

AVIATION SAFETY BULLETIN

Safe Skies, Secure Fiji



International Civil Aviation Day 2025

Introducing CAAF's Board Chair



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Enhancing Aviation Competency Through the Introduction of the ASPEQ E-Examinations



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Fiji's State Safety Programme

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Message from CAAF's Chief Executive

As we publish our final Aviation Safety Bulletin for 2025, it's hard to believe how quickly the year has passed. Fiji's aviation sector has had its fair share of challenges, operationally, commercially, and regulatorily. While we may not always see eye to eye with operators on every issue, CAAF's mandate remains clear and non-negotiable; safeguarding the safety and security of Fiji's aviation system.

Aviation is a lifeline for Fiji, supporting tourism, trade, mobility, emergency response, and the everyday connectivity our islands depend on. When aircraft depart and arrive safely and securely, they carry with them not only passengers and goods, but livelihoods and national wellbeing.

This is why our guiding commitment remains; Safe Skies, Secure Fiji.

This issue highlights several important themes:

- Safety over convenience, always. The article on ATR72 operations at Labasa Airport explains, plainly and technically, why evidence-based limitations (including weight restrictions) are essential to protect passengers, crews and infrastructure while preserving critical connectivity for Vanua Levu.

- A strong reporting culture saves lives. The piece on Aviation Safety Reporting reinforces the purpose of MOR and voluntary reporting, the "just culture" principles that protect good-faith reporters, and the role of FCAIR in strengthening proactive hazard identification.

- Seasonal vigilance matters. As we transition into summer and cyclone season, the bulletin's seasonal reminder notes the risks from "bogi walu," turbulence, crosswinds, and rapidly changing conditions, and highlights that this season historically correlates with higher accident and serious incident rates in Fiji.

- Competency and integrity in licensing. Our move to ASPEQ E-Examinations is a significant step in modernising personnel licensing, strengthening examination integrity, and aligning assessment standards with international best practice.

- Keeping pace with change, without compromising safety. The article on Remote Tower Services is a timely reminder that innovation must be matched with robust safety assessment, redundancy planning, and clear operational contingencies, particularly where new models can introduce single points of failure.

- Security and safety frameworks are evolving. We draw attention to proposed Amendment 19 to ICAO Annex 17, and what that will mean for Fiji, including updates to legislation and programmes, stakeholder consultations, and strengthened oversight across the aviation security system.

- Strengthening national safety oversight. The publication of Fiji's updated State Safety Programme (SSP) and the supporting NASP reflects our continued commitment to structured, risk-based safety management aligned with ICAO expectations.

I also acknowledge the appointment of Mr. Anare Jale as Chairman of the CAAF Board, and recognise the contribution of the outgoing Chair, Mr. Peceli Baleikorocau, for his years of service and leadership.

Looking ahead, the Civil Aviation Bill is undergoing consultation and is planned for presentation to Parliament in 2026. In 2026, CAAF will also commence its review of the Air Navigation Regulations, to better align Fiji's framework with ICAO Standards and international best practices appropriate to our operating environment.

Finally, my sincere appreciation to our industry partners and stakeholders for the engagement and relationships built over the year, and to the dedicated staff of CAAF, whose professionalism underpins every aspect of our oversight and service delivery. I encourage you to continue sharing feedback and practical ideas to help us improve.

I wish you and your families a safe and joyful Christmas, and I look forward to continuing our engagement in 2026.

