



Chairman's 2025 Annual Report: Craig Kelly-Maartens



It is my privilege to provide a broad overview on behalf of our Executive Committee, of the Custodians' strategic progress, governance focus, and key developments over the past year.

While the CEO's report will provide a more detailed account of operational matters, my report reflects on the strategic direction, priorities, and challenges that have shaped our work at an executive and policy level. It also serves to reaffirm our collective commitment to sound governance.

Our Executive Committee has focussed on key priorities, keeping a clear view of both operational and strategic priorities, and ensuring that the Association operates with integrity and transparency. These efforts demonstrate our ongoing commitment to responsible leadership and to promoting ethical, sustainable professional hunting in South Africa.

Key Priorities & Governance

EXCO focused on keeping our Association on a steady path and ensuring we achieve our goals through several key priorities during the year:

- **Strategic Initiatives:** Development of the proposed Custodians' Program of Change which will be implemented in the new year, structured around three core areas – Economy, Environment, and Social.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Continued open communication on various matters affecting the professional hunting sector. Engagement happened with other organisations within the local, regional hunting and international hunting and wildlife sector, the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment and provincial Nature Conservation.
- **Intellectual Property Protection:** Considerable progress was made in securing the Association's intellectual property, with Collective trademark applications filed for the Custodians brand, including word marks and logos, across multiple classes covering education, broadcasting, promotional services, and lobbying.
- **Registrations & Submissions:** After first applying in 2023 and following up with resubmissions and correspondence, our Association has now been registered as an NPO. All reports to the Central Firearms Registrar and SARS have been submitted on time.
- **Operational Effectiveness:** Despite a demanding administrative workload, the Custodians office has successfully advanced governance, strategic, and operational priorities – laying a solid foundation for continued growth and impact. The Custodians office, based at Queenswood, Pretoria, operates on a hybrid schedule, with two staff members, working together in the office partly and remotely.

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved, Custodians has strengthened its foundation, protected its reputation, and continued to move in the right strategic direction.

Financial Results

The budget presented to members at the previous AGM reflected the strong financial position at the time, with a surplus of R494,427, and included Commitments and Obligations of R474,000 for the year, which effectively projected a deficit of R527,242. Through careful and prudent financial management, we are pleased to report that the Custodians closed the year with a surplus of R62,227. This excellent outcome is a testament to the dedication and diligence of our Finance Committee (FINCO), and I extend my sincere appreciation to them for their commitment to ensuring the association's financial stability and sustainability.

Public Relations & Brand Awareness

The 2025 reporting year has also seen significant growth in our brand and communications, reflecting our commitment to professionalism, transparency, and engagement. The launch of a

refreshed corporate identity, combined with a modernised website and an expanded digital presence, has increased the visibility of the Custodians. Since the beginning of the year, the Custodians have initiated a regular newsletter to keep our members informed and engaged. These newsletters provide updates not only on Custodians' activities but also on broader developments within the professional hunting and conservation industry, including legislative changes, announcements, and relevant news.

Industry Engagement

Over the past year, Custodians has continued our focus on building and strengthening relationships with local and international counterpart organisations, government departments, and other stakeholders at national, regional, and international levels. These partnerships have allowed us to share knowledge, exchange best practices, and collaborate on initiatives that promote ethical hunting and sustainable wildlife management. By working closely with our industry peers, we have created a stronger, more unified voice for professional hunters. These connections have not only reinforced our commitment to biodiversity conservation and responsible land use but have also provided invaluable insights into emerging challenges and opportunities, helping us guide the Association strategically while remaining grounded in real-world needs.

Participation in national industry projects remains a key focus for the Custodians, allowing us to actively contribute to the development and advancement of the professional hunting sector. Examples of our engagement include the inclusive process initiated by PHASA regarding the establishment of a Professional Body for the industry, the development of the SAQA National Qualification training module, and our involvement in two SABHSSA events. In addition, we have strengthened institutional partnerships through a Memorandum of Understanding with SA Wildlife College, with a similar agreement with AWEI to be signed shortly. These initiatives ensure that the Custodians play a proactive role in shaping industry standards, professional development, and sustainable hunting practices.

