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### APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

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tell of trade-route terror

### WOMEN IN TRANSPORT

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Unit 17, Northcliff Office Park, 203 Beyers Naude Drive, Northcliff, 2195.  
P O Box 957, Fontainebleau, 2032, South Africa  
Tel: 011 782 1070 | Fax: 011 782 1073 /0360

### EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Charleen Clarke  
Cell: 083 601 0568  
charleen@focusontransport.co.za  
womanonwheelsza

### PUBLISHER

Tina Monteiro  
Cell: 082 568 3181  
tina@focusontransport.co.za

### DEPUTY EDITOR

Wynter Murdoch  
Cell: 082 453 9794  
wynter@charmont.co.za

### SUB-EDITOR

Jeanette Lamont  
jeanette@charmont.co.za

### JOURNALISTS

Mariska Morris  
Cell: 084 788 8399  
mariska@charmont.co.za  
Patroffie

### TECHNICAL CORRESPONDENT

Vic Oliver  
Cell: 083 267 8437  
voliver@mweb.co.za

### CONTRIBUTORS

Mike Fitzmaurice  
Malcolm Hartwell  
Vaughan Mostert  
Gianenrico Griffini  
Jarlath Sweeney

### ADVERTISING SALES

Atish Ramachul  
Cell: 061 320 2210  
atish@focusontransport.co.za

Diana Gouws  
Cell: 082 801 8506  
diana@charmont.co.za

### CIRCULATION MANAGER

Bev Rogers  
Cell: 078 230 5063  
bev@focusontransport.co.za

### DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Nelio da Silva  
nelio@focusontransport.co.za

### PRINTING

Camera Press

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# MAZDA ESCHEWS THE WORKHORSE

**IN TERMS OF MAZDA'S NEW GLOBAL STRATEGY, THE BRAND IS COMMITTED TO DELIVERING PREMIUM-QUALITY VEHICLES AIMED AT MOVING THE NEEDLE FOR BRAND VALUE. AMONG NEW PRODUCTS SCHEDULED IS A REPLACEMENT FOR THE BT-50 BAKKIE – WHICH WON'T INCLUDE A WORKHORSE**

M

azda's new-generation BT-50 bakkie – developed in collaboration with Japanese rival Isuzu – won't include a workhorse version for the South African market, though a cab-and-a-half derivative is on the cards.

In an interview in Johannesburg at the launch of the brand's new-generation Mazda3 passenger car, Craig Roberts, managing director of Mazda South Africa, said sales of the upcoming BT-50 – which is scheduled for launch in 2021 – would be aimed primarily at the leisure sector of the light commercial vehicle market and would be limited to double cabs and, probably, a cab-and-a-half variant.

"We aim to align the vehicle to the private buyer, who, in the main, represents the leisure user rather than the commercial fleet operator. That's where we think the consumer trend is heading. And, since we regard the bakkie as being representative of a true crossover vehicle, the new model will incorporate premium-quality features that, in our view, will make it a forceful competitor to SUVs," he said.

Roberts added that, in terms of global strategy, Mazda was repositioning all of its products as "more premium" than they had previously been perceived. He said the new Mazda3, for instance – which represented the seventh generation of the model – had moved upmarket and, through his eyes, the vehicle now rivalled an Audi A3 rather than a Volkswagen Golf in terms of styling, features, equipment and quality.

Similarly, he believed the new BT-50 would sport a cabin comparable to that of the current Mazda CX-5, with exterior styling – solely developed by the company's design team – taking on a robust, truck-like look. "I've seen the styling

designs for the new vehicle," he said, "and the overall look is far more muscular than that of the model it will supersede. I think it's right for South Africa's market."

Roberts described Mazda's current BT-50 – which was co-developed with Ford about eight years ago – as "a little too soft and passenger car-like" in terms of the bakkie market's consumer appeal. "It is largely perceived to be a Ranger with a different badge. In this respect, I believe the new model will open up exciting opportunities for us. Even though it has been developed in conjunction with Isuzu, it will have its own identity, its own DNA – and that will be an important differentiator in the consumer market.

"It's been four-and-a-half years since Mazda became a standalone company in South Africa, and only now are we getting to the point where we're being seen to be independent of our former custodians. I believe the next-generation BT-50 – along with other new models in the Mazda line-up – will help us to further challenge the way the brand is distinguished," he said.

Roberts added that although the launch of the vehicle remained a long way off – it is likely to be unveiled locally only in the second quarter of 2021 – the model is seen as imperative from a brand perspective. "In terms of sales, South Africa represents only fractionally over one percent of Mazda's annual global volume – yet our performance here is regarded as important to the company's overall success.

"From a local perspective, our share of the market is equally vital. We're in business to generate a profit, and we have to ensure a realistic line-up of vehicles that is going to help us to achieve that aim. In terms of our 'more-premium' strategy, we are committed to delivering quality products that will move the needle for brand value."

**WYNTER MURDOCH**





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Haven't yet seen **FOCUS** on social media? Not to worry, here are some of our most popular posts from the last month.

**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**

The entire transportation industry is undergoing a significant transformation. From self-driving vehicles, autonomous fleets and electric trucks, to artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and the gig economy - the future of trucking faces some big changes. Does this sound scary? Change doesn't have to be intimidating...  
<http://bit.ly/2nvdX>



**Are You Ready for the Future of Trucking?**  
Four strategies logistics providers should consider now to prepare for the...

**Top Five**  
Dick Moleplame This change dates back to 2012 in South Africa with the launch of Volvo FH vision 4 Trucks Electrical Architecture 2+ (TEA2+)

**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**

Watch as Carle Stanche investigates the real reasons behind the truck violence that's crippling South Africa's road transportation industry.  
<http://bit.ly/2xq5YRX>



**Truck Wars**  
"Avoid being on the N3 at night" - that's the alarming warning from...

**Ishean Prinsloo** You can easily see who and what the problem is in that video?  
Like Reply Message 10

**Patrick Darlington Dake** South Africa is not a better place for transporters  
Like Reply Message 10

**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**

The N3 trade route that links Durban and Johannesburg is now considered to be one of the most dangerous highways in the country. Since April last year, more than 100 trucks carrying cargo have come under attack on the N3, resulting in billions of rand in losses to KwaZulu-Natal's economy.  
<http://bit.ly/2xpe4MT>



**SA'S MOST HIGH-RISK ROAD**

**SA's most dangerous highway | The Mercury**  
Ongoing attacks on trucks and truckers have made the N3 highway between...

**Norman Nino KaJube** Thank you for info us  
Like Reply Message 1w

**Amedeo Sebeedani** Which road is safe?  
Like Reply Message 6d

**Dada Glasvoccero** War zone  
Like Reply Message 1w

**Lambert Sigtho Maritanga** Mmmm so sad  
Like Reply Message 1w

**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**

South African drivers and trucks may be barred from entering neighbouring countries in what could badly affect South Africa's export industry if the spate of attacks on commercial vehicles is not contained soon, according to a regional truck drivers' organisation.  
<http://bit.ly/2t1Jk1e>



**Foreign truck drivers warn of retaliation on SA drivers if attacks continue**

**Gugu Sithole** So they want to work here illegally by force now wonderful thanks to our government for not taking his country seriously

**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**

Swedish truck maker Volvo has released a video that shows its autonomous, electrically powered Vesa commercial vehicle performing real world work at a port terminal, where it was tasked with hauling containers from a logistics centre to a container terminal.  
<http://bit.ly/2Wt5F0K>



**See Volvo's 'very' driverless truck in action at port terminal**  
Truck maker Volvo just debuted video of the autonomous electric "Vesa".

**Quintus Truter** The port of Rotterdam is full of these. Nothing new here  
Like Reply Message 1w

**Ozzy Joonab** Here goes the jobs of the drivers who are burning the trucks...  
Like Reply Message 1w

**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**

Disruptive transport technologies will take centre stage at the 36th annual Southern African Transport Conference (SATC) to be held from 8 to 11 July 2018 at the CSIR Convention Centre in Pretoria. Endorsed by the Department of Transport and the International Road Federation, SATC has become the region's premier transport conference and exhibition, hosting internationally-lauded plenary speakers and welcoming over 700 transport professionals, academics, students and engineers. To book your seat, email: Jacqui Oosthuizen on satc.conference@gmail.com or call 083 324 9522 @SATTransportConference



**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**

A blowout of a front tyre on a heavy-duty truck or bus can be extremely dangerous, as the driver loses all steering and directional control. This is how you can avoid that situation: <http://bit.ly/2G0C0JH>



**The dangers of a front tyre failure on a truck or bus - Focus on Transport and Logistics**

**Sigfus Cyprian** How can you put a retread tyre on front or steering wheel, there so many stupid companies out there

**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**

A driverless electric truck has begun making deliveries using public roads in Sweden in what its creators believe to be a world first  
<https://t.me/prv2wUjBE>



**Driverless electric lorries begin deliveries in Sweden**  
Developers estimate vehicle will reduce road freight operating costs by...

**Semone M Mufokeng** At least in S.A our jobs are still safe!

**FOCUS on Transport and Logistics**



**Top Five**  
Dick Moleplame Very nice



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# APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION



**DESPITE PROMISES BY GOVERNMENT THAT IT WILL RESOLVE TRUCK VIOLENCE, TERROR CONTINUES TO REIGN ALONG THE COUNTRY'S MAIN TRADE CORRIDORS. LOCAL TRUCK DRIVERS FEAR LOSING THEIR LIVES FOR DOING THEIR JOBS, WHILE TRANSPORT OPERATORS FACE FINANCIAL RUIN. WANITA WALLACE REPORTS**

**S**

ibusiso Mapumulo, whose truck had broken down on the N3 near Pietermaritzburg, watched in the rear-view mirror as a shadowy figure crept out of the bushes towards the rear of the vehicle. It was dark and Mapumulo couldn't make out what the person was doing. He was scared, hoping that the figure wasn't intent on attacking him.

Then he saw the flames – small at first, but suddenly growing larger – and, fearing that he would be incinerated, he leapt from the cab to seek refuge in the bushes. All he

could do was watch as the fire consumed his vehicle.

About 600 km away, near Meyerton, Bongani Richman Tshabalala slowed his truck on the R59 highway as traffic began to back up. He believed this to be the result of protest action taking place further up the road, which was aimed at truck drivers. To escape being caught up in the chaos, Tshabalala decided to take an off-ramp and follow a route adjacent to the highway. Other trucks were making similar moves and he followed them onto Morris Road.

At a stop street the vehicle in front failed to pull off. Tshabalala wondered why – then suddenly he realised that



some protesters had moved from their barricade on the highway to the stop street, and they now surrounded his vehicle as well as the truck in front, pelting them with rocks.

Fearing he would be killed, Tshabalala – like the other vehicle's driver – jumped from his cab, injuring his leg in the process, and managed to escape the mob. Taking refuge in a nearby property, he watched with his fellow evacuee as both their trucks were set alight.

Details of these incidents are contained in affidavits obtained by investigator Danie Day, who has been contracted by a number of insurance companies to conduct assessments of vehicle damage related to protest action.

"The N3 route is a battlefield and the perpetrators have now started to operate countrywide," Day says. "In all of the 30 cases in which I have been involved, no suspects have been positively identified or arrests made. No successful prosecution has been initiated. Remember, SAPS case dockets have been registered in each case in accordance with the insurance companies' respective policies."

Day calls the protest action economic sabotage. "If government and police do not establish a well-qualified, disciplined and formidable task team to initiate well-planned action soon, this country is going to suffer serious economic damage and is going to fall behind on transport service delivery to such an extent that it will never recover," he warns.

A representative from a local trucking company, who requested anonymity, says the violence associated with the protest action – which is ostensibly aimed at protecting the jobs of local truck drivers against foreign nationals – has already had severe consequences for his business.

"Our drivers have been rerouted to safe truck stops and ordered not to travel after dark, because that is when most of the looting and burning takes place. There isn't much we can do. We all have to be vigilant and cross our fingers, while hoping our trucks, drivers and customers' goods arrive at their destinations the next day.

"Of course, our clients want quick deliveries, but this hasn't been happening – which is one of the reasons customers are seeking alternative modes of transport, or perhaps are looking for other hauliers. In the long run,

exporters and importers are going to ship their cargoes to and from other ports, and we'll end up losing business."

The source confirmed that one of his company's trucks was burnt out in a recent attack. "Thankfully the driver wasn't harmed or injured," he said.

In a statement issued by the Department of Transport (DoT), Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula has echoed calls for stronger police action with law enforcement doubled along the N3 highway and connecting routes. He says: "The interdepartmental task team is making progress and should be given room to do its work. Violence and terror are not how we are going to solve this."

According to the statement, the DoT has implemented a plan, which includes the establishment of a multi-disciplinary rapid response team; the cessation of illegal employment of undocumented migrants; the implementation of skills-development initiatives for local drivers; and the creation of a database of unemployed drivers and a review of work permit legislation.

Mbalula adds that attacks on trucks on public roads will be upgraded to a higher category of criminality – especially since government is engaged in resolving legitimate concerns of local drivers.

The source says: "I think companies need to ensure that all foreign truck drivers have all their paperwork in order, such as passports, work permits and licences. Our truck that was set alight was operated by a South African. However, those who were responsible didn't seem to care. The mentality to destroy assets puzzles me ... those responsible want to burn a truck, ostensibly the very same one they want to drive."

Day says that in the case of the two incidents quoted by **FOCUS**, the drivers were both South African citizens. Although police arrived shortly after the trucks were set alight – firing warning shots in the Meyerton incident to help disperse protesters – no suspects were questioned at the scene.

The minister says that acts of arson undermine the genuine concerns of industry players. He has urged perpetrators to desist or face the full might of the law. It remains to be seen whether or not the perpetrators will heed his call... **F**





**MIKE FITZMAURICE** is the CEO of the Federation of East and Southern Africa Road Transport Associations (Fesarta). He has 42 years of experience in the transport and logistics industry with several major companies in South Africa, as well as overseas exposure with some of the leading transport companies in six European countries. Since 2004 he has established and run Transport Logistics Consultants. In May 2015 he became CEO of Fesarta.

# REDUCING CROSS-BORDER TRANSIT RISKS

**WHILE CROSS-BORDER FREIGHT-TRANSIT RISKS NEED TO BE EFFECTIVELY MANAGED, COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH LENGTHY DELAYS AT CUSTOMS POINTS NEED TO BE REDUCED. FESARTA HAS IDENTIFIED THE IRU TIR CARNET AS THE ONLY POSSIBLE SOLUTION THAT WILL ADDRESS THE ISSUE EFFECTIVELY**

**A**long with the cross-border freight-transport industry, Fesarta recognises the key role of customs in protecting excise revenue. Accordingly, there is no question that transit risk needs to be effectively managed.

An effective transit system should help customs to identify and facilitate lower-risk movements, which will provide sufficient security, guarantees and information to enable officials to apply controls at corridor level, rather than at national level.

However, it must be recognised that systems that are used to control transit risks – which are based on national bonds and sealing of loads at borders – lead to additional cost burdens on the private sector, arising from:

- Delays caused by waiting for seals or escorts;
- The cost of the seals and escorts;
- Multiple declarations using different documents;
- Delays and costs of inspections;
- Potential rejection of cargo by customers if the integrity of the load has been compromised; and
- Environmental, safety, health and crime risks associated with long queues of trucks.

International cross-border transit-risk systems should include

optimum features and benefits, while minimising risks to cargo owners and border authorities. The systems should be economical to implement and should offer large reductions in transit time as well as cost.

The systems should operate using standardised methodology with minimum variation in pricing to

provides an effective and simple solution for all customs authorities – the transmission of electronic pre-declarations allows officials to assess risks and determine in advance which trucks should be subject to specific controls.

TIR trucks will be subject only to the scanning and stamping of the



simplify transactions and facilitate maximum efficiency. These are the primary objectives of risk-management procedures, and integrated conformations make the most commercial sense for import-export operators.