Vinaka saka vakalevu,

Theresa Levestam
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

International Civil Aviation Day 2025

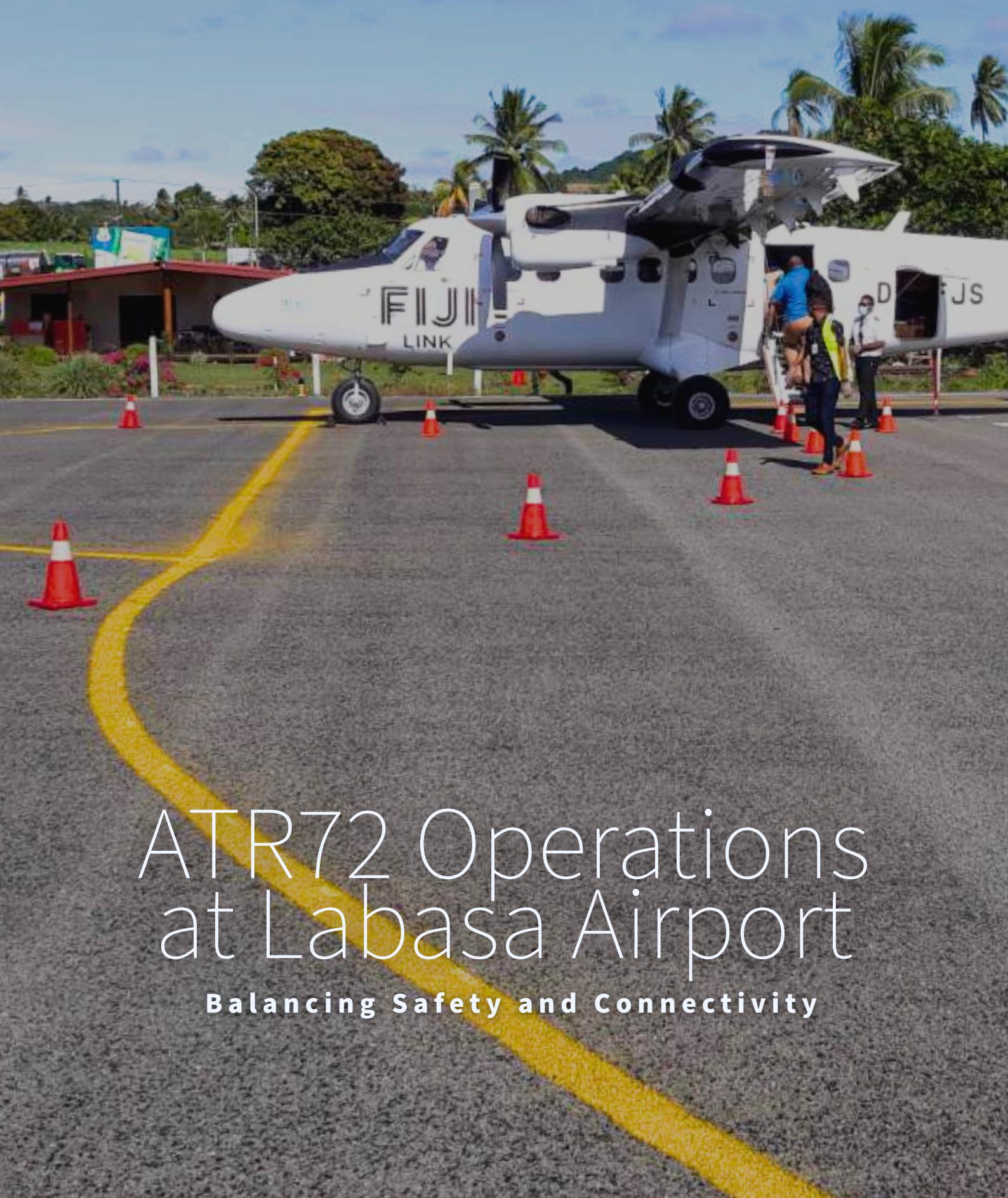
safe skies & sustainable future for all

Every year on the 7th of December, the global aviation community marks International Civil Aviation Day (ICAD), a day dedicated to recognising the extraordinary role civil aviation plays in connecting nations, supporting economies, and enabling the movement of people and goods across the world. What began in 1944 with the establishment of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has grown into one of the most sophisticated and essential transportation systems ever created, underpinning global trade, tourism, and economic growth. For Fiji, aviation is more than just movement, it is a lifeline. Our aviation system supports tourism, which is a cornerstone of our national economy; facilitates trade and investment; enables regional and international mobility; strengthens emergency response; and keeps communities connected across our islands. Every safe flight contributes to jobs, livelihoods, and opportunities for Fijians and for our partners across the Pacific and beyond. As we commemorate ICAD 2025, we reflect not only on global progress, but also on Fiji's own journey in advancing aviation safety, security, innovation, and service excellence. Fiji's geographic reality makes civil aviation a critical national asset. From commercial flights and regional links to helicopter operations, search and rescue missions, and medical evacuations, aviation touches nearly every aspect of national development. When aircraft depart and arrive safely, on time, and securely, they carry with them tourists, families, workers, students, and essential goods that sustain our economy and our way of life. This system, however, rests on one non-negotiable foundation: safety and security. Around the world, people choose to fly because they trust that aviation is the safest way to travel. Maintaining that trust requires strong regulatory oversight, robust safety management, effective security measures, and continuous vigilance. For Fiji, "Safe Skies. Secure Fiji."





is more than a tagline, it is a responsibility we carry on behalf of every passenger, every crew member, and every community that depends on aviation. ICAO continues to highlight the importance of innovation, sustainability, and resilience in shaping the future of aviation. Fiji remains aligned with this vision, strengthening our systems and capabilities to ensure we remain safe, secure, and competitive in an evolving global environment. Behind every safe and secure flight is an entire community of aviation professionals, air traffic controllers, engineers, inspectors, security officers, pilots, cabin crew, ground handlers, airport staff, meteorologists, and many others, working often behind the scenes, every day and every night. Their dedication ensures that aviation in Fiji not only functions, but thrives, and that our contribution to the global aviation network remains strong and reliable. As the global industry moves toward greener technologies, smarter air traffic systems, and stronger safety and security frameworks, Fiji continues to adapt and evolve. CAAF remains committed to working with Government, airlines, airports, training organisations, regional bodies, and industry partners to build an aviation sector that is future ready, resilient, and sustainable. International Civil Aviation Day is a reminder that aviation is a collective effort, one that depends on cooperation, trust, and a shared commitment to continuous improvement. On this International Civil Aviation Day 2025, the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji extends its heartfelt appreciation to all aviation partners, stakeholders, and industry leaders for your ongoing contribution to a safe, secure, and reliable aviation system. Your teamwork, professionalism, and dedication keep Fiji connected to the region and the world, and help sustain our economic and social wellbeing. Together, we will continue to uphold the highest standards of safety, security, and quality, while embracing innovation and preparing for the next chapter of aviation development in Fiji. Safe Skies. Secure Fiji. 



