

Congestion eased, business fluidity promoted in Eastern Cape port terminals

Transnet Port Terminals (TPT), Transnet Freight Rail (TFR) and Maersk are proud to announce their successful collaboration in implementing a road-to-rail initiative during the citrus season in the Eastern Cape Terminals.



This joint effort aims to alleviate congestion at the Ngqura Container Terminal (NCT) and enhance business fluidity by utilizing rail transport for the movement of empty reefer containers. Shipping lines typically discharge empty reefer containers in preparation for increased demand during the citrus season, which begins on May 1st and ends on October 30th.

Historically, these containers were road-hauled from NCT to the Maersk container depot near Deal Party. However, the high influx of trucks during this period prompted an engagement between TPT and Transnet Freight Rail. Rail transport was explored as a means of reducing congestion and optimizing operations. On the 8th of June 2023 a significant milestone was achieved as the first Maersk reefer shuttle train, carrying 50 empty reefers, departed from NCT at 13:06 and arrived at Deal Party at 17:00. The success of this rail shipment shows the effectiveness of the collaborative initiative, which has been in development for nearly two years. By utilizing rail transport, the initiative aims to mitigate congestion at NCT and improve overall business fluidity.

One train carrying 50 containers is equivalent to removing 50 trucks from ports and roads. The reduction in truck traffic enhances business operations but also contributes to safer roads. This collaboration between TPT's Port Elizabeth Container Terminal, Ngqura Container Terminal, and Transnet Freight Rail teams exemplifies the commitment to conceptualizing and implementing innovative solutions that benefit both the industry and the local community.

Looking ahead, TPT and Transnet Freight Rail plan to expand the road-to-rail initiative in the Eastern Cape Region by introducing an inter-terminal shuttle service between NCT and Port Elizabeth Container Terminal for full containers. Additionally, efforts will be made to maximize the utilization of the return leg from Deal Party to NCT for empty containers.

TPT, TFR and Maersk express their gratitude to all parties involved for their dedication and teamwork in bringing this initiative to fruition. This collaboration sets a precedent for future industry partnerships aimed at improving efficiency, reducing congestion, and promoting sustainable logistics practices.

The Ngqura Container Terminal forms part of a network of 16 sea-cargo and 3 inland terminals managed by Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) nationally. TPT is a division of Transnet SOC Ltd and South Africa's (SA) leading terminal operator responsible for loading and offloading cargo aboard vessels calling the seven SA ports. The company provides import and export services for both domestic and global markets

through staff complement of 9000 across 16-sea cargo and three inland terminals. TPT's operations target four major market sectors namely: automotive, containers, bulk, and break bulk.

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