Internationally, we attended the DSC and SCI conventions in the beginning of the year. Alliances with the Dallas Safari Club (DSC) and Safari Club International (SCI) strengthen the Custodians' connection to the global hunting and conservation community. These partnerships provide access to international expertise, promote ethical fair chase standards, support advocacy on sustainable wildlife use, and enhance the association's credibility, committed to responsible hunting and biodiversity conservation.

Our chair-elect Jacques Senekal and Adri also attended the African Wildlife Consultative Forum (AWCF), arranged by the SCIF. Attendance at the AWCF enables Custodians to engage directly with regional governments, conservation authorities, and industry stakeholders on wildlife management and policy. Participation ensures that ethical, sustainable hunting is represented in decision-making, keeps members informed of regulatory developments, and strengthens collaboration across Africa to support science-based conservation and responsible use of wildlife resources.

Adri attended the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) General Assembly in Doha during April. Membership of CIC affirms the Custodians' commitment to ethical, fair chase hunting and sustainable wildlife management. It connects us to a global

network of conservation and hunting professionals, enables participation in international policy discussions, and reinforces the role of responsible hunting as a practical and credible tool for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem stewardship.

Our application for IUCN membership has also been submitted recently. Membership in the IUCN provides the Custodians with a platform to align with internationally recognised conservation standards and principles. It affirms that our commitment to fair chase, ethical hunting, and sustainable use of wildlife is consistent with global best practice. Through this affiliation, we contribute to evidence-based conservation policy, collaborate with experts, and reinforce the role of responsible hunting as a legitimate and valuable tool for biodiversity management and habitat stewardship.

Regionally, Custodians continues to play a leading role through OPHAA, where we hold the position of Chair. All member Associations agreed to uphold the agreed upon cross-border hunting policy and MOU.

Regulatory Affairs

Custodians have strengthened its presence in regulatory and policy forums, ensuring our perspective is considered in decisions that affect the professional hunting and conservation sectors. Through detailed submissions, active participation in consultations, and consistent engagement with authorities, we have reinforced our reputation as a trusted partner in wildlife governance. These important efforts from industry, help shape regulations and policies that support sustainable resource use, while ensuring that ethical and legally compliant hunting practices continue to underpin South Africa's biodiversity and wildlife economy.

Over and above our regular intervention with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) and Provincial Nature Conservation, we were intensively involved with addressing challenges with the Central Firearm Registry, when members experienced with the issuing of Firearm Import Permits to Mozambique earlier this year, which was eventually successfully resolved. We have also had in-depth consultations with both the KZN and the National Department of Veterinary Health when the KZN FMD Protocols were published, to obtain clarity on the transport and export of hunting trophies.

Internationally, we will be represented by our CEO at the CITES Conference of Parties to be held in Uzbekistan within a week from now.

Membership

At the heart of Custodians' strength are our members. Over the past year, we have seen encouraging growth in both membership renewals and new registrations. This progress has been supported by personalised engagement, clear communication, and initiatives aimed at promoting active participation. Programs such as Custodi-Annes and Custodi-Youngs have been particularly impactful, fostering mentorship, community, and future leadership within our membership. By engaging with members, sharing their stories, and celebrating their achievements, we have strengthened both loyalty and engagement, ensuring that Custodians continues to be a credible and representative body for professional hunters and conservation practitioners across South Africa.

Conservation & Transformation

Over the past year, we have made considerable progress in advancing our conservation agenda. Custodians contributed to government consultations at various levels, reinforcing our commitment to sustainable wildlife management and our position as a credible stakeholder in national policy. These efforts help ensure that South Africa's biodiversity remains protected while ethical hunting continues to sustain the conservation economy.

Building on this momentum, the Association will embark on a nationwide roadshow in the coming year—bringing together our conservation and transformation initiatives. This engagement will focus on sharing best practices, capturing member achievements, and deepening collaboration to strengthen both biodiversity protection and industry transformation.

Through continuous dialogue with members and partners, Custodians remains at the forefront of measurable transformation—creating opportunities, expanding capacity, and promoting inclusion across the professional hunting and conservation sectors. By connecting with members both in person and online, we aim to amplify our collective impact and celebrate the meaningful contributions driving the future of our industry.

Staff Excellence

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the exceptional work of **Adri Kitshoff-Botha** and **Nonkie Kunene**, both of whom have gone above and beyond their roles this year.

