

## DR. KWAZI MBANJWA

I am delighted to introduce to you some of the most significant developments ever relating to the issuing of learners and driving licences in KwaZulu-Natal and indeed in our country.

In every province in our country, departments responsible for transport related matters have been grappling with the following challenges:

1. Addressing the inequalities that arose during apartheid through separate infrastructure development.
2. Addressing problems with existing infrastructure.
3. Addressing corruption relating to the issuing of driving licences.
4. Addressing the fact that our rate of accidents and road related fatalities are unacceptably high.

You've all seen the negative publicity that these challenges have generated, amongst others:

- Exposes on M Net's Carte Blanche programme.
- Very recently, spine chilling reports on ETV's 3rd Degree programme.
- Many talk shows on SABC's SAFM and other radio stations.
- Countless newspaper reports.

Indeed, many of you may have even personally experienced these problems or at least know of close friends or relatives who have. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport has spent millions of Rands investigating fraud and prosecuting people over the years. And quite frankly, even though there have been so many investigations, the problems have persisted.

Even now R51 million is being spent by the National Department of Transport investigating driving licence fraud nationally. R18 million of this, is being dedicated to KwaZulu-Natal. In fact the Special Investigation Unit set up by the National Department of Transport only recently completed their first round of investigations at the Rosburgh testing station.

We therefore took a bold decision in July 2005 to do things very differently in future. We decided to spend money to eradicate the problems rather than investigating the problems even more.

You will witness today how these age old problems have been addressed using ground breaking technology. You will also see how technology can be used to improve life in the deepest of rural areas.

Today, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport is proud to introduce to you its new:

1. Learner licence mobile units.
2. The revamped, high-tech, anti-corruption, pro-service delivery systems.
3. A new counterpart learners and driving licence card.

### **THE LEARNER LICENCE MOBILE UNITS**

There are currently 32 driver testing centres in KwaZulu-Natal at which candidates may write learners licence tests. Due to apartheid planning, most of these centres are located in developed urban areas. Candidates from rural areas have to travel long distances in order to access learner driver centres.

Our learner licence mobile units are able to offer learners licence tests in the deepest of rural areas. When we plan the deployment of the mobile units we will ensure that the areas furthest away from existing learners licence centres are prioritized.

When candidates apply for learners licence tests they often have to wait for long periods. When fully deployed, these mobile units allow us the opportunity to test a further 3000 learner driver licence candidates each month in KwaZulu-Natal. Testing capacity will be increased with the introduction of additional mobile units.

One of our plans is to arrange with the Department of Education and school principals to allow our mobile units to visit schools in rural areas. Matriculants can each obtain driving licences which could make them more marketable in the employment stream.

These mobile units each have:

- A registration desk fitted with equipment such as a camera to scan the eye, fingerprint reader, digital signature pad, digital ID photographic camera and a high spec computer. This technology at the registration desk not only registers and books in candidates, but also importantly provides a basis to eliminate corruption.
- 13 cubicles fitted with touch screen computers that run the computerized learners licence system.

Learners answer questions by simply touching the screen. Whether or not a candidate has used a computer before, he/she will find the learners test easy to answer – in fact we think that it's actually easier to answer than the current written test. An audio facility is available to those who did not have the opportunity to go to school.

By completing the test using the computer, there is no need for an examiner to mark the test. The computer automatically marks the test and immediately informs the candidate whether or not he/she has passed or failed. There is no room for a crooked examiner to fail someone who should have passed, or to pass someone who should have failed in order to solicit a bribe. There is also no room for examiner error. Further, there is also no way for a candidate to get a learners licence without completing all questions.

The test questions and answers are randomly generated. The randomization of questions and answers ensures that candidates cannot learn for their test "parrot fashion". Candidates will have to learn the rules, signs and controls to pass this test.

The computer system maintains a record of all questions answered and whether or not a candidate has passed or failed, so it will be very easy to verify the validity of learners licences carried by KwaZulu-Natal drivers.

Before a candidate writes a test, his/her iris will be scanned at the same time that the candidate's identity is verified through his/her identity document and photograph is taken electronically, all in the mobile unit. For additional security, the candidate's signature and fingerprints are also captured electronically. Before the candidate begins the test, the computer will verify that the candidate that registered is the one starting the test – not someone else. If someone else attempts to write the test, the computer will deny him/her access. There is thus no way for an examiner to complete a test for a candidate.