For acceptability, it is important that proposed systems can demonstrate evidence of extensive and effective international usage to revenue authorities. This evidence must include advanced systems for risk profiling, monitoring and control – with the aim of providing assurances of reliability and security. Fesarta has identified the IRU TIR Carnet as the only possible solution that will address all of the above effectively.

The unacceptably long waiting periods at borders – ranging from many hours to several days – result in additional transport time and more cost, which have a negative impact on trade. The IRU TIR Carnet

TIR Carnet, thereby enjoying speedy customs control and offering massive reductions in border waiting times and the associated transport costs.

TIR Carnet – Cost Savings:

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- Simplification of the clearing process;
- Reduction in the amount of documentation required.

The estimated cost of a TIR Carnet for a transit movement covering four countries along the north-south corridor – South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo – will amount to about US\$ 80 (about R1 120), compared to around US\$ 450 (about R6 300) under the current national transit bond system.

The TIR system is available by arrangement between IRU and Fesarta as a viable solution to the current inefficiencies and costs incurred on Southern Africa's major trade route. **F**



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**MALCOLM HARTWELL** is a director based in Durban. He is a master mariner and the team leader for transport and has been with Norton Rose Fulbright since 1994. He is a shipping lawyer and specialises in admiralty, international trade, marine insurance and all aspects of maritime casualties, in particular investigating the maritime aspects of cases involving salvage, collisions, grounding, flooding, fires, anchor dragging and cargo claims. He has been involved in most of the casualties in this region in the last twenty years.

# POTENTIAL BOON FOR LOGISTICS COMPANIES

**CRYPTOCURRENCIES AND THE FREEDOM OF TRADE EMBRACED BY THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA AGREEMENT (AfCFTA) OFFER ENORMOUS POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH IN THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY IN AFRICA. STRONG POLITICAL WILL AND COMPETENT ASSISTANCE WITH TECHNOLOGY AND REGULATORY SUPPORT WILL, HOWEVER, BE REQUIRED**

**T**he AfCFTA has come into force after receiving 22 ratifications. It seeks to create the world's largest free trade area by allowing for the free movement of goods and people between African member states. It does not replace existing regional free trade agreements. It is, however, designed to transform the economies of African states.

African trade patterns are currently dominated by resource exports to the developed and developing world, combined with imports of manufactured goods. Intercontinental trade is limited – either because the

economies are underdeveloped, or because tariff barriers are in place. AfCFTA has been welcomed for its promise to drop tariff barriers and help improve economies.

On its own, AfCFTA offers many opportunities to traders and logistics companies wishing to develop corridors and trade routes between African states.

Unfortunately, African countries' concerns over state sovereignty have always resulted in constrained access to neighbouring markets. That challenge remains and will require considerable political will, and perhaps some outlying countries to prove that success comes at a short-term loss of revenue, but is compensated for by a long-term growth in their economies.

These possibilities are enhanced by a rapid growth in interest in blockchain and, in particular, cryptocurrencies operating on blockchain platforms. Those currencies will allow for easier and cheaper payment for goods and services, including logistics services.

Other blockchain platforms linking customers and logistics service providers will also dramatically lower the cost of logistics and the cost of doing business.

Cryptocurrencies are facing some resistance from governments who fear the loss of sovereignty over their own currencies and an inability to police and tax cryptocurrency payments. This resistance will need to be overcome if these currencies are to succeed.

The reaction from African countries has varied from cryptocurrencies being banned in some cases, to a "wait and see" attitude, such as that reflected by the South African

Reserve Bank. The reality, however, is that cryptocurrencies are here to stay.

States, regulators and tax authorities are going to have to get to grips with this new technology and try to regulate the cryptocurrencies in order to preserve their control over tax revenue and the payment for goods. Those who refuse to accept reality will, no doubt, be left behind as the Fourth Industrial Revolution and its ancillary technologies gain greater acceptance across the world.

Insofar as non-financial blockchain platforms are concerned, they will need to be accepted by regulatory authorities, logistics providers and border-control authorities to harness their full potential. They can help in the free movement of goods by reducing the considerable administrative burden currently associated with the import, clearance, transport and export of goods. Blockchain platforms can remove all the paper shuffling and delays associated with the regional transport of goods.

As with all new technologies, there are likely to be some start-ups that fail, but it is also clear that first movers will gain a considerable advantage if the platforms achieve wider acceptance.

This will require constant and sustained engagement by traders and logistics companies with regulatory and fiscal authorities. Should those engagements succeed, there is no doubt that cryptocurrencies and blockchain platforms will help AfCFTA realise its goal of increased inter-regional trade within Africa, and change Africa from a resource-dependant continent to an active trading partner with the world and within Africa. **F**





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**VIC OLIVER** is one of this country's most respected commercial vehicle industry authorities, and has been in this industry for over 50 years. Before joining the FOCUS team, he spent 15 years with Nissan Diesel (now UD Trucks), 11 years with Busaf and seven years with International. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit [www.focusontransport.co.za](http://www.focusontransport.co.za) and have your say!

# THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT VEHICLE LOADING

## OVERLOADING AND INCORRECT LOAD PLACEMENT ON A TRUCK CAN BE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, AND CAN RESULT IN EXPENSIVE MECHANICAL REPAIRS

**A**

ll truck manufacturers design their vehicles to safely carry the specified load as illustrated on the vehicle data plate.

In calculating these loads, the manufacturer assumes that the operator will correctly load the vehicle with an evenly distributed load, without overloading any axle, or exceeding the maximum gross vehicle mass, or gross combination mass rating.

Many heavy loads are incorrectly positioned on the vehicle, because the driver has no idea about the mass distribution of the load or axle loadings, making the vehicle unsafe to operate on the road. Incorrect mass distribution also contributes to early component failure and high maintenance costs.

Can we really blame the driver, if he has not been trained on the correct method of loading his vehicle?

Truck operators often place the load directly behind the cab when loading vehicles, or they load the vehicle evenly with the full load and then start off-loading from the rear in multi-stop operations. This results in a front axle overload during the last part of the journey.

Driver education is essential to ensure that a vehicle is loaded correctly. Drivers should be assisted to understand the correct method of loading a rigid vehicle by marking

the centre of the truck body with a small indicating arrow that points at the load centre. They should also be taught to always endeavour to place the load evenly with the centre of the load placed at the arrow indicator.

Once the vehicle is loaded correctly, it is also important to ensure that the load is properly secured. How often do we hear about accidents on our roads where the cause is due to a load that has fallen from a vehicle? This situation also imposes a threat to



“

Once the vehicle is loaded, it is also important to ensure that the load is properly secured.

Many benefits can be gained from correct vehicle loading:

- The vehicle will comply with the Road Traffic Regulations. Remember it is the responsibility of the registered owner of the vehicle to ensure that it complies with the law and is safe to operate on the road.
- Optimum tyre life can be achieved.
- Steering will be better with less wear on all front axle components.
- Good vehicle drive-wheel traction will be achieved.
- Optimum brake life can be achieved.
- Maximum spring life will be achieved; overloaded springs and suspension result in broken components.

other road users, as they are at risk of their vehicle being damaged by cargo falling from another truck.

In the past, we have witnessed situations where a truck has been involved in an accident and the load being transported has come loose from the impact of the accident and gone straight through the cab, killing the driver and passenger. Drivers must be trained on how to safely secure the load and must be supplied with the correct load-securing equipment.

Truck owners will not get the full return on their investment, unless the vehicle is correctly loaded to its maximum designed capacity. **F**





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**VAUGHAN MOSTERT** lectured on public transport issues at the University of Johannesburg for nearly thirty years. Through Hopping Off, Mostert leaves readers with some food for thought as he continues his push for change in the local public transport industry.

# LET'S REPEAT THE MYNAH MAGIC!

**IT SEEMS OUR POLITICIANS WILL BE USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN FUTURE. THIS IS, HOWEVER, NOT AS SIMPLE AS IT SOUNDS**

**T**he Treasury has started cracking the whip among South Africa's 257 municipalities, calling on mayors and senior municipal officials to start tightening up on wasteful expenditure. When it comes to transport, that means using "the municipal fleet" and "public shuttles" instead of expensive cars. Will these rules also be pushed upwards to include provincial officials as well as the blue-light crowd?

I liked the response on *Twitter* that the most appropriate form of transport for many municipal officials is in the back of a police van!

The government will need to give stronger leadership on this issue. Even in the few cities that have their own bus fleets, senior officials have little idea about the services they are supposed to be "managing".

Take Johannesburg Municipality's Metrobus service as an example. It uses a fleet of hybrid cars (I suppose that makes it OK) to take senior people to town and back. The head office of Metrobus is about a kilometre west of the Civic Centre, and there is a bus stop right outside the building, served by routes 66, 67, 412 and 413. Why can't they go by bus? Answer: these four routes operate so infrequently that one could sit for an hour before a bus arrives.

If that's the way it is in South Africa's number one municipality, what can we expect of the other 256?

Previous columns have stressed the need for simple, low-cost solutions

to the country's public-transport problems. So let's have a quiz. What has been the most important development in bus transport in South Africa since 1960? (That's when Pretoria bought South Africa's last trolleybuses and Durban electrified the Musgrave Road route).

Is it bus rapid transit (BRT)? Is it the Go!George scheme?

In my opinion it's neither. Top spot goes to the Durban Mynah service, introduced in November 1987. At that stage, white passenger levels in Durban had been falling steadily since the early 1960s – from 40 million in 1961 to 24 million in 1971, ten million in 1981 and eight million in 1987, when they stopped keeping separate records for white commuters.

The Mynah service used 70-odd midibuses of 21-seat capacity, operating on better schedules than before, mainly on the previous trolleybus routes in Durban. Accompanied by an excellent publicity campaign, it turned things around – by 1990, passenger levels (mainly white) had risen to over 11 million.

That's impressive, especially in view of the "white" issue, because large numbers of whites need to get back on to public transport in South Africa. That's an essential part of the radical economic change that we keep reading about.

Sadly, by around 1995 the Mynah service started to fall apart again, entirely due to incompetence and mismanagement, and it has never recovered.

Nevertheless, I am confident that this kind of turnaround can be achieved again in South Africa today, despite over 30 years of stagnation in the bus industry.



The introduction of BRT in South African cities has achieved nothing that a reorganised basic bus service could not have achieved. Unlike the Mynah concept, we do not even need new buses in the initial stages.

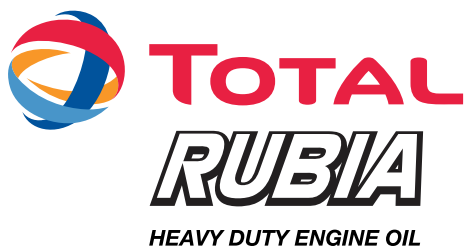
Finally, talking of publicity campaigns brings me to the topic of timetables and the way they are presented to the public. Last month's column described the poor rail service on Saturdays at Germiston station – supposedly the busiest passenger railway junction in South Africa.

When I went into the Metrorail website later that day to check on the trains that were supposed to be running, I found that the entire Saturday timetable for Gauteng (consisting of at least 15 pages of spreadsheets) was "unavailable". A full month later, all the pages were still missing!

It is clear that transport managers don't care much about informing the public of the services on offer, and when they do the information is badly presented.

With the exception of the Gautrain and one or two of the BRT operators, the websites of most bus operators in South Africa (where they exist) are close to useless. Perhaps we will discuss them in another column! **F**





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# FACE TO FACE WITH HEINZ- JÜRGEN LÖW

**THIS MONTH, JARLATH SWEENEY GOES FACE TO FACE WITH ONE OF THE MOST EXPERIENCED COMMERCIAL VEHICLE EXECUTIVES IN THE BUSINESS, HEINZ-JÜRGEN LÖW, BOARD MEMBER FOR SALES AND MARKETING AT VOLKSWAGEN COMMERCIAL VEHICLES**

**L**öw is a true doyen of the commercial vehicle industry, having spent most of his career in top positions at Renault Trucks, MAN Truck & Bus and Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles.

During his time as president of Renault Trucks he oversaw the creation of the multi-award-winning Range T and then, after the move back to his native Germany, helped with the resurgence of MAN Truck & Bus as it became a major player within the Volkswagen Truck & Bus family (now rebranded Traton Group).

Now his task is to oversee new product developments, increase sales and be part of the negotiation team within the company that's forming an alliance with Ford Motor Company in Europe.

Löw is primarily a people's person. He is enthusiastic, motivated and focused. We renewed our long-held acquaintance at bauma 2019, where the new Volkswagen T6.1 van range was launched.

## **What do you think of the evolution of Volkswagen's best-selling van model, the T6?**

I would like to praise the brand's head of design, Albert Kirzinger. He did a great job, bringing this iconic design a step forward. We can still see and feel the roots and DNA of the brand, which is quite important.

## **You talk about your roots, but what lies ahead? Will it be autonomous driving?**

Autonomous driving is an important future task, but there are lots of things that need to happen first: we need to upgrade and test the technology, so it will take some time before full Level 5 autonomy will arrive.

Frankly speaking, I believe the first driverless vehicles we will see will be in enclosed areas, such as harbours, or

manufacturing sites with container movements carried out remotely. Then in time it will spread out into other areas – city centres, for instance. We will see different tipping points in different regions of the world.

## **Electrification is surely also on your radar?**

Yes. Electrification will come first (before autonomous vehicles). We have the capability within Volkswagen AG (Group).

## **Speaking of electrification, we saw the I.D. Buzz Cargo concept at last year's IAA. How will this vehicle fit into your vehicle portfolio?**

When you consider its payload and loading space, it will be positioned in the city van segment. In a couple of years from now, we will have a really wide product range, probably the widest on the market for customers to choose from according to their needs.

## **There are, however, some challenges with widespread electrification – infrastructure, for instance?**

Indeed. A recent study in Germany posed questions to operators who were considering buying a new commercial vehicle in the next six to 12 months, and I was positively surprised that 48 percent have taken into account electric vehicles as their top choice. However, we just don't have the necessary infrastructure. We need government intervention everywhere. It's a huge topic in all countries.

## **What is happening in terms of your collaboration with Ford?**

Right now we're talking about the successor of the Amarok pickup. This will be the first step. Down the road, we have not yet fully decided where and how to go, but we are considering a city van, and then the next generation of the T6. **F**

Jarlath Sweeney is the owner of Fleet Publications, the largest publisher of transport-related magazines in Ireland. Read Fleet Transport here: [www.fleet.ie](http://www.fleet.ie)





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# MAXIMISING THE MAXIMUS

**THE LATEST VERSION OF KOREAN TRUCK MANUFACTURER DAEWOO'S MAXIMUS KL3TX 6X4 TRACTOR IS SCHEDULED TO STAR AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE BRAND NEXT MONTH AT THE FUTUROAD EXPO AT AUTOMECHANIKA JOHANNESBURG. FOCUS OFFERS INSIGHTS INTO WHAT DRIVES THE TATA-OWNED NAMEPLATE.**

It's perceived to be one of the most imposing but stylish-looking trucks on the road. It's Daewoo's Maximus KL3TX, a long-haul heavyweight that's scheduled to star as the brand's centrepiece at next month's Futuroad Expo at Automechanika Johannesburg.

The trucking show, which is held every second year, is the only international trade fair of its kind to be staged in Africa. It targets visitors from across the sub-Saharan region and has replaced the South African Truck and Bus Show on the automotive calendar.

Thanks to its commanding presence, Daewoo's King of the Road is likely to prove to be one of the most popular attractions at the event. Blending a United States-derived drivetrain with European-designed cab architecture, the vehicle is assembled from semi-knocked-down kits at a Tata-owned plant at Rosslyn, near Pretoria.

And the Maximus will not be the only Daewoo on display. Also being launched officially at the expo is the latest version of the brand's 6x4 freight carrier, the K7CEF. These two products will complement the existing range of a ten-cubic-metre tipper, the K5DEF; and a six-cubic-metre mixer, the K5MVF.

Headquartered in India, Tata bought Daewoo, an admired Korean brand, in 2004 and has subsequently expanded the nameplate's operations to include 70 countries on five continents. Respected for high quality componentry as well as reliability, durability and a low lifecycle cost, the brand

is perceived to set the highest standards for performance, dynamics, safety and features.