Adri Kitshoff-Botha has, as always, been brilliant in her role. Her guidance has been exceptional, providing strategic insight, operational oversight, and mentorship whenever needed. Adri's dedication, diligence, and initiative-taking approach have ensured that projects run smoothly and that the Association continues to operate at the highest standards. She has been instrumental in strengthening governance, stakeholder engagement, and member relations — consistently going above and beyond. I will genuinely miss our daily discussions and long WhatsApp voice notes, though she may not miss those as much!

Nonkie Kunene has also been a tremendous asset. Through her professionalism, reliability, and strong work ethic, Nonkie has supported critical operational and strategic initiatives, ensuring programs are delivered efficiently and effectively. Her efforts have reinforced the Association's ability to achieve its mission while maintaining high standards of service and integrity.

In recognition of their years of dedicated service, we have also taken steps to ensure that both Adri and Nonkie are looked after financially and supported in planning for their eventual retirement, reflecting our commitment not only to the Association's success but also to the wellbeing and future security of our exceptional staff.

Together, Adri and Nonkie exemplify the dedication and leadership that make Custodians successful and respected across the professional hunting and conservation sectors.

Farewell and Thanks

As I step down from my role as Chairperson, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported and contributed to Custodians' growth and success. I am deeply thankful to the EXCO members, whose dedication, insight, and commitment to responsible leadership have been inspiring. I am particularly grateful to Adri Kitshoff-Botha and Nonkie Kunene, whose tireless professionalism and support have been vital in keeping the Association running smoothly. To our members, your trust, encouragement, and belief in our shared vision have meant more to me than I can express. It has been a privilege to serve you and to represent an Association built on such integrity, passion, and unity. To our partners and stakeholders, your collaboration and commitment have strengthened everything we stand for and will continue to guide Custodians into a bright and enduring future.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the incredible support of my family, whose encouragement has been a cornerstone of my work. To my wife, Kate, in particular, your patience, understanding, and unwavering belief in me have made all the difference. I also want to thank my children and extended family, whose love, guidance, and steadfast support have been my foundation — without you, none of this would have been possible.

Craig Kelly-Maartens
Chairman

CEO's 2025 Annual Review Report: Adri Kitshoff-Botha



Dear conference delegates,

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our members and guests for attending our annual conference and for your ongoing support.

Although our financial year runs from 1 September to 31 August, this report covers the period since our previous Annual General Meeting, held on 26 November 2024. EXCO have focused on several key priorities during the year, which will be included in the Chairman's report.

The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed overview of the Association's operational activities and initiatives across its various functional areas. In contrast, the Chairman's Report presents a broader, strategic reflection, highlighting our collective achievements, leadership direction, and the continued growth and influence of Custodians within the sector.

EXCO:

Craig Kelly-Maartens (Chairperson and FINCO member)
Jacques Senekal (Chair-Elect and FINCO)
WJ Theron (Vice Chair, Treasurer and FINCO chairperson)
Douw Pelser (Conservation & Landowner Liaison and FINCO member)
Howard Knott (Conservation & Landowner Liaison)
Jannie Otto (Membership)
Mark Ivy (Transformation)
Mike Currie (Membership)

GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC PROGRESS

Over the past year, the Executive Committee (EXCO) have met six times:

26 November 2024
27 November 2024
10 & 11 March 2025
28 June 2025
1 October 2025
28 October 2025

GOVERNANCE MATTERS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Program of Change

EXCO approved the Custodians Program of Change with the following three Strategic Objectives:

S01: Environmental
S02: Socio
S03: Economic

A roadshow will be undertaken early 2026, to meet with members as part of Phase one of the program, to determine a baseline of Custodians' contribution to conservation and transformation.

- Position Statements

EXCO reviewed and developed several key position statements to guide the Association's stance on sensitive and emerging matters:

Following incidents where inappropriate hunting footage was circulated online, EXCO developed a **Proposed Custodians Statement on Social Media Conduct**, aimed at protecting the image of responsible hunting and South Africa as a hunting destination. The statement promotes respect, accuracy, constructive dialogue, privacy, and legality online. It further outlines the appropriate procedures for responding to irresponsible posts, distinguishing between internal member conduct and external parties, to ensure measured, professional handling in all cases.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential abuse of **rhino vita-darting** as a means for hunters to achieve Big-5 status. **EXCO reaffirmed its current policy**, which supports vita-darting strictly under veterinary supervision and for legitimate management, conservation, or translocation purposes, and only where all relevant legislation and permits are adhered to. The matter remains under review to ensure continued ethical alignment.

