

FleetWatch

EMag Vol 90 / 2025

South Africa's Leading
Online Trucking Magazine

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Sasol Truck Stop
**Trucking
Wellness
opens 21st
clinic on
N17**

**Commission
points to truck
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▲ Dumisani Bengu, Senior Vice President: Downstream Energy Marketing & Sales & Managing Director of Sasol Oil Pty Ltd. "The Sasol N17 Truck Stop is our flagship and it's just the start."

Cover Story

New Sasol N17 Truck Stop. It's a winner

While most South Africans know Sasol from its many branded fuel stations across the country, the company has not been seen as a Truck Stop champion. That is, until now. With the recent opening of the new Sasol N17 Truck Stop - a top-class facility just outside of Secunda - you can expect to see Sasol making further inroads into the trucking sector with the roll out of more Truck Stops around the country writes Patrick O'Leary.

The new Sasol N17 Truck Stop puts on the trucker's map a facility that offers truck drivers everything they need when taking a break from the road. Four words were repeated from the speakers during the official opening ceremony. They were "home, comfort, care and dignity" - and that's the main intention of this Truck Stop. To provide drivers with all the facilities that make them feel like they've arrived home.

For Sasol, the opening of this new facility marks a milestone in its drive to go further than just being a fuel provider. As Dumisani Bengu, Senior Vice President: Downstream Energy Marketing & Sales & Managing Director of Sasol Oil Pty Ltd, told *FleetWatch* at the launch: "It's part of our broader strategy of improving mobility throughout the country and is a commitment to the country's economic growth. This is our flagship and it's just the start."

When asked why it has taken so long for Sasol to get active in facilities such as truck stops, he said it aligned with Sasol embarking on a drive to re-imagine itself.

"This came with a concept started back in 2019 called Sasol 2.0 where we embarked on strategies to reimagine ourselves and become more customer centric as opposed to just a fuel provider. It starts with fuel but goes beyond into convenience needs - and this is the first example of how we are achieving that for truck drivers and fleet operators. Our intention is to copy and paste this facility - with even more refinements in the future - and replicate it throughout the country," he said.

While deserving a pat on the back for all this, Sasol acknowledged the critical role of its partners including local government, SMMEs, suppliers and last but certainly not least, retailer Renee de Waal,

▶ 4

► her frontline staff and her team of directors, whose customer-centric approach will drive the day-to-day operations of the TruckStop. A large government contingent attended the opening, including the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport in Mpumalanga, Mr Thulasizwe Thomo.

Catering to drivers' needs

FleetWatch spoke to Renee de Waal and wow, here's a lady who has sincere and genuine empathy for truck drivers. What exists in the N17 Truck Stop is not just a thumb suck. De Waal interacted over the years with many trucks drivers to establish their needs from a Truck Stop.

"It was simple things like fresh water which they battle to get on the road. So we've put in a water fountain where they can get free water. They want a safe and secure place to relax, they want their loads to be safe, they want WiFi, an entertainment facility with TV and pool tables, they want to shower and have a place to wash their clothes and they want good quality but not over-priced food. Reacting to their desires, we have established all the facilities that meet those needs...plus more," she says.

The 'more' is an outside gym where drivers can exercise and a Boma where they can cook, chat around a fire and enjoy music. "Some of them prefer cooking their own meals so we've enabled that," says De Waal. There's also a soccer field and a basketball area for the sporty types. Oh yes, and an on-site barber.

With more women drivers coming into the industry, they have also been catered for with separate showers that lock when occupied. There is even a shop in the shower area to buy toiletries and other items.

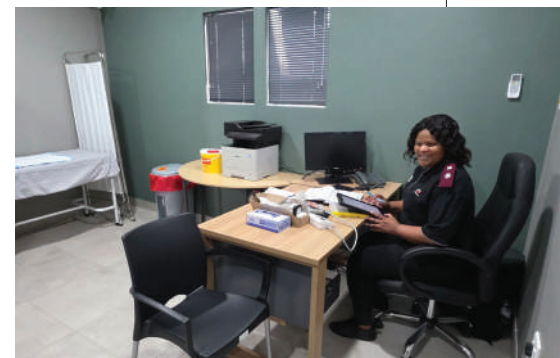
All round security is tight with controlled entry and exit, perimeter fencing with roving security guards and 87 cameras positioned in strategic places which monitor all movements.

And the truck operator has not been forgotten either. A computer



► Musa Ndlovu, National Secretary of the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry - under which Trucking Wellness falls - officially opens the 21st Trucking Wellness clinic.

◄ Renee de Waal who, along with her management team, will run the day-to-day operations of the Sasol N17 Truck Stop. This lady had genuine empathy for truck drivers.



21st Wellness Clinic

► Sister Ziliswa Maganda waiting for her first truck driver client in the new Trucking Wellness clinic.

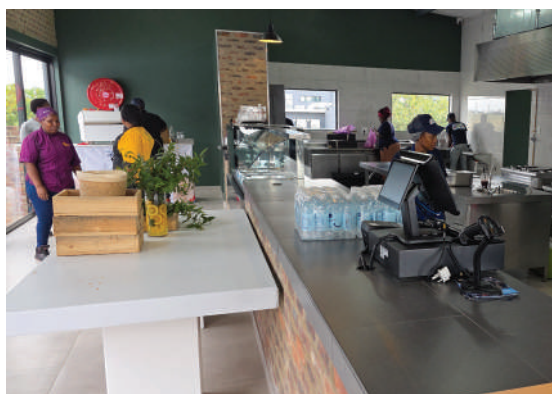
programme has been specifically written to enable truck operators to have their own portals which they can log into, sign in their own trucks and see when their trucks are entering or exiting the Truck Stop.

This programme also allows De Waal to monitor live the number of trucks in the yard at any time. She taps on her phone while we're ► 5

Cover Photograph

Tertius Wessels, project manager for Trucking Wellness with Famida Rahman, General Manager, Funds and Wellness Administration, NBCRFLI, at the celebration day of the opening of the Sasol N17 Truck Stop and the 21st Trucking Wellness clinic.

Home from home



▲ Canteen



▲ Showers

talking. "At the moment there are 22 trucks parked and we've had 2 057 trucks come in since Monday this week," she says with a satisfied smile.

21st clinic for Trucking Wellness

While this may be Sasol's first flagship Truck Stop, it also marked a big celebration for Trucking Wellness with the opening of its 21st truck stop wellness clinic around the country. So, it's number 21 in 25 years of its existence - a magnificent achievement.

Celebrating this milestone was a full contingent of management from the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry - under which Trucking Wellness falls - led by National Secretary Musa Ndlovu who officially opened the clinic. Also there was Tertius Wessels, project manager for Trucking Wellness along with other managerial, nursing and support staff.

While this clinic is permanently stationed inside the building, on



▲ Gym ▼ Laundry



display was also one of the Mobile Clinics used to visit truck depots for driver wellness checks.

Trucking Wellness started its clinics in converted containers, many of which are still in operation doing the job admirably. It has now moved to a hybrid situation where the clinics are housed in both containers and buildings. If premises allow for an in-house clinic, that's where the clinic will be. If not, the clinics will operate from converted containers.

The important thing is that Trucking Wellness will always be there to support the industry as it grows - as it has done for the past 25 years. This organisation is world class and has rendered superb and vital services not only to the truck drivers of South Africa but also to surrounding communities - and will continue to do so.

The clinic at the Sasol N17 Truck Stop will initially be open from around 16h00 to 22h00 and has fully



▲ The full package



▲ Happy day at the Sasol N17 Truck Stop for these drivers seen with Caroline Page, Manager Partnership & Enablement, Sasol Mobility Fleet Business.

qualified nursing staff on-hand to provide medical checks, treatment, counselling and recommendations.

And what do the drivers think of all this? "It's great. It's what we want," is what one driver I spoke to from East Rand Bulk told me. Another driver, from Lieben Logistics, echoed that sentiment.

There's a saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Well, those drivers ate and they liked what the Sasol N17 Truck Stop is serving. They'll be back - as will many others. It's a winner. □


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SA's Trucking Status **Competition, NEVs** **and policy priorities**

At naamsa The Automotive Business Council's SA Auto Week held in Gqeberha, Jan Aichinger, Managing Director of MAN Automotive South Africa and naamsa Vice President for Heavy Commercial OEMs, addressed the realities facing South Africa's commercial vehicle sector. Not only did he highlight the commercial vehicle market's competitiveness, the scale of its economic contribution but also outlined four urgent areas for government action to be taken given that Southern African truck transporters are becoming subject to increasing pressure to decarbonise their fleets in the transition to new energy vehicles (NEVs).

▲ Jan Aichinger, Managing Director of MAN Automotive South Africa and Vice President for Heavy Commercial OEMs at naamsa The Automotive Business Council.

Aichinger kicked off by praising the increased attention naamsa is giving to trucking under the council's President, Billy Tom and CEO Mikel Mabasa. Billy Tom is CEO of Isuzu Motors South Africa. *FleetWatch* also welcomes this as we have always felt that naamsa has traditionally paid full attention to the car market and scant attention to the trucking sector. This, according to Aichinger, has now changed. About time we'd say.

Market context and competitiveness

Welcoming the growing focus on commercial vehicles within naamsa he contrasted the sector with passenger cars: "Obviously, the biggest difference between the passenger car industry and commercial vehicles is simply that our customers buy investment goods and hence we have to

Market Context & Competitive Awareness

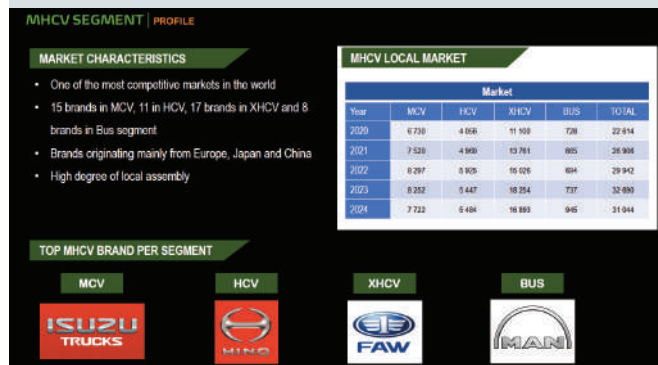


Illustration 1

Economic footprint & regional growth

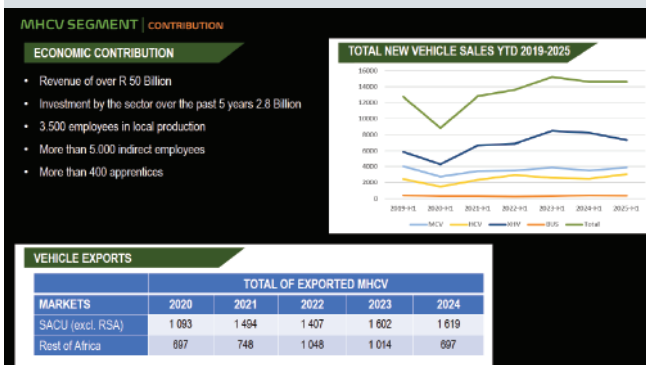


Illustration 2

Trucking plays a crucial role in African economies. The transport sector is expected to be one of the big winners of the African Continental Free Trade Area where higher production will create local jobs and open opportunities for more localisation.

NEV transition & policy priorities



Illustration 3

convince them with facts and proof of reliable operation, whereas with passenger cars it is mainly about emotions.”

He emphasised South Africa’s highly competitive truck market: “Seventeen different brands compete in the XHCV segment. Seventeen brands for just under 17 000 trucks – an average of 1 000 units per manufacturer. If one compares it to international markets such as the US or the European market, dear colleagues from the dinky toy side of the business, you are complaining about increasing competition? Welcome to our world.”

Looking at 2024 and 2025 market performance, he noted the uneven trends across segments: medium commercial vehicles down 6.4%, heavy commercial vehicles stable, extra-heavy vehicles down 7.5%, and buses up 28.2%. (See Illustration 1).

“Usually commercial vehicle sales are an earlier indicator of a

country’s economic state,” he said, highlighting how mining downturns affected truck replacement cycles.

Economic footprint and regional growth

Aichinger drew attention to the industry’s scale and societal contribution: “More than 8 500 people are employed by the 17 brands. About 3 500 are employees in production and service and a further 5 000 work in sales and administration. (See Illustration 2)

“The industry is committed to transformation and has made big progress not only by offering an average of 400 apprenticeships on an annual basis but also opening up opportunities for females while traditionally being a male dominated industry.”

He stressed the potential of regional trade: “Trucking plays a critical role in African economies. The transport sector is expected to be one of the big winners

of the African Continental Free Trade Area where higher production volume will not only create more local jobs, it will also open opportunities for more localisation.”

Transitioning to NEVs and policy priorities

With Southern African truck transporters subject now to increasing pressure to decarbonise their fleets, Aichinger outlined four urgent areas for government action: (See Illustration 3).

NEV transition requirements

“An encouraging trend is the increasing introduction of electric trucks and buses. However, the actual sales numbers remain insignificant: 26 EV sales in 2024,” he said.

“Challenges include the much higher upfront costs and the lack of public charging infrastructure. A high-speed, high-capacity ▶ 10

►9 charging network is needed to make battery electric commercial vehicles viable.

“The introduction of NEVs into the local market has created additional challenges for commercial vehicle manufacturers, resulting in a weight penalty of 3 metric tons and a length penalty of up to 1.5 metres compared to equivalent ICE commercial vehicles. This penalty is driven by the battery packs or gas tanks needed for trucks and buses to achieve range.

“This over-weight and over-length penalty is further compounded by the size of the existing trailer fleet of about 220 000 units legislated around ICE technology.

“Legislation therefore needs to be amended for NEVs only, to compensate for these penalties and allow operators to use the existing trailer fleet,” he urged.

ITAC tariff application

“How little current legislation caters for EVs is demonstrated by the fact that ICE vehicles are duty free if imported as SKD. However, the current definition under Rebate Item 317.07 does not make provision for EVs!” he noted.

“There are more than 150 kits on order, soon to be imported for locally built buses. A duty concession import window is required to encourage the early introduction of NEV commercial vehicles.”

Regulatory environment

“On Cleaner Fuels 2, this has been a long-standing issue dating back to 2014. The date has kept moving to the current target of 1 July 2027,” he added. “This date cannot be moved any longer. At the same time a firm date for the introduction of the Euro 5 emission standard must be established.”

Government support

“We need various government departments to deal with the various legislation changes. We need the DTIC to support the industry by taking the lead

and coordinating the various workstreams,” stressed Aichinger. “And we need it less bureaucratic and we need it fast.”

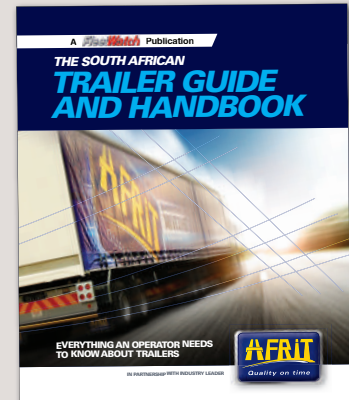
He concluded with a reminder of the trucking sector’s socio-economic centrality: “The significance of the MHCV sector in the country’s economy is unquestionable as the transport of goods and people affects the entire economy.”

Editor’s Comment: Aichinger’s insights underline a simple but urgent truth: South Africa’s commercial vehicle industry cannot transition to new energy technologies while facing outdated legislation, restrictive tariff structures and fragmented government oversight. Naamsa and its members must continue to lobby decisively for NEV-ready regulations, rationalised import tariffs and a coordinated policy environment. Only then can the sector protect jobs, grow local manufacturing and move confidently toward a cleaner, more competitive freight economy.

And that is precisely why *FleetWatch* welcomes the increased accent being placed on the trucking sector by naamsa The Automotive Business Council. It is not only NEV regulations that the industry needs to lobby Government on. There are other issues as well. As such *FleetWatch* is dedicating this song by Josh Grobin to naamsa. Click on the link below. With your new focus on trucking, this sector will be able to stand on mountains and walk on stormy seas. We’ll all be a lot stronger when we are on your shoulders. Go for it!

[Click here for the dedicated song.](#)

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- Engen truck stop directory links, showing nearby Engen stops so drivers can find services and free wellness clinics easily





Madlanga Commission points to a ‘truck-targeting operation’

The Chairman of the Anti-Truck Hijacking Forum in South Africa has highlighted a number of key issues and emerging risks in the Boksburg and greater Johannesburg area that have surfaced at the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry, as well as from recent crime data. Here's his report and it's not a pretty picture.

In essence, the Madlanga Commission is probing allegations that organised criminal networks have infiltrated parts of law enforcement, including specialised metro police units and are actively facilitating serious crimes such as hijacking, kidnapping and cargo theft.

Evidence before the Commission points to a “truck-targeting operation” where rogue officers allegedly hijacked high-value loads and then sold the cargo back to the owners or their insurers, effectively turning law-enforcement resources into a criminal business model.

Testimony on an EMPD SWAT/

specialised unit based in Ekurhuleni (which covers Boksburg, Benoni, Brakpan, etc.) alleges that members are implicated in murder, extortion, kidnapping, theft and hijacking, including:

- A case where a shop owner was kidnapped and his supply truck hijacked and abandoned in a remote area.
- A series of cases in which the same officers allegedly robbed premises in Meyerton and stole from a truck in Putfontein (Benoni) under false pretences, and;
- A specific incident where two of three officers hijacked a truck on the N12 and stole its load – a critical freight route linking Johannesburg, Boksburg/ Ekurhuleni and key industrial nodes.

A protected witness (“Witness D”) has testified that in high-value cargo cases, “police officers are part of the hijacking team”, confirming what industry has long suspected that some hijackings in the Gauteng logistics belt are facilitated or protected from inside the system.

▲ High-value freight routes through Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni (including Boksburg and Benoni) are being systematically targeted, sometimes with the suspected involvement or protection of rogue law-enforcement elements. There is elevated risk on key routes such as the N12, R21, N3 and industrial spines in Ekurhuleni.

Localised picture: Boksburg & Johannesburg area

Boksburg/Ekurhuleni sits in the centre of a high-risk logistics corridor tied to the N12, N17 and related arterials feeding into Johannesburg.

Boksburg North SAPS recently issued a warning about an increase in hijackings of company vehicles and trucks in their policing precinct, underscoring the operational risks facing freight companies in that immediate area.

Broader hijacking-hotspot analysis for Gauteng shows multiple high-risk stations in the Johannesburg/ Ekurhuleni belt (including Boksburg North) featuring on provincial “top” lists for hijacking-type crimes, which aligns with what we are seeing on the ground in logistics. ► 14

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National & provincial truck-hijacking trends (industry context)

National police statistics and industry analysis show that:

- Truck hijackings have risen in recent reporting periods. One analysis of SAPS data shows a 5.3% increase (from 435 to 458 cases) over a comparable quarter, with Gauteng, Eastern Cape and KZN leading the trend. Delaying of the crime stats is also problematic as we cannot see what the current status is.
- Industry estimates suggest 30–35 truck hijackings per week nationally, with around 65% of these occurring in Gauteng confirming that our main economic hub is also the main theatre of operations for truck-hijacking syndicates.
- Fleet-crime data further indicates that business-owned vehicles are almost twice as likely to be hijacked as simply stolen, reflecting targeted attacks on commercial and logistics fleets.

Implications for industry

The Madlanga Commission is

effectively confirming a pattern that freight operators have been flagging for years.

High-value freight routes through Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni (including Boksburg and Benoni) are being systematically targeted, sometimes with the suspected involvement or protection of rogue law-enforcement elements.

This compromises confidence in the criminal-justice value chain at exactly the points where we most rely on police and prosecutorial integrity to protect cargo, drivers and critical supply chains.

For operators in and around Boksburg and Johannesburg this translates into:

- Elevated risk on key routes such as the N12, R21, N3 and industrial spines in Ekurhuleni;
- The need for enhanced vetting and control around escorts, recovery agents and any “law-enforcement linked” service providers;
- A stronger push for credible, multi-agency task teams with transparent oversight and proper industry engagement. □

Editor’s Comment: The Chairman of the Anti-Truck Hijacking Forum has stated to *FleetWatch* that the Forum is taking all this into consideration and is formulating a number of strategies to counter the risks being faced by transporters as are being revealed in the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry. For obvious reasons, these will remain confidential at this time. However, while it is absolutely shocking to hear what is coming out of the Commission, it is good to know that there are a large number of people in our industry who are working tirelessly to make the roads safer for transporters and to counter the impact of criminals – whether they wear uniforms or not. I say this because one can only shake one’s head in absolute despair at what we are hearing at the Inquiry - but there is hope. There are many good people out there – including many in police uniforms – who are fighting for the good of the trucking industry and the country. These are the people who need the full support of all.

**Industry estimates
30 - 35 truck
hijackings per
week nationally,
with around
68% occurring in
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Awards set benchmark for excellence

The 2025 Naamsa Accelerator Awards once again set the benchmark for excellence across South Africa's automotive and commercial vehicle sectors, recognising brands that drive innovation, reliability and customer trust. In the commercial vehicle categories, Mercedes-Benz's Actros truck, Isuzu's medium and heavy commercial ranges and MAN's Lion's Explorer bus took top commercial vehicle product honours.

FleetWatch was also among the winners, scooping two awards in the automotive media category for its contribution to the industry. For the heavy commercial vehicle sector, these accolades highlight not just market success but the collective effort behind every mile – from OEM engineers and dealer networks to the storytellers keeping the industry accountable and inspired.

DTSA celebrates people, purpose and progress

For Daimler Truck Southern Africa (DTSA), the evening was a double triumph. The Mercedes-Benz Actros was named Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicle of the Year for the third consecutive year while the company also received the B-BBEE Certificate Performance Award for achieving Level 1 MHCV B-BBEE status.