With close to 120 KL3TXs already on South Africa's roads thanks to a pilot programme initiated by Daewoo SA in which vehicles were sold only to selected transport companies – many of which were running fleets consisting of Scania's, Volvos, Freightliners and Internationals – the model has been widely tested under local conditions, as well as cross-border operations, emerging with glowing testimonials.

Value for money aspects and impeccable levels of Daewoo service impressed Piet Stemmet, owner of PA Stemmet Vervoer, a Boksburg-based transport company which focuses on moving all types of cargo – livestock and furniture apart – in and around South Africa.

The company operates a mixed fleet that exceeds 20 trucks, the majority of which haul tautliner trailers across six of the country's nine provinces. Typically completing a number of smaller deliveries in and around country towns, the vehicles usually cover around 5 000 km a month.

So impressed was Stemmet with his initial two Maximus champions that he recently added another three KL3TXs to the fleet. "My first two Daewoo trucks are now a year old and have been performing well in terms of fuel economy, power, comfort and, most importantly, reliability and uptime. They are easy to drive, with comfortable air-suspended seats and above average ride quality.

"We haven't experienced any mechanical problems and, combined with all the other attributes the Maximus offers



– and factoring in the professional levels of service I have received from Daewoo – I decided to increase the number of KL3TXs in the fleet. Also, the standard warranty of three years or 600 000 km is a great comfort – it shows the confidence Daewoo SA has in its product. I am 100 percent satisfied," he says.

Equally impressed by the Maximus is Jacques Botha, who heads up Gauteng-based Gay Transport, a family owned business, started by his father, Ben. He says that following a decision to improve efficiencies within the company, he was in a position earlier this year to acquire new trucks.

It was important to Botha that the vehicles matched Gay

see there being any problems with this anymore."

The 14,9-litre Cummins engine used in the Maximus is both powerful and reliable. "Long hills are ascended comfortably, meaning our average speeds are superior. My drivers complain because, in accordance with government regulations, the trucks are governed to 80 km/h," Botha says dryly.

He adds that the Daewoo driving experience is also a noteworthy characteristic. "This type of cab is comfortable and our drivers know it well. Also, they know how to extract the best torque from the engine. We haven't had to use any breakdown services yet, but I must say the Daewoo service department is right up there with the best in the industry."

Daewoo Assist, a 24-hour call centre, is in place to help with issues that might arise on the road with parts always available from a newly introduced, dedicated Daewoo parts facility. In fact, there are 91 touch points dedicated to serving the brand throughout the country, with skilled technicians able to respond quickly to customer requirements.

In partnering with Cummins and ZF, optimal uptime can be ensured, which is one of the main focuses for Daewoo. Additionally, the dynamic parts system has all but eliminated waiting times for spares – about 97 percent of items are now readily



**ABOVE:** Representatives of Daewoo Trucks and Gay Transport at the handover of the latest Maximus truck tractor to join the transporter's fleet.

**RIGHT:** The Novus HCV 6x4 freight carrier.

Transport's productive business philosophy, and he decided on the Maximus, taking delivery of two KL3TXs in March. Both trucks were subsequently put through a testing phase and, having passed the company's evaluation period with aplomb, two more Maximus 6x4 truck tractors were added to the fleet in June.

Reflecting on the decision to buy the Daewoos, Botha explains that his quest for efficiency and cost containment led him to the long-haul champion, which is equipped with a Cummins engine and a choice of 18-speed Eaton or 12-speed ZF gearbox – brands of which his company has solid knowledge and work experience.

He chose the Eaton gearbox, which, he says, enables excellent fuel consumption and, combined with the Cummins engine, highest possible average speeds. Today, the vehicles are used to deliver loads to Cape Town, Durban and Tzaneen, as well as across the border into eSwatini and Lesotho. With service intervals of 30 000 km, the first two KL3TXs in his fleet have already completed their first minor services.

"Fuel consumption in all of the trucks is great," says Botha. "We run at about 2,25 litres per kilometre pulling tautliner trailers across the country. The next best thing is the 24-volt electrical system, which is a significant upgrade over 12-volt systems used with this engine by other truck brands. I can't



available for picking, with a simplified selection process helping to eliminate incorrect choices.

With various models making up Daewoo's local line-up, the choice is wide – mixers, tippers, rigids and a variety of freight carriers among them. While all the vehicles are perceived as enticing, the Maximus 6x4 truck tractor is seen as the jewel in the crown. Its Cummins ISX Euro-3 engine produces 358 kW (480 hp) and 2 509 Nm, while the truck's chassis frame is said to be manufactured from the strongest steel in use in the auto industry.

Vehicles in the Novus range feature Doosan engines, the K5DEF tipper and K7CEF freight carrier utilising in-line, six-cylinder units that produce 250 kW and 1 421 Nm, and the K5MVF mixer equipped with a V8 that develops 287 kW and 1 569 Nm. **F**

P

latooning. It's a big word in the transport industry. Observers believe it will change the way the world's road-freight systems operate. For starters, there will be more trucks on the road – but fewer drivers, as platooning and autonomously driven vehicles go hand in hand.

In fact, a scarcity of truck drivers in the United States (US) is one of the most influential factors in move towards platooning. Fuel saving is another, with commercial vehicle manufacturers under more and more pressure to meet ever-tightening legislation regarding environmentally harmful emissions.

In his blog published recently on [www.trucks.com](http://www.trucks.com), Alan Adler suggests that autonomously guided truck platoons could beat driverless cars to real-world use. And experts say that letting big trucks draft each other on highways is far easier than solving urban challenges faced by automated vehicles.

Platooning allows groups of digitally connected trucks to closely follow each other to reduce drag and increase fuel efficiency. Some truck manufacturers believe the concept will increase road safety, improve transportation times, cut costs and significantly reduce emissions.

In his blog, Adler notes that, already, companies and organisations such as Volvo Trucks, Daimler Trucks, the US Army, Partners for Advanced Transportation Technology at University of California Berkeley and Peloton Technology are developing platooning systems.

Much of the technology combines adaptive cruise control and forward collision warning with vehicle-to-vehicle communication. The safety technologies provide automated vehicle control to keep a tight formation, with vehicles talking to each other through direct short-range communication.

A spokesman for Peloton claims that in this company's test runs – using a manually driven truck to lead a fleet of autonomously piloted equivalents – fuel savings exceeded seven percent.

Swedish manufacturer Scania – part of the Volkswagen Group – has already laid the groundwork for the world's first full-scale autonomous truck-platooning operations, based on its own, advanced technology.

The site of the company's living laboratory is land-constrained Singapore, where new transportation concepts, designed to increase productivity, reduce safety risks and optimise road capacity, are being put to the test. Initially, autonomously driven, cargo-carrying platoons are being used on public thoroughfares while ferrying containers between port terminals.

Scania has also recently been engaged as the lead partner in a large-scale transportation project called Companion, which is developing systems for the implementation of platooning on European roads.

The manufacturer is also currently working on enhancing wireless communication between heavy vehicles, which will allow distances between moving vehicles to be safely reduced, lowering drag and improving fuel consumption.

# DAY OF THE DRIVERLESS TRUCK?

**IMAGINE THIS ... NO SOONER HAVE GOODS BEEN PACKAGED FOR TRANSPORTATION THAN AN AUTONOMOUS-DRIVE, LONG-HAUL TRUCK SLOTS INTO POSITION AT THE LOADING DOCK, WAITS AS THE CARGO IS QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY TRANSFERRED, THEN CHECKS OUT DIGITALLY AND HEADS FOR THE HIGHWAY... WANITA WALLACE REPORTS ON THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT IN THE MAKING**





Scania is well advanced in cutting-edge autonomous truck technology and platooning, having carried out numerous tests involving manned and unmanned convoys, as well as developing systems to fully automate processes for precise docking and loading of cargo.

The brand is not alone. Daimler Trucks has established its Autonomous Technology Group (ATG) as a global force for the development of automated driving systems. The main focus of the new unit comprises the implementation of a road map for automated driving, as well as the setting up of an operations infrastructure and network in anticipation of series production of driverless trucks within a decade. The company has backed its strategy with an investment of more than €500 million (about R7,9 billion).

Will we see autonomous trucking and platooning in South Africa in the not too distant future? "No," says The Transport Forum's Harry van Huyssteen. He adds: "My personal and biased opinion on this topic is that our road infrastructure is not advanced enough to cater for autonomous driving."

Van Huyssteen says that, locally, driverless vehicles might work in dedicated areas such as industrial precincts or campuses – but not on public roads. "There would have to be proper road markings and sensors and a host of other equipment to enable autonomous driving. We would need to get our infrastructure in place and, clearly, a huge educational process would need to be undertaken before we will be in a position to align for this." **F**



“

Some truck manufacturers believe platooning will increase road safety, improve transportation times, cut costs and significantly reduce emissions.



# STAGNANT ECONOMY IMPACTS HEAVY- VEHICLE SALES



**A SLUGGISH ECONOMY, COUPLED WITH A RISE IN THE NUMBER OF VIOLENT ATTACKS ON TRUCKS, ESPECIALLY ALONG THE N3 HIGHWAY, ARE BEING CITED AS PRIMARY REASONS FOR THE DIP IN THE SALES OF HEAVY-DUTY VEHICLES. WILL THIS TREND CONTINUE? LIANA SHAW INVESTIGATES**

**“T**

he heavy truck and bus market, which takes up about 1 000 units a year, is seeing a terrible downturn,” states Dave van Graan, head of special projects at MAN Automotive.

“Over the past year (ending in June 2019), this sub-segment is down 12,8 percent and, consequently, we are projecting a bus and coach market of below 1 000 units, although it is hoped that some new product entrants from MAN and Volkswagen may stimulate a little up-side in the last quarter of 2019. That the heavy market is down 1,2 percent year-on-year is, in our opinion, directly linked to the general state of the economy.”

Naseera Barnard, marketing manager Ever Star Industries, concurs that things are tough right now. “The past few years have been very trying, with 2019 seeing the worst decline, specifically in construction,” she tells **FOCUS**.

“Stunted economic growth is the main factor that constrains the commercial vehicle segment. Customers are looking for alternatives to further expand their business and sales. High fuel costs, taxes, strikes and the like are hurting transporters,” Barnard adds.

Leslie Long, senior manager: production planning and marketing at Hino, agrees: “The reasons for the decline in sales in the heavy truck and bus segments are all linked to the economic and political landscape,” he says.

“Everybody expected the markets to settle after the

elections, but this does not seem to be the case. Many things have been talked about, but there is no definitive direction from government as to how this will be achieved. This has contributed to continuing uncertainty in business circles.”

Maretha Gerber, head of Mercedes-Benz Trucks at Daimler Trucks and Buses Southern Africa, says the year started off fairly well: “While the first three months of the year proved positive from a business perspective, the period from April to June has been tough. Overall, I expect sales to remain flat for 2019. There are no signs of market growth, and business confidence is still under pressure.

“However, there are definitely some sub-segments with opportunity and positivity for 2019. I further believe that next year will see an upward trend in truck sales, with the trajectory continuing into 2021.”

Additional factors that could be contributing towards the sales slump, according to Van Graan, include the inability of the big five market-share players to deliver, due to production ramp-ups. Customers are choosing to wait for the newly launched products. This is coupled with the fact that government-subsidised contracts are often delayed or postponed.

Long agrees: “The only other factor that can contribute to the slowdown is the timing of replacement cycles from big fleets. We would not like to guess to what extent this is a contributing factor, as only the respective





original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) would have a true indication based on their respective customer bases."

According to the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa), another unexpected factor that is having a negative impact is the recent violence and attacks on trucks on main arterial routes.

The Road Freight Association (RFA) estimates that over the past year close to 1 400 trucks across the country have been burnt, damaged or destroyed, with 213 people having lost their lives due to these attacks. Moreover, the loss of life and property is costing the economy between R1.2 and R1.3 billion.



There are no signs of market growth, and business confidence is still under pressure.

This is alarming in that the road-transport sector is a key contributor to the country's economy and accounts for over 80 percent of freight share compared to other modes of transport such as shipping and rail.

The N3 highway, which is the main artery linking Gauteng to sub-Saharan Africa's biggest port, Durban – and ironically, one of roads that is most critical to the economy of the country – has been particularly hard hit with a wave of violent incidents that shows no sign of abating.

"It is of vital importance that the government and police address and prevent these attacks on trucks and drivers," advises Gert Swanepoel, managing director of UD Trucks Southern Africa. "Trucks form a crucial part of the economy and driver safety is utmost importance," he says.

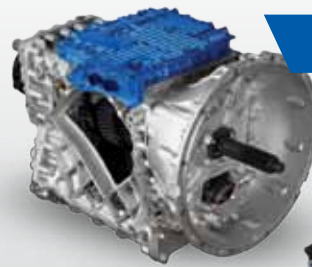
In a bid to weather the storm and remain sustainable, OEMs such as Everstar are looking for ways to compete by expanding their product offering and dealer footprint, and by placing more resources into aftersales, while introducing new products into other industry segments.

This is the case at Hino, which is monitoring the market and sales environment on a monthly basis in order to assess and adjust sales and production plans accordingly.

In contrast, MAN appears to be bucking the overall trend by actually growing sales volumes and market share. Van Graan reveals: "We have seen an incredible kick-start to the year, with the best order intake recorded in ten years for MAN trucks. Our heavy truck market share is up 1.1 percent, our extra-heavy truck market share is now 13.6 percent and our share of the bus and coach market has increased to 35.7 percent. If our sales trend continues, we could reach 2 000 truck sales this year with an increase in market share for the fourth year running."

Going forward, the market is hoping for constructive political and economic reforms, which could mean an improved performance in the second half of the year in terms of new-vehicle sales. **F**

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# SOUTH AFRICA UNPREPARED FOR DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

**THE IMPACT OF DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY ON THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY WAS A KEY THEME AT THE 2019 SOUTHERN AFRICAN TRANSPORT CONFERENCE (SATC), WHICH WAS HELD IN PRETORIA IN JULY. FOCUS REPORTS**

**T**he annual SATC brings various professionals within the southern African transport industry together to discuss and debate the challenges facing the industry. This year, the conference highlighted the impact of technology on the transport sector with topics on cashless fare collection and electric cargo bikes in the last-mile delivery, for example.

Held at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Convention Centre in Pretoria from July 8 to 11, the event opened with an address by Minister of Transport Fikile Mbalula, which summarised the relationship between transport and technology in South Africa. He noted that the country is stuck between the pioneers and late adopters.

There has been some investment in new technology within the public-transport sector including smart-card technology, mapping the routes of the informal minibus-taxi industry and creating mobile apps for commuters to plan their journeys. However, the country still faces many obstacles with the government's ability to implement policies efficiently being the biggest challenge.

"The very fast pace and frequency at which new technologies emerge, and their diffusion across the world, makes us question whether southern Africa is ready and whether it will ever be ready," Mbalula said.

"Government's role is to speedily come up with new policies and laws that will render transport disruptive technologies beneficial to all," he added.

While there are many examples of technology that

required a quick response from government in recent years (consider for example drone and e-hail technology), Mbalula highlighted the environmental laws around carbon emissions.

"There is currently no policy, or regulatory framework, that determines the requirements, norms and standards for cleaner fossil fuels in South Africa," he explained. "There is also no policy or incentive scheme that rewards users of cleaner fuels and cleaner fossil fuels."

While many other countries are already deeply invested in the introduction of new environmentally friendly transport options – such as electric vehicles – the South African government faces a mountain of new technology that still requires regulation. The recently introduced carbon tax is a good example of the long government processes involved in the introduction of new regulations.

Although South Africa signed the Paris Agreement aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2016, it introduced a carbon tax only in June. Professor Imad AL-Qadi from the University of Illinois in the United States noted that the GHG per capita in South Africa is almost double that of the world average at 8,97 metric tonnes.