*Ladies and gentlemen, by now you're probably wondering whether all of this can be real. I assure that it is.*

#### Benefits of the improved systems

If you thought that the systems in the mobile unit were unbelievable, you're definitely going to find it hard to believe what we have achieved at Rosburgh. Here are some of them:

1. Learners and driving licence bookings done through a purpose designed computer system.
2. Choice of date and time for learners and driving test – flexibility similar to airline booking system, with audit trail to avoid "special favours."
3. New streamlined registration and booking process using high tech systems.
4. Touch screen learners licence system similar to those fitted in the learners licence truck.
5. Increased capacity for learners licence testing – from 132 per day to 240 per day.
6. Full CCTV monitoring of learners licence test rooms.
7. Full CCTV monitoring of the driving licence test yard – 10 different cameras recording every aspect of the yard test.
8. Driving licence test vehicles each fitted with 3 cameras and an on board computer that monitors acceleration, speed, braking, indicators, clutch, gear change, proximity to objects, handbrake position, steering wheel position, etc.
9. Driving licence test vehicles supplied by the Department – Toyota Corolla 160i GLE's with air-conditioning and power steering.
10. Examiner can now make reference to video and on board computer results after the test.
11. Iris scanner in briefing rooms and camera on board the car verify that the right candidate takes the test.

12. Candidates can seek video and on board computer records for appeal purposes.

13. Examiner scores test on a rugged touch screen hand held computer – no need for pen and calculator. In addition, test results are available quicker.

14. Examiner is required to thoroughly brief and debrief candidates in room monitored by video and audio equipment. Video and on board computer results to be shown to applicants that fail.

15. State of the art back up devices for data. Learners and drivers test results as well as all video and on board computer data will be backed up electronically and available for years.

16. Dedicated forensic auditing computers to facilitate continuous auditing of test results.

Essentially, our new driving licence test vehicles and test yard cameras record all the evidence that an examiner would have used as the basis for scoring candidates.

It's not science fiction at all – it's all there for you to see later!

### **Fresh attitudes**

We have already started and will be focusing even more attention in the coming months on motivation and training of our staff at Rossburgh. Our staff know that the Department has pulled out all the stops to give them a much more pleasant working environment and have expressed their commitment to living up to their end of the bargain.

We also require fresh attitudes from driving schools and plan to work more closely with them to fulfil their crucial role of driver training. We want them to focus on providing quality driver training rather than simply a car hire facility. We want the driving school industry to get better organised so that they can themselves weed out incompetent instructors or those in the business only for the money.

With renovated facilities, new systems and fresh attitudes, a visit to the Rossburgh Driver Certification Centre will be 100% better than it ever was. Our customers will get the service and integrity that they deserve.

## **A NEW COUNTERPART LEARNERS AND DRIVING LICENCE CARD**

We are also introducing new counterpart learners and driving licence cards for KwaZulu-Natal. The card will be impossible to alter – it's based on the latest in card technology and has many security features. The card will only be produced here at Rossburgh and only based on the results of tests recorded on our systems. So it will be impossible for a card to be produced without a candidate having passed.

Some features of the card worth mentioning:

- It takes just 3 ½ minutes to produce our new card – whilst the candidate waits.
- Not only is the card secure and quick to produce, it is also attractive. We're sure that holders of these cards will feel proud to have them.
- The card has what is known as a "photomask". This section of the card can only be written to by the two card initialisers here at Rossburgh. Not even the manufacturer of the initialisers can write to the KZN card - due to unique once-off serialization of the cards.
- The card has a memory that can record data not printed on the face of the card. Importantly, this memory can be used to record demerit points attributable to the driver – when that system is introduced.
- The card is almost indestructible and has a guaranteed lifespan of 10 years.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our new learners and driving licence systems ensure that it's impossible:

- To be passed if you should have failed.
- To be failed if you should have passed.
- For someone else to complete a test for you.
- To be issued with a learners or driving licence card without passing a test.

In short, it's now impossible to get a learners or driving licence through bribery or error. Kuphelile, Finito, No More!

By ensuring that people issued with learners licences and driving licences actually do the test and pass, we are ensuring that they actually know the rules of the road, road signs and controls of their vehicles. This should ensure that we have safer drivers on our roads, which is ultimately exactly what we want to achieve.

I am sure you will agree that the learners licence mobile units, the Rossburgh Driver Certification Centre and all the cutting edge technology contained in them, are some of the best news for a long time in the area of learners and driving licensing. For far too long there have been very negative sentiments and connotations around learners and driving licences. For far too long, authorities have been looking backwards investigating fraud and corruption. For far too long, we have had to endure carnage on our roads, much of which is caused by incompetent drivers.

I am sure that all relevant stakeholders including driving schools, financial institutions, the insurance industry, Automobile Association, car manufacturers and so on will be very excited and supportive of this initiative.

Finally, we have systems that will help.

**Kuphelile, Finito, No More!**