"We feel truly honoured to have received two awards at Accelerator Awards evening. These awards are more than recognition; it is a reminder of why we do what we do," said Maretha Gerber, President and Group CEO of DTSA.

"In an industry that is constantly evolving, staying true to our values while embracing change is no small feat. Therefore, we celebrate not just the win, but the journey, the people and the purpose that got us here. ▶ 18



▲ **Isuzu Trucks SA** took home three awards and the beams on the faces are justified.



▲ **Mercedes-Benz Actros** was crowned Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicle of the Year. Another trophy for Daimler Truck Southern Africa.



▲ **MAN Truck & Bus SA** won the Bus of the Year award for the MAN Lion's Explorer.



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► 16 Encouraged by this recognition we continue our journey with purpose and care.”

Isuzu’s consistent strength and customer focus

Isuzu Motors South Africa (IMSAf) took home a trio of accolades, recognised as the overall winner in the New Vehicle Sales category in both the Medium and Heavy Commercial Vehicle of the Year awards for its N-Series and F-Series trucks as well as for achieving B-BBEE Level I status for the sixth consecutive year.

“We are honoured to receive this recognition for both New Vehicle Sales and our B-BBEE Level I achievement,” said Billy Tom, President of Isuzu Motors South Africa. “Being recognised across three categories is a testament to the dedication of our entire team and reflects our ongoing commitment to delivering exceptional products, services and experiences to our customers.”

MAN’s enduring success in the passenger transport market

MAN Truck & Bus South Africa maintained its winning form with the Lion’s Explorer named Bus of the Year. “This award is a testament not only to our sales success but to the strength of our partnership with operators across South Africa,” said Giacomo Virgili, Head of Bus Sales.

Echoing this sentiment, Jan Aichinger, Managing Director of MAN Truck & Bus South Africa, added: “As the commercial vehicle market continues to evolve, with new technologies and customer needs reshaping the sector, MAN has shown it can adapt without compromising on delivering quality vehicles to our customers.”

FleetWatch’s double delight

A surprise for FleetWatch’s own Patrick O’Leary was the Business Journalist of the Year trophy being handed to him! The problem was, he wasn’t at the award ceremony – he was at Van Reenen’s Pass attending Philip Hull’s memorial service.



FleetWatch wins Media House of the Year

▲ FleetWatch was thrilled to take Naamsa’s Media House of the Year award. What a privilege.



Business Journalist of the Year – Patrick O’Leary

▲ In absentia – FleetWatch’s Patrick O’Leary was crowned Business Journalist of the Year; his ‘certificate’ accepted here on his behalf by MAN’s Jan Aichinger (centre).

A further surprise was FleetWatch itself being crowned Media House of the Year. Not bad for a publication that’s spent three decades chasing trucks, not headlines.

“It truly is a humbling experience to have received these awards and to be on stage with the champions of the automotive and trucking industries,” said O’Leary. “It came as a total surprise and these awards belong to every OEM, dealer, truck driver, and all the diesel-stained heroes who keep this industry alive - and certainly to the magnificent FleetWatch Team!” When it comes to trucking passion and straight-shooting journalism, FleetWatch still has plenty of fuel in the tank.□

Editor’s Comment: The Naamsa Accelerator Awards continue to serve as a valuable barometer of performance and progress across the industry. From the Actros and Isuzu’s enduring workhorses to MAN’s buses and all the other truck and bus OEMs who make the commercial transport industry great, the message is clear – consistency, innovation and customer focus remain the cornerstones of success. FleetWatch’s recognition alongside these OEM giants underlines the shared commitment to a safer, smarter and more sustainable future for South Africa’s road transport sector. Let’s Keep on Trucking!

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Hollard crowns its Highway Heroes



From 220 entries in 2015 to over 13 000 entries for the 2025 competition. That's the growth the Hollard Highway Heroes competition has seen over the past 10 years with this year marking a decade of contributing to raising the profile of truck and bus drivers while also improving road safety writes Patrick O'Leary.

It was in 2015 that Wayne Rautenbach, then GM of Regent Insurance (now retired) and Paul Dangerfield, current Head of Hollard Trucking, launched a competition to promote safe driving practices among their clients' drivers. Regent Insurance was a company which focussed on trucking insurance with a heavy leaning towards driver performance and training.

Under the overall banner of road safety, the aim of the campaign and the awards was also to honour South Africa's truck drivers and fleet owners for their contribution to South Africa's socio-economic growth and to highlight those that displayed the best driver behaviour in their day-to-day duties. The awards also aimed at educating the public to understand and be more tolerant of truck drivers on the road.

It was a bold aim but what would make this competition different is that once drivers had been nominated by their employers, they would then be evaluated by way of a stringent analysis of driving techniques and behaviour via telematics data obtained from the fleet owner. An additional C-Track Solo Unit was also fitted to each truck and monitored by the Regent bureau for 60 days. Also, a driver assessment test would be undertaken and a behavioural case study submitted in order to evaluate the nominees.

So, it wasn't just a written nomination that would be evaluated. Each driver would be monitored via telematics data on their daily performance over three months. This would give a real-life indication of whether the good things on



WATCH THE VIDEO



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4AwVZEY5-4>

The Winners (Truck)

▲ Matheus Namhindo from Crossroads Distribution Namibia was crowned the Hollard Highway Hero of the Year in the truck category. He is flanked by Paul Dangerfield (left) Hollard's Head of Trucking and Olivia Kumalo, Hollard Trucking Operations Manager Risk Services.

Highway Heroes is about people - creating a culture of care and accountability

the nomination form matched the driver's performance and behaviour on the road while going about this daily task. And this remains to this day with telematics, coaching and consistent monitoring of speeding, harsh braking and fatigue remaining central to the programme's impact, backed by partnerships with fleet operators, technology firms, associations and regulators.

It was a great idea and little did we know at that time just how this competition would grow over the years in format, stature and reputation. In that first year, the competition attracted only 220 entries. The first winner was Themba Vilakazi, employed by Fairfield Longhaul. It is interesting

that in this year's 2025 awards, another Fairfield Longhaul driver, James Ndlovu, made it into the top 10 finalists in the truck driver category.

In 2017, Hollard bought Regent Insurance and the following year, the name of the competition was changed from Regent Highway Heroes to Hollard Highway Heroes. Since then, the competition has evolved with a major step being taken in 2019 when entries were opened to all fleet owners, irrespective of whether or not they were Hollard clients. When it was launched, it was restricted to Regent clients only.

Another advance was taken in 2023 when bus drivers were brought into the fold via a bus category. This year, the competition was expanded even further by becoming a Pan African initiative with entries from Namibia and Botswana also being accepted. The accompanying video in this article tells of other advancements over the years.

And how's this. In 2015, the winner got a cheque of R50 000 with the second and third placed drivers receiving R25 000 and R12 500 respectively. This year, the winner in the truck category received a cheque for R330 000 while the winner of the bus category received R160 000.

The 2025 winners were announced at a lavish function held at Hollard and attended by operators, drivers and sponsors. In addition to the overall truck and bus champions, winners were also recognised across the various categories which included, in the truck sector: Tippers, tankers, tautliners, flatdecks and refrigerated. In the bus sector, there were two categories - shorthaul and longhaul. Each category winner received a cheque for R80 000 from Hollard, with an extra R5000 added by Optix.

Interesting is that this year's entries saw more women than ever before - a reflection, says Hollard, of the growing presence and influence of female drivers in the sector. And they shaped well, with two women making the top ten finalists in the



Proud

▲ Hollard's Head of Trucking, Paul Dangerfield: "For every kilometre driven safely, there's a life protected - and that's what we celebrate today."

bus category and one in the truck category. The latter was Nonkoliso Jineneka, winner of the Tautliner category who drives for Grainfoods Distributors (Pty) Ltd.

The big winner in the truck category was Matheus Namhindo from Crossroads Distribution Namibia who not only won the Tankers category but also came out on top as the Overall Highway Hero of the Year. In the bus category, Lesedi Masiteng, who drives for Unitrans Kloof took the podium as top driver in the bus category.

When the award 'whoops' were over, guests were treated to a lively show by the Ndlovu Youth Choir, the choir that did so well in the 2019 America's Got Talent show reaching

the finals of the competition. They were the first choir in the history of America's Got Talent to reach the finals.

Commenting on the competition, Hollard's Head of Trucking, Paul Dangerfield said that Hollard Highway Heroes is "our Shared Value initiative where we seek to make an impact at the core of road safety in South Africa and for the first time, in neighbouring countries."

"Highway Heroes has helped turn uncertainty into certainty, showing how emphasising responsible driving can make our roads better, one driver at a time. At its core, Highway Heroes is about people. It's about creating a culture of care and accountability."

Yes, the prize money was large, the event was spectacular but at its core is a road safety ambition. As Dangerfield said: "For every kilometre driven safely, there's a life protected - and that's what we celebrate today."

FleetWatch extends congratulations to all the winners and to all those over 13 000 drivers who gave it their best shot to be the best, we say keep going and keep it safe out there. □

Lady Hero

▼ This year saw more women entries than ever before. Nonkoliso Jineneka (centre), who drives for Grainfoods Distributors, won the Tautliner category and made it into the top 10 truck driver finalists. She walked away with R80 000 prize money.





▲ Top Man: Andre Scholle, Vice President, Head of ZF Aftermarket region India, Turkey, MEA, CIS.

When invited to a conference by ZF Aftermarket, a division of the ZF Group, under the overall banner of “Together we’re maximising mobility uptime in Africa,” I thought OK, we’re going to hear about new products, services and strategies. Yes, this was certainly part of it but this conference wasn’t only ZF talking to its customers. It was ZF listening to its customers - and how revealing that was writes Patrick O’Leary.

WATCH THE VIDEO



ZF Aftermarket - Listening To Africa

Listening to Africa

The 2025 ZF Aftermarket Africa Conference, the first of its kind, was held at the world famous Boschendal Wine Farm situated in the heart of the Cape Winelands with customers from over 12 different countries in Africa hosted by Vice President Andre Scholle, head of ZF Aftermarket region India, Turkey, MEA, CIS.

When the first guy stepped onto the stage, I thought he was going to introduce Andre Scholle to the audience. I was wrong. The guy was Andre Scholle.

But what gave me this wrong impression? Simply because on stage was a slim, young-looking man who looked like he ran a marathon every morning or, at least, cycled up and down a few mountain passes every morning before breakfast - and then got back to eat a breakfast of fruit and vegetables instead of fried eggs and boerewors on toast. He looked slim, trim, fit and healthy - and very alert.

Consider this image against the areas which fall under his responsibility - India, Turkey, MEA, CIS. For those who, like me, don’t know what MEA stands for - its Middle Eastern Countries and CIS is the Community of Independent States, formerly the Soviet Union. “So basically,” he told me later, “it’s from Cape Town to Vladivostok.” That’s a huge area.

Now consider this. ZF Aftermarket offers a wide range of products, services and solutions for the brands of ZF, LEMFÖRDER, SACHS, TRW, WABCO, and BOGE.



▲ FX Laubscher, Head of Industrial Aftermarket and Autonomous Mobility.

FleetWatch is a trucking magazine which was my prime interest for being there but it is not only trucks and buses that the company caters to. Other segments which get equal attention are passenger cars, mining, off-highway, rail and marine.

To go into all the products and services offered by ZF Aftermarket across these segments requires at least a 30-page brochure - which ZF does have. In fact, the company has a number of them printed. There’s certainly not enough space here though. The point remains that Scholle has a vast region for which he is responsible and a large product portfolio to look after.

Let’s dive into some of the numbers. In his region, there are 297 632 751 vehicles, representing 18.1% of the global vehicle parc. The area

coverage is 45 million sq.kms - 44% of the total land area of the earth. The vehicle parc age is an average of 13.6 years - which is 2.4 years higher than the global average (excluding MEA); the population of the region is 4.04 billion people, representing 51% of the total global population and the number of countries in the region totals 94 - which is 48% of all the countries in the world.

So, here's the question: How the heck does Andre Scholle look so fresh, young, alert, sharp and stress-free? With such a huge region to look after - and so much responsibility on his shoulders - most would look pretty shagged at his age.

As the day went on, I saw that it wasn't only him that had this aura. Other speakers such as Vijay Mawalall, Head of Sales, Africa region; FX Laubscher, Head of Industrial Aftermarket and Autonomous Mobility; Lorraine Houndsome, Head of Marketing, ZF Aftermarket Sales; Yulia Baranova, Head of Marketing and Communications, Region IMEA, all of whom hold high levels of responsibility, reflected the same aura of spark, confidence and yet, total approachability.

There are great people spearheading the activities of this organisation and Scholle, while no doubt running a tightly controlled ship, does not let his lofty position transform him into an autocrat or dictator - like a certain President of a certain country I know of. Quite the opposite in fact. He relies on his people and at this conference, he was also relying on his customers to guide him forward.

Scholle is humble and he listens - and that was the whole point of this conference. It was not to dictate practices and methods from Germany but rather to listen to Africa. To hear the problems and challenges - or just the way of doing business - in African countries compared to Europe, and to take that into consideration in facing the future.

Operating from his firm belief that relationships and trust are the base

for sustainable business growth, he and his colleagues were here to build further on existing relationships and to embed deeper trust into those relationships.

And did it work? It certainly did and I urge you to please listen to the video interview accompanying this article that I conducted with him after the conference. It consolidates what the conference achieved and it is really enlightening to know that there are 'chiefs' out there who are prepared to listen to the locals.

The key takeaway was the need to tailor business practices to Africa's unique markets, rather than treating it as an extension of Europe. Emphasis was placed on building deeper, personal relationships with customers which are crucial in Africa's business culture.

While quality standards remain uncompromised, the approach must adapt to Africa's distinct vehicle park and customer trust dynamics. The strategy will shift towards sustainable, long-term growth, focusing on mutual success rather than rapid expansion.

"I think the strongest message I heard during the day was that we cannot treat Africa as an attachment of Europe - we cannot come to Africa doing business like we have done on the European continent. I think we need to learn and understand how customers expect us to do the business here in Africa. And then we need to adjust our approach when it comes to product," Scholle told me.

"We also need to get closer to our customers in order to better understand the market needs.

There's a certain non-monetary driven trust that develops in an African context. We need to move back to that strongly because that's what people rely on - personal relationships," he said.

With those lessons learnt, ZF Aftermarket is looking forward to doing great business across Africa, especially in light of the changing shifts and dynamics in the global markets. New opportunities are there - many of which were clearly spelt out during the conference - but they are not going to be capitalised on by placing relentless pressure on improving bottom lines. Rather, they are going to be capitalised on by a focus on improved relationships. The improved bottom lines will then follow.

And perhaps it is this that keeps Andre Scholle looking like he's going on a relaxing fishing trip when walking into a business forum. His head is filled not with figures. It's filled with people - each one unique needing special attention. And he is listening closely to the voices of those people. He is listening to the voices of Africa.

Who was it who said: "We don't do business with companies. We do business with people." That was epitomised at the 2025 ZF Aftermarket Africa Conference and could act as a reminder to many. □

▼ **Top team pushing for close relationships, from left:** Lorraine Houndsome, Head of Marketing, ZF Aftermarket Sales; Yulia Baranova, Head of Marketing and Communications, Region IMEA; and Vijay Mawalall, Head of Sales, Africa region.





◀ Powerfleet's Unity Operations Centre - helping customers make more sense of their data in solving various challenges in safety, sustainability, compliance, insurance and operational efficiency...and more.



▲ Kicking off the day were Brendan Horan (left), GM Powerfleet Group, Rest of the World and Steven Sutherland, General Manager Enterprise, Powerfleet.

Powerfleet showcases partnerships

Powerfleet - formerly MiX Telematics - has gone beyond traditional telematics offerings by on-boarding partner companies to add further services to its customers. The benefits of this were spelt out to customers at a recent Customer Day event held in Durban under the theme 'Leading with Vision: Innovation meets collaboration'

Patrick O'Leary was there.

Are you finding it difficult keeping up with the changing

technology facing the world today? It seems like only yesterday that we were getting our heads around the functioning of GPS, the technology used back in the early 1990s to herald in the tracking and recovery of hijacked and stolen trucks. Now we have Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT) - and AIoT, Cloud and Edge Computing, Big Data Analytics, 5G/6G advanced connectivity. I could go on. Yeah, yeah, yeah - so where is my truck?

If you're a techno-boffin, this must truly be an exciting time for you. For the transport operator, however, it is becoming overwhelming. I have attended a number of 'conferences' where I end up scratching my head at the amount of information and new techno jargon one has to absorb.

◀ Gregory Naicker - VP Operations, Powerfleet.



▲ Ronel Spies (left), Global Partner Operations Manager and Elka Du Piesanie, VP Product Marketing (Africa).

At a recent presentation - I won't say by whom - I pointed this out saying that with all the new systems, transporters in the room would have to forget about running trucks and rather become system analysts. There was a supportive chorus of chuckles from the transporter operators.

Let's face it, while the basics of running a truck operation will always stay constant, the benefits offered by telematics makes the incorporation of this technology no longer a 'nice to have' but rather a 'must have'. There is no doubt that it helps to elevate your operations to a much



TELEMATICS | PARTNERSHIPS



higher level. But how do you keep up given that technology is changing at such a rapid pace?

This is where Powerfleet is thinking clearly. From what I observed on the day, Powerfleet is keeping up with viable developments by changing its business model where it is no longer offering telematics as we have come to know it. Rather it is refocussing its offerings using video-led AIoT while also on-boarding partner companies for various focussed benefits to add value. Thus, the theme 'Innovation through Collaboration'. It has also gone off-road into on-site operations where it is bringing the operational and safety benefits into warehouses.

The first question one may ask is: But is this not adding more 'information overload' to transporters? In today's digital age, siloed systems and fragmented data slow businesses down. Powerfleet is aware of this concern and to this end, is offering a powerful solution to overcome these challenges by incorporating all monitoring activities - which includes all Third-Party products - into one space, its Unity Operations Centre (UOC).

This centre - opened last year in Durban - is different to a normal

◀ Renko Bergh, Co-Founder, Ctrl Fleet.

control centre in that it isn't just focussed on stolen vehicles but on all-round heavy commercial management. It is here where the 'rubber hits the road' as this is where Powerfleet's 'Unity Eco-System' is put to use providing the proactive real-time "Track-and-React" services to subscriber end-users.

It is the 'Unity Eco-System' that is responsible for the hardware and system agnostic data ingestion and interpretation, not the UOC, and it and its benefits are available directly to end-users whether they choose to use and subscribe to the proactive UOC services or not.

In essence, apart from active risk mitigation, all this helps customers to make more sense of their data in solving various challenges in safety, sustainability, compliance, insurance and operational efficiency...and more.

The services emanating from the Unity Operations Centre are now being enhanced with the addition of a multitude of services from partner companies. Each one of these

From l-r below:

▼ Tash Botha, Senior Manager, Solution Sales, MTN.

▼ Andrew Heath, Chief Executive Officer, iWantFuel.com

▼ Pieter van Zyl, Director, Canvas Intelligence.

▼ Wayne Witherspoon, Chief Executive Officer, Right Now Response.

▼ Brendan Horan, GM Powerfleet Group, Rest of the World, interacting with a customer.

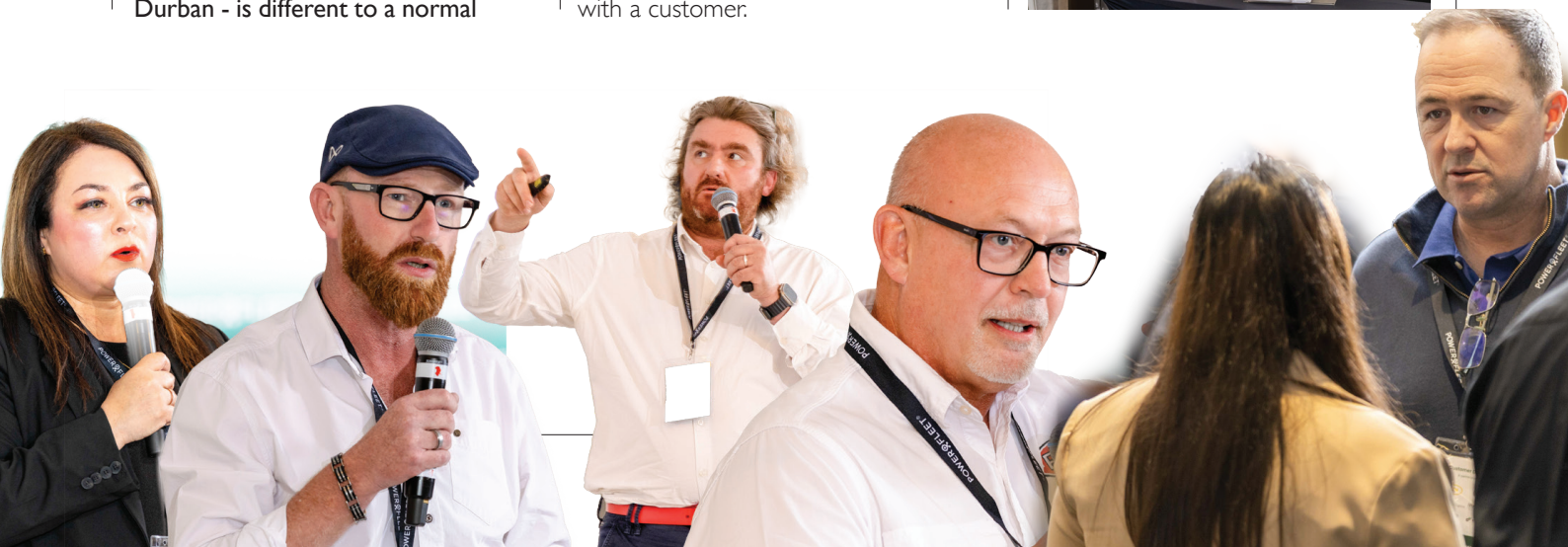
companies specialises in its particular focused area of expertise.