He added that the transport sector remains the biggest contributor. Around 71,3 percent of all oil-based emissions stem from the transport sector. However, addressing this high level of GHG emissions could be as simple as introducing flexible ride sharing, or a change in mobility, which could reduce GHG emissions by 40 to 60 percent at full autonomy.



A key aspect of the transport industry that needs to be addressed is road freight. According to AL-Qadi, transport companies are losing 40 percent of fuel through aerodynamic drag, 25 percent as a result of mechanical losses and 35 percent to rolling resistance.

Some of the solutions to these fuel-consumption challenges he suggested include changing the texture of road surfaces, which can reduce fuel consumption by eight percent, and platooning, which could reduce fuel consumption by up to 15 percent. However, the introduction of these technologies in South Africa seems unlikely.

There are insufficient regulations in South Africa to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles. According to AL-Qadi, there are only about 700 electric vehicles in use in South Africa.

Mbalula also said that it is unlikely that the country will have autonomous vehicles any time soon. "As a country, we are still a long way off from transitioning to autonomous technology such as an autonomous bus system," he noted. Even if the policies were in place, there is a lack of infrastructure. In addition, the infrastructure in place is poorly maintained – especially in provincial areas.

Don Ross and Mathew Townshend, from the University of Cape Town, gave a presentation on the road maintenance backlog in South Africa. According to their research, there is a R243-billion functional maintenance backlog and a

R281-billion technical-needs maintenance backlog on gravel roads.

They noted that on paved roads there is a R61-billion functional backlog and a R135-billion technical maintenance backlog. The majority of the backlog can be found in provincial networks, which poses a challenge for logistics in the more rural areas.

If government attempted to cover these backlogs within five years, it would require the entire new economic stimulus plan. Alternatively, Ross and Townshend suggested a four-percent rise in VAT, or an increase of R3 per litre on the national fuel levy.

Despite the challenges and a lack of adequate policies to regulate the new technology, Mbalula has high expectations for the country and a desire for it to be at the forefront of new developments.

"My concern with the pace is that we must not be relegated to catching up. We must be part of the innovators. We must not only respond to what others have produced, because that often gives rise to additional challenges," he says.

Even with the hope of South Africa becoming an innovator, Mbalula is still realistic in the approach of the Department of Transport towards new innovations. He concludes: "We can only find solutions to these disruptive technologies and can never turn back from tackling these challenges head-on." **F**

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# CRAFTER: EXCELLENCE PERSONIFIED!



**THE VOLKSWAGEN CRAFTER IS FULLY IMPORTED FROM WRZESNIA, POLAND, AND, AS CHARLEEN CLARKE DISCOVERS, IT MUST BE ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S FINEST EXPORTS**

**M**y mates often feel sorry for me – especially those who spend their lives testing cars. Because I spend much of my life behind the wheel of a commercial vehicle, they either treat me like a weirdo (because I'm a woman and women don't drive trucks, you know), or they treat me like orphan Annie – because they think their jobs are so much nicer than mine. Either way, I'm often treated with curiosity, pity or both.

These sentiments are wasted. I won't bother to comment on the female thing; it's simply too boring. However, I truly believe that my job is every bit as good as those of motoring scribes – because I get to drive some seriously awesome vehicles.

The latest Volkswagen Crafter is one such example. It is surprisingly good in all departments and it is more refined than some cars I've tested. I like the overall styling, too; while easy on the eye, it is more aerodynamic than its predecessor, meaning better fuel consumption and lower emissions (Volkswagen reckons that the 2.0-litre four-cylinder TDI engine will consume anything from 7.3 to 7.6 litres of diesel per 100 km).

The vehicle is a joy to drive; 103 kW of power and 340 Nm of torque are on tap, and I found this more than adequate, even when the van was loaded to the roof – and on the highway I never found it lacking. The motor is paired to a six-speed manual; unfortunately, Volkswagen's superb auto is not available here.

What's more special, though, are the levels of comfort and the superb handling. It really is as comfortable as a passenger car (and I'm not referring to some cheap and cheerful cars I've driven; the Crafter knocks them right out the park in this department).

The electro-mechanical steering (a first in this segment)

made me feel as though I was driving a far smaller vehicle. Handling is predictable. While the van is surprisingly manoeuvrable and composed for its size; it never felt unsettled – even when I suddenly changed direction or braked hard (the brakes are superb, by the way).

The interior is as well put together as the average Volkswagen passenger car – meaning it is good. I was really impressed with the storage space; it's virtually endless.

However, I was disappointed to see that my test van didn't come with a radio and a USB port. Of course, these are optional extras, but, given the fact that a van driver will spend his life on the road, I think both of these features are absolutely essential (the radio will relieve boredom while the USB point is vital for charging various devices).

On a positive side, it does come standard with a side-wind compensation system, electric windows, central locking, Hill Hold Assist, Automatic Post-Collision Braking System and a steering wheel with height and telescoping adjustment. I found the Hill Hold especially handy when whizzing around mountainous Northcliff!

However, Hill Hold is not necessarily a top priority when buying a van – it's all about cargo capacity! And I am pleased to report that the Crafter certainly doesn't disappoint in this department. It offers up to 17.5 m<sup>3</sup> of cargo space. This depends on the model chosen: front or rear-wheel drive, there are various lengths (5 986 mm, 6 836 mm, or, for the panel van, 7 391 mm) and also various heights (2 355 mm, 2 625 mm, or, for the panel van, 2 637 mm). I had a front-wheel drive derivative and the minimal sill height of 570 mm made loading exceptionally easy.

The Crafter is a truly terrific van. In fact, it was declared International Van of the Year back in 2017. And it's not hard to figure out why... **F**





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FAWDE GENERATOR ENGINE								
Model	40W	40X	40F	60F	6DL1	6DL2	6DM2	
Bore×Stroke mm	4- 85×100	4- 90×100	4- 102×118	4- 110×125	6- 110×125	6- 112×135	6- 112×145	6- 123×145
Displacement (L)	2.27	2.54	3.86	4.75	7.13	7.7	8.6	11.05
Standby power/speed (Kw/rpm)	19/1500	23-34/ 1500	36- 53/1500	72-92/1500	105- 154/1500	194/1500	228- 251/1500	318-330/1500
Prime power/speed (Kw/rpm)	19/1500	21-31/ 1500	33- 48/1500	85-84/1500	96- 140/1500	176/1500	205- 227/1500	287-300/1500
Available range	Generator: 15KVA-375KVA							

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FAWDE ENGINE									
Model	40W	40X	40F	60F	6DL1	6DL2	6DM2	6DM3	
Bore×Stroke mm	4- 85×100	4- 90×100	4- 102×118	4- 110×125	6- 110×125	6- 112×135	6- 112×145	6- 123×145	6- 126.5×166
Displacement (L)	2.27	2.54	3.86	4.75	7.13	7.7	8.6	11.05	12.52
Rated net power/speed (Kw/rpm)	17- 33/1500- 2650	22-55/ 1500-2650	40- 74/1500- 2400	65- 118/1500- 2300	92- 177/1500- 2400	147- 195/1500- 2100	162- 235/1500- 2200	228- 309/1500- 2000	300- 338/1500- 1900
Maximum torque/speed (N.m/rpm)	145/1500 0-1800	245/1500 1800	380/1500 0-1800	540/1400- 1700	860/1400- 1700	1100/1500- 1800	1400/1500- 1800	2100/1300- 1600	2300/1300- 1500
Available range	Trucks, Generator, Water pump, Forklift, Loader, Harvester etc.								

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**CONFIDENCE IN THE CIVIL ENGINEERING INDUSTRY IS DOWN, WHICH MEANS FEWER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES. HOW WILL THIS IMPACT ON VEHICLE SALES FOR ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS? MARISKA MORRIS INVESTIGATES**

**F**

irst National Bank (FNB), in partnership with the Bureau for Economic Research (BER), published its FNB/BER Civil Confidence Index report in June, which indicated a continued low level of confidence in the civil engineering industry. This is expected to impact on the construction industry and other related sectors.

The index is determined by the responses from professionals in the sector with a maximum of 100. In the first quarter of 2019, this figured dropped to an all-time low of ten. The second survey, conducted between April and June, showed a slight uptick with civil confidence at 11. However, this still means that close to 90 percent of respondents were dissatisfied with the prevailing business conditions in the industry.

"It's disheartening that the level of confidence has been so low for such a prolonged period," says Siphamandla Mkhwanazi, property economist at FNB. He notes, however, that the industry perception is not unreasonable. In the first quarter of 2019, Statistics South Africa reported a 0.9 percent decline of construction works.

"The reasons for the downbeat sentiment are clear from the underlying data. The main drivers of depressed confidence in the sector are weak market activity (demand) and intensifying tender competition. These have severely squeezed profit margins," Mkhwanazi explains. "The slowdown in construction activity is expected to continue and will probably intensify."

The low demand – especially new demand – is a key reason for the industry's lack of confidence. Mkhwanazi notes that 88 percent of respondents consider insufficient

demand for new construction work to be a constraint on their business operations. The lack of opportunity could have very serious consequences.

"This is likely to keep output in the sector subdued, which will have negative consequences for employment growth," Mkhwanazi predicts. "In turn, this will add to the already existing pressure on households' finances and their ability to spend. Industries such as manufacturing of cement and steel products will also take a knock from the slowdown in the construction sector."

The decline in construction is also likely to have an impact on the transport industry and vehicle sales – at least in theory. Mkhwanazi explains: "For example, with low demand for construction work, demand for transport equipment, machinery and warehousing will also take a knock."

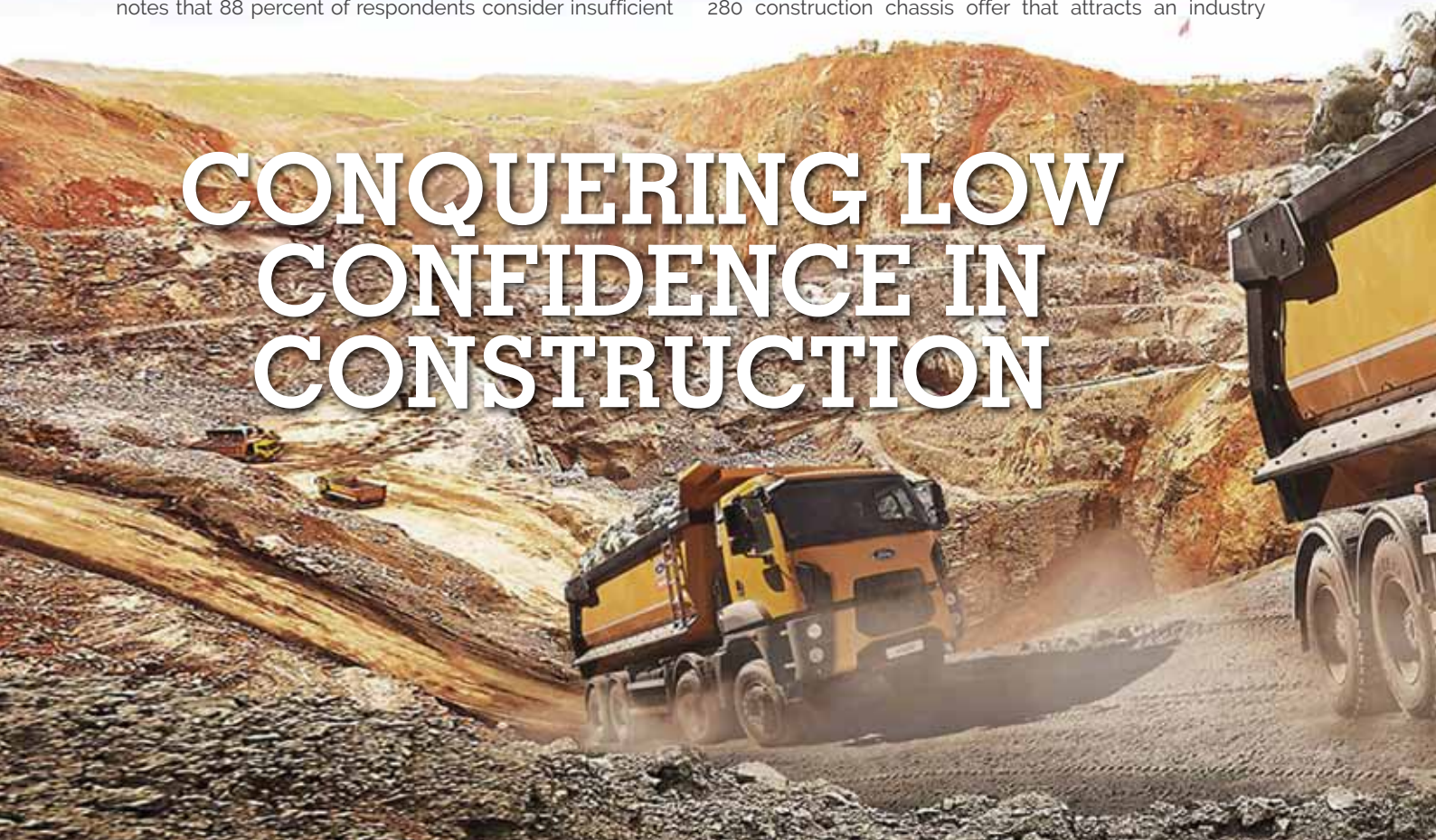
However, the reality for at least one vehicle original equipment manufacturer (OEM) is proving to be a little different. Fuso Trucks Southern Africa has recently enjoyed healthy sales figures.

"In the last couple of months we have experienced unexpected growth in sales of our FJ26-280 construction chassis, which is suitable for both mixer and tipper applications," says Mpho Matseba, product and marketing manager at Fuso Trucks Southern Africa.

"Although it's not excessive growth, it is certainly well above our expectations. It is derived mostly from the small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) segment, which indicates that there is still activity within certain parts of the construction industry."

This begs the question: What does the Fuso FJ26-280 construction chassis offer that attracts an industry

# CONQUERING LOW CONFIDENCE IN CONSTRUCTION





experiencing low confidence levels? According to Matseba, the product meets all the important customer demands including payload, performance and price.

The engine design is based on proven Mercedes-Benz technology. This is combined with the oil-lubricated fuel pump and a lower engine speed that reduces wear, while the various technologies, including the speed limiter and cruise control, ensure better fuel economy.

Matseba notes: "It has certainly proved itself from a performance, durability and affordability standpoint. The tipper application achieves ten cubic metres and, due to a number of weight-reduction measures that have been implemented, the mixer application now comes close to achieving the required six cubic-metre payload.

"In addition, the LCD intelligent instrument cluster makes vital information available at a glance, including trip mileage, average fuel consumption and total fuel consumed. All this is available for a favourable retail price of R976 700 (excluding VAT)."

Fuso is so confident in the model that the range has received a "facelift". Matseba explains: "We are excited to note that this range has recently received a facelift with a view to ensuring superior performance, safety and driver comfort. The model now comes standard with 13 enhanced or new features and is available for sale at the prevailing price."

While the industry has favoured Fuso, the company is still aware of the need for more construction opportunities and

looks forward to the uptick. "We are not oblivious to the fact that industry growth is required to sustain and amplify our current performance," Matseba says.

"Our aim is to continue to aggressively target SMMEs entering the construction segments with affordable packages, which, hopefully, should allow us to maintain the current momentum and grow significantly should there be an upturn in the near future."

So, perhaps a good product can prevail despite the confidence levels in an industry.

In the meantime, Mkhwanazi suggests ways in which the confidence and business opportunities within the industry can be improved. He notes: "The biggest hindrance right now is the severe lack of demand. This is linked to the unfavourable position of government finances.

"Ideally, under these circumstances, the private sector would chip in and plug the gap. However, with the low business confidence that has prevailed in the country for several years, we have not seen this happen. Stimulus in the sector depends on whether the public and private sectors can foster some kind of partnership. However, this will require the elimination of policy uncertainty and a plugging of the trust deficit."

