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Oh please can we **GO GREEN?**

I am finally sensing more of a willingness among operators to go green. I just wish that government would come to the party ...



CHARLEEN CLARKE

S hhhhhh ... don't tell a soul; I am becoming a bit of a bunny hugger. I do still use deodorant. Pinky promise. I am, however, one of those weirdos who arrive at a supermarket armed with shopping bags.

If I forget them in the boot, I load my groceries into the trolley (you should see the really strange looks I get in posh places). I abhor the idea of buying plastic bags. This is not because of the 50 c, or whatever it is they cost. I mean ... really ... thanks to the gymnastics of our currency, R50 is almost worth nothing; 50 c is a paltry price to pay for a bag.

Buying one, however, defeats the object of the exercise – we are supposed to be ridding our country of those blasted things! We are not meant to be spending the 50 c and adding to the problem!

Now, as we all know, our wonderful industry also does its fair share of adding to our planet's woes. And, honestly speaking, until such time as government catches a wake-up, that's not really going to change. Sure, there are some massively enterprising and brave operators out there who are doing their damnest to go green. I salute them! They are, however, few and far between.

The reason why is simple: while it makes sense, it often just doesn't make cents. Going green is often too expensive.

It can be done ... but government needs to ease the way, rather than make it more painful. Recently I was invited to a business breakfast and one of the

guests – a well-known transport operator – visibly showed his frustration with government. He had been trying to "go green" ... and had been venturing down the biofuels path, but, he said, it was fraught with challenge after challenge.

"I received absolutely no assistance from government, whatsoever. I wasn't actually looking for aid, or financial support! I would have just appreciated a helping hand! Instead, all that happened was that government put obstacles in my way," he bemoaned.

That fleet, which was looking to go the biofuels route, is now destined to use diesel for the conceivable future. This is not because management wants to; it's a case of sink or swim – in diesel.

I am fortunate to travel a lot. I have, therefore, come across many case studies whereby governments actively support green initiatives. We all know the drill; tax incentives and the like.

I was in Norway recently and the incentives were so appealing that electric cars have become as common as Vikings (in the good old days). This has meant that government has had to withdraw some of the privileges ... electric cars aren't allowed to travel in bus lanes anymore, for instance.

That was only logical – Teslas were becoming a dime a dozen and those lanes were simply too congested, but my point is that sales of those electric cars were bolstered by government initiatives ... and not just the desire of motorists to do the right thing.

Meanwhile, back in South Africa, we still languish with gazillions of Euro-2 trucks on our roads ... **F**



WITH THE HIGH DEMANDS OF FLEETS WITHIN THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY, IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT ONE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A STEP AHEAD OF THE REST.

To contribute, Michelin has taken the opportunity to create a modern day business solution for truck tyre dealers in South Africa. If your goal is to enable your business with the best products and services that the industry has to offer, then the opportunity is finally here to take part in the movement of the Michelin Truck Service Centre (MTSC).

The experience when visiting an MTSC dealership is a step above the rest. You'll be met by highly skilled staff who will ensure that your vehicle is properly taken care of and that all work needed will be attended to promptly and to the highest standards. All MTSC shops are fitted with top quality equipment from truck tyre fitting machines to wheel alignment

systems. These shops offer a range of value added services allowing you the customer to get the most out of the time your vehicle is off the road.

By inflating your tyres with Nitrogen at time of fitment, you will find that you improve overall tyre pressure conditions as Nitrogen inflated tyres run at optimal pressure for longer. The benefits of correct tyre inflation is invaluable and can extend overall tyre life overall. Considering this service as well as the repairing of tyres, it makes an MTSC centre a one stop shop for both large and small fleets. Another value added service is the retreading of quality Michelin casings. With the 4 stages of the tyre life cycle (Stage 1 - New, Stage 2 - Regrooving, Stage 3 - First Retread and Stage 4 - Second Retread) a Michelin casing has the potential of achieving multiple retreads. Recamic is Michelin's pre-cured retreading rubber which offers optimal performance and an improved cost per kilometre.

Another value added service provided by this world class service centre is the rotation your tyres. It is critical to remember that they should be rotated after every service interval. Tyre rotation ensures even wear which extends the lifespan and

improves performance of the tyre. We also use the best tyre change equipment to strip, fit and balance the tyres on your fleet.

MTSC centres have gone one step further by offering every engine a chance to breathe properly. All technicians can check your air and oil filters and replace them if necessary. Another added advantage is that you can visit your nearest MTSC dealer to check and replace batteries, as MTSC centres stock only the best quality batteries.

With all our products and services on offer, it is also key to know that as part of the MTSC offering, you get the added benefit of fleet surveys. MTSC centres offer a full range of fleet services and inspections to the benefit of the end user. MTSC centres uses top of the range diagnostics to detect engine problems before they occur. Once the problem has been detected, we offer a range of solutions to help prevent damage and keep your vehicles on the road. Becoming part of the MTSC family adds to your business and offers you a chance to focus on the important part of your business, while we take care of rest.



Perpetuating the STEREOTYPE

It's true; people really do live up to stereotypes ... although, on the rare occasion, they break through them – however briefly



GAVIN MYERS

The old stereotype that Joburg drivers are *mal* and Cape Town drivers are *dopey* (no tactless reference intended) will forever stand, especially when one visits the “other” city. We don't ever really take the time to consider other parts of the country though – and I think I've found a spot that'll put both those cities to shame ...

I recently put in for a bit of R&R. Packed up the car, left the madness of Joburg in our wake and blasted off – at a steady 120 – to the KwaZulu-Natal south coast.

Like most Joburgers, I'm no stranger to this trip. I've also driven up and down the coast and through the greater Durban area many times. As a “hardened” Joburg boy – conditioned by the metropolitan's relentless hustle and bustle, the unforgiving onslaught of gap takers, tailgaters and speed makers, as well as the kind, considerate nature of most of our minibus taxi drivers – I continually think that coastal traffic will be a breeze ...

I don't know how to best describe it – suffice to say that, compared to Johannesburg's somewhat controlled chaos, Durban traffic seems just plain chaotic. The parts where one drives through Durban (on the N2 from Amanzimtoti north, the N3, the M7 and the like) are particularly bothersome – a hunting ground for aggressive drivers, and there were many ...

The fabled “white van man” is also alive and well in KwaZulu-Natal. For example, a specific chap in a

VW Crafter, whose grand-prix race I found myself caught in the middle of twice (different days) on the same bit of N2, really lived up to that stereotype. (For a bit of context, “white van man” – as described by *Wikipedia* – is a stereotype used in the United Kingdom for a commercial van driver, perceived as selfish, inconsiderate, mostly working class and aggressive.)

There were also the usual suspects – lane straddlers, speedsters, and the like. Serial undertakers performing the most risky of manoeuvres were the most prevalent.

I do have to say, however, that one evening I was actually pleasantly surprised. Most visitors to the Umhlanga region will know the chaotic construction currently underway at the N2/M41 (Mt Edgecombe/Umhlanga) interchange. During the day, I was surprised to make it through unscathed, and doffed my beach hat to the road builders getting on with the job as motorists squeezed through at barely reduced speed.

Returning that evening in the dying light of a long, hot work day (well, for them, anyway), the majority of drivers passing through the concrete bollards did so sensibly and calmly. No rush, no fuss, no flash of bright lights or aggressive undertaking.

It was quite refreshing, actually, and quite un-stereotypical. If only they could keep up that attitude during the daytime ... and other drivers – in whatever part of the country – could follow suit. **F**



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Understand your vehicles' DATA PLATES

Commercial vehicle operators and drivers need to understand the information displayed on the data plate affixed to their vehicles. Without this information, it's impossible to establish the maximum imposed load

It is a mandatory requirement for all buses, minibuses, goods vehicles, truck tractors and trailers to display certain prescribed information, which must be clearly imprinted or stamped on a metal plate affixed in an accessible position. (Regulation 245 of the Road Traffic Act.)

The purpose of the data plate on a commercial vehicle is to indicate the various permissible and manufacturer's maximum-load capacities of the vehicle. Failure to adhere to the maximum manufacturer's specifications could result in the vehicle warranty being rejected and expensive repair costs.

Failure to adhere to the legal limits could have very serious, costly and dangerous consequences, as well. Remember, ignorance of the law is no excuse.

The metal or aluminium plate must be affixed by the manufacturer of the vehicle; usually on the cab door or under the bonnet. On trailers it can normally be found in a visible position on the kerb side of the trailer.

To understand these data plates it is necessary to understand the letter symbols shown on the plate. The information is divided into two sections. Normally the first section denotes the manufacturer's specifications. The second section indicates the maximum permissible loadings, in other words the maximum legal mass of the loads.

The meanings of the symbols illustrated in the first section of a data plate are described below. These are the maximum design limits as set by the vehicle manufacturer.

GVM – Gross vehicle mass is the maximum total allowable mass that can be imposed on a vehicle, according to the manufacturer's rating. This includes the mass of the chassis cab and the body.

It also includes the payload and any add-on

equipment that may be fitted to the vehicle. The GVM rating is set by the manufacturer and may not be exceeded.

GCM – Gross combination mass is the maximum total allowable mass that can be imposed on a vehicle when the vehicle is pulling a trailer.

Again, this includes the total mass of the truck, trailer(s), payload and any add-on equipment.

GA – Gross axle mass is the maximum load that the axle is designed to carry.

GAU – Gross axle unit mass is the maximum load that a tandem or tridem axle is designed to carry.

KW – the power rating of the vehicle in kilowatts.

T – Tare mass is the mass of the empty vehicle ready to travel on the road. This includes the body mass plus any add-on equipment, but excludes fuel and payload.

The meaning of the symbols illustrated in the second section of a data plate is described below. These are maximum legal limits set by the Department of Transport, taking into account the restrictions imposed by the Road Traffic Act. These limits must not be exceeded.

V – The maximum permissible (legal) mass, when fully loaded. This mass must not be exceeded when the vehicle is operating on a public road.

DT – Drawing vehicle's maximum permissible mass.

A – Permissible axle mass load.

AU – Permissible axle unit mass load.

The information described on the plate allows the owner and driver of the vehicle to establish the exact payload that can be transported legally.

It is important to note that it is illegal for any of the information displayed on the plate to be altered in any way, without the consent and approval of the original manufacturer. **F**



One of this country's most respected commercial vehicle industry authorities, VIC OLIVER 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 and have your say!

NO SILVER BULLET

Although small motor vehicles and minibus taxis accounted for over half the accidents during the 2015/6 festive season, light delivery vehicles and trucks were also responsible for 27,5 percent of these accidents resulting in 1 755 deaths.

Although relatively few in number, truck accidents make headlines because of the high number of fatalities. As one of the leading direct insurers, MiWay believes that reversing this trend will take a concerted effort from all role-players as well as a multi-pronged strategy to produce lasting change.

We believe that enforcement of safety measures and regulations is only part of the solution. The industry as a whole has to be convinced that paying greater attention to safety makes sound business sense.

The direct cost to the economy of motor vehicle accidents was recently estimated at R306 billion. To this must be added the indirect cost of lost work hours and, for transport operators and their customers, delayed or destroyed cargo.

The cost to the insurance industry is very high and is ultimately reflected in higher vehicle insurance premiums; something that affects the entire insurance market.

Other factors to consider would be proper, regular rest and advanced instruction for drivers.

Improving the safety record of this vital industry is clearly important. It can only be done if major role players, such as insurance companies, the Department of Transport, logistics companies and drivers, all commit to a strategy that addresses and reduces the causes of truck accidents in particular.

Morné Stoltz
Head of business insurance, MiWay



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CONNECTIVITY;

the new buzzword in transport and logistics

With the launch of Highway Pilot Connect, Daimler Trucks has taken the next step in the quest for truly autonomous driving – allowing numerous vehicles to reap the rewards of travelling in convoy. GAVIN MYERS previews the technology

W

here would we be without communication? With its ability to transmit data at lightning speed, modern technology has opened countless doors never

before imagined; allowing a plethora of connected devices to communicate with one another. There's no denying that today's world relies on this connectivity.

And now, trucks are truly connected by being able to communicate with each other and the surrounding infrastructure. At an international reveal in Düsseldorf, Germany, three connected Actros 1845 trucks made their way to the venue in convoy on the country's A52 autobahn – drivers' hands off their wheels and feet off their pedals.

Daimler Trucks calls this platooning. By introducing vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication to its existing Highway Pilot autonomous driving technology (now approved for use on public roads throughout Germany), the ability to platoon reduces fuel consumption and emissions by up to seven percent (averaged across the vehicles), makes better use of infrastructure and increases road safety.

It's something quite incredible to witness: the trucks close up to a distance of 15 m apart at the legal 80 km/h, while an eight-inch, in-dash monitor relays images of the road ahead from the lead truck, as well as other pertinent information such as each truck's position.

Should a regular road user need to intersect the platoon – to take an off-ramp, for example – the

platoon will recognise this and create a gap, before closing up again once the vehicle has passed.

