

**Section: 2**

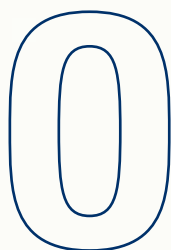
**REPORT OF THE  
EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY**

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*MEC:  
Transport KwaZulu-Natal  
Minister S'bu Ndebele*

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY



Our financial year ended on a sad note with the death of the Honourable Minister of Transport, Dr Abdullah Omar. The late Dr Omar will always be remembered for the innovation and tireless sense of duty he brought to the Transport Portfolio. Both his talent and humanity will be sorely missed.

It is perhaps a fitting tribute to his stature in World Transport that South Africa was chosen to host the Twenty Second PIARC World Road Congress in Durban. During the conference Minister Omar held discussions with twenty visiting African Ministers of Transport who reached agreement on the tabling of African road infrastructure issues at the various structures of NEPAD, SADC and the African Union.

Despite a difficult operating environment which was dominated by skills shortages, fluctuating petrol/diesel prices and political tensions, the Department continued to perform well. It is pleasing to appreciate just how fundamentally the Department has restructured the way it manages its core functions and its relationship with the public. It is clear from our Annual Report that today the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport provides an effective, professional and consultative service to those most neglected during the apartheid era and that we have created an enabling environment for black economic empowerment and the emergence of the small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) sector.

Among the many achievements of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport during this reporting period, the one that stands out is the reduction of road fatalities during the December 2003 holiday period by 17,95%. This is certainly a most welcome achievement and I must thank the many Department officials, artists, religious leaders, business community, freight transport, public transport and minibus taxi industry and, indeed, members of the public for this wonderful achievement. It is clear that our combined Zero Tolerance and Asiphephe programs are having the desired effect.

There was overwhelming public support for our inter-faith Road Safety Prayer Days and it is clear that the road using public of KwaZulu-Natal are fully behind our initiatives to end the carnage on our roads. Our Participatory Education Techniques (PET) and Child in Traffic projects, which target scholars and assist them to identify road safety problems and find solutions thereto, continue to be well received by both rural and urban schools and the introduction of the Department's Road Safety Education website has already proved itself to be an innovative educational tool. Our Provincial Driver of the Year competition was well supported and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport hosted the National Driver of the Year finals.

It is particularly pleasing to note the steady progress made by the Road Traffic Inspectorate in enforcing overloading control regulations. The fact that, in KwaZulu-Natal, only 12% of all heavy duty vehicles are overloaded as opposed to 25% nationally, is strongly indicative of the effectiveness of the Road Traffic Inspectorate. It is equally pleasing to note the steady decline of the number of minibus taxis and buses involved in road collisions. This can undoubtedly be attributed to the formation of the Public Transport Enforcement Unit (PTEU).

I am also pleased to acknowledge the continued progress made by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport in healing the fractures between our first and second economies.

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The establishment of the eThekweni Metropolitan Transport Authority will considerably streamline freight and passenger transport services in and around the eThekweni Municipality. There has also been considerable progress on the plans to develop the Dube Trade Port and to relocate the Durban International Airport to La Mercy.

On the other hand the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport continues to expand and develop programs that target the many challenges of our Province's second economy. New labour intensive road construction initiatives that specifically target youth and women, as well as a focus on rural manufacturing of road need materials, have been added to our nationally and internationally acclaimed Zibambele and Vukuzakhe programs. Increasingly, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport's commitment to placing the rural economy in our Province on a labour absorptive growth path is being realised.

Finally, I must acknowledge the progress made in bringing peace to the taxi industry in KwaZulu-Natal and the advancements made towards its professionalism. The Judicial Taxi Commission of Enquiry, chaired by Judge Gerald Alexander, has submitted its final findings and recommendations. Most of the Commission's recommendations have already been implemented. The planned relocation of the KWANATACO offices to Pietermaritzburg will undoubtedly strengthen the co-operative working relationship between the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport and the taxi industry. I am particularly pleased with the highly successful training program designed to skill taxi drivers and taxi owners in road safety, customer service and business development and management.

The all round solid performance of the various Departmental Directorates and programs has occurred in the context of a difficult political climate. It speaks volumes for the commitment of staff to the ethos of Batho Pele that they could serve all the public of KwaZulu-Natal without regard to party political affiliations.