The vehicle manufacturing industry can only hope that under new governance, the financial position of the country and confidence in the economy will improve, and that as a result more opportunities will be created in the construction sector. **F**



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**ALTHOUGH SHE HADN'T CONTEMPLATED A CAREER IN THE MOTOR INDUSTRY, 20 YEARS AFTER JOINING MERCEDES-BENZ, MARETHA GERBER FINDS HERSELF HEADING UP THE BRAND'S TRUCKING BUSINESS**

N

early two decades ago, when Maretha Gerber arrived at Mercedes-Benz South Africa's Head Office in Centurion, near Pretoria, to demonstrate the capabilities of a photocopier machine, she had no idea that one day she would return to the building as head of Mercedes-Benz Trucks.

"I was working as a sales executive for a copier company at the time," she says. "The day following my presentation I received a phone call from one of the people who had attended. He wanted to know whether I would consider working for Mercedes-Benz – there was an opening for an account executive.

"I had always had an interest in vehicles – and Mercedes-Benz models in particular, since my family had owned a number of the cars when I was growing up – so I thought: 'Why not?' An interview was arranged and I got the job. That was in 2000 – and I've been associated with the brand ever since."

It was little more than a year ago that Gerber was appointed head of Mercedes-Benz Trucks following a three-year stint as dealer principal at Mercedes-Benz Rosebank, a key Johannesburg branch in the brand's dealer network.

Previously, she had gained extensive managerial experience at head office following appointments in various key departments – including sales, strategy and marketing – where she had obtained insights into, and an understanding of, many of the integral parts of the brand's operations.

Last year, when welcoming Gerber back to Centurion, Jasper Hafkamp, executive director of Daimler Truck and Bus South Africa, said of her: "She is no stranger to the automotive sector and she has proved that she is invaluable to any team of which she has been part. Mercedes-Benz Trucks was looking for someone with leadership qualities, who could innovate and ensure that the brand would continue to be the best. Gerber ticked all of those boxes, and more!"

As head of a business unit that had traditionally been the preserve of men, Gerber admits to having been a little nervous about moving into the driver's seat. However, given her motor industry experience – and the full acceptance of the team with which she was working – she quickly found the job to be less awkward than she originally expected.

"Good teamwork is vital to success," she says. "The quality of the support I received helped me to settle in smoothly. Being surrounded by people you can rely on always makes a big difference. Here, everyone lives the brand ... there's common





focus. It's been that way since day one."

That said, she reveals that her first year in office has been quite a journey. Highlights have included the launch of a new-generation Actros – the most popular seller in the Mercedes-Benz truck stable – as well as the unveiling of the Arocs, a heavy-duty vehicle aimed at the construction sector. On the negative side, the poor state of South Africa's economy has impacted sales in specific segments of the truck market – including the sector in which the Arocs competes.

"As far as sales go, there have been disappointments," she says. "Equally, there are no significant signs that growth will occur soon. On the upside, the first three months of the year were great for Mercedes-Benz. We saw a lot of interest from transport operators not usually associated with the brand, as well as from our loyal customers. The added buoyancy helped us to make a number of conquest sales, which was pleasing.

"Since then, however, conditions have toughened – and I think volumes in the market generally will stay flat for the rest of the year. Business confidence remains under pressure and, although we were expecting an upswing in sales following May's general election, that didn't happen. I remain optimistic, however. I believe that next year will see an upward trend in the truck market generally, with the trajectory continuing into 2021."

Though the new-generation Actros remains the star performer in the Mercedes-Benz Trucks line-up, the brand is a leading participant in all of the commercial vehicle segments in which it competes – medium, heavy and extra-heavy – with road efficiency, cost reduction, and aftersales back-up fundamental to enhancing the total ownership experience across all categories.

"While each of our products has a reputation for excellence, our ability to offer total solutions contributes substantially to the way the market perceives the brand," Gerber says. "We have a strong and effective dealer network that stretches across the country and into neighbouring territories – enabling us to take responsibility even for cross-border assets.

"The aftersales aspect remains the backbone of our road-efficiency programme. It is critical to our overall success, and is an enabler in terms of service, preventative maintenance and repair – the main aim being to reduce truck downtime. It operates extremely efficiently and, in terms of feedback, is much-appreciated by our customers for its dedicated, premium-quality technical support."

She's been encouraged, too, by the growth of Mercedes-Benz's TruckStore operation, which is responsible for sales of used commercial vehicles. "TruckStore provides a service that offers the same reliability that is synonymous with the Mercedes-Benz and Daimler brands, and it prides itself on being a trustworthy business partner for its customers.

"Essentially, vehicles sold through the division provide value for their new owners in the same way that new vehicles

do – the operation is working very well," she says. "It has also become a significant enabler for new vehicle sales, which is pleasing from a business perspective."

So, is there anything in particular that customers look for when buying a truck? Her response is immediate: "Fuel efficiency is paramount from a running-cost point of view – and transport operators see that factor as one of Mercedes-Benz's most significant strengths.

"The new Actros, for instance, has been shown in tests to offer fuel savings of between five and ten percent compared with the model it has replaced. Similarly, the new Arocs has been lauded for its fuel efficiency, as have other models in our line-up."



Good teamwork is vital to success. The quality of the support I received helped me to settle in smoothly.

She adds that recently more customers have begun to take cognisance of the way the vehicles they operate affect the environment, with one key fleet operator stipulating that he would buy only trucks fitted with Euro-5 engines, which run on low-sulphur diesel. "It's a trend that I believe is beginning to establish itself in South Africa, and it is one of Mercedes-Benz Trucks's strategic focus areas," she says.

Vehicle uptime and efficiency in the field are other factors that influence customer purchasing decisions, with the capability of digitally managing fleet operations playing a central role. In this respect, Gerber says Mercedes-Benz's FleetBoard management system is a popular choice among new-vehicle customers, boasting a penetration level that exceeds 70 percent.

"Driver training, too, is a factor, with Mercedes-Benz being well placed to uplift skills through our various programmes. We are also involved in driver wellness projects, which, in turn, contribute to road safety. Essentially, though, any aspect of a vehicle's operation that helps to drive down cost, provide more efficiency and add comfort and safety is well appreciated by our customers – and our products and services are designed to meet all of those demands, and more. It's our ability to provide a total solution that counts most."

Does she have advice for women who may be thinking of a career in the motor industry? "The environment is not as daunting as many women may believe," she says. "A few women both here and overseas occupy significant positions within the industry. I think that common to most is a passion for things automotive and the drive to make a difference. The point is that anyone who really loves the motor industry can contribute." **F**

# 'YOU NEED NERVES OF STEEL'

**BEING A WOMAN IN WHAT IS TRADITIONALLY REGARDED AS A MAN'S WORLD IS NOT WITHOUT ITS CHALLENGES. LISE VAN DER BERG, FOUNDER AND CEO OF TRADEVEST LOGISTICS, A COMMITTED NETSTAR CUSTOMER, OFFERS SOME INSIGHTS**

**E**mpowerment of women has been a much-discussed topic over the years, especially in South Africa where the number of women who hold executive positions in commerce and industry falls far short of that of men. Equally, 50/50 parity becomes even more challenging in historically male-dominated sectors such as the transport industry – although strides are being made.

Lise Van der Berg is founder and chief executive officer of Tradevest Logistics, a fleet-management, logistics and warehousing company based in Cape Town. Established in 2010, Tradevest is a 100-percent female-owned company that prides itself on its value system, which is based on honesty and transparency.

"Before I started Tradevest, I was one of two founders of a transport company based in Mpumalanga," says Van der Berg. "Driven by the urge to do my own thing and desire to establish roots in Cape Town, I left my job, moved to the coast and started my own business."

Having built meaningful and trusting relationships with her customers over the years, Van der Berg says many of her former clients chose to back her when she started her fledgling operation. "Their support for Tradevest really humbled me. It taught me that, by treating customers with respect and handling all deals with integrity, you can lay the foundations for building a successful business," she says.

Nine years after starting her company with just one truck, she now manages a fleet of nine vehicles. "Above establishing good working relationships with clients, you also need to build similar bonds with suppliers," she says. "During the past couple of years, in particular, Tradevest has built an excellent working relationship with Netstar, which is responsible for ensuring that our fleet is safe no matter where the trucks go."

She says she has had the pleasure of working predominantly with women at Netstar. "It is encouraging to see how organised, honest and helpful the Tradevest account managers have been. The transport industry, although rewarding, is very challenging. However, being a woman adds another layer of complexity," she explains. "You need to work ten-times harder to prove yourself. That is why you need to be passionate about your job and surround yourself with people you can trust."

In that respect she singles out not only the personnel at Netstar, but also one of her directors, Rista Watts,



who joined the company in 2016 as an investor. "Her managerial skills and business acumen make her a huge asset to Tradevest," says Van der Berg. "Having run her own pharmacy business for 18 years, Rista is constantly teaching me things. And we are also learning from each other as fellow female entrepreneurs."

In 2007, when Van der Berg was still with the Mpumalanga-based transport company, she was named Entrepreneur of the Year by the Lowveld Chamber of Business. The following year, she was announced as the winner of the South African Business Woman of the Year title by the South African Council for Business Women (SACBW). She has also claimed National Large Enterprise awards from the organisations.

In 2015, Van der Berg was announced as runner-up in *CEO Magazine's* Most Influential Woman Award. And, in 2017, she once again won the SACBW's National Business Woman of the Year title.

"I have had the privilege of being recognised for my work within the industry, but I want to stress that it has not been easy," says Van der Berg. "The transport sector is really cut-throat and you need nerves of steel to make it."

"However, I believe that women have been created with an extraordinary ability to withstand even the toughest circumstances. I would encourage more of us to join the transport industry to make our marks as leaders in the field." **F**



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# NEXT CHAPTER IN EFFICIENT TRANSPORT

**AS TECHNOLOGY CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVES TRANSPORT PROCESSES, ENSURING EFFICIENCY WITHIN THE SUPPLY CHAIN IS THE NEXT STEP IN REDUCING TRANSPORT COSTS. MARISKA MORRIS REPORTS**

**T**echnology, such as in-cab monitoring systems, has enabled transport operators to become more efficient with reduced downtime and fuel expenses. While there is still room for improvement, these gains are small compared to the opportunities for improving efficiency within the supply chain.

As Oliver Gracio, sales manager of telematics and assets at DataDot Technology, points out: "Companies no longer compete against companies. Supply chains compete against other supply chains for supremacy. Organisations need their suppliers to assist in decreasing costs, improving customer service and efficiency."

With supply chains under tremendous pressure, there is no room for inefficiencies. "The good news is that supply chain technology can simplify and optimise business processes," Gracio says. "It is imperative that companies continually innovate and streamline their supply chains and respective software."

With the correct technology, a company can ensure greater visibility, more control and reduced operating costs. Available supply technology includes trace devices, radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology, cloud-based platforms and enhanced data-availability platforms.

Before implementing any software, it is important to understand the interconnectivity of the supply chain. Justin Manson, sales director at TomTom Telematics South Africa, notes: "It is important to understand that the supply chain involves different organisations, activities, people and processes."

"We also need to realise that the challenges are extensive and, more often than not, have a ripple effect throughout the supply chain."

Each link in the supply chain will require its own software solution to optimise efficiency. A key factor to the success of the technology implemented is to avoid or minimise the possibility of human error.

"Although the challenges are often the same, the impact could be different," Manson says. "When it comes to manufacturing, for example, having a reliable uninterruptible power source is critical to prevent the negative impacts of load shedding."

"Having a good warehouse management system (WMS) will ensure that companies can better control the warehouse operations and manage inventory, for example. A good WMS can also be integrated into the picking and packing processes to automate these functions."

He adds that a good fleet-management system





integrated into a WMS and enterprise resource planning system is essential.

"Being able to automatically dispatch drivers with digital trip sheets or job cards, which include navigation, will help reduce fuel costs. Live traffic updates alert the driver to congestion and possible issues on certain routes," Manson explains.

A number of software service providers can assist with solutions for transport operators in the supply chain. DataDot Technology, for example, offers its Telematics Guru software that manages and monitors tracking devices, while its VehicleFacts systems provide the microdot status and vehicle facts report.

As much of the software hosts important, sensitive information and data, it needs to be protected. Johan Gericke, senior manager of the IT department at DataDot Technology, notes: "DataDot Technology takes security very serious and ensures that information is protected. Data is transmitted securely from devices to the server with the use of encryption. Our servers are protected and can be accessed by only by authorised personnel."

Transport operators should also encourage their suppliers and customers to optimise operations with technology. For the transport industry, there is software to monitor vehicles

and drivers. TomTom Telematics South Africa offers a number of solutions.

Manson explains: "A key component of a supply chain is the transport aspect. TomTom Telematics South Africa offers Webfleet software as a service solution, which, along with the driver terminals, allows fleet operators to manage all aspects of their fleet and drivers.

"Depending on the vehicle, it is possible to offer immediate fuel-consumption data that shows sudden decreases in fuel." The company's OptiDrive360 driver-scoring system allows transport operators to improve driver behaviour. These systems are protected according to international standards.

"We have ISO 27001 certification, which means that the systems adhere to certain standards relating to data security, system uptime and reliability, among other things. These standards are critical when clients are using data to make critical business decisions," Manson notes.

With Bridgestone Europe, the Middle East and Africa acquiring TomTom Telematics, Mason says more innovative solutions can be expected from the software service provider.

Affordability of this software is key as Pierre Bruwer, MD of Netstar, points out: "We realise that solutions need to be future proof, so we focus on solutions that are scalable, flexible, and adaptable, and that make financial sense to a price-sensitive market. Supply chain requirements hinge around technology that is integrated, fit for purpose and affordable."

The correct technology from a reputable software service provider could make all the difference to how transport companies operate within the supply chain. As Harry Louw, CEO of Cartrack South Africa, notes: "It is challenging for fleet managers to react quickly to unforeseen disruptions if they don't have the right technology in place.



"Smart fleet-management solutions are the best way to minimise risks and create a more efficient and timeous process. With modern-day telematics solutions in place, there is no reason for companies to risk theft, unnecessary costs and time-consuming inefficiencies.

"Fleet-management solutions negate risks to a large extent and create a far more efficient and effective environment in which to run successful supply chains," Louw concludes. **F**



# CARING FOR THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

**BRAKING SYSTEMS ON COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ARE, ARGUABLY, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT COMPONENTS AS THEY HELP PREVENT ACCIDENTS. THEY ARE, HOWEVER, UNDER TREMENDOUS STRESS. MARISKA MORRIS INVESTIGATES HOW TO TAKE CARE OF BRAKING SYSTEMS**

**T**ransport operators have a responsibility to ensure the safety of their drivers and the general public when transporting goods. Faulty braking systems on commercial vehicles can have devastating consequences, as the accidents in Pinetown (2013) and Alberton (2014) demonstrated. In both cases, the vehicle brakes failed as the vehicle was descending a hill.

For the most part, brake failure can be prevented with the correct maintenance and regular inspections. Older or heavy commercial vehicles – especially those travelling on routes that put strain on the braking system, such as a mountain passes – will require more frequent inspection.

Brakes should be included in the pre- and post-trip inspections. The driver should undertake the inspection should know what to look for and report anything suspicious – including any noises. While a squeaking noise, for example, could be something as harmless as dust on the brake pads, it could potentially be something more serious.

The brake checks should determine whether all the relevant parts are secure, not damaged or leaking and free of any oil, grease and debris. To set up a comprehensive checklist, consult with a mechanic or the original equipment manufacturer (OEM), especially if the vehicle has unfamiliar or new technology.

The OEM's suggested timeframe for maintenance should be followed and the braking system should be replaced with original parts. Sub-par or non-genuine parts could compromise the performance of the braking system, and it

could wear down more easily, or break. This could result in unplanned down time, or – in the worst-case scenario – an accident.

Besides following the OEM's suggested maintenance intervals, the route and driver behaviour should be taken into consideration. Just as a challenging route can put more strain on the vehicle, so driver behaviour can impact on how frequently transport operators need to perform maintenance or inspections on the braking system.

