

# Boat building opportunities in the Eastern Cape

Transnet National Ports Authority's (TNPA) Port of Ngqura recently hosted the testing and launch of the first ever locally manufactured aluminium vessels by Port Elizabeth-based boat builder, Legacy Marine.



A Dive Support Vessel being lowered into the Port of Ngqura. Image supplied.

As the company's ship yard is based in Perseverance, the low bridges blocked the route to the Port of PE in the past, restricting the building of larger vessels. When the new Port of Ngqura stepped up as an alternative port, it contributed to the expansion of boat building in the Eastern Cape.

"Now that the port is available for new vessel launches, we can build larger vessels, providing a boost to the boat building sector in the region. When we approached the port in 2017 as an alternative port from which to launch newly built vessels, they were very willing to assist us. Since then Legacy Marine has launched four new vessels at the port, with the last vessel being shipped to Angola in February," said Gary Tait, general manager of sales at Legacy Marine.

"We conducted all the vessels' commissioning and sea trials with our international clients in the port. The Ngqura team has been extremely professional and provided immense support to us," Tait said.

## Supporting local manufacturers

"It was an honour and privilege for the Port of Ngqura to allow the berthing of these newly built vessels. We are open to new activities that make business sense. This way we have shown that we are not only focusing on big vessels and revenue, but also on smaller upcoming businesses. The activities included the vessel launching, ship stability testing, seaworthiness testing, testing of navigational equipment, a survey according to local authority standards and the mooring arrangements – using ropes to keep the vessels alongside the berth," said Vuyani Ntsimango, acting deputy harbour master of the Port of Ngqura.

"We strive to give the best service possible to our customers – from the moment they enter our gates. We are looking forward to assisting more manufacturers of locally built vessels in our ports, helping them to grow their business," Ntsimango said.

## Vessels launched with the latest tech

The four vessels consisted of two Passenger Transfer Vessels for an international cruise liner and two customised Dive Support Vessels for Stapem Offshore, based in France. The two Passenger Transfer Vessels operate in Mozambique, while the Dive Support Vessels are designed to operate in the oil and gas production sector off the Angolan coastline.

The Dive Support Vessels were the latest two vessels tested and launched. They are designed to work alongside a mothership and carry out subsea inspections and repairs to the oil platforms. They are working dive stations from where daily underwater operations are directed. These vessels are equipped with a 3-man air dive system, ROV (Remotely Operated Underwater Vehicle), a subsea HP (High Pressure) washer and subsea welding capabilities. Due to their size and efficient use of space the vessels are extremely cost-effective and high-tech work platforms.

The two Dive Support Vessels were custom designed by international naval design company Incat Crowther in conjunction with Legacy Marine and the end-client. They were built under American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) class survey, which was the first new vessel survey done in South Africa by ABS.

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