The partner companies introduced on the day were: iWantFuel, Canvas Intelligence, Right Now Response (RnR), TankSafe and Ctrl Fleet. The presentations given by each of these companies was like a smorgasbord of offerings to enhance operational and managerial functions of all fleets. But don't get a fright Mr Transport Operator. You will not have to take on-board and manage more silos. The Unity Operations Centre does it all for you.

Also announced on the day was a partnership between Powerfleet and MTN which intends to offer an affordable fleet management solution to smaller companies aimed at dispelling the perception that fleet management is only accessible to big enterprises. Its fleet management for everyone. More of this later.

There are a number of people pictured on these pages - both from Powerfleet and the new partner companies. Isn't it pretty cool knowing they can be part of your team should you wish them to be. □

▼ Ken Bailey, Managing Director, TankSafe.



OPINION ELECTRIC TRUCKS



Volvo FM Electric truck

◀ Volvo Trucks introduced its FM electric truck in South Africa in 2023.

Actros 300

▼ Daimler Truck Southern Africa launched its eActros 300 in South Africa in 2024. Alongside it is the Fuso eCanter - also in South Africa.



Electric Trucks The spoiled child of a misguided dream?

OK. This article is going to solicit a lot of agreement and a lot of opposition. I say this because there is a huge amount of support for electric trucks in Europe and indeed, even growing support in South Africa where although adoption is in the early stages, some operators are already incorporating them into their fleets. However, there are also many who do not see the electric truck as the way forward to ensure a sustainable planet or industry. So, what's your view? Have electric trucks "proven to be the spoiled child of a misguided dream - expensive, unreliable and impractical in the real world of freight and logistics" as Van Niekerk states - or do you see them having a practical and viable role to play in the move towards emission-free trucking while also creating financial and operational benefits for truck operators. Get involved in the debate. It's an important one. Send your views to The Editor, Patrick O'Leary at fleetwatch@pixie.co.za. And now, it's over to Albrich van Niekerk to lay his cards on the table with his opinion.

OPINION

ELECTRIC TRUCKS

For over a century, the internal combustion engine (ICE) has not only powered our vehicles - it has also powered our economies. It remains the backbone of global industry, directly and indirectly supporting millions of jobs across manufacturing, transport, logistics, mining, and energy. In short, the internal combustion engine keeps the world moving. To imagine it being replaced entirely by electric trucks is, at best, wishful thinking - and at worst, economic suicide.

The harsh reality of electric trucks

Electric trucks entered the stage with glamorous promises: zero emissions, silent operation and a cleaner planet. Yet in practice, they have proven to be the spoiled child of a misguided dream - expensive, unreliable and impractical in the real world of freight and logistics.

Let's face it: the infrastructure to charge electric trucks does not exist on any meaningful scale. Not in Africa, not even consistently in Europe or the United States. And even if it did, the electricity itself isn't green. Charging an "eco-friendly" truck with coal-based power defeats the very purpose of going green.

We are burning fossil fuels to charge batteries that are meant to save us from burning fossil fuels - the irony writes itself.

The real cost of "green"

Producing batteries for electric trucks is an expensive, energy-intensive and environmentally destructive process. Mining the lithium, nickel and cobalt needed for battery cells causes significant ecological and social harm.

Add to that the reality that these batteries are short-lived, costly to replace and difficult to recycle - and the so-called "zero-emission vehicle" begins to look less like a revolution and more like a costly detour.

When you factor in the manufacturing footprint, charging emissions and eventual disposal, many lifecycle studies now show that an electric truck's total environmental cost can rival or



**By Albrich van Niekerk,
Group CEO – Pander
Holdings (Pty) Ltd**

even exceed that of a modern diesel engine running on cleaner fuel.

The future lies in cleaner combustion

Instead of trying to kill the internal combustion engine, we should be evolving it. The real answer lies in cleaner fuels - hydrogen, ammonia, synthetic fuels and advanced bio-diesels. These allow us to leverage

decades of proven technology while drastically cutting emissions.

Hydrogen, for example, offers the efficiency and refueling speed that heavy-duty transport needs. Synthetic fuels can even recycle captured carbon, creating a closed-loop system that keeps the ICE alive while cleaning up its act.

It's a path of evolution, not extinction - and it makes both environmental and economic sense.

Let's be practical

The internal combustion engine built modern civilization. It drives our food, our goods, our economies, and our livelihoods. Electric trucks, on the other hand, remain a luxury experiment - appealing to headlines and political targets rather than to hard logistics reality.

If we truly care about the planet and the people who keep it running, we should stop chasing the electric fantasy and start investing in cleaner, more sustainable fuels for the technology that already works. Because the world doesn't need a new engine.

It just needs a cleaner one. □

Response from Daimler Truck

Cleaner fuels comment: "Instead of trying to kill the internal combustion engine, we should be evolving it. The real answer lies in cleaner fuels - hydrogen, ammonia, synthetic fuels and advanced bio-diesels. These allow us to leverage decades of proven technology while drastically cutting emissions."

*Albrich van Niekerk, Group CEO
Pander Holdings (Pty) Ltd*

DTSA Response

Daimler Truck is committed to achieving CO₂-neutral trucks and buses by 2050. We acknowledge that there is no single "silver bullet" to accomplish this goal; rather, a combination of technologies will be required. Our view differs slightly from the author in that battery-electric trucks remain a core pillar of our zero-emission strategy, particularly suited for urban and regional transport. At the same time, hydrogen fuel-cell technology will be critical for long-haul and heavy-duty applications where range and refuelling speed are essential. Our position is not to prioritize one technology over another, rather, we believe that striking the right balance between these solutions is essential to meeting diverse customer needs while advancing the transition to sustainable transport.

Volvo Trucks South Africa indicated they would like to issue a response to the Opinion Piece. This had not been received at the time of publication. FleetWatch will publish it once received.



◀ Truk Afrik's first sale of a Sitrak unit was to ChemiCorp in Barberton.



▲ The second batch of 10 units was delivered to Versatile Logistics in August 2025. This followed a first batch of 10 delivered to the company in February 2025.

▶ Co-founders of Truk Afrik, Wes Mommsen (left) and Chris Pinto checking out the goods on their first visit to Pinetown.

Against all odds



This is a story of the growth of a dealership focused on the Chinese truck brands Sitrak and Howa. It is a story of Truk Afrik's journey - a textbook example of how entrepreneurship thrives precisely where doubt is loudest. At a time when Chinese trucks faced huge scepticism in parts of the market, this team built a dealership by backing their instincts, taking risks that would make most dealers flinch and delivering on the basics: service, responsiveness, hustle and trust. The fact that customers themselves helped shape the dealership speaks volumes about the strength of the relationships they forged. It is proof that in trucking, solid enterprises are often born not from perfect conditions but from founders bold enough to push ahead when everyone else hesitates. Here is the story as told by Chris Pinto - co-founder and director, Truk Afrik.

TRUK AFRIK | THE STORY

It started with a simple idea during a birthday dinner at Kingfisher Restaurant in Nelspruit. The date was August 26, 2022. As Wes Mommsen and I looked around at the logistics landscape, we identified a gap in the market: a truck from China that looked perfectly suited to survive and thrive in African conditions. We were immediately excited.

The very next day, we arranged to meet Wes's father, Don - one of our country's pioneers in the trucking industry. We pitched the concept to him, and he agreed: it was a solid idea.

To move forward, we needed to see the product first-hand. Alpine Truck and Bus in Pinetown was already advertising these vehicles and having known the MD, we set up a meeting. We left that meeting feeling more confident than ever. Dave du Plessis was brought on board to manage the financial side and just like that, Truk Afrik was born.

Taking the leap

Our next bold move was meeting the Chinese principals a few weeks later in Boksburg. They played hard to get. At that stage, we had no premises, no workshop, no technicians and no parts. After lengthy negotiations, the Sitrak South Africa regional director made us an offer: if we bought a demo truck right then and there, he would give us a chance. Wes phoned his bookkeeper and minutes later, we were the proud owners of a Sitrak C7 480. We hadn't even test-driven it yet.

► The new HOWO 430 which has just landed. Truk Afrik will be offering this unit for the tri-axle market.



▲ Truk Afrik broke into the Kwa-Zulu Natal province with an order from Freight World.

Breaking the ice

Then came the hard work. We had to convince potential buyers that this "Chinese" truck was the solution to their problems. We knocked on doors, called every old client we knew and sold our hearts out.

It took six months to close our first sale. Chemicorp in Barberton decided to take a chance on our Sitrak. We rushed to invoice the bank and prepare the truck, only to hit another wall: the bank had never heard of the brand. After two weeks of frustration getting the truck registered on their system, we finally got the go-ahead. Our first truck was on the road.

However, we still had no premises. After much deliberation, Tubemech Logistics decided to order 20 trucks from us – on the condition that we register Tubemech Logistics as a Sitrak Service Centre. In a sense, our client helped us build the Truk Afrik Sitrak dealership.

Exponential growth

More orders followed. Grindrod Logistics Africa evaluated our truck and, after careful consideration, gave us our largest order to date. We had made it. But the best was yet to come.



With a slowdown in coal exports, Tubemech needed to consolidate their branches, meaning their Nelspruit facility was closing. Against all logic, we took over their massive facility and workshop staff. Our staff count quadrupled overnight, as did our expenses, but we believed in what we were building.

Next, we set our sights on Gauteng. To start, we needed to drive sales. We found a dynamic young salesman in Pretoria and offered him a position as sales manager – before we even had a sales team. The decision paid off.

The road ahead

Sales have increased dramatically since January 2025. We are now averaging 20 trucks per month, taking bulk orders of five, ten and twenty units at a time from major companies.

The growth has been phenomenal. We are currently preparing to open a full sales and service branch in Gauteng, scheduled for early 2026. With Sinotruk (the Sitrak holding company) increasing its range, we remain incredibly positive about the future. The sky is the limit! □

Editor's Comment: The journey of Truk Afrik is a reminder that entrepreneurs with a clear vision can turn an overlooked opportunity into a thriving enterprise. It also underscores a deeper truth in South Africa's road freight sector: solid businesses are often born not from perfect conditions, but from founders willing to believe in the product long before the market does.



▲ The first big order came from Grindrod for a total of 20 Sitrak units.



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Improving quality of our truck drivers



by **Flippie Bronkhorst**
JC Auditors



Build a professional identity for drivers

The transport sector plays a vital role in driving economic growth and connecting communities. At the heart of this sector are truck drivers, the unsung heroes who keep supply chains moving across vast distances, often under challenging conditions. As demand for efficient logistics grows, improving the quality, safety, and professionalism of truck drivers is essential. In this second article focusing on truck drivers, Flippie Bronkhorst, a man with over 25 years experience in transport and driver training and now lead RTMS Auditor for JC Auditors and Training Specialist at The Kunamandla Group, lists some practical ways operators can raise the standard of our drivers and strengthen the industry as a whole.

1. Invest in on-going driver training & skills development

A once-off license is not enough. To ensure competence and confidence on the road, drivers need continuous training in:

- Defensive driving techniques and fuel-efficient driving.

- Load securing and cargo management (especially for abnormal or hazardous loads).
- Road Transport Management System (RTMS) standards and compliance.
- First Aid and emergency response skills for incident preparedness.
- Soft skills such as communication, time management, and customer service.
- Regular refresher courses not only sharpen technical abilities but also build a strong culture of safety and accountability.



2. Implement clear policies and performance standards

A structured Driver Policy Framework helps set the tone for expected behaviour. This should cover: ► 32

- Speeding, fatigue management, and substance abuse policies.
- Pre-trip inspection procedures and defect reporting.
- Use of technology such as onboard cameras, telematics, and tracking systems.
- Clear consequences for non-compliance and incentives for safe performance.
- When drivers understand the rules - and see that they are applied fairly - performance improves naturally.



A healthy driver is a safe driver

3. Prioritize health, wellness, and fatigue management

Truck driving is physically demanding and often lonely. Poor sleep, long hours, and unhealthy food options can affect both safety and morale. Companies can support drivers by:

- Scheduling rest breaks and adhering to legal driving hours.
- Providing access to health screenings and wellness programs.
- Promoting balanced diets and hydration on the road.
- Encouraging mental health

awareness and peer support networks.

- A healthy driver is a safer, more productive driver.

4. Leverage technology for monitoring and support

Modern telematics systems provide real-time data on driving behaviour, fuel use, harsh braking, speeding, and route adherence. Instead of using this data solely for discipline, companies can use it to:

- Coach drivers individually, showing them how to improve.
- Identify trends for targeted training.
- Reward drivers for consistent safe performance.
- When technology is framed as a support tool, not surveillance, it builds trust and boosts quality.

5. Recognize and reward excellence

Acknowledging top-performing drivers boosts morale and sets a benchmark for others. Recognition can take many forms:

- Driver of the Month awards.
- Certificates, branded merchandise, or vouchers.
- Public acknowledgment in meetings or newsletters.
- Opportunities for career growth, such as mentoring new recruits.

- A culture that celebrates excellence encourages everyone to raise their game.

6. Build a professional identity for drivers

Elevating the status of truck driving from “just a job” to a respected profession is key. This involves:

- Encouraging drivers to wear uniforms or branded PPE.
- Including them in safety committees and operational decision-making.
- Supporting learnership programs and career pathways into fleet management or training roles.
- When drivers feel valued as professionals, they act like professionals.

Conclusion

Transport Month was more than a commemoration - it's was a Call to Action. By investing in people, enforcing standards, embracing technology and building a culture of respect, we can significantly improve the quality of truck drivers in South Africa.

Safer, better-trained drivers mean fewer accidents, lower costs and a stronger reputation for the entire transport sector. Let's commit to driving change - one driver at a time. □



Recognition of skilled drivers boosts morale

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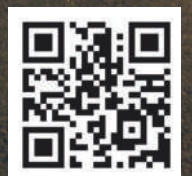
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Premium Truck Tyres at Affordable Prices New Tread Engineering Reduces Tyre CPK

Southern Africa's trucking sector faces constant pressure on operating costs, and keeping tyre expenses under control is an ongoing challenge. Premium tyres from leading global manufacturers offer superb casings and tread performance, but escalating prices put them beyond the reach of many operators. Budget imports may seem attractive, but there's a snag – their inferior casing quality often prevents retreading, increasing long-term costs and waste.

Over the past decade, Southern Africa's truck tyre market has been flooded with low-cost imports, offering operators a seemingly affordable solution to rising running costs, but ultimately harming long-term fleet efficiency.

"The influx of cheap tyres has reduced the retreadability of our national truck tyre parc by around 25%," says Monal Naik, Marketing Manager of Bandag Southern Africa.

"Many casings from cheap

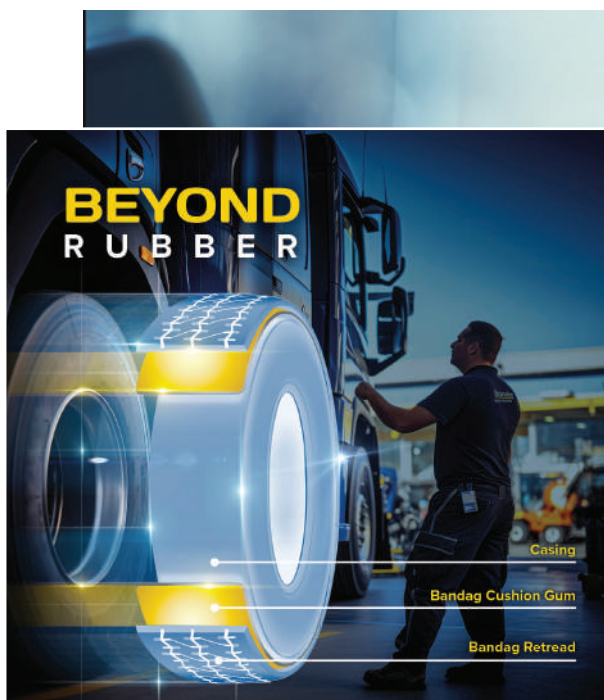
imported tyres are simply not designed to be retreaded, which drives up long-term costs for operators and increases environmental waste. Bandag's approach of retreading premium casings provides a reliable alternative that restores tyre performance and supports sustainable fleet operations."

Bandag SA's proven alternative is backed by a 60-year track record of supplying the Southern African market with tyres that are 'the

best of both worlds'. By retreading premium casings with advanced tread designs, Bandag produces tyres that are effectively 'near new', delivering peak performance at a more affordable price.

Not only are Bandag SA's tyre manufacturing processes ISO-accredited but they are also fully aligned with global industrial cradle-to-grave environmental policies.

"At heart, Bandag SA embraces a 'glocal' approach to product development whereby global



www.bandag.co.za

Bridgestone-Bandag R&D and engineering expertise are applied to Bandag SA's tyre manufacturing processes," adds Naik.

"New tyre and tread prototypes undergo extensive real-world trials in local operating conditions. Once proven, these new products are then supplied to the Southern African trucking industry via a fully supportive franchise dealer network that is routinely audited by Bandag SA service engineers to ensure truck fleet customers receive optimum quality, service and support."

Introducing Bandag's New Tyre Treads

In line with its philosophy of continuous improvement in tread design, Bandag SA has launched two new products to meet the evolving demands of Southern African fleets: the R-DRIVE 001+ for drive applications and the R-TRAILER 002 for super single trailer axles. Both have been rigorously tested across multiple Southern African fleets to ensure performance, durability and versatility in real-world conditions.

Built to Outperform – NEW R-DRIVE 001+

The R-DRIVE 001+ has been engineered to deliver extended tyre life for the exacting demands of regional and long-haul operations. Drawing on insights shared from global R&D and benchmarked through extensive local testing, the R-DRIVE 001+ has been put through its paces across six local fleets, covering more than 3 million kilometres of trials, consistently delivering exceptional traction, stability and mileage performance.

"The R-DRIVE 001+ combines everything we've learned from global engineering and in-field testing to deliver a product that truly answers the needs of Southern African fleets," explains Naik. "Its innovative unidirectional design, new INFINITY tread compound and unique bond between casing and tread ensure peak performance, while shoulder stabiliser bars enhance stability,

handling and durability across all major drive tyre sizes."

From Gauteng's busy streets to the demanding terrain of the Lowveld, the R-DRIVE 001+ keeps trucks moving efficiently, extending tyre life and reducing operating costs.

Roll with Confidence – NEW R-TRAILER 002

For trailer applications, Bandag SA introduces the R-TRAILER 002, a super single tread designed for durability and all-year usability. Its unique pattern features Y-shaped grooves to reduce irregular wear, while integrated water drainage channels provide reliable performance in wet and dry conditions.

"Every detail of the R-TRAILER 002 was designed with fleet operators in mind," says Naik. "The new mini wing enhances resistance to cracks and tearing, giving drivers the confidence to roll safely with every load."

Extensively tested on Southern African roads, the R-TRAILER 002 delivers improved tread longevity, predictable performance and operational reliability, setting a new benchmark in the super single trailer segment.

Scrap Tyre Insights = Smarter Tyre Management

Bandag SA's commitment to continuous improvement extends to its extensive scrap tyre analysis programme. Studying tyres at the end of their life provides invaluable insight into wear patterns, failure points and the root causes of tyre degradation.

This data informs retread design and compound selection while equipping fleet operators with actionable knowledge to optimise maintenance, reduce unplanned downtime and enhance profitability.

Sharing these insights through Bandag's network and digital tools such as the ProApp suite ensures fleets benefit from a cycle of learning that turns real-world experience into smarter, cost limiting tyre management.



▲ Bandag's latest premium retread product offerings - R-Trailer 002 and R-Drive 001+

Best for Business, the Environment and Society

Bandag SA's technology goes beyond premium tread design, delivering real fleet tyre management intelligence. Tools like the ProApp suite allow franchise dealers and operators to track tyre performance, optimise retreading cycles and share best-practice insights across their customers.

This approach improves profitability through extended tyre life, supports environmental care via cradle-to-grave reuse, and sustains skilled jobs in Bandag's franchise network and the wider tyre service sector.

Smarter technology, practical knowledge and social responsibility combine to keep Southern African fleets moving efficiently, sustainably and competitively.

Bandag – Built for Better

With the launch of the R-DRIVE 001+ and R-TRAILER 002, Bandag SA continues to demonstrate its commitment to innovation, affordability and sustainability (for fleets, jobs and the environment). By combining global engineering insight with local validation and offering products optimised for Southern Africa's unique operating conditions, Bandag SA and its franchise network provide fleets with the confidence to operate efficiently, reduce costs and extend tyre life – all while adhering to an environmental philosophy that creates a universally beneficial circular truck tyre economy. ■



Trucking Acronyms

EPK as crucial as CPK and TCO

Fleet operators live by their acronyms. From CPK (Cost per Kilometre) to TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) and PPF (Payload Productivity Factor), these metrics form the backbone of financial management across the industry. Now a new one is entering the fleet finance vocabulary - EPK, or Earnings per Kilometre - and, according to Banie Claasen, Managing Executive for Specialised Lending Products at Absa Business Banking, it's just as vital for long-term sustainability.

As Claasen points out, South Africa's 750 000 km road network is the largest in Africa and the tenth largest in the world. Road transport dominates freight movement with an 80% market share, making it the biggest subsector in transport.

Yet despite this scale, operators continue to face rising input costs and tightening margins – pressures that demand sharper financial insight.

"Earnings Per Kilometre (EPK) is a profitability metric that shows how much revenue a vehicle generates per kilometre travelled," says Claasen. "It helps operators assess whether

Fuel is the single biggest driver, accounting for up to 55% of operating costs.