On its website, Arrive Alive states: "With trucks, the sheer size and momentum results in much greater friction forces, resulting in greater temperatures and much earlier failure of components. Overuse of any of the systems, like brakes, can result in extremely abnormal wear or friction, which can lead to failures – like failed brakes – or systemic failures like skipping a particular gear and not being able to engage it again.

"The most prevalent factor that leads to truck crashes would be a lack of understanding of the fine balance between the various systems." Thus, driver behaviour plays an important role in whether the brakes are able to perform, even when under tremendous pressure. Drivers should be trained in how to use the vehicle efficiently and be familiar with the vehicle before setting off on a journey.

Drivers should also be familiar with the route. A mountain pass, for example, requires a lot of skill to keep the vehicle at a slow, safe speed. Arrive Alive explains: "Selecting the correct gear, controlling the speed and maintaining a low enough speed before the descent is important in order to





the vehicle even without this crucial component.

There are many examples of truck drivers who were able to avoid an accident even when the vehicle's brakes failed.

A video recorded by Paul Maynes in 2012, for example, shows how a truck driver was able to warn other motorists and safely manoeuvre the vehicle into an arrester bed, while truck driver Eddie Prinsloo was able to bring his vehicle to a stop by driving into a steep embankment and using the grass as a natural braking system in 2016.

A good knowledge of the route to be travelled will also mean the driver will know where the arrester beds are located, or of other areas where the vehicle can safely be brought to a standstill. Transport operators can send their drivers for advanced or defensive driving courses to ensure they are prepared for every eventuality and are able to calmly respond.

Various OEMs provide advanced



turn and stop safely at any time."

The organisation suggests a mentorship programme where more experienced drivers transfer their skills to new drivers. It is important, however, to also ensure that drivers are familiar with any new technology on the vehicle.

While regular inspections, maintenance and replacement of braking systems, together with good driver behaviour can prevent brake failures, there is always a possibility of an oversight. In this case, the driver needs to be skilled in controlling

training courses and the National Occupational Safety Association (Nosa) also offers a course on operating a heavy-duty vehicle, which includes information on performing inspections, identifying road accident factors, driver behaviour and collision prevention.

It is always better to be prepared. Transport operators should invest in upskilling drivers and enforce strict inspection and maintenance regulations to prevent brake failures and prepare for the potential worst-case scenario. **F**

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# TURNING PLASTIC INTO DIESEL

**GLOBAL PETROLEUM COMPANY BP HAS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT TO BUY DIESEL MANUFACTURED FROM PLASTIC, HIGHLIGHTING THE VITAL ROLES THAT INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY PLAY IN DRIVING THE WORLD'S TRANSITION TO A LOWER-CARBON FUTURE**

**T**rucks that run on electricity are beginning to become more familiar, but what about trucks that run on diesel derived from plastic waste? A new plant opening in the United States (US) is aimed at enabling just that.

Brightmark Energy broke ground recently on a US\$ 260-million (about R3.88-billion) facility that will turn plastics into fuel, thanks to a chemical recycling process said to be the first of its kind in the US.

"We're taking plastics from the waste stream and creating value out of them," says Bob Powell, CEO of Brightmark. "The project is at the beginning of solving one of the biggest environmental problems in the world."

The solution comes through a process called pyrolysis, which, despite its name, does not involve the incineration of plastics. The waste material is, instead, heated using very low oxygen levels to create a vapour, which is then converted into ultra-low-sulphur diesel fuel. A by-product is industrial wax, which can be used to coat lumber, among other applications.

Powell envisages that each year Brightmark will initially convert about 100 000 t of plastic into about 68-million litres of diesel and naphtha, a blend stock that has many uses. It will also produce nearly 25-million litres of wax.

He adds that the process can be applied to almost any type of plastic, whether or not recyclable – and is 93-percent efficient, leaving only a small volume of unusable output – a non-toxic powder – to be sent to a landfill.

Powell says that while several other facilities use the process across the globe, none of them can take such a

wide variety of plastics, nor are they able to operate at a similar scale to the Brightmark plant.

"This technology has been a twinkle in the eye for scientists for a long time," says Jamie Nolan, a spokeswoman for the project. "This is, however, the first plant of its kind in the world that has made it this far."

BP has signed an agreement to buy the fuel, with spokeswoman Amy McKerns, director of business development, saying: "Our relationship with Brightmark highlights the vital role that innovation and technology will play in driving the transition to a lower-carbon future – and the many and unique opportunities that will come with it. As a global energy business, BP is focused on the dual challenge of meeting society's rising energy needs while reducing carbon emissions."

Powell says the cost of producing the diesel will be similar to that of traditional refining methods and, while he acknowledges that use of the fuel will result in emissions, he believes the Brightmark plant will have a net positive impact on the environment.

Besides reducing plastic waste, he says the type of diesel produced will be of the environmentally friendly, ultra-low-sulphur variety. He points out that when the plant comes on stream, less crude oil will need to be extracted from the ground to make diesel the traditional way – a process that also is a much greater pollution emitter than chemical recycling.

In time, Brightmark hopes to expand its operations, opening additional facilities in the US and in other parts of the world. "Ultimately, plastic is a global problem and we want to expand globally because the solution applies globally," Powell says. **F**





# CONSTRUCTION'S EXTRA-TOUGH CHAMP!

**WHETHER A HARD-WORKING TIPPER, FLEXIBLE SKIP LOADER, ROBUST CONCRETE MIXER OR ROUGH-ROAD HAULER, THE TYPE OF APPLICATION FOR WHICH A VEHICLE IS BEST-SUITED ELICITS DIFFERENT CHALLENGES AND REQUIREMENTS – WHICH IS WHERE TAILORED SOLUTIONS OFFERED BY SCANIA'S HEAVY-DUTY XT RANGE FIT PERFECTLY**

**S**

outh Africa's construction industry faces increasing demands for sustainable, cost-effective production. With a powerful, next-generation XT line-up ready to undertake the toughest of tasks, Swedish truck manufacturer Scania appears well prepared to meet the sector's rigorous transport needs.

"We have the right products, the right services and the right skills in place to meet the industry's most stringent requirements, tailoring features in our heavy-duty XT range with a view to maximising uptime and conquering slim margins," says Theuns Naude, Scania SA's segment manager for construction, public and special vehicles.

The first thing to know is that Scania's XT trucks – which use as their platforms P- and G-series derivatives – have been specially developed to offer extra durability and flexibility. While the line-up's attractive, muscular looks aim at endorsing the XT badge's long-standing reputation for efficiency, the authoritative features represent more than simply sleek embellishment – every aspect of every derivative has been designed, engineered and tested to meet the construction industry's toughest challenges.

Across the range, a sturdy, high-level, one-piece bumper with a 150-mm extension in a horizontal direction helps to protect the front of the vehicle, while an associated skid plate shields the radiator. Manufactured from four-millimetre-thick high-strength steel, the bumper incorporates a footstep as well as an integrated towing unit with a capacity of 40 t – billed as the strongest on the market. Also, there are headlamp-protection housings and robust mirror casings and, under the skin, a choice of powertrain, chassis and axle combinations that can be matched to best meet the specific needs of particular applications.

In addition, there's improved visibility from the cab thanks to a new, aerodynamically influenced design, which not only helps to enhance driveability and comfort factors, but which also aids fuel economy. "Choosing a next-generation XT derivative means choosing a business partner that's reliable, robust, durable, efficient and ready to cope with the toughest challenges that come with any construction operation," says Naude.

With advanced combustion technology, an extremely efficient cooling system and state-of-the-art fuel injection

technology, Scania's engines have been developed to provide exceptional performance with high torque and low emissions. What's more, they can be coupled with a range of drivetrain options, with transmission through a choice of eight or 12-speed Opticruise gearboxes, each of which can be fitted with a Scania Retarder for optimum downhill braking performance.

Incidentally, Opticruise – which represents one of the first automated gear-changing systems on the market – has been refined over the years, and is now regarded one of the smoothest and smartest transmissions available. In its latest guise it features Clutch on Demand – which incorporates an extra clutch pedal in the cabin – to help a driver maintain precise control when manoeuvring in tight spaces.

In terms of safety, the cabs of XT models – which are hewn from high-tensile steel – exceed by far Sweden's stringent crash test standards. And, in a first for the truck industry, side curtain airbags have been incorporated to help to protect cabin occupants in the event of a roll-over.

"All of Scania's vehicles have an undisputed reputation for world-class handling and manoeuvrability," says Naude. "In our next-generation range, this aspect has been improved even further. The new XT's steering design and robust, heavy-duty cab suspension help to provide better responses and more directional stability than was achieved previously."

Naude adds that while the construction industry is characterised by diversity, everyone working within the sector shares the pressure of narrow margins. "In order to maximise uptime, meet sustainable requirements and increase productivity, one cannot settle for a one-size-fits all vehicle. That is why Scania tailors its solutions based on specific customer needs instead of compromising to suit the industry as a whole," he says.

Whether a hard-working tipper or flexible skip loader, a robust concrete mixer or rough road hauler, the choice of application brings with it a host of different challenges and requirements. "Inevitably, undertaking a transport task in the construction industry using a vehicle that's tailored to do the job is sure to be more successful than attempting a similar assignment in a vehicle that's compromised. With the choice of solutions offered by its XT range, I believe Scania can provide the right answers." **F**

# 'WE ARE CUSTOMER-FOCUSED'

**THERE'S A NEW MAN AT THE HELM OF DAF. HE COMES INTO THE COMPANY AT A TIME THAT IT IS ACHIEVING RECORD AFTER RECORD. HOWEVER – AS GIANENRICO GRIFFINI DISCOVERS – HARRY WOLTERS, THE NEWLY APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF DAF TRUCKS, HAS NO INTENTION OF RESTING ON HIS LAURELS**

**H**aving celebrated its milestone 90th birthday last year, DAF continues to achieve record after record. Following an outstanding 2018, the Eindhoven-based company is determined to capitalise on the success it has achieved so far, and will do so with a new captain at the helm – Harry Wolters, 48. Wolters actually began his career with the company as a trainee some 23 years ago.

When you enter the office occupied by DAF's newly appointed president, you are immediately struck by the atmosphere. The impressively solid desk once belonged to DAF founder Hub van Doorne and, on the table, is a highly polished bowl that was presented to the company by DAF agents in 1953 to mark the brand's 25th anniversary. The antique grandfather clock has borne witness to numerous important management decisions.

The whole space has a formal, stately quality – in stark

contrast to the approach that Wolters is known to favour: being easy to work with, friendly and approachable. "My door is always open, especially to good ideas that can help us to move forwards," says Wolters.

## **THE EUROPEAN MARKET LEADER FOR TRACTOR UNITS**

Wolters took up the role of president of DAF Trucks in September last year and had the honour of reporting one of the company's strongest sales achievements. With unit sales of almost 320 000 vehicles in 2018, the European market for heavy-duty trucks all but saw a return to the record levels of 2008 – and DAF reaped the benefits.

European market share in the heavy-duty segment increased to a record 16,6 percent, making DAF the second-largest truck manufacturer in Europe. The company was also market leader in the important tractor-unit segment





It's important to remember that the trucks are only one cog in the machine. Any leading truck manufacturer must have all elements of its business in order.

and the number one import brand in Germany. It also enjoyed a sharp increase in popularity in international markets. More than 8 500 DAF trucks were sold in countries outside Europe in 2018 – a figure that is around 65-percent higher than three years earlier.

#### THE EXTRA MILE

"The secret to our success? Our excellent trucks," says Wolters. "Our customers really appreciate what the new CF and XF vehicles have to offer – the reliability, the fuel consumption figures and the comfort. The latter being important given that transport operators are currently experiencing a squeeze on profits driven by a shortage of drivers.

"However, it's important to remember that the trucks are only one cog in the machine. Any leading truck manufacturer must have all elements of its business in order: perfect

parts supply, a wide range of financial services, repair and maintenance contracts and easy access to data via a first-rate fleet management system like DAF Connect.

"We must look at the entire picture, and it goes without saying that this includes an excellent dealer network. At DAF, we have made a conscious decision to work with a network of independent partners. Our dealers are entrepreneurs who are prepared to go the extra mile for the customer," he stresses.

#### GROWTH IN RIGIDS

A record market share, record production figures – what more could you ask for? "The fact that DAF is doing well does not mean that we can rest on our laurels," says the president. "Quite the opposite, in fact. It's also true that there are segments that have potential for further growth for us. With a market share of almost 20 percent, we are leading the field in the European tractor-unit segment.

"We need to shout it even louder from the rooftops that we are always able to provide the perfect solution for rigids and for special applications. Two, three or four-axle vehicles, single or double drive, leading axles, trailing axles, steered and non-steered axles – DAF can do it all. So yes, we are keen to grow our rigids business. If you consider that almost 70 percent of all trucks sold in the construction industry are rigids, it's not hard to see why this is a focus area for us."

#### ADDED VALUE

DAF has not always been known as a technical innovator. For as long as anyone can remember, the Dutch truck manufacturer has believed that new technologies should be introduced only if they have been fully developed and offer added value for the customer. "Our focus is completely on the customer. We have a very pragmatic approach," says Wolters.

This strategy has certainly not done the company any harm. Perhaps surprisingly, DAF is actually among the front-runners when it comes to electric and hybrid vehicles. Initial testing of these vehicles is already underway with some of the company's leading customers.

"Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and improving air quality in urban areas are shared challenges," says Wolters. "As a truck manufacturer, we certainly have a part to play. Let's not forget, either, that the European Commission has tasked the truck industry with achieving a 15-percent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2025 and a reduction of some 30 percent by 2030. When you factor in this sort of requirement, it's clear that we will definitely need to make use of all of the available technologies."

#### EVEN GREATER PROXIMITY TO THE CUSTOMER

Considerable time and resources are being invested at Eindhoven to ensure that DAF is ready to respond when the



market shifts towards alternative drive lines. The company is also continuing its usual investments in the traditional diesel engine, as the advent of new fuels – such as HVO and power-to-liquid e-fuels – heralds a bright future for oil burners.

"We must also remember to factor in the importance of developments in digitalisation and what we call servitisation," stresses Wolters. "Big data will bring us ever closer to our customers, allowing us to improve our service

challenges facing the truck industry.

"Why wouldn't we?" says Wolters. "We are proud to be part of Paccar, which is the eighth-largest truck manufacturer in the world in terms of its production figures. If you look at how condensed the figures are between the fifth-placed and eighth-placed manufacturers, you could almost consider that we are the fifth-largest. The Paccar Group has turned a profit 80 years in a row, which is a unique achievement within the industry," he notes.

The company also continues to invest in all aspects of its operations, regardless of whether the economy is booming or experiencing a downturn. "The synergy between the Kenworth, Peterbilt and DAF brands is a particularly important element of Paccar's success. The brands collaborate on the development of state-of-the-art technologies such as autonomous driving.

"While you are unlikely to find Kenworth and Peterbilt trucks on European roads, or DAF trucks being used in North America, you can be certain that the same technology is there beneath the skin. Half of all Peterbilt and Kenworth trucks use a power source developed in Eindhoven, and, of course, DAF is looking on with interest as Kenworth takes important steps forward in relation to hydrogen drives," says Wolters.

DAF is among the most successful truck manufacturers in Europe and also has global ambitions, for instance in South America and South-East Asia. The Eindhoven-based truck manufacturer does not currently have China or India in its sights, although Wolters explains

that "we are certainly represented as part of the Paccar Group".

"We do business with a host of suppliers in both of these countries via offices in Shanghai, Beijing and Pune, where we also have technology centres. We sell a lot of engines to manufacturers of buses and coaches in China. As things stand, however, we do not think that now is the time to move into the truck segment.

"We have to be honest with ourselves – there is a very, very limited market for European trucks, not least for pricing reasons. We are keeping a very close eye on developments. As you can see, we are pragmatic in this respect as well," he concludes. **F**



Big data will bring us ever closer to our customers, allowing us to improve our service offering.

offering. Providing an online fleet management system in the form of DAF Connect is just one example.

