

MEDIA STATEMENT

09 February 2011

**STATEMENT BY THE SA CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY ON THE PLETTENBERG BAY
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

The South African Civil Aviation Authority has dispatched a team of accident investigators to start the process of investigating the cause of the aircraft accident that took place yesterday near Plettenberg Bay in the Western Cape. The aircraft, a Pilatus PC12, with two crew members and seven passengers on board, took off from Queenstown Aerodrome yesterday at around 15:00 and was destined to land at Plettenberg Bay Aerodrome just after 16:00.

Information at this stage indicates that shortly after being handed over to the Cape Town Radar Control and at approximately five kilometres (5Kms) away from Plettenberg Bay Aerodrome the aircraft went off radar. The South African Search and Rescue (SASAR) activated the search and rescue soon after they became aware that the aircraft had not reached its destination.

Regrettably, the search and rescue team found, this morning, the debris of the missing aircraft just off shore of the Robberg Nature Reserve. According to the information that the SACAA has at this stage, the accident is fatal as the search and rescue team has recovered the remains of some of the people who were on board.

The Acting Director of Civil Aviation, Mr Zakhele Thwala, wishes to extend his deepest condolences to the family of the deceased. "We will thoroughly apply our minds so that we can close this investigation as soon as possible. We would also like to acknowledge the role played by the rescue team and encourage them to keep on searching for possible survivors," said Mr Thwala.

At this stage the probable cause of the accident is unknown, and as such the SACAA will be able to announce the actual cause only after a final accident report has been completed.

NOTES TO EDITOR:

- A Pilatus PC12 is a single engine light aircraft and is certified to carry up to nine (9) passengers.
- It is never possible to confirm how long an investigation process will take. However, Investigators usually attempt to finalise a report within a year and if they are unable to; they would then produce a preliminary report. It should also be noted that where there are fatalities, the investigation process tends to take longer.
- The purpose of any aircraft investigation is to establish the actual cause of an accident in order to avoid recurrence.
- Please refer to the table below for recent accident statistics.

Monthly rate of accidents													
Month		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Actual 2009	0	7	11	11	10	16	10	11	7	6	8	17	12
Actual 2010	0	11	20	11	6	9	8	17	12	12	17	15	9
Actual 2011	0	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Fatal Accidents Accumulative												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2009	1	3	5	5	6	6	7	9	9	10	13	16
2010	0	2	3	5	7	7	9	12	13	13	15	15
2011	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

NB: The statistics in the table above details confirmed accidents and include the Plettenberg Bay accident.

Fatalities Accumulative												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2009	1	3	7	9	10	10	11	15	15	17	22	30
2010	0	3	4	6	9	9	13	20	21	21	24	24
2011	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

NB: The statistics in the table above details confirmed fatalities and exclude the Plettenberg Bay accident.

-ENDS-

About the SACAA:

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) is tasked with promoting and maintaining a safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation environment, by regulating and overseeing the functioning and development of the industry in an efficient, cost-effective, and customer-friendly manner according to international standards.

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