PPF vs EPK

◀ The push for greater payload efficiency (PPF) has always been a primary profit driver in the trucking industry but Absa advises closer adherence to Earnings Per Kilometre (EPK) financial management principles to improve bottom-line performance.

their pricing strategies, fleet utilisation and cost management align with sustainable profitability."

Pressures on profitability

The going rate per kilometre varies widely depending on the route, commodity and market conditions. Claasen highlights that the open and highly competitive nature of road freight keeps rates under constant pressure.

"Those who overprice are quickly replaced by cheaper competitors. However, under-pricing the kilometre rate is unsustainable in the long run too, hurting profitability," he notes.

Over-capacity in some corridors, notably the container route between Johannesburg and Durban, has added to the challenge, pushing prices down further. Macroeconomic factors such as lower consumer demand and global trade volatility also squeeze margins across the board.

Fuel remains the single biggest factor driving Cost per Kilometre. "It is a dominant driver, accounting for up to 55% of operational costs," says Claasen. "The recovery of the Rand against the U.S. Dollar has pushed the diesel price slightly down, to the benefit of transporters."

Yet, the reprieve is temporary. Rising parts prices, maintenance charges, wages, insurance premiums, tolls and financing costs all feed back into the equation, affecting both CPK and ultimately EPK.

Strong financial and operational alignment will define the next chapter of freight success.

Partnership and financial alignment

For Claasen, the solution lies in partnership. “It is critical that transport operators choose the right partner that can offer financial solutions tailor-made for success in this intensely competitive and volatile industry,” he says.

“The right partner can help operators craft fleet optimisation strategies and offer transactional tools that help ease operational cost pressures, actively manage the total cost of ownership and ensure a future-fit replacement strategy.”

He adds that such partnerships can take practical form in structured finance, full maintenance lease options and efficiency measures that address CPK, TCO, PPF and now EPK in unison.

“For transporters looking to expand or modernise their fleets, long-term lending packages at reasonable interest rates assist in the sustainable management of costs,” says Claasen.

“Automated fleet management systems and fuel efficiency measures encompassing telematics, route optimisation and driver training to reduce fuel burn can also result in significant operational cost savings.”

Claasen concludes that strong financial and operational alignment will define the next chapter of road freight success: “Those seeking to make it in this industry must understand the dynamics that make it a profitable and sustainable venture in the long run.” □



Earnings per kilometre (EPK) helps operators assess whether their pricing strategies, fleet utilisation and cost management align with sustainable profitability

Banie Claasen
Managing Executive,
Specialised Lending Products,
Absa Business Banking

Editor's Comment: *FleetWatch* appreciates Claasen for placing EPK firmly on the financial dashboard alongside CPK and TCO. It's a timely reminder that profitability depends not only on controlling costs but on measuring what every kilometre truly earns. In a sector as competitive and vital as road freight, that insight could well prove the difference between survival and success.

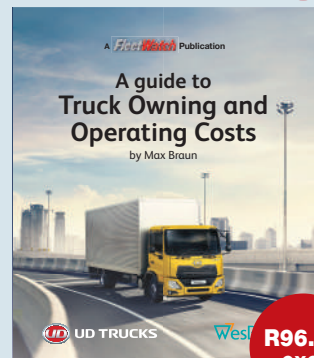
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▲ Mercedes-Benz Trucks and its dealerships have provided not only robust, reliable vehicles but also exceptional after-sales support and a personal approach that fosters long-term trust, says Dale Taylor, COO of RDM Logistics.

Actros is the 100th truck for RDM Logistics

▲ Century on the Vaal – the newest Actros in the now 100 truck-strong RDM Logistics fleet backs the Taylor family, from left: Allan Taylor; Dale, Megan and Richard.

RDM Logistics has reached a major milestone having taken delivery of its 100th truck - a Mercedes-Benz Actros 2652 Pure - from New Vaal Motors Commercial Vehicles. For a privately owned family business, operating 100 trucks is an impressive achievement, reflecting sustained growth and a long-standing partnership with Mercedes-Benz Trucks.

“Reaching our 100th truck is a proud moment for our family and our team. Choosing Mercedes-Benz Trucks for this milestone was an easy decision. The brand represents reliability, advanced technology and strong after-sales support. This partnership has been instrumental in our success story,” says Dale Taylor, Chief Operating Officer of RDM Logistics.

Founded in 2009 by Allan Taylor

and now owned and managed by Allan and his three children - Richard, Dale and Megan - the company began with a fleet of just ten trucks servicing the World Food Program into Zimbabwe.

Today, RDM operates across South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, transporting a wide range of commodities including grains, beer, chrome, lithium, soda ash, timber and mining equipment. Despite navigating the challenges of the 2009 global recession and the Covid-19 pandemic, RDM continues to grow through reliability, efficiency and customer service.

Enduring reliability

More than half of RDM's fleet - 52 trucks - are Mercedes-Benz Actros models, a clear testament to the brand's performance and durability. “My father, Allan Taylor, has been in the transport industry for over 45 years and his decades-long relationship with Daimler Truck Financial Services (formerly

Mercedes-Benz Financial Services) made our initial decision to partner with Mercedes-Benz seamless,” says Dale.

“Our very first 10 trucks were Freightliners and since then, the partnership has only deepened. From day one, Mercedes-Benz Trucks has provided not only robust, reliable vehicles but also exceptional after-sales support and a personal approach that fosters long-term trust. This relationship has played a significant role in our growth and success story.

“Beyond the product, we value the people behind the brand: always available, always invested in our success. Over the years, we've built strong personal relationships across all levels of the organisation and that commitment to partnership goes a very long way in sustaining mutual growth,” says Dale.

RDM maintains a five-year equipment replacement policy to ensure uptime and service reliability.

"We're not on any maintenance contracts but we ensure that all our trucks are serviced and maintained at Mercedes-Benz truck dealerships. We budget internally for servicing and maintenance and over the 5-year period of owning each truck, have always managed to keep costs within budget," Dale explains.

Favourite features?

Reading from here on down may read like a paid for advertisement but it is not. It is the opinion of Dale Taylor and exemplifies the importance of not only having the correctly specced product for the job but also of building and maintaining long-term relationships. He refers to it as a "partnership" so let's hear what Dale has to say – and no, he hasn't been paid to sing Merc's praises.

"There are a few key features that we and our drivers enjoy.

For us as a company, features like the Power Shift Control ensure smooth shifting and fuel efficiency, Lane Keeping Assist and Attention Assist ensure better safety for our drivers, assets and customers' loads," says Dale.

"FleetBoard and Mercedes-Benz Trucks Uptime assist us in monitoring driver performance, fuel consumption and many more key metrics for efficient fleet monitoring. These are only a few of the many key features that Mercedes-Benz Trucks offers.

"For our drivers who spend many hours driving, the unparalleled comfort from the driver suspension seat, large cab space and the advanced multimedia cockpit all makes the life of our drivers a lot better and easier."

Quality of after-sales service?

"For any transporter, the after-sales support is key. The easiest part of logistics and transportation is buying the truck; what happens after is what really impacts your business in a positive or negative way," states Dale.

"For us, the support, infrastructure and network are key. Paired with this is the speed and turnaround time for getting our assets back on the road and working. As mentioned, we service all our trucks at Mercedes-Benz Trucks dealerships, and our trucks are always attended to and serviced well within a reasonable timeframe.

"Mercedes-Benz Trucks also has an effective and vast support dealer network for breakdown assistance, which is another key factor for any transporter - as no matter what, breakdowns do happen."

Let's give the final words to Olaf Petersen, Vice President Sales and Marketing at Daimler Truck Southern Africa: "Mercedes-Benz Trucks, in partnership with New Vaal Motors Commercial Vehicles, extends its sincere appreciation to RDM Logistics for their continued loyalty and support. We congratulate them on reaching this remarkable milestone and wish them every success in the future."

It's congrats all round.□



Mercedes-Benz Trucks, in partnership with New Vaal Motors congratulates RDM Logistics on this remarkable milestone.

Olaf Petersen
Vice President Sales and Marketing
Daimler Truck Southern Africa

RDM's favourite features on Actros 2652 Pure



▲ The Multimedia Radio Touch with its 17.7 cm colour display can be operated intuitively via the touchscreen and offers numerous features including the Bluetooth interface for hands-free calling and audio streaming and convenient access to smartphone content via Apple CarPlay and MirrorLink.



▲ The refrigerator located in the drawer beneath the bunk enhances comfort by allowing food and drinks to stay chilled during journeys. Its mobile design means the driver can conveniently access and use it while on the move.



▲ Lower bed with a length of 2000mm in 2.3m wide cabs; 2200mm in 2.5m-wide cabs and 750mm wide for each. Featuring a 70 mm-thick cold foam mattress, all-round curtain and a control panel on the rear wall for radio, auxiliary heater/auxiliary air conditioning, light/reading light and sliding/tilting sunroof.



Do you have the oldest-running MAN?

For any fleet owner, a truck's value is measured not just in payload but in years of reliable service. That's why a robust, customer-focused OEM aftersales network is critical - keeping vehicles in peak condition through genuine parts, approved lubricants and expert maintenance. MAN Truck & Bus South Africa understands this equation well, and its new 'Max Mileage Master' campaign puts that philosophy firmly in the spotlight.

Truck longevity takes centre-stage

MAN Truck & Bus SA has launched the 'Max Mileage Master' competition to celebrate the endurance, resilience and reliability of MAN trucks operating across Southern Africa. The contest aims to identify the MAN truck - built from 2007 onwards - that has achieved the highest verified mileage and is still hard at work.

"Max Mileage Master is not just

a competition - it's a marketing activation that underscores what our customers already know; when well taken care of, a MAN can truly go the distance," says Noko Seopa, Head of Customer Service Management at MAN Truck & Bus SA. The initiative highlights the long-term partnership between MAN and its customers - one that extends well beyond the point of sale.

"This campaign reinforces how proper maintenance, together with using MAN Genuine Parts and our after-sales support, results in vehicles that maintain uptime year after year, deliver excellent residual value and consistently prove their quality over time," adds Seopa.

Partnership makes all the difference

"We're excited to celebrate our customers' success stories and show South Africa the real durability and reliability of an MAN," adds Philip

▲ The search is on for an operational MAN truck built from 2007 onwards with the highest verified mileage.

Kalil-Zackey, Head of Truck Sales. "Partnerships are not only formed at the point of sale - partnerships go beyond and MAN, being represented in South Africa ever since 1936, has always appreciated the longstanding partnerships with our customers."

As the search for the 'Max Mileage Master' gets underway, MAN is calling on fleet owners, operators and the wider transport community to share their stories of endurance on the open road. Every odometer reading tells a human story - of drivers, routes and journeys that keep Southern Africa moving. The race is on to see which MAN will take the crown as the ultimate kilometre king.

Open to MAN customers in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia, entries can be submitted via www.man.eu/za.

MAN's 'Max Mileage Master' initiative doesn't just aim to celebrate high mileage; it acknowledges the synergy between good engineering, responsible ownership and aftersales excellence that keeps fleets profitable and on the move. Good luck MANne! □

Isuzu donates two e-trucks to NMU



As South Africa's transport sector slowly edges toward an electric future as part of the truck mix, the need for specialised EV truck technicians has become impossible to ignore. The country's shift to high voltage drivetrains, battery systems and electric propulsion demands a new generation of technicians trained from the ground up. It is in this context that Isuzu Motors South Africa (IMSAf) has extended its long-standing academic partnership with Nelson Mandela University (NMU), donating two electric trucks to help equip students with the skills needed for an EV-ready road freight industry.

Strengthening industry-academia collaboration

IMSAf's EV truck gift to NMU forms part of its long-term collaboration with the Gqeberha university to align curriculum, technology and practical training with the needs of a rapidly evolving automotive sector.

Celestin Ndhlovu, Executive Vice President for Corporate Services at IMSAf, says the partnership plays an important role in preparing young people for future work: "Our collaboration with the Nelson Mandela University has helped align their curriculum with current industry trends. This is particularly important as our focus is to help improve the quality of education and equip young people with requisite skills for the future world of work."

Electric technology in the classroom

The two EV trucks run on rechargeable batteries that power electric motors, enabling them to operate without emitting exhaust fumes, a key advantage in reducing

air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

NMU says the donation significantly enhances its teaching capabilities and allows students to work directly with modern electric technologies.

Andrew Young, Engineering Director at the university, explains the practical benefits:

"Students from different faculties will gain valuable exposure with these electric vehicles. They will now be familiar with the Battery Management Systems, High Voltage Battery packs and High Torque motors."

Young also reflects on the steady evolution of the relationship with IMSAf: "Our engineering relationship with IMSAf started with simple component testing and went on to performance testing of some of the Isuzu ICE engines on our test equipment."

"This resulted in students being familiar with products produced at IMSAf and being able to contribute to manufacturing the vehicles as soon as they completed their studies."

Converted in Gqeberha, tested for real-world use

The Isuzu EV trucks – an NPR 400 and FTR 850 – were converted in 2019 at the company's Vehicle Conversion and Distribution Centre in Gqeberha by an Australian specialist in EV technology.

Range tests, charging cable compatibility assessments, speed evaluations and gradability tests were carried out to determine real-world usability, including how effectively the units launch on inclines.

IMSAf confirms it will continue collaborating with NMU across

▲ The Isuzu EV trucks – an NPR 400 and FTR 850 – donated to the Nelson Mandela University were converted at the company's Vehicle Conversion and Distribution Centre in Gqeberha by an Australian specialist in EV technology. The unit pictured here is a FTR850 model prior to conversion.

research, training, component testing, localisation and performance review.

Ndhlovu concludes: "Our ultimate objective is to ensure the current generation can unlock future opportunities and contribute to the broader vision of socio-economic development." □

Editor's Comment: South

Africa's e-trucking future depends on whether the industry can produce technicians who understand high voltage systems, battery diagnostics and electric drivetrains long before mass adoption arrives. This donation from Isuzu is more than a gesture – it is capacity building at precisely the right time. By placing real EV trucks in the hands of engineering students, Isuzu and NMU are helping to ensure the transport sector does not face an expertise gap when electric commercial fleets scale up. In a market where skills determine competitiveness, these partnerships are setting the groundwork for a safer, cleaner and more technologically advanced trucking industry.

Engen releases campaign stats 2025



▲ Participating drivers in Engen's Transport Month Trucker Health campaign benefited from health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, malaria, TB, STDs and HIV conducted by Trucking Wellness.



Thumbs up for healthier drivers

In a vocation where fatigue, dietary shortfalls and lack of physical exercise take a quiet toll, truck driver health monitoring remains a mission-critical industry endeavour. Since the turn of the millennium, both Trucking Wellness and Engen have pioneered accessible, on-the-road healthcare for South Africa's truck drivers with an annual Transport Month Trucker Health campaign providing essential driver health statistics. Engen's 2025 findings based on voluntary driver screenings speak volumes: sustained wellness interventions remain essential for a sector that moves nearly 90% of the nation's goods.

Impact beyond Transport Month

It's an acknowledged fact within the South African road freight sector that the Engen Driver Wellness campaign has made a measurable impact on the trucking community, empowering drivers to take charge of their well-being on an on-going basis, despite the pressures of life on the road.

Run in partnership with Trucking Wellness, an initiative of the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry, this year's Engen Driver Health campaign during Transport Month provided free voluntary screenings

▲ **Top left:** Garth Karstens (left), Engen Sales Specialist; Goolam Rawoot, (second left), Engen Truck Stop Network Manager; and Sharveen Maharaj (right), Engen Commercial GM, join a Trucking Wellness nurse and a truck driver during the Driver Wellness campaign.

at 29 Engen Truck Stops and Engen 1-Stops across eight provinces between 20 October and 13 November.

A total of 1 503 screenings were conducted, covering blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, malaria, TB, STIs, HIV/AIDS and BMI tests. Every participating driver also received a complimentary Engen tog bag.

Health insights from 2025

The data illustrates the ongoing need for proactive health support:

- 53.6% presented with abnormal findings requiring follow-up.
- 9.9% tested positive for high or abnormal blood pressure.
- 28.9% had elevated cholesterol or blood sugar.
- High cholesterol: 18.1%
- High blood sugar: 10.8%

Beyond the stats, the screenings offer something most drivers seldom get: time with qualified healthcare professionals.

Partnerships that deliver

Olwethu Mdabula, Engen's CSI Manager, emphasises the company's commitment to the sector's frontline workers: "Truck drivers play an indispensable role in driving our economy forward. Through this

campaign, Engen aims to make their health and safety a national priority because when drivers are healthy, our roads and supply chains are safer too."

Engen and Trucking Wellness also support drivers year-round through six fixed Trucking Wellness clinics located at Engen Truck Stops in Beaufort West, Musina, Port Elizabeth, East London, Harrismith and Kokstad.

These facilities provide on-going access to treatment support and counselling long after the mobile teams have packed up.

Tertius Wessels, Project Manager of Trucking Wellness, highlights the longevity and impact of the partnership: "Our collaboration with Engen enables us to reach drivers where they live and work on the road. The on-going support provided through both the mobile and fixed clinics ensures continuity of care, early diagnosis and ultimately, safer roads for everyone."

A Broader purpose for the sector

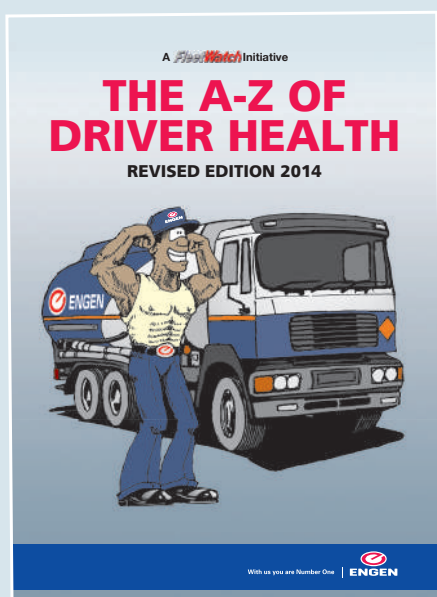
Engen's Commercial Marketing and Business Development Manager, Adnaan Emeran, underscores the campaign's wider significance: "Driver Wellness is more than just

check-ups; it's about caring for the people who keep our economy moving.

"Engen's on-going partnership with Trucking Wellness reflects our belief that health and safety go hand in hand with productivity and sustainability in the transport industry."

With forward-thinking vision, Emeran concludes: "As we look ahead, Engen remains committed to strengthening our partnerships, expanding access to healthcare for truckers and supporting the long-term sustainability of South Africa's road freight sector." □

Editor's Comment: Driver health remains a vital pillar of South Africa's road freight safety chain and Engen's latest statistics show why long-term, consistent wellness programmes matter. The exemplary partnership between Engen and Trucking Wellness not only gives drivers the holistic health care and positive affirmation they deserve but also works tirelessly to help ensure safer roads, driver retention and a more resilient road freight industry. Respect!

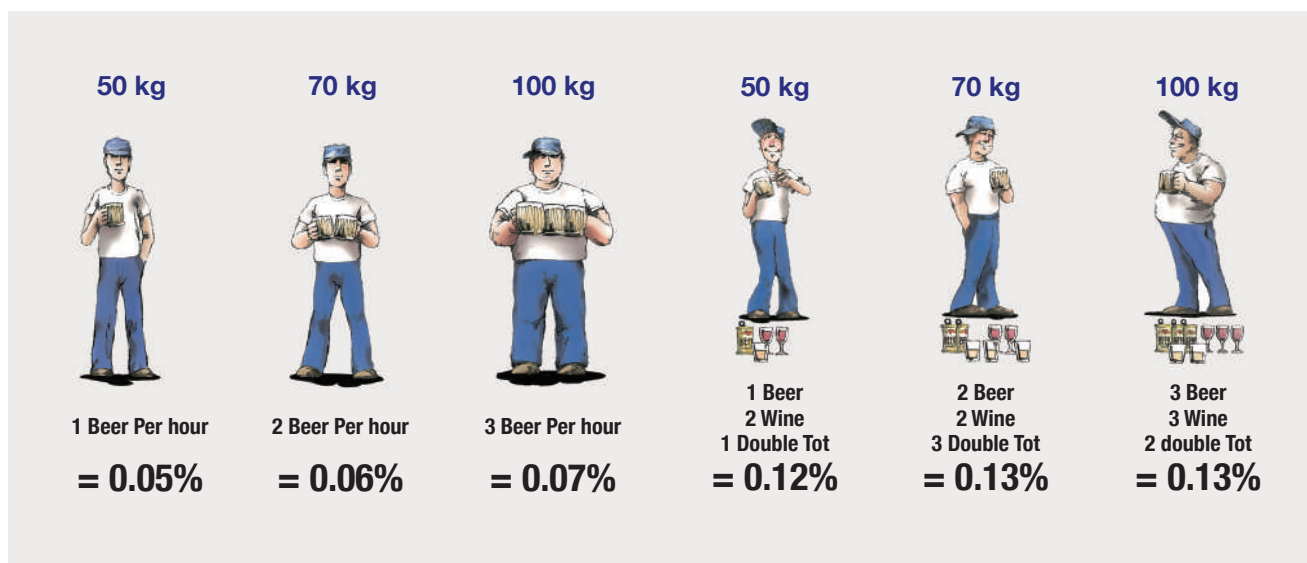


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Limits for Professional Drivers

Blood
0,02g per 100ml

Breath
0,10mg per 1000ml

Understanding SA's drink-driving limits

The Festive season is just around the corner and although drinking and driving is nowhere near as prevalent among truck drivers as it is in the passenger car arena, the danger of having one too many does exist as the Christmas bells start to ring. And let's face it, it's party time for all so this informative article by Rhys Evans, Managing Director at ALCO-Safe, is intended not only for the information of trucks drivers but for everyone in the industry. Please circulate it far and wide and include friends and family. Here we go... over to Rhys.



