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NEWS

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SEPTEMBER 2025



VOLVO EC300

REDEFINING EXCAVATOR PERFORMANCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

MATERIALS HANDLING: Daimler Truck Experience Day highlights customer-centred innovation

ENVIRONMENT: Volvo Trucks to start local assembly of Euro 6 trucks

CRUSHING AND SCREENING: Leading the charge towards fully electric

HEAVY LIFTING

Concord Access Solutions
launches a new refurbishment
centre. **PAGE 12**

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BALANCING RISK AND REWARD

Capital expenditure – or capex – is often a bellwether of business confidence. When companies commit resources to new plants, infrastructure, technology, or expansion projects, it signals not only their growth ambitions but also their belief in the stability and potential of the economy they operate in. In South Africa, capex decisions are shaped by a unique and often challenging mix of local conditions, global trends, and sector-specific realities.



At the broadest level, macroeconomic factors weigh heavily. A sluggish economy, marked by modest GDP growth, inevitably dampens appetite for large-scale investment. Inflationary pressures and rising interest rates make borrowing more expensive, while rand volatility complicates the cost of imported machinery and technology. For resource-dependent sectors, commodity cycles are critical: a strong upswing in platinum group metals, for instance, can unlock investment in new shafts and processing plants, while downturns have the opposite effect.

Overlaying these economic considerations is the political and regulatory environment. Businesses thrive when policies are clear and predictable. In South Africa, however, regulatory uncertainty around areas such

as mining rights, land reform, and energy policy has often acted as a brake on investment. Bureaucratic delays in licensing, environmental approvals, or infrastructure connections add further friction. Investors, both domestic and foreign, are acutely aware of governance concerns and the risks associated with corruption or shifting political priorities.

No discussion of capex in South Africa can ignore the role of infrastructure and, above all, energy. The crisis at Eskom has become the single biggest influence on corporate investment decisions. Load shedding not only increases operating costs but also forces firms to divert capital into backup generation or renewable energy solutions. In fact, this has given rise to a parallel wave of investment into solar, wind, and battery storage, with many businesses seeking greater energy independence. Similarly, weaknesses in rail and port systems affect exporters directly, shaping decisions about whether and where to expand production. At the same time, opportunities are opening in digital infrastructure, with the expansion of broadband and the rollout of 5G driving telecoms and ICT investment.

Financing conditions form another layer of complexity. Access to capital markets depends on investor confidence, and South Africa's sovereign credit rating has a direct impact on borrowing costs

across the economy. Domestic banks remain an important source of funding, as do development finance institutions, but projects often hinge on foreign investment. Here, perceptions of risk play a decisive role. On the public sector side, government's infrastructure budget is meant to act as a catalyst for private investment – a role it fulfils unevenly, depending on fiscal constraints and delivery capacity.

Sectoral dynamics add further nuance. In mining, the global energy transition is creating new demand for minerals such as manganese and lithium, while still sustaining interest in traditional exports like coal and platinum. In manufacturing, capex is driven by both domestic demand and the need to remain competitive against imports, often with the support of industrial incentives. The energy sector itself is undergoing profound change, with independent power producer programmes and decarbonisation commitments unlocking new opportunities. Property and construction follow a different rhythm, shaped by interest rates, tenant demand, and urbanisation trends.

Of course, South Africa does not operate in a vacuum. Global investor sentiment toward emerging markets, geopolitical tensions, and shifting supply chains all play into local investment decisions. Increasingly, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations also influence where and how capital is allocated, with green finance and sustainability-linked projects becoming more prominent.

Finally, much comes down to firm-specific factors. The strength of a company's balance sheet, its risk appetite, and its long-term strategy determine whether it will commit to large investments. For some, automation and diversification are the drivers. For others, expansion into African markets is the motivation. Strong governance and effective leadership often make the difference between bold capex programmes and cautious retrenchment.

Taken together, these factors paint a picture of an investment landscape that is both fraught with challenges and rich with opportunity.

**Wilhelm du Plessis -
MANAGING EDITOR**



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VOLVO EC300 REDEFINES EXCAVATOR PERFORMANCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Capital Equipment News' Juanita Pienaar spoke with Olle Watz, excavator product manager at Volvo CE Region International, to unpack how the new-generation EC300 is setting new benchmarks for productivity, efficiency, and operator comfort across Africa.



"We bring in excavators and haulers in heavy-duty configurations as standard, which is rare. Our machines are designed to operate across a variety of African terrains, from chrome and iron ore to hot slag and coastal diamond mines."

David Vaughan, Managing Director of Babcock's equipment business.

A memorable unveiling in Middleburg

The EC300's arrival in Southern Africa was first marked at a high-profile event in Middleburg earlier this year, where Babcock and Volvo Construction Equipment (CE) unveiled their latest generation of articulated haulers and excavators. The launch was attended by senior leaders, including David Vaughan, Managing Director of Babcock's equipment business, and Joakim Arndorw, Head of Region International at Volvo CE. Speaking at the event, Vaughan



highlighted Volvo and Babcock's commitment to building machines suited to African conditions: "We bring in excavators and haulers in heavy-duty configurations as standard, which is rare. Our machines are designed to operate across a variety of African terrains, from chrome and iron ore to hot slag and coastal diamond mines." It was here that the EC300 was first introduced to the South African market as part of a line-up of six new-generation excavators delivering up to 15% improved fuel efficiency, enhanced operator environments, and cutting-edge machine control technology.

Power, precision, and next-generation engineering

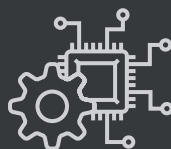
"These new generation excavators can deliver premium quality and heavy-duty performance," says Watz. "They mark another way Volvo CE is continuing to understand and adapt to the unique needs of customers and end-users by providing superior, highly productive options." The EC300, a 30–32.7 t class excavator



The EC300 is part of a line-up of six new-generation excavators delivering up to 15% improved fuel efficiency, enhanced operator environments, and cutting-edge machine control technology.



The EC300, a 30–32.7 t class excavator powered by the 243 hp Volvo D8L engine, has been engineered for versatility in demanding applications.



At its core is Volvo's advanced electro-hydraulic system with a smart main control valve (MCV), which optimises hydraulic flow based on demand.



Volvo CE's brand-new ROPS-certified cab has been designed to improve ergonomics, visibility, and operator control

QUICK TAKE



We are constantly monitoring fuel consumption across the business. Not doing so would be detrimental to our bottom line, so it's safe to say fuel efficiency is critical.

powered by the 243 hp Volvo D8L engine, has been engineered for versatility in demanding applications. From quarrying and trenching to infrastructure and mining support, it offers robust performance

without compromising efficiency.

At its core is Volvo's advanced electrohydraulic system with a smart main control valve (MCV), which optimises hydraulic flow based on demand. This

means faster cycle times, higher digging forces, and more precise control, all while reducing fuel consumption and emissions.