ATR72 Operations at Labasa Airport

Balancing Safety and Connectivity

“Safety is ICAO’s guiding and overarching priority.” In aviation, safety isn’t just a priority, it’s the foundation. Every aspect of operations, infrastructure and oversight must be designed and conducted to prevent accidents and incidents above all else.

Labasa Airport, the primary gateway to Vanua Levu is a lifeline that connects the Northern Division to vital services in health, education, commerce, and government concentrated in Suva and Nadi. This means that every flight is not only moving passengers but also enabling essential access for medical emergencies, students, families, and businesses.

Aerodrome characteristics and aircraft compatibility
Labasa Aerodrome is classified ICAO Code 2C, with a runway length of 1,069 metres and width of 30 metres. The runway was resurfaced in 2024; however, pavement strength limitations remain under ICAO’s updated ACR/PCR methodology, which provides a more accurate assessment of pavement capacity and usage. In 2024, Runway 13/31 was assessed at PCR 130/F/X/D/T.

Aircraft in the ATR 42 class are compatible with Code 2C operations at Labasa.

The ATR 72-600, at maximum take-off weight (MTOW), has an ACR of 162/F/D, which is higher than the runway’s PCR value. It also typically requires ~1,330 metres for safe take-off under standard conditions, exceeding Labasa’s available runway length. Wet conditions, surrounding terrain and obstacle clearance further reduce performance margins.

What the limitations mean in practice

To ensure operations remain within certified safety margins, specific limitations apply to ATR 72 operations at Labasa, including:

- Weight restrictions to align aircraft performance with runway length and pavement strength;
- Reduced movements in adverse weather and strict adherence to performance calculations;
- Rigorous procedures for take-off, landing and ground handling. These measures, while sometimes restrictive, are essential safeguards. They demonstrate how ICAO’s safety principle translates into real-world operational practice; ensuring that despite infrastructure limitations, the highest standards of

protection are afforded to passengers, crew, airport personnel, and the wider community.

CAAF’s Role in Safeguarding Operations

As Fiji’s aviation safety regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF) upholds its mandate to protect the travelling public and ensure safe aerodrome operations. Following safety assessments conducted by the airport operator and the airline, reviewed and approved by CAAF, specific limitations were placed on ATR72 operations at Labasa. These measures are evidence-based and align with national and ICAO standards.

Why weight restrictions are essential

Weight controls are precautionary, not punitive. Without them, the risks of runway overruns or undershoots and reduced emergency margins would increase significantly. Operating above recommended limits could also accelerate pavement wear or cause damage, triggering regulatory intervention and possible suspension of services.

Looking ahead

CAAF recognises Labasa’s vital role in connecting Vanua Levu and supports safe, sustainable air services. The airport operator, airlines and CAAF will continue to collaborate to maintain safe operations and to carefully assess any new aircraft types proposed for Fiji’s domestic network. Any aircraft scheduled to operate into Labasa, or any domestic aerodrome, must first undergo rigorous technical assessment to confirm compliance with CAAF’s national requirements and ICAO standards.

Conclusion: Safety over convenience

Labasa Aerodrome meets ICAO’s minimum specifications for its code, but its physical and pavement limitations require a cautious, disciplined approach. The ATR 72 weight restrictions are a necessary safeguard that preserves Labasa’s critical connectivity without compromising safety. For the travelling public, these controls are assurances that Fiji’s aviation system is working as intended, identifying risks, applying safeguards and keeping safety paramount. In doing so, Labasa Airport will continue to be a secure, reliable lifeline for Vanua Levu. 

Introducing

Mr Anare Jale

The New Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Board.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Anare Jale as the new Chairman of the CAAF Board.

Mr. Jale is a highly respected Fijian statesman and public servant whose career spans more than five decades of distinguished service in government, diplomacy, and community development. Born in Onoilau, Fiji, he has held a number of senior roles within the Fijian civil service and has represented Fiji internationally at the highest levels.

He began his public service career in the Ministry of Labour in 1970, rising through the ranks to become Chief Labour Officer, and later serving as Permanent Secretary for Labour and Industrial Relations. His expertise in industrial relations and public sector reform led to his appointment as Secretary for the Public Service, and subsequently Chief Executive Officer for the Public Service under the Prime Minister's Office.

From 2001 to 2004, Mr. Jale served as Fiji's Ambassador to the United States of America and Mexico, representing Fiji in key diplomatic engagements and multilateral forums. He later contributed to regional governance as a Public Sector Reform Adviser to the Solomon Islands Government under the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). In the political arena, Mr. Jale was elected to Fiji's Parliament in 2018 under the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA), where he served as the Opposition Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and participated in several parliamentary committees.

