**NEWS ARTICLE**

Zutari to showcase its design thinking journey at d-school AFRIKA opening

**26 September 2022:** As a pioneer of design thinking in Africa, leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com) will be a key participant at the 2022 d.confestival in Cape Town from 12 to 14 October. Hosted by the international Hasso Plattner d-school Afrika at the University of Cape Town (UCT), the occasion not only marks the first design thinking conference in Africa but will also see the official opening of a new purpose-built 6-Star Green-rated d-school building on the UCT campus.

The d.confestival is a unique hybrid event centred around design thinking that follows on from the 2012 and 2017 events hosted in Potsdam, Germany. It is supported by the Global Design Thinking Alliance, which also celebrates its fifth birthday. The ‘confestival’ term denotes a combination of the traditional academic conference and the interactive, creative elements of a festival. Sessions will include keynote presentations, panel discussions, interactive workshops and a discovery tour of the Cape Town innovation ecosystem.

“As Zutari, we have been on a design thinking journey for the last six years,” says **Wim van Schalkwyk**, Growth, Eminence and Innovation Lead at Zutari. “It is deeply ingrained in our firm’s purpose to **co-create** an engineered impact that enables environments, communities and economies to thrive.”

Design thinking places people at the centre of the design process. It acknowledges end users as active participants in the process of design, exposing opportunities for innovation. “We have learned many lessons in bringing this approach into the African infrastructure engineering context. Partnering with clients like the City of Cape Town has allowed us to explore new ways of tackling complex city problems like public housing, water resilience and social inclusion.” The benefits of this way of thinking and doing have yielded impactful results – now entrenched in how Zutari approaches all its work.

Van Schalkwyk argues that good design cannot stop with placing ‘people at the centre’. “We must remember that people do not live in a vacuum. We live on a planet; and this planet has its boundaries. At Zutari we believe that designing and engineering resilient cities require us to be both people-centred **and** planet-minded.”

Zutari has been involved with significant work to support cities to become more resilient in the face of climate change and other challenges across its main markets of Water, Energy, Resources, Built Environment and Transport. Its solution-finding approach seeks to answer four key questions: What is desirable to people? What is technically feasible? What is financially viable? And what is environmentally sustainable?

As part of a discovery tour of Cape Town’s innovation and design thinking ecosystem, delegates of the d.confestival will have the opportunity to visit the Zutari office at Century City on 13 October. Under the theme ‘**The Resilient City. Engineered.**’, Zutari will share how it is partnering with the City of Cape Town to make the City more resilient. This will include a panel discussion with members of Zutari’s Management and Sustainability team and City of Cape Town officials. Three diverse case studies will showcase the broad impact of a people-centred and planet-minded design approach in the City.

Van Schalkwyk concludes that Zutari is excited to participate in this internationally significant event at UCT. “As one of the first major engineering consultancy firms to fully embrace design thinking as a mechanism for innovation in Africa, we remain committed to co-creating a positive impact on the continent.”

**Pull quotes**

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**Social media**

#Zutari will be a key participant at the 2022 d.confestival in Cape Town from 12 to 14 October hosted by the international Hasso Plattner d-school Afrika at UCT. This is the first design thinking conference in Africa and sees the official opening of a new purpose-built 6-Star Green-rated d-school building on the UCT campus.

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

**About Zutari**

As an engineering and advisory firm, we believe infrastructure has unparalleled potential to create enduring impact. Never more relevant, this potential can be realised only if we plan, design, deliver and manage infrastructure in ways that maximise its value. Our work in water, transport, energy, resources, and built-environment infrastructure does just this – helping to nurture thriving communities, growing economies, and healthy environments.

At Zutari we understand that radical impact doesn’t just happen; it requires more of us to connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted.

**We connect differently.** Our broad collective of in-house experts connects across traditional disciplines to provide integrated results. We collaborate with clients, partners, and end-users, leaning into diverse perspectives to create superior solutions - together.

**We work smarter.** Our people lead the industry. We draw from deep technical skills, accrued over decades, and embrace the transformative power of digital technology to find simpler, better, and more innovative ways to deliver value.

**We stay rooted.** Few can rival our local capacity and understanding. Building on solid foundations, now 90 years in the making, we are trusted to shape locally relevant solutions through our extensive footprint in Africa and the Middle East.

At Zutari our people connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted. Working in this way, we reliably deliver impact through infrastructure, making the world a better place – one project at a time.

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