"Using the data generated by this system, we can proactively plan maintenance and ensure that parts are available at the dealership when needed. We can also provide even better advice in relation to future vehicle specifications and customise training for drivers, who could be operating their trucks even more efficiently. The possibilities and opportunities are endless."

#### PROUD TO BE PART OF PACCAR

The real question is whether or not DAF has the scale – whether or not it is big enough – to tackle the multitude of

As regular readers of **FOCUS** know, this magazine has been appointed an associate member of the International Truck of the Year (IToY)! **FOCUS** is the sole South African magazine to have joined this prestigious body. One of the advantages of this association is access to exclusive articles, specially written for **FOCUS** by ITOY jury members. This is one such article.





# BUILT ON THE BACK OF TATA TRUCKS

**THOMSON'S TOWING AND PANELBEATERS, BASED IN WHITE RIVER, MPUMALANGA, OWES MUCH OF ITS SUCCESS TO THE HARDWORKING TATA TRUCKS IN ITS GROWING FLEET**

**T**homson's Towing, an Automobile Association partner, currently operates six Tata trucks comprising Tata 713, 813 and 913 medium and heavy-duty LPT models. One of these, a Tata 713, stands out from the rest.

Over the years, this four-tonne, medium-duty truck has completed in excess of 1.5-million trouble-free kilometres. The truck was bought second hand several years ago, and it had already clocked up 500 000 km while serving the forestry industry in Mpumalanga.

Tommie Thomson, owner of the business, recently decided to overhaul the engine himself to keep it in tip-top condition. "Parts are cheap and are readily available," he says. "As a qualified diesel mechanic, I fit the parts myself and I know what to look out for when buying a truck. These Tata trucks are so cheap to maintain I can afford to buy more. There is nothing better."

He explains that he has a long history with the Tata brand, having opened a Tata dealership in Nelspruit several years ago. "I later moved on to towing and chose the Tata trucks, because I knew the brand very well," he reasons. "Everyone here knows that I drive only Tata trucks. I'm looking at buying more; I'd happily buy a Tata with 500 000 km on the clock."

Thomson is particularly impressed with the four-tonners in his fleet, which use 5.7-litre turbocharged Tata engines and five-speed manual gearboxes. These trucks have a gross combination mass (GCM) of just over ten tonnes and a permissible body and payload of 4 990 kg. They use dual wheels at the rear and are equipped with full air brakes.

One of these trucks has done over 260 000 km to date and is used primarily to tow forklifts, minibus taxis and other stricken vehicles in the Lowveld. Thomson says he has seen improvements in fuel consumption and more space in the cabin on the newer models from Tata.

"We serve the Lowveld and move cars, bikes, boats and even light aircraft," he continues. "We do a lot of long-distance work, from Nelspruit to Johannesburg and Pretoria, to Lydenburg and even to places as far away as Burgersfort."

The 150-km drive from Nelspruit to Burgersfort includes several mountain passes. "The Tata trucks are not overly fast, but they're dependable," says Thomson. Apart from towing, the company also provides vehicle-recovery and roadside-assistance services, and even does some panel beating.

"I'm busy. I do a lot of work for the insurance companies. We run 24-hours a day. If there are vehicles broken down somewhere, we collect them. I do all the work for SMD as



well," he explains. "While we drive long distances every day, we also do local contract work and we deal with several insurance companies, too."

In all of this, reliability is the most important characteristic for Thomson. "I don't need to pick up my trucks from the side of the road. If something does go wrong, the drivers can normally still drive the vehicles back to our yard," he says.

"I will not change to a different make of truck. I've had guys trying to sell me different brands, but I'm not interested. One reason for that is maintenance – the Tata's are much cheaper to maintain. Personally, I'm very happy," says Thomson.

He says he gets his drivers to partner with more experienced drivers for a week or two to familiarise themselves with the vehicles before allowing them to operate the new trucks. While his fleet is made up of both new and older trucks, he says the drivers of the older models envy the drivers of the newer vehicles.

"Nobody can tell me bad things about Tata or its trucks. I've seen my competitors with new trucks, which are fitted with fancy auto gearboxes, being towed in for repairs. In this game, reliability is more important than luxury."

"These Tata trucks are real workhorses. Any faults I've had usually stem from driver abuse or from incorrect loading of vehicles. I can't possibly speak badly about a truck that has helped to build my business. I've only had good service out of these trucks from the very beginning," he concludes. **F**

# GLOBAL FOCUS NEWS

## NO ICE IN THIS ICE-CREAM VAN

Picture an ice-cream van. Its diesel engine is running, while excited kids gather around. While the van thrills those kids with delight, it has the opposite effect on environmentalists ... because of all those emissions going into our atmosphere.

Enter a prototype van based on the e-NV200, Nissan's 100-percent electric light commercial vehicle. It's an ice-cream van sans an internal combustion engine (ICE)!

Instead of a jingle to attract customers – not always popular with parents – the concept has a smart button that generates a tweet of the van's precise location using the global addressing service What3Words.

What3Words divides the world into three-square-metre locations, each with a unique three-word address. For instance, trendy.angel.define is a spot on Brighton & Hove's seafront in the United Kingdom (UK). Customers can easily find the van in a park or seafront location where normal street addressing would not apply.

The van was created to celebrate the recent Clean Air Day in the UK. It was produced in conjunction with Mackie's of Scotland, an ice-cream producer that powers its family owned dairy farm by renewable wind and solar energy.

"Ice cream is enjoyed the world over, but consumers are increasingly mindful of the environmental impact of how we produce such treats, and the 'last mile' of how they reach us," says Kalyana Sivagnanam, managing director of Nissan Motor (Great Britain).

Most ice-cream vans – particularly older models

– have diesel engines, which are kept running to operate the refrigeration equipment. These motors are criticised for producing harmful emissions, including black carbon, when left idling. Some UK towns and cities are now looking to ban or fine these vehicles.

While the van's motor is driven by a 40 kWh battery, the on-board ice-cream equipment, including a soft-serve machine, freezer drawer and drinks fridge, are powered by the newly unveiled Nissan Energy ROAM, which goes on sale later in 2019.

Designed for both professional and leisure applications, ROAM is a portable power pack that uses lithium-ion cells recovered from early first-generation Nissan electric vehicles (produced from 2010 onwards). This provides a sustainable second life for Nissan EV batteries.

The e-NV200 has an all-electric driving range of up to 200 km between charges. The two Nissan Energy ROAM units have a combined storage capacity of 1.4 kWh and can each output power at up to one kilowatt. They can be recharged either from a 230 V mains supply (a full recharge takes about an hour), or the solar panel array on the van's roof (a full recharge takes two to four hours).

Thanks to the e-NV200's bi-directional charging capability, owners could even earn income through the winter – when the van is less frequently used. Through a V2G (vehicle-to-grid) charger, the e-NV200's battery can be used to store surplus energy from the national grid (for example renewable wind and solar energy),



## VEGAS LAUNCHES TRIP TO STRIP

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada has launched Trip to Strip, a new on-demand micro-transit ride service that transports multiple passengers heading in the same direction in a shared vehicle. It is so named because it operates on and around the Las Vegas Strip.

Like Uber, it works via an app. Users

hail a premium van which can carry up to 11 passengers in a so-called "limousine-style interior". Trip to Strip runs on the Vegas Strip, in downtown Vegas and it also serves the McCarran Airport.

In a side swipe at other service providers, Trip to Strip has announced that it will never implement surge pricing (which is much hated by Uber users).



## CHARGING AND REFUELLING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED – DESPERATELY!

The automobile industry and the public transport sector are calling on European Union (EU) member states to step up investments in much-needed infrastructure for charging and refuelling alternatively powered buses. The European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) and the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) issued this joint call following the Council of the European Union's recent adoption of the Clean Vehicles Directive.

The Clean Vehicles Directive sets binding targets for the public procurement of zero- and low-emission vehicles – in each of the 28 EU member states – for 2025 and 2030. However, without the necessary bus-specific infrastructure in place, these targets simply cannot be met, caution ACEA and UITP executives.

"There is no doubt that climate change is a major challenge, which also requires additional efforts to

cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the transport sector. EU bus manufacturers are fully committed to play their part," states ACEA secretary general, Erik Jonnaert.

"However, the lack of charging and refuelling infrastructure is a major barrier to introducing new bus technologies to the market. National governments and the European Commission must take urgent action to resolve this," he adds.

"It is essential that member states update their national implementation plans from the alternative fuels infrastructure directive (DAFI) and engage their cities and public transport undertakings so that the necessary infrastructure for low-emission bus systems can be planned for," adds Thomas Avanzata, UITP senior director Europe department.

The more we hear about these targets, the more messy and ill-conceived they seem...





## MEET THE MOTHER OF ALL SLAB TRANSPORTERS!

Kamag Transporttechnik – a German company that specialises in the production of industrial vehicles, modular transporters and vehicles for terminal logistics – was recently called upon to produce a very special slab transporter for steel giant ArcelorMittal. The vehicle was 71-m long, it carried a payload of 150 t, and it had a gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 150 t.

Needless to say, considerable engineering expertise was required...

Slabs are large blocks of steel that can weigh up to 30 t each, depending on the design. Generally, they're transported in stacks within the steelworks. ArcelorMittal specified that the vehicle would need to be equipped with grippers, which are used to raise the slabs, and that they would need to lift the slabs to a height of 2,5 m in 25 seconds ... no mean feat!

To facilitate the required payload, the Kamag engineers had to completely redesign the vehicle's trailing unit, which would bear the highest loads when transporting the slabs. The rear axle is equipped with gigantic 40.00-57 tyres that are twice as high as a man!

The Ulm industrial vehicle specialists were able to use an existing design and proven drive components for the front end. They broke new ground with the so-called "fatigue calculation". This enables them to make predictions about the service life of the vehicle construction, for example.

The customer stipulated that the frame could not develop any cracks for at least ten years of round-the-clock transporter operations (despite working under the extreme working conditions associated with any steelworks).

Heat is just one feature of these demanding working conditions. When



the slabs come out of the press, they have a temperature of around 900°C. Accordingly, the slab transporter from Kamag is equipped with numerous heat protection plates.

In addition, the tyres on the rear axle, which get really close to the glowing slabs during transport, are each filled with ten tonnes of water, which helps to dissipate the heat that penetrates the synthetic tyres.

Not surprisingly, transporting the new empty 132-t slab transporter to the customer proved equally as challenging as its design. Transport experts from Spedition Kübler assisted in this regard. To move the colossus, Kübler used two InterCombi transport platforms with 12 and ten-axle lines and a lifting bridge.

Two truck-mounted cranes from Ulm-based Rieger & Moser were used for the laborious loading onto the abnormal-load vehicle, a four-axle MAN TGX 41.680. The push-and-pull combi unit (an Actros pushed from the back) travelled 260 km on public roads from the Kamag site in the Ulm-Donautal industrial area to the port at Heilbronn. Once there, the slab transporter was moved onto a barge for the final stage of its journey to the steel producer's dock. Sounds like a job extremely well done! Bravo, Kamag et al!






## DUCATO GOES ELECTRIC

Fiat has lifted the lid on its Ducato electric, which will be launched in 2020.

The first full-electric Fiat Professional model, the Ducato was developed after the company completed an extensive research project into customers' attitudes towards electric vehicles. The study found that 25 percent of customers are already ready and willing to go the electric route (this will obviously increase by 2020).

Fiat claims that the vehicle is best in class in many areas. It will offer a range from 220 to 360 km and different charging configurations. Speed will be limited to 100 km/h to optimise energy use while the vehicle boasts maximum power of 90 kW and maximum torque of 280 Nm. Load volumes from 10 to 17 m<sup>3</sup>, and a payload of up to 1 950 kg, are claimed to be best in category.



 @womanonwheelsza

**CHARLEEN CLARKE** is editorial director of **FOCUS**. While she is based in Johannesburg, she spends a considerable amount of time overseas, attending international transport events – largely in her capacity as associate member of the International Truck of the Year Jury.

# SHORT HAULS

## HILUX GETS SPORTY

Toyota has released a limited-edition Hilux bakkie that reflects the spirit of Gazoo Racing – the brand's motorsport division. Badged the Hilux GR Sport, the model features suspension upgrades and cosmetic enhancements.

In a statement, a company spokesman says the development brief for the vehicle hinged on offering better off-road handling, enhanced off-road body control and a sharper on-road steering feel. Accordingly, the model has been fitted with monotube shock absorbers that work in conjunction with firmer front springs to offer a sportier ride. Rear leaf-spring rates have been left unaltered to maintain the maximum payload.

The decal-bedecked vehicle is available in a choice of Glacier White, Arizona Red or Attitude Black, the colours matching that of Gazoo Racing's livery. An enlarged, honeycomb front grille features distinctive Toyota lettering like that found on the brand's Dakar race vehicles. It is finished in gloss black and sports a GR badge.

Depending on vehicle colour, fog-lamp garnish is outlined in red or white. All models feature a black bonnet and roof, with black accents on side mirrors, GR-branded tubular side steps, over-fenders and wheels, the last-mentioned being 17-inch alloys that are GR specific. Tailgate badging is in rifle black.

The cabin is swathed in black leather with red stitching. GR logos are embroidered on headrests and carpets, and even the start button features a GR motif. There's also a branded production plate that includes the vehicle's serial number.

Piano Black finishes have been applied to dashboard and door trim panels, with a red accent line running



across the fascia. The infotainment system features an eight-inch, flush-mounted display with a touchscreen interface, navigation system and Bluetooth as well as USB and Aux ports. Steering wheel operability and a reverse camera add comfort and convenience.

The instrument cluster features white-faced dials with orange needles and a cog-shaped motif. A TFT-based multi-information display relays information relating to audio, compass, navigation, trip and fuel consumption.

Power is provided by a 2.8-litre GD-6 turbodiesel engine that delivers 130 kW and 450 Nm, mated to a six-speed automatic gearbox equipped with manual and sport modes. Throttle response can be adapted through selectable drive modes. Four-wheel drive can be engaged on the fly.

According to a Toyota spokesman, only 600 GR Sports will be built – all of them double-cab models. They will be priced at R707 400, which includes a 90 000 km service plan.

## GEARING UP FOR FUTUROAD

Futuroad, a comprehensive business platform for South Africa's truck, bus and commercial vehicle sectors, opens next month at the Johannesburg Expo Centre, Nasrec, where it will form part of the multi-faceted Automechanika Johannesburg trade fair.

The event is billed as the biggest automotive exhibition in Africa and it is expected to attract visitors from across the sub-Saharan region. Staged from September 18 to 21, it aims to provide a premier showcase for the display of commercial vehicles, with a number of brands having committed to the launch of new models at the show.

Volvo, UD, Daewoo, FAW, Tata, Powerstar, JMC and Fiat Professional, as well as bodybuilder Serco and component supplier Trailquip, have confirmed their

participation. Additionally, exhibits will include displays of vehicle tracking and navigation systems, technology relating to fleet management, refueling systems and cross-border services, as well as products from service providers to truck and bus operators.

Joshua Low, managing director of Messe Frankfurt SA, organisers of the show, says a test drive venue has been established in the showgrounds so that visitors can experience at first hand the capabilities of vehicles that will be on display.

"Adding to this, we are pleased to announce that the Road Freight Association (RFA) and South African Bus Operators Association (Saboa) have confirmed that they will be hosting conferences alongside the Futuroad Expo," he says.



## NEW FAW 6.130 FL FREIGHT CARRIER IMPRESSES

Johannesburg-based company Careful Carriers has been using a FAW 6.130 FL truck since late last year to transport loads across South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho, racking up about 40 000 km in the process. The vehicle represents a new medium commercial from FAW South Africa and, like the successful 8.140 on which it is based, the model is equipped with a Cummins engine.

The truck, which has a 4,6-t payload, was delivered to Careful Carriers by FAW Isando. "The vehicle has met our needs perfectly, whether carrying full loads or a single pallet," says Braam Lottering, the freight company's operations director. "There are no complicated fuel systems or electronics and, when it's had to be serviced, work has been completed within a day, keeping downtime to a minimum."

