

Imperial invests in state-of-the-art warehouse for healthcare sector

Imperial Health Sciences is expanding in order to optimise its logistics services to the healthcare sector. The Imperial Logistics group company has announced an investment into new, state-of-the-art warehousing and additional office space at its Centurion head office.



Centurion facility

Managing director Lara Haigh reveals that the business needed additional capacity following its diversification into the pharmaceutical wholesaling, medical devices and animal health markets. As a result of the expansion, which will enable Imperial's Pharmed pharmaceutical wholesale and distribution business to move into the Centurion facility, clients will reap the benefits of a refined and cost effective "over the fence" supply chain solution, Haigh explains.

She reveals that Pharmed – which specialises in the wholesale supply and distribution of healthcare related products - will be moving in as of June 2018, and will leverage Imperial's well-established operational processes, systems, and resources. "The move will result in efficiency gains for both business units," Haigh states.

State-of-the-art storage solution

The expansion project encompasses the construction of a new, 41,000m² warehouse with 30,280 bulk storage positions, 4,550 high-risk locations, 1,350 cold storage locations for cold chain products and 4,000 positions for Schedule 6 medicines.

A very narrow aisle (VNA) warehouse, 8,500m² in size, will also be added to Imperial Health Sciences' infrastructure. It will offer 31,000 pallet locations. A new bond store will be built, with 1,500 pallet locations, while fridge capacity will be increased at the Centurion facility, with the addition of 2,000m² of space providing 2,500 pallet locations. The new storage space will also boast a state-of-the-art high-speed conveyor system suitable for carrying both pallets and cases of product.

In addition to the new warehousing and office block, Imperial's capacity-building venture also includes increasing the size of all other functional areas at the Centurion operation by between 40 and 60%.

Design defined by 'green' thinking

The group's commitment to sustainability is reflected in the project's focus on energy efficient design features and water saving initiatives. Haigh elaborates: "Energy efficient elements of the new build include motion sensing and low wattage lighting, the use of solar panels and solar-powered equipment, and a façade design that provides insulation and will optimise the use of natural light in appropriate areas, particularly in the offices. Natural ventilation will be used wherever possible, and energy efficient air conditioning will be installed."

Further green elements of the expansion project include landscaping using water wise, indigenous plants, and water saving initiatives like storm water and grey water harvesting, water meter systems, sensor-based electronic taps and hot water on demand. A water recycling system will also be employed.

"Environmental considerations have been kept in mind with every aspect of the building and its functionality. Materials will be locally sourced where possible and all timber purchased will be Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified," Haigh stresses, and says that suppliers that subscribe to the principle of cradle-to-cradle manufacturing will be given preference. This approach strives to create systems that are not only efficient but also essentially waste free.

The expansion is scheduled for completion in June 2018.

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