**By Rhys Evans
MD, ALCO-Safe**

South Africa's drink-driving limit according to the Road Traffic Act amounts to a legal Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.05 grams per 100 millilitres of blood for general drivers. This means that if you're a regular driver, your blood can only have up to 0.05 grams of alcohol per 100ml before you're over the legal limit. For professional drivers, like truck or taxi drivers, the limit is even lower at 0.02 grams.

The general drink-driving limit is roughly equivalent to one or two 300 ml beers (at 5% alcohol) or one to two glasses of wine at 120 ml, depending on individual factors. However, this seemingly simple calculation creates a false sense of security – one that can have deadly consequences on South Africa's roads.

Alcohol metabolism and its hidden dangers

Alcohol is metabolised slowly, at approximately 0.015 BAC per hour. Even a seemingly modest amount – two beers, for instance – can linger for two to three hours. Many drivers

fail to realise how quickly they can exceed the limit or, more critically, how alcohol impairs judgement and slows reaction time long before reaching it.

Alcohol contributes to a staggering 65% of fatal road accidents in South Africa. A single gram of alcohol – about half a beer – compromises driving ability, impacting coordination, vision and cognitive function. This is precisely why professional drivers face stricter regulations; their responsibility is greater, and the risks of impairment can be catastrophic.

The knowledge gap: How many South Africans know the BAC limits?

How many South Africans actually know our legal drink-driving limits? Alarming few. This widespread lack of awareness is a major contributor to alcohol-related road deaths. If drivers don't know the limits, how can they adhere to them?

South Africa's drink-driving limits are scientifically grounded and relatively stringent. For instance, our old limit of 0.035 mg/l – still in place in the UK – was considered too lenient and revised. But at home, these limits are almost meaningless due to woefully inadequate enforcement.

The alcohol equation isn't one-size-fits-all

Numerous factors, including body weight, gender, metabolism and genetics, influence alcohol processing. Yet, this vital information is widely misunderstood. South Africa's current awareness campaigns fail to resonate – they rely on uninspired messaging that lacks impact.

Generic "drink responsibly" messages are not enough. Public awareness campaigns must go beyond clichés and deliver concrete, scientifically accurate information about alcohol's effects and metabolism. A more effective approach would involve targeted interventions – educational initiatives in schools, workplaces, and community groups. Integrating



alcohol awareness into driver education and learner's licence applications could further reinforce these messages.

What you should know about Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) and how it relates to the drink-driving limit:

- **Amount of alcohol consumed:** The more alcohol consumed, the higher the BAC.
- **Rate of absorption:** Slower absorption leads to lower peak BAC.
- **Time:** Consuming alcohol over a longer period results in a lower final BAC.
- **Rate of consumption:** Consuming alcohol at a faster rate rapidly increases alcohol absorption.
- **Stomach contents:** Food, especially fatty substances, slows alcohol absorption.
- **Body weight:** Larger individuals generally have lower BACs due to greater water content.
- **Body composition:** Individuals with higher body fat percentages will have higher BACs than muscular individuals of the same weight, as alcohol is less soluble in fat.
- **Gender:** Women generally have a higher ratio of body fat to water than men, resulting in higher BACs for the same amount of alcohol.

Regardless of your tolerance or understanding of alcohol limits, if you plan to have even one or two drinks, it's best not to drive. If you're having more than two, you definitely shouldn't be behind the wheel.

South Africa's drink-driving crisis

With many South Africans

unaware of the legal drink-driving limits, this knowledge gap is further exacerbated by weak enforcement. While penalties for exceeding these limits – fines, imprisonment, licence suspension, and a criminal record – may seem strict, they are rarely enforced with consistency. The long-promised demerit system remains unimplemented, further undermining the law's effectiveness.

The emphasis must shift from simply lowering limits to actively enforcing them. This requires more frequent roadside breathalyser checkpoints, visible policing and a more effective system for prosecuting offenders. Without effective enforcement, the limits are easily ignored. While technology such as in-car alcohol detection systems could play a valuable role, these solutions are costly and often viewed as intrusive. A more targeted approach might involve mandatory in-car breathalysers for repeat offenders.

Shaping responsible choices starts at an individual level

While drink-driving limits, strict policing and firm enforcement are essential, they alone won't solve the problem. True change requires a cultural shift. South Africans must foster a society where drunk driving is socially unacceptable – where friends intervene, families hold each other accountable and communities actively discourage risky behaviour.

The way forward is through education, enforcement and accountability.

South Africa's drink-driving crisis demands decisive action on multiple fronts. Our drink-driving limits are scientifically sound but without consistent enforcement, they fail as a deterrent.

Public awareness campaigns must move beyond generic slogans, providing real, actionable knowledge about alcohol's effects. A multi-pronged strategy – prioritising law enforcement, strengthening education and instilling personal responsibility – is the only way to create lasting change. □

Tracker Vehicle Crime Index Jan – Jun 2025



BUSINESS VEHICLES ARE
48% MORE LIKELY
TO BE **TARGETED** THAN PERSONAL VEHICLES.

Business vehicle crime:

A **BUSINESS** VEHICLE HAS ABOUT DOUBLE THE CHANCE OF BEING HIJACKED THAN STOLEN.



66% HIJACKING



34% THEFT

Personal vehicle crime:

A **PERSONAL** VEHICLE IS EQUALLY LIKELY TO BE HIJACKED OR STOLEN.



50% HIJACKING



50% THEFT

Day of Week and Time of Day:

More **HIJACKINGS** are reported on
Thursdays
between 16:00 – 21:00

More **THEFTS** are reported on
Saturdays
between 11:00 – 16:00

Tracker recovery stats:



Number of
vehicles recovered
3,671



Number of
arrests
146



Number of
firearms recovered
10

Vehicle crime trends based on Tracker data
from the company's installed vehicle base.



◀ **Valuable resource:** Tracker's Vehicle Crime Index shares criminal activity data and trends, effectively helping fleet operators and drivers implement preventative measures.

Truck hijackings and cargo theft continue to corrode the undercarriage of South Africa's road freight sector, pushing up insurance premiums, downtime costs and overall fleet operating expenses. Tracker's Vehicle Crime Index (VCI) aptly illustrates that as criminal syndicates grow more sophisticated, fleet operators need smarter risk mitigation strategies, stronger driver vigilance and real-time vehicle crime intelligence.

Tracker's latest statistics for January to June 2025 show that business-owned vehicles are 48% more likely to be targeted than personally-owned vehicles.

Business-owned vehicles, according to Tracker, "range from cargo trucks with trailers to courier vehicles delivering items ordered online. Crime targeting these vehicles proves highly lucrative, with criminals acquiring the vehicle, the goods being transported and the driver's personal belongings, e.g. mobile phone."

Duma Ngcobo, Chief Operating Officer at Tracker states: "Crime trends change over time, and the shifting pattern of hijackings shows that they can happen anytime, anywhere, making it essential to remain alert to your surroundings."

The latest Tracker VCI data reveals new patterns in both timing and location, with Mpumalanga emerging as a hotspot and weekday hijackings overtaking weekend incidents, he says.

Shifting hotspots and changing tactics

The Tracker Vehicle Crime Index, based on over 1.1 million subscriptions, shows business-owned

Hijackings for cargo is on the rise

vehicles experience 32% more crime than their share of the Tracker base, with 57% of cases occurring in Gauteng.

Hijackings outnumber thefts almost two to one, and in regions like the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, hijackings are five and four times more likely respectively. Mpumalanga now joins these provinces as a hijacking hotspot.

Where weekends once saw most activity, hijackings now spike on Thursdays between 4pm and 9pm, while theft remains most common on Saturdays. Regional variations are marked - Gauteng sees most hijackings on Tuesdays between 11am and 4pm; KwaZulu-Natal on Wednesdays between 4pm and 9pm; and the Western Cape on Wednesday mornings.

During the first half of 2025, Tracker recovered 3 671 vehicles, assisted in 146 arrests and helped recover 10 firearms.

“Businesses, in particular, can take proactive steps to mitigate risk by implementing technologies



The shifting pattern of hijacking shows they can happen anytime, anywhere making it essential to remain alert to your surroundings.

Duma Ngcobo
CEO, Tracker

such as AI-powered fleet dashcams with facial recognition, 360-degree cameras, safe zone management, cargo door sensors and emergency driver assist buttons,” Ngcobo concludes, adding that these tools enable fleet managers to respond swiftly to incidents. “Additionally,” he says, “subscribing drivers to rapid emergency armed response services can further enhance safety.”

Editor's Comment: Fleet operators must now treat crime intelligence as a core component of operational strategy, not just security. Tracker's data reinforces that hijacking is no longer confined to high-risk routes or late-night deliveries – it's a weeklong, broad daylight threat across multiple provinces. Thus, the need for proactive monitoring, driver training and layered technology protection has never been greater. The cost of prevention may be significant, but the cost of complacency is far higher.

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by Max Braun

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Introduction

The relevant chapters in this book review these aspects to illustrate the need to manage all fixed costs in order to effectively or reduce the impact on the bottom line.

Fuel costs remain the largest single expense for virtually all vehicle operators. The nine words of John Loxton, Head of WesBank Fleet Management and Leasing Division, the writer of the one featured in this book, sum up the fact that the price has virtually doubled over the past decade. The average vehicle price in 2017 (when the original edition of this book was being compiled) was R150,000 compared with R212,000 before adding the 12% of increased in the 2018 edition.

Challenging as it is, the factor of road freight logistics remains optimistic. As economies around the world grow stronger, so too does the demand for commercial, profitable and agricultural logistics services. The outlook for trucking locally and internationally indicates healthy expectations of steady growth. It is important to note that, notwithstanding the on-going high costing and operating costs, the key to success in achieving efficient transport operations as the road to sustainable growth and return on assets. This book intends to provide a better understanding of the importance of getting control over the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of trucks. We urge you to use it as a tool to drive and not just survive.

The combined cost of maintenance, service and tyre costs can easily represent as much as 100% of the capital cost of vehicles.

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A report on Logistics Crime in South Africa for the period August 21, 2025 to September, 2025 held little good news. The report, compiled by Nationwide Risk Management, states that truck hijackings, cargo theft and infrastructure sabotage continue to disrupt the flow of goods and inflict significant economic damage. Here is the report....

1. Overview and key trends

Logistics crime, a persistent and costly issue in South Africa, continues to pose significant challenges to the economy and supply chain. While official, comprehensive statistics for the specific period of August 21st to September 21st, 2025 were not yet publicly available at the time of writing a review of recent reports, news and official statements provides a clear picture of the ongoing threats and trends. The landscape of logistics crime during this period is characterized by:

Continued high levels of truck and cargo hijackings:

Hijackings remain a primary method for criminals, with valuable goods being the main target. The surge in truck hijackings that was a trend in early 2025, according to a

Report holds little good news

Bidvest Insurance report, appears to be a continued concern.

Targeting of specific commodities:

Criminals are focusing on a range of high-value goods, including electronics, food and beverages, and metals. The valuable nature of these items and the relative ease of selling them on the black market make them attractive targets.

Infrastructure sabotage and theft:

Beyond vehicle and cargo theft, criminal activities are also directly impacting the country's logistics infrastructure. The theft of essential equipment, particularly copper cables from rail lines, continues to be a major cause of disruption and financial loss for state-owned entities like Transnet.

Sophisticated and Organized Nature of Crime:

The incidents are not random. Reports from organizations like the Transport Asset Protection Association (TAPA) and Munich Re highlight the increasingly sophisticated and strategic nature of these crimes. This includes the use of deception, fraud and insider collusion, underscoring the role of organized crime syndicates.

2. Notable incidents and developments

Transnet security operations:

A notable development was the successful arrest of 17 suspects in a two-day period (September 9-10) by Transnet security personnel and the South African Police Service (SAPS). The arrests were made in six separate incidents across different provinces, highlighting the widespread nature of the problem. Incidents included the attempted theft of a spare wheel from a train wagon in KwaZulu-Natal and the recovery of stolen copper cable in the North West province.

Rail infrastructure crime:

The ongoing problem of cable theft continued to disrupt rail freight services. A derailment on the Durban corridor, which caused a 12% drop in container volumes, was a key incident during this period. While the line has since been recommissioned, this underscores the vulnerability of the rail network to criminal activity. ► 50



Trucks hauling copper from northern countries to Durban harbour drive in convoys as an extra measure of safety.

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Cross-Border and Border Post challenges:

News updates indicate that border congestion and security issues remain significant challenges. While some improvements have been noted in median crossing times at some borders, incidents of crime and delays continue to be a persistent threat to the flow of goods.

3. Contextual analysis and contributing factors

The logistics crime situation in South Africa is not an isolated issue but is deeply embedded in broader socio-economic and security challenges. Reports from entities like Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and the Democratic Alliance (DA) provide valuable context:

Worsening crime crisis:

According to Stats SA's "Victims of Crime" survey for the 2024/25

period, there is a general worsening of crime in the country, with significant increases in commercial crime and a low public perception of safety. This broader crime trend provides a fertile environment for logistics-specific crimes to flourish.

Economic pressures:

High inflation and a growing informal economy create conditions where consumers are more likely to seek cheaper, illicit goods. This, in turn, fuels the demand for stolen cargo and products.

Weak enforcement and corruption:

A key finding in a 2025 report by the TRACIT organization is that illicit trade is enabled by corruption, weak regulatory enforcement and the presence of organized crime. This suggests that a lack of effective policing and intelligence is a major contributing factor.

Conclusion and outlook

From August 21st to September 21st, 2025, logistics crime in South Africa remained a major threat to the supply chain. While there were some successes in combating crime, such as the arrests made by Transnet and SAPS, the overall trend points to a persistent and evolving challenge. Truck hijackings, cargo theft and infrastructure sabotage continue to disrupt the flow of goods and inflict significant economic damage.

The root causes of these crimes, including organized crime, economic pressures and systemic weaknesses in law enforcement are complex and require a multi-faceted approach. Efforts to secure infrastructure and improve police-private sector collaboration are critical, but a long-term solution will require addressing the underlying issues that enable these criminal networks to operate. □



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Digistics sets a new benchmark for logistics excellence

In today's highly competitive logistics arena, truck fleets looking to get ahead must prove not only efficiency but also establish international credibility. Globally recognised quality assurance certification has become a vital ticket for South African transporters gearing to trade and compete on the global stage. For leading local cold-chain logistics company Digistics, its recent securing of four top-flight certifications simultaneously through JC Auditors (JCA) will no doubt prove a pivotal moment.

The certifications include ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 45001 and RTMS accreditation. This milestone underlines what the company calls its "unwavering commitment to quality, sustainability, safety and compliance" and sets a new benchmark for excellence in the local logistics sector.

Pioneering sustainability in transport

Digistics refers to a "multi-faceted sustainability strategy that integrates international standards with practical innovation." Among



▲ **Inset:** Yashen Naidoo (left), Lead Auditor at JC Auditors, presents the group certificate to Ebrahim Salie, Digistics General Manager.

▲ **Main photo: Celebration time, from left:** Herman Potgieter (JCA), Grace Mathebula (Digistics SHEQ manager), Ndima Mankomo (JCA), Monique Marks (Digistics national fleet manager), Itanje Marnewick (Digistics SHEQ Compliance) and Yashen Naidoo (JCA).

the headline initiatives is its zero-emissions refrigerated fleet, with fully electric refrigerated trailers "reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring reliable cold-chain delivery."

Equally significant is Digistics' work in repurposing used cooking oil into biodiesel. "For every litre of biodiesel used in our fleet, carbon emissions are reduced by 2.15 kg of CO²," the company notes.

Beyond the emissions benefit, Digistics emphasises the food safety impact: "When UCO exceeds a free fatty acid level of 5%, it is unsafe for consumption and can become carcinogenic. By converting UCO into biodiesel, Digistics protects communities from harmful practices while reducing transport-related emissions."

Another flagship initiative is the introduction of hybrid regeneration electric axles. In collaboration with TCA and BPW Axles, Digistics has launched 4-axle hybrid regeneration truck trailers that "capture kinetic energy, much like hybrid vehicles, to power the refrigeration units. This reduces diesel consumption in trailers by up to 99% in certain cases, saving approximately 3 litres of diesel for every hour on the road."

According to Digistics' management, this technology "not only cuts emissions and costs, but also provides resilience against potential diesel shortages."

Why certification matters

Each certification underpins a critical business pillar at Digistics. ISO 9001 secures improved service delivery and continuous quality

improvement. ISO 14001 embeds the company's ability to measure, manage and reduce environmental impacts, with biodiesel and hybrid regeneration highlighted as "flagship examples of ISO 14001 in action."

ISO 45001 protects employees through better risk identification and control. RTMS enhances road safety by focusing on load management, driver wellness and vehicle maintenance, while supporting South Africa's national road safety objectives.

The certification audits were conducted by JC Auditors, a SANAS-accredited and IAF-aligned certification body. JCA's integrated audit process enabled Digistics to undergo a coordinated assessment across all four standards, "reducing duplication and ensuring comprehensive compliance."

According to JC Auditors Managing Director, Oliver Naidoo, "JCA's certifications are backed by the International Accreditation Forum, ensuring Digistics' achievements enjoy global recognition and credibility, while assuring stakeholders that the company operates at internationally accepted best-practice levels."

Committed leadership

The Digistics management team comments: "This achievement is not only about compliance but about shaping a sustainable, safe

and globally competitive logistics business. Our ability through innovative solutions – from biodiesel production to hybrid regeneration axles – shows our determination to make logistics greener, safer and more resilient for the future."

Naidoo concludes: "We commend Digistics on its vision and leadership. Achieving four certifications simultaneously is already an outstanding milestone but combining this with pioneering initiatives like biodiesel repurposing and electric axle technology places Digistics at the forefront of sustainable logistics innovation." □

Editor's Comment: Digistics' achievement with the guidance of JC Auditors shows the shift in SA trucking to a more globally orientated mindset. What's more, global-standard certification is no longer just paperwork; it is a platform for innovation. Digistics has tied its ISO and RTMS credentials directly to hard sustainability gains, from carbon-cutting biodiesel to electric axles that harvest kinetic energy. For a South African fleet, this is an industry-defining step - and with JC Auditors' internationally recognised stamp, it signals a new level of global competitiveness.



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The progress made in recent years comes down to collaboration... the real goal is to maintain a shared responsibility.

Anton Cornelissen
Head: Heavy Haulage, Santam

Editor's Comment: Fleet insurance is a vital stabiliser for South Africa's heavy haulage sector. As Anton Cornelissen highlights, the industry's resilience depends on more than fuel and freight volumes - it hinges on risk management and collaboration. Insurers like Santam help fleet operators navigate rising costs, poor infrastructure and unpredictable weather with confidence. Keeping South Africa moving safely is a shared responsibility - and insurers are just as critical to that journey as the drivers behind the wheel.

Post Transport Month

Collaboration should be a year-round focus

South Africa's road freight sector powers the economy, moving everything from commodities to farm produce and finished goods across vast distances. But with scale comes risk - everything from accidents, theft and extreme weather to poor infrastructure can stop operations dead in their tracks.

Santam and other fleet insurers manage these exposures, providing tailored cover, safety initiatives and support for driver wellbeing. Their role is simple but vital - helping operators stay on the road and the wheels of commerce turning.

In this article, **Anton Cornelissen, Head: Heavy Haulage, Santam**, reflects back on Transport Month to delve into the many facets of the trucking sector in which Santam is so heavily involved, urging for a year-round focus on collaboration rather than just during October Transport Month.

Heavy haulage, high stakes

Every year, October is designated as Transport Month - a time for reflection. For those of us in logistics and insurance, it's when we take stock, not just of the challenges on our roads but of how this sector keeps South Africa's economy moving.

With over 20 years of experience in insurance, South Africa's heavy haulage sector has always been my point of passion. Over that time, one

truth has never changed: without trucks, everything stops.

There's nothing around you right now that hasn't been moved by a truck. Road freight keeps mines, factories, farms and retailers running - contributing to South Africa's GDP and supporting well over a million jobs.

That's why the health of this sector matters to everyone. When fuel prices rise, transport operators feel it first. When ports slow down or when parts become too expensive, the impact ripples through the economy almost immediately.

Insurance, in this context, is about more than paying claims. It's about protecting livelihoods, sustaining businesses and keeping the wheels of trade turning.

A well-insured, high-stakes sector

Heavy haulage isn't classified as a separate insurance line. It falls under motor and goods-in-transit (GIT) cover. These products are fairly standard but tailored to the realities of long routes, high-value assets and tight margins.

A brand-new truck can easily cost R3.5 million, so most operators rely on finance, which makes insurance essential. Liability insurance, too, is a legal requirement for freight movement, which means the industry is relatively well insured. It's rare to find a financed commercial truck

Infrastructure

► Infrastructure remains the sector's biggest vulnerability. Our roads, ports and railways are deeply interconnected. When one struggles, the whole system feels it.

without cover.

The real challenge lies in maintaining affordability. Premiums on a new truck combination can reach R100 000 per year, so operators are constantly seeking ways to reduce costs without increasing their exposure. In South Africa, the risks are high and exposure is inevitable.

Managing infrastructure and weather risks

Infrastructure remains the sector's biggest vulnerability. Our roads, ports and railways are deeply interconnected. When one struggles, the whole system feels it.

Government's long-term transport plan, which aims to move bulk commodities like coal back to rail, is a step in the right direction. Fewer heavy loads on the roads mean fewer accidents and less wear and tear. Many large operators and mines already contribute to maintaining the provincial roads they use, and that really makes a difference.

But off the main highways, conditions are tougher. Many secondary roads were never designed for large trucks and lack basic infrastructure like truck stops and lighting – and that's where many incidents occur.

Add increasingly unpredictable weather, from Cape storms to KwaZulu-Natal floods and snowstorms and the risk landscape becomes more complex every year. That's why the industry has come together from all angles.