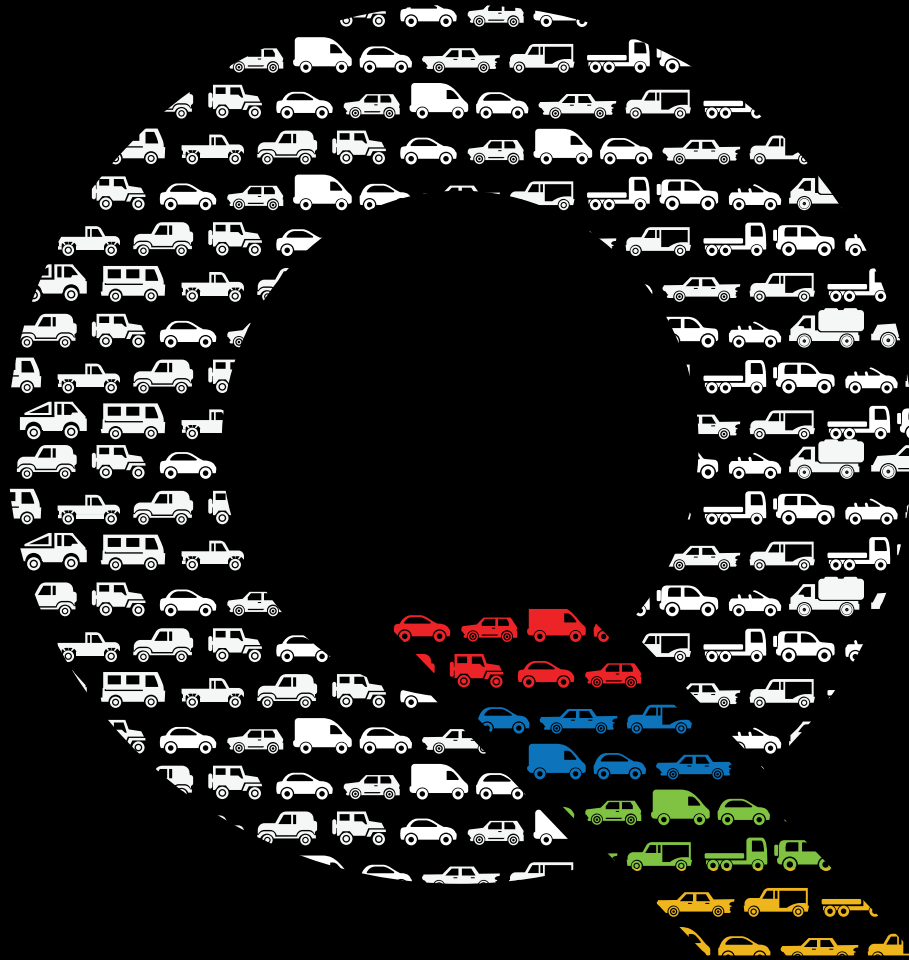
If one of the vehicles in the platoon brakes, those following do so as well – with a reaction time of one-tenth of a second, the convoy will travel just 2,2 m before each vehicle initiates an emergency stop.

The connected truck has the ability to communicate with others in a platoon, as well as with the infrastructure supporting it. This vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) communication means that all these messages and signals from the platoons – as well as other data such as weather data and road conditions – are also sent to external recipients, such as traffic control centres. The idea is for the authorities to respond flexibly, for example by changing the speed limit, or opening up additional lanes.

Other connected road users will also receive this precise route data in real time, with suggestions for alternative routes, so as to make their journeys more efficient.

"We have a vision of the future, where the entire transportation process is entirely seamless. The connected truck becomes the main data node at the centre of the logistics network, creating an information power grid," says Wolfgang Bernhard, member of the board of management of Daimler AG, responsible for Daimler Trucks & Buses.

This is just to scratch the surface of this technology, though ... its full scope of ability, and possibility, being far more detailed. Look out for the full report with the May edition of **FOCUS. F**



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Behind the **FLEET- MANAGEMENT** scenes

Fleet management is often punted along the lines of advanced tracking and reporting equipment and what these can do for a business. What does this actually mean in a day-to-day operation? **FOCUS** takes on the challenge and tries to find out ...

The key word here is "tries". As it was expected when this feature was planned, not many vehicle operators were very willing to bare all and let us in behind the scenes of their operations. Given the competitiveness of South Africa's transport and logistics industry, that's hardly surprising.

Nonetheless, on condition of anonymity, a large fast-moving consumer goods company allowed us a peephole view of its operation – so that we could try to understand how fleet management is applied in the real world.

The operation consists of 50 sites country wide. According to the company, it's not only the products manufactured in these facilities that provide its competitive advantage. "Our distribution stops at nothing to deliver to trade," we're told.

While primary distribution between the facilities is managed by five different contractors operating regionally within South Africa, the company manages its own secondary distribution operations; from the depots to trade. All the trailers used are owned by the company, as are some of the truck tractors. However, the majority of these are operated by owner drivers.

There's more to the operation than that, though; ➤

FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

It's always worth looking at something from two different points of view – so we asked Eqstra Fleet Management how it helps its customers to find the right fleet management solution.

"In essence," says Murray Price, managing director of Eqstra Fleet Management, "operators should look for a fleet management company that can offer an integrated solution and supply fleet data in real time. There are still many fleet management companies that offer only a few applications. This means that the fleet operators still have to call in reports from other suppliers and spend a lot of time coordinating these to get a complete view of their fleet."

Price says that Eqstra will begin to look at the operator's existing fleet and determine whether or not they have the correct vehicles for the application. Once that is done and the total cost of ownership is evaluated, Eqstra is able to advise operators on the best telematics systems that can offer a total, real-time overview of the operating costs of the fleet.

"Eqstra's specialised fleet department will configure vehicles that have the right fit for the purpose, at the best possible operating cost.

Then, in offering operators a total real-time overview of the operating costs of the fleet, an Operational Dashboard is compiled according to customised fleet needs. This is composed mainly of data collected from vehicles and from a driver scorecard.

"Such a dashboard assists operators to reduce fleet expenses by carrying out a quarterly analysis of performance and progress reports. This is used to spot trends in vehicle performance, driver behaviour and productivity," he explains.

So what does Eqstra see for the future of fleet management in 2016? "Running a fleet has become the second biggest cost to a company, after staff/administration costs. As companies increasingly focus on their core business, managing fleets in-house is becoming more expensive and inefficient.

"Fleet management companies help to ensure that vehicles are operated more efficiently and cost-effectively, by improving driver performance and managing maintenance schedules, thereby prolonging the use of the vehicles, while at the same time significantly reducing fuel and maintenance costs," Price concludes.

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with well over 1 000 fleet vehicles from the numerous regional offices running across the country – all of which are managed in house.

For the company, the ability to accurately cover and report on such a sizeable fleet is one of the most important considerations when choosing fleet-management systems. It's got to be high-tech, too ...

"All our units (including passenger vehicles used by sales representatives) need to be activated

biometrically, tracked, and reported on in detail – including mileage, detailed speeding in different zones, abuse such as harsh braking, after-hours driving, and so on."

Beyond that, there is also an administrative function to be taken care of. "We require a maintenance fund for mechanical and tyre issues, accident management, insurance management, fine redirection as well as licensing

and vehicle disposal," **FOCUS** learns. For all this, the services of numerous providers are enlisted.

Cost saving is always a big drawcard when looking at these systems. "Costs are reported on and the business has to implement corrective action, but, in some cases, the savings will be hidden. For example, minimising excess mileage to budget and below will not be visible, because it's difficult to tell the difference between intervention and coincidence.



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"Costs, though, can always be seen clearly. All fleet management companies promise benefits compared to the competition, so we will issue a 'request for proposal' and compare the offering(s) by running our business case. We will select the provider with the lowest cost that has a footprint capable of covering our network across South Africa."

We are told, however, that nothing is perfect. "No single fleet management provider can really deal fully with a company our size. There's no one 'bulletproof' platform, because transport is a high headcount business where, as we

know, salaries are low and skills are limited ... And we are a demanding customer that expects perfection," the company concludes.

Now there's a challenge if ever there was one. **F**



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MiX Track And React Bureau Service



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To realise the full benefits of a telematics fleet management system, drivers need to be proactively managed in real-time. The MiX Track And React bureau service is an outsourced control room used to monitor vehicles and drivers on behalf of the customer. This pro-active service ensures driver compliance resulting in fuel cost savings and increased productivity, making the service self-funding.

- ✓ The safety of your vehicles and drivers are improved as they are monitored 24/7
- ✓ The ability to recover stolen vehicles is increased with pro-active monitoring
- ✓ Productivity of your fleet is improved with fewer unauthorised stops
- ✓ Return-on-investment of your telematics system is increased with real-time change management
- ✓ Fuel consumption is reduced due to improved driver behaviour

The control room monitors various events including speeding, entry into no-go areas, driving without a rest break and unauthorised stopping en route. Depending on the type of event triggered, the highly trained agents will either call the driver or fleet controller (in English or isiZulu) and escalate repeat offenders to senior management.

Independent agents prevent intimidation by drivers or controllers. Daily and weekly reports are provided to track the overall improvement of a fleet's performance. Economies of scale makes this service affordable. The MiX Track And React bureau service is available to fleets of anywhere between 1 to 10,000 vehicles for a monthly subscription.

Proven Results



A bulk transport operator with 63 vehicles achieved a 1,6ℓ/100km reduction in fuel consumption. Incidents of speeding and excessive idling was significantly reduced by using the MiX Track And React bureau service.

The MiX Track And React bureau service is managed by Compass FM, a division of MiX Telematics. For more information please contact info@compassfm.co.za or phone +27 31 580 2400.



FUEL MANAGEMENT

– is it your priority?

There are many costs involved in running a fleet business, ranging from vehicles, drivers, tyres, maintenance, finance and insurance. Fuel tends to be the largest expense for many fleets and with the constant fluctuation in fuel prices, it is very difficult for businesses to optimise costs and productivity

Fleet businesses operate in a competitive industry, where operating costs are constantly scrutinised. When fleet operators are well equipped to manage their mobile assets and take control of driver behaviour, the result is a guaranteed increase in profitability. The key to success is improving efficiencies and productivity, and one of the most effective ways to do so is through fuel management.

The average large fleet's fuel costs account for approximately 40 percent of the fleet's total operating costs. As fuel is key to the fleet sector – to remain competitive, fleet operators need to implement solutions that will assist in managing fuel. A common reality in the South African environment is the increase in fuel theft, which not only impacts the profitability of the business, but also limits the ability to compete in a demanding market.

Two critical areas of fuel management that businesses should prioritise are fuel control and fuel security. By utilising the latest, innovative technologies, these areas will not only be easy to identify and manage, but will result in a significant saving on fleet costs.

FUEL CONTROL

A properly implemented fleet management solution that monitors and improves driver behaviour is imperative to reduce fuel consumption. By lessening poor driving habits like harsh acceleration, speeding and excessive idling, fuel consumption is reduced significantly. Technology plays a key role in fuel control and reducing risk. The state-of-the-art fleet management solutions from Mix Telematics have proved to bring about an average of ten percent savings on fuel costs – often equating to millions of rands in savings for customers. Considering the rising cost of fuel, these savings are critical to remain competitive.

FUEL SECURITY

Fuel is becoming more of a commodity in South

Africa due to its rising cost. There is an increase in fuel theft and if businesses wish to remain profitable, serious measures need to be put in place to stop the incidents of fuel theft. Fleet operators can lose as much as ten litres of fuel per truck per day due to syphoning and skimming, which could easily amount to over R30 000 per year per vehicle.

Fleet owners should invest in effective fuel security solutions that have been proved to protect fuel and profits. MiX Telematics Africa has extended its fleet management solutions by providing MiX Fuel Security solutions to fleet operators in South Africa.

MiX Fuel Security devices provide a solution that prevents syphoning and skimming. With proven savings achieved of up to ten percent of the total fuel cost, return on investment after fitting a MiX Fuel Security device is achieved within six weeks. With simple installation that only takes a few minutes, MiX Fuel Security solutions are highly effective in resolving any fleet's fuel security concerns.

Fuel management is critical to the bottom line of any business. By making use of end-to-end safety and security solutions with the latest technology, fleet operators can increase profitability and competitiveness. When it comes to fuel, it is key to remember that it is not only about managing the theft thereof, but also optimising usage by implementing technologies that monitor and improve driver behaviour – which is one of the best ways to reduce fuel consumption. Savings like this are critical when considering the rising cost of fuel and the highly competitive climate in which fleet businesses operate.

Fuel management is critical to the bottom line of any business. By making use of end-to-end safety and security solutions with the latest technology, fleet operators can increase profitability and competitiveness.

For more information on MiX Fuel Security devices and other MiX Telematics fleet management solutions contact fleetsa@mixtelematics.com.



Improving LOG LOADING efficiency

Several modes of transportation are used in the forestry sector worldwide, but truck transportation constitutes an important part of the supply chain. CLAIRE RENCKEN takes a look at how it can be optimised

Take Ireland for example ... in 2007, forests covered ten percent of Ireland's land area, and this is projected to increase to 17 percent by 2030. This volume increase will have a direct correlation and impact on the logistics involved in the wood supply chain.