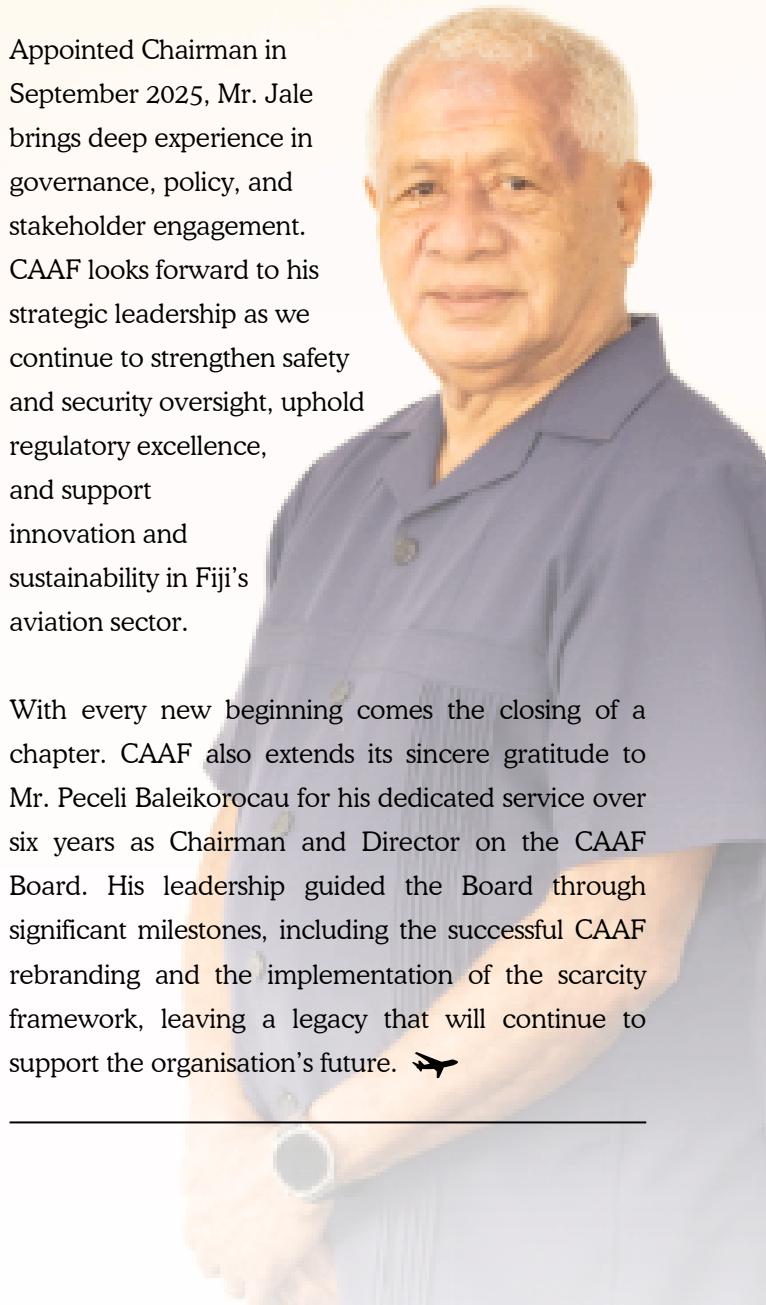
Mr. Jale has also held numerous board and leadership positions, including as Chairman of the

Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF), the Fiji National Training Council (TPAF), and the Ratu Kadavulevu School Board of Governors. He currently serves as a Director on the Board of Fijian Holdings Limited, and is the founding member and current Chair of Nulomadova Holdings Company Ltd, a community enterprise focused on sustainable development in Onoilau.

He has represented Fiji in over 40 international conferences and training programmes across Asia, the Pacific, Europe, and North America.

Appointed Chairman in September 2025, Mr. Jale brings deep experience in governance, policy, and stakeholder engagement. CAAF looks forward to his strategic leadership as we continue to strengthen safety and security oversight, uphold regulatory excellence, and support innovation and sustainability in Fiji's aviation sector.

With every new beginning comes the closing of a chapter. CAAF also extends its sincere gratitude to Mr. Peceli Baleikorocau for his dedicated service over six years as Chairman and Director on the CAAF Board. His leadership guided the Board through significant milestones, including the successful CAAF rebranding and the implementation of the scarcity framework, leaving a legacy that will continue to support the organisation's future. 



Aviation Safety Reporting: **Why It Matters and How It Works**



A strong safety culture depends on one simple principle: if something doesn't look right, speak up. Reporting is one of the most powerful tools we have in aviation. It helps us catch problems early, prevent accidents, and continuously improve the way we operate.

Objectives of Safety Reporting CAAF's safety data collection and processing systems are designed to:

- Enhance Aviation Safety: Identify safety hazards and reduce the likelihood of accidents or incidents.
- Promote a Just Culture - Encourage open and honest reporting by ensuring protection from retribution.
- Support Risk Management - Enable analysis of trends and identification of systemic issues.
- Facilitate Continuous Improvement - Inform safety policy, oversight, and preventive actions.

Types of Reports

Mandatory Occurrence Reports (MOR):

Under ANR 71, individuals and organisations must report safety-related occurrences. These reports are crucial for identifying risks and preventing accidents. These reports must be submitted within 96 hours of the occurrence, using the forms prescribed by CAAF.

Voluntary Reports:

Voluntary reporting enables individuals to report aviation safety concerns that may not otherwise be captured through the mandatory reporting system but are still relevant to aviation safety. Voluntary reporting is a proactive process of reporting that gathers information to enable early identification of hazards/unsafe conditions that have not yet caused an incident/serious incident/accident which otherwise would be revealed by a MOR.

These may include:

- Unsafe practices
- Safety concerns
- Equipment issues
- Human factors concerns
- Emerging hazards

Voluntary reports contribute to the early identification of safety risks and complement the MOR system. Use Form OR 012 available on the CAAF website.

