

PLETTENBERG BAY AIRPORT



Plettenberg Bay Airport, Airport Road, Plettenberg Bay
0861 AIRPORT |

PRESS RELEASE
UNDER EMBARGO
3 SEPTEMBER 2024

Title 1: PLETTENBERG BAY AIRPORT UPDATE

Plettenberg Bay, South Africa - 3 September, 2024 - Bitou Municipality and Garden Route AERO have reached an agreement on the way forward for Plettenberg Bay Airport, with all contractual matters now concluded. Garden Route AERO, who has made its license application to the Civil Aviation Authority, expects the license to be issued in its name imminently. This means that Garden Route AERO will then assume full responsibility for all decision making for the airport, which has not been the case to date.

"There has been some frustration due to the limitations we faced as we were not the license holder for the airport. However, we anticipate the license to be issued in our name shortly and will have full authority to make decisions. We will be moving forward with determination and vigour," said Deidre Davids, spokesperson for Garden Route AERO. The license application is for a Category 2 license. This means that all general aviation activity can resume. "While it is good news that the general aviation activities will resume, the runway will unfortunately not be able to handle your larger commercial aircraft. This means that Cemair operations will still be suspended," added Davids.

Garden Route AERO can now expedite and prioritise all historic maintenance and backlog issues, most notably fixing the runway. Engineers have been appointed to determine the scope of works for the runway. Once the extent of the works is confirmed, there will be a clear indication of time implications, procurement requirements and construction. "Our intention is to begin runway works as soon as possible, implementing a comprehensive solution that will ensure the runway's durability and performance for at least the next five years. This will avoid the need to revisit this issue in the near future," said Davids.

"Once the runway works are completed commercial scheduled services will be reintroduced," said Davids. The upgrade and extension of the runway will allow the airport to apply for a Category 5 license. A recent media article suggests that the runway will be able to accommodate Boeing 737's, this is not correct. The intention is to strengthen the runway with a limited extension to allow for other regional smaller regional carriers to serve the destination.



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Garden Route Aero is most mindful of the importance of finding a fine balance between providing adequate air access into the region whilst also respecting and supporting what Plettenberg Bay residents and communities value in terms of what the town represents from an environmental and noise perspective.

Although the runway is the immediate priority, preliminary designs for the terminal extension and refurbishment have already been developed. Work on the terminal is expected to commence early in the new year. “We are keenly aware of the fast-approaching peak season and will collaborate closely with all key stakeholders to manage it as effectively as possible,” concluded Davids.

“It has been a challenging few months, but we are optimistic that things will improve from here. We are committed to establishing Plettenberg Bay Airport as a hub of service excellence and quality, while also serving as a powerful catalyst for economic development and improving the lives of the surrounding communities”, concluded Davids.

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