



Velile Dube joins as Chief Executive



Velile Dube is a well-known figure amongst those close to Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) and he has served in varying roles across the port terminals. By Mitchell Brooke

In July the CGA held a teleconference call with Louis von Zeuner (Transnet Board), Velile Dube and all the container terminal managers across all the ports. Here Velile outlined his plan for TPT going forward and he has already made sweeping changes.

Something positive is the fact that each terminal manager will be at the centre of that terminal's functioning and performance, this is reverting to a previous structure, which was changed to a largely centralised business structure. The terminal manager is accountable for all activities, where previously many core functions were centralised, such as maintenance of machinery and equipment,

which has been an area of much contention of late.

Five things are at the centre of terminal performance and all these functions need to be suitably in place for a terminal to achieve high levels of performance:

- 1) Management – apart from Cape Town Container Terminal and Cape Town Multipurpose terminals having acting terminal managers, there is much confidence in the abilities of the current terminal managers at all the port container terminals.
- 2) Machinery and equipment – we understand that machinery and equipment are ailing at just about all the container terminals due to

historically failing procurement and ailing maintenance programs. TPT are on the warpath to change this with a massive procurement and maintenance drive across all terminals to boost machinery maintenance and replace those that are ailing or redundant. Having the terminal managers at the core of this should see things change drastically.

- 3) Human resources – the HR function is another aspect that Velile outlined will be decentralised and taken back to terminal level. This is also a very positive move. All terminal staff need to be suitably qualified and trained, and need to be conditioned about the need for high levels of productivity.
- 4) Processes – a core aspect of terminal functionality that boosts productivity is good operational and planning processes. CGA has motivated for an

integrated systems approach whereby stakeholders in the chain involved in importing and exporting of containers are connected to a central online platform. This will permit TPT to move towards a pull approach from a disastrous push approach.

5) Infrastructure – something that we see across most highly efficient container terminals is good infrastructure. From landside access in and out of terminals as well as the design of the yard configuration and quayside layout. The only container terminal in SA that actually replicates the design and configuration aspects of highly efficient terminals is that of the Ngqura Container Terminal (forgo the aspect of the wind and swell effects that impact the ports productivity). The access into and out of NCT, the design layout and yard

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configuration is probably the closest to replicate globally efficient terminals. Unfortunately, Durban Pier 2 has a very poorly designed quayside and landside configuration. To quote a well-known port consultant, the road access into and out of Pier 2 is totally unfit for purpose. Let us not despair though, as Transnet have commissioned a Durban port

decongestion committee focused on resolving this matter.

Outlined in the meeting with TPT is the fact that over the past three citrus seasons, exports have been heavily impacted by operational problems at the container terminals – Durban in 2018, Ngqura and PE in 2019 and now Cape Town in 2020 (to acknowledge, the latter very much associated with the impact from COVID-19). With the change in leadership, a new structure putting the terminal managers at the forefront of terminal performance and given the equipment procurement plan, performance levels should begin to improve towards the latter part of 2020. All going well, the operational status of the ports container terminals should be better poised to align with the need for high performance levels in accordance with the industries growth forecast. 



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