**PRESS RELEASE**

Zutari fast-tracks its disaster response in flood-ravaged KwaZulu-Natal

**Expert team mobilised to help repair damaged critical infrastructure**

**6 May 2022:** With the vital N2 corridor in Durban damaged to the extent that the road is impassable in certain sections following the recent flooding in KwaZulu-Natal, an existing contract related to settlement repair of the route has been fast-tracked by the South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd. (SANRAL).

[Zutari](http://www.zutari.com) was awarded the contract following a competitive tender early last year. The engineering design and advisory services company is now playing a major role in devising the most cost-effective and resilient solution to repair a section of the route relating to its contract.

“We have effectively pulled together significant resources and expertise as quickly as possible to assist to the best of our capabilities,” says Zutari Technical Director **Tashna Margo**. This includes advising on measures to ensure human life is protected and quickly restoring the damaging impact of the floods on key infrastructure.

In addition, Dams Expertise Leader **Dr**. **Frank Denys** and Senior Water Resources Engineer **Martin Kleynhans** have been called upon to assist in assessing the flood damage as part of Zutari’s urban stormwater and flooding expertise. “Basically, we are conducting a condition assessment to ascertain the extent of the damage, assess what repairs can be done and what not, and provide options as to the way forward,” says Denys.

A contributing factor has been the role played by the existing slope instabilities in the province. KwaZulu-Natal is known for slope instability as it relates to the local geology and topography. Floods and climate change influence this risk.

“There is a broader narrative around this and how with climate change and design and construction we need to assess risk and design differently for more resilient infrastructure,” says **Dr. Gabi Wojtowitz**, a geotechnical engineer and Associate Design Director at Zutari. “It also speaks to risk classes and defining areas not to develop in. Perhaps a similar risk classification for development in respect to slope instability could be drawn up as to what is currently used for dolomitic ground conditions where specific measures are imposed for high-risk areas,” she suggests.

Dr. Wojtowitz concurs that the catastrophic flooding has increased the focus on climate change as an area of serious concern. She notes that such extreme weather events are likely to become more extreme and common in future. This speaks to the need for resilient infrastructure and risk mitigation, as well as bringing human-centred and environmentally aware design to bear.

“If we highlight potential issues that are not responded to, and then these become the cause of a disaster scenario, it is a much harder scenario to rectify after the fact. Not that this was not an extreme event; it certainly was. However, there are definite multiple underlying contributing factors that maybe made it worse than it should have been. It does suggest this could be an example of what is likely to occur more regularly in future,” says **Dr. James Cullis**, Technical Director and Sustainability Expertise Leader at Zutari.

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Zutari**

As engineering consultants and trusted advisors, Zutari co-creates an engineered impact that enables environments, communities and economies to thrive. Few others can match our local capacity, long-standing presence and understanding of the challenges required to operate successfully across various regions in Africa and the Middle East.

We have created an impact across Africa for almost 90 years (1932 to 2022) and remain committed to this continent, making us the perfect partner to those less familiar with working in Africa. We are experienced in international projects and our Global Design Centres allow us to bring world-class solutions to our clients.

As a private management-owned company, our commitment is true and we have vested interest in our clients’ success. Our strong relationships allow us to connect the right expertise, processes and resources to match client’s needs and bring stakeholders that have shared interests together.

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