



## Ingwelala Share Block Limited

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### *Message from the Chairman*

Dear Members of Ingwelala,

## INGWELALA UPDATE

### Introduction

You will have noticed that the frequency of my Messages to Members has reduced – this is due to the magnificent job that our Management Team and Staff have done to get Ingwelala well on the road to recovery. There are, however, some important developments since my last communication, some of which are outside the scope of the Dando Project and are also dealt with below.

### Nkorho Private Nature Reserve Association

I am delighted to advise that the inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Nkorho Private Nature Reserve Association was held in Johannesburg on 17 April 2012 and the first Executive Management Body (EXCO) of the Association duly elected. The elected EXCO members are:

Ivan Visée (Ingwelala)  
Justin Dowdle (N'tsiri)  
Ian Fuller (Mansimvula)  
Evelyn Millard (Motswari)

The EXCO has been tasked with getting the Association fully operational as a matter of urgency. Some amendments were made to the Association Agreement and agreed to by all parties at the AGM, which will encourage more Umbabat landowners to join Nkorho. The founding members of the Association are already co-operating on numerous fronts and sharing heavy machinery for flood restoration.

### Main Tarred Access Road (Argyle Road) Restored

If you have recently travelled to Ingwelala you will have noticed that the Main Tarred Access Road to and from Ingwelala (Argyle Road) is all but restored. Of interest to members is an excerpt below from an April 2012 Update Letter from Mike Vlok, Chairman of the Control Gate Company:

**Directors:** K. Alborough (Chairman), I. Knight (Vice Chairman), J. Llewellyn (Managing), R. Bezuidenhout, H. Cochrane, D. Fourie, C. Henderson, A. Rossaak, J. Saker, J. Vice, I. Visée

"The flood damage to the main access road is estimated in excess of R2.5M and does not include items such as the reinstatement of the apron at the Shalalumi causeway, which could not be estimated as the extent of the undercut in the plunge pool on the downstream side cannot be determined as yet. The bulk of the earthworks have been completed which allowed earlier than expected opening of the road and in particular the heavy vehicle traffic. The final base layer still needs to be ripped and recompact and the sand seal surfacing applied. New pipes had to be installed at the 0.5km site as the existing 900mm diameter pipes were badly cracked and the cost of concrete encasement would have been more expensive than installing new pipes. A single 1.8m diameter pipe was opted for as it would give an increased stormwater flow and be less likely to be blocked by branches and debris during a flood. The unusually high water table has caused new seepage lines to become apparent on the existing road, which requires additional maintenance woes to an already stretched budget. The problem is being addressed with deeper side drains and the possibility of using bitumen emulsion in the base layer to make it less sensitive to moisture ingress. The resurfacing, which was scheduled for May 2012, has been postponed till after winter to enable the flood repairs to be completed before any resealing commences."

## **Failed Dams**

As you are aware, numerous Dams were damaged and in some instances entirely washed away during the Dando Floods on 18 and 19 January 2012. As a result the property of Ingwelala was subject to significant environmental damage. In addition, the assets of Ingwelala (including 32 Bungalows and road infrastructure) were subject to considerable damage resulting in multi-million rand losses to Ingwelala. The Ingwelala Board and its environmental consultants are of the preliminary view that the cumulative effect of the breach of the Dams upstream of Ingwelala contributed to the environmental and financial damage suffered by Ingwelala. In this regard, Ingwelala has advised its southern neighbor that it reserves its rights to proceed against him to recover the cost associated with such damage.

Current water and environmental legislation seeks to protect water systems, water quality and water provision for all citizens. This is a huge challenge in our water stressed country which is divided up into catchment areas for local management purposes. Ingwelala is situated in an identified stressed catchment area. In all of our water systems, the legislation also provides for a 'reserve' which is the flow necessary to maintain ecological function. This is the base flow of the water system and is often placed before human and agricultural needs. It is not only the aquatic fauna (frogs, fishes, etc.) but also the flora (reeds, river bank trees, habitats etc.) that is important to maintain. River systems that are out of balance (for example, below the 'reserve' flow) have negative effects on all components - and ultimately on water quality and quantity. The regulations for dams provide for safe structures that do not negatively impact on downstream users and allow at least some river function - even South Africa's major dams continue to release water to maintain the 'reserve' flow.

Ecologically dams create massive barriers in the watercourses and prevent natural movements of aquatic life. They also create risks for users downstream - both in terms of water quality and quantity (usually too little, and occasionally too much if disaster strikes). One consequence was the fine black sediment that originates from dam floors being deposited in the flooded Ingwelala bungalows. Another consequence of the floods that cannot be repaired is the massive ecological damage to the riparian areas of the watercourse - we have all seen the huge trees that have been uprooted, the loss of reeds and other important wildlife habitat around the Ingwelala river system. This has seriously affected the roosting and nesting for birds, which may negatively affect their breeding success in the future. These may well have survived the flooding had the dams not failed.

