

Sanral fast-tracks Zutari contract related to settlement repair of N2 in KZN

Sanral has fast-tracked an existing contract related to settlement repair of the N2 corridor in Durban. The road is now impassable in certain sections following the recent flooding in KwaZulu-Natal.



Zutari technical director Tashna Margo

Zutari, which was awarded the contract last year, is now playing a major role in devising the most cost-effective and resilient solution to repair a section of the route.

“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.

Assessing the flood damage

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.

Increased the focus on climate change risks

“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 Wojtowicz, 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.

Wojtowicz 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



Dr Gabi Wojtowicz, a geotechnical engineer and associate design director at Zutari

much harder scenario to rectify after the fact.



Dr James Cullis, technical director and sustainability expertise leader at Zutari

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.

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