

SAA's business rescue exit gets thumbs up from pilots' association

Captain Grant Back, chairperson of the SAA's Pilots' Association has welcomed the first step towards a revitalised SAA that the adoption of the business rescue plan represents. "The vote by creditors in favour of the plan will go a long way towards providing a path forward, after an immensely fraught period.

"We believe that it is in the best interests of South African Airways (SAA), its employees and all affected persons, for the airline to successfully exit business rescue. The adoption of the business rescue plan today is the first step in this direction," says Back.

The approval of the business rescue plan must usher in a new era of transparency and accountability at the airline, if SAA is to succeed.

The appointment of Philip Saunders as the airline's interim CEO, with his experience in the airline industry, is encouraging, says Back. "Saapa has repeatedly emphasised the value and necessity of competent leadership with experience in the industry, and we hope that the interim appointment of Mr Saunders marks an important step in the right direction for the airline."

"We hope that the new interim board to be appointed soon will be made up of diverse and experienced individuals, with business acumen and airline experience, who are determined to put SAA on a path to profitability, prosperity and growth, free from political interference and meddling," continues Back.

Back emphasises that If SAA is to have any chance of success then these appointments must come with the mandate to make the necessary decisions in appointing a fit for purpose management team. "The pilots of SAAPA stand ready to do what we can to support the new leadership in developing a robust business model and an improved plan for the way forward.

"Our primary objectives throughout our engagements during the Business Rescue proceedings over the last seven months have been to save jobs, to reduce the reliance on the fiscus, and to work towards a revitalised airline in a way that retains cost flexibility while carrying no risk.

"We are determined to continue to work together with all stakeholders towards the achievement of these goals as the airline is restructured through a process that remains compliant with our country's laws," concludes Back.

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