

## Transnet and Buffalo City Municipality Showcase Port for Communities

**[East London, South Africa, 25 June 2017]** Thousands of people flocked to the Port of East London on Saturday, 24 and Sunday, 25 June 2017 to support what was widely hailed as the successful return of the East London Port Festival. The event – hosted by Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) – transformed the city’s iconic harbour precinct into a spectacular showcase of local music, quality arts and crafts, impressive naval prowess and high-adrenaline entertainment.

“This was a very special weekend for the community of East London and the greater Buffalo City, as we brought back this much-loved event to South Africa’s only commercial river port, after an absence of five years,” said Acting Port Manager for East London, Alvin Singama.

“The diversity reflected in the array of entertainment, as well as the fact that this festival brought the community together across age, race, gender and socio-economic backgrounds, was a true reflection of a united South Africa,” he said.

TNPA thanked Buffalo City communities for their support and said attendance on the first day had been close to 13,000 and approximately 23,000 over the full weekend.

Singama said the event would not have been possible without TNPA’s partners Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Transport, the South African Navy, the South African Maritime Safety Authority, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and media partner Daily Dispatch.

Phyllis Difeto, TNPA Chief Operating Officer, said the festival had an underlying strategic focus. She touched on programmes such as the government initiative Operation Phakisa which emphasised using the Oceans Economy to drive economic development, job creation and skills development.

“We want to promote awareness of the ports, recreational opportunities, and career and business opportunities offered by the maritime industry. We want our communities to experience the unique operations in the port, and its exciting people-centred vision,” she said.

Executive Mayor of Buffalo City Municipality, Councillor Xola Pakati, said: “We are slowly trying to position ourselves as a tourist destination of choice and events such as this port festival are a testament of that.

“This event does not only have tourism-boosting benefits but also has substantial social and economic enterprise development benefits. It gives us the opportunity as the city to amplify efforts to make the city a tourist destination of choice as well as increasing employment opportunities,” he added.

The two-day festival returned with all the thrills and spills that made this one of the region’s most popular and best-loved outdoor events.

Snaking queues were seen throughout the weekend for free public tours of the South African Navy frigate SAS Spioenkop, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) protection vessel Victoria Mxenge and the SA Agulhas polar supply and training vessel. Short rides on one of TNPA’s tug boats were also a popular highlight for all.

Just some of the entertainment on offer included live jazz acts such as the Stirling Jazz Band, school choirs, local musicians Siseko Pame, Aston Wylie of *The Voice*, Centrestage performers and performances by the Kaapse Klopse.

There were old festival favourites such as air and sea rescue demonstrations, naval manoeuvres, aerobatics displays, an arts and crafts market, a food market, an anything-that-floats competition and a spectacular fireworks display to end off the first night. This year's festival also included two days of heart-stopping bungee jumping and harbour racing featuring rubber ducks, yachting, rowing and paddle skiing.

An exhibition showcased maritime companies, career and study opportunities, while a kiddies' entertainment area kept the little ones entertained with face painting, sand art, jumping castles and more. Opening day 2 on Sunday morning was a special ceremony to mark International Day of the Seafarer, in honour of the brave men and women whose hard labours at sea bring nations together and make international trade possible.

The 2017 East London Port Festival was again staged as a charity and community development event. Proceeds will go to local charities and service organisations. The Port Festival Golf Day raised in excess of R40,000 that will co-fund the participation of local professional golfers Siviwe and Yolanda Duma in the Lady Sunshine Tour next year.

Visitors expressed their appreciation for the depth and variety of entertainment and leisure activities on offer over the course of the two days for a nominal fee of R20.

East Londoner Sinovia Beebe said, "We had a wonderful time. Everyone enjoyed themselves from the oldest mamas to the youngest children. Well done guys!"

Carin Els Van Zyl said: "It was an excellent experience and well organised. There was so much to enjoy and it was very interesting to go onto the ships. We will definitely visit again next time."

**ENDS**

### **Image Gallery**

Below: The array of waterside entertainment included a yacht sail-past and inflatable powerboat racing.





Below: A spectacular fireworks display ended off the first night at the East London Port Festival.



Below: Entertainers included the Kaapse Klopse of Cape Town.



Below: Kids were spoilt for choice with jumping castles, face painting, sand art and more open to them.



### **About Transnet National Ports Authority**

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) is one of five operating divisions of Transnet SOC Ltd. The National Ports Authority is responsible for the safe, effective and efficient economic functioning of the national port system, which it manages in a landlord capacity. It provides port infrastructure and marine services at the eight commercial seaports in South Africa – Richards Bay, Durban, Saldanha, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Mossel Bay and Ngqura. It operates within a legislative and regulatory environment and is governed by the National Ports Act (Act No. 12 of 2005). For more information visit [www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net](http://www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net).

Follow us on



[www.facebook.com/TransnetNPA](http://www.facebook.com/TransnetNPA)



[@TransnetNPA](https://twitter.com/TransnetNPA)



[@TransnetNPA](https://www.instagram.com/TransnetNPA)

#### **Issued by:**

Terry Taylor  
Corporate Affairs Manager  
Port of East London  
Transnet National Ports Authority  
Tel. 043 700 1043, 043 700 2446 or 083 284 1786  
[Terry.Taylor@transnet.net](mailto:Terry.Taylor@transnet.net)

#### **On behalf of:**

Alvin Singama  
Acting Port Manager  
Port of East London  
Transnet National Ports Authority