

GREEN POINT LIGHTHOUSE MARKS 118 YEARS OF SERVICE THIS OCTOBER TRANSPORT MONTH

(CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, 16 OCTOBER 2023) Green Point Lighthouse in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) will mark 118 years of service this October Transport Month. It was the first lighthouse to be fully automated on 18 November 1961.

Green Point Lighthouse is situated near Scottburgh on the KZN south coast. The 22-metre circular cast-iron structure is painted with red and white horizontal bands, and the white lantern house has a red dome. The rotating lens system produces two flashes every 15 seconds. It is connected to the mains supply and has a standby diesel generator set. The lighthouse is automated, and there is a resident lightkeeper who oversees day-to-day maintenance. Scheduled maintenance is carried out by teams from Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) in Durban. They will check and service the light, the tower, and the standby engine. Regular grass cutting is important, to discourage the resident black mambas.

It is one of three lighthouses that assist mariners to safely navigate the Aliwal Shoal, a submerged reef approximately five kilometres off the coast. In 1889, wooden beacons were used to mark the extremities of the shoal. These were replaced by two cast-iron lighthouses in 1892 – one at Scottburgh to mark the southern end, and the other at Mahlongwa Head to mark the northern end. The lighthouses were confusing to mariners, and the relocation of the lights to Port Shepstone and Green Point was proposed. The Scottburgh light was moved to Port Shepstone. At Green Point, a completely new lighthouse was erected and brought into operation in 1905.

Green Point Lighthouse is one of 11 operational lighthouses along the KZN coast. The other 10 are: Cape Vidal, Cooper, Durnford, Ifafa Beach, Jesser Point, North Sand Bluff, Port Shepstone, Richards Bay, Tugela and Umhlanga Rocks. TNPA is mandated by the National Ports Act, 2005 (Act No. 12 of 2005) to provide, operate and maintain lighthouses and other marine Aids to Navigation (AtoNs) to assist the navigation of vessels within commercial port limits and along the coast of South Africa.

A marine AtoN is defined as: "A device, system or service, external to vessels, designed and operated to enhance safe and efficient navigation of individual vessels and/or vessel traffic." Lighthouses, beacons, and buoys are the most common types of visual AtoNs. Virtual AtoNs are new technology that use digital signals to warn of dangers in specific locations, without the need for physical buoys or lighthouses. The digital signals are transmitted from Automatic Identification System (AIS) stations and are received by AIS units onboard vessels. Large vessels – such as container ships and passenger ships – are required to carry AIS in terms of International Maritime Organisation regulations, but smaller vessels are not. Therefore, visual marine AtoNs cannot be done away with. TNPA AtoNs conform to the standards set by the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA). South Africa, represented by TNPA, is a founder member of IALA.

- ENDS –

Photo gallery:

1.



Green Point KZN Lighthouse was first lit on the night of 16 October 1905.

2.



It was the second last lighthouse to use petroleum vapour burners, like the ones pictured here.

3.



Green Point KZN must not be confused with Green Point in Cape Town. Green Point Lighthouse in Cape Town is the oldest lighthouse of the 44 operational lighthouses on the South African coast. It was commissioned on 12 April 1824.

About Transnet National Ports Authority

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) is one of six operating divisions of Transnet SOC Ltd. The National Ports Authority is responsible for the safe, effective, and efficient economic functioning of the national port system, which it manages in a landlord capacity. It provides port infrastructure and marine services at the eight commercial seaports in South Africa – Richards Bay, Durban, Saldanha, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Mossel Bay and Ngqura. It operates within a legislative and regulatory environment and is governed by the National Ports Act (Act No. 12 of 2005).

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