According to the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, freight transport was set to grow from 50 to 60 percent by 2015, from the 2001 values. So, road transportation is, and will remain, the most important mode of timber transport in Ireland; forming a substantial part of the industry's raw material cost and having a major influence on the sector's overall economic performance and competitiveness.

The transport of wood from the forests to the industries is carried out by trucks of different makes and models. The trucks are usually differentiated by the number of axles, axle spacing, tare weight and the engine position in relation to the front axle.

All European countries impose haulage regulations related to the restriction on dimensions and weight of the trucks. The weight restriction is more complex, due to the relationship between number of axles and

the distance between them, and this affects loading of the vehicle in terms of gross vehicle weight (GVW).

Ireland sets a maximum of 44 000 kg for trucks with six axles (soon to be increased to 46 000 kg), and 42 000 kg for five-axle trucks (proposed to be reduced to 40 000 kg). The truck's weight is monitored at weighbridges and overloaded trucks incur penalties, normally of a financial nature, or in the form of a ban on transporting timber for a specified period of time.

As everyone in the trucking industry knows, overweight trucks can cause problems such as deterioration of roads, short vehicle life, difficulty in manoeuvring vehicles and safety issues. Of course, fuel consumption also increases with the weight of the vehicle.

The challenge facing truck operators is to place enough material on a truck (and trailer) of fixed dimensions, in an efficient manner. Obviously, carrying less than the legal maximum weight is not economically viable. In the case of wood biomass (chips and bundles), low density can decrease the productivity in transport with loads reaching the maximum legal dimensions of the truck and/or trailer before meeting the legal maximum weight.



In the case of logs, the situation is different; the material has a higher bulk density in comparison to bundles and woodchips. Maximising the load involves attempting to reach the full load volume capacity without exceeding the legal maximum weight.

Another way to potentially increase efficiency in transportation is to reduce the variability of the GVW. Less variable GVW yields higher net payloads.

Factors such as wood moisture content, dry matter, solid and bulk density and truck payload constraints all need to be evaluated in order to deliver the material cheaply and efficiently.

Truck hauliers need a way to determine, in-forest, the optimum volume and payload weight of wood



to be transported, by knowing the wood moisture content and using the height of the stanchions of the trailer as a reference point to improve the overall log loading efficiency.

Weighing in-forest through an on-board system generally reduces the variability of GVW, increases the payload (by minimising the light payloads) and reduces the possibilities of financial penalties due to overweight trucks. However, implementing on-board weighing systems constitutes initial capital investment to install such a system, together with the increase in managerial duties in order to effectively use the information it provides to the benefit of the haulage company. **F**



CATERPILLAR KEEPS DRIVERS ALERT AND ALIVE

Operator fatigue and distraction can result in deadly accidents when using heavy forestry equipment. Caterpillar has launched a monitoring service to help manage operator fatigue.

Property damage, increased fuel burn and tyre abuse have also all been tied to fatigued or distracted operators. Caterpillar has launched an equipment operator monitoring service to help manage the human factor in the operation.

In-cab and wearable safety technologies give customers visibility to both machine and operator information. Caterpillar's 24-hour monitoring centre contains analysts who correlate data, about the health and productivity of operators and equipment, to reveal the magnitude of conditions such as fatigue and distraction and their impact on operations.

Various technologies were used to develop the monitoring system. The Driver Safety System (DSS), developed by Seeing Machines (an alliance partner of Caterpillar) includes an in-cab camera and alert system to notify the operator the moment a fatigue or distraction event occurs.

These events are tracked by analysts who also capture operator sleep quantity and quality information provided through the wrist-worn Cat Smartband, an actigraphy solution powered by Fatigue Science.

The enhanced visibility to risks extends beyond frontline employees to expose improvement opportunities throughout the organisation including: education and training, shift scheduling, leadership coaching and other cultural elements.

LCV market steers on **STEADILY**



The past year has seen a surfeit of light commercial vehicles (LCVs) being launched, which reflects the increasing growth of this segment, the demands of consumers and their buying habits. ZIPHORAH MASETHE explores

LCVs have gained wide popularity over the years within the transport, construction and agricultural industries and among private individuals, and make up a large percentage of overall vehicle sales.

Covering a broad range of services, this segment's popularity is a result of the vehicles being light, fast and agile – among other factors.

In a report from the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa), LCVs (including bakkies and minibuses) reflected a decline in total sales from 15 143 units sold in February last year, to 13 161 units sold during February 2016. (This represents a decrease of 1 982 units, or a 13,1 percent decrease in sales in this segment.)

Ford says that it forecasts that the decrease will be five or six percent less than the previous year, staying lower than other segments.

The LCV market, for both business and private market sales, is essentially shaped by consumer interest and buying power. "The double-cab bakkie market, specifically, seems to be growing quite strongly and within the market itself there is definitely a move from passenger cars to the double-cab segment," points out Volkswagen divisional head for commercial vehicles, Jaco Steenkamp.

Riaan Esterhuysen, Toyota product communications manager, says: "As is common in a highly competitive market environment, demand often shifts to the newest entrant and, considering Hilux's rich sales history in South Africa and notable market

performance in the past, we expect the newcomer to capture a large percentage of the one-tonne market. However, considering the global economic conditions, we are not expecting the launch of the new Hilux to significantly grow the segment volume.

"Export volume is subject to the same global market conditions, and, therefore, is forecast to remain at a stable level," he adds.

Recently, Hyundai launched the upgraded H-1 – the country's leading large multi-purpose vehicle, with applications as a family vehicle, as well as commercial use.

Despite LCVs being subject to harsh operating conditions, Hyundai also announced an outstanding improvement in its warranty. A seven-year/200 000 km on its vehicles, from the previous five-year/150 000 km warranty, reflects the brand's confidence in its engines. "Our warranty burn rate is very low and gives the customer a greater peace of mind. This is a testament of our trusted engines," says Deon Sonnekus, Hyundai's general manager of corporate communications.

Ford, which also manufactures locally, points out that the current economic climate has had some effect on its local production. Dale Reid, LCV brand manager at Ford says: "The exchange rate fluctuation and rand devaluation also affects locally built vehicles."

New vehicle exports during February 2016 indicated a slight decline when compared to February last year. This could also be as a result of factors such as the current drought experienced in parts of South Africa



and the pressure on mining.

"Imports have been negatively affected by the current rand devaluation, which makes it more expensive to import vehicles. This will have a negative impact on retail prices and contribute to the decline in sales," says Nicolette Lambrechts, vice-president of Mercedes-Benz Vans Southern Africa

She adds: "People are looking at vehicles that can save them money on total cost of ownership, and companies are looking at buying off balance sheet, or leasing."

The weakening rand is definitely going to have an impact on new vehicles sales, according to WesBank CEO Chris de Kok. "The movement of the rand will be key for the performance of new-vehicle sales in South Africa.



"A deteriorating currency will force manufacturers to increase prices more aggressively. This will push new-vehicle price inflation well outside that of the headline consumer price index, thus sending more buyers to the used-car market," he adds.

Brian Olson, vice president of vehicle sales, service and marketing at General Motors Sub-Saharan Africa, says: "Exports have been affected as a result of low commodity prices, for example, in countries such as Angola and Nigeria. Used vehicle sales tend to increase when there is a downturn in the economy. Based on this historic observation, we would expect the same to happen this year."

However, according to Naamsa, new vehicle exports are expected to increase in March/April following the launch of the locally assembled Toyota Hilux – with export sales resuming from March into the rest of Africa, and from mid-March into Europe.

Recent LCV launches have saturated the market with competitive options for the consumer. With the current economic crises, consumers are expected to spend sparingly, while looking for more value for money. Ford predicts the LCV segment should maintain its share of the industry, more so than passenger vehicles.

WesBank, however, predicts a ten-percent decrease in LCV segment sales, as the second half of the year is expected to be tougher, mainly as a result of accelerated price increases for new cars, as well as higher interest rates. **F**

Ziphorah Masethe is a third-year journalism student at the Tshwane University of Technology. Her passion for writing and interest in the motoring world landed her the opportunity as the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists' Guild Bursar for 2016. As part of the programme, Ziphorah will be deployed throughout the year to various publications, agencies, and vehicle manufacturers serving the industry. She recently spent a month with **FOCUS**, where she was exposed to the commercial vehicle industry.

Hail the HILUX!



The reveal of the new Hilux was the biggest launch in the history of South Africa! Is it just a case of smoke and mirrors, or is the new Hilux really a Seriously Big Deal? CHARLEEN CLARKE was there ...

The Hilux sure has come a long way. In its first local guise back in 1969, it was a bit of a block on wheels – powered by a 1.5-litre, four-cylinder petrol engine that pushed out a mighty 57 kW.

A column-shift, four-speed manual gearbox sent the power to the rear wheels. In keeping with its robust characteristics, this short-wheelbase bakkie was built by Hino Motors. It was, after all, designed to be a workhorse. This was not a vehicle for sissies ...

Fast forward 47 years and we now have the eighth generation of a bakkie that has sold over 16 million vehicles worldwide (one million of these were sold here in South Africa).

A lot has changed about the Hilux over the years. However, one thing has remained constant: the Hilux is viewed as a trusted old friend, as Calvyn Hamman, senior vice president of sales and marketing at Toyota, noted at the launch: "This is like a party with old friends." (I assume he was alluding to the vehicle and not the journalists ...)

That "friendly" relationship is one of the reasons why the Hilux has been such a sales sensation – both here in South Africa and elsewhere around the world. Add to that the low cost of ownership and the unbreakable nature of the actual bakkie, and it's really tough to outsell this Toyota (although, impressively, Ford has achieved this with its Ranger from time to time).

The all-new Hilux offers more of the same. Yes, it's still going to be the same tried-and-tested buddy; a bit like a loyal dog, but one on wheels.

Although, with the vehicle's new looks, the dog

analogy probably is quite unfair. That block-on-wheels styling disappeared decades ago, but it must be said that the latest Hilux really is a good looker.

It's wider and longer than before, so it looks quite menacing, but the new styling also makes it look more streamlined and, dare I say it, prettier. (Yes I know that that's akin to calling Chuck Norris "cute".) On the subject of pretty stuff, I would highly recommend the two new colours: Cosmic Blue and Arizona Red. They're simply yum.

Of course, the pretty stuff ain't going to sell the new Hilux to fleet operators. So what will? There are trillions of new features ... far too many to mention here ... but I think that the new suspension is definitely worth mentioning. The Hilux utilises a double-wishbone front suspension design and leaf-spring type suspension with twin shock absorbers in the rear.

The length of the leaf spring has been increased by 100 mm to 1 400 mm, suppressing road-surface vibration. The attachment point of the rear suspension has been moved to the front of the spring. Moving this attachment point 100 mm forwards and lowering it by 25 mm contributes to enhanced steering stability.

In addition, the newcomer has larger-diameter shock absorbers mounted in a new location for increased durability, stability and more effective control of small vibrations. As a result, the ride comfort is vastly improved.

The new interior – distinctly car-like – and the competitive pricing (which starts at R228 900) are well worth noting, too.

Our Hilux buddy just got a whole lot better! **F**

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What were you EXPECTING?



GAVIN MYERS expected much from the new Vito, but a week with the 111 Tourer Pro only reinforced his initial impressions from the vehicle's launch ...



nce known for its bulletproof vehicles, that were built from rock and designed to run forever, Mercedes-Benz sort of lost its way sometime just before the turn of the millennium. It's well known that the company took on a "profits above all else" approach to business, and, as such, its vehicles were worse-off for it ...

During the last decade and a bit, the company has worked extremely hard at returning to its original

of the notchy six-speed manual gearbox.

The 111 delivers 84 kW at 3 800 r/min and 270 Nm between 1 500 and 2 500 r/min. Mercedes-Benz claims you can expect fuel consumption of 7,9 l/100 km around town, but we managed a more realistic ten.

It also rides very well, quite softly, in fact – which might have been expected due to the fitment of independent front and rear suspension. It's also sure-footed on the road and visibility is good, aided by the wide mirrors.

You'd also expect the Vito to be packed with high levels of convenience and safety features. In addition to the expected anti-lock brakes and electronic stability program (adaptive, including trailer stabilisation), standard fitment includes adaptive brake lights, attention assist, crosswind assist and headlight assist. You also get heat-insulating glass, semi-automatic air-conditioning (in the rear as well) and full audio connectivity.

So, what wouldn't you expect? As with the launch vehicles (see **FOCUS** November 2015), our Vito test car had numerous squeaks and rattles emanating from behind the dash, the large sliding doors and rear rows of seats. The extensive use of hard, cheap-feeling black plastic also detracts from the "Mercedesness" of it all – though it does seem that it'll stand the abuse the car is intended to endure.

It somehow feels less substantial than its rivals. Even compared to its predecessor, the Vito feels as though it's been built to a budget. For a vehicle costing R546 984, that's not an appealing notion, though the 40 000 km service intervals and five-year/120 000 km service plan certainly are.

This is not at all to say that the Vito is a bad vehicle ... but, considering its rivals from Hyundai, Ford and Volkswagen, it just reminds one of a Mercedes from the "profits above all else" era. **F**



values. The best build and material quality became non-negotiable and vehicles bearing the three-pointed star were again, more than ever, objects of stature and status; which is why I remain somewhat perturbed by the latest Vito – it has everything you'd expect from a modern Mercedes-Benz, and everything you wouldn't ...

