

Mokgadi Matli, newly appointed full-time CEO of GAAL, reports that the finalisation of staffing appointments has instilled a sense of direction and stability, signalling that the organisation is moving forward with a clear vision and leadership structure



**Mokgadi Matli, CEO
of Gateway Airports
Authority Limited.**

Mokgadi Matli was born and raised in the village of Rosenkrantz Ga-Matlala, Limpopo. She is a self-driven human-resource professional who has worked in the human resource management field for over 20 years, of which 14 have been at managerial level. She has served in both the private and public sectors, with most of her experience acquired in the manufacturing and gaming industries. She has been in the aviation sector since 2016 and has a BCom Honours in HR Management obtained from MANCOSA and a National Diploma in Operations Management.

Congratulations on your appointment as CEO. What are the main takeaways that you have from your period as Acting CEO?

Serving as Acting CEO was an invaluable experience. Adapting quickly to changing circumstances and making decisions under pressure was key. I learned to navigate uncertainty with confidence and clarity. Clear, transparent communication is vital during times of transition. I honed my ability to articulate vision, strategy and expectations to stakeholders at all levels. Trusting my team to execute tasks autonomously was crucial. Empowering them led to increased morale, productivity and innovation. Facing challenges head-on and maintaining composure in turbulent times was essential. Resilience helped me persevere and keep the organisation focused amid adversity. This period taught me the importance of agility, communication, empowerment, strategic thinking and resilience in effective leadership.

Can your appointment to the full post be seen as a confirmation of further stabilisation of the administrative environment?

My appointment to the full post can indeed be viewed as a confirmation of further stabilisation within the administrative environment. It indicates that the organisation has confidence in my ability to lead and that there is continuity in leadership, which often fosters stability. If my appointment completes the roster of key management positions, it could signify a state of stability in terms of leadership.

Nonetheless, stability is not solely contingent on having all positions filled but also on the effectiveness and cohesion of the leadership team.

The appointment of a CEO provides a sense of direction and stability, signalling to stakeholders that the organisation is moving forward with a clear vision and leadership structure.

What will that stability enable GAAL to achieve?

Stability will enable smoother operations, stable systems and, with processes in place, the authority will streamline workflows, reduce delays and enhance overall efficiency in airport management. Stable operations contribute to a safer and more secure airport environment. Stability in GAAL will deliver a more seamless and enjoyable experience for travellers. With reliable services there will be minimal disruptions.



Airlink connects Polokwane International Airport to all major regional destinations and Skukuza Airport in the Kruger National Park.

Please describe the relationship of GAAL and your team with the stakeholder.

The relationship between GAAL and stakeholders such as the Provincial Government and the Department of Transport and Community Safety is crucial for effective airport management and development. They provide regulatory oversight and set policies related to airport management, safety standards and infrastructure development. They allocate funds for capital projects, maintenance and upgrade of infrastructure. This is essential for expansion and modernisation. GAAL collaborates closely with the Provincial Government to align airport development plans with broader economic and integrated transportation strategies. By working together effectively, these stakeholders ensure the safe, efficient and sustainable operation of airports under GAAL's management while supporting broader regional development objectives.

become a significant cargo hub. GAAL can invest in infrastructure and facilities to accommodate increased cargo traffic, attract logistics companies and facilitate the efficient movement of goods throughout the region.

Polokwane's proximity to popular tourist destinations such as the Kruger National Park and the Victoria Falls presents an opportunity for GAAL to promote the airport as a gateway for tourists visiting the region. Collaborating with local tourism authorities and airlines, we can work to increase awareness of Polokwane as a convenient entry point for exploring nearby attractions. By capitalising on Polokwane's strategic location, GAAL can position the airport as a vital transportation hub serving both domestic and regional markets, thereby driving economic growth and development in the area. ■

What is GAAL doing to take advantage of the strategic location of Polokwane relative to other South African airports and the SADC region?

Leveraging the strategic location of Polokwane relative to other South African airports and the SADC region presents numerous opportunities for GAAL. We can focus on enhancing air connectivity between Polokwane International Airport and other major airports within South Africa and the broader SADC region. This involves negotiating with airlines to establish new routes or increase flight frequencies to key destinations, facilitating easier travel for both passengers and cargo. Given its central location, PIA has the potential to