First in Southern Africa: Cloete's Sand and Stone experience

The first EC300 in Southern Africa was delivered in June 2025 to Cloete's Sand and Stone, a family-run aggregates supplier with over 40 years in the business. For managing director Wesley Cloete, fuel efficiency was a major driver behind the purchase.

"We are constantly monitoring fuel consumption across the business. Not doing so would be detrimental to our bottom line, so it's safe to say fuel efficiency is critical," Cloete says. "I was really impressed with how quick the machine was. It moves like a smaller machine but has the capability of a bigger one."

The EC300's speed and strength have already resulted in measurable gains for the operation. Faster truck loading and improved cycle times are helping the business move more material in less time, while the redesigned cab has improved operator productivity. "If your staff are more comfortable at work, you will get better productivity, and I can confirm productivity has gone up," Cloete adds.

Operator comfort at the forefront

Volvo CE's brand-new ROPS-certified cab

has been designed to improve ergonomics, visibility, and operator control. Noise levels inside are just 76 dB, vibration is reduced via hydraulic dampening mounts, and personalised settings allow operators to adjust the seat, joysticks, and climate control to their preference.

"With the cab, it's a totally new design with a more intuitive layout," says Watz. "Whilst we've prioritised productivity and power, it's not to the expense of operator comfort."

Safety is also enhanced through features such as 360° Volvo Smart View monitoring, large glazed areas for all-round visibility, and optional falling object and rollover protection systems.

Smart technology for maximum precision

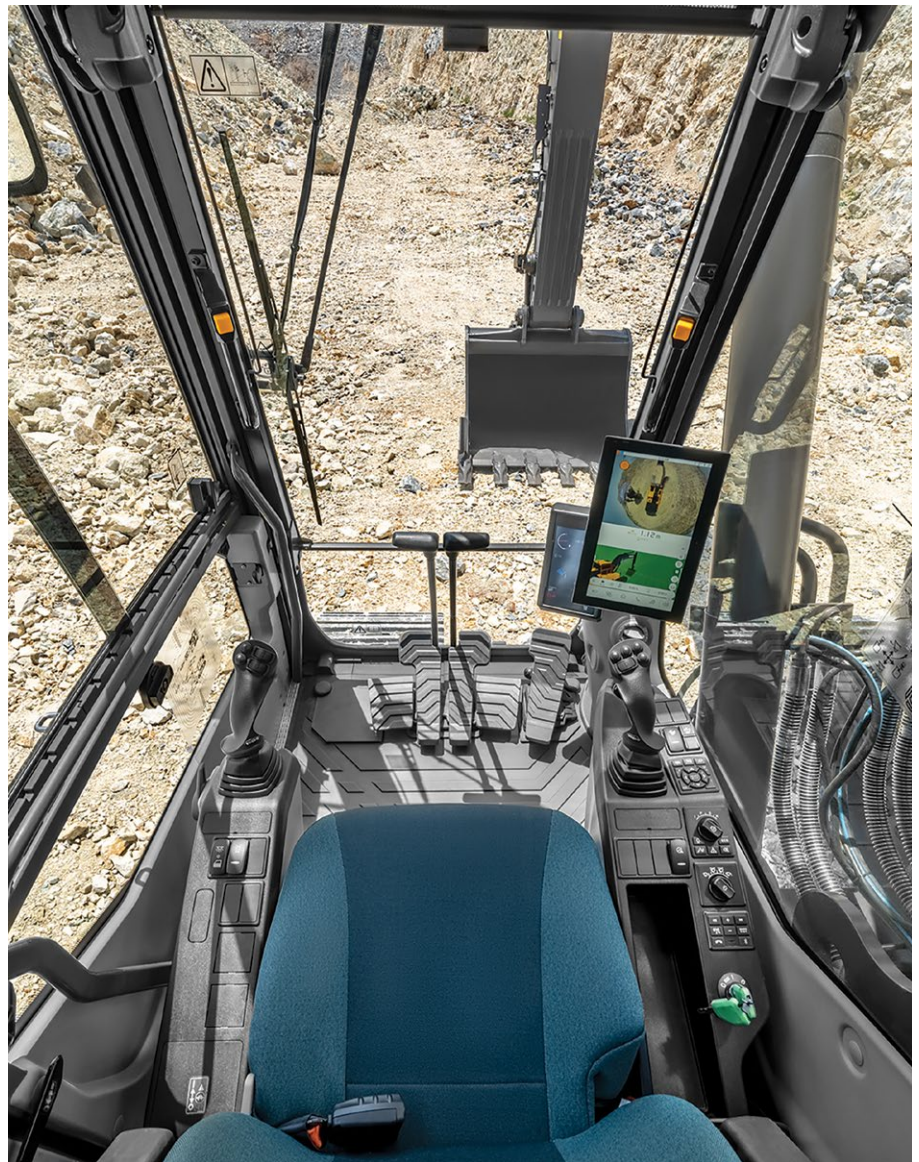
Like the other models in Volvo's new-generation range, the EC300 is compatible with Dig Assist - a suite of machine control tools that improves excavation accuracy and jobsite safety. Features include on-board weighing, automated digging, in-field design, and preset depth, height, and swing limits.

"These machines have been developed with a focus on reliability and adaptability," Watz explains. "They excel in varying conditions, offer best-in-class fuel efficiency, and deliver value to operators worldwide."

Serviceability designed for uptime

The EC300 offers ground-level access to service points, extended maintenance intervals, and grouped lubrication and filtration systems. The undercarriage features a robust X-shaped frame with greased and sealed track chains, providing long service life in harsh environments.

Babcock's rapid response and technical support were also a deciding factor for Cloete's Sand and Stone. "All the relevant information I needed was provided with a quote and options within hours of my request," Cloete recalls. "It's still early days with the EC300, but I have trust in the brand and I'm happy with



Babcock's backup service."

Specification snapshot

Operating weight: 30 730 - 32 710kg

Engine: Volvo D8L, 243 hp (179 kW)

Max torque: 1 250 Nm @ 1 300 rpm

Max digging reach: up to 10,720 mm (standard)

Max digging depth: up to 7 350 mm (standard)

Bucket breakout force: up to 207 kN with power boost

Hydraulic pumps: 2 × 276 l/min variable displacement axial piston pumps

Cab noise level: 76 dB

Built for Africa, built to last

From its reinforced booms and heavy-duty cooling packages to its precision hydraulics and fuel-efficient engine, the EC300 embodies Volvo CE's design-for-market philosophy. As David Vaughan said at the Middleburg launch, "We're not just selling machines, we're selling uptime, reliability, and performance."

For Cloete's Sand and Stone, the decision to be first was about business results rather than prestige. "Moving dirt is in my blood, and to be honoured with the first EC300 in Africa is a proud moment. It's a privilege I'll value for a long time," says Cloete.

With its combination of strength, speed, operator focus, and intelligent control systems, the EC300 is proving itself as a next-generation solution for African construction and mining businesses. 🌟

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With the cab, it's a totally new design

with a more intuitive layout.