You'd expect it to look good – and it does. It is unmistakably a contemporary Mercedes-Benz, and has a stately presence befitting a vehicle of its size – even with the black plastic bumpers of our Pro-spec test car.

You'd expect it to drive well, too – and it does. The 111 has the smallest engine offered at 1,6 litres. Nonetheless, once it gets into the torque band – above 1 500 r/min – it manages well, though steeper gradients and heavier loads will require extra shuffling

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More you don't need, less you **DON'T WANT**

The Volkswagen (VW) Constellation range of workhorses has been specially engineered to meet the demands of niche trucking applications in southern Africa



Manufactured in Brazil and forming part of MAN AG's multi-brand truck and bus portfolio, VW heavy- and extra-heavy commercial vehicles are gaining market share in emerging African economies, following the brand's success in Latin America.

"The VW Constellation range is extremely versatile, making it the ideal choice for the medium and on-highway distribution segments," says Dave van Graan, Head of Truck Sales, MAN Truck & Bus South Africa.

"The range has great potential to service a number of niche medium and long-haul distribution applications. The VW Constellation 19.320 has a gross combination mass of 44 t, which puts it ahead of most rival 4x2 truck tractors as far as payload and drawing capacity are concerned," says Livingstone Mulaudzi, Head of Product Management at MAN Truck & Bus South Africa.

MAN is targeting the removals segment as a key new market, as well as other "volume-based" cargo hauliers.

"The VW Constellation 24.250 freight carrier has a longer wheelbase at 5,819 mm, which provides a better platform for various truck bodies. It is also specified to tow a draw-bar trailer, which makes it an attractive option for operators seeking optimum payload productivity," adds Mulaudzi.

Equipped with mechanical suspension and a liftable tag axle, the VW Constellation 24.250 also sports a dual-speed differential which delivers "fast" and "slow" gear ratios for better traction under load.

Anti-lock braking system (ABS) and low roof sleeper cabins are now standard equipment for the 17.250 and 24.250 freight carrier derivatives. All derivatives have a high level of in-cab appointments for driver comfort, which, in turn, improves productivity.

Specified for regions that are not equipped with the latest hi-tech workshop equipment, the VW Constellation range is finding favour in sub-equatorial Africa. This is primarily due to its reliability, robust chassis and "easy-to-fix" driveline, based on the Cummins ISBe power-plant and Eaton FS 6306 B manual transmission.

"The ease-of-diagnosis for engines and electronics enables rapid servicing turnaround times," Mulaudzi adds.

"The VW Constellation truck range is growing in stature, because it is a 'fit for purpose' vehicle, tailored to meet the specific needs of niche applications. As a business tool, it strikes the optimum balance between price and lifecycle cost," concludes Van Graan.



"Predominantly, our customers use the VW Constellation for volume van, dropside, tautliner, refrigerated and car-carrier applications. This clearly demonstrates the volume and weight-carrying capabilities of the range."

Citing reliability and fuel economy as key attractions, Van Graan adds that the Constellation range has been optimised through prudent engineering of various driveline components to broaden its appeal in the local road-freight industry.

The VW Constellation range includes the 19.320 4x2 truck-tractor and rigid-chassis freight carrier derivatives: the 13.180 4x2 freight carrier, the 15.180 4x2 freight carrier, the 17.250 4x2 freight carrier and the 24.250 6x2 freight carrier.

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Set to storm

THE MARKET

Iveco's New Daily arrives in South Africa as you read this. Elvis Mutseura, product marketing manager at Iveco SA, tells us why this is the best Daily ever

The name Daily is something of a byword for heritage. Since being launched in 1978, it has seen numerous firsts introduced to its class. The Daily was the first light commercial vehicle in the world to sport independent front suspension back in 1978.

Direct injection was introduced in 1985, while common-rail diesel technology, developed by Fiat Powertrain Technologies, was also a first for the Iveco Daily that was voted Van of the Year in 1999. In 2006, the Iveco Daily became the first light commercial vehicle fitted with the ESP8 electronic stability program.

"When Iveco's engineers set out to create a new Daily, they certainly had their work cut out for them – but they were up to the task," says Mutseura. "The Van of the Year 2015 title was awarded in recognition of Iveco once again pushing the boundaries in this tightly contested vehicle segment."

He explains, by way of example, that the new Daily is the first commercial vehicle to have an eight-speed fully automatic transmission.

"Dubbed HI-MATIC, it is the perfect solution to protect the engine and transmission, with maintenance and repair costs reduced by ten percent (compared to a manual transmission) and has exceptional reliability and durability."

The new transmission is available in three versions: Urban, for those who have to face everyday city traffic; Regional, which offers outstanding flexibility that maximises the driving experience; and International, which combines driving comfort and outstanding fuel economy for long-distance journeys.

Re-engineered from bumper to bumper –

80 percent of the body-in-white is completely new – the new Daily continues to use a strong, truck-derived ladder-frame chassis.

"This unique feature in the van segment gives the Daily unquestionable strength – it can easily out-tow all of its competitors and a good many trucks, too, with a braked towing capacity for the five-tonne panel van of 3,5 t," boasts Mutseura.

The tried and tested 2,3-litre F1A and three-litre F1C powerplants from Fiat Powertrain Technologies are retained, giving up to 153 kW and 470 Nm output.

Iveco has been careful to retain the Daily's famed agility, with the new model boasting best-in-class turning circles across the range.

"The balance between the length of the cargo bay and the overall length of the vehicle is optimal and wheelbases have been lengthened, while reducing rear overhang. This results in better handling, due to a reduction in the oversteer tendency inherent with rear-wheel drive vehicles," Mutseura notes.

That said, an extended rear-overhang option pushes the available cargo length to more than 5,1 m. Iveco South Africa will offer two versions with this option, which will also allow for a people-carrier conversion that can carry 25 + 1 passengers.

In this regard, ride comfort – even if it is only for the front passengers of a panel-van derivative – was a priority during the development of the new Daily. Extensive work has also been done to reduce noise levels, which range from better soundproofing to improvements in the suspension.

On single-wheel panel vans, this begins with the new Quad-Leaf suspension system, which adopts a double wishbone scheme with transversal leaf spring. Roll behaviour, noise and vibration, loading



performance and manoeuvrability are all improved.

The larger twin-wheel vans sport an improved Quad-Tor front suspension that adopts a double wishbone scheme with torsion bar springs, and achieves similar results on the larger vans.

"Handling is now much more intuitive and predictable, in line with that of a passenger car. Emergency manoeuvres are now also safer under all load conditions. Handling improvement is measured by the increase in lateral acceleration: up 25 percent, corresponding to 0,74 G – an impressive performance for a commercial vehicle," explains Mutseura.

"Another impressive figure relates to the improvement in aerodynamics. The drag coefficient for the new Daily has been reduced by six percent to 0,316 – a figure that many premium passenger cars would be happy to have, and one that will make a very welcome and significant impression in the pockets of owners and operators whenever they visit a fuel pump," he continues.

The car-like feel and interior appointments and ergonomics of the new Daily have been lauded in Europe. The driving position has been modified; a lowered hip-point, adjusted steering column angle and steering-wheel diameter and a larger windscreen all aid driving comfort and overall visibility.

"A wide array of practical storage areas and controls, all within easy reach of the driver, impressed the Van of the Year judging panel so much that all 23 judges were completely satisfied. None of the judges found a single fault with the design," Mutseura smiles.

Driver and passenger airbags, a radio and air-conditioning are all standard. Additionally, the electrical system has been enhanced up to cater

for extra load, while the air-conditioning compressor lends itself to power roof-mounted air-conditioners that are fitted by many customers.

"At Iveco SA, we believe in giving our customers the best value available for their investment. The whole vehicle is covered by our standard two-year, unlimited kilometre warranty, and we have managed



to keep our pricing at unbelievably favourable levels," notes Mutseura.

How favourable? You'll have to wait for the launch report to find out – but Mutseura is confident it'll be tough to resist ...

"We are going to offer some outstanding finance deals on the new Daily. Our order book is open and customers will do well to place their orders now to secure theirs!" **F**

Scania Finance – the unique **SOLUTION**

Petr Novotny, managing director Scania Finance, explains why Scania's vehicle finance solution is unique

There is no reason that transport operators – especially those who are feeling the pinch of tough economic times – should be left to fight through financial matters alone. Regardless of the focus of your business, or whether you need to procure, off-load or insure a vehicle (or even a genset, for that matter), Novotny is confident that Scania Finance can make the process easy.



Scania Finance proactively works with the customer, says Novotny.

"The Scania approach is to provide the customer with a full solution, with the main benefit simply being that of cost," he explains. "Our solution must mirror the operator's needs exactly: we try to match the cost with his revenue stream, keeping affordability and financial stability in mind."

That all sounds ideal, but, in practice, how is it achieved? An understanding of the customer's needs – the type of vehicle, its specification and the area in which it operates – is the beginning.

Novotny adds: "We also find out who the customer's customers are, so we can understand what they expect of the operation. Based on all this information,

we evaluate the risk, structure a deal and create a solution."

"We look at each operation differently and also try to understand its specific risks. The solution can be customised for each client, because our definition of risk is not predefined."

There is a spin-off advantage, too – convenience. One relationship, whether it's with the salesman, financial representative, or more senior person within the Scania organisation, means one point of contact, and one invoice at the end of every month. The results are less administration and a saving of time. "And for our customers, time is money," Novotny asserts.

This agility, says Novotny, is only enabled through the cross-functional cooperation between the Scania sales, after-sales, finance, insurance and used-vehicle departments.

"There's a 'value chain flow' throughout the organisation, not a silo approach," Novotny explains.

This approach is clearly hitting the right notes with operators. In the last 18 months, Scania finance has increased its penetration from 40 to 60 percent. "Our customers see it as a contribution to their business," Novotny says. "If difficult times come, we can help our customers make difficult decisions and find the best solutions."

An increased footprint helps in this regard, with the Scania Finance organisation fully based in Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya (and looking at Mozambique and Zimbabwe as well).

"We want to make it easier for our customers to keep their operation where they want it to be – if they want to diversify across borders and base their fleet elsewhere, they must be able to do that easily ..."

"We've changed from a 'banking' way of doing business to a proactive cooperation with the customer. The main focus for us is on the customer," he reiterates. "If our customers run a profitable business, we can run a profitable business," he concludes. **F**



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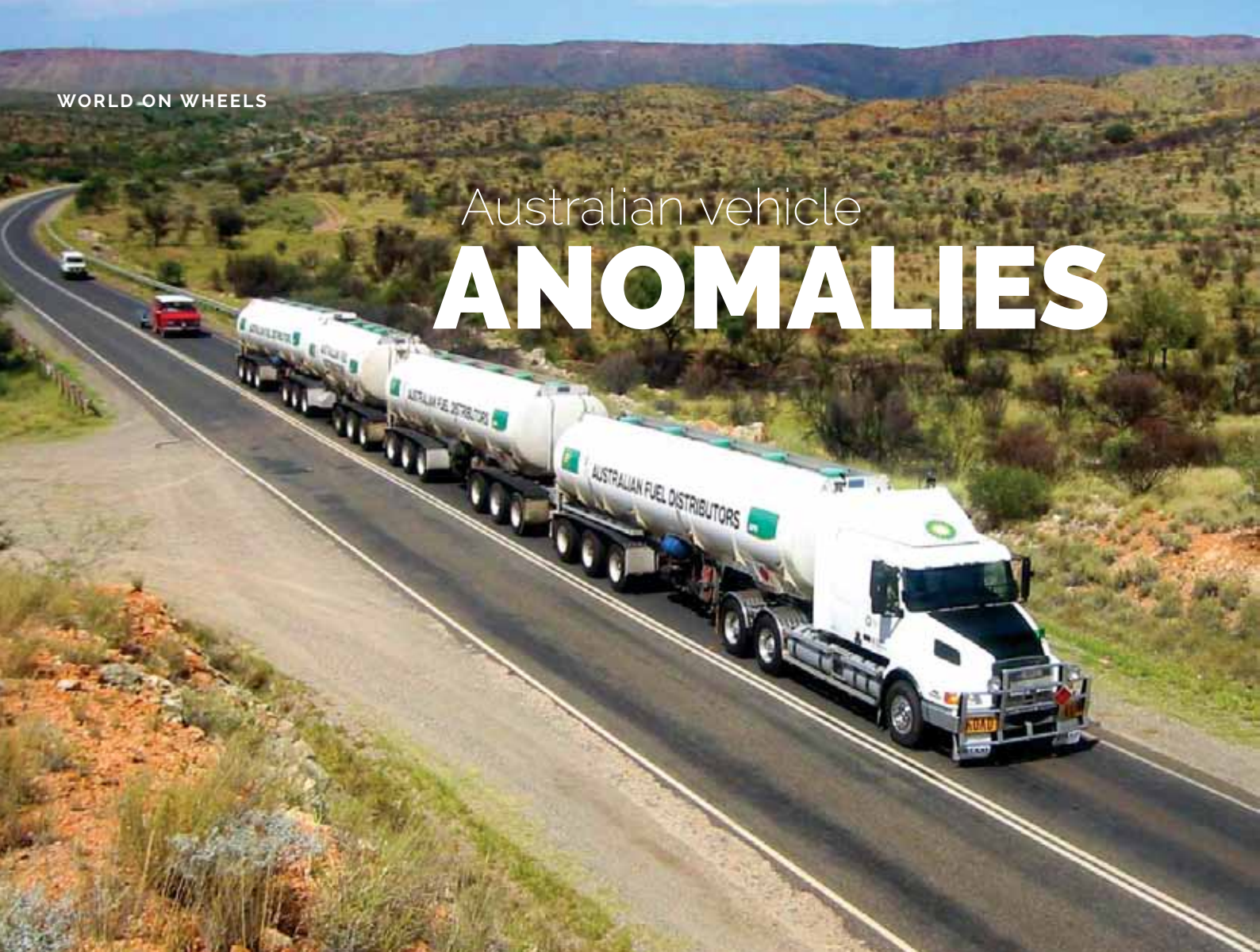
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Australian vehicle ANOMALIES



Peculiar-looking vehicles roam the streets of Australia. AIMEE SHAW takes a look “down under” to explore the interesting world of road trains and double-steer refuse trucks

Imagine transporting 100 bulls across 320 km of the Australian Outback. The first modern road train was created by Kurt Johannsen using an American army tank-retrieval tractor left behind after the Second World War.

