



MEDIA RELEASE

Transport Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga steps up government's war on potholes with Vala Zonke War Room

Centurion, 30 July 2023 – Transport Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga has stepped up government's war on potholes with the introduction of the Vala Zonke War Room in Centurion today.

Minister Chikunga led the media on a tour of the Vala Zonke War Room, which is located at the SANRAL Central Operations Centre (COC) in Centurion.

"The introduction of this Vala Zonke War Room is the natural progression to ensure success in the war against potholes, following the launch of the Vala Zonke campaign nearly a year ago," said Minister Chikunga.

"We have reflected on the progress made through the Vala Zonke campaign, observed learnings from the processes and addressed some of the practical challenges. Through this War Room, we are re-affirming government's commitment to this campaign aimed at eradicating potholes across South Africa's Road network," she said.

Minister Chikunga also said that several private sector entities, particularly in the freight industry, had made commitments to partner with government to improve the state of South Africa's roads.

In June this year, the Minister directed the Department to address the current state of roads in an integrated way through the 'War Room' approach. This is part of a holistic response to the rapid deterioration of the condition of the road network.

SANRAL's Chief Executive Officer, Reginald Demana, said the national roads agency would coordinate the war on potholes and work in close cooperation with other roads agencies at provincial and municipal level. "The Vala Zonke War Room is equipped to capture and report on all information that will be uploaded via the Pothole APP by road users," said Mr Demana. "The data captured will be important for SANRAL to respond appropriately. For example, if we get recurring potholes in a specific area, that could be a sign that there is a need for a longer lasting solution, perhaps a redesign of the road to ensure that it is suitable to current traffic needs."

The basic principle of a war room is to gather everyone responsible for carrying out the intervention by the Department of Transport, as directed by Cabinet, for the road maintenance, refurbishment and the Vala Zonke Campaign, in one room, where they can coordinate the most appropriate response.

Its benefits include:

- **Communication** – the war room will enable effective communication between members of the team and the public.
- **Information management** – Visual information will be conveyed more effectively with visualisation of the data and facts. On-site specialists will be able to analyse the data and respond appropriately.
- **Focus** – The team works exclusively on the Vala Zonke Campaign.
- **Centralised** – The Vala Zonke War Room is the central hub where all pothole-related issues are addressed and resolved. This will be done in real-time, as information flows into the centre and is swiftly responded to.

SANRAL was appointed as the coordinating agency to drive the Vala Zonke Campaign, which includes the harmonisation of all data and information on potholes and providing the technology and technical knowledge to ensure quality delivery on the campaign.

"An entity such as SANRAL, is one whose place, in the service of the country, is immeasurable. Of course, I want to emphasise that we execute our work not as an independent entity, except administratively so, but as an integral component of government, and actually, as an agent of government," said Themba Mhambi, SANRAL Board Chairperson.

South Africans are encouraged to continue reporting potholes via the Pothole App, as this is the start of a meticulously documented process flow that assists government in identifying the problem but simultaneously assists with holding various roads authorities accountable to the people of South Africa, said Mr Mhambi.

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