

LOWVELDER - TUESDAY, 10 APRIL 2007

Smoother flow at Lebombo Border Post

■ Dalene Robus

NELSPRUIT - With the school holidays drawing to a close today, thousands of Lowveld tourists are returning home after a well-deserved breakaway.

The holiday season led to an enormous increase in traffic on all the major roads in the province and it was expected to increase significantly from yesterday.

Although traffic congestion occurred at the Lebombo Border Post over the Easter weekend, people travelling to Mozambique and back were assisted much faster than last December. The border post handles approximately 8 000 passengers daily, but the figure increased to more than 57 000 on April 6, the start of the long weekend. Totals of 6 328 and 9 304 passengers passed through on Saturday and Sunday respectively.

According to Ms Brenda Horn, CEO of the Maputo Corridor Logistic Initiative (MCLI) the longest period passengers had to wait was approximately three hours. The various departments involved at the border post had met regularly since January 2007 in an

attempt to prevent the same congestion that had many a traveller hot under the collar in December last year. Although there were long queues the past weekend, the provincial roads department also assisted in the flow of traffic, Horn said.

According to Mr David Nkambule, head of communications of roads and transport, the busiest day on the roads was Friday April 6, with the start of the Easter weekend. More than 1 200 vehicles per hour travelled between Middelburg and Wonderfontein on Friday and it decreased to 613 per hour at the Nkomazi Plaza on the same day.

He said that to date a total of 21 fatal accidents had taken place on provincial roads since the start of the school holidays on March 23. Five occurred on roads in the Lowveld, one on the Lydenburg/Dullstroom Road, two in the vicinity of Tonga, one on the N4 near Malalane and one on the R40 in the Bushbuckridge area.

Nkambule said poor visibility on roads due to the rainy weather, as well as speeding and reckless driving, contributed to the accidents.