Johannsen was challenged and inspired by the South Australian government trains (which use wagons on pivots) to develop trailers with self-steering axles.

Road trains or “truck trains” are unusual-looking vehicles resembling a traditional railway train, and are used to transport goods across the remote areas of the Australian Outback.

These road trains travel with livestock, grains, fuel, ore and construction materials, which are stacked densely in volume and weight. For this reason, road trains are restricted to the northern Outback with measurements that stretch up to 53.5 m in length.

Australian road trains are designed specifically for the vastness of the Outback, which consists of one-lane roads. Roads and trains have been improved over the years, but hazards are posed by large stretches of barren land. For this reason, drivers need to plan well and be equipped with the relevant knowledge and supplies.

All modern road trains are equipped with radio

devices for drivers to communicate with a base station. Drivers notify the base station of departure and expected arrival times for each trip.

In addition, road trains come with sleeper boxes, lockers and air-conditioning for additional safety and comfort. Generally road trains travel at night. However, they do still operate and share the road with “regular” traffic during the day.

According to the Australian Road Train Association, drivers should not be on the road for longer than 14 hours per day. Added precautions should be taken for operations requiring additional space to pick up speed and to slow down, or when attempting to turn.

Carstuff host Ben Bowlin and co-host Scott Benjamin describe road trains as “time, resource and energy saving”. An off-shoot of *HowStuffWorks.com*, *Carstuff* is a website featuring podcasts discussing topics that relate to the automotive industry.

Benjamin says the largest road trains are found in Australia and have nine major variations. The largest design is the “body and six”, which is banned from public roads and is able to operate only on private property.

The driver will need a special permit to operate this type of road train and relevant knowledge to



change the tyres if necessary, which can be risky and time-consuming.

In urban areas, drivers may need to unhook individual carriers (if the road train is too long) and, once the remaining trailers have been delivered, return at a later stage to hook them up and transport them through the urban area.

Australia has the largest usage of road trains with an average weight of between 80 and 120 t. The maximum weight may not exceed 200 t. In addition, drivers need to be aware of licensing rules and regulations and when it is "seasonal" to operate on public roads. Road trains are considered cost-efficient and are integral for the regular supply of goods to communities in the Outback.

In the urban areas of Australia, Mercedes-Benz Australia is proving its mettle in the waste industry, with the arrival of the new dual-steer refuse truck. In a previous article, written by Frank Beeton for Global Focus March, he says: "One will notice that these trucks have steering wheels on both sides of the cab."

The Australian waste industry utilises the "one-man-operated system of wheelie-bin collection". Citizens are required to place their bins on a painted mark one metre from the kerbside, with 300 mm space between bins and other objects.

This is the first time this specialised version of the Mercedes-Benz Econic dual-steer truck has made its way to the Australian market, although dual-steer Iveco ACCO and Dennis Eagle trucks

are also available.

The Mercedes-Benz Econic dual-control refuse truck was originally designed in Wörth, Germany, and introduced to the Australian market at the 2012 International Truck, Trailer and Equipment Show in Melbourne.

It evolved from a single-steer model to a dual-control system, specifically to support refuse collectors in controlling their vehicle from the side closest to the kerb.

"Refuse compactor vehicles are equipped with side-loading equipment to lift the bin and tip its contents into the on-board hopper," says Beeton. "After this procedure, the bin is replaced back to where it was taken from."

Andrew Assimo, sales manager for Mercedes-Benz trucks, says: "The dual-control Econic has the full suite of safety and environmental features, including the Euro-6 engine, a low-entry cab design and the additional side-loader system for increased visibility." These trucks have been designed with computerised technology to aid the aspect of safe operation.

The Electronic Stability Program is designed to improve the vehicle's stability by detecting and reducing loss of traction. Additional safety features include the Electronic Braking System and the Anti-lock Braking System.

In addition, the Econic uses a 7.7-litre diesel engine with power outputs of 223 kW (299 hp) to meet Euro-6 emission standards. This engine produces reduced emissions of "up to 90 percent compared to the Euro-5 engine".

The cabin is designed to comply with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE-R29) crash test regulations and features a panoramic windscreen for constricted areas, with comfortable driver seats and air suspension on all axles for drive control and braking.

It is linked to a six-speed Allison fully automatic transmission system to lower engine speeds in support of energy-efficiency and fuel saving.

"We are excited to introduce a dual-control version which, we think, ticks all the boxes for Australian waste-collection operators," says Assimo.

When visiting Australia, don't be alarmed if you see an automated refuse truck with twin-steering, picking up and replacing bins from the side of the road, or if a road train, with six trailers, tries to overtake another vehicle.

These distinctive and unusual-looking vehicles have gradually made their way onto Australian roads as tangible proof of innovation to support and adapt to the unique operating conditions of this country. **F**



LEFT:

Up to 200 t, 53.5 m and six trailers: Australian road trains are not for the faint of heart.

ABOVE:

The dual-control Mercedes-Benz Econic cuts a distinctive figure in the Australian refuse sector.



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BUILDING TRUST

NAMPO PREVIEW



Farmers to have a **FIELD DAY**

Grain SA's Nampo Harvest Day is one of the largest agricultural exhibitions under private ownership in the southern hemisphere. CLAIRE RENCKEN finds out what can be expected at this year's event

The show takes place annually, just outside the town of Bothaville in the Free State. The Harvest Day enables producers, and other role players in the agricultural industry, to experience the latest technology and products on offer in the agricultural industry – first-hand at one venue.

The almost 70 000 visitors to the 2015 show enabled agricultural exhibitors to do good business, and

officer, Wim Venter, elaborates: "About 675 agricultural and related exhibitors, 4x4 demonstrations, a *boerepatente* competition, new technology in the agricultural sector, an auctioneer competition, seed plots and livestock exhibitors are just some of the things visitors can expect to see at the 2016 show. There will also be some new exhibitors launching new products."

Furthermore, it is not only locals that showcase their wares



it is expected that this year's show will be no different.

In fact, this year the event is especially noteworthy, as it will be the 50th Harvest Day. As a result, organisers and exhibitors will be showcasing why, after 50 years, Nampo is still the leading exhibition for the South African agricultural industry.

Nampo Harvest Day administration

at the exhibition. "On average, 60 international exhibitors from 15 overseas countries take part in Nampo every year," Venter explains.

The show will take place between May 17 and 20. Tickets can be purchased at the gates, or at a discounted price on the TicketPro website. Visit the Nampo website: www.nampo.co.za for more information on the show. **F**



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So if you're just buying trucks, we're probably not the supplier for you. But if you believe what you're actually buying is a partnership, a commitment, a total transport solution, then we should talk.

There is a better way.



First new

INTERNATIONAL

truck branding emerges



In his monthly review of global news for local truckers, FRANK BEETON details the first re-designated International truck family for North America, notes what appears to be the sad end to the Caterpillar truck story, looks at a whole slew of new Indian trucks, and gives a brief account of an interesting new product range from Mahindra and Mahindra

At the end of last year, we reported on Navistar International's plans to rebrand its entire North American truck line-up. This would involve the deletion of the TranStar, PayStar, ProStar, WorkStar, TerraStar and DuraStar nameplates, and their replacement by an alphanumeric designation system consisting of two letters, followed by three numbers. The numeric code would indicate whether the model has a long or short bonnet and the forward or rearward positioning of its front axle.

During February, details of the HX Series vocational truck family were announced. It is described by the manufacturer as a "severe service, premium vocational truck", and is intended to replace the erstwhile PayStar range.

The line-up consists of: the HX515 short bonnet, set-forward axle rigid truck chassis; the HX520 long bonnet, set-forward axle rigid or truck-tractor chassis; the HX615 short bonnet, set-back axle, rigid, or truck-tractor chassis; and the HX620 long bonnet, set-

forward axle, rigid or truck-tractor chassis.

Applications, or "vocations", covered by this range include truck mixer, construction dumper, roll-on/roll-off, crane truck, platform stake/crane and heavy-haul truck-tractor.

Power choices

The HX515 and HX615 models are powered by Navistar's in-house, 13-litre N13 engines, while the HX520 and HX620 models are equipped with Cummins 15-litre ISX15 diesels. Interestingly, Navistar has re-designated its erstwhile MaxxForce 13 engine as the N13, following the introduction of selective catalytic reduction emissions countermeasures in 2013.

The basic design of this six-cylinder, in-line engine dates back to the 2004 strategic component manufacturing alliance between Navistar and Germany's MAN Nutzfahrzeuge AG. Regular readers will be aware of the difficulties that confronted Navistar over the non-compliance of some of its power units with the EPA 2010 emission standards currently in



force for vehicles being sold in the United States.

This was resolved in 2013 by a two-pronged strategy that included a definitive, long-term supply agreement with engine specialist manufacturer Cummins Inc. for the provision of both engines and emissions after-treatment technologies, the latter of which would be applied to Navistar's own range of heavy-duty big-bore engines, including the N13.

Other HX features

Transmission options for the HX range include the Eaton 8LL 18-speed manual, Eaton Ultrashift automated mechanical, or Allison 4 000, 4 500 or 4 700 Series fully automatic gearboxes.

The 40° front wheel cut angle on both sides enables improved manoeuvrability, while the cab suspension incorporates 52-inch springs to improve comfort and reduce noise. Standard equipment includes LED lighting, air-conditioning, power windows and power door locks.

The HX Series order book was opened in February for deliveries in March/April. This range is to be followed by the LT Series, which will replace the current ProStar family, later in the year.

CATERPILLAR BOWS OUT OF ON-HIGHWAY TRUCKING

It was only in the November issue of **FOCUS** that we carried news of Caterpillar Inc.'s intention to take over the manufacture of its own-branded vocational trucks for the North American market from Navistar International, and build these products in its Victoria, Texas excavator-manufacturing plant.

The announcement intimated that Victoria was to become the future design and engineering centre for Caterpillar's range of dumper, mixer and haulage trucks, to carry on from the CT660, CT680 and CT681 models, which, earlier, had been sourced through the erstwhile NC² collaboration with Navistar International.

This certainly suggested that Caterpillar was serious about persevering in this specialist area of the truck market, despite the earlier dissolution of the NC² joint venture between the iconic yellow-metal specialist and Navistar International that ran from 2009 to September 2011.

That cooperation had promised so much at a time when Navistar seemed intent on establishing a broader global footprint for itself in the trucking business through a number of multi-national joint ventures.

However, problems emanating from the non-compliance of some of International's MaxxForce engines to the EPA 2010 emissions regime (see reference in previous article) precipitated a period of consolidation at Navistar, and subsequent abandonment of much of its globalisation strategy.

An astonishing announcement!

Nevertheless, Caterpillar seemed determined to forge ahead with its North American truck business, and "Cat" branding continued to be applied to a series of International-built heavy-duty truck tractors for the Australian market.

However, on February 26, Caterpillar announced that it was to discontinue production of on-highway vocational trucks, and withdraw from this market!

Apparently this decision was based on a reading of the prevalent business climate, and was said to be consistent with the company's ongoing restructuring activities "to align its businesses with existing conditions".

To say we were astonished by this announcement would be a major understatement. The number of radical direction changes that have been taken by Caterpillar, with regard to its relationship with the truck market since the 2009 announcement of the NC² joint



International's HX-Series replaces the PayStar range in the North American market.

Other HX Series product features include huck-bolted chassis frames and cross members, an aluminium cab with ergonomically designed interior, three-piece Metton bonnet assembly [Metton Liquid Moulding Resin is a tough and durable engineering plastic material used to produce large or thick moulded parts for diversified applications, including, in this case, vehicle bonnets], stainless steel piano-door hinges and an extra-heavy-duty tow pin for extreme recovery towing.

venture, are hardly consistent with the execution of a well-thought-out strategy. It is a well-known fact that the truck industry does not like indecision, and that operators/buyers prefer to do business with suppliers who are in it "for the long haul".