Fiji Confidential Aviation Incident Reporting (FCAIR)
FCAIR is a confidential reporting mechanism that encourages individuals to report safety issues without fear of reprisal.

The key features of the FCAIR include:

- Guaranteed confidentiality
- Protection from punitive action
- Strengthening of safety culture
- Focus on learning and improvement
- Support for proactive hazard identification

Submit using Form OR 010, available on the CAAF website.

Who Should Submit an MOR?

Refer to ANR 71 (1). This includes but is not limited to:

- Aircraft operators (domestic and foreign)
- Flight crew
- Maintenance personnel
- Certificate or licence holders
- Aerodrome and ANSP operators

What Must Be Reported?

Refer to ANR 71 (2) for a list of reportable occurrences. These include:

- Events affecting aircraft safety or operation
- Injury or fatality
- System or control failures
- Ground service issues
- Other safety-endangering occurrences

How to Submit a Report

Reports can be submitted through the following methods:

- (a) Online Submission: access via "Quick Links" section on the CAAF Website. User registration and login are required.
- (b) Confidential Hotline: Phone +679 6723219.
- (c) Manual Submission via Forms: Download and submit the appropriate form from the CAAF website.

Form ID	Title
OR 001	Official MOR Form
SF 004	Aviation Security MOR
OR 002A	Bird Strike/Incident Notification
OR 002B	Supplementary Bird Strike Reporting
OR 003	Occurrence Investigation & Closure Report
OR 004	Wake Vortex Encounter Reporting Form for Pilots
OR 005	Wake Vortex Encounter Reporting Form Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs)
OR 010	Fiji Confidential Aviation Incident Report (FCAIR)

Confidentiality and Non-Punitive Approach
Confidentiality Guarantee: CAAF ensures that the reporters identity remains confidential. Personal details will not be disclosed without consent, unless required for investigation or legal purposes. **Non-Punitive:** Reports submitted in good faith will not result in punitive action against the reporter, except where there is evidence of gross negligence, intentional violation or criminal conduct.

Record Preservation Requirements Operators must preserve relevant flight data, voice recordings, or surveillance records for 14 days from the date a report is made, or longer if directed by CAAF. Refer to ANR 71(8) and (9).

Authority to Investigate CAAF retains the authority to investigate any reportable occurrence submitted under this regulation as per ANR 71(10).

Further Information For more information, visit the CAAF Website or contact the CAAF Quality Unit. 

We Want to Hear from You!

FCAIR *Fiji Confidential Aviation Incident Report*

The Fiji Confidential Aviation Incident Reporting (FCAIR) form is a voluntary, non-punitive tool that allows anyone in the aviation community to confidentially report safety concerns or incidents to help improve aviation safety and security in Fiji.

FCAIR forms are available for download from the CAAF website (www.caaf.org.fj) or from the Enquiries counter at CAAF HQ. Completed forms are to be emailed to fcair@caaf.org.fj.

CONFIDENTIAL

Fiji Confidential Aviation Incident Reporting
Forms Available on Website:

www.caaf.org.fj

or front desk CAAF HQ

Take Our Survey

CAAF is keen to hear from you regarding our levels of service.

If you believe you have constructive ideas on how we can improve our services or would like to report instances where we have failed to meet your expectations.

Please send your feedback to CAAF, preferably using the QA 108 form that can be accessed from our website.

This can be sent to CAAF via email or dropping it in the feedback box in the foyer of CAAF HQ; or email to:

info@caaf.org.fj



Safe Skies, Secure Fiji

Enhancing Aviation Competency Through the Introduction of the ASPEQ E-Examinations.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF) is modernizing its examination platform by transitioning to the ASPEQ E-Examination System for Flight Crew Licenses (FCL), Aircraft Maintenance Engineer Licenses (AMEL), Air Traffic Controllers Licenses (ATCL) and the Aviation Language Proficiency (ALP).

This transition ensures that Fijis Personnel Licensing standards aligns and maintains the established international standard under the knowledge and technical skill requirements . The ICAO Annex 1 *Personnel Licensing* requires that all personnel, exercising licence privileges must demonstrate adequate knowledge (theory) and technical skills (competency) through approved examinations and tests. These requirements ensures safe and standardized performance across ICAO Contracting States.

As a requirement, prior to the granting of a licence all personnel must pass the technical (theoretical) knowledge examinations appropriate to the privileges of the licence or rating. These examinations must evaluate the applicants knowledge, understanding and application of operational, technical and safety- critical subjects.

The technical examination provided must satisfy criteria's as required under Annex 1, and this includes;

- The exams must be state approved, Secure, conducted via written, digital, oral or a combination and Independently administered and invigilated;
- Exams must cover the full scope of the licence/rating privileges which includes Airlaw, operational procedures, Human performance, Technical knowledge specific to the applicable licence & Equipment/ system knowledge;
- Exams must evaluate competence, not just recall. It must test the understanding of principles, evaluate application of knowledge in scenarios and assess safety- critical decision making;
- Exams must specify pass marks it must be consistent, fair, have standardized evaluation and clear criteria for pass/fail;
- Re-examination must be available if a candidate fails. It must also include waiting periods, limit number of attempts and requirements for refresher trainings.