Collaboration and innovation wins the day

The progress we've made in recent years comes down to collaboration. Santam continues to work closely with institutions like the Road Traffic Management Corporation, provincial authorities and industry partners to improve road safety and driver



wellbeing.

Through our partnerships, we support mobile wellness clinics that offer free medicals, blood pressure checks and even Professional Driving Permit renewals for drivers while they're on the road. We've also backed initiatives like Nikki Scott's Safer Stops. And there is much more to come. And this goes hand-in-hand with the latest advancements.

Today, AI-based monitoring systems act as a second pair of eyes – identifying risks, reading road signs and helping drivers adjust their behaviour in real time. Many large fleets now use these tools as training aids, even rewarding their safest drivers through internal competitions.

In addition, we've supported the development of a truck stop mapping app. It literally helps drivers see where the stops are, plan their routes safely, find a place to rest and get all the things they need while they're on the road. By giving drivers the tools they need to make smarter, safer decisions on the road, the results have been outstanding. So, it's a no-brainer.

Driving safer roads together

Transport Month brings the industry together. Each October, we

Unpredictable weather

▲ Many secondary roads were never designed for large trucks and lack basic infrastructure – and that's where many incidents occur. Add increasingly unpredictable weather and the risk landscape becomes more complex every year.

see wellness events, safety drives and partnerships that remind us what's possible when everyone pulls in the same direction. But the real goal is to keep that focus year-round. We must continue to build safer roads, support healthier drivers and strengthen the sector that drives our economy.

At Santam, we share this vision with our government and industry partners. To get every driver home safely and to make South Africa's logistics sector stronger and more resilient for the long road towards economic growth.

Even in challenging times, with rising costs and pressures across the industry, we remain forever committed to keeping premiums steady, supporting operators and ensuring that the wheels of our economy keep turning. □



Africa must own its new energy transformation process

Biomethane

▲ Home-brewed biomethane (bio-LNG): a glimpse of how Africa's trucking sector could cut diesel dependence, reduce emissions and create jobs by harnessing locally produced renewable fuels.

For Africa's trucking sector, the challenge of the next decade will not only be about cleaner fleets but also about mobilising to ensure that circular economies underpin reliable new energy systems. If Africa is to build true energy resilience, the ownership of solar, wind, biomass and green hydrogen assets must rest with Africans themselves, not offshore corporate profit-seekers.

That was the powerful undercurrent at the 5th Annual Sustainability Summit Africa, held in Johannesburg, where business leaders, policymakers, NGOs and sustainability specialists convened to plot the continent's unique, inclusive path to a green transition.

Unlocking Africa's renewable potential

Speakers underscored that Africa, while contributing the least to global emissions, faces the harshest climate realities – droughts, flooding, resource scarcity and land degradation.

With fit-for-purpose policy frameworks and targeted investment, the continent could emerge as a renewable energy powerhouse. Sasol's Climate Change senior manager Raksha Sunderlall highlighted how scaling renewables can meet national emissions targets while also unlocking jobs and wider socio-economic benefits.

Green finance, however, remains a key bottleneck. Deloitte's Jayne

Mammatt and other experts pointed to the pressing need for de-risking mechanisms, green bonds and blended finance models, warning that adaptation and mitigation strategies cannot progress without predictable flows of capital.

Circular energy and biomethane for sustainable transport

Not all sessions focused on barriers. One of the most uplifting presentations came from Patricia Schröder, CEO of Circular Energy NPC, whose Energy 4 Hope initiative refurbishes solar PV modules and batteries for reuse in disadvantaged communities. Piloted at Ikhetelo Children's Village



in KwaZulu-Natal, the project demonstrates how circularity can combat both energy poverty and waste.

"We must reframe waste as a resource," Schröder told delegates. "Circular solutions are not just possible, they are necessary."

This same logic can power the trucking sector's future. Locally produced biomethane, derived from organic waste streams such as agricultural residues or municipal biogas plants, could fuel heavy-duty trucks sustainably while creating thousands of rural jobs.

In South Africa, sugarcane bagasse and food processing residues could be converted into compressed biomethane to run long-haul fleets. In East Africa, livestock manure and crop residues offer another scalable feedstock, while municipal waste streams in rapidly growing cities could power distribution vehicles.

By turning waste into fuel, transport operators can cut diesel dependence, slash emissions and reduce costly fuel imports – all while stimulating Africa's own energy economy.

Building sustainable African value chains

Daniel Viviers-Rasmussen of NewForesight explored how agriculture can be made commercially

viable at scale through shared value chains and robust public-private collaboration. Such approaches, he argued, will be key to Africa's ability to feed its people while adapting to harsher climate conditions.

Delegates praised the summit's practical and inspiring content. "I found the content valuable and well delivered," said Xolisa Dhlamini of Sanlam. "My highlight was the presentation from Circular Energy NPC," added Lesego Matjila of the CSIR - NCPC-SA.

Rooted solutions for Africa's future

Debbie Tagg, CEO of Smart Procurement, summarised the essence of the summit: "As climate pressures intensify, the summit underscored the necessity for Africa to craft our own solutions, and not depend on unsuitable, one-size-fits-all global approaches.

"The path forward isn't about adopting what's worked elsewhere, it's about building what works here - with the focus on our people, our challenges and our enormous potential." □

Editor's Comment: Africa stands at a crossroads. The trucking sector and wider logistics industry must not sit back and wait for imported solutions that enrich foreign corporations while leaving Africans exposed. Locally owned renewable infrastructure – whether solar microgrids or biomethane plants for trucking fleets – can safeguard both the economy and the environment.

What doesn't help is anti-decarbonisation political rhetoric from so-called 'national leaders', a recent example being US president Donald Trump's farcical diatribe against climate change policies at the UN.

Environmentalism detractors (especially those in government) are not only harmful to Earth's biosphere, societies and economies, but they betray the world's children, who deserve a healthy planet to grow up in. Ultimately, Africa must take the reins of its green recovery, remain steadfast and chart its own course.

The summit underscored the necessity for Africa to craft our own solutions and not depend on one size-fits-all global approaches!

Debbie Tagg
CEO of Smart Procurement





As both truck and trailer manufacturers – and indeed their customers – seek bumper-to-bumper green trucking solutions to cut carbon emissions, Woolworths SA and DP World are proving what's possible. Since launching Africa's first AxlePower reefer (refrigerated trailer) in January 2024, the partnership has expanded its eco-trailer fleet to 16 units, each designed to keep FMCGs cool while cutting emissions on long-haul routes.

Kinetic energy meets cold-chain innovation

AxlePower captures kinetic energy from the trailer's movement and converts it into electricity to power the refrigeration unit. The result is 100% electric, zero-emission cooling that operates independently of the truck's diesel engine – a breakthrough in sustainable cold-chain logistics.

"To get the most out of this technology and to maximise the sustainability benefits, we operate these trailers on our long-haul routes between Johannesburg and Cape Town and north into Namibia," says Feroz Koor, Woolworths Group Head of Sustainability.

"With 12 trailers already on the road, we saved 102 tonnes of carbon

Woollies and DP World expand eco-reefer fleet

With 12 eco-trailers already on the road, we saved **102 tonnes of carbon emissions** in the last year

emissions in the last year alone. Expanding to 16 trailers not only accelerates progress, but it also brings us closer towards our goal of 21 AxlePower trailers by June 2026 and creates the opportunity for even greater carbon savings in the future."

A journey to net zero

This initiative forms part of Woolworths' Good Business Journey Vision2025+, which commits the retailer to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040. By rethinking its logistics chain through innovation and collaboration with DP World, Woolworths is showing that truck fleet sustainability can be achieved without compromising quality or reliability. □

Editor's Comment: Woolworths and DP World are setting a great example of true 'system thinking' – where the truck, trailer and technology all work together towards a single goal: decarbonising road freight. It's a demonstration to the wider industry that the path to net zero runs not just through new trucks, but through smart trailers and forward-thinking partnerships too. Well done folks!



▲ The Woolworths SA/DP World RTMS-accredited eco-trailer fleet now includes 16 AxlePower reefers and aims to number 21 units by mid 2026.

Serco positive about 2026 upswing

Words like 'uptime', 'service', 'reliability' and 'innovation' are ever present in truck OEM marketing speak - and rightly so. By the same token, South Africa's local trailer manufacturers - as vital to the industry as the prime movers - should be guided by these best-practice watchwords. Serco, one of the country's leading truck and trailer body builders, certainly walks the talk, continually proving that top-notch homegrown engineering and astute customer focus can drive operational resilience and customer value in challenging times.

"Despite economic headwinds, Serco has navigated 2025 with resilience and strategic focus, delivering growth through innovation, customer partnerships and operational excellence," says Serco CEO Clinton Holcroft. "Stand-outs are our on-site repair facilities and the quick-opening curtain systems which help customers cut down time and labour costs during loading operations."

He notes that trends show customers are stretching asset lives while selectively investing in efficiency improvements.

Strategic growth through partnerships

A major milestone for the year was Serco's successful completion of a complex, multi-site vehicle body replacement project for Clover South Africa. "That project showed our ability to scale across manufacturing sites, maintain consistent quality and operate as an extension of a key customer's



logistics function - exactly the kind of partnership we want to be known for," Holcroft states.

Growth remains tangible, he says, with expansion underway at Serco's Boksburg facility, adding 1 500m² for repairs and 600m² for manufacturing and steel-processing operations.

"The added undercover workspace will enable us to increase capacity and service levels to our customers in Gauteng," says Holcroft. "The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2025 and will include the use of rainwater harvesting to improve the efficient and sustainable use of water in our business."

Investment in capacity and sustainability

Further capacity development is also planned for KwaZulu-Natal, where Serco has secured larger premises for its after-sales repair business in Durban. The new site, expected to be operational by April 2026, will significantly boost repair capability for truck and trailer bodies in the province.

"Added to this, we are refining our 'speed bay' model to give customers same-day or next-day turnaround for smaller repairs," Holcroft explains. "Finally, we are accelerating the product development of operationally efficient body systems (load/unload speed and durability) and new materials to increase durability and weight saving in our vehicles."

◀ Clinton Holcroft, CEO of Serco... 'cautiously optimistic'.

Cautious optimism and continued innovation

Holcroft says he is "cautiously optimistic" about 2026, with a healthy order pipeline but on-going pressure on order volumes due to the slow economy. Serco's core strengths, he says, lies in its industry experience, multi-site capacity, strong after-sales footprint and innovations such as its fast-opening curtain siders and Ferro-foam refrigerated trailers.

Opportunities ahead include replacement of ageing fleets as interest rates ease, lighter body designs for low-emission conversions and increasing demand for rapid repair services. Currency volatility and tariff uncertainty, however, remain key challenges for the sector.

Holcroft adds: "Our purpose remains to give customers the edge. For 2026 we will focus on reducing our customers' total cost of ownership through innovation and faster service to improve vehicle uptime.

"Practically, that means improving repair turnaround times across our network, reducing lead times for new vehicle bodies through investment in plant capability and launching customer-facing service innovations that translate into measurable fleet productivity gains."

Despite economic pressures, he notes, Serco has proven its resilience and ability to grow through customer partnerships and operational excellence.

"With new technologies, expanded capacity and a focus on sustainable, high-performance solutions, we're confident that 2026 will be a year of meaningful progress for our business and the transport sector as a whole," Holcroft concludes. □



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PORT OF GAUTENG RAIL & PBS



Port of Gauteng Is this the answer?

▲ Massive 'Port of Gauteng' billboards have been seen for some time alongside the N3 near Vosloorus. The cat has now been let out the bag on what this is all about.

South Africa's freight backbone is in crisis. The Durban/Gauteng corridor, meant to be the country's most strategic artery, has seen rail volumes collapse while trucks swamp the N3 in unsustainable numbers. The Port of Gauteng White Paper recently unveiled sets out a R50 billion private-sector response - a massive inland logistics hub designed to make rail competitive again while achieving new road freight efficiencies through Performance-Based Standards (PBS) trucks. FleetWatch correspondent Paul Collings reports.

Francois Nortjé, Developer of Port of Gauteng, frames the plan in bold terms. "We're creating Africa's most advanced inland trade gateway. This facility

represents our commitment to solving South Africa's freight crisis while generating massive economic returns. The 50 000 permanent jobs are just the beginning; we're creating a platform for decades of sustainable growth."

The project covers 1 400 hectares at the junction of the N3, N12 and N17, directly on the Container Rail Corridor. Two 2.2 km flat rail alignments are at the core of the design, built to handle 750-metre trains with targeted three-hour turnaround times.

Alongside them will sit a container terminal, a world-class car terminal and integrated green infrastructure such as rooftop solar, rainwater harvesting and advanced recycling systems.

The freight crisis in numbers

The White Paper spares little detail in diagnosing the current malaise. Transnet lost R1-billion annually on the corridor between 2014 and 2019, rising to R3-billion during Covid. Train movements plummeted from 80 a day to around 15 by 2023-24.

The 2013 National Development Plan (NDP) set a target that half of long-haul freight should move by rail by 2030. With four years to go, less than 14 percent is on rail.

"Since the 2013 National Development Plan set ambitious 2030 targets for shifting freight from road to rail, little progress has been made - and with just four years to go, the need for decisive action is urgent," says Nortjé. ▶ 62

PORT OF GAUTENG RAIL & PBS

E-commerce surge adds to the strain

South Africa's freight pinch is being amplified by the rapid entry of global online retailers. Platforms such as Temu, Shein and Amazon are scaling their African presence, pushing containerised imports sharply upward.

These players may start with air freight but as volumes grow, they inevitably switch to sea freight, adding new pressure on Durban's already stretched terminals and the inland corridor to Gauteng.

The white paper flags this trend as a structural shift in the market - one that makes reliable rail and high-capacity trucking solutions even more urgent.

Making rail competitive again

The developers believe reliability is the missing link. By offering rapid turnarounds and guaranteed slots, the Port hopes to restore shipper confidence in rail. "Port of Gauteng changes everything. It provides the missing link that makes rail competitive again," says Mike Daniel, CEO of RailRunner South Africa.

"With purpose-built rail alignments and future three-hour turnaround times at the container and car terminals, we can finally deliver the reliability that shippers demand," he adds.

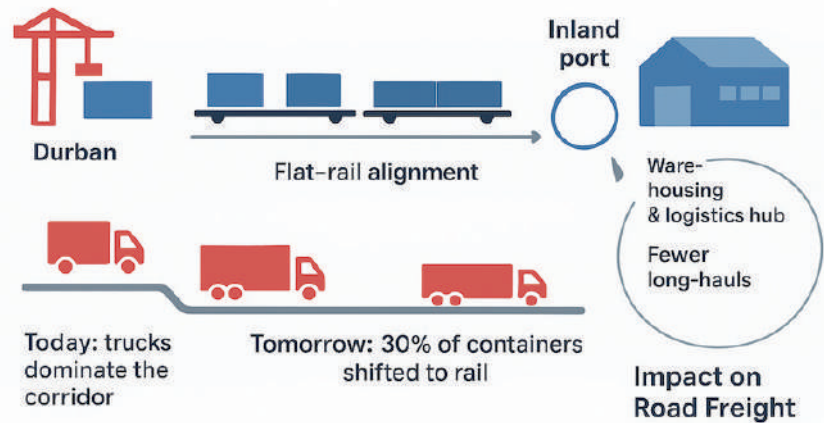
The model envisages private operators moving trains on newly competitive terms, reducing costs per container and making long-haul rail once again attractive compared with road.

Unlocking smarter trucking with PBS

The White Paper is equally ambitious about road freight reform. Performance-Based Standards vehicles - longer, more stable combinations capable of carrying two containers each - are positioned as the key to cutting congestion. By matching PBS operations with rail flows, the developers believe they can remove up to 40 percent of truck movements from the N3 while still improving efficiency.

According to Dr Paul Nordengen, Director at Heavy Vehicle Transport

From Road to Rail – The Corridor Shift



A snapshot of Port of Gauteng's road-to-rail vision.

Technology Africa: "Port of Gauteng's integration of PBS vehicles represents the most significant advancement in heavy vehicle transport efficiency we've seen in decades, reducing truck movements by up to 40% and improving safety outcomes on our most critical trade corridor,"

For fleet operators the numbers are significant: two containers per trip, safer handling dynamics, and lower per-unit emissions.

Regulatory hurdles remain

The challenge is that PBS remains

a pilot scheme. Government is considering a three-year extension to the pilot before deciding whether to legislate it permanently. That leaves operators in limbo - reluctant to commit capital to new trailers, training and insurance without clear rules on routes, axle-load limits and toll charges.

On the rail side, service-level agreements and slot guarantees will be vital. Shippers will only shift to trains if reliability is legally enforceable. Without those contractual frameworks, the fear is that trucks will remain the default.

With just four years to go to reach the 2030 targets, to shift road to rail, little progress has been made... thus the need for decisive action is urgent.

Francois Nortje
Developer, Port of Gauteng



PORT OF GAUTENG RAIL & PBS



▲ Mike Daniel, CEO of RailRunner South Africa says Port of Gauteng “provides the missing link that makes rail competitive again.”

Finance, competition and community impact

The Port of Gauteng is presented as a private-sector project, funded through equity, land sales and rail-park participation rather than government subsidies. The developers point to the expiry of the N3 toll concession in 2029 as a window for reform, with tolling structures potentially aligned to support PBS adoption and corridor decongestion.

Competition is inevitable. The Port’s scale and design will draw business away from Johannesburg’s existing inland terminal at City Deep. That raises questions of labour transfer, community impact and equitable development. While the paper highlights the 50 000 jobs, it does not yet provide detail on skills transfer or mitigation plans for displaced workers.



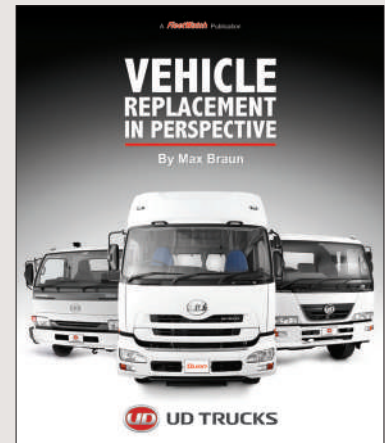
Environmental and decarbonisation benefits

Sustainability is built into the concept. Integrated solar and recycling systems will reduce operational footprints. Shifting more freight onto rail and using fewer, more efficient PBS trucks will lower emissions per container, but the White Paper stops short of offering quantified carbon reduction targets, something shippers and investors will increasingly demand. □

Editor’s Comment: *FleetWatch* has long said the road-to-rail debate is not about talk-shops but about actual delivery. The Port of Gauteng White Paper is the most ambitious private-sector plan tabled to date. It puts reliability and smarter trucking at the heart of its design, and it spells out the failures that have paralysed the corridor for a decade. But ambition alone will not move containers. The test will be execution: can regulators provide certainty on PBS? Can private rail operators guarantee performance? Can financing be secured without political delay? For fleet operators the watchwords are caution and opportunity. Stress-test the business case, model the PBS economics and demand firm rail guarantees before investing. If these pieces align, the Durban–Gauteng corridor could finally shift from crisis to competitiveness. If not, the trucks will keep rolling and the N3 will remain South Africa’s most fragile artery. Also, as stated, the developers believe they can remove up to 40 percent of truck movements from the N3 while still improving efficiency. So where do those trucks go to earn a living?

◀ Dr Paul Nordengen, Director at Heavy Vehicle Transport Technology Africa says Port of Gauteng’s integration of PBS trucks is “the most significant advancement in heavy vehicle transport efficiency we’ve seen in decades.”

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▲ The success of Port of Gauteng will be largely dependent on the efficiency of its road transport interface in providing vital 'first- and last-mile' services that link rail freight to end customers.

RFA backs PBS and rail integration

As South Africa looks to rebalance its freight ecosystem, the Port of Gauteng project has become a national talking point - and the Road Freight Association's support may prove decisive. With government and private investors seeking to revive the Durban-Gauteng corridor through a new R50-billion inland logistics hub, the RFA's endorsement signals crucial alignment between policy and the operators who move the country's freight.

The Association's buy-in on the project's Performance-Based Standards (PBS) vehicle framework adds weight to the initiative's credibility - showing how smart-truck integration, fair modal access and transparent competition can drive a more balanced and sustainable supply chain.

Here is the full opinion piece from Gavin Kelly, CEO of the Road Freight Association, shared verbatim for *FleetWatch* readers.

Port of Gauteng

The drive to achieve an integrated logistics network

The Road Freight Association has reviewed the recently released White

Paper from Port of Gauteng and it notes that the developers have targeted a very ambitious project to address the huge shortfalls in the current logistics network, especially around rail and multi-modal operations involving rail, as well as the fundamental necessity of involving and allowing the private-sector to drive the integration of logistics.

The R50-billion project represents a pivotal opportunity to address the systemic inefficiencies crippling South Africa's economic arteries, particularly the Durban-Gauteng freight corridor.

A bold step toward integrated logistics

The RFA has long championed an integrated, multimodal logistics network where road and rail function as collaborative partners, not competitors.

The vision outlined in Port of Gauteng White Paper, "to create a premier trade gateway that restores balance to our supply chain", resonates deeply with the core principles of bringing about integrated freight operations and infrastructure.

Over the past four decades, the RFA has advocated for the development of inland ports to alleviate the severe congestion at the ports, and the freight handling operations immediately surrounding



**By Gavin Kelly,
CEO of the RFA**

the ports, as well as inland depots like City Deep.

The White Paper correctly identifies the unsustainable pressure on the Port of Durban, a bottleneck that ripples through the entire economy - with an echo in the current inland freight handling depots.

The RFA has spent decades interacting with SARS Customs

to make international trade (cross border freight movement requiring declarations to Customs) as simple and efficient as possible.