Caterpillar's mainstream business in construction equipment is even more cash-intensive than trucking, so one would imagine that consistency of strategic direction is equally important in that field.

Erosion of credibility

Back in 2008, when the first news of the NC² partnership broke, Caterpillar also announced that it would no longer supply its highly successful proprietary engines to specialist truck builders, but would jointly develop engine platforms with Navistar.

Up to then, Caterpillar's ACERT series of diesel engines had established a loyal following in truck markets across many parts of the world. This decision left customers, who had adopted Caterpillar as their engine supplier of choice, with no option but to make alternative arrangements.

Given its recent history, it is perhaps wise that Caterpillar has decided to disengage completely from the truck market where its potential to win back

customer confidence would have been eroded by this recent series of events.

We are not aware, at time of writing, if any further decision has been taken with regard to the continuation of Caterpillar branding on trucks marketed in Australia, but we would expect that Navistar's efforts in that market will be concentrated entirely on International brand products going forward.

LOTS OF NEW TRUCKS FOR THE INDIAN MARKET

In recent times, India has become an increasingly important source of truck products for export to markets with less demanding emissions regimes, such as the Euro-2 standard currently applicable in South Africa. This has potentially increased interest in product developments in that country to readers of Global Focus.

As we have pointed out previously, Indian buying preferences are materially different to those in this country, particularly in respect of engine power outputs when related to gross vehicle and combination masses. This is, presumably, a reflection of differing traffic average and maximum speeds.

Nevertheless, it is a worthwhile exercise to keep track of new Indian-sourced products, as variants of



It seems that Caterpillar-branded on-highway trucks will soon be consigned to the history books.

these may well find their way to our local market in the months and years ahead

The EXCON India construction equipment trade fair, held in Bangalore late last year, and the Auto Expo 2016, staged in New Delhi in February, saw a slew of new products launched by truck manufacturers active in the Indian market.

Understandably, most of the new products exhibited at EXCON were targeted at the construction industry, which primarily utilises tippers, truck mixers, crane trucks and concrete pumpers, while those displayed at the later show were of interest to a broader market. The following details, listed by manufacturer, describe some of the more interesting exhibits at the two shows.

Tata Motors

- **Tata Prima 3138.K.** Described as a 8x4 heavy-duty tipper intended for coal mining applications, the 3138.K is powered by a 285 kW (380 hp), 8.9-litre

front- and rear-drive axles.

- **The Tata Signa series.** These sub-premium medium and heavy trucks, which replace the legacy non-Prima line-up, will feature a new improved and upgraded version of the familiar Tata cab (which had its roots in a mid-1970s Mercedes-Benz design), to which a one-piece windscreen and more stylish grille has been added.

It is equipped with suspension seats and features improved safety, reduced noise, vibration and harshness levels, as well as improved ventilation and visibility. The first three models to be launched were the Signa 4923.S truck tractor, Signa 2518.K three-axle tipper chassis and the Signa 3118.T twin-steer 8x2 truck with lifting or steering rearmost axle.

The 4923.S is powered by a 170 kW (227 hp) Cummins ISBe 5.9-litre engine, while the 2518.K and 3118.T are fitted with 135 kW (180 hp) Tata Cummins B5.9 L-6 power units. Both the 4923.S and 2518.K employ Tata's G1150 nine-speed transmission, while the 3118.T utilises the Tata G750 six-speed unit.



Cummins ISLe engine, driving through an Eaton ES-150409 nine-speed manual or Allison fully automatic transmission to a 48-t capacity planetary hub-reduction rear bogie.

- **Tata Prima LX 3128.K.** Yet another 8x4 tipper chassis, the LX 3128.K is intended for high-density opencast mining applications, and is powered by a 210 kW (280 hp) 6.7-litre Cummins ISBe CRDI engine, driving through Tata's own nine-speed G1150-DD gearbox with crawler gear, to a 48-t capacity RA 109 rear bogie.
- **Tata Prima LX 2523.K Re PTO.** A dedicated three-axle truck mixer chassis with standard engine-driven power take-off. Powered by a 170 kW (230 hp) 6.7-litre Cummins ISBe engine coupled to the same gearbox as the LX 3128.K and driving through a RA 109 single-reduction rear bogie.
- **Tata SAK 1613 4x4.** A new all-wheel-drive, 16-t gross vehicle mass (GVM) truck chassis fitted with a 97 kW (130 hp) Cummins B59 turbocharged engine, driving through Tata's own six-speed G600-DD gearbox and TC 2500 auxiliary gearbox to single-reduction

Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles (VECV)

- **VECV PRO 8000 Series 8031XM.** The PRO 8000 series has a close visual resemblance to UD's Quester range, but specifications and frontal styling have been fine-tuned to meet Indian market preferences.

The 8031XM is a new 8x4 tipper chassis, powered by the 7.7-litre Volvo VEDX8 diesel engine developing 245 kW (330 hp), driving through VECV's nine-speed manual transmission to a pair of hub-reduction rear-drive axles. This unit is intended to be fitted with either an 18/20 m³ conventional tip, or 16/18 m³ rock dumper body.

- **VECV PRO 8000 Series 8049HD 49-t GCW truck tractor.** This heavy-duty unit is available with both 6x4 and 6x2 drive configurations. It is powered by the 210 kW (280 hp) output version of Volvo's VEDX8 diesel, driving through a nine-speed, direct-top-ratio gearbox. The 6x2 variant has a single-reduction drive axle, while the 6x4 model offers a choice of single- or hub-reduction bogies.

Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (BharatBenz)

- **An updated version of the 3143 Thunder Bolt rigid tipper,** powered by the 12-litre Mercedes-Benz OM457 six-cylinder diesel developing 315 kW (430 hp), driving through an automated 12-speed transmission, suitable for fitment of a 19.5 m³ rock dumper or 32 m³ coal carrier bodies.

Pune MAN Trucks India

- **The new 31.280 8x2 haulage truck and 49.300 6x4 truck-tractor models** were displayed by the wholly MAN-owned successor to the previous joint



venture with Force Motors. The former 210 kW (280 hp) model is targeted at the construction industry, while the latter 49 t gross combination mass (GCM) 225 kW (300 hp) unit is intended for the transportation of construction equipment which exceeds normal dimensional limitations.

Ashok Leyland Limited

- **The first Euro-6, 49-t GCM truck tractor** from India's second-largest truck manufacturer (after Tata Motors), was displayed. Designated 4940 it is powered by an in-house Neptune six-cylinder engine.
- **An intriguing new cruiserweight model branded GURU** was also on display. This 12-t GVM unit

evidence suggested that it had found a convenient solution in a range of products being developed by its Indian truck and engine-building joint ventures with Mahindra and Mahindra.

However, Navistar subsequently sold its shares in those joint ventures to Mahindra and Mahindra, leaving the Indian company to carry on independently. We have reported previously on Mahindra and Mahindra's unilateral plans to develop and expand the range, but the announcement, during February, of the new Blazo "smart truck range", has encouraged us to update the story of the Indian concern's continuing efforts in the truck market.

Blazo Positioning

At the launch stage, the Blazo range is still concentrated in the GVM/GCM spectrum between 25 and 49 t, which means that the long-promised lighter models between 9 and 16 t GVM are still in the future, although the company says they will appear over the next two years.

The cab design is still recognisably the one we first saw in 2011, while the standard power unit, covering the output range from 165 to 205 kW (220 to

274 hp), is an Indian-manufactured version of Navistar's MaxxForce six-cylinder 7.2-litre engine.

The Blazo catalogue includes two, three, four and five-axle models, which can be described as "typically Indian" in terms of the offered features and options, although it is quite surprising to see that the range includes a chassis/cowl option that caters for aftermarket cab construction by specialist coachbuilders.

The main Blazo selling feature appears to be its three-mode "FuelSmart" system which allows the driver to select the most appropriate power setting for the prevailing payload and operating conditions.

In our continued pondering over the fate of Navistar International in South Africa, we cannot help wondering if there may still be a future for these Mahindra and Mahindra products, or maybe just its forward control cab, in that scenario. What we are sure of, however, is that the longer such a decision is put off, the more difficult it will be for Navistar to re-establish a presence in the local truck market. **F**



ABOVE LEFT: Volvo Eicher's PRO 8000 Series has a distinct family resemblance to UD's Quester line-up.

ABOVE RIGHT: The BharatBenz 3143 has been nicknamed "Thunder Bolt" to celebrate its powerful engine.

is reportedly derived from AL's joint venture with Nissan Motors, which up to now has produced an indigenised version of Nissan's Cabstar light truck, which is also sold with Ashok Leyland branding in India, rated at 6 600/6 700 kg GVM. However the GURU is reportedly powered by a 90 kW (120 hp) three-cylinder Hino CRS engine, which, together with its 12-t GVM rating, makes the reported Nissan link somewhat difficult to fathom!

... AND WE DISCOVER THE MAHINDRA AND MAHINDRA BLAZO!

Back in 2011, the South African Navistar International operation displayed long and short versions of a truck cab at the Johannesburg International Motor Show, which was said to herald the imminent arrival of a new product series named "MetroStar".

At that time, the American manufacturer was short of the forward-control models it needed to take a greater share of the local truck market, particularly in the heavy commercial vehicle, and lower reaches of the extra-heavy commercial vehicle segments. The



Global FOCUS is a monthly update of international news relating to the commercial vehicle industry. It is compiled exclusively for FOCUS by Frank Beeton of Econometrix. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit www.focusontransport.co.za and have your say.

BARLOWORLD LOGISTICS EXPANDS INTO MULTI-TEMPERATURE FOOD SECTOR

Barloworld Logistics, which owns 100 percent of KLL Distributors and a controlling share in Aspen Logistic Services, has expanded into multi-temperature food logistics.

KLL is a multi-temperature, secondary-storage and distribution provider in South Africa, serving mainly the convenience sector and top-end retailers.

Aspen Logistic Services is a primary refrigerated road transport service provider operating a state-of-the-art fleet; comprising more than 120 truck and trailer combinations nationally and across the border.

"These acquisitions are in line with our strategy of servicing a growing market need for multi-temperature, multi-product, multi-principal and multi-drop network solutions," says Steve Ford, CEO of Barloworld Logistics.

"The two deals will enable Barloworld Logistics to scale for growth in this sector, leverage our capabilities and offer more holistic supply chain solutions to a broader customer base – thereby extracting greater value for the market," adds Gavin Wilson, executive, Barloworld Logistics.



TRANSFORMING THE INSURANCE SECTOR

A pioneering value-added product – known as the Depreciation and Shortfall Protector (DSP) – which is set to change the traditional risk management sector, was launched recently by Value Master Protector (VMP), a specialist underwriting management agent of Centriq (a subsidiary of Santam).

The DSP product is developed and delivered by Phik'a. It is underwritten by Centriq and reinsured by Hannover Re Africa (a subsidiary of the world's third-largest insurer).

DSP does not rely on comprehensive insurance (or other ancillary insurance) to admit liability and settle legitimate claims. DSP customers with comprehensive insurance (or other types of total loss insurance) are allowed to present a signed agreement of loss from other insurers to substantiate the total loss of their insured vehicles.

DSP settles the full outstanding amount owing on the vehicle at date of total loss, including residual/balloon payments for uninsured financed vehicles. Conversely, financed vehicles insured elsewhere also enjoy credit shortfall cover at no additional cost to the customer. DSP guarantees to pay customers the full retail value, if the vehicle is not insured elsewhere for that purpose, at total loss date.

Customers enjoy physical risk protection of their vehicles against theft/hijacking through mandatory tracking devices supplied and maintained by the DSP-approved service providers, at DSP's expense. Mix Telematics, a leading global provider of fleet and mobile asset management solutions, is the approved tracking device service provider for DSP.

According to Motumi Molewa, chief executive officer for Phik'a group: "We are excited to present the DSP product to the market, with many more in the pipeline to complement it in the not-so-distant future."

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SALES REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2016

Note: For the time being, Great Wall Motors SA (GWM) and Mercedes-Benz SA (MBSA) will only report aggregated sales data. The GWM/SA and MBSA commercial vehicle market split volumes are estimates based on historical trends and forecasting techniques. The totals listed below do not include MBSA figures.

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 13 161
AMH	581
Fiat Group	26
Ford Motor Company	2 919
GMSA	2 141
GWM	131
Jaguar Land Rover	48
JMC	14
Mahindra	242
Mazda South Africa	65
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	13
Mitsubishi Motors SA	13
Nissan	2 445
Peugeot Citroën SA	7
Renault	13
Suzuki Auto	3
TATA	120
Toyota	3 927
Volkswagen SA	453
Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 659
AMH	19
Fiat Group	4
Ford Motor Company	16
GMSA	117
Iveco	34
JMC	6
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	161
Peugeot Citroën SA	5
TATA	30
Toyota	202
Volkswagen SA	65
Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 334
FAW	53
GMSA	81
Iveco	8
MAN	6
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	42
TATA	20
Toyota	86
Volvo Group Southern Africa	80
Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 741
Babcock DAF	13
FAW	23
GMSA	34
Iveco	40
MAN	104
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	295
Powerstar	32
Scania	173
TATA	18
Toyota	26
Volvo Group Southern Africa	278
Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 74
Iveco	5
MAN	30
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	17
Scania	32
TATA	4
VDL Bus & Coach SA	1
Volvo Group Southern Africa	2

*Source: National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa).