Whilst we've prioritised productivity and power, it's not to the expense of operator comfort.



EXCAVATOR SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

QUICK TAKE



Competitive acquisition pricing.



Reduced downtime through durable design, high-quality components, and proactive service support.



Extended machine life thanks to robust engineering and genuine parts.



Operational efficiency with optimised hydraulics and fuel use.

T rue value in construction and mining equipment comes from reliability, efficiency, and long-term performance. Hitachi Construction Machinery Africa delivers all of this with the proven ZX200-5G and the established ZX350LC-7G and ZX350LCH-7G, machines that continue to perform across Southern Africa.

Proven reliability: ZX200-5G

The Hitachi ZX200-5G has earned a reputation as a dependable workhorse across Southern Africa. Built with Japanese-engineered durability and high-quality components, it performs consistently under demanding conditions. Backed by genuine parts, responsive service, and a strong regional support network, the ZX200-5G represents a reliable investment that delivers predictable performance and strong resale value.

For operators and project teams, its familiarity and ease of operation ensure that machines get to work immediately, supporting smooth project execution and reliable output.

Established efficiency: ZX350LC-7G & ZX350LCH-7G

Now in its second year in the Southern African market, the Hitachi ZX350LC-7G and ZX350LCH-7G have proven their reliability while incorporating the latest advancements in efficiency and technology. These machines offer enhanced operator comfort, improved hydraulic performance, and advanced monitoring through ConSite, which helps prevent unplanned downtime by identifying maintenance needs before they become issues.

Robust structures, quality components, and refined engineering make the -7G series resilient under heavy workloads. With these machines, businesses can optimise productivity, extend machine life, and maintain consistent performance across projects.

Considering all these factors, businesses can make informed decisions that protect margins, reduce risk, and deliver predictable, long-term project outcomes.

Final word

The ZX200-5G provides a proven, reliable solution for consistent productivity, while the ZX350LC-7G and ZX350LCH-7G, with a year of field-proven performance, combine efficiency, advanced technology and long-term value. Both options give businesses confidence in performance, operational costs, and lifecycle outcomes. Hitachi Excavators, The Total Cost of Ownership Advantage. 🌐

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Medium excavators that drive long-term business performance.

Whether in mining, construction or plant hire, low life-cycle cost is essential—not optional. The Hitachi **ZX200-5G** to **ZX350LCH-7G** range of excavators is built to deliver precision, power and fuel-efficient performance, with responsive handling and minimal downtime. Backed by exceptional parts availability, local service support and real-time machine monitoring, these machines are designed to keep your operation running. With Hitachi machines, you get more than a machine—you get reliability, productivity and true peace of mind.

Get the full advantage of the Hitachi ZAXIS Series — where every detail drives long-term business value.



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100 000 HOURS OF *PARTNERSHIP IN MOTION*

Hitachi Construction Machinery Southern Africa and Seriti's New Vaal Colliery have reached a remarkable milestone, with two Hitachi EX3600-6 mining excavators recently surpassing 100 000 operating hours.

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Central to this achievement is the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) Advantage synonymous with the Hitachi brand of equipment.

This achievement highlights the strength of the partnership between the two companies and the proven performance of Hitachi equipment in delivering long-term value. From the day the machines were commissioned, Hitachi and Seriti have worked side by side to ensure consistent productivity and reliable performance.

“This machine achieved a 92% availability by undertaking scheduled maintenance which reduces breakdowns and downtime costs,” said Henk Meyer – Shovels and Drills General Engineering

Superintendent.

Through proactive servicing, the continuous supply of genuine Hitachi parts, and a collaborative approach to maintenance planning, the teams have maximised machine availability while keeping operations running smoothly. Meyer went on to elaborate on the 100 000-hour achievement being a clear demonstration of the Hitachi brand's reputation for robustness and durability. The EX3600-6 excavators at New Vaal Colliery continue to perform in demanding mining conditions, showcasing the engineering strength that makes Hitachi

equipment a trusted choice for mining companies across the globe.

Central to this success is the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) Advantage synonymous with the Hitachi brand of equipment. By focusing on long-term value, the OEM ensures that customers benefit from extended machine lifecycles, predictable maintenance, and consistently high availability. For Seriti New Vaal, this has translated into reliable productivity and optimised operating costs for more than a decade.

This milestone reflects more than machine hours – it represents a true partnership. Hitachi Construction Machinery Southern Africa and Seriti New Vaal have aligned their goals, shared their expertise, and worked as one team to deliver exceptional outcomes. The journey of these two EX3600-6s demonstrates what is possible when robust, reliable technology is combined with a customer-focused support philosophy.

As the machines continue their productive journey beyond 100 000 hours, the collaboration between Hitachi Construction Machinery Southern Africa and Seriti New Vaal Colliery stands as a powerful example of uptime, availability, and value created through enduring partnerships and a machine that just won't quit. 🌟

FIRST NEW GENERATION VOLVO A40 ADTs DELIVER THE GOODS FOR M CIVILS

Having become the first recipient of the new generation Volvo articulated dump trucks (ADTs) in southern Africa, M Civils has deployed its 12 Volvo A40 units to undertake a newly-awarded chrome mining project. Particularly impressed by the fuel efficiency, quick cycle times and operator comfort, M Civils has placed an order for 12 more A40 units.

Established in 1997, M Civils started in construction, with particular focus in road building and infrastructure development. Over the years, the Rustenburg headquartered company has diversified its business to include contract mining.

Its latest project is a greenfields chrome mining contract to produce 90 000 tonnes (t) of run-of-mine chrome per month for the next five years. To execute this project, ADTs were deemed ideal for the operating conditions, where seams dip at 10-12 degrees on average, confirms site manager Mpho Ramalepe.

After careful consideration, the company opted for Volvo Construction Equipment (Volvo CE) haulers, placing an order for 12 new generation A40 units, which were delivered in early June this year. Due to the urgent nature of the contract, Babcock, the sole Volvo CE dealer in Southern Africa, delivered the machines to M Civils well ahead of the June 26 official launch event.

Choosing Volvo CE

Central to the buying decision, explains Reino de Kock, COO at M Civils, was Volvo CE's interface kit, which facilitates the integration of Level 9 Proximity Detection Systems (PDS)/ Collision Avoidance Systems (CAS) technology from any third-party supplier.

"The biggest benefit of an OEM Level 9 interface is seamless integration, which reduces compatibility challenges, a common issue when using third-party interfaces," says Reino de Kock.

Another key attraction for M Civils was the Haul Assist with On-Board Weighing, a Volvo CE system that provides real-time payload data, aiming to increase productivity, efficiency and reduce wear and fuel consumption by preventing underloading and overloading.

Key considerations

Apart from feature-related interests, M Civils also placed value on total cost of ownership (TCO) and the aftermarket support behind the Volvo CE product. The



The biggest benefit of an OEM Level 9 interface is seamless integration, which reduces compatibility challenges, a common issue when using third-party interfaces.