To achieve these criteria's and while maintaining the credibility and integrity of technical examinations the state must establish a secure, independent, standardized, competency –based examination system backed by strict



oversight, validated examination content and continuous monitoring to ensure continued compliance with ICAO standard and Recommended Practices (SARPs). This ensures examinations are fair, reliable, internationally aligned and resistant to compromise.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji is undergoing a major transformation in its current examination framework. The introduction of the ASPEQ computer based examination system represents a significant step forward in modernizing the Personnel Licensing processes and maintains Fijis examination standards with other leading international civil aviation authorities.

The transition to ASPEQ will not only enhance examination integrity and accessibility but will also raise overall standard of aviation competency assessment in Fiji. As aviation operations become increasingly complex and safety - driven, CAAFs introduction of advanced digital examination platforms is vital to ensure that aviation professionals such as Pilot, aircraft Maintenance engineers and air traffic controllers are assessed using rigorous, reliable and globally benchmarked tools.

Importance of the New E-Examination System

The ASPEQ system incorporates strong security features, including identity verification, controlled testing environments and secure question banks. This reduces the risk of malpractice, enhances fairness and protects the credibility of licence holders. Every exam ensures candidates are assessed under consistent conditions, improving the transparency and authenticity of results.

By transitioning to ASPEQ, Fiji joins a growing number of aviation regulators including New Zealand, Australia and several Pacific states who also use ASPEQ to administer aviation licensing examinations. This would ensure:

- Harmonized examination standards aligned with ICAO competency requirements.
- Modernized testing processes comparable to international best practice, and
- Increased recognition of Fiji issued licenses within the region.

Every candidate that attempts the ASPEQ exams will be provided with a more improved candidate experience with a modern user friendly computer based interface, provide immediate feedback through faster result processing, and digitally streamlined registration and scheduling. For candidates that will be transitioning from paper based exams to digital examination, this transition would significantly reduce administrative delays, improve exam clarity and ensure greater consistency in assessments.

The new examination framework strengthens the foundation of personnel licensing by ensuring licence holders possess the required theoretical knowledge to operate safely in a dynamic and high-risk environment. And this improved assessment system directly supports Fijis State Safety Programme (SSP) by enhancing the competency and safety culture of Fijis Aviation professionals.

This transition marks an important milestone in Fijis examination framework. By modernizing the assessment framework for pilots, aircraft engineers and air traffic controllers, CAAF is strengthening aviation safety, improving examination integrity and ensuring that licensing standards meet global expectations. 



Seasonal Safety Reminder

Transition to Summer Operations

We are currently transitioning between winter to summer. The spring season brings about strong south easterlies, known locally as the "bogi walu". These winds may create hazards on approaches due to orographic turbulence, strong crosswinds at all airports and excessive tailwinds at certain strips.

Be mindful as well as the summer season approaches toward the cyclone season, all domestic operators are strongly encouraged to remind company flight crew of the importance of maintaining constant vigilance regarding the sudden and unpredictable weather changes that can occur during this period.

Data from the CAAF Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) database indicates that this season historically accounts for the highest number of aircraft accidents and serious incidents in Fiji. To mitigate risks, flight crew should be reminded of the following key points:

Cumulonimbus (CB) Activity: Be aware of the dangers associated with taking off and landing when CB activity is in close proximity to the airport.

Microbursts: Understand the nature of microbursts and the significant risks they pose.

Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC):

When flying in IMC, monitor onboard GNSS navigational aids to ensure continuous RAIM (Receiver Autonomous Integrity Monitoring).

Marginal Weather Conditions: Exercise caution when operating at airports without letdown aids, especially during low visibility or cloud base conditions.

Early Decision-Making: Make timely decisions during visual approaches, particularly at airports where go-arounds are constrained due to rising terrain near the runway.

Crew Coordination: Promote teamwork among crew members to ensure safe operations and CRM practices.

Weather Hazard Assessment: Identify potential safety hazards through thorough analysis of weather reports.

Operational Limits: Ensure crew members avoid situations that exceed their personal capabilities or those of the aircraft.

Contingency Planning: Have a robust back-up plan or escape route in case of sudden mechanical failure, especially during critical phases of flight or marginal weather conditions.

Surface Conditions: Be cautious of soft or slippery grass surfaces at airports after heavy rainfall, as these conditions can negatively impact aircraft performance, particularly during take off and landing.

Role of Company Safety Officers

Management should encourage Safety Officers to maintain a heightened presence during this period by proactively fulfilling their responsibilities as outlined in the company Operations Manual.

Additional measures include:

Ensuring safety materials are accessible to all crew. Promoting ongoing safety awareness through direct engagement with all crew.

Hurricane Preparedness

The Hurricane season also presents an opportunity for Management and Safety Officers to review and update company hurricane procedures. Key actions include:

Securing aircraft and hangar facilities effectively. Inspecting and clearing surrounding areas of debris and unwanted items that could become airborne in high winds, posing a risk to personnel and property.

A Proactive Approach to Safety

By adopting a proactive stance toward safety during this critical time of year, management can make a significant contribution to minimizing accidents and serious incidents. Safety is a shared responsibility, and collaboration among all stakeholders ensures the continued protection of lives, property, and operations.