- Membership Governance and Disciplinary Matters

EXCO maintained oversight of membership standards and disciplinary procedures to protect the integrity of the Association.

Tribunal Proceedings: One disciplinary tribunal was convened during the year, with independent legal oversight. Membership termination for this member was suspended for five years under strict conditions, including restrictions on nominations and proposals within the Association.

Complaints: All complaints received are being dealt with in accordance with the Custodians Constitution and Disciplinary Rules. We have experienced members resigning after complaints were brought against them, without the process being finalised. Custodians do have a rule that such a member would not be able to rejoin at a later stage, until the matter has then been properly dealt with.

- Compliance and Registration

Consistent adherence to regulatory obligations reflects our organisation's commitment to transparency, accountability, and sound financial governance:

- **Registration as NPO:** The Association has eventually obtained Non-Profit Organisation Status from the Department of Social Development after re-submitting our original application of two years ago.
- **Trademark Registration:** Legal advisors Spoor-Fisher were appointed to manage the registration of the Custodians trademark. The process, expected to take approximately two to three years, will cover multiple goods and service classes. Preliminary registrability searches have been conducted to ensure the mark's distinctiveness and compliance and the registration has been lodged.
- **Central Firearms Registry:** Over and above submitting our annual report to the CFR on time at the end of 2024, we have issued quite a number of new Section 16 Professional Hunter Status certificates to members who need to apply for firearms in terms as Professional Hunters. We also supported members with Endorsements of their Firearm Licence applications for Professional Hunters and Business purposes.
- **SARS:** We have fulfilled all Custodians' fiduciary responsibilities by ensuring full compliance with the South African Revenue Service (SARS). Throughout the year, all required monthly and annual reports were accurately prepared and submitted on time.

Industry Engagement

SOUTH AFRICA

Custodians has continued active engagement across the South African wildlife and hunting sector. Our working relationship with other Associations remains strong, with mutual attendance of **PHASA, SATTA and WRSAs** conferences, ensuring alignment on sectoral issues.

At a **SABHSSA** Best Practice Workshop, Custodians contributed significantly by presenting on the professional hunting value chain, regulatory compliance, and best practices, demonstrating the sector's ethical and sustainable approach and highlighting opportunities for mentorship and skills transfer.

With the support of other associations within the sector, we obtained membership of the Eastern Cape Safari Industry Committee, SECSICOM, where we advocate, amongst others, for proper permit use and compliance.

We also participate in the South African Tourism & Sector Advocacy. At the TBCSA annual conference, key developments in tourism and travel were highlighted, including the rollout of Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETAs) for international visitors and the growing use of AI in the travel sector. Custodians has leveraged these insights to strengthen sector advocacy, branding, and promotion, emphasizing sustainability.

Custodians have strengthened collaborations with a range of organisations. We are proud to announce the entering into a MOU with **SA Wildlife College** and expect to sign the MOU with AWEI soon. Thereby, we aim to promote joint research initiatives, capacity building, community-based projects, and knowledge sharing on sustainable hunting practices, with mutual obligations to uphold each other's reputations and meet at least twice yearly.

At the end of July, Custodians attended and made a presentation at a workshop at SAWC, arranged by the SANDF, to discuss ways to unlock the value of the **SANDF** available land through responsible hunting; a sustainable model for funding, habitat protection, and rural empowerment.

SADC AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Custodians was elected as Chairperson of the **OPHAA** and attended various meetings during the course of the year, with the AGM which was held during the AWCF meeting in Zambia during September.

In light of hunting incidents in Mozambique, clear guidelines about hunting in Mozambique were developed and shared via newsletters.