HIJACKINGS PUT A DENT IN SA'S ECONOMY

Freight hijackings have contributed towards a R3 billion loss to the country's economy, according to Wayne Rautenbach, general manager for Regent Commercial Vehicles.

Speaking at the Insurance Institute of South Africa (IISA) Insurance Forum, Rautenbach said that more than 1 279 vehicles, transporting goods across South Africa, were hijacked during the 2015 period alone.



"A response from an insurer within the first 60 minutes is critical," he added.

"South Africa's insurance industry has the most effective technology in place to mitigate the risk of hijacking, as far as technology and access to data is concerned," he noted.

"However, constant innovation, advanced global telematics solutions and partnerships between fleet owners, truck drivers and monitoring bureaus, are fundamental aspects in transforming existing risk mitigation tools pertaining to vehicle and freight hijackings," he said.

Fast-moving consumer goods are typically the attraction in most truck hijackings. Items like cooking oil, alcohol, canned goods and fuel are quickly resold and easily disposed of.

"South Africa's insurance industry should find comfort in knowing that it is at the top of its game and competes with the best worldwide. As a result, our primary purpose as an industry is to devise intelligence to mitigate client risks and protect assets," Rautenbach concluded.

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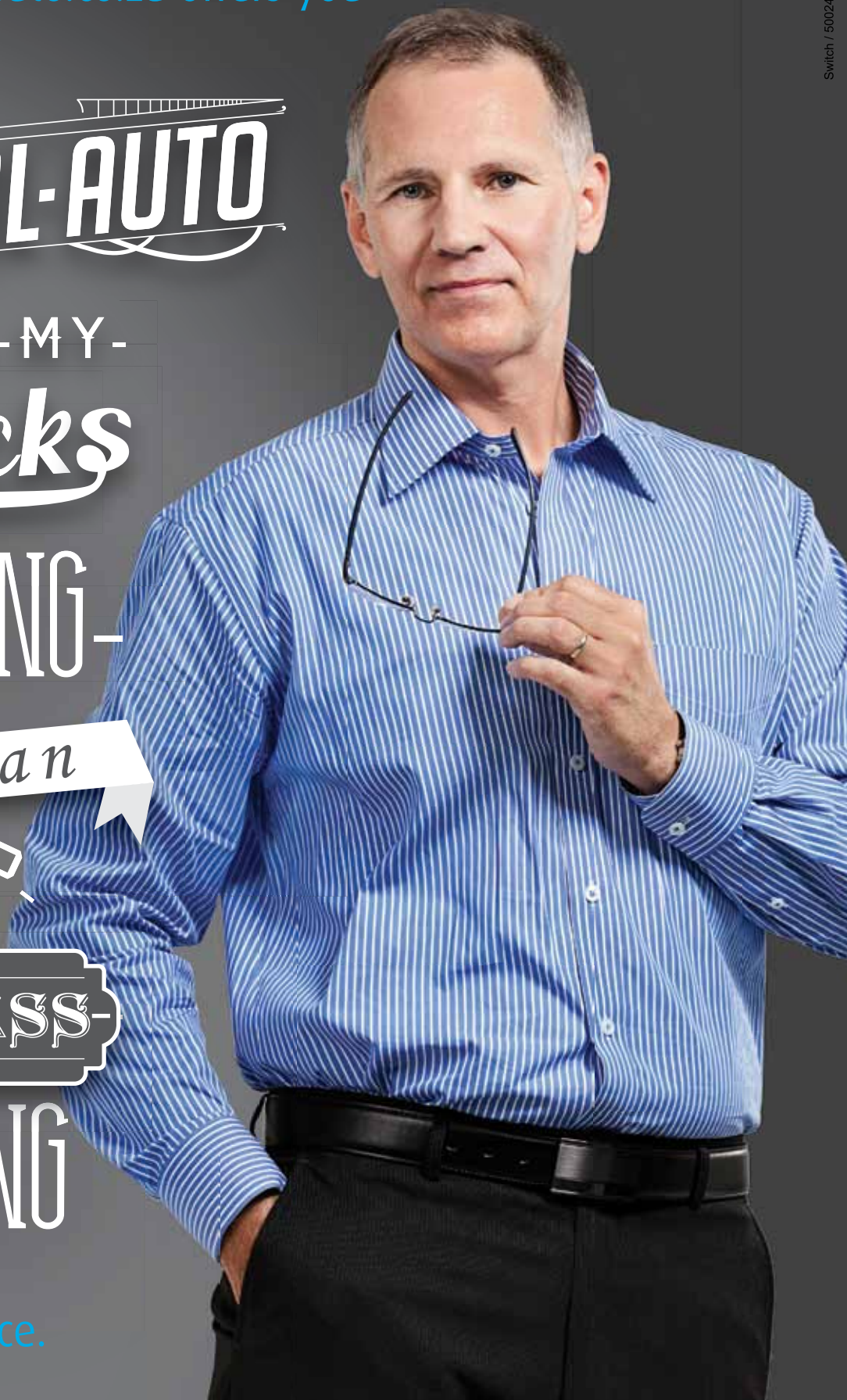
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ONLY HALFWAY THERE ...

Reflecting on the progress made during the five years since the Decade of Action for Road Safety was initiated – namely, achieving an overall 43-percent reduction in fatalities along the N3 route from 196 in 2011 to 112 in 2015 – some serious concerns remain for the N3 Toll Concession (N3TC).

"These can only be effectively addressed through the commitment of all stakeholders, most notably that of drivers and law enforcement agencies," says Miles le Roux, transport engineer at N3 Toll Concession.

"The general attitude of South African drivers remains poor. About 70 percent of crashes on the N3 are due to human behaviour and drivers generally show little respect for other road users and the law," he adds.

"Drivers need to be made aware of how dangerous driving actually is. They are often not skilled enough for the speeds and

conditions they encounter on the road. The cooperation of all road users and an overall behavioural change are essential to overcome our road safety challenges."

Various initiatives between the N3TC and key stakeholders are helping to increase road safety on the route. These include: improving the knowledge and experience of all emergency services along the route, ongoing N3TC incident management and training initiatives, various operations along the route, speed control and enhancing road signs and markings, post-crash support and the recent CCTV Pilot Surveillance Project.

"Partnerships are essential to achieve lasting results. Despite our best efforts, real change will only be achieved if individual drivers, vehicle owners, law enforcement officers and prosecuting authorities also make road safety their utmost priority," concludes Le Roux.



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ON BUS AND COACH

MAN AT SABOA:

Understanding the local market to
drive success



SABOA 2016:

Can government and industry pull off a
turnaround?

PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROBLEMS -

we've seen it all before ...



Seeking **SOLUTIONS** from Munich to Mzansi

Two MAN Bus product introductions, and a delegation of representatives from the MAN Truck & Bus AG parent company, made the 2016 Southern African Bus Operators Association (Saboa) conference and exhibition one to remember for the MAN Truck & Bus SA team

“It's difficult to understand the South African market from a European perspective. We're not used to the variance of vehicles and customers, or the market structure and the many applications," explains Heinz Kiess, senior manager: sales buses and coaches, product marketing high-floor vehicles, at MAN Truck & Bus AG.

Based in Munich, Germany, Kiess found his first experience of Saboa quite an eye-opener. "The South African bus industry is really special; I've never seen a market like it before.

"My impressions are that it's more challenging than the European market for sales. To match the local requirements, as a manufacturer, we have to listen to every customer – and they all have their own philosophies as to what they expect from our vehicles.

"MAN needs to be flexible and we have an experienced team here," he adds.

The reason for Kiess's visit was just that: to engage with customers and further establish what must be done to support them and the local MAN team in the future.

"This market will also evolve and increase its requirements for emissions regulation and safety. We want to lead the market with our safety features, as we do in Europe," he notes.

"Our South African market is more complicated than the European market. We have buses ranging from Euro-2 to Euro-6 vehicles, front or rear engines, truck conversions – and so on," adds Philip Kalil-Zackey, head of sales and product – Bus, MAN Truck & Bus SA.

Kiess quips: "In Europe the city bus business is more or less just about low-floor or articulated vehicles, and we have maybe three different coach lengths. Engines are not a concern, other than in terms of their efficiency. When I was listening to some of the discussions earlier, I couldn't believe all the options available here! South Africa is a very dynamic market."

Adding to this dynamism, MAN Truck & Bus SA used Saboa 2016 to reveal two new products. The first was its reworked, revived 18.350 HB Lion's Explorer. Running on a front-engined 4x2 chassis, the 18.350 is powered by MAN's 10.5-litre D20 engine.

Its 257 kW (350 hp) is channelled to the drive axle through a 12-speed Tipmatic transmission, while

**ABOVE AND LEFT:**

The MAN Truck & Bus stand at Saboa 2016 demonstrated the company's 100-year legacy, and was a hive of activity throughout. It also won the award for best stand.

BELOW:

From left: Gerhard van Wyk (bus sales); Giacomo Virgili (HOD, retail bus sales); Marietjie Haasbroek (admin manager); Naseera Barradeen (marketing and communications manager); Tiago Dias (HOD national accounts, Bus); Andrew Mark (head of dealer support, Bus).



comfort for the 65 passengers is increased thanks to the fitment of air suspension. Anti-lock disk brakes are fitted all round, and a retarder is standard.

"With the revival of his product, we're targeting customers that operate in arduous commuter or intercity conditions, such as in Lesotho, Swaziland and KwaZulu-Natal, where they need high horsepower for the mountainous topography. However, it is a very versatile, one-bus-fits-all product," says Kalil-Zackey.

The second product to make its debut was the new CLA 18.220 chassis. Although catering for the budget segment of the city/commuter market, this 65-seater, front-engine bus also features air suspension, anti-lock brakes and a retarder. Its six-cylinder engine produces 164 kW (220 hp), driving through a six-speed manual transmission.

Both chassis are assembled locally, with some local content in both, while the Lion's Explorer is produced entirely at MAN's Olifantsfontein production facility.

"We've tested the CLA for three years in South Africa, and we expect customer feedback to be very positive. In fact, we've sold the first two local units already, and we believe more will follow very quickly because we've priced it perfectly for the market," smiles Kalil-Zackey.

There's more to come this year, too, he alludes – with new products in the pipeline. "We're looking forward to an exciting year," he adds.

Kiess adds some motivation: "We're working together on a strategy and to see what we can do, step for step, to bring the best solutions to our customers, at the right time. We have some good ideas and I look forward to the future!" **F**



POSITIVE news?

Key issues at the 2016 Southern African Bus Operators Association (Saboia) conference included a turnaround plan for the contract bus industry and numerous amendment bills. GAVIN MYERS attended

Before you ask – no, the minister of transport did not make it to the conference, yet again. She did, however, deploy the Director General of Transport, Pule Godfrey Selepe, to deliver her key note address on her behalf.

Selepe was joined by his deputy, Mathabatha Mokonyama – who addressed the conference on the national land transport strategic framework, with specific reference to the Department of Transport's (DoT's) turnaround plan for the contract bus industry. So, two more senior government representatives one could not (probably) have hoped for ...

Some of the most pertinent points to be raised in the keynote address were:

- Eighty percent of the population is totally dependant on public transport and the economic impact of the 25 000 buses in the industry can be summarised as: They have an estimated replacement value of R25 billion, direct employment is provided to 30 600 people, and 860-million passenger trips are undertaken per annum.
- Government's subsidy level for rail and road public transport is comparably high – at around 60 percent of the economic cost of rendering the service – compared to a "rarely exceeded"

30 percent in other countries.

"We are mindful of the shortfalls in subsidies to bus operators in terms of their contracts and are having discussions with treasury about filling that gap. We are not happy about the situation. We have the best chance in decades to forge a new future," Selepe quoted the minister as saying.

- A strong foundation for a successful bus industry and IRPTNs has been established with the implementation of the public transport turnaround strategy ...

"The shared vision for the future should be a bus industry where service excellence is the norm. While we are on the right track, we are still a long way from our destination. No simple solutions exist for these challenges, and we can only do this through partnerships," Selepe added.

It was, however, undoubtedly, Mokonyama's presentation that had the most "meat on the bone" – substantiating the minister's comments – as well as demonstrating an epiphany of sorts.

"Government is aware of the challenges associated with the current way of doing things; among them is that operators have been on month-to-month contracts since 1997, or so," he began.

"The parliamentary process has been finalised for





BRT systems are expensive and don't work in the South African context.



the public transport operating grant (PTOG) allocation for 2015/16. We have an additional R250 million a year (cut from R500 million), so we are still getting an increase, whereas all other budgets in government have been cut. The PTOG increase is slightly above the Consumer Price Index (CPI)."

Mokonyama made it clear that provinces have been advised not to use the money to expand, but rather to deal with the challenges in order to improve the performance of current contracts. Herein came the revelation ...

"We have done a rough assessment, and we should be the first to concede that bus rapid transit (BRT) systems are expensive! If you think construction is expensive, operations

THEY SAID IT ...

