vhutshilo has contributed significantly to the reputation and operational excellence of SAAT, positioning the company as a leader in technical aviation services in South Africa.



Vhutshilo Tshitangano

Speaker Profile

Frankline Omondi | Aviation Expert

AFCAC

Frankline Omondi is an Aviation and Environment Expert at the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) with over 14 years of experience in civil aviation, environmental protection, and sustainability, spanning airline operations, regulatory frameworks, and continental policy development. He is also the AFCAC CAEP Observer.

At AFCAC, Frankline leads and coordinates aviation environmental protection and sustainability initiatives across African States, working closely with governments, global and regional organisations, industry stakeholders, and international partners.

He currently plays a central role in advancing Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Low Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF) development in Africa, including the coordination and promotion of the Africa Continental SAF Strategy and Policy Guidelines, which provide a harmonised framework for SAF, LCAF deployment across the continent placing a strong emphasis on sustainable development of African Air Transport as a catalyst for socio-economic development and African integration.

Frankline Omondi brings extensive experience in continental SAF policy harmonization, feedstock aggregation, and value chain activation aimed at ensuring that SAF, LCAF development delivers both climate benefits and sustainable economic value for African States.



Frankline Omondi

Speaker Profile

Lyverne Prinsloo | Lead Consultant for Information Security

SITA

Lyverne Prinsloo is a leading cybersecurity professional and visionary entrepreneur for integrating information security with drone technology. She is currently the Lead Consultant for Information Security at SITA and the founder of Beeyond Drones, she drives innovation in drone security, training, and STEM education.

With over 20 years of experience in cybersecurity and information technology. She previously served as Cybersecurity Manager at the South African Reserve Bank from 2019 to 2023. Before that, Lyverne spent over a decade at SITA (2009–2018), where she implemented cybersecurity solutions for government departments, and worked as a cybersecurity specialist at Telkom.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Information Science from the University of Pretoria and has earned various cybersecurity certifications, including SABSA, CISA, and a recently renewed Certified Information Security Manager certification. Lyverne is a passionate advocate for the integrated convergence of security, the merger cybersecurity with physical security. She is also qualified in aviation, holding multiple licenses from the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), such as: SACAA Drone Pilot; BVLOS (Beyond Visual Line of Sight) Rating and Drone Flight Instructor & Technician

Lyverne is committed to preparing South African youth for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) equipping out youth with cybersecurity and drone technology skills. She launched the Honeybee High School Drone Program, equipping students with skills in drone coding, maintenance, and air law.

She has been recognized as a finalist for both the IITPSA Technology Excellence Award and the Santam Women of the Future Awards.



Lyverne Prinsloo

Speaker Profile

Adv. Mphati Lebakeng | Board Chairperson *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Advocate Mpati Qofa Lebakeng is a distinguished legal practitioner and executive with over 21 years of experience across aviation, litigation, regulatory law, corporate governance, and strategic leadership. She is a practising Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, with extensive experience in the High Court, Labour Court, Supreme Court of Appeal, and Constitutional Court. She also serves as an Acting Judge of the High Court and the Labour Court, contributing to the administration of justice at the highest level.

She is a Board Chairperson of the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), where she plays a central role in aviation governance, safety oversight, regulatory compliance, and strategic direction aligned with both South African and international aviation standards.

Advocate Lebakeng brings deep aviation sector expertise, strengthened by multiple certifications through the International Air Transport Association (IATA), including Aviation Law for Route Development, Network and Fleet Planning, Aviation Strategy, and Negotiation. Her work integrates legal precision with operational insight, enabling her to contribute meaningfully to aviation policy, airline sustainability, and sector transformation.

Her executive leadership includes serving as Chief Legal Officer of South African Airways (SAA) during a critical turnaround period, where she advised the Board and Executive on complex aviation regulatory frameworks, ICAO compliance, high-stakes litigation, and commercial strategy. She played a key role in strategic negotiations, and ensuring alignment with global aviation standards.



Adv. Mphati Lebakeng

Speaker Profile

Eric Bodenstein | Manager of Aviation Safety

FlySafair

Eric Bodenstein is the Manager of Aviation Safety at FlySafair, bringing over 26 years of aviation experience to his role — including more than a decade as flight crew on both domestic and international airlines. Beyond managing day-to-day airline safety operations, Eric represents the industry on local and international aviation safety councils.



Eric Bodenstein

Speaker Profile

Paul Phooko | Executive: Safety, Standards and Assurance (Acting) *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Dr Paul Phooko is the Senior Manager for personnel licensing and the current Acting Executive for Safety Standards and Assurance at the SACAA.

He is the former Captain for the South African Police Airwing. He holds the Master of Business Administration and a Doctor of business Administration from Tshwane University of Technology.

He is also a member of ICAO Personnel Training and Licensing Panel which is responsible for the development of Standards and Recommendations for Annex 1.



Paul Phooko

Speaker Profile

Morgan Chikurune | Executive: Manager AMO

Airlink

Mr Morgan Chikurune's career in aviation began in 1991 as an apprentice engines and airframe fitter in general aviation at Charles Prince Airport. He obtained his first SACAA license in 1996 whilst working at Foster Webb Aviation in Lanseria. He joined Airlink in 1997 as a Line Maintenance AME. He rose through the ranks to becoming a certifying AME in 2002, a crew chief between 2003 to 2007, the fleet specialist on the Jetstream 41 aircraft between 2008 to 2009.

In 2010 he was appointed as the Flight Line Chief Inspector. In 2015 he was appointed to his current role as the Accountable Manager for the AMO.



Morgan Chikurune

Speaker Profile

Dr Lesego Bogatsu | Senior Manager: Aviation Medicine *South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)*

Dr. Lesego Bogatsu is an accomplished medical professional with extensive experience in aerospace medicine and public health. With a BCS in Biology from Edward Waters College, an MBCHB from MEDUNSA, and a Master's in Public Health in Epidemiology from the University of Pretoria, Dr. Bogatsu has dedicated her career to advancing aviation medicine in South Africa.

Currently serving as the Senior Manager of the Aviation Medical Department at the South African Civil Aviation Authority since 2009, she oversees medical certification processes and the implementation of regulations related to public health and aviation safety. Dr. Bogatsu has played a pivotal role in establishing the first AERO Medical Committee in South Africa and has been a key figure in international initiatives, including leading the ICAO-WHO CAPSCA Conferences and coordinating responses during significant health events such as the Ebola outbreak.

Her contributions are reflected in her numerous publications, including articles in the South African Medical Journal and features in various media outlets. Recognized for her leadership, Dr. Bogatsu has received numerous accolades, including awards for her excellence in Internal Medicine, and has been actively involved in training and developing the next generation of aerospace medicine professionals. A respected advocate for public health within civil aviation, she continues to work towards enhancing safety and health standards in the industry.



Dr Lesego Bogatsu