INTERNATIONAL

Custodians attended the DSC and SCI Conventions in the beginning of the year, as well as the CIC General Assembly which was held in Doha during April. We remain engaged with international organisations such as **DSC, CIC, SCI, and Conservation Force** and we once again attended the **AWCF**, which is an initiative of the SCIF. We also participate in the **International SUO Group** which meets virtually. We will also attend the upcoming **CITES CoP** to be held in Uzbekistan from 24 November to 6 December 2025.

Regulatory

Throughout the past year, Custodians actively engaged with government, provincial authorities, and international bodies to represent our members and the professional hunting sector within the broader conservation and sustainable-use framework.

Efforts were focused on influencing legislation, strengthening relationships with regulatory authorities, contributing to biodiversity policy development, and ensuring that the principles of sustainable utilisation remain a cornerstone of South Africa's conservation model.

LEGISLATIVE & POLICY SUBMISSIONS

During the reporting period, Custodians made several key submissions to government, reinforcing the Association's role as a credible stakeholder in conservation policy development. Although we did not attend the national Elephant Indaba in September we have submitted substantive comments to the proposed *Elephant Heritage Strategy*, addressing sustainability, ethics, and rural economic impact.

Following Foot & Mouth Disease outbreaks in KZN, and the establishment of Disease Management Areas (DMAs), Custodians liaised with veterinary authorities. It was eventually confirmed that trophies can be moved from DMAs with appropriate *Red Cross permits* and compliance with treatment protocols. Members were advised to obtain written exemptions from State Veterinarians and maintain full documentation during transport to mitigate compliance risks.

INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY AFFAIRS: CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)

Custodians continued active involvement in international conservation governance through participation in CITES-related processes:

- Preparation for CoP20 (Uzbekistan, Nov 2025): Input on industry proposals

- Attendance at SADC CITES Joint Working Group Meeting: Representation by Custodians as one of only three SADC hunting tourism associations. Discussions focused on regional implications of CITES proposals and sustainable-use policies.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT & FORUM ENGAGEMENTS

Custodians continued to represent our members' interests in several DFFE- or Provincial led consultative forums:

- Two **National Wildlife Forum meetings**, where we actively participated in meetings alongside other associations within the sector.
- Three Interprovincial Professional Hunters Committee (**IPPHC**) meetings – Engagement on professional hunting and conservation policy
- Two **Biodiversity Sector Transformation Committee** meetings, ensuring inclusive participation and transformation in biodiversity use
- Two **CITES** Proposal Workshops, with reviews and feedback from DFFE and the Scientific Authority
- **Biodiversity Economy Mega Hub** regarding the launching of provincial biodiversity economy development process
- **Game Meat Mega Hub** Workshop, where we provided input on a national game meat development framework
- **Game Meat** Formalisation workshop
- Three **National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan meetings (NBSAP)**: Contribution to SA's new Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan. The Association continues to advocate for sustainable use of wildlife as a key mechanism for achieving biodiversity and economic resilience
- **National Department of Tourism**: Tourism Growth & Partnership Plan Execution Lab.

PROVINCIAL ENGAGEMENTS

- **Limpopo (LEDET)**

Elephant Trophy Permits: LEDET published a notice confirming that non-exportable elephant hunting permits will be issued, ensuring equitable access for both South African and international hunters.

Industry Engagement: Custodians, represented by members Howard Knott and Robin Fourie, participated in a high-level engagement addressing permit delays, predator management challenges, and the need for improved regulatory systems. LEDET committed to further cooperation and transparency.

- **North West (DEDECT & NWPTB)**

Custodians attended MEC Bitsa Lenkopane's budget and policy statement to the Provincial Legislature, highlighting conservation priorities.

Engagements with NW Parks & Tourism Board leadership (Acting CEO Jonathan Denga and Chairperson Khorommbe Matibe) reinforced recognition of the Custodians' contribution to sustainable professional hunting.

Elephant Task Team Workshop (Madikwe & Pilanesberg): Representation by Michael Botha. Focused on elephant management, biodiversity impact, and socio-economic considerations.

- **Eastern Cape:**

- Two **SECSICOM** (Eastern Cape) meetings

- **National & KZN Veterinary Health** meeting to discuss the transport and export of hunting trophies from FMD control areas in KZN

NEW REGISTRATIONS & RENEWALS

Custodians once achieved notable growth during the year under review with a net growth of 12%. It is exciting to see that all membership categories, except for the Retired category, has grown over the past year.