One of the Ingwelala Boards objectives is to endeavour to maintain a bio diverse rich and sustainable natural area that will continue to provide Members with exceptional wildlife and wilderness experiences. To achieve this, Ingwelala implements and complies with the APNR Management Plan approved by the MEC which, *inter alia*, identifies the need to maintain open water systems within the APNR area.

*How will an open water system rather than a dammed river benefit Ingwelala?* It is likely that flood risk will be reduced, grazing pressures will be removed from areas adjacent to dam sites facilitating grassland recovery, and the natural movement of all animals in the watercourse will be possible. It will therefore allow natural processes and natural selection to take place and the river functioning in its natural non-perennial state, flowing more often without any artificial impoundments to impede its flow. It will have water pools in more places in the summer. It also means that the river system may become completely dry in the winter. The riparian areas that form the water courses have evolved with these natural cycles.

In view of all of the above, the Ingwelala Board is of the view that a decision not to reconstruct the failed dam walls presents an opportunity to achieve the primary water objective in the APNR Management Plan (which is to provide water for animals in places and for periods which are to approximate as closely as possible to the natural past distribution of water without affecting adversely the hydrology and consequent ecology of the reserve and to maintain natural water bodies in such a condition so as to support the naturally occurring species linked to such bodies).

Importantly, on 25 January 2012, Dr. Freek Venter (GM: Conservation, SANParks) advised all the APNR Reserves that SANParks discourages the repair of the broken dams and appealed to all not to promote the repairs of these broken dams. In response, both the local authority (MTPA) and the Chairman of the Timbavati PNR supported this view.

Regrettably, our southern neighbour has commenced reconstructing the failed dam wall of the Dam on our immediate border at Timbavati crossing (Argyle No.2 Stuwal Dam) without the necessary licenses and environmental authority. Ingwelala has notified the relevant authorities of this development and requested them to intervene, as well as requesting our neighbour to cease reconstructing his Dam wall, failing which Ingwelala will proceed to inderdict him from doing this.

Below is photographic evidence of this from the air reconnaissance commissioned by the Board, showing the extensive reconstruction work that has already taken place, necessitating the speedy legal action taken directly by Ingwelala.



### **Flood Levy and Special General Meeting**

The Board decided during its May 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting that the imposition of a Flood Levy was essential in order to raise funds to cover the costs of repairing the flood damaged roads, river crossings and related equipment needs and incidentals. A date for a Special General Meeting of Members in Johannesburg has been set for 3 July 2012. A further, detailed communication and formal Notice of Meeting in this regard will be sent to all Members shortly.

### **Roads and River Crossings**

Repair and reconstruction work on our flood damaged roads and river crossings continue. This effort will escalate in intensity once the Flood Levy has been approved and the necessary funds have been raised. Despite the efforts of our Staff to restore Ingwelala's roads and river crossings, some Members and their guests continue to ignore closed roads and river crossings, bypassing barricades, getting stuck, wasting Staff time and inflicting more damage. I appeal to all Members to assist us in this restoration task by adhering to the instructions imposed by the Management Team at Ingwelala.

## **Bungalow and Pool Restoration**

### **Bungalow Restorations**

The Bungalow Restoration Project continues under the leadership of the Project Manager (Jacques Hoffman) and oversight of the Building Committee (Raymond Bezuidenhout). It has been divided up into 3 phases and each and every flood damaged Bungalow will be accommodated in one of the phases, so unfortunately patience is required. Chameleon have been appointed as the main building contractor for phase 1, together with specialist sub-contractors to assist them (Bosbok Gas, Hoedspruit Electrical, Hoffmans Thatching and DAP Exclusive Carpentry). Some Members are making use of the opportunity in order to rebuild or effect additional alterations. Construction work under phase 1 has already commenced on some of the Bungalows. The planning for phase 2 and the sourcing of additional building contractors is currently underway. It is hoped that this project will be completed by the time the Builders have their year-end break (mid- December 2012).

### **Swimming Pool Rebuild**

The rebuilding of the Swimming Pool is progressing very well, with gunite concrete currently being laid. The target completion date of the new Pool is 30 June 2012.

### **Insurance Claims**

Ingwelala Management continues to make good progress with the formulation and submission of the insurance claims. The representatives of the affected bungalows are in direct and regular contact and communication with the Building and Insurance Committees and the Project Manager.

We look forward to seeing you at Ingwelala during the mid-year holidays!

Sincerely,



**Kevin Alborough**  
Chairman