

# Future role model

## **"A MAJOR TRANSFORMATION**

beyond the expectations of many – and with much to contribute in future" is how the port of Maputo is described by Liam Mckenzie, director of Fairseas International, one of the bulk shipping operators using the port on a regular basis and a shipping executive previously based in Maputo for seven years.

"Maputo is the only truly concessioned port in southern Africa and has an opportunity to develop as a future role model for the much-needed privatisation of port operations in South Africa and the region."

Mckenzie says recent developments at South African ports – which recently effectively held the trading activities of the nation to ransom – had highlighted the benefits of Maputo as an alternative port for SA's imports and exports.

With a stable operating environment, strong, committed and focused shareholders in the MPDC port authority, well-man-

aged specialised freight terminals, an effective corridor development initiative and an "open for business" approach adopted by all Maputo has everything going for it.

Incredible progress has been made over the past seven years to transform the port from almost derelict status to a position of regional importance. And while there's been some small hiccups in past years – with what Mckenzie refers to as an initial heavy turnover in port management staff and some difficulties at cargo-operating supervisory levels that's tended to frustrate freight stakeholders from time to time – the positives far outweigh any negatives to date.

The port now has a new CEO in place in Jorge Feraz, previously MD of the MIPS Container terminal at Maputo, who Mckenzie says is a man of vision with the perfect credentials for the job and who is well positioned to take Maputo port to the next level.

"Port users are enjoying tangible benefits from the ongoing investment in the port. You literally see progress on a day-to-day basis and the refreshing effect of what's taking place in Maputo port – along with the increase in shipping lines calling at Maputo – is exactly what the region needs. South African cargo interests will increasingly continue to embrace Maputo in future."

Maputo can in some ways be considered as the "home" port of Fairseas, with its vessels regularly calling to load and discharge local and transit commodities. Says Mckenzie: "We seek to add value by providing cargo interests with efficient and cost-effective sea transport and intermodal solutions along the African seaboard and the Indian Ocean rim – and Maputo is an essential part of our services offering. We'll have in the region of 25 vessels call at Maputo this year, making Fairseas one of the more regular bulk callers at the port." ■