This has (together with other stakeholders) realised the current electronic clearance processes and the drive towards SmartBorders - making goods declaration and clearance possible anywhere and at any time by registered importers and exporters. This no longer requires a "centralised facility" where importers and exporters need to present themselves and the relevant documentation.

Block Chain has also brought efficiencies. However, container staging at strategic hubs (outside of the ports) such as Cato Ridge and the proposed hub in Gauteng will unlock further significant efficiencies.

Rebalancing rail and road efficiency

The Association echoes the need to shift rail friendly cargo off road onto rail (with the given that rail will actually be able to efficiently handle such cargoes) and the Association has reiterated and driven this approach.

The “access to rail by private operators” is key to the efficient operation of rail - but comes with its own operational challenges. The reality that rail currently handles less than 14% of volumes on the Durban/ Gauteng Corridor is a vivid reminder of the work that needs to be done – and is in stark contrast to the National Development Plan (NDP) 50% target, highlights the gravity of the situation.

However, it is critical to emphasise that rail cannot succeed in a vacuum. The success of Port of Gauteng will be largely dependent on the efficiency of the road transport interface as road freight operations provide the vital “first- and last-mile” services that connect the rail network to the broader economy and customers who do not have sidings or efficient access to rail depots.

The White Paper envisages seamless train-to-truck transfers - which is a critical aspect if any success is to be achieved (think about the SAR container service in the 70s and 80s where dedicated fleets brought resized containers to the door of the customer).

Editor's Comment: I recall those heady days with Henred Fruehauf getting an order for 600 skeletal trailers from SAR for that function. They were hauled by Oshkosh E-Series truck tractors which I described at the time as a sauna in summer and a fridge in winter. But what heady days of growth those were. To achieve this, substantial investment must extend beyond the boundaries of the port to the surrounding road infrastructure and intermodal facilities. It is essential that true gateway is developed and built, not just a simple relocation of the bottleneck from Durban to Gauteng.

Smart trucks and the PBS connection

The explicit integration of Performance-Based Standards (PBS) vehicles into the design of the Port of Gauteng is intriguing but cognisance

must be taken of the fact that this is still a pilot project, as well as the effect this will have on all road freight operators who operate standard, legal combinations.

The Association has been a leading advocate for the research and development of more efficient road freight vehicles for decades. Smart trucks are not necessarily vehicles that carry more payload - they are vehicles that bring compound efficiencies into the baseline operations of a fleet. That is where the future of smart trucks lies.

Vehicles (and drivers) that are safer, more efficient and reduce road wear per tonne of freight moved, reduce fuel consumption and bring about lower operational costs are the non-negotiable components in modern, competitive road freight logistics operations - for both micro and large road freight companies (operators).

All about New Economy efficiencies

As previously noted, the RFA has consistently supported the efforts of government to revitalise rail, including the historic opening of the network to private operators. The candid assessment in the White Paper of Transnet's past operational and financial challenges on the Corridor underscores why private sector involvement and investment are so crucial.

Port of Gauteng may well provide the “missing link” that can make rail competitive again. By providing the world-class infrastructure and reliability that shippers demand, it creates a viable business case for the road-to-rail shift.

The realities of new market freight access also need to be taken into consideration – for example the demands of e-commerce and the logistical supply chains that this requires.

In the last five years, freight has morphed from large consignments into consumer operations with very small consignments - sometimes a single item - and this has in its own changed the realities within warehouses and consumer logistics supply chains.

The Port of Gauteng will need

to be efficient and fast to deal with this demand - irrespective of the mode it uses to arrive at the port - and if this is to be containerised via rail to the port, then there will be huge asks on turnaround times, scheduling of services and destuffing of containers at the port. This, in itself, will place a huge “ask” on rail services.

Collaboration for a resilient freight future

The Association supports integrated modal operations - provided there is transparent cooperative competition within the port for various operators (rail, warehousing and road) - thus being based on a foundation of operational excellence and fair, competitive access for all parties.

Port of Gauteng is a project that aligns with the long-term vision of the RFA for a functional, efficient and integrated South African logistics supply chain. The success of the port will be our members' success, and ultimately, the nation's success.

The Association looks forward to collaborating with all relevant stakeholders in this project to improve the integration and operation of the logistics network. By working together, the proposed R50-billion investment will be better able to deliver on the promised potential to create jobs, reduce logistics costs, and build a resilient economic future for South Africa. □

Editor's Comment: *FleetWatch* welcomes the RFA's forthright endorsement of the Port of Gauteng vision. The Association's recognition of PBS integration and private-sector rail access as cornerstones of future logistics reform highlights a mature, solutions-based approach. It's a view rooted in operational reality - that trucks and trains must cooperate, not compete. For South Africa's freight economy to thrive, the RFA's “view from the road” must stay central to how the nation designs its next-generation transport corridors.



▲ **Above:** Maersk's new 10 000m² Belcon Cold Store facility in Cape Town strengthens the country's cold chain infrastructure.

◀ **Left:** The new state-of-the-art Belcon Cold Store facility aims to reduce truck turn-around times.

Maersk's investment in SA's cold-chain tops R1.7 billion

South Africa's cold chain logistics network has got a significant boost from offshore investment with Maersk formally opening its Belcon Cold Store facility in Cape Town bringing to US\$100 million+ (± R1.72 billion) the total investment made by Maersk into enhancing South Africa's perishables infrastructure and safeguarding billions in agricultural exports. It also eases pressure on the country's road freight sector.

Reliable cold-chain storage near major ports allows trucking operators to plan more efficient inland distribution, reduce delays and preserve the quality of temperature-sensitive goods such as citrus, table grapes and other fresh produce. Maersk's investment is also a clear signal that global logistics players see

South Africa as a strategic node in the southern African supply chain.

With the inauguration of Belcon, Maersk now operates three world-class cold storage facilities in South Africa - Belcon, Cato, and PreCool. Together, these facilities form a comprehensive network designed to support the demanding cold chain logistics requirements of exporters, featuring:

- 32,000 pallet positions.
- Strategic proximity to the ports of Cape Town and Durban.
- Rail sidings and highway connections for seamless multimodal transport.
- On-site container depot for efficient cargo handling.
- Renewable energy systems to decarbonise supply chains.

The three facilities have already

ramped up operations during the second half of 2025 and have delivered positive impacts to customers during the critical citrus season, ensuring product quality and reducing waste in the supply chain.

Closing the cold-chain gap

Maersk Southern Africa & Islands Managing Director Lubabalo Mtya says the country's cold-chain logistics market has experienced inconsistent performance leading to substantial losses for exporters of temperature-sensitive produce.

He cites the South African grape industry as one sector which has faced significant challenges with delays and "broken cold chains in logistics" costing this sector alone R1.5-billion annually.

"There was a clear need to strengthen South Africa's cold chain infrastructure to minimise these losses and support the competitiveness of local exporters. The Belcon Cold Store directly addresses this critical gap in the market," he says, adding that this new facility is part of Maersk's broader investment into South Africa's cold chain network, supporting the growth of perishable exports.

"We are continuously expanding our infrastructure to provide ▶ 68

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► 66 end-to-end solutions for customers in South Africa.”

End-to-end logistics for exporters

Beyond storage, Maersk is emphasising its end-to-end service offer. “We are listening to our customers and implementing solutions that go beyond business as usual,” Mtya adds. The company provides consolidation, customs brokerage, terminal handling and both land and sea transport. For exporters, this integrated model reduces friction, lowers risk and ensures that produce arrives in optimal condition.

Renewable energy systems embedded in the new facility also support decarbonisation goals, reflecting a growing need for sustainable logistics practices.

A boost for South Africa's export economy

For road freight operators, the new facility translates into better scheduling, fewer urgent shipments and reduced product loss during inland transit. For agricultural exporters, it means improved reliability, less waste and stronger access to global markets.

“Maersk has been invested and present in South Africa for over

three decades, and our ambition has never been stronger. We are committed to building and delivering logistics solutions that create tangible value for our customers and their businesses, while contributing to South Africa's economic prosperity and the livelihoods of its people,” concludes Mtya. □

Editor's Comment: Maersk's Cape Town investment underscores the critical role offshore logistics capital plays in strengthening South Africa's supply chain. By anchoring reliable cold-chain storage near ports, the company not only supports exporters but also benefits the local trucking industry by smoothing inland distribution. For road freight operators, it is a reminder that infrastructure investment at the port and warehouse level can directly impact fleet efficiency, payload security and overall sector competitiveness. This facility sets a new benchmark for cold-chain reliability in southern Africa and highlights the growing intersection of export logistics, sustainability and fleet operations. Salute to Maersk.



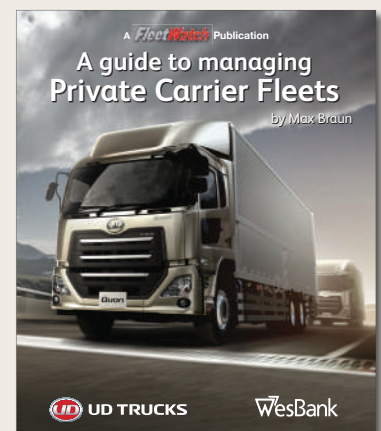
There was a **clear need to strengthen SA's cold chain** infrastructure to minimize losses and **support competitiveness of local exporters**. The Belcon Cold store addresses this gap.

Lubabalo Mtya
MD, Maersk Southern African and Islands

A *FleetWatch* Publication

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▲ Going all out: helping hands and generous spirit – Engen and Vivo employees amid the life-giving shelves of FoodForward SA's warehouse.

▲ Inspired to help: on World Food Day, Engen and Vivo Energy employees helped pack food for distribution to thousands of beneficiary organisations nationwide.

Engen fuels the fight against hunger

Keeping the wheels of compassion turning, Engen has reaffirmed its commitment to fighting hunger by pledging a further R2-million in fuel support to FoodForward SA. The latest contribution brings Engen's total fuel assistance to R10-million since 2020 – a lifeline that keeps FoodForward SA's truck fleet moving across South Africa's vast terrain to deliver food to vulnerable communities.

World Food Day saw Engen employees rolling up their sleeves alongside colleagues from Vivo Energy, volunteering at FoodForward SA warehouses in KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, and Gauteng. Together, the teams sorted, packed, and prepared food parcels destined for thousands of beneficiary organisations nationwide.

Driving change through logistics

FoodForward SA Managing Director Andy du Plessis expresses deep appreciation for the partnership: "We thank Engen and Vivo for their ongoing generosity and for caring enough to make a real difference. Their annual fuel support helps FoodForward SA alleviate hunger across the country and ensures that many more impoverished households receive food provisions."

Fuel, as any operator knows, is the heartbeat of logistics. Without it, trucks don't move and communities don't get served. Engen's contribution ensures FoodForward SA's delivery fleet can stay on the road – covering long-haul routes that link food donors to those most in need.

Sustaining impact beyond World Food Day

Engen CSI Manager Olwethu Mdbabula highlights the importance of partnerships that go beyond immediate relief: "As a brand that aims to improve the lives of the communities in which we operate, Engen is humbled to partner with FoodForward SA and play our part on World Food Day.

"But we also recognise that lasting impact requires more than food hampers – it requires a clear, sustainable plan that includes skills transfer and a focus on long-term food security. This is why we are deliberate about the partners we choose and the impact we seek to make."

Founded in 2009, FoodForward SA bridges the gap between surplus and shortage by recovering quality excess food from the consumer goods supply chain and redistributing it to organisations supporting vulnerable groups.

"As a caring and inclusive company with heart, our support for FoodForward SA aligns with Engen's commitment to the United Nations SDGs, which strive for a better and more sustainable future for all," concludes Mdbabula. □



▼ Left to right: Big smiles from Werner Kapp, CEO - Altron, Grant Fraser - Netstar Group Managing Director, Kgothatso Banoe - NSRI Gauteng

Netstar backs NSRI bravery

This is not a direct trucking related story but one that warms the heart as it involves telematics company Netstar, well known in the trucking sector, extending its life-saving support beyond vehicles on the road.

South Africa's coastline is vast, unpredictable and increasingly dangerous. Each year thousands of lives depend on the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI), yet the organisation continues to grapple with challenges around funding and access to modern technology. Given this, we lift our hats to Netstar, already an NSRI supporter, for stepping up to strengthen its funding efforts by raising R350 000 for the NSRI through a dedicated fundraiser.

Long-standing partnership saves lives

The donation forms part of a partnership dating back to 2011, when the NSRI first began using Netstar tracking devices on its vehicles. Today 37 NSRI rescue vehicles are

fitted with Netstar units that allow teams to monitor status in real time via Netstar's AI application. This technology has become integral to coordinating missions and protecting volunteers.

"We're proud to stand alongside the NSRI," says Grant Fraser, Group MD of Netstar. "Their volunteers are out there every day, saving lives in some of the toughest conditions. This donation is our way of saying thank you – and making sure they have the tools they need to keep doing what they do best."

Bridging gaps where resources fall short

While Netstar's devices are not yet installed on NSRI sea-rescue vessels, their role in land-based operations is crucial. Every rescue that requires a dispatched vehicle benefits from the safety net of tracking and real-time oversight, offering peace of mind to crews and coordinators alike.

Renee Leeuwner, Community Fundraiser at the NSRI, states: "The



▲ "Lifesaving work at sea depends on support from those on land."
- Renee Leeuwner, Community Fundraiser at the NSRI.

recent fundraiser by Netstar saw a multitude of stakeholders coming together to invest in the resilience of South Africa's coastal communities. It was a reminder for all of us that lifesaving work at sea depends on support from those on land. We are extremely grateful for partnerships like these." □

Editor's Comment: *FleetWatch* salutes Netstar for recognising that technology has a valuable role to play in lifesaving operations on our oceans. The NSRI is powered by volunteers and donations, not state funding, and that reality leaves a dangerous gap. Partnerships like this show how the private sector can step up to strengthen safety where it is most needed – on the roads (like in the case of the late, legendary Philip Hull's Community Medical Services and Road Safety Foundation SA), and at sea with the NSRI.

BakkieH provides logistics solutions for SMEs

For small and medium enterprises (SMEs), logistics is often the make-or-break factor. Many entrepreneurs struggle to get their goods to market quickly, reliably and at an affordable rate. Without access to professional distribution networks, their growth stalls.

This is why a new grassroots segment of South Africa's trucking sector is emerging – one powered by digital platforms that connect smaller operators with customers. Among them, BakkieHi is positioning itself as a homegrown solution that leverages technology, partnerships and trust to build the foundation for inclusive logistics.

Building a tech-driven grassroots segment

Founded by Skhibela Mohlala, BakkieHi aims to give SMEs, households and growing businesses a seamless way to access vetted transport providers, ranging from small bakkies to 8-ton trucks. Backed by Gauteng's Innovation Hub, the platform already has 151

▼ Skhibela Mohlala, founder of BakkieHi: "Providing a technology-driven logistics platform that connects individuals and businesses with trusted transportation partners."



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▲ BakkieHi's vetted transport services range from small bakkies to 8-ton trucks.

vehicles signed up from a pool of more than 1 000 applicants.

These drivers and operators now form the backbone of a fast-growing network handling at least 10 confirmed deliveries daily, from local trips in Johannesburg to long-distance hauls linking Gauteng with the Western Cape.

Strategic partnerships give the platform added clout. DHL Express powers international shipping, DSV Courier handles local road deliveries and Pace Car Rentals provides vehicles to keep the fleet agile. Together, these collaborations allow BakkieHi to offer a service mix that would be out of reach for many small operators acting alone.

AI innovation driving transparency

A standout feature is the AI-powered service request tool. Customers simply upload an image of their cargo, receive instant vehicle recommendations and get a fair, AI-generated quote. This system reduces haggling, cuts inefficiencies and makes logistics transparent. For drivers, it provides steady, pre-qualified work. For customers, it delivers certainty and affordability.

"Logistics is no longer just about moving goods from point A to point B – it is about creating an ecosystem that is data-driven, sustainable and customer-centric," says Mohlala.

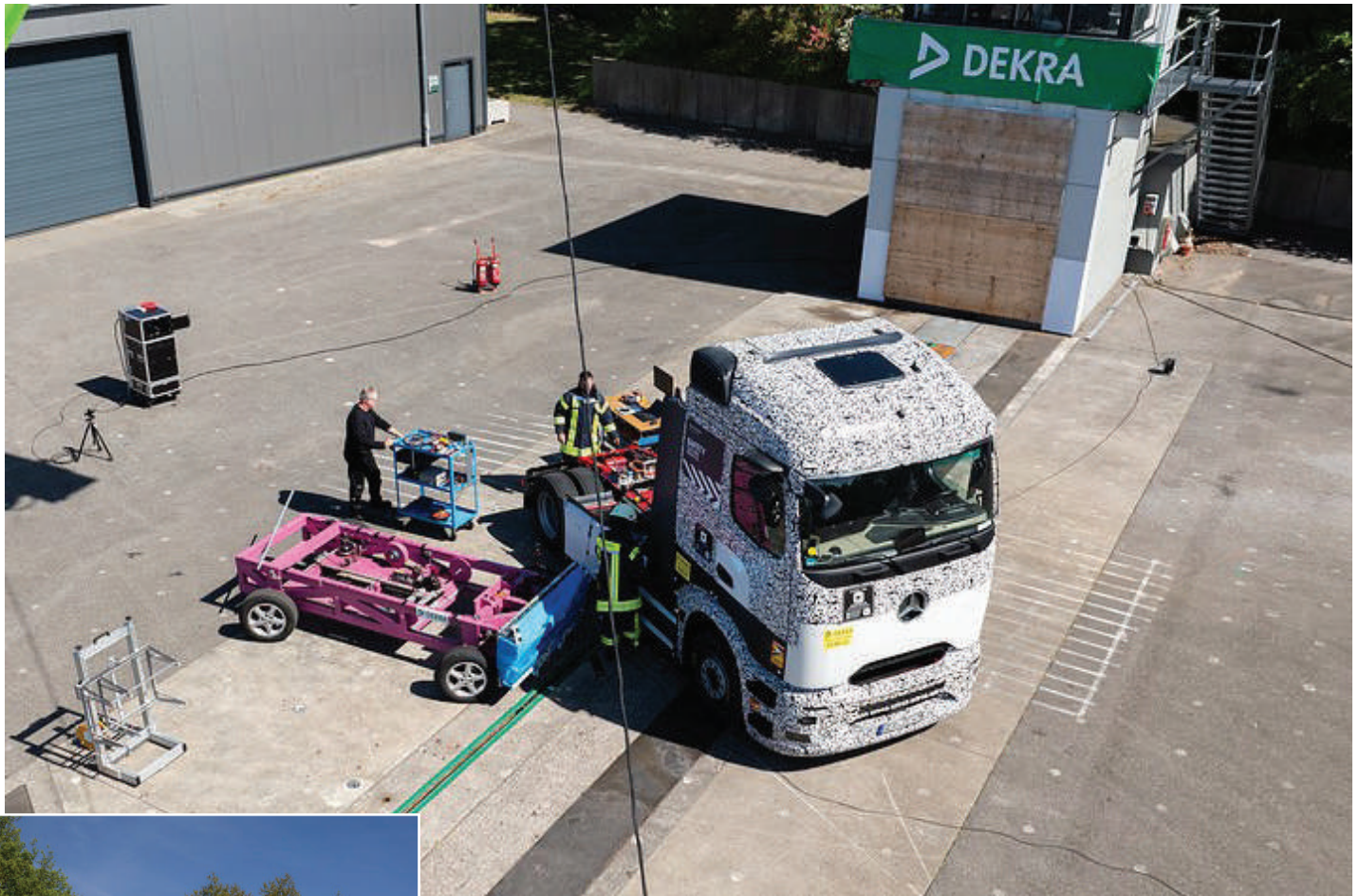
"At BakkieHi, we believe in building that future today, starting with Gauteng and soon rolling out nationally."

Strengthening the base of logistics pyramid

The BakkieHi model goes beyond tech – it signals the rise of a grassroots logistics economy where SMEs, township entrepreneurs and owner-drivers can plug into a national system.

With its strong supply base, partnerships and innovative platform, BakkieHi is proving that the road ahead for logistics in South Africa will not only be driven by large corporates but also by agile, tech-enabled SMEs building sustainable livelihoods from the ground up. □

Editor's Comment: *FleetWatch* has long argued that the health of South Africa's logistics sector depends on strengthening its base. The country's future trucking economy cannot rely solely on large fleets – it must empower SMEs and smaller operators with the tools, trust and transparency to compete. Platforms like BakkieHi are a positive step in that direction, knitting together technology, partnerships and entrepreneurial grit to build an inclusive logistics ecosystem. The challenge now is to ensure that the policy environment, infrastructure investment and financial support systems are in place to help this grassroots segment thrive.



Inset: Passing with flying colours: Crash testing the eActros 600 replicates real-world conditions.

Main photo: The eActros 600 undergoing a side-impact test of over 1-tonne travelling at 50km/h.

Mercedes-Benz eActros 600

Electric crash test genius

Truck accidents continue to plague South Africa's roads and as such, each new safety innovation in the heavy vehicle sector is more than a technical milestone - it's a step toward saving lives. The latest safety development from Mercedes-Benz Trucks in Germany is a stroke of tech genius. The new battery-electric eActros 600 – although not yet launched in South Africa - has undergone rigorous real-world crash testing, underscoring that electrification and safety can - and must - evolve hand in hand. This

will come as sweet news to local companies using the eActros 300 or eActros 400 – both of which were introduced into our market in 2024 – for it shows that the move toward electrification need not compromise safety; in fact, it may set a new benchmark.

The eActros 600 combines efficiency and sustainability with what Mercedes-Benz Trucks calls the highest standards of active and passive safety. Long before its series production, the company's internal accident research team analysed real-

world accident data to guide design measures.

