



## Unitrans & RBM. A 41-Year Partnership Driven by Safety, Trust and Performance.

Case study / Mining  
10 Min read

Over the course of its 50-year operation, Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) has relied on Unitrans as a core transport and logistics partner for 41 years. This enduring collaboration is a testament to mutual trust, resilience, and the ability to grow together through decades of change. From project milestones to cutting-edge innovation, the partnership continues to shape safer, smarter logistics and operations at the mine.

### The Challenge

RBM needed a transport and logistics partner capable of scaling with its operations – while consistently raising the bar on safety and efficiency. With evolving safety standards and growing operational complexity, the challenge was not only to meet expectations, but to help set new standards.

### The Unitrans Solution

#### 1 Phase 1: Network Redesign & Health and Safety Transformation

Unitrans embedded safety into every layer of its operations, earning Rio Tinto's Most Outstanding Contractor Partner Safety Award at the annual RockStars of the Year Safety Awards for two years in a row (2024 and 2025). This recognition speaks volumes about the company's proactive approach and dedication to the Rio Tinto Safety System.

##### Key initiatives included:

- Seamless adoption of Rio Tinto safety rituals into daily routines.
- Real-time risk assessments and regular reporting to RBM leadership.
- Next-gen safety tech, including collision avoidance and fatigue alert systems.
- Dedicated onboarding for new hires, accelerating alignment with RBM protocols.
- A strong employee feedback loop, creating a culture of respect, accountability, and improvement.

*"I'm exceptionally proud that we have won this award for the second consecutive year and that Rio Tinto's safety maturity model has been implemented across the operation at Richards Bay Minerals."*

John Kettlewell, Mining Executive at Unitrans.



### Results

The following safety metrics reflect Unitrans' commitment to operational excellence and continuous improvement in the RBM operation:

#### 15%

reduction in vehicle-related incidents year-on-year, demonstrating the effectiveness of targeted interventions and driver awareness programs.

#### Over 2.1M

Over 2.1 million man hours without a Last Time Injury (LTI) during peak operational periods, underscoring a strong safety culture and rigorous compliance.

#### 10M

10 million LTI-free kilometres travelled, reinforcing the reliability and discipline of our fleet operations.

#### Over 20k

More than 200,000 product drops executed safely and efficiently, with zero major incidents reported.

#### 7%

A 7% reduction in driver risk severity from Q3 2025 to Q4 2025, while the industry saw a 5.2% increase.

#### 173 point

The Unitrans Mining risk score is 173 points lower than the industry average for Q4 2025, reflecting significantly safer driving behaviour.

#### 2 Tailored, Innovative Solutions.

##### The Box-Cut Project

At a critical juncture in its operations, RBM faced the need to access high-value mineral deposits buried beneath overburden material, without disrupting ongoing production. Recognising this challenge, Unitrans proposed a bespoke Box-Cut excavation and reprocessing solution designed specifically for RBM's geological and operational context.

##### The initiative:

- Involved the excavation and reprocessing of over 3.13 million tons of material.  
*Breakdown:*  
May 2020 - Apr 2021: 505,357.25 tons  
May 2021- Apr 2022: 1,143,707.21 tons  
May 2022 - Apr 2023: 1,096,231.42 tons  
May - Aug 2023: 382,684.65 tons]
- Enabled access to previously unreachable mineral-rich zones.
- Was engineered to minimise disruption to existing mining activities and infrastructure.
- Delivered a 17% improvement in material recovery efficiency, unlocking immediate returns.
- Demonstrated the power of client-led innovation, combining custom equipment, precise planning, and agile execution.

More than just a project, the Box Cut initiative illustrated Unitrans's ability to respond quickly, plan strategically, and deliver measurable impact when clients face turning points.

##### Road Trains Reimagined for Performance and Safety.

Over the years, Unitrans worked closely with RBM to deliver progressively more efficient, scalable commodity haulage solutions. The result? PBS-compliant road trains – designed to maximise efficiency, minimise environmental impact, and uphold world-class safety.

### Our innovations delivered:

The following safety metrics reflect Unitrans' commitment to operational excellence and continuous improvement in the RBM operation:

#### +16%

75-ton payloads, safely increasing capacity by 16% over previous configurations.

#### Cut Fuel Consumption

Fuel consumption cut from 3.2 million litres to 1.4 million litres annually.

#### Fleet size reduction

A reduction in fleet size from 30 vehicles to 14, halving on-road exposure.

#### 38% boost

A 38% fuel efficiency boost over standard 56-ton trailers.

#### Over 50%

Annual distance travelled dropped from 4.6 million km to 2 million km.

#### PBS Safety

Full compliance with PBS safety regulations, making them among the safest and most efficient vehicles operating in Africa.

#### 3 Community Involvement

##### Beyond the mine gate, Unitrans remains a committed community partner.

##### Key initiatives included:

- Building ablution facilities for rural schools.
- Delivering thousands of food parcels during COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Sponsoring and participating in local events to foster unity and inclusion.



##### A Safety Legacy Built on Trust, Tenacity, and Teamwork

Unitrans's 41-year journey with RBM is more than a contract – it's a collaboration built on trust, tenacity, and a shared commitment to raising the bar. From daily rituals to award-winning results, the partnership demonstrates that when leadership aligns, technology empowers, and people take ownership – transformation is not only possible, it's sustainable.



Discover more of our solutions driving growth in mining.



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### Innovation That Fuels Growth

What ties these solutions together is Unitrans' commitment to scalable, data-driven transformation in Mining. Industry leading safety standards combined with innovative solutions are empowering our mining customers to improve with precision.

This is innovation that unlocks potential. This is growth, reimagined.