



MAN supplies Buscor with two wheelchair-friendly bus-trains

MAN Truck & Bus South Africa has supplied Buscor, Mpumalanga's premier commuter bus service with two new MAN HB4 Lion's Explorer bus-trains, specially equipped with hydraulically-operated wheelchair lifts and dedicated wheelchair docking stations to help give passengers with special needs an easier, more comfortable commuting experience.

The new buses were handed over to Buscor during a gala event held at Buscor premises in Mbombela (Nelspruit) on Friday 11 October in front of a crowd of hundreds of local commuters.

Speaking at the event were South Africa's First Lady, Ms. Nompumelelo MaNtuli-Zuma, members of the Mpumalanga Departments of Transport and Public Works, and members of the management boards of Buscor and MAN Truck & Bus South Africa.

Expressing her organisation's urgent need for wheelchair-friendly buses, Buscor Executive Chairperson, Ms. Nora Fakude-Nkuna stated: "I have to single out MAN for responding immediately to our call for buses suitably equipped for today's event which marks the beginning of the road to inclusion for Mpumalanga's disabled community. People with disabilities in South Africa have been sidelined for too long but Buscor has taken a stand to break this cycle of exclusion. No longer will bus commuters with disabilities be handled like bags of *mielie meel*. We are intervening as of today."

Bruce Dickson, CEO, MAN Truck & Bus South Africa explained that, "The wheelchair lifts on the buses are fitted to a dedicated entrance situated at the rear side of the the bus-train prime-mover, which allows wheelchair occupants to board the bus with ease to make their way to a convenient, safe and comfortable bay inside the bus."

Buscor currently runs a fleet of over 450 MAN buses, the majority of which are bus-trains based on the HB4 Lion's Explorer chassis, transporting over 38

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million passengers per annum, covering a distance of approximately 32 million kilometres per annum.

According to Tiago Dias, Key Accounts Manager, MAN Bus & Coach South Africa, "the HB4 Lion's Explorer is the ideal prime-mover for bus-train applications, particularly in semi-rural areas where gravel roads predominate. Equipped with air suspension, the HB4 gives passengers a comfortable ride. The Euro 3 MAN common-rail diesel engine is both fuel-efficient and quiet. Padded passenger seats, all with seatbelts add to the comfort and safety levels in the bus."

Built to carry 104 seated passengers (no standing passengers), the Buscor HB4 bus-train is powered by the 10.5 litre MAN D20 turbo-charged engine with a maximum power output of 257kW@1 900 rpm, and a torque rating of 1750Nm@1 000-1 400 rpm.

The aerodynamic frontal design of the HB4 Lion's Explorer body reduces 'drag', contributing to improved fuel economy.

Ease of driving to minimise driver fatigue and distraction from the road ahead are assisted by the MAN TipMatic automated gearbox, with ABS, EBS, traction control and a ZF intarder delivering ultra-safe braking and vehicle stability functions.

The wide, pneumatically operated passenger door on the HB4 has large glass panels for improved driver curb-side visibility and styling, while the entrance has adequate passenger handrails and non-slip flooring which to help improve passenger boarding and alighting from the bus. All doors are inter-linked to the park brake, preventing them from opening while the bus is moving. The wheelchair lifts are operated by dedicated Buscor stewards.

For added safety, the HB4 bus-trains are fitted with a curved rubber-glazed windscreen and curved rear-view mirrors which afford the driver greater peripheral vision and reduced glare. To enhance reliability, the front grille design on the HB4 improves airflow for cooling and allows easy access for daily maintenance checks.

“Other safety features include roll over protection, emergency exit compliance and seat anchorage, ensuring that our buses not only comply with SABS safety requirements but also surpass them,” added Dias.

The new MAN bus-train bodies are locally manufactured by MAN, as are the Skyjacks wheelchair lifts, contributing to job creation and MAN’s 80%-plus bus-body Local Content rating. The buses will be serviced at Buscor’s MAN-accredited workshops in Mpumalanga.

“MAN’s bus and coach division is South Africa’s only one-stop bus chassis and body shop where bus operators can get vehicles designed to meet their needs with absolute efficiency and cost effectiveness. Our ability to satisfy our customers is mirrored by our passenger transit partners like Buscor who likewise is totally committed to satisfying its customers with safe, reliable and affordable commuter bus services, “ concluded Dickson.

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The Transport Efficiency Program by MAN Truck & Bus

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