

**SPEECH BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON, MR WILLIES MCHUNU, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE TRUCK STOP IN PINETOWN**

*28 November 2015*

Master of Ceremonies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my privilege to be in your esteemed company today and have an opportunity to say some few words at the official opening of the Metro Truck Stop in Pinetown.

On behalf of the government of KwaZulu-Natal, I want to thank the Metro Group for the vital service to heavy motor vehicles using the national route from virtually all corners of the north-western parts of South Africa towards Durban and other coastal areas of the province.

This is to fulfil an always-felt need for suitable facility for truckers to break their journey towards destination.

As government, we have always supported a programme whereby new truck stops are being built to improve truck transport efficiencies and driver job satisfaction, while simultaneously empowering local communities.

Studies have been undertaken to address development of truck stops along the major routes. The challenge is that there is no national regulation regarding working hours and rest stops for truck drivers.

These standards are set by many of the larger companies that use Global Positioning System (GPS) to monitor that drivers take the mandated rest stops and honour the working hour limits.

On the other hand, smaller companies and owner-drivers may not have set rules and leave the number of stops to the driver's discretion.

Statistics show that, truck traffic growth on our roads is estimated at 5% per annum. On the N3 (between Pietermaritzburg and Durban, in both directions), we have about 4 150 heavy vehicles passing through Marianhill Toll Plaza and therefore close to this Truck Stop.

**Economic boost**

In terms of economic growth, the facility that you have established here represents more than a convenient and resting place for travelling motorists who might want to freshen up, fill up, relax, or obtain something to eat.

It is in effect also a significant and important contribution to the social and economic development of the area in which it is located. We know that Truck Stops are an opportunity to boost the local economy with a continuous stream of travellers passing through.

They bring additional income for local business providing truckers with various necessary services including food and drink, groceries as well as truck repair and parts provision.

Therefore, the intention of the Metro Group for this facility to contribute to the generating of much-needed revenue must be applauded as tangible evidence of how together we can bring about our economic emancipation.

### **Truck Stop and Road Safety**

We also view the Truck Stop facility of providing a convenient resting place for truckers has a critically important role to play in reducing the rate of collisions involving heavy motor vehicles on our roads.

I have become aware that the road freight sector and its associated stakeholders were the first business sectors under the democratic South Africa to forge ahead in a partnership with government, employers, unions and NGOs on board to tackle the crisis of road safety in the road freight industry.

Today we appreciate that indeed, the Metro Group is on board to address driver fatigue/ driver tiredness by offering a good sleep.

One reason that driver tiredness is responsible for such a high proportion of fatal road accidents is because there is no braking or steering adjustment prior to these accidents.

A driver asleep at the wheel will not act to avoid an accident and consequently is much more likely to cause death or serious injury.

In fact, tiredness-related accidents are three times more likely to result in serious injury or death compared to other types of road accidents.

We also appreciate the security systems with cameras and lighting that will prevent the threats of hijacking, theft etc.

The provision of a medical care facility here, we hope, will contribute to raising the level of awareness about HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses and have their eyes tested. As we know, there is high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among truck drivers.

I trust that the Metro Truck Stop will remain a safe and reliable facility to assist our truck drivers by giving them a relaxing atmosphere through their demanding and tight schedules. We are indeed proud to be part of this project, which will make life easier and safer for our truck drivers.

I thank you for the opportunity of addressing you, and congratulate you on your achievements.

**I thank you.**