



MEDIA STATEMENT

SANRAL calls for multi-stakeholder collaboration to restore R75 route in Nelson Mandela Bay Metro

Gqeberha, 11 September 2024 – The South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) has called for greater collaboration from the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) and other stakeholders to restore the R75 road to acceptable safety standards.

“SANRAL has experienced challenges since the appointment of the routine road maintenance (RRM) contractor for national roads within the metro, who has had only intermittent site access and has been unable to perform the maintenance required to improve road safety along portions of the network, including the R75. The contractor was prevented from carrying out its duties by the actions of individuals and groups claiming to be from adjacent municipal wards who demanded to participate in the RRM project,” said Mbulelo Peterson, SANRAL’s Regional Manager for the Southern Region.

He further stressed that “as a result, conditions were unsafe for the contractor to carry out the necessary work on the R75 until consensus is reached. Furthermore, the RRM project has experienced incidences of vandalism and theft of the infrastructure, specifically along the R75, for which the replacement rate has become unsustainable.”

SANRAL has over time held several engagements with municipal stakeholders as well as the Project Liaison Committee (PLC) to find a resolution to the challenges.

“The Office of the Executive Mayor was also approached to intervene, including during Mr Retief Odendaal’s tenure as the Metro’s Executive Mayor. He was unable to help to resolve the issues. While we acknowledge the concerns raised by Odendaal, we dispute that SANRAL had failed to make any attempts to resolve the challenges around the R75,” said Peterson.

“SANRAL’s mandate is to build, manage and maintain the national network so it therefore is unreasonable to expect the roads agency to single-handedly resolve the challenges around the R75 – including theft and vandalism of the road infrastructure, project disruptions and delays, as well as instances of extortion all of which have negatively impacted the RRM project within the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.”

“SANRAL is engaging with the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, law enforcement through the local and provincial South African Police Service (SAPS), the business community through engagement with the NMB Business Chamber, and the local

community to address the challenges and to work towards a resolution," added Peterson.

SANRAL is urging stakeholders to collectively address these challenges, not only in the short term but also into the future.

Protracted delays in the appointment of SMMEs due to differing procurement policies – SANRAL's open tender approach versus the municipality's ward selection-based approach – have now been resolved and the first round of SMMEs have been appointed and begun work on the RRM contract.

The second round of subcontracts will be advertised in September with the intention to appoint more SMMEs by November 2024.

The Freeway Management System (FMS) is under construction, which will soon be implemented in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality to also assist with the monitoring of vandalism on the R75 and N2 routes, as well as to improve the safety measures on SANRAL's network. The FMS, Zone 1 and 2, is anticipated to be completed by June 2025.

"As custodians of the traffic signals, the municipality is in the process of piloting a hardened traffic signal solution at a selected intersection along the R75. In partnership with NMBM, we are hoping this pilot is successful and depending on available financial provisions, could be extended once the Interim Traffic Monitoring Centre (ITMC) is operational and specific protocols are put in place," said Peterson.

"It is the plan that the ITMC will be operational from June 2025. In discussion with the NMBM, we are considering monitoring some of the identified traffic signals from the ITMC which will include 24/7 CCTV surveillance, infra-red and thermal technology, tamper and proximity alarms and the ability to work with law enforcement and private security to respond to suspicious activities."

On the matter of the recent unfortunate crashes along the R75, the conflict points have generally been the intersections and where general poor road user behaviour is a primary contributor. The general moving infringements and traffic violations must be addressed and prioritised.

"As government works to find a more permanent solution to the theft of its traffic lights, SANRAL will work with the traffic law enforcement to see how we can assist and support," said Peterson.

Furthermore, through its engagements with the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber, SANRAL will pursue public private partnerships where the business community can partner on some of these initiatives i.e. 'Adopt a Traffic Signal' or by provision of private security services. It is also SANRAL's plan to involve the community through further consultation and community-based projects.

//Ends

Issued by FTI Consulting on behalf of SANRAL. For editorial content or additional information contact: Lwando Mahlasela on 082 440 5305 or pressoffice@nra.co.za