TCO approach to M Civils' procurement decisions factors all costs associated with the operation, maintenance and eventual disposal over the entire lifecycle, which justified the decision to go with Volvo.

"Every good product is only as good as its support. In Babcock, the Volvo CE product is supported by a reputable dealer in southern Africa. Strong aftermarket support is crucial for the success of our operations – it minimises costly downtime, extends equipment lifespan, reduces TCO and improves operational productivity through expert technical support, timely parts delivery and a proactive maintenance regime," says De Kock.

Delivering the goods

The 12 Volvo A40 units have been deployed to haul both waste and ROM material from the newly-opened pit to the designated waste rock dumps and ROM pads. Working 12-hour shifts, the haulers have already clocked between 600 and

700 hours, delivering the goods as per M Civils' expectations.

Ramalepe has been impressed by how quick these haulers are, even over challenging terrain, which affords faster cycle times and ultimately greater productivity.

Vincent de Kock has been particularly impressed by the fuel efficiency. "Fuel consumption to date ranges between 10 litres per hour, when running with overburden, and 14 litres per hour, when loading chrome, which by its nature is heavy due to its specific gravity, typically between 4,5 and 4,8," he explains, adding that these figures might change in future as mining conditions become tougher.

Based on the performance of the ADTs to date, M Civils has placed an order for 12 more A40 units. "As we ramp up production, we are looking forward to receiving another 12 A40 units, which we will deploy on the same project," concludes Reino. 🌟

GIVING MACHINES A SECOND LIFE

Capital Equipment News spoke with Neil Kendrick, Technical Director at Concord Access Solutions (CAS), about his journey in the industry, the company's refurbishment centre, its national parts distribution strategy, and the introduction of the New Terex Franna crane to the local market. *By Juanita Pienaar.*





FLS manufactures NexGen media, trommel and screen panels with expert precision to ensure consistent quality and high performance.

Two divisions, one goal

CAS operates in two clear areas: rentals and sales/after-sales. "There's a complete rental division, with five branches across South Africa," Kendrick explains. "We have about 1 100 access machines nationally, with the largest branch here in Midrand, holding around 465 machines."

On the other side sit sales and after-sales. "My division doesn't rent at all," he says firmly. "We represent all the brands, carry out sales, service, and parts support. The goal is to keep machines running and give customers the reassurance of full lifecycle support."

That support extends beyond the conventional. "If a customer has a number of machines on one site and doesn't want to employ their own technicians, we can arrange a man-on-site service," Kendrick explains. "It's about ensuring uptime and reducing stress for the end-user."

The refurbishment advantage

The jewel in the crown of CAS's recent expansion is its refurbishment centre, which has been operational for less than a year. "We started moving in last November," Kendrick says. "At the moment, we're fully refurbishing around six machines per month. By October, I

QUICK TAKE

Machines move through sandblasting, non-destructive testing, spraying, painting, and final quality checks before load testing. It even has a 5-tonne crane for major repairs.



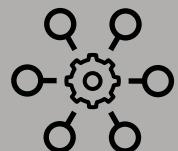
Supporting the refurbishment centre and customer fleet is a new Parts Distribution Centre (PDC).



The model showcased at the launch was the FR 17, built in India to the same specifications as the Australian machines and ideal for tight spaces, such as power stations, mining, industrial, chemical plants, harbours and building sites, where mobility is critical.



CAS is positioning itself as a one-stop partner for the access and lifting industry.





believe we'll be up to 12."

The process is meticulous, beginning with intake inspections. "All our technicians work on a mobile app called Asset Pool," he notes. "Each product has about 50 inspections loaded, from service to pre-delivery and security checks. The intake inspection is just to capture the condition in which the machine arrives – it ensures transparency with the customer."

Once machines move through washing, technical inspections, and quotation approval, the real work begins. "You're giving the machine a second life and buying it at 60% of what a new machine would be," Kendrick stresses. "At the moment we are ranging between 40% and 61% of new. If the refurbishment cost goes above 65%, then the customer needs to start considering the financial case for a new machine. But below that threshold, refurbishment makes a lot of sense."

The savings are tangible, but the benefits don't stop there. "Sustainability is a big driver," he adds. "Instead of scrapping a machine, we can refurbish it. Instead of buying new, we can give you another option. Globally, companies are looking at how to improve sustainability in their operations. Refurbishment is one of those answers."

A fully equipped facility

The new facility is designed for efficiency. Machines move through sandblasting,

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At the moment we are ranging between 40% and 61% of new. If the refurbishment cost goes above 65%, then the customer needs to start considering the financial case for a new machine. But below that threshold, refurbishment makes a lot of sense.

non-destructive testing, spraying, painting, and final quality checks before load testing. It even has a 5-tonne crane for major repairs.

"Most of the machines we see are between 10 and 17 years old," Kendrick explains. "We give them a second life. The main wearing items are pins, bushes, boom cables, hydraulic components, and, of course, engines. Those we replace with genuine parts."

To streamline the process, CAS has developed refurbishment kits. "If the machine only requires a standard kit, the process can take two to three weeks," he says. "Sometimes additional parts are needed, which can add time, but the aim is speed without compromise on quality."

National parts distribution

Supporting the refurbishment centre and customer fleet is a new Parts Distribution Centre (PDC). "We stock about R49-million worth of parts nationally," Kendrick notes. "We order six months' worth of fast-moving items, distribute three months' supply to branches, and keep three months here."

The system ensures customers aren't left waiting. "Of course, unusual failures can take longer, but for common issues we always carry stock," he adds. "If a customer has a unit down and it's critical, we'll even fly parts in. Normal shipping takes five to seven days for flown parts, or six weeks by sea."

Training for technicians and operators

CAS is also investing in training. "We'll have a training academy for both operators and technicians," Kendrick reveals.

"It's not just for our own staff but also for customers. For operators, it's about familiarisation and licensing, which must be renewed every two years. For technicians, we provide hand-over training, covering maintenance and diagnostics to help customers maximise uptime."

The academy will begin with CAS' core strengths. "For the first six months to a year, we'll focus on access machines and cranes," he says. "After that, we'll consider extending into other product lines, because the expertise is here."

The Franna arrival

Alongside refurbishment and after-sales growth, CAS has introduced the Franna pick-and-carry crane to South Africa. "Franna is originally an Australian product, started in 1976," Kendrick explains. "Today, they build around 700 pick-and-carry cranes per year. Ninety percent of those stay in Australia, where



It's not just for our own staff but also for customers.

For operators, it's about familiarisation and licensing, which must be renewed every two years. For technicians, we provide hand-over training, covering maintenance and diagnostics to help customers maximise uptime.

they dominate the market."