The Authority encourages all operators to use the company Safety Management System to identify risks and hazards and to mitigate them accordingly. The authority reminds operators of its open-door policy to discuss safe operational practices.

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to safety. 

Remote Towers: Balancing Evolution with Operational Safety

The Evolution

The traditional image of an air traffic controller scanning the airfield from a high glass tower is rapidly changing. Throughout 2025, the adoption of Remote Tower Services (RTS)—also known as Digital Towers—has accelerated globally. This evolutionary technology replaces the "out-of-the-window" view with high-definition cameras and sensors located at the airport, which relay a panoramic live feed to a Remote Tower Centre (RTC) that may be hundreds of miles away.

While this technology promises efficiency and cost savings, particularly for smaller regional and domestic aerodromes, recent developments in Q4 2025 have highlighted critical safety gaps that safety managers and aerodrome operators must address.

While this technology promises efficiency and cost savings, particularly for smaller regional and domestic aerodromes, recent developments in Q4 2025 have highlighted critical safety gaps that safety managers and aerodrome operators must address.

The Emerging Safety Concern: "Multiple Mode of Operation"

In late November 2025, a significant safety warning was issued jointly by international pilot associations (IFALPA and ECA). The core of their concern is not the cameras themselves, but a practice known as "Multiple Mode of Operation." This practice allows a single Air Traffic Controller (ATCO) to manage traffic for more than one airport simultaneously from the same remote workstation.

Why is this a Risk?

This safety bulletin highlights two primary risks for aerodrome and air navigation services safety teams to consider:

Human Factors

A controller in a multi-mode operation is monitoring two or more different airfields at the same time. Each airport has unique weather patterns, runway layouts, and a different mix of aircraft traffic. This significantly increases the cognitive load on the controller. The risk of confusion, such as issuing a clearance for a runway that exists at one airport but not the other, is a genuine human factor hazard that requires rigorous training and robust mitigation strategies.

Figure 1: The evolution of air traffic control: New technology replaces the traditional "out-of-the-window" view with high-definition cameras and sensors that relay a panoramic live feed to a Remote Tower Centre (RTC). While this offers efficiency for regional aerodromes, the focus in 2026 must remain on ensuring these systems are robust enough to handle unexpected failures without compromising airspace safety.



WEATHER PATTERN COMPLEXITY



Figure 2: The cognitive load challenge: "Multiple Mode of Operation" allows a single controller to manage traffic for more than one airport simultaneously. Because each airport has unique weather patterns and runway layouts, this practice increases the risk of confusion, such as issuing a clearance for a runway that exists at one airport but not the other.

Loss of Redundancy

Traditionally, if an airport's physical tower had a fire or technical failure, flights could divert to an alternate airport with a functioning tower. In the new centralised model, a single Remote Tower Centre (RTC) might control both the destination airport and its designated alternate. If that one RTC suffers a system failure, power loss, or a cyber-incident, it could simultaneously "black out" air traffic services for both airports at once. This creates a critical single point of failure that standard operational contingency plans often fail to address.

Recommendations for Safety Managers

If your organisation is considering or interacting with Remote Tower technology, ensure your Safety Management System (SMS) addresses the following:

i).Contingency over Redundancy: Do not confuse technical backups (like spare cables or screens) with true operational contingency.

If the main system fails, is there a physically independent and immediate way to provide safe landing services?

ii).Alternate Selection: Flight crews should be explicitly advised if their destination airport and their filed operational alternate are controlled by the same physical remote facility.

iii). Assessment of Change: Any move to "Multiple Mode of Operation" requires a specific, documented safety assessment that demonstrates that safety levels are equivalent to or better than traditional single-aerodrome control.

Digital towers represent an exciting evolution in air navigation, offering undeniable benefits. However, efficiency must never outpace safety. As we move into 2026, the focus must remain on ensuring that these new systems are robust enough to handle unexpected failures without compromising the safety of the airspace. 

Sources:

1. IFALPA & ECA Joint Position Paper: Remote Towers, 25 November 2025.
2. African Pilot: Remote Towers Raise Fresh Safety Concerns, 07 December 2025.
3. ICAO Annex 11 & PANS-ATM (Safety Assessment requirements).



SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE

RTC Failure Disconnects All Connected Airports Simultaneously.

CAAF Strengthens Aviation Safety Oversight with Fiji's State Safety Programme

CAAF has published Fiji's updated State Safety Programme (SSP), reinforcing the State's commitment to managing aviation safety standards. Fiji's State Safety Programme outlines a comprehensive framework designed to ensure safe, secure, and efficient air travel across the country.

Legal Foundation

The SSP is mandated under section 3(1) of the Civil Aviation Act 1976 and section 14(2)(c) of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji Act 1979, aligning Fiji's aviation oversight with international standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

The framework integrates ICAO's eight Critical Elements of the State Safety Oversight system and four SSP pillars, ensuring compliance with global best practices.

Key Highlights of the Programme

- Robust Oversight: Fiji pledges continuous improvement in safety monitoring, accident investigation, and hazard management.
- Safety Objectives: Fiji aims for zero fatal accidents, proactive hazard identification, and a collaborative safety culture across all aviation stakeholders.
- Legislative Reform: Fiji is reviewing and consolidating its aviation laws, including the Civil Aviation Act 1976 and Civil Aviation Reform Act 1999, into a single modern legislative instrument.
- Industry Scope: Fiji's aviation sector includes 1 international operator, 10 domestic operators, 2 private operators, over 110 registered aircraft, and more than 500 licensed personnel.

