**PRESS RELEASE**

SMEC wins CESA Award for Tshelimnyama Pedestrian Bridge Project

***26 August, 2013:*** *Global engineering consultancy firm SMEC has been recognised at this year’s CESA Aon Engineering Excellence Awards as the overall winner of the ‘Projects with a value of less than R50-million’ for its design of the Tshelimnyama Pedestrian Bridge, which is located on the N3 between Westville and the Mariannhill Toll Plaza.*

SMEC South Africa’s lead consultant on the project **John Anderson** says that the Tshelimnyama Pedestrian Bridge Project is a key link in the larger South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) pedestrian facility upgrade project.

The Tshelimnyama Township, which is located on the south side of the N3, is home to many low-income families – a large portion of who have found work in the nearby industrial areas of Mahogany Ridge and Westmead on the northern side of the N3. Due to a lack of shorter, more direct routes, many of the residents chose to cross the N3 freeway to access these work opportunities, risking their lives in the process.

“This was extremely dangerous for those crossing the freeway; as well as for the motorists travelling on the freeway. In order to address this issue and to assist with determining a suitable solution, a pedestrian audit was conducted which confirmed that a pedestrian bridge was required. To assist the residents while simultaneously allowing for future route upgrades, SANRAL invited tenders for a bridge that could freely span the N3 without impacting current and future traffic requirements,” explains Anderson.

Anderson points out that the challenge of the site was to attract pedestrians onto the bridge and to design a structure which integrated itself into the surrounding landscape. “SMEC was appointed as the consulting engineers for the project and produced a design that was functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. The slender deck floats over the N3, supported by the stay cables and anchored to the central tower and the rock cutting on the adjacent slopes. The bridge was constructed by JT Ross (Pty) Ltd,” explains Anderson.

There are many unique elements on this project, including the sculpted structural steel tower, which leans forward at an angle of 14 degrees with a continually varying cross section. The tower geometry is complex but aesthetically pleasing and testament to what is achieved with a strong collaboration between architect, engineer and employer, explains Anderson.

The success of this highly-complex design has allowed the people of the Tshelimnyama Township to access their places of work in a well-lit, convenient and safe manner as evidenced by the high number of pedestrians who use the bridge on a daily basis.

“This award winning project is testimony to the SANRAL objectives of providing safe and efficient transport facilities to the motorists and pedestrians using South Africa’s national roads,” states SMEC Chief Executive Officer Dr **Thomas Marshall**.

In addition to being awarded as the overall winner for the Tshelimnyama Bridge Project, SMEC also received a commendation for its work involving the widening and strengthening of the Okavango River Bridge, on behalf of the Roads Authority of Namibia. In addition to being recognised by CESA, SMEC has also recently been awarded the South African Institute of Civil Engineering (SAICE) Branch Awards Technical Excellence Award for its work on the Tshelimnyama Pedestrian Bridge Project.

***Ends.***

**Notes to the Editor**There are numerous photographs specific to this press release. Please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the SMEC link.

**About SMEC**Australian based SMEC has more than 4 000 employees and an established network of over 60 offices worldwide. SMEC provides consultancy services for the lifecycle of a project to a broad range of sectors, which include; hydropower, transport, water, natural resources and environment, geotechnical, mining, tunnelling, urban development, renewable energy, power, government and advisory services and social infrastructure development. Following the Vela VKE merger, the SMEC Group now has over 5 000 employees and an established network of over 70 offices in 36 countries throughout Australia, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Pacific, North and South America.

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