The model showcased at the launch was the FR 17, built in India to the same specifications as the Australian machines. "It's a mobile crane you can drive to a site, lift, balance, and move loads without outriggers," he says. "It's ideal for tight spaces, such as power stations, mining, industrial, chemical plants, harbours and building sites, where mobility is critical."

Premium brands, trusted support

Kendrick is clear about CAS' positioning. "We are strictly about elevating excellence; all our brands are premium brands," he says. "They're all long-established machines with strong legacies, backed by direct links to the OEMs. That means parts, service, and technical support are never in question."

It's a model designed to build trust and sustainability in equal measure. "Our unique

selling point is exactly that – you buy from us, and we look after you, whether it's service, parts, or technicians on site. That's the CAS difference."

Keeping machines running and businesses moving

CAS is positioning itself as a one-stop partner for the access and lifting industry. With a refurbishment programme that delivers cost-effective sustainability, a national parts distribution network designed to minimise downtime, the launch of the Franna crane, and a forthcoming training academy for operators and technicians, the company is steadily building a reputation for reliability and innovation.

The message is clear: whether customers need new machines, a second life for ageing fleets, or long-term technical support, CAS has the expertise, infrastructure, and premium brands to deliver. 🌟

► Commercial Banking

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MANUFACTURING AT THE CROSSROADS

The South African manufacturing sector has long been characterised by its resilience in the face of adversity. In recent years, this resilience has been tested by a range of challenges, including energy insecurity, port inefficiencies, geopolitical tensions, and supply chain disruptions. And yet, despite this pressure, many manufacturers continue to stand tall, driving economic output, creating jobs, and investing in the future. By Amith Singh, National Manager for Manufacturing, Nedbank Business and Commercial Banking.

As we sit here in August 2025, resilience alone is no longer enough. What we need now is reinvention. And it starts with understanding the fundamental shifts underway in the global and local landscape.

Volatility is the new normal

We've moved from recovery to complexity. The global environment

continues to be shaped by inflationary pressures, tightening fiscal regimes, and volatile trade corridors, from ongoing conflict in Eastern Europe and the Middle East to the regulatory headwinds created by the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which is now in full reporting phase.

Domestically, the situation remains no less complex. Energy remains a constraint, not just loadshedding, but

the broader cost and reliability of supply. Logistics backlogs, particularly at ports, have persisted, affecting both the imports of key inputs, such as green steel, and the exports of finished goods. Many of our clients are now budgeting six to eight months ahead for critical raw materials, just to ensure continuity.

And yet, despite these challenges, manufacturers are not retreating. In fact, many are expanding, modernising, and greening their operations. The question is no longer 'Can we survive?' but 'How do we lead?'

Strategy-driven firms are pulling ahead

The Nedbank–NAACAM carbon emissions study, released in June, uncovered some stark contrasts in readiness across the sector.

Over 60% of manufacturing respondents, particularly small and



Amith Singh, National Manager for Manufacturing, Nedbank Business and Commercial Banking.



We've built a specialised manufacturing team that understands your operating environment, from retrofitting machinery and navigating CBAM, to diversifying energy sources and decarbonising your supply chain.

mid-sized firms, do not yet have a carbon emissions baseline in place.

Despite this, most are already being asked for sustainability credentials by OEMs and global customers.

The top three areas firms identified for immediate support were: energy efficiency, cleaner material inputs, and access to affordable finance.

This disconnect between ambition and execution is fundamental, and it's where we, as a bank and as an ecosystem partner, are stepping in.

A partner for reinvention

Nedbank has evolved its support model in step with the sector. We've built a specialised manufacturing team that understands your operating environment, from retrofitting machinery and navigating CBAM, to diversifying energy sources and decarbonising your supply chain.

Our offering includes:

- Sustainability-linked finance and green asset funding
- Simplified supplier payment systems
- Digitised banking platforms tailored to

manufacturers

- Support in navigating export markets and trade finance tools
- Co-investment in sector research, toolkits, and skills development

Through our work with NAACAM, we've also launched a carbon readiness toolkit tailored to the automotive component sector, with learnings applicable across manufacturing sub-sectors.

Case study: Malben

One example is Malben, a Tier 1 component supplier, which recently became one of the first South African firms to trial green steel in local production. The company's transition was driven not only by environmental commitment but by OEM requirements and export risk mitigation.

Green steel currently carries a price premium of €200–300 per ton, yet Malben's leadership opted to invest early, securing relationships with European mills and participating in the Manufacture 2030

emissions reduction platform.

The result? Improved brand visibility, supply chain diversification, and an increase in interest from international buyers. Their leadership demonstrates that early adoption isn't just an ESG badge; it's a growth strategy.

Reinvention as a national imperative

South Africa's reindustrialisation journey cannot rely solely on resilience. We must support firms in decarbonising, digitising, and reskilling, not only for compliance, but also to unlock access to future markets, trade benefits, and capital.

The manufacturing sector remains a cornerstone of South Africa's economy. At Nedbank, we're not just watching from the sidelines. We're building new pathways, in partnership with the sector, to ensure that South African manufacturing doesn't just stand resolute, but leads.

Think bigger. Think Nedbank Business and Commercial Banking. 🌟



DAIMLER TRUCK EXPERIENCE DAY HIGHLIGHTS CUSTOMER-CENTRED INNOVATION

Capital Equipment News' Juanita Pienaar joined the Daimler Truck Experience Day at the Gerotek Testing Facility, where the company showcased its latest products, technologies, and services. On the sidelines of the event, Maretha Gerber, Group President and CEO of Daimler Truck Southern Africa (DTSA), and Olaf Petersen, Vice President for Sales and Marketing, shared their insights on the company's vision, customer-first approach, and the future of sustainable transport.

A gathering with purpose

Under the theme "For all who keep Africa moving", the Daimler Truck Experience Day brought together customers, media, and partners to experience the company's vehicles first-hand. "Today marks the beginning of what we call the biggest event of the year for our customers, our media, and our partners," Gerber explained. "It is important to connect and stay connected during these times."

The programme included a wide range of interactive activities such as electric truck experiences, ride and handling sessions, gradient climbs, and straight track runs.

Another compelling feature of the Daimler Truck Experience is the live demonstration of

Mercedes-Benz's latest safety technologies on the Actros 2652LS/33 RE. Guests watched as Active Brake Assist 6 (ABA 6)

avoided a collision with an inflatable crash-test vehicle, Active Side Guard Assist 2 detected a cyclist in the blind spot during a turning manoeuvre, and Frontguard Assist reacted to obstacles in front of the truck at low speeds.

"These advanced systems reflect Daimler Truck's ongoing commitment to intelligent safety and innovation on the road," Petersen said. "They don't just reduce the severity of collisions, they aim to prevent them altogether."