The annual membership renewal process commenced in December 2024, with initial invoices circulated to all members on 12 December. Early renewals were encouraging, and by the end of February 2025, overall renewals have already reached 72%. A more personal and structured approach to communication by the office staff, has significantly improved collection efficiency, strengthened relationships with members, and set a solid foundation for future renewal cycles.

MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITY

Recognising the importance of fostering a strong and connected membership community, new initiatives were proposed and developed to encourage greater participation:

- **Custodi-*Annes*:** A platform for women (wives, partners, and female members) to participate more actively in the Custodians family. The group will serve as a support network and contribute to the development of conference programmes that include activities of interest for partners attending events.
- **Custodi-*YOUNGS*:** A youth-focused initiative aimed at members aged 18–35. A sliding-scale membership fee for newly qualified professional hunters have already been introduced. The group will provide opportunities for younger members to become actively involved and is designed to strengthen the next generation of leadership and promote a sense of belonging among younger professionals.

RECOGNITION FOR PRIOR LEARNING & NQF PROFESSIONAL HUNTING QUALIFICATION

Custodians continues to inform our members of the national, accredited Professional Hunting Qualification and have entered into a Service Level Agreement with Eco-Ranger for the RPL process. As communicated with our members, the NQF is not a legal requirement at this stage to obtain or retain a PH permit, but we have advised members to consider obtaining their RPL.

We have also attended workshops arranged by PHASA, to discuss the way forward with the Professional Body for Professional Hunting at the first workshop. This initiative not only enhances professional standards within the sector but also provides a valuable platform to connect with future members early in their professional development. At a follow-up session facilitated by SAQA, we have also provided input to the development of the Modules for a SAQA NQF level 5 qualification at a follow-up session.

Public Relations & Brand Awareness:

The 2025 reporting year marked a period of significant growth and consolidation for Custodians' public image and communications. Building on the rebranding initiative approved at the previous AGM, the Association's visibility, professionalism, and brand cohesion have all strengthened across multiple platforms. From the successful rollout of the new corporate identity and website to enhanced digital engagement through newsletters and social media, Custodians continues to expand its reach and reinforce its reputation as a credible and progressive voice in professional hunting and conservation.

CORPORATE IDENTITY & REBRANDING

As presented at the 2024 AGM by Mr Flaps van der Merwe from *The Oaks*, the company officially handed

over Custodians' new Corporate Identity in early February 2025. This milestone marked the transition to a refreshed and modernised brand identity, inspired by the colours of blue skies and sunsets, reflecting Custodians' ethos of responsibility, integrity, and connection to nature.

The implementation of the new brand was rolled out across all communications channels, including newsletters, the website, and social media. Member and non-member feedback on the new branding has been overwhelmingly positive, with the Association's new look and tone successfully positioning Custodians as both professional and accessible.

To ensure consistency, members requesting the logo for use on clothing, merchandise, or promotional material received official files and guidelines. This process will remain ongoing to accommodate new members and ensure uniform, professional application of the Custodians brand across all touchpoints.

Website Development

A major highlight of the year was the revamp and relaunch of the Custodians website (www.thecustodians.co.za). The redesigned site features improved functionality, mobile responsiveness, and enhanced navigation.

Following the launch, referral traffic from social media increased drastically, indicating greater cross-platform engagement and wider reach among members and the public.

Newsletters and Publications

Launched at the beginning of 2025, the bi-weekly Custodians Newsletter has become a cornerstone of the Association's communication strategy. By the end of October, 20 editions had been published, featuring policy updates, industry news, event information, and professional opportunities. This initiative has strengthened communication with our members, ensuring they remain well-informed and connected to both the association and the wider industry.

Looking ahead, plans are in place to introduce new features, including Member Spotlights, curated content contributions, and promotional opportunities for industry partners through adverts and sponsored inserts.

Social Media

The Custodians' social media presence, particularly on Facebook and Instagram, continues to show steady growth and positive engagement. While organic growth remains healthy, reach is increasingly supported by boosted posts, highlighting the potential benefit of allocating modest promotional budgets to sustain visibility.

Responsible Social Media Use

In response to inappropriate online commentary observed within the broader hunting community, Custodians published a "Pitfalls of Social Media" article in the 4 July newsletter, reaffirming the Association's social media position statement.

