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Reference: 16/2/11

Dear Valued Client

## **RENOVATION OF THE PROVINCIAL VETERINARY LABORATORY**

On 31 October 1969, renowned Stellenbosch architect Jochem A Mars, handed over the architectural drawings and plans for the construction of Provincial Veterinary Laboratory to the Department of Transport and Public Works (then Department of Lands). Construction of the laboratory commenced in June 1971 and was completed in May 1972 with the handing over of the keys to the new building to the Department taking place on 13 June 1972. The official opening of the, what was then known as the Regional Veterinary Laboratory, however only took place nearly one