

# Port of Mossel Bay catalyst for Garden Route economic development

Delivering his keynote address at the recent Garden Route Investment Conference under the theme "creating opportunity in global uncertainty", Nico Walters, general manager: strategy at Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) acknowledged the important role of ports in the local economy...



Despite being the smallest of the commercial ports along the South Africa coast, the Port of Mossel Bay is an important contributor to the economy of the Garden Route and Southern Cape, said Walters.

"The immense potential of small ports and harbours to contribute to economic growth is acknowledged in government's pursuit of using small harbours to attract investment in state coastal maritime, develop infrastructure and properties, grow businesses, create jobs and redistribute wealth," said Walters.

"Transforming our ports into people's ports, where local communities and businesses have access to and are able to participate in port activities is a goal of TNPA. The Port of Mossel Bay is among the ports earmarked for investment under Operation Phakisa," said Walters.

## Operation Phakisa strategy

*"The Operation Phakisa strategy, designed to unlock the ocean's economy, has resulted in major upgrades and new facilities for ship repair as well as the development of facilities to serve the oil and gas industry, to ensure that South Africa attracts its share of this business."*

"The Ocean's Wealth translates into skills development, jobs, innovation, entrepreneurship and changing the country for the better," said Walters.

The development of The Small Harbours and State Coastal Property Development unit (SH&SCPD), within the National Department of Public Works is part of the Oceans Economy strategy within Operation Phakisa.

Hundreds of state properties along South Africa's coast are to become sites of new business opportunities and catalysts for economic growth and job creation. Skills development and job creation targets within these strategies will facilitate opportunities for port communities.

"We aim to create a smart, safe and secure port system with the infrastructure and capacity to promote economic growth, job creation, transformation and sustainable benefits for port communities. Training people to join the marine and dredging divisions is part of the organisation's transformation agenda and a supplier development aspect is integral to every tender awarded by Transnet. Contractors are committed to supplier development initiatives that include encouraging local small business, capacity generation, IP transfer and training/bursaries for local South Africans," he added.

## **Developmental plans for Port of Mossel Bay**

Developmental plans for the Port of Mossel Bay will ensure that it continues to create economic growth in the region. These include the establishment of a mixed-use waterfront development that will include retail, commercial and industrial facilities. This, in addition to the cruise vessel facility that brings in thousands of tourists to the Garden Route, and the fact that the Port of Mossel Bay is the only port operating two off-shore mooring points providing underwater vessel inspection, hull cleaning and salvage. The slipway upgrade that is in the pipeline will also support the local fishing and other industries.

"The Port of Mossel Bay holds a special place in South African maritime history as the first recorded harbour used regularly along the South African coast by European seafarers journeying to the East. We want to ensure that it continues to take its rightful place in the South African ports system," said Port of Mossel Bay Manager, Shadrack Tshikalange.

He said the reintroduction of the Mossel Bay Dias and Port Festival, held in partnership with the Mossel Bay Municipality, aimed to bring the public into the port, grow awareness of the role the ports play in the economy and promote career and business opportunities amongst local communities.

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