Members were reminded that while everyone is entitled to personal opinions, public comments made by Custodians members, particularly those critical of other associations or individuals, may be perceived as representing the Association's official stance. The communication emphasised professionalism, respect, and industry unity, reinforcing Custodians' commitment to maintaining a positive and credible public image.

RESEARCH:

A key objective has been to ensure that members have access to credible and relevant research. To this end, we have created a dedicated Research Source Page on the Custodians website. We are in the process of publishing approved research papers about conservation, sustainable hunting, biodiversity management, policy frameworks, and ecological studies. Partnerships with academic institutions are being explored to enrich this repository with peer-reviewed studies. EXCO has already approved the signing of a MOU with African Wildlife Economy Institute (AWEI).

During 2025, members were also invited to contribute to several key national and international research surveys, including the IUCN Red List Assessment for Serval, Safari Club International Foundation's (SCIF) Anti-poaching and Landscape Protection Strategy (ALPS), the Biodiversity Expenditure Review Survey, and the TBCSA Tourism Safety South Africa Survey.

Research conducted by NWU's Prof. Peet van der Merwe and Andrea Saayman highlighted the economic significance of hunting tourism in South Africa, offering valuable data that will inform future advocacy and strategic direction. Prof. van der Merwe is scheduled to present these findings at the annual Custodians Conference.

CONSERVATION:

We are excited about the possibilities of the Custodians' Program of Change which we expect to provide us with extremely important information about our members' involvement in conservation projects. The Program will provide an opportunity to gather information on conservation projects undertaken by both Custodians and its members, tracking financial contributions, physical participation, job creation, and measurable outcomes. The platform aims to consolidate the Association's conservation impact and provide transparent, aggregated reporting on the sector's contributions to biodiversity and community development.

Custodians continued to engage with Nature Speaks & Responds to integrate traditional healing practices into sustainable wildlife management. Meetings explored collaboration on sourcing, handling, and storing materials used in traditional practices, ensuring legal compliance and sustainability. This collaboration will be highlighted at the 2025 Custodians Conference, demonstrating the intersection between professional hunting, cultural practices, and conservation.

LANDOWNER LIAISON:

Engagement with WRSA and landowners remains central to Custodians' mission, ensuring that conservation, sustainable hunting, and responsible land management practices are aligned.

Transformation

We were very positive about participating in the National Youth Employment Service (**YES**) program, to explore collaborative opportunities aimed at fostering meaningful participation in the conservation and professional hunting sectors by empowering young individuals through employment, skills development, community upliftment and training. The discussions focused on identifying ways in which Custodians can support and align with YES initiatives, particularly in facilitating access to career pathways within the sustainable use sector. The project was unfortunately put on hold by the organisers, due to a lack of funding.

The designing of the **Program of Change**, provides a structured overview of members' contributions to sectoral transformation, creating a transparent and integrated reporting tool. The platform will enable

Custodians and its members to report on members' activities such as:

- Skills development and training;
- Beneficiaries of upskilling programs;
- Mentorship and structured development initiatives; and
- Skills transfer and apprenticeship programs

Custodians has identified several accredited modules and training courses through **Agri-SETA and CATHSSETA** to upskill members and their staff. These include:

- Animal & Plant Production: Levels 1–3, covering husbandry, crop science, mixed farming, and horticulture.
- Professional Hunting & Wildlife Management: NQF Level 4, including tracking, firearm use, trophy handling, conservation ethics, and client care.
- Hospitality, Tourism & Leadership: Levels 2–4, covering guiding, culinary skills, supervisory training, tourism operations, and field leadership.
- Short Learning Programs: 1–5 day courses in food safety, hygiene, wildlife monitoring, and conservation practice.

These programs provide opportunities to strengthen operational, conservation, and professional hunting competencies, while supporting sector-wide transformation goals.

WORKSHOPS & SECTOR ENGAGEMENT:

Custodians representatives actively participated in the SABHSSA skills development workshop at the Southern African Wildlife College in May 2025. The workshop focused on practical hunting skills, firearm safety, tracking, and ethical hunting practices, reinforcing the Association's commitment to skills development and transformation in the sector. We also attended and presented at the SABHSSA Best Practice Workshop, which brought together key role players from across the hunting and wildlife sectors to explore how South Africa can build a more inclusive wildlife economy.