With service intervals of 15 000 km, the vehicle has been serviced twice – once at FAW Randburg and once at FAW Spartan. "In terms of fuel consumption, we are achieving 8,5 km per litre – and the truck is comfortable to drive," says Lottering.

Since Careful Carriers has a number of 8.140 models in service, company personnel are familiar with the 6.130's layout and components. "The similarities made learning to drive the 6.130 FL a straightforward process," says Lottering. "We've had no complaints from our drivers. Also, the vehicle is comfortable, light on fuel and powerful enough to meet our needs. We consider the 6.130 to be the benchmark truck in this market segment."



Careful Carriers has been in business for over 30 years and operates a fleet of 75 vehicles across southern Africa. While specialising in fragile loads shipping, the company also provides supply chain management and warehousing services and counts Coca-Cola and SAB among its clients.

Reflecting on the state of the transport industry, Lottering says the price of fuel is a significant issue and the addition of more levies, as well as introduction of carbon tax, are making it difficult for transport businesses to thrive. "Those factors make the FAW 6.130 FL an even stronger buying proposition for us," he says.

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITY FROM ELECTRA MINING

Knowledge is power – that's the theme of seminars which will run alongside Electra Mining Botswana, a mining, industrial and power-generation expo to be held at the Gaborone Fairgrounds from September 10 to 12.

Specially designed to promote business growth in Botswana, displays at the trade show will feature each of the sectors' latest technologies, machinery, products and solutions. The event will be co-located with A-OSH Expo Botswana, an occupational health and safety (OHS) initiative aimed at promoting awareness and the importance of safety standards.

Event director Charlene Hefer says the free-to-attend seminar programme has been designed to provide a learning opportunity for exhibitors and visitors alike. Topics to be discussed include:

- How the Internet of Things (IoT) and smart devices could change the face of mining in Africa;
- Managing occupational health and risk management;
- Smarter safety solutions for mining;
- Where artificial intelligence and machine learning fit within industry and mining;
- The importance of a strategic approach to IT security.

"Not only will visitors learn loads from the 100 or so leading local and international exhibitors on the floor – who will be showcasing their latest products, services and solutions – they will also learn from our seminar panel of experts," she says.

For information log on to [www.electramining.co.bw](http://www.electramining.co.bw)

## WHY CORRECT TYRE INFLATION PRESSURES ARE IMPORTANT

Tyre manufacturers will tell you that the cost of a full set of tyres for a standard commercial vehicle with a semi-trailer equates to between two and three percent of the running costs – yet, too few commercial users pay any great attention to getting the best out of what is a significant investment.

Arguably, the most important aspect of keeping tyres well-serviced is to ensure that inflation pressures are correct.

Steve Howat, general manager for technical services at the Continental Group United Kingdom and Ireland, says a tyre that is under inflated by 20 percent can increase fuel consumption by up to three percent.

He advises: "Tyres should be checked when cold with an accurately calibrated tyre-pressure gauge. The most neglected tyre for inflation pressure is the inner twin tyre, and this is purely due to missing or inappropriate valve extensions."

## CTRACK LAUNCHES DRIVER MOBI SERVICE

Leading vehicle tracking and telematics provider, Ctrack, has launched Ctrack Driver Mobi in South Africa, following a successful rollout of the service in the United Kingdom (UK). With Driver Mobi, drivers are able to view their driving behaviour scores on internet-enabled smart phones. The scores are derived from journeys they have made over 30 days.

The scores can be compared against those of other drivers in the company or against specific driver groups within a company, creating a competitive environment that encourages greater personal responsibility.

Using a smart mobile URL, the Ctrack Driver Mobi service records acceleration, braking, cornering, speeding and idling events every 100 km and provides a score from these out of 100. Drivers are not able to manually edit their scores; they have to drive better in order to achieve better results.



Drivers can view their past trips on maps and can also separate and submit business and private trip information. Business-only trips can also be exported in PDF format for tax purposes. Furthermore, drivers can complete comprehensive vehicle safety checks. Comments can be added if vehicle components reach a critical stage of disrepair or damage. This information can then be submitted to an appropriate manager immediately via email, all from the driver's mobile phone.

Ctrack's Driver Mobi is ideal for small and medium-sized businesses and works best in situations where multiple drivers use a vehicle. It helps fleet managers to obtain accurate odometer readings and can be used to monitor the effectiveness of driver-training initiatives.

Thousands of Ctrack customers in the UK have found that drivers using Driver Mobi engage with telematics far more and, as a result, their road manners improve, fuel costs reduce, accident rates come down and general company administration duties plummet.

Ctrack Driver Mobi is suitable for use in fleets of any size and works with all makes and models of vehicles. Ctrack continues to enhance and expand its range of services for small and medium-sized businesses," says Hein Jordt, managing director of Ctrack South Africa.

"The introduction of Ctrack Driver Mobi is further evidence of our ongoing drive to simplify the administrative burdens faced by these enterprises, while enhancing driver safety in South Africa for the benefit of all road users."

## STATE OF THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE MARKET, JUNE 2019

The National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa), reported that sales of new light commercial vehicles grew 1.2 percent in June compared with figures for the corresponding month last year. Sales in the medium and heavy segments showed mixed performance, the former improving by 16 percent and the latter dropping by 3.9 percent compared with figures for June last year.

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 14 495
Changan	12
Datsun	1
Fiat Chrysler Automobiles South Africa	22
Ford Motor Company	2 069
GWM	175
Hyundai Automotive SA	329
Isuzu Motors South Africa	1 611
JMC	12
Kia South Africa	143
Mahindra	292
Mazda South Africa	25
Mercedes-Benz SA	105
Mitsubishi	49
Nissan	2 704
Opel	22
Peugeot Citroën	9
Renault	18
Suzuki Auto	63
Toyota	6 405
Volkswagen SA	447

Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 834
FAW	9
Ford Motor Company	20
Hino	156
Hyundai Automotive SA	16
Isuzu Motors South Africa	225
Iveco	46
JMC	18
Mercedes-Benz SA	135
Peugeot Citroën South Africa	4
Tata	62
Toyota	75
VECV (Eicher)	1
Volkswagen SA	67

Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 482
FAW	44
Hino	115
Isuzu Motors South Africa	145
Iveco	3
MAN Automotive	3
Mercedes-Benz SA	41
Powerstar	10
Tata	57
UD	59
VECV (Eicher)	5

Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 1 167
Babcock DAF	7
Daewoo	16
FAW	36
Hino	48
Isuzu Motors South Africa	37
Iveco	31
MAN Automotive	149
Mercedes-Benz SA	202
Powerstar	29
Scania	268
Tata	12
UD	100
VECV (Eicher)	1
Volkswagen SA	4
Volvo Group Southern Africa	227

Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 76
Iveco	11
MAN Automotive	27
Mercedes-Benz SA	11
Scania	12
Tata	7
Volkswagen SA	4
Volvo Group Southern Africa	4

Note: Mercedes-Benz SA reports only aggregated sales data. The company's commercial vehicle market split volumes are estimates based on historical trends and forecasting techniques. All figures are supplied by Naamsa.



# IN THE NEXT ISSUE

## OILS, FUELS, LUBES AND ADDITIVES



Some say the uptake of electric vehicles in South Africa could displace 50 percent of petrol and diesel sales by 2042. We investigate the impact on the liquid fuels value chains.

## WORLD ON WHEELS: MIDDLE EAST



Artificial intelligence (AI) is advancing in all domains and it has become one of the most trending topics. We look at the impact of AI on the transport industry in the Middle East.

## AFTERMARKET FOCUS



Aftermarket warranties have become popular add-ons in a used-truck purchase for extending coverage beyond a factory warranty. We find out more.

## VEHICLE FINANCE AND INSURANCE



We take a look at how the recent truck violence on the country's roads has affected the vehicle finance and insurance industry.

## RFA REPORT BACK



We report back on the 2019 Road Freight Association (RFA) Conference and some of the interesting topics discussed (such as green trucking and the future of collective bargaining).

## SABOA REPORT BACK



From new product launches to all the news from the bus sector, we bring readers all the developments from the 2019 Southern African Bus Operators Association (Saboa) Conference.

## FOCUS ON NISSAN NAVARA STEALTH



We take the Nissan Navara Stealth to Swaziland to see what the newest addition to the Navara range has to offer.

## FLEET MANAGEMENT



What are the most significant challenges facing fleet managers in 2019? We investigate, report back on a recent global study by TomTom Telematics and get input from local fleet-management companies.

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# BUSWORLD 2019: BRING IT ON!



**BUSWORLD 2019 IS GOING TO BE SENSATIONAL! IT'S GOING TO BE JAM-PACKED WITH BUSES, COACHES AND MINIBUSES, FEATURING THE VERY LATEST TECHNOLOGY. WELL, THAT CERTAINLY APPLIES TO THE MAN STAND, AS CHARLEEN CLARKE DISCOVERS**

I'm in Munich at the world-famous Allianz Arena, which is home to FC Bayern Munich – one mighty illustrious football team. I'm not here to meet that cute chap, Thomas Müller (although this does remain a dream, it must be said), instead I'm here to meet some other stars in their own right.

Specifically, I have come to Munich to find out what MAN Truck and Bus will show at Busworld 2019, which takes place in Brussels from October 18 to 23 this year. And the stars of the MAN stand are just as impressive as Herr Müller, although maybe not quite as cute...

So, what will visitors to MAN's Busworld stand see? One of the highlights of the stand will be the all-electric MAN Lion's City E, which members of the public will be able to test drive for the very first time.

The international journalists who have gathered in Munich are all elated at the thought of taking it for a spin and I practically get trampled in the rush to get to it, so I decide instead to drive some of the other vehicles – and save the best for last.

I kick off my day's exploration at the MAN TGE City, which is a static display here at the Allianz Arena. It is based on the TGE van, which I have driven and reported on in the past, but this is a people transporter – and it is mighty cool.

The seats can be moved backwards and forwards at the push of a lever and there's a nifty wheelchair lift at the back. I love the large side windows, which provide the passengers with unhampered views. It would go down so well in South

Africa – although it does cost about R1.1 million...

My next port of call is the MAN eTGE Combi, an e-minibus based on the MAN eTGE electric van, which is already in series production. This minibus can transport up to eight people in absolute comfort – and silence, of course. It's great for inner-city transportation in low-emission zones and for use in any areas where there is a focus on keeping noise to a minimum...

I chat to a deliberately unnamed (by me) MAN employee with the most marvellous sense of humour. I ask him how long it takes to charge the vehicle. "Two years," is his response – without the hint of a smile. Actually it takes just 45 minutes to charge the eTGE to 80 percent (assuming you have access to a DC charging station with a Combined Charging System and 40 kW of charging power).

Then we hop into the eTGE and go for a spin. I drove the vehicle in Berlin last year, so it's not my first time behind the wheel. Still, I really enjoy the experience of prodding the accelerator and being propelled forward. The instantaneous torque is just so rewarding. So, too, is the actual driving; the vehicle feels nimble, it handles quite brilliantly and it's ever so comfortable. I suggest to the unnamed chap that we take a trip to Salzburg and then return to Munich later. "What a great idea! Of course, we can never get there and back again on a single charge, but we can try," he says with a hearty laugh.

Next up, I explore the MAN Lion's Coach that is used by FC Bayern Munich. We're not allowed to drive this coach, but I wander through it, marvelling at the plush interior and



“

I really enjoy the MAN TipMatic Coach 12-speed automated gearbox with integrated retarder – honestly speaking, it is so smooth; I could not feel it change gears.



## OTHER BUSWORLD HIGHLIGHTS

I didn't get to drive absolutely every vehicle that will be exhibited by MAN at Busworld. Should you visit the show, it would be wise to look out for these displays too:

- The Lion's City 19 EfficientHybrid will be shown for the very first time. The 38-seater bus spans 1,75 m in length. A highly efficient D1556 LOH diesel engine with 265 kW powers the vehicle. If equipped with MAN EfficientHybrid, the bus becomes an even more economical and environmentally friendly solution. The stop-start function ensures that the vehicle is near silent and emission-free when it stops.
- At Busworld, MAN is presenting the Lion's Intercity with a new D1556 LOH engine for the first time – the vehicle on show will deliver 265 kW. When combined with the MAN EfficientHybrid module, the engine can lower consumption by a whopping 16 percent!

the fact that it has three fridges. (Honestly, how many beers do these soccer players drink?)

Visitors to the MAN stand at Busworld will be treated to a long-distance model of the Lion's Coach C, which is 13 m in length has with 48 seats, a lift and two wheelchair spaces. The two-axle vehicle on show will boast the 346 kW



**ABOVE:** Gerard Nicholas Kalil-Zackey, marketing and brand manager at MAN Automotive, and Charleen Clarke, prepare for a spin in the new electric bus.

D2676 LOH engine, with a maximum torque of 2 400 Nm coupled to a 12-speed gearbox MAN TipMatic.

My next test vehicle is something also super luxurious: the Neoplan Cityliner L. This three-axle high-floor coach, equipped with MAN's D2676 LOH motor, is blissful to drive – thanks to the fact that there are 368 kW of power and 2 500 Nm of torque on tap.

Heading with trepidation through the suburbs and then onto the autobahn (this coach does, after all, cost about R10 million; it would be poor form to trash it), I really enjoy the MAN TipMatic Coach 12-speed automated gearbox with integrated retarder – honestly speaking, it is so smooth; I could not feel it change gears.

However, this is a coach for passengers and not for the driver – and what a luxurious experience it offers. I ➤

**RIGHT:** The 12-m version of the Lion's City E can seat up to 88 passengers, whilst the 18-m variant can accommodate a maximum of 120 passengers. The range is up to 270 km.

**FAR RIGHT:** Charleen Clarke gets ready for her test drive in the Lion's City E.

**BELOW:** The Lion's Coach L comes with every conceivable safety feature.



Finally, there is the highlight of my day: a drive in the all-electric Lion's City E.

The Tourliner is powered by the D26 engine, which features 346 kW of power, maximum torque of 2 400 Nm, and an automated MAN TipMatic Coach gearbox. A Neoplan Skyliner – featuring the 375 kW D2676 LOH diesel engine with a maximum torque of 2 600 Nm, the 12-speed automated MAN TipMatic Coach gearbox and electronically controlled shock absorbers, will also be on the Busworld stand.

The next vehicle that I drive – the MAN Lion's Coach L – has the same

particularly like the rear lounge, which seats seven (it looks like a spot where memories are made). I also really like the OptiView, the first mirror replacement system for coaches, which celebrated its world première at the last IAA. (It's available on all Neoplan models from 2020.)

Cameras on both sides of the vehicle provide real-time imaging on two displays, which are really easy to see and use; they look a bit like two iPads on top of each other, but they're even clearer.

A Tourliner L – with its fabulous movingART design – will be on display at Busworld. This vehicle is the coach of choice for the famous German composer, Hans Zimmer. He has a show called the "The World of Hans Zimmer", which is currently touring Europe, and the musicians travel in a Tourliner L. During the press event, we're treated to music by the orchestra. They will join the coach at the Busworld; both will be an absolute delight.

engine and gearbox. Significantly, it has an axle ratio of  $i = 2.73$ , which results in reduced consumption and wear as well as less noise. Actually, as we drive through Munich and traverse the autobahn, the cabin and the entire coach, in fact, are ominously silent.

Finally, there is the highlight of my day: a drive in the all-electric Lion's City E. At Busworld, MAN will be exhibiting a 12-m solo version of the Lion's City E, which comes with 35 seats. This bus has the most incredible, funky design – despite the fact that there are all those batteries on the roof. In the solo bus, the all-electric driveline can produce an output of between 160 kW and a maximum of 270 kW. As a result, the Lion's City E has a range of 200 km – or up to 270 km in good conditions – across the entire service life of the batteries. Belting around Munich, I realise that I am driving the future – and that's precisely what Busworld visitors will experience come October. **F**





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From left: Mr Jacques Vorster (Agent), Mr Boikhutso Masipa.

**“Jacques is always there for us.” Boikhutso Masipa**

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