

# New intake of maritime trainees for Transnet

As it prepared for a new intake of trainees at its Maritime School of Excellence, Transnet said earlier in the month it remained committed to building and strengthening the country's ocean economy.

Transnet has set aside R7.7 billion to train personnel over the next 10 years.

The state-owned company, which operates South Africa's eight ports as well as its national railway network and its pipeline business, said it would continue with its skills-development drive focusing on young South Africans. This is to skill them in various aspects of port and

marine operations. These include cargo co-ordinators, specialised crane operators, specialised freight handling and general purpose ratings.

The intake consists of unemployed learners and the majority will be absorbed into the employ of Transnet's two maritime operational divisions, the Transnet National Ports Authority and Transnet Port Terminals. They are trained in priority skill areas to ensure port operational demands are met with the necessary skill sets for enhanced productivity and efficiencies.

The aim of this training is to cre-

ate capacity for Transnet as well as for the wider industry. Importantly it also develops each participant and arms them with appropriate skills which prepare them to either start businesses or seek jobs in the freight handling sector.

To date, Transnet has been able to absorb about 80% of these learners upon completion of their qualifications. The training Transnet provides does not automatically entitle a trainee to a job in Transnet but arms them with both the theory and experience to participate in the oceans economy.

Participants can work with ship-

ping lines, cargo owners, freight forwarders and other operators in the industry.

The customised training programmes are designed to ensure priority skills are in place, ahead of market demand. Transnet said it wanted to support growing activity as promoted in the government's Operation Phakisa, with new activity envisaged in oil and gas, rig repairs and maintenance and general cargo handling.

The training is undertaken at the Maritime School of Excellence, headquartered in Durban with satellite training centres in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. Transnet also

operates a further three schools: the School of Rail, School of Engineering and School of Pipelines.

The courses at the school are accredited by the Transport Education Training Authority, the South African Maritime Safety Authority, the Department of Labour, the Swedish Academy as well as the International Labour Organisation.

Last year, Transnet graduated 513 national trainees in the following fields: marine pilots, tug masters, marine engineers, operators of lifting equipment (ship-to-shore cranes, rubber-tyred gantry cranes and straddle carrier operators).