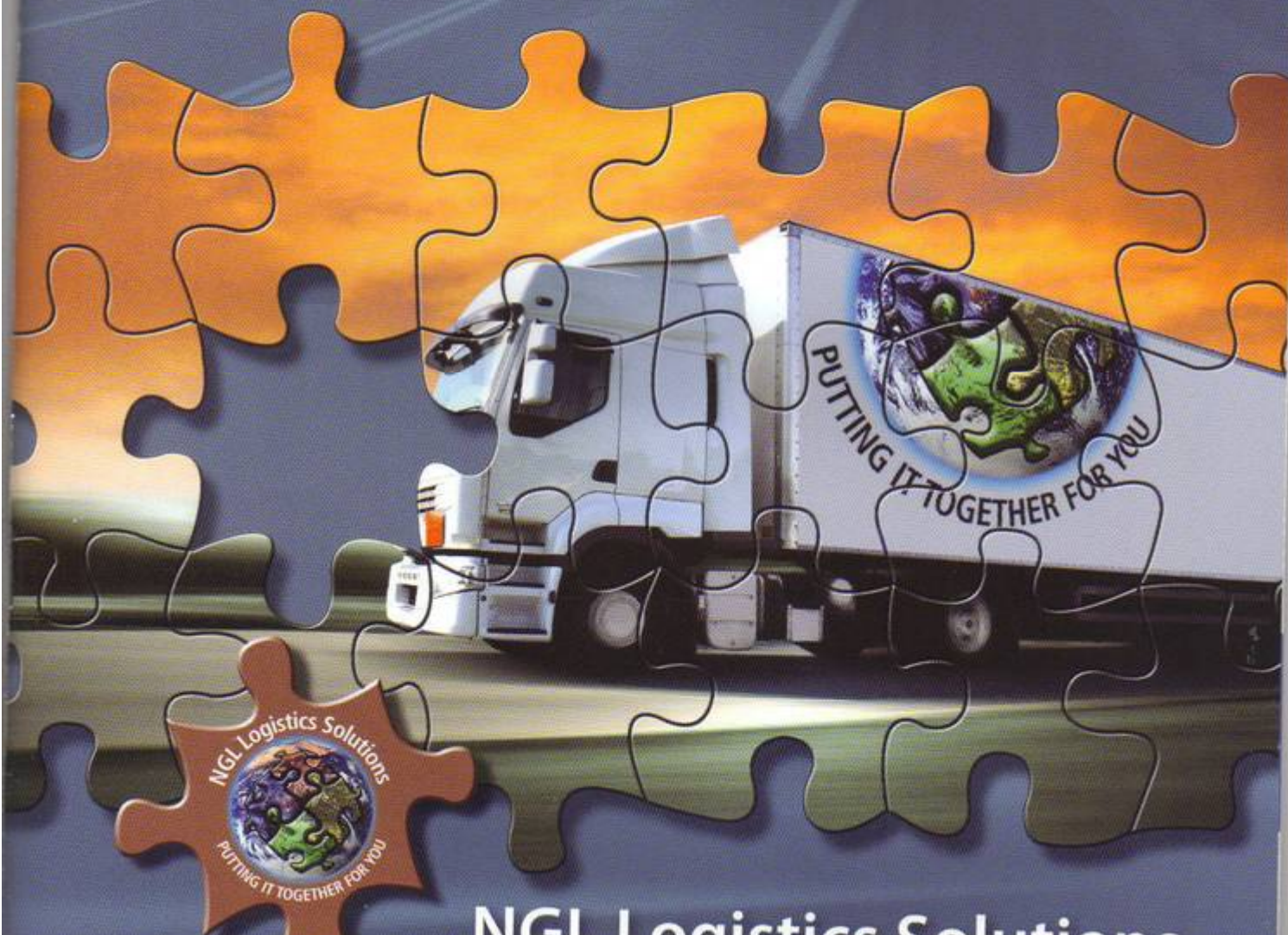


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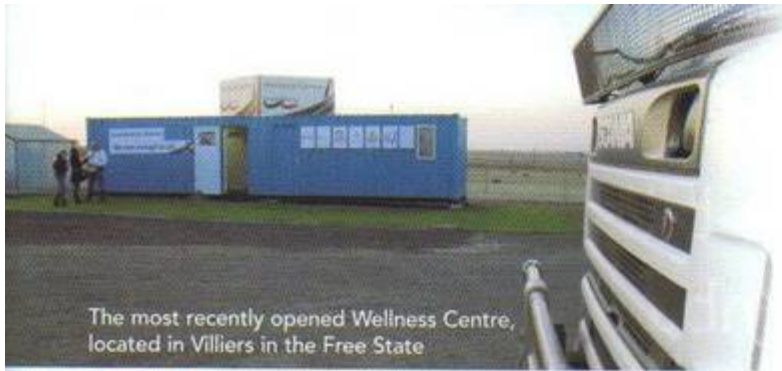
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SOUTH AFRICA



NGL Logistics Solutions



The most recently opened Wellness Centre, located in Villiers in the Free State

## Counting the cost of truck driver illness

**H**ealthy and happy truck drivers provide numerous benefits to the road freight industry. They are more alert, reliable and responsible, ensuring that their vehicles and cargoes reach their destinations intact and on time.

A sickly driver is more at risk of being involved in an accident, incurring major costs to the employer and their insurer through loss of the vehicle, trailer and cargo. If a sick driver is killed in an accident, although tragic, his employer is faced with the further cost of recruiting and training a replacement driver.

One of the mechanisms that help to keep truck drivers healthy on South Africa's many major transport routes are the 20 in situ Wellness Centres and five mobile wellness units strategically located throughout the country.

Most trucking accidents in South Africa are attributed to driver fatigue – a common problem in the industry. However, this is not the only cause. Sickly drivers suffering from TB, high blood pressure, diabetes, colds and flu, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV-related conditions can contribute to a poor level of health in a driver, which adversely affects his performance. The purpose of Trucking Wellness is to improve the overall health and well-being of the country's drivers and reduce the potential for driver "down-time" and accidents.

The Trucking Wellness project is designed to create HIV/Aids and STI awareness among long-distance truck drivers, commercial sex workers and the communities around the various truck stops, as well as to provide the necessary counselling and treatment. Managed by the Corridor Empowerment Project (CEP), the Trucking Wellness

clinics operate mostly after hours and at night and offer a number of services to drivers free of charge and in a safe and confidential environment.

Con Roux, Commercial Manager for the N3 Toll Concession which is involved with Trucking Wellness, has seen an interesting trend. "Many insurance companies are coming on board because it is in their financial interests to make sure that truck drivers are healthy. One trucking accident can cost millions, and ultimately someone has to pay up. In most cases it's the insurers. Ultimately, it really is in everyone's interests to make sure that this project succeeds."

Roux emphasises the social responsibility element expected of trucking companies with regard to the quality of life of their drivers, as well as other road users who are negatively affected by accidents. "There is definitely a moral high ground to be taken here," he says. "The consequences of the ill-health of drivers are a major national problem for the industry. By getting involved in Trucking Wellness, a transport operator is striding ahead of its competitors in terms of social responsibility.

"Brand awareness is vitally important in this industry," adds Roux. "And companies are starting to realise the value of being recognised as an organisation that cares enough about its employees to make their wellness a priority."

Trucking Wellness provides the ideal solution to a growing issue at no cost to companies themselves. The clinic services are free to the drivers (and anyone who might need them), so companies can address the well-being of their drivers free from financial repercussions. ♦

**For further information contact 011 894 2566**