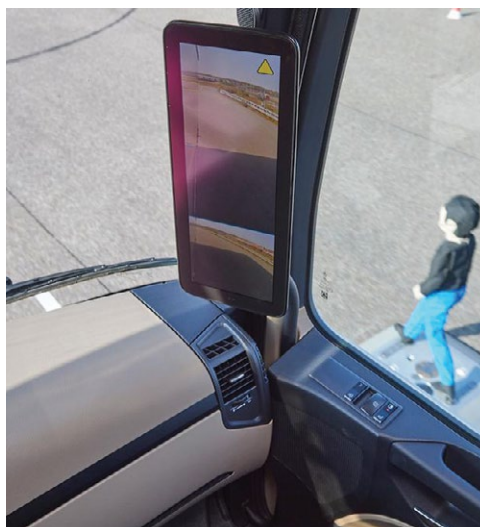
Building for Africa

For Gerber, Daimler's role in Africa goes beyond supplying vehicles. "Our purpose is clear: for all who keep Africa moving. It is our job to make sure that our



"We are not here just to sell a truck. We're here to build relationships. Selling a truck is coincidental. Without our customers, we are nothing."

Maretha Gerber, Group President and CEO of Daimler Truck Southern Africa (DTSA).



Under the theme "For all who keep Africa moving", the Daimler Truck Experience Day brought together customers, media, and partners to experience the company's vehicles first-hand.



Recent service innovations include Mercedes-Benz Uptime, which predicts service needs; online parts ordering, dubbed the "Amazon for parts"; used truck warranties valid internationally; and the launch of Daimler Truck Rental.



DTSA oversees operations across right-hand drive markets in Southern Africa and employs over 1 500 people directly and indirectly through its dealer network.



From cutting-edge safety systems to new rental solutions and a sharper customer focus, Daimler Truck Southern Africa is positioning itself not just as a manufacturer, but as a partner for progress.

products keep moving, because then our customers can deliver a service to the industry," she said.

DTSA oversees operations across right-hand drive markets in Southern Africa and employs over 1 500 people directly and indirectly through its dealer network. Importantly, more than 95% of its trucks are assembled in East London, while the Daimler Truck-owned Atlantis Foundries in Cape Town produces around 80% of Daimler Truck's global heavy-duty ICE engine blocks. "You can open any bonnet and check the engine - it will say made in South Africa," Gerber noted with pride.

Customer at the core

Much of the day's discussion circled back to customer relationships. Gerber was candid about Daimler's renewed emphasis on this area: "It is not just about the volume and being number one in the market, it's about the customer in the end. We've always had the customer top-of-mind. We're just making that conscious statement now because people don't only need a cheaper truck, they need a solid business behind it."

She highlighted the company's ability to tailor solutions. "We look at the customer from a complete business solution," she said. "If it doesn't work, we acknowledge where it went wrong, give clear communication, and fix it. And if it doesn't get fixed, we make another plan. That's always been our story."

Product highlights and new launches

Petersen walked guests through an impressive product showcase. Mercedes-Benz continues to focus on heavy-duty trucks across long-distance, construction, and special-purpose applications, while FUSO covers the light, medium, and distribution segments.

Among the highlights was the launch of the Fuso FJ automatic variant, equipped with an Allison six-speed automatic transmission. "This opens up new applications where manual transmission struggles, such as firefighting, water tankers, and waste compactors," Petersen explained.

The abnormal load truck tractor range has also been extended with 120-tonne and 250-tonne variants, featuring unique turbo retarder clutch technology that allows for smooth starts and push-pull operations. "This is where Mercedes-Benz is unique. Fluid coupling makes it possible to synchronise two trucks in tandem without damaging gearboxes," Petersen said.

Safety and sustainability

Safety and sustainability remain at

TAKE

QUICK



the heart of Daimler Truck's strategy. Petersen emphasised the life-saving impact of safety systems: "After 19 years of development, Active Brake Assist is a feature that saves lives. We are very happy that customers are increasingly opting for it."

On sustainability, Petersen explained the dual approach. "We are developing electric trucks and hydrogen technology. Hydrogen may well be the energy of the future. Even so, we invest in a variety of solutions, including ICE, to remain ready for all market realities."

He added that Daimler Truck itself has long integrated sustainability into operations: "We were one of the first manufacturers to move to water-based paint. Now we're targeting zero-consumption factories, with solar installations and close monitoring of energy, water, and waste."

Beyond metal: services and solutions

Both executives stressed that Daimler Truck Southern Africa is not just

about selling trucks. "Product is not everything. Product needs to be supported by service, otherwise it's nothing," Petersen remarked. With more than 30 service points across South Africa and neighbouring countries, DTSA ensures uptime and reliability.

Recent service innovations include Mercedes-Benz Uptime, which predicts service needs; online parts ordering, dubbed the "Amazon for parts"; used truck warranties valid internationally; and the launch of Daimler Truck Rental. "We are now able to offer rentals from one to 11.9 months, giving smaller businesses flexibility to start operations or manage peak demand," Gerber explained.

Telematics is another growth area. Petersen pointed out that Daimler Truck's proprietary FleetBoard goes far beyond aftermarket devices: "FleetBoard taps into 200 sensors in the truck, providing comprehensive reports. If customers use it correctly, they can cut fuel costs by up to 10% - and fuel is often 60 to 75% of operating costs."

Navigating challenges, embracing change

Gerber acknowledged the complexity of today's business environment, from geopolitical uncertainty to local infrastructure challenges. "It's like a perfect storm," she reflected. "But our approach is to become simpler, faster, and stronger. Complex businesses are not appreciated anymore. We need to support our customers faster, and we need to remain resilient."

She also addressed South Africa's emissions standards. "We have been engaging with government to move forward. We cannot prolong Euro 2 standards any longer - it limits us from bringing in advanced products. If the industry doesn't transform, South Africa will be left behind," she cautioned.

Despite these headwinds, Daimler Truck remains committed. "South Africa is a critical part of Daimler's global strategy," Gerber stressed. "We have invested in Atlantis Foundries, East London, and our head office in Pretoria. We are here to stay."

A partner for progress

The Daimler Truck Experience Day was more than a showcase of horsepower and technology. It was a statement of intent. "We are not here just to sell a truck," Gerber concluded. "We're here to build relationships. Selling a truck is coincidental. Without our customers, we are nothing."

For Petersen, the focus is clear: "It is not only about product, it's about creating a whole ecosystem to support the customer. We see huge opportunity to help operators optimise costs and performance. If we get this right, everybody wins."

From cutting-edge safety systems to new rental solutions and a sharper customer focus, Daimler Truck Southern Africa is positioning itself not just as a manufacturer, but as a partner for progress. 🌟



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HINO DOUBLES DOWN ON CUSTOMER VALUE WITH MARKET-LEADING WARRANTY AND SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

Juanita Pienaar spoke with **Anton Falck**, Vice President of Hino, and **Itumeleng Segage**, General Manager of Hino South Africa, during a recent media breakfast where the company outlined bold moves in aftersales support, market positioning, and new-energy vehicle trials.