International Alignment

The SSP is closely tied to the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (2023–2025) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Plan, ensuring Fiji's aviation system remains integrated with international safety initiatives.

Leadership Commitment

Theresa Levestam, Chief Executive of CAAF, emphasized Fiji's dedication to safety:

"Through the systematic identification, prioritisation, and mitigation of aviation risks, Fiji upholds a civil aviation system that is safe, secure, and efficient, consistently meeting ICAO's standards and adopting international best practice." Looking Ahead

The SSP will be reviewed every three years by the SSP Committee, which includes representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Fiji Airports, Fiji Meteorological Services, and other agencies.

This ensures the programme evolves alongside industry growth and international developments.

With Nadi International Airport already handling over 2 million passengers annually, our SSP positions Fiji as a regional leader in aviation safety, supporting both tourism and economic growth.

In summary, the Fiji State Safety Programme (SSP) details the approach employed by the state to manage aviation safety within Fiji's operational environment, including the comprehensive oversight of operators who are required to maintain a safety management system (SMS).

The SSP specifies the governance framework and designates the entities accountable for establishing and implementing each ICAO annex on behalf of the State, as well as outlining the collaborative efforts between entities and working groups under the SSP. Additionally, the SSP defines the process by which the State fulfills its obligations under ICAO Annex 19, structured around four pillars:

1. State Policy and Objectives
2. State Safety Risk Management
3. State Safety Assurance
4. State Safety Promotion

As a component of Fiji's SSP, the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF) has developed Fiji's National Aviation Safety Plan (NASP), providing a practical roadmap that identifies key national hazards along with the associated organisational and operational risks.

The Fiji NASP prioritizes high-risk categories—such as Mid-Air Collision (MAC), Loss of Control In-Flight (LOC-I), Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CFIT), Runway Excursion (RE), Runway Incursion (RI), and wildlife strikes—and assigns responsibilities to the most appropriate entities for implementing safety improvements.

Collectively, Fiji's SSP and NASP ensure that all stakeholders remain aligned and proactive, advancing towards the shared objective of a safer and more resilient aviation system for Fiji.



Proposal for Amendment 19 to ICAO Annex 17

AVIATION SECURITY

ICAO recently disseminated Amendment 19 to Annex 17 - Aviation Security following the 6th meeting of the Councils 236th Session on the 21st of November 2025. Each Contracting State is given time to discuss the amendments and provide its response to ICAO. Any further changes shall be finalised in the Councils 238th Session in June of 2026.

Why Amendments Need to be made?

Amendments are made to ICAO Annex 17 (Security) to ensure that international aviation security measures remain effective, relevant, and responsive to evolving threats. The reasons for these changes stem from:

- Need to mitigate emerging and evolving security threats
- Implement lessons learnt from past security incidents
- Seal gaps identified from ICAO Universal Security Audit Programmes (USAP)
- Proactive security measures
- Technological advancements
- Harmonisation of global practices
- Clarification and strengthening requirements; and
- Changes in operational environments

The Proposed Changes

Some proposed changes include new definitions of transfer passengers and baggage, and transit passengers and baggage; revised definition of human factors; a revised Recommended Practice on human factors; and a revised Standard on aircraft security checks or searches. Definitions are amended to provide clarity to an existing definition.

What these Amendments Mean for Fiji?

1. Changes to the implementation of Annex 17 SARPs where appropriate
2. Update the Civil Aviation Security legislation and regulations to align with the amended Standards and Recommended Practices
3. Revise the National Civil Aviation Security Programme (NCASP) and other national programmes
4. Conduct consultations, training and awareness by the Authority on the amendments and how it affects current security measures and requirements
5. Revise and amend Operator Security programmes that include airports, aircraft operators, ground and cargo handlers, aircraft catering service providers, regulated agents and known consignors
6. Enhance oversight and compliance monitoring for the Authority and the Management and quality control arm of all stakeholders

These amendments to ICAO Annex 17 ensure that Fiji's aviation security framework remains current, compliant and effective. Furthermore that Fiji's aviation security practices align with global best aviation security practices. In short, aviation security standards protect aviation from acts of unlawful interference by making potential targets less attractive to terrorists. 

Sources:

Amendment 19 to ICAO Annex 17 AVIATION SECURITY



ICAO

International Standards
and Recommended Practices

Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation

Aviation Security

INTERATIVE AIRSPACE

ASB Word Search

Word Search Puzzle

N	P	L	Y	B	C	G	K	V	I	E	Y	Q	C	K	X	J	R
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AIRCRAFT
AIRSPACE
CONTROL TOWER
FLIGHT

LANDING
PILOT
RUNWAY
SAFETY

TAKEOFF
TERMINAL

Through the AeroLens: Your Safety, Your Spotlight

Calling All Aviation Safety Champions! Submit a photo of your workplace showcasing top safety practices—whether it's proper equipment use, clear signage, or your team in action.

The best shot will be featured in our next issue!

Submit your photos to: socialmedia@caaf.org.fj

*We would love your feedback
on how we can improve!*

