



## Marking maritime milestones

*It seems that 2018 is a milestone year for a number of companies and organisations in the maritime sectors who are all celebrating momentous anniversaries.*

The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) marks its 20th anniversary on 1 April this year through the promulgation of the SAMSA Act 5 of 1998. While the first decade of SAMSA's existence saw the Authority keep a rather low profile, they have maintained a high profile over the last ten years in pursuit of their objectives.

Promoting the country's maritime interests have been high on their agenda and the Authority has been a successful component of the drive to bolster the ocean economy.

The last few years have seen SAMSA navigating some turbulent waters, however, as the Authority has presented a rather troubling balance sheet and over-spending has been identified. Currently without a permanent Chief Executive Officer, the industry hopes to see the position being filled with someone who understands the industry, but who is also circumspect about the role SAMSA needs to play in the industry going forward.

As some industry stakeholders rekindle talks of the feasibility of a dedicated Maritime Ministry, it would be interesting to ponder how SAMSA could help formulate such a bold move. And so, as we congratulate SAMSA on their anniversary, one cannot but help to wonder what the next decade will hold for the Authority.

We are privileged to have watched a number of other companies prosper over the course of the magazine's existence. Maritime companies celebrating notable milestones this year include Belmet Marine (50), Atlatech (40), Tallie Marine (30) and Offshore Marine Services (20).

All started by entrepreneurs keen to strike out on their own, they showcase what hard work, skills and determination can accomplish - even in a capital intensive industry such as this one.

I have had extensive engagements with all of these

companies and have been privileged to write about their successes on numerous occasions. Most have even provided significant lessons for the running of our own ventures and we look forward to capturing future chapters and milestones for them.

At a time when government policy favours the establishment of SMME's and the inclusion of the youth in our formal economy, these companies can surely help provide a blueprint for other start-ups.

Perhaps not as pleasant news has placed a question mark on the skill of South Africa's harbour pilots. Two incidents drew attention to the country's ports as a vessel found itself grounded in Cape Town (see photo above) and another collided with a stationary tug in Durban. Both had local harbour pilots on board at the time. SAMSA is currently investigating the cause of the collision in the Port of Durban, but certainly Transnet National Ports Authority needs to take heed of the situation.

Another port operation that has been attracting significant international attention is the Doraleh Container Terminal in Djibouti. The government seized control of the concessioned terminal from DP World in February.

Since then both parties (DP World and the Government of Djibouti) have been engaged in issuing public statements relating to their respective claims to the terminal. DP World is adamant that the seizure was unlawful and in breach of the contract, while the Djibouti Government maintains that the contract was terminated through a transparent legal process.

It will be an interesting case to follow at a time when Africa is seeking international investment in port and rail infrastructure that may include concession opportunities. The Djibouti situation is likely to impact on the international community's appetite for investment.

We will continue to watch developments in this regard and look forward to bringing you further updates.

Colleen Jacka, editor.  
editor@maritimesa.co.za