Confidence through change

Despite challenging market conditions and shifts in the global trucking landscape, Hino is positioning itself as a brand of certainty and reliability in South Africa. The company's upcoming merger with Daimler, Fuso, and Toyota will bring new opportunities, but leadership insists that customer support remains the differentiator.



"The opportunities that will flow from the merger are enormous, but the even bigger importance for us is to differentiate ourselves through getting even better in terms of total support."

Anton Falck, Vice President of Hino.

Falck emphasised: "The opportunities that will flow from the merger are enormous, but the even bigger importance for us is to differentiate ourselves through getting even better in terms of total support."

This concept of "total support" is hardly new for Hino; it has been part of the brand's DNA for decades. Falck continued: "We make sure that our customers get the right trucks and that we take good care of those trucks afterwards. That has been our promise for more than 50 years in South Africa."

Strong performance in a shifting market

While South Africa's truck market has shown a decline, particularly in the extra-heavy segment, Hino is quietly



gaining ground. Segage explained: “Our expectation for this year is that the total market will end at around 30 800 units, with the extra-heavy segment down by about 11%. However, as much as the market is declining, we are consistently growing our share.”

That growth trajectory is clear. “In 2023, we ended on 8,3% share. This year we expect to reach 9,7% and by 2027 our target

is 10%. That tells us customers are choosing to invest in a brand they trust, even in a competitive and uncertain environment,” Segage said.

Six-year driveline warranty

The centrepiece of Hino’s announcement is its new six-year driveline warranty - the longest of its kind in the South African truck market. Falck described it as more than a marketing move: “This is not just an increase in cover; it is a statement of confidence in Hino’s engineering and manufacturing standards.”

Importantly, the warranty applies retrospectively to all vehicles purchased from 1 January 2025 and comes at no additional cost to customers. Segage underscored its significance: “Most OEMs in South Africa offer up to four years. No one else offers six. We are saying we back our quality truck with an industry-leading warranty, without adding to the purchase price.”

For fleet operators, this directly impacts long-term value. Falck explained: “If you replace your truck after four years, in the past, the next owner would have no warranty support. Now, with a six-year warranty, the residual value of the vehicle improves significantly. That changes the total cost of ownership calculation in a big way.”

Segage agreed, noting the practical benefits: “A lot can change in six years, but our brand promise won’t. The warranty addresses key operator concerns: cost predictability, uptime, and higher resale values.”

Built for South Africa

Hino leaders were clear that their trucks

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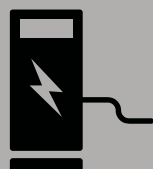
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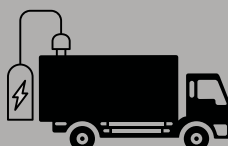
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While new-energy solutions capture headlines, Falck cautioned against premature assumptions about rapid adoption.



The company is running trials of 38 Hino 300 diesel-electric hybrids in South Africa, showing fuel savings of up to 20% and significantly reduced emissions.





are not generic imports, but products tailored to the unique demands of the South African environment. Segage said, "Our trucks are built for South Africa. They are for someone operating from Kuruman to Saldanha Bay, or from Witbank to Richards Bay."

This local focus is also reflected in Hino's dealer network, now 66 outlets strong. "It is one of the most competitive networks in the country, ensuring we can look after customers wherever they operate, even in rural and unpaved areas," Falck added.

Innovation in hybrid and electric

Beyond aftersales support, Hino is carefully testing sustainable alternatives. The company is running trials of 38 Hino 300 diesel-electric hybrids in South Africa, showing fuel savings of up to 20% and significantly reduced emissions. "We believe the hybrid is particularly suited to urban operations," Falck said. "Although we cannot sell them locally yet, we are working on subsidising acquisition costs and offering low-risk finance to selected customers through Kinto."

The media event also showcased the Hino Dutro Z EV, a small battery-electric truck designed for last-mile deliveries. With a gross weight of 3,4 tonnes and a payload of one tonne, it offers a driving range of around 150 km on a single charge.

Falck, however, was realistic about its limitations: "The vehicle has been designed for urban environments with low ground clearance, which makes it questionable for South African road conditions. We are bringing it here to showcase possibilities, but whether there is a real demand will



In South Africa, the economic case for going electric or hydrogen isn't there yet. We don't have legislation driving it, so operators will choose the lower-cost option. Internal combustion diesel remains difficult to replace and will be with us for some time.

abandoning the realities of our market," Falck said.

Standing on value, not price

A recurring theme from both executives was the importance of shifting the industry conversation from upfront price to long-term value. Segage made the point strongly: "We are moving away from a price discussion to a value discussion. What matters is the cost per kilometre and uptime, not just the day you purchase the vehicle."

Falck echoed this sentiment: "If you have two products, one Euro 3 and one Euro 5, and the Euro 5 is 20% more expensive, without legislation, an operator will choose the cheaper one. Our job is to provide value beyond that equation - through total support, lower running costs, and higher resale value."

Backing quality with commitment

As Hino eyes further growth in South Africa, both executives expressed confidence that the brand's mix of durability, customer focus, and forward-looking innovation will continue to resonate.

Segage summed it up: "When you purchase a Hino, it's the start of our relationship, not the end. We are gearing ourselves to partner with customers from day one, whether they are a start-up or a large fleet operator."

Falck concluded with a reminder of the company's philosophy: "Quality, durability, and reliability remain our promise. But it is the way we support our customers - before, during, and after the sale - that truly sets us apart." 🌟



determine its future."

Segage added that technicians are already being trained to handle such vehicles, with some sent to Japan earlier this year. "There will be more upskilling as these products become viable locally," he said.

Facing market realities

While new-energy solutions capture headlines, Falck cautioned against premature assumptions about rapid adoption. "In South Africa, the economic

case for going electric or hydrogen isn't there yet. We don't have legislation driving it, so operators will choose the lower-cost option. Internal combustion diesel remains difficult to replace and will be with us for some time."

Still, Hino is investing in multiple pathways, including hydrogen, to stay ahead of global shifts. "Hydrogen holds potential for the future, but it comes with its own risks and complications. We will keep developing alternatives, but without



VOLVO TRUCKS TO START LOCAL ASSEMBLY OF EURO 6 TRUCKS

Volvo Trucks South Africa has announced that it will start local assembly of its advanced Euro 6 trucks at the company's plant in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal during the first quarter of 2026.

Local assembly of Euro 6 trucks reinforces Volvo Trucks' leadership in sustainable transport solutions, while continuing to support the development of the local manufacturing sector," said Mattias Rodier, Chief Financial Officer of Volvo Trucks South Africa. "This milestone also continues our commitment to providing cleaner and more efficient transport solutions for the South African market."

Notably, the Euro 6 standard represents



"Local assembly of Euro 6 trucks reinforces Volvo Trucks' leadership in sustainable transport solutions, while continuing to support the development of the local manufacturing sector."

Mattias Rodier, Chief Financial Officer of Volvo Trucks South Africa.

