

# EXPORT IRON ORE LINE MILESTONES

## LOOKING BACK THROUGH TIME

Saldanha Bay. The best natural harbour on the African coast remained hidden for centuries on the western seaboard of South Africa. Until 1601, when it was stumbled upon by Dutch explorer Van Spilbergen.

Yet its potential as a deep sea port lay dormant until 1969 when feasibility studies for an extensive iron ore export project recognised Saldanha Bay as the perfect setting for a port that would launch South African Iron Ore into the world market.

Construction of the 861 kilometre line began a few years later on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1973 and drew to completion with the arrival of the first iron ore train in Saldanha Bay on 14 May 1976.

Over time, the operation has continued to break new ground in positioning Transnet Freight Rail as a leader in the South African business community and indeed as an icon in the heavy haul and rail transportation industries, locally and abroad.

## MILESTONES

### **1 June 1973**

Construction begins

### **14 May 1976**

First Iron Ore from Sishen arrives at Saldanha

### **27 September 1976**

First export consignment leaves Saldanha on the “Fern Sea”

### **April 1978**

Sishen-Saldanha line taken over by South African Railways & Harbours

### **15 November 1978**

First train with Beeshoek (near Postmasburg) Ore arrives at Saldanha

### **1979/80**

More than 18 million tons of Iron Ore is exported in a single year

**January 1980**

First metal concentrate from Aggeneys arrives at Saldanha

**30 October 1984**

The 100 millionth ton of Iron Ore is exported

**July 1988**

The largest single consignment ever of Export Iron Ore (293 280t) is loaded

**26 August 1989**

A once-off record-breaking “Monster Train” of over 7km in length is listed in the Guinness Book of Records

**1992**

Total Iron Ore exported since start-up reaches **200 million** ton level

**1994/95**

More than 20 million tons is exported in a single financial year

**1995/96**

22.259 million tons of Iron Ore exported in a single financial year

**20 February 1998**

Amalgamated ISO listing is awarded

**1998**

Total Iron Ore exported since start-up reaches **300 million** ton level

**September 1999**

Gold Award from the National Productivity Institute (NPI) to business partners Transnet Freight Rail, Transnet Port Terminals port of Saldanha and Iscor for outstanding achievement in productivity improvement (M-ORE Project.)

**2001**

The Iron Ore Export Channel celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary

## **2001**

Total Iron Ore exported since start-up reaches **400 million** ton level

## **October 2002**

Winner of the Annual Logistics Achiever Awards for the M-ORE (capacity expansion) project

## **22 February 2004**

The highest tonnage throughput for one week is recorded at 585, 012 tons

## **August 2004**

Radio Distributed Power: Proof of concept tests and radio receptivity tests by means of voice controlled Distributed Power train.

## **2005**

Total Iron Ore exported since start-up reaches **500 million** ton level

## **August 2005**

Voice controlled DP test train in both directions, introducing different train compilation to 2004 test

## **August 2006**

Locotrol RDP equipment tested on train consist of 5x 9E and 3x DE and a single train driver

## **August 2007**

RDP test train to verify parameters, witnessed by Railway Safety Regulator

## **17 December 2007**

First ever 342 RDP production train departs from Sishen

## **May 2008**

New Iron Ore mine at Khumani starts raiing Iron Ore for export markets

## **2008**

Total Iron Ore exported since start-up reaches **600 million** ton level

## **5 July 2009**

New weekly throughput record of **899,592** tons in a single week

**6 July 2009**

1000<sup>th</sup> loaded RDP train arrives at Saldanha<sup>1</sup>

**26 July 2009**

Highest ever weekly throughput of **955,800** tons in a single week. First time ever that actual production matches planned production 100% normally line operates at 95% efficiency.

**10 August 2009**

One billionth gross ton (mass of locomotives + mass of wagons + mass of iron ore) traverses the iron ore line

**15 September 2009**

The first new generation 15E class locomotive, locomotive number 15001 is delivered to the Export Iron Ore Line

**28 September 2011**

A total of 44 new generation 15E class locomotives have already been commissioned on the Export Iron Ore Line...paving the way for the capacity expansion on the line

**20 November 2012**

The first train with Iron Ore from the Kolomela Mine departs

**26 March 2012**

The Export Iron Ore Line ended the 2011/2012 financial year on a high by setting a new operations weekly throughput record of 1,222,000 million tons.

\*\*\* \*\*

---

<sup>1</sup> **Radio Distributed Power Trains:**

RDP technology was implemented on the iron ore line in December 2007. On Sunday 5 July 2009 the 1000<sup>th</sup> loaded RDP train departed on a 21 hour journey from Sishen to deliver export iron ore at the Port of Saldanha. The train was made up of 342-wagons, each with a carrying capacity of 100 tons and three electrical and seven diesel locomotives.

I would once again like to thank all the role players for their hard work. Without the dedication and commitment of the people on the Sishen-Saldanha Corridor we would not have been able to achieve the considerable growth in business over the last months. Your exceptional efforts are making us proud!