The Custodians presentation focused on the broader hunting value chain, including outfitting, taxidermy, logistics, and professional hunting, and how it connects to related sectors like tourism, game meat production, and live animal sales. The workshop emphasized that transformation in the sector depends on skills development, fair access, and trust-building, with initiatives like the SANParks Wildlife Economy Programme helping to open doors for emerging hunters and communities.

In closing:

This year marks the eighth anniversary of the Custodians for Professional Hunting & Conservation South Africa; still a relatively young organisation when compared with others in our sector. Yet, as can be seen from the reflection on our journey and accomplishments over the past year, it is evident that Custodians has established a firm and respected foundation within the South African wildlife and professional hunting industry.

As we conclude another successful year, I want to wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a prosperous, joyful 2026. May the coming year bring continued success, good health, and happiness to you and your loved ones.

Thank you.

Adri Kitshoff-Botha

TREASURER'S 2025 Annual Report: WJ Theron

The Independent Reviewer's Report is provided below. The balance sheet and income statement will be discussed in detail during the closed session of the AGM.

The 2024/25 financial year once again delivered excellent results, largely driven by the significant auction income generated at last year's gala dinner. We closed the year with a surplus of R62,227, exceeding the budgeted deficit of R527,242 which included obligations and commitments of R474,000, following the substantial surplus of the previous year.

We also continued to manage our debtors' book effectively, ensuring strong financial stability. The budget for 2024/25 will be presented to members during the closed session of the AGM.

WJ Theron
Treasurer



Independent Reviewer's Report

To the Members of Custodians of Professional Hunting and Conservation South Africa

We have reviewed the annual financial statements of Custodians of Professional Hunting and Conservation South Africa, set out on pages 7 to 17, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 August 2025 and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the annual financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

Executive Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The executive committee are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these annual financial statements in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Companies Act of South Africa, and for such internal control as the executive committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of annual financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Independent Reviewer's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on these annual financial statements. We conducted our review in accordance with the International Standard on Review Engagements (ISRE) 2400 (Revised), Engagements to Review Historical Financial Statements (ISRE 2400 (Revised)). ISRE 2400 (Revised) requires us to conclude whether anything has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the annual financial statements, taken as a whole, are not prepared in all material respects in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. This Standard also requires us to comply with relevant ethical requirements.

A review of annual financial statements in accordance with ISRE 2400 (Revised) is a limited assurance engagement. The independent reviewer performs procedures, primarily consisting of making inquiries of management and others within the entity, as appropriate, and applying analytical procedures, and evaluates the evidence obtained.

The procedures performed in a review are substantially less than those performed in an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion on these annual financial statements.

Conclusion

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that these annual financial statements do not present fairly, in all material respects the financial position of Custodians of Professional Hunting and Conservation South Africa as at 31 August 2025, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Companies Act of South Africa.

L. REYNEKE & ASSOCIATES INCORPORATED Reg No: 1995/000503/21

Registered Auditors • Tax Advisors • Secretarial Practitioners • Management Consultants • Accountants

PHYSICAL ADDRESS: 5 Bauhinia Street, 30 Cambridge Office Park, Highveld Techno Park, Centurion, 0169

POSTAL ADDRESS: Postnet Suite 015, Private Bag X1007, Lyttleton, Gauteng, 0140 • **TELEPHONE:** (011) 315 4283

DIRECTOR: L. Reyneke, CA (SA) RA

ASSOCIATE: ST Dawson, AGA (SA)



Independent Reviewer's Report

Other Reports Required by the Companies Act of South Africa

The annual financial statements include the Executive Committee's Report as required by the Companies Act of South Africa. The directors are responsible for the Executive Committee's Report. Our conclusion on the annual financial statements does not cover the Executive Committee's Report and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our independent review of the annual financial statements, we have read the Executive Committee's Report and, in doing so, considered whether the Executive Committee's Report is materially inconsistent with the annual financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the independent review, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of the Executive Committee's Report, we will report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

L Reyneke & Associates Inc.
Leonard Reyneke CA(SA RA
16 November 2025

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