TALKING POINT



The Volvo Trucks Durban Assembly Plant already underwent several upgrades in 2022 following the OEM's introduction of Euro 5 technology for its product range.



The Volvo FH Euro 6 is ideally suited for this market, offering efficient, safe, and cost-effective solutions that considers total cost of ownership.



Volvo Trucks South Africa's FH Euro 6 is available in seven horsepower variants across the D13 and D17 engine ranges, and in all cab configurations.



Earlier this year, the Volvo FH Aero won the coveted 2025 Green Truck award.

a substantial improvement over the current Euro 2 standards regulating both passenger and commercial vehicles in South Africa. The company continues to offer products from Euro 3 technology and up, to support customers with various sustainability requirements.

The Volvo Trucks Durban Assembly Plant already underwent several upgrades in 2022 following the OEM's introduction of Euro 5 technology for its product range. These included updates to the plant layout to support new assembly processes such as the introduction of AdBlue tanks and specialised exhaust systems. An additional investment has been made by the company to accommodate the Euro 6 truck assembly.

To ensure the highest levels of product quality and performance, Volvo Trucks also continues to invest in extensive training for its assembly operators, road testers, and product auditors.

"Quality is the foundation of everything we do – from the way we design and build our trucks, to the people, parts and services that support them," explained Rodier.

By assembling trucks locally, Volvo Trucks is not subject to import duties that are typically applied to fully built-up vehicles. This enables the company to offer Euro 6 models at more competitive pricing.

"As always, we are driven by our customers' needs," stated Rodier. "By assembling Euro 6 trucks locally, we're not only responding to growing local demand for cleaner technology but also doing so in a way that ensures competitiveness and accessibility for our customers."

Volvo's Euro 6 diesel engines are produced at the company's state-of-the-art facility in Skövde, Sweden. From there, engines are shipped to global assembly plants, including the one in Durban.

The integration of Euro 6 production is complementary to the existing local assembly of Volvo's full range of extra heavy trucks – including the FH, FM, and FMX ranges – with no disruption to current assembly lines. Rather, it enhances the plant's capabilities and product offering.

The introduction of Euro 6 to South Africa began earlier this year with the launch of the technology on its original long-haul icon, the Volvo FH. Now, with local assembly underway, fleet operators can benefit from the full spectrum of Volvo Trucks' sustainability, performance, and operational efficiencies.

In South Africa, long-haul transport plays a fundamental role in facilitating the movement of goods across the country. Fuel and operating costs are critical components of a fleet owner's business, regardless of its size.

The Volvo FH Euro 6 is ideally suited for this market, offering efficient, safe, and cost-

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Volvo Trucks South Africa's FH Euro 6 is available in seven horsepower variants across the D13 and D17 engine ranges, and in all cab configurations: Sleeper, Globetrotter and Globetrotter XL.

FH Aero coming soon

The company also said it is in the process of homologating and conducting local tests for the introduction of its FH Aero range in South Africa. A launch date will be announced once all these processes have been completed.

The Volvo FH Aero was introduced globally in 2024 and is seen by the company as the ideal long-haul truck. Its aerodynamic cab is designed to save fleet owners energy and reduce their carbon footprint. Local customers will be able to choose between electric and diesel models.

Earlier this year, the Volvo FH Aero won the coveted 2025 Green Truck award. It is a comprehensive and independent comparative press test to identify the most fuel-efficient long-haul truck, organised by the German trade magazines Trucker and Verkehrs-Rundschau.

"The new Volvo FH Aero is our most efficient truck ever as we continue to reduce CO₂ from our entire product range," said Rodier. "This is a Volvo truck at its best – a safe, aerodynamically designed and superior quality truck for tough long-haul tasks, designed for the success of our customers. We can't wait to introduce it to the South African market." 🌟

LEADING THE CHARGE TOWARDS FULLY ELECTRIC MOBILE CRUSHERS AND SCREENS

As contractors in Southern Africa seek to reduce operating costs to remain competitive, the recent arrival of the fully electric Powertrack range from Athos Crushing and Screening unlocks a new era in crushing and screening. A contractor operating outside South Africa has placed an order for two units, heralding the industry's keen interest in the technology.



July 2025 marked a new era in the Southern African crushing and screening space as Athos Crushing and Screening, a sister company to Pilot Crushtec International, took the wraps off what is believed to be the first fully electric line of mobile crushers and screens in southern Africa.

The launch event saw the arrival of the first three units – the Powertrack PT Pro J-11E mobile jaw crusher, the Powertrack PT Pro C-20E mobile cone crusher and the Powertrack PT Pro ST-08E mobile triple-deck screen, which will be joined by the Powertrack PT Pro SP-08E mobile scalping screen at a later stage.

“Ahead of the launch, a contractor operating outside South Africa placed an order for two machines, a Powertrack PT Pro J-11E mobile jaw crusher and a Powertrack PT Pro ST-08E mobile



High-capacity material separation is achieved with the Powertrack PT Pro ST-08E triple-deck screen, powered by a fully electric drive.



The Powertrack PT Pro ST-08E mobile triple-deck screen offers versatile performance while eliminating diesel costs.



Fully electric mobile crushers and screens are cutting costs while driving sustainability in mining and quarrying.

triple-deck screen. The machines will be deployed to crush aggregates for the maintenance of haul roads at a mine," confirms Sales and Marketing Director Francois Marais.

While there is a general trepidation to go the fully electric route among some quarters of the industry, Marais says there is another school of thought that recognises the immediate cost benefits of adopting this technology, especially

where grid electricity supply exists.

"The fully electric Powertrack range ushers in a new era in cost efficiency. Firstly, the range comes at a competitive price point. The absence of the diesel engine alone shaves off 30 to 40% of the capital cost compared to comparable diesel units," Marais says. "Secondly, the elimination of diesel fuel expenses provides significant reduction in operating costs. Based on our own calculations, we

expect operators to realise a 40 to 50% cost benefit by running these machines on grid electricity versus diesel," he says.

Another cost benefit of the e-Power Powertrack range stems from the reduced maintenance requirements due to the absence of a diesel engine. Jorge Abelho, Technical Support Director at Athos Crushing and Screening, says electric motors by their nature have far fewer moving parts than their diesel counterparts, reducing the need for frequent servicing, oil changes and replacement of components such as filters.

"Simplicity is another key feature which makes these machines easy to fault find and maintain, maximising uptime. The simple nature of these fully electric units also means that there are no specialised skills required to look after the machines. Most existing technicians who have worked on static plants will easily service these machines," Abelho says.

Marais says the e-Power range comes at a time when the incentive for contractors to reduce costs is very high. This is driven by the dire need to remain competitive, enhance profitability and ensure sustainability by lowering major expenses such as capital costs, fuel and maintenance.

"By managing costs effectively, contractors can stay resilient against market volatility, while meeting the increasing demands for environmental responsibility, thus securing their long-term success in such a competitive market," Marais concludes. 🌱

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