“From the outset, our aim was to make no compromises when it came to vehicle safety,” says Felix Pietler, passive safety developer at Mercedes-Benz Trucks. “With electric drives in particular, it is not only important to ensure passenger protection – measures to protect the immediate surroundings are also crucial.”

A real-world side impact crash test in Neumünster proved the value of this approach. Despite significant collision force, the high-voltage battery system and all electrical components remained intact.

Frank Müller, Head of Accident Research & Passive Safety, states: “The test showed that the mechanical stress was high - but our concept works reliably.”

Built to withstand real-world impact

The reinforced cab and defined energy absorption zones in the front end of the vehicle dissipate impact forces in frontal collision scenarios in a targeted manner via crash-optimised structures.

With regard to side impact scenarios, the latest test confirmed that the high-voltage battery modules remained intact and the housing showed no critical deformations thanks to a frame architecture specially developed for heavy-duty collisions. In addition, airbag systems and seatbelt tensioners are available to increase occupant protection in all vehicle variants.

Prior to the test, simulation-based analyses were carried out and sensors were installed and precisely calibrated; each component was precisely tailored to the test scenario.

“For me personally, the last two to three minutes before the crash are particularly fascinating,” says Christoph Berger from the Passive Safety team, describing the moment just before the test sequence is triggered. “Everything becomes quieter than before, and there is a concentrated tension in the air.” Upon impact, more than a ton of mass collides with the side of the truck at a speed of over 50 km/h.



▲ Passive safety benchmark: crash testing the Mercedes-Benz eActros 600, Frank Müller (left), Head of Accident Research & Passive Safety, Mercedes-Benz Trucks, and Felix Pietler (Passive Safety Engineer, Mercedes-Benz Trucks).

Electrified and fortified

Mercedes-Benz Trucks designed the high-voltage (HV) system with robust insulation, mechanical protection and fire-resistance measures. Each vehicle not only meets but exceeds current legal standards, with results verified by emergency services after each test. “The results clearly confirm our expectations; there would have been no danger here in practical use,” Müller notes.

Even after series launch, the company continues real-world tests to integrate lessons from field data, aligning with its Vision Zero goal of eliminating road fatalities for both conventional and electric fleets.

The eActros 600 is also equipped with cutting-edge driver assistance systems such as Active Brake Assist 6, Active Sideguard Assist 2, Front Guard Assist and Attention Assist 2 – all designed to prevent incidents before they occur. Its Acoustic Vehicle Alerting System (AVAS) ensures that pedestrians and cyclists can detect the vehicle even in silent electric operation.

Range, reliability and responsibility

The eActros 600 boasts a 600+ kWh LFP battery delivering up to 500 km on a single charge and a projected service life of 1.2 million kilometres over ten years. The

truck has already proven itself in the “eActros 600 European Testing Tour 2024” and subsequent Winter Tour 2025, and was crowned International Truck of the Year 2025.

With over 40 variants now available, Mercedes-Benz Trucks continues to expand its battery-electric portfolio, merging long-haul capability with the brand’s renowned durability and safety. □

Editor’s Comment: For South Africa’s trucking community, where road safety remains a national crisis, such engineering achievements offer a glimmer of hope. The tragedy of truck crashes is one we report on too often - and any technology that keeps drivers, passengers and bystanders safer deserves the industry’s attention. The eActros 600 demonstrates that the move toward electrification need not compromise safety; in fact, it may set a new benchmark. Mercedes-Benz Trucks’ rigorous crash testing shows what can be achieved when manufacturers take real-world data seriously. If global OEMs can lead with this level of commitment, perhaps our own local fleets will soon see fewer tragedies and more technology-driven triumphs on South Africa’s highways.



Finding strength in unity

Mitsubishi Fuso and Hino finalise integration reading

Global truck manufacturers are finding strength in unity. As OEMs face new sustainability and technology frontiers, mergers like the upcoming integration of Mitsubishi Fuso and Hino Motors show how collaboration can unlock value for customers worldwide. Fleet operators stand to benefit most - with shared R&D, streamlined production and accelerated advances in zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) technology leading to lower costs, improved uptime and more efficient service networks.

In Tokyo recently, Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus Corporation and Hino Motors Ltd confirmed that their new holding company will be called ARCHION, marking a major step towards the integration announced earlier this year. It was in June that Daimler Truck, Mitsubishi Fuso, Hino and Toyota Motor Corporation concluded "definitive agreements" to integrate Mitsubishi Fuso and Hino Motors as a new Japanese truck powerhouse.

[Click here to read the story FleetWatch ran at the time.](#)

Scheduled to begin operations on 1 April 2026, ARCHION represents what the partners describe as 'delivering the future of commercial mobility'. The name fuses 'arches' - symbolising connection and strength - with 'eons', expressing a long-term commitment to future mobility.

Under the ARCHION umbrella, both brands will retain their identities while sharing technology, platforms and supply networks. The integration aims to deliver benchmark profitability through a comprehensive synergy strategy focused on product enhancement, portfolio expansion and efficiency gains.

"Today we take the next step to bring our shared vision to life," said Karl Deppen, designated Representative Director and CEO of ARCHION, and current President and CEO of Mitsubishi Fuso. "With ARCHION, we aim to 'deliver the future of commercial mobility' for the benefit of our customers and all stakeholders."

Top left: The FUSO eCanter at a charging station in Japan. Beyond efficiency, ARCHION will channel savings into CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared and Electric) technologies. Hino South Africa recently brought the Hino Dutro Z EV into South Africa for trials.

Top right:

▲ Hino Motors recently unveiled Japan's first mass-produced fuel cell heavy-duty truck. Hydrogen fuel cell systems and autonomous driving capabilities are priority areas for the merged Mitsubishi Fuso and Hino Motors Group.

Realising synergies and growth opportunities

A key pillar is the Integrated Platform Strategy, which will align heavy-, medium- and light-duty vehicle development across both manufacturers. This will enable faster model launches, improved cost efficiency and a broader product range tailored to global fleets.

Backed by Toyota's and Daimler Truck's technological capital, ARCHION plans to consolidate domestic truck production into three sites by 2028 - Kawasaki, Koga and Nitta - optimising logistics and



quality while phasing out duplicate operations.

Financial leadership will be driven by Hetal Laligi, designated CFO and Representative Director. “Our financial ambition for the new Group is rooted in a clear strategy: unlocking the full potential of this integration by realising synergies and growth opportunities,” said Laligi. “We aim to elevate financial resilience and performance to peer benchmark level.”

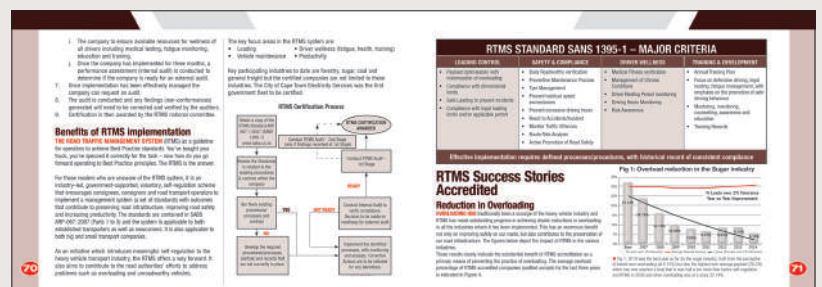
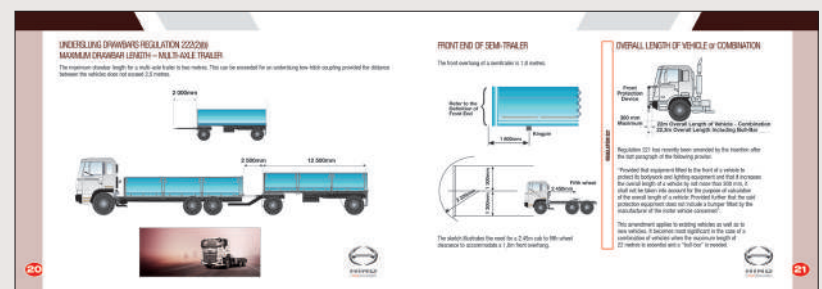
Satoshi Ogiso, CEO of Hino Motors and designated CTO, added that customer focus remains central: “First and foremost, we are committed to putting our customers at the centre of everything we do to drive customer business success.”

Prioritising new truck technologies

Beyond efficiency, ARCHION will channel savings into CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared and Electric) technologies. Hydrogen fuel cell systems and autonomous driving capabilities are priority areas, combining Daimler’s expertise with Toyota’s innovation leadership. The move is also expected to bolster Japan’s industrial base by sustaining advanced engineering jobs and reinforcing supply-chain resilience.

ARCHION’s planned shareholder structure will see Toyota and Daimler Truck each hold 25%, with full ownership of Mitsubishi Fuso and Hino. The company is targeting a future listing on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Prime Market. □

Editor's Comment: ARCHION marks more than a merger – it’s a realignment of global truck manufacturing around sustainability, scale and customer value. For fleets, this means access to better-integrated vehicles, lower lifecycle costs and faster access to next-gen propulsion. If ARCHION can balance healthy brand rivalry with genuine collaboration, it may become the model for how legacy OEMs navigate the road to carbon-neutral transport.



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Vivo Energy launches digital truck health monitoring system

Truck breakdowns remain one of the biggest headaches in the transport industry, costing operators time, money and customer trust. With technology stepping in to predict and prevent failures, Vivo Energy has launched VE-CEM, a digital monitoring solution that promises to keep Africa's fleets and equipment moving.

Unveiled in Cape Town, VE-CEM (Continuous Equipment Monitoring) is powered by Digital Twin technology from Vivo's strategic partner Intangles. The system captures real-time data from a vehicle's electronic control unit and delivers insights into engines, aftertreatment systems, brakes, batteries, alternators and air intake.

The VE-CEM also monitors the effect of driver behaviour on vehicle health and fuel use. Operators can view the data via dashboards that provide a full 360-degree picture of fleet and asset performance.

"At Vivo Energy, we don't just fuel industries; we power transformation," says Stan Mittelman, CEO of Vivo Energy. "With VE-CEM, our customers will be able to predict issues before they happen - slashing costs, boosting productivity and gaining greater confidence in their operations. This

new offer will deliver real value where it matters most: keeping fleets and equipment working reliably, day after day."

The solution is aimed at transport, mining, construction and agriculture - sectors where uptime is critical to profitability. It connects via a compact device that links directly into the vehicle or machine, giving instant access to predictive insights through a secure platform.

Proven in Africa, ready to roll out

Sharveen Maharaj, Engen General Manager: Commercial, adds: "Our commercial customers face real pressures: tight margins, high equipment maintenance costs, and rising expectations around safety and sustainability. VE-CEM provides the ability not just to monitor, but to predict equipment failures and take action before a breakdown ever occurs. That foresight changes the game. It turns maintenance into a strategic advantage, reduces costs, lowers fuel consumption, and improves fleet availability."

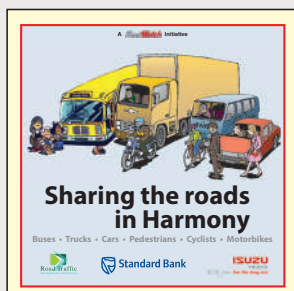
Pilots with mining and fleet operators in Kenya, Senegal and Zambia have already shown the system's ability to detect potential issues weeks in advance, reducing



▲ Bye-bye breakdowns? Vivo Energy and Intangles at the launch of VE-CEM. Anup Patil, (left) CEO of Intangles and Stan Mittelman, CEO of Vivo Energy.

unplanned downtime. Rollout is now planned across Vivo Energy's commercial operations, with scope for further digital solutions to follow. □

Editor's Comment: Unplanned breakdowns are a drain on fleets across Africa, forcing operators into costly downtime and putting delivery schedules at risk. The ability to predict failures before they happen is more than just clever tech – it's a survival tool in tough operating environments. *FleetWatch* sees this move by Vivo Energy and Intangles as another sign that digital intelligence is becoming central to modern trucking. Keeping vehicles moving safely and profitably is what it's all about.



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◀ Each 12-metre Lion's Explorer E carries four 80 kWh battery packs located between the axles, with production scheduled to begin in 2026 and deliveries completed by the end of 2027.



▲ Bussing a new electric fleet route, from left: Micheal Kobriger, Executive Board Member Production & Logistics at MAN Truck & Bus SE; Mohamed Paruk, Founder of Paruk Group; and Mohamed Paruk Jnr, Director of Paruk Group.

Paruk Group goes electric with a 100 eBus deal

Although *FleetWatch* traditionally keeps its wheels firmly in the trucking lane, this landmark order of 100 electric city buses for South Africa deserves attention. It marks a pivotal moment in commercial vehicle electrification. MAN Truck & Bus, long a stalwart of diesel power, has clinched its largest eBus contract outside Europe, partnering with South Africa's Paruk Group in a 100 unit deal that cements the country's role in the global transition to clean mobility.

MAN Truck & Bus has signed an agreement with the Paruk Group for the delivery of 100 fully electric Lion's Explorer E buses – its biggest eBus order beyond European borders.

"This order is an important step on our journey to make urban transport around the world even cleaner, quieter and safer. At the same time, it demonstrates the strategic importance of our international chassis business," says Barbaros Oktay, Head of Bus at MAN Truck & Bus.

"We are delighted to be setting new standards for electric mobility on the African continent together with the Paruk Group."

The vehicles, based on MAN's Lion's Chassis E, will be entirely built in South Africa – chassis at MAN's Pinetown plant and bodies at Olifantsfontein – reinforcing local industrial capacity and supporting green value creation. Each 12-metre Lion's Explorer E carries four 80 kWh battery packs located between the axles, with production scheduled to begin in 2026 and deliveries completed by the end of 2027.

A bold step for African e-mobility

For Paruk Group, which operates one of the world's largest MAN bus fleets, the move from diesel to electric represents a long-term commitment to sustainability.

"We operate one of the largest MAN bus fleets globally – a testament to over 30 years of trust, partnership and shared vision," says company owner Mohamed Paruk.

"Our move from diesel to electric isn't just a technological shift but a promise to our continued focus on sustainable transport solutions in the region. It is a bold step – but with MAN at our side, it feels like a natural evolution."

The milestone follows MAN's 2023 delivery of its first fully electric bus for the African market, assembled locally for Cape Town. "Thanks to manufacturing in South Africa, we can ensure that the eBuses perfectly meet the needs of transport companies and can also be integrated into existing processes in the best possible way," notes Oktay.

MAN Truck & Bus South Africa Managing Director, Jan Aichinger, concludes: "We are proud to not only bring the first MAN eBuses on the African roads, but to be the first manufacturer, across both passenger and commercial vehicles, in the South African automotive industry to localise the production of an electric vehicle." □

UD Trucks expands dealer footprint

In a time when South Africa's trucking sector is searching for signals of long-term stability, the opening of new dealerships is a healthy sign of both industry expansion and commitment to the local economy. UD Trucks Southern Africa, in partnership with Fuzion Motor Group, has underlined this commitment with the launch of two new fully equipped dealerships in the Western Cape - one in Vredenburg on the West Coast and another in Swellendam.

The openings strengthen UD's national footprint, improve customer accessibility, and deepen support across both urban and rural regions.

Strategic locations to support metro and rural operators

The Vredenburg dealership, opened its doors on 1 October 2025. Positioned at the heart of the West Coast, it offers visibility and ease of access for customers from Vredenburg, Saldanha, Langebaan, Velddrif and surrounding towns.

With residential, commercial and industrial activity accelerating in the region, the demand for reliable transport solutions, servicing and parts continues to rise.

The Swellendam dealership, is just 1.5 km from the N2 offramp between Cape Town and George. Its central location creates a hub for regional transport businesses, local farmers and fleet operators, placing essential support within closer reach of customers.

According to Jason De Swardt, Branch Manager of Vredenburg:



"Opening this branch is more than just a business milestone - it's about serving the West Coast community right where they live and work. We're here to make servicing easier, more personal and more accessible for everyone."

Morné Trollip, Branch Manager for Swellendam states: "The presence of UD Trucks in Swellendam is a proud moment for us. We can now offer both existing and new clients the convenience and peace of mind that comes with having expert service, genuine parts and trusted support right on their doorstep."

A partnership built on reliability

For Fuzion Motor Group, the openings represent a key milestone in strengthening both service capability and customer support across the region. By combining UD Trucks' global expertise with Fuzion's deep local knowledge, the partnership ensures operators have timely, professional support and high-quality services.

It is a collaboration that enhances efficiency, builds customer confidence and reinforces the long-term reliability of the UD brand.

"The expansion of our UD branches enables us to better serve our clients while making the Fuzion name synonymous with the

▲ The two new UD Trucks SA/ Fuzion Motor Group dealerships in the Western Cape will bring tangible benefits to both long-haul and regional truck fleets.

UD brand. For customers, this means trust - knowing they are supported by a partnership built on reliability and a shared commitment to excellence," says John Trollip, Managing Director of Fuzion Motor Group.

For UD Trucks Southern Africa, network expansion is about more than selling vehicles - it's about ensuring customers enjoy the quality, durability and uptime that define the brand.

"Our aftermarket support is built on speed, reliability, quality, and uptime. These new dealerships will reduce travel time for customers, improve service turnaround and keep vehicles where they deliver the most value - on the road, earning for their owners," adds Sanjay Naipal, Aftermarket Director at UD Trucks Southern Africa.

"Expanding our presence alongside a trusted partner like Fuzion ensures that more customers can experience the reliability, efficiency and uptime UD Trucks is known for. These dealerships embody our promise of being closer to our customers, wherever they operate," concludes

Editor's Comment: The opening of new dealerships is encouraging for operators and communities but it also underlines the pressure on OEMs to continue investing in dealer networks in a difficult economy. Rising input costs, volatile fuel prices and persistent skills shortages are already testing the resilience of the transport sector. Dealer support is critical to keeping trucks on the road, but the responsibility cannot rest on OEMs alone. Government has to provide policy stability, infrastructure investment and skills development to ensure that private investment is not left to carry the weight on its own. The new branches from UD Trucks and Fuzion Motor Group show what can be achieved but lasting industry growth will only come when the Government mobilises its resources to strategically enable sustained development in the trucking sector.

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Expertise needed in infrastructure decisions

The Institute of Municipal Engineering of Southern Africa (IMESA) is calling for urgent reform in how infrastructure decisions are made. The organisation says that many ongoing failures in transport and public infrastructure are rooted in one critical issue: engineers are being excluded from procurement and planning decisions.

“At municipal level, tender evaluation committees and bid adjudication committees - which are responsible for awarding billions of rands in infrastructure contracts - are still dominated by non-technical officials,” IMESA asserts. This has become a systemic issue that the institute has repeatedly sounded the alarm on.

“We now need urgent intervention because tenders are routinely being awarded to contractors who do not have the technical capacity to deliver. Often, decisions are based on the lowest price, not on whether the bidder can actually build what’s needed,” says IMESA president Geoff Tooley.

He notes that the 2023/24 Auditor-General report confirmed the scale of the crisis. “Municipal infrastructure projects across the country are plagued by delays, cost overruns and quality issues. In nearly every case, these problems can be traced back to poor contractor selection and a lack of proper technical due diligence - the very areas where engineers are trained to advise.”

More than just roads and bridges

Transport infrastructure is more than just roads and bridges, IMESA stresses. “It is the backbone

of local economies, enabling the movement of goods, people and services. Infrastructure supports daily life, promotes economic activity and connects communities. But to ensure that it is safe, dependable and lasting, engineers must be involved from the outset and through all phases, including planning and procurement.”

The current situation, where they are being sidelined, puts professional engineers in an impossible position, Tooley says. “Under the Engineering Profession Act (46 of 2000), engineers registered with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) are legally required to uphold standards that protect the public. This includes rejecting work that is unsafe, improperly scoped or risks infrastructure failure. When engineers are not part of procurement decisions - or worse, when their expert input is ignored - it creates an ethical and legal conflict.

“Municipal engineers’ standard role includes a detailed evaluation of whether the proposed budget matches real-world construction costs and whether the bidder has a track record for the kind of work being tendered,” he explains.

“These assessments are submitted as part of the engineer’s report to the bid evaluation committee. But currently, engineers’ recommendations are

▲ If SA is serious about delivering infrastructure that lasts, engineers need to be at the decision making table from day one.

often ignored, especially when we advise that a tender be declined. That’s not just bad practice, it’s reckless and it wastes public money. This pattern must end.”

IMESA is urging all municipalities and national departments to ensure that registered engineers are included in all tender evaluation and bid adjudication committees. The institute also calls for technical recommendations by engineers to not only be heard but followed. “The law already gives engineers a mandate. It’s time municipal procurement processes recognised it in practice.

“When engineers are involved early, infrastructure projects are more likely to be delivered on time, on budget and with long-term sustainability. That translates into better service delivery, safer communities and greater economic resilience. The current approach is not working. If South Africa is serious about delivering infrastructure that lasts, engineers need to be at the decision-making table from day one. Anything less is a risk we simply cannot afford,” Tooley concludes. □



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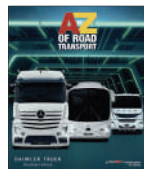
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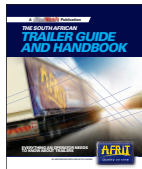
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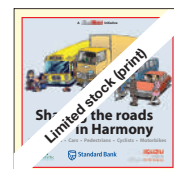
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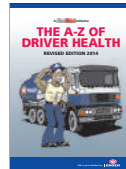
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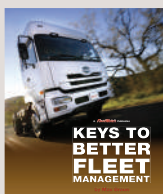


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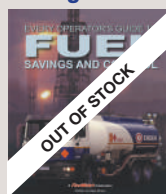
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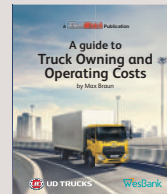
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