

## NEWS 📰

# Cape Winelands Airport to offer 'significant employment opportunities'

Initial indications are 35,000 jobs can be created during construction with an economic contribution of more than R24bn

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BY THOMPHO MMBI AND SIPHESIHLE HONA



An artist's impression of the planned expansion of the Cape Winelands Airport.

*Image: Cape Winelands Airport*

The planned R7bn expansion of a historic former air force base, now known as the Cape Winelands Airport, is expected to create thousands of job opportunities and has already reached important milestones.

Previously known as Fisantekraal Airfield, built in about 1943, the airport - already a licenced aerodrome - is now in the hands of a consortium of private owners and construction, pending regulatory approvals, could start as early as 2026.

Nick Ferguson, MD of rsa.AERO, which owns and operates the airport, told TimesLIVE Premium: “airports have immense potential to change social conditions and are major employment centres providing job opportunities from pilots and air traffic controllers to ground staff, security personnel, maintenance crews and workers in retail and hospitality.

“In the case of Cape Winelands Airport there will be significant employment opportunities during and after construction. The airport operations will have to be resourced in its entirety.

“There are also opportunities for new businesses which are an extension of airports such as logistics and warehousing. Initial indications were 35,000 jobs can be created during construction with an economic contribution of more than R24bn during construction.”

The main runway will be extended to 3,500m which can accommodate an Airbus A380, and the project aims to introduce the first digital air traffic control tower and control room in Africa.



Artist's illustration.

*Image: Cape Winelands Airport*

“There are a number of milestones, notably our current process, being an environmental impact assessment. This is under way. We concluded the second phase of public consultation at the end of August,” said Ferguson.

“We are preparing to submit our scoping report application to the department of environmental affairs for consideration. From a timing perspective, if we obtain the necessary approvals, we hope to begin construction in early 2026.

“Funding will be raised through a combination of equity and borrowing, ranging from investment by way of shareholding – individuals or

consortiums – or loan funding through banks.”

Proposed amenities at the revamped airport, which will be surrounded by vineyards, include, subject to approval, a cargo processing facility, botanical garden, aviation museum, outdoor amphitheatre, a wine tasting facility, hotel accommodation and a heliport.

Ferguson said the expansion would also include additional hangarage, facilities for light manufacturing and industrial purposes, logistics and warehousing services, food processing facilities, spaces for educational and commercial office purposes, retail spaces, venues for events and conferences, a bulk aviation fuel farm and a public filling station.

“We have engaged all the domestic airlines and a multitude of international ones. Our plans have taken into account requirements from the airlines. We will also have a big focus on the general aviation market and have engaged many operators in this regard.”

The effect of airport operations on surrounding communities and measures to mitigate potential noise and environmental concerns will “be assessed during the impact phase of the environmental impact assessment”.

“Our commitment extends towards working with and collaborating with all role players to limit any negative impact. We will know more about this once the impact assessments are concluded.”

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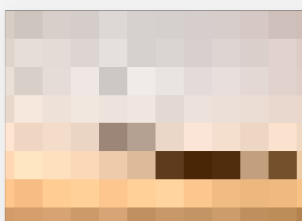
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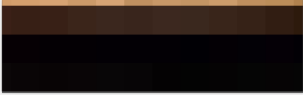
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