The presentation on the turnaround plan is positive for the whole bus industry. It's encouraging to hear about shifting funds to the PTOG, which has been a contentious issue for some time.

– **Franco Pisapia, Putco**

We rarely hear positive news from the department ... We get a lot of confusing messages from different spheres of government.

If you can capacitate those spheres so that they talk about what you're telling us today, we will make it work more quickly.

– **Nora Fakude, Buscor**

The rate that we know is economical is more than the Division of Revenue Act says it can give. That is setting up the smaller operator for failure.

– **from the floor**

It's the first time in ten or 15 years that we share a common understanding of these problems and how to solve them. There are still some frustrations: we need improved public infrastructure, road conditions, law enforcement (especially with taxi problems), and the management of operating licences is a huge issue.

– **Fraçois Meyer, Golden Arrow Bus Service (GABS)**

This is a way forward, but will the negotiated contracts – after the process is complete – be entered into with existing operators?

– **Nick de Beer, North West Transport**

It's good that you'll be looking to implement services that will suit the different areas of operation, not a one-size-fits-all approach, or reinventing the wheel.

– **Nora Fakude, Buscor**

The promise of money has to be there if we've done what we were asked to do to make the process viable and sustainable for the 12-year period.

– **from the floor**

In some provinces the scholar transport subsidy resides with the department of education, and in other it's with the DoT. Why? The operators are not treated equally.

– **from the floor**

The lack of progress has also inhibited the transformation process. There are many operators who are keen to move ahead and provide a better quality service with proper controls in place.

– **Franco Pisapia, Putco**

We're still concerned with the sustainability of BRT services. We are converting conventional bus services – which are economical and efficient to operate – into BRT, and are really worried that down the road government will start cutting back. Then we'll be without any type of efficient service.

– **Fraçois Meyer, GABS**

If small bus operators are not recapped, we cannot qualify for new tenders, because our buses are much older than the required five years – 75 percent of us are using busses older than 20 years.

– **from the floor**

There are no plans to recapitalise small buses.

– **Mathabatha Mokonyama, DoT**



If there are insufficient funds, this plan will come to zero.



are worse! The cost to government and, therefore, to the user, is ridiculous. It doesn't work in the South African context and will never work if you look at land-use patterns. We do not have the dense corridors to justify those kinds of systems," he admitted.

"We are insisting the municipalities should do proper public transport plans, which form part of integrated public transport networks (IPTNs). This focus on BRTs should be relooked at in terms of a revenue approach. We need longer-term contracts for sustainability."

What are the implications of this in terms of practical implementation? The one-size-fits-all approach is out – "It doesn't work in any sector or industry," Mokonyama noted.

In its place are groupings of main metros, emerging metros, medium cities, rural centres and deep rural areas, which will each require unique interventions: mixed traffic on some BRT trunks to ease congestion in big metros, for example.

Mokonyama explained: "Interim contracts should not be month to month, but a minimum of three years to create sustainability. In the plan there will be a mixture of tenders and negotiated contracts, of up to 12 years. We want to believe that it'll go a long way to improving the transport system. We are finalising this, and once we are done it'll be made available to the public for comment."

On the point of scholar transport, Mokonyama noted: "While commuter services are supported by government to the tune of R4.9 billion (now up by aforementioned R250 million), scholar transport has been supported by about R2 billion per year nationwide.

"We have concluded the National Learner Transport Policy,



and whoever implements scholar transport must do so in terms of the policy. The premiers allocate functions the way they want to, because the constitution allows them to, but if provinces are not managing scholar transport according to the new policy, they must be taken to task," he insisted.

"It is important to remember that: we are moderating and going more slowly with BRTs; we want to see the re-emergence of the conventional bus service – this needs to dominate as these services are cheaper and more ideal for South Africa; and we must have mixed fleets," he reiterated, before issuing a stern caution ...

"If this plan is done properly, it'll cost us about R3 billion per year including rail – which is not that much. The economic situation is not good, however, and all of this is dependant on money. So, if there are insufficient funds, this plan to rescue the South African commuting public will come to zero."

Of course, there were many more notable discussions at Saboa 2016, such as the amendments to the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO) Act, and how this will affect transport operators. **FOCUS** will bring you some comment from these in forthcoming issues.

In the interim visit the Saboa website for all the presentations from this year's conference. **F**



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Scania expands NATURAL GAS in the UK

FRANK BEETON reports on Scania's gas-fuelled Euro-6 double decker

Scania has launched a Euro-6 natural gas-fuelled, double-deck bus chassis on to the United Kingdom (UK) market. Based on the N 280 UD4x2EB chassis, this vehicle is powered by Scania's 210 kW (280 hp) OC09 10.1-litre, five-cylinder dedicated gas engine, driving through a ZF EcoLife six-speed fully automatic transmission.

The engine is capable of operating on either compressed natural gas or biogas, and employs a three-way catalyst and exhaust gas recirculation system to meet Euro-6 emission standards.

Bodywork for the first demonstration vehicle is being provided by the Falkirk plant of Alexander Dennis Limited to its 400MMC design.

The demonstration programme is being supported by Roadgas, which will provide a mobile refuelling station for the vehicle as it tours the UK. Roadgas will also be offering potential purchasers a service to plan, design, install, commission and maintain

equipment to store and deliver gas at their depots.

Gas-fuelled Scania single-decker buses have been operating in the UK since April 2013, when Reading Buses placed the first units in service, and some 80 units have subsequently entered operation.

The double-deck unit draws its fuel from six 150-litre gas tanks, with four located in the rear, and two under the stairs. This is expected to provide an operational range of 300 to 330 km between refuelling.

As we have stated before, service bus operation is an ideal scenario for alternative fuel and driveline applications, as the vehicle can routinely visit fixed refuelling infrastructure, and will always be relatively close to technical support.

In South Africa, with its dearth of clean diesel fuel availability, bus operators wishing to become more environmentally friendly, and achieve higher levels of emissions mitigation, may well be advised to consider natural gas fuel as a viable alternative. **F**

BUS STOPS

NO ESCAPE FOR BUS HIJACKERS

A brand new Volvo bus, hijacked in Johannesburg en route to its new owner, was found and safely returned after experts in Sweden and South Africa managed to pinpoint the vehicle's position through the Volvo Bus Fleet Management system – even though the perpetrators managed to deactivate the bus's local tracking device.

The coach was pursued on narrow rural roads to the town of Thabazimbi, in Limpopo Province, some 300 km from Johannesburg. Authorities managed to pull the coach off at the Lephalale/Vaalwater intersection.

It was recovered with no serious damage and the driver arrested, just eleven hours after being hijacked. The Volvo Bus Southern Africa employee who had been confronted by the gang fortunately escaped unharmed.

"Even though it was an unfortunate incident, we were heartened to see that the technology inherent in every Volvo Bus unit enabled us to locate the vehicle and return it unscathed to our customer," says Marius Botha, general manager of Volvo Bus Southern Africa. "We would like to thank everyone involved for their commitment to safely recovering the vehicle."



BUSWORLD HEADS TO RUSSIA

Busworld, the world's largest business-to-business exhibition of the bus and coach industry, will see the first edition of Busworld Russia take place from October 25 to 27 at the Crocus Expo Centre in Moscow. The exhibition will be held every two years, alternating with the International Commercial Vehicle Auto Show, Comtrans.

The Busworld Russia trade show will offer manufacturers and distributors of coaches, buses, components and spare parts an opportunity to present their latest products and developments to a professional audience; learn first-hand about the market trends; and engage in negotiations with the market participants.

It will feature 10 000 m² of exhibition space and is expected to host more than 85 companies from 15 countries, while 12 000 visitors are expected.

Busworld Russia will offer an extensive business programme highlighted by the Busworld Academy, and organised in partnership with the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

Throughout its existence, Busworld has been a focal point for people who want to find all kinds of information on the many aspects of the bus and coach industry, by making use of its worldwide network of exhibitors, operators, academics, journalists, engineers and other contacts.

MAN BEATS SPORTS CARS AND MOTORBIKES AT THE iF DESIGN AWARDS

MAN Lion's Intercity Coach was named winner of the iF Gold Award 2016 – beating motorbikes and sports cars in the Automobiles/vehicles/bikes category at the iF Design Award Night, held in Munich, Germany, on February 26 – making it one of 75 gold prize winners out of 5 295 entries submitted.

Vice president of Omnibus Design at MAN, Stephan Schönherr, says: "We are thrilled to have received this award, which is an internationally renowned seal of quality for good design. It is a great success that has so far generally been reserved for our luxury segment and premium products."

The external appearance of the products, as well as the shape, innovation, ergonomics and functionality, together with environmental aspects, formed the criteria for the award.

All 58 panel members, who are design experts, were impressed by the timeless design, clear lines and perfectly balanced proportions of the MAN Lion's Intercity Coach.

According to the award panel: "All of the details are flawlessly implemented, with the interior matching the exterior. The windows and doors are attractively integrated with the colour scheme. All of these factors make the bus a modern vehicle that is absolutely convincing in its entirety."

The iF Gold Award 2016 is the 13th design award for MAN, which also counts the Red Dot Design Award, the iF Design Award and the German Design Award among its design success.



How many more years do the “PLANNERS” NEED?



Sifting through thousands of pages going back to 1963, one thing becomes clear – South Africa is not, and has never been, serious about public transport. If the promises made in 1993 had been acted upon then, there would have been no need for either the Gautrain or a fourth lane on the freeway

It's good to hear that double-deck Chinese-sourced trolleybuses have been chosen as the preferred option for the Moloto Road. OK, that was a lame April fool's joke, but in view of our financial distress, I think the trolleybus is a serious contender for the job.

Nonetheless, here's a quick quiz based on four media reports, all of them dated January 27. Which quote is the odd one out?

1. "... the subsidisation of the taxi industry could result from the government's recognition yesterday of a new, unified taxi organisation ... it was unfair that buses and trains were subsidised by the state, but not taxis ... we cannot afford to have a situation where only bus and train transport is subsidised, the minister said." (*Business Day*)
2. "I don't want to see the headlines in the media saying we are funding public transport for the rich, taking away from other public transport funding." (Gauteng MEC for transport, Ismail Vadi at the opening of bids for new Gautrain coaches – *The Star*)
3. "ANC MPs tore into Opposition to Urban Tolling (Outa) chairman Wayne Duvenhage yesterday over e-tolling, questioning why he insisted on more consultation on the controversial scheme when this had been done." (*Business Day*)
4. "... an estimated R46 billion has been added to the provincial economy, due to property development induced by Gautrain. This has created 245 000 jobs." (*The Citizen*)

The odd one out is number one – it dates from January 27, 1993, when Dr Piet Welgemoed was still the minister of transport. The other three are from 2016 – 23 years later to the day. So, let's revisit these.

Quote 2: Sorry to say, but that is precisely what is happening. MEC Vadi needs to explain why Annexure F remains absent from the website of his department's 25-year transport plan. While Gauteng lacks a public transport plan, no ad-hoc funding should be given to any project whatsoever.

Quote 3: Outa doesn't need my support here – it can look after itself – but it is worth repeating Carol Paton's remarks in *Business Day* (August 17, 2015): "The (toll road) consultation process ... cannot be described as anything other than a sham. In the case of road tolling, the sham is built into the legislation that governs it."

That comment also applies to public transport, where a shamefully watered-down Land Transport Act allows billions of rand to be spent on phoney public transport projects like the Gautrain and bus rapid transit (BRT).

Quote 4: The meaningless phrases "creates jobs" and "adds to gross domestic product (GDP)" are part of the reason why the South African economy has descended to near-junk status. We have now tolerated 16 years of spin from the Gautrain's promoters, and its contract researchers. In a financial squeeze such as the one South Africa is facing now, let's rather try to develop some property around existing Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) stations. How about decking over the Braamfontein staging yards?



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Bogus "integrated transport master plans" are found all over the world. One example is that of Lahore in Pakistan. Writing in the newspaper *Pakistan Today* (March 3, 2011) Hassaan Ghazali, a consultant on public policy, discusses three reasons why the master plan there hasn't worked.

First, there are the "actual citizens of Lahore ... who no one really listens to". Second are "our good friends at the National Engineering Services of Pakistan (Nespak), who would like nothing better than to pour concrete all over the country".

Third, "our leaders can't get by without ad hoc announcements to gain political mileage". Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

It isn't only developing cities that experience this problem. Writing in the magazine *Australian Transport* (September, 1987) Walter Penzias, a lecturer in urban traffic systems, described the situation in Sydney as

follows: "We are so accustomed to an appalling level of service in urban transport. We rarely think of what is achievable using only well-proven technology and our existing human and material resources ... only minor changes could reduce the needed car population of Sydney to half the present number, or less."

Perhaps things have improved in Sydney during the past 30 years, but these comments neatly fit the present situation in South Africa.

Instead of addressing our public transport problems by rationalising existing subsidised services, our public representatives either make jokes about the situation, attack citizens who want answers, or make sweeping claims for underperforming schemes like BRT and the Gautrain.

Do we plan to do something about it, or do we tamely give our transport "planners" another 30 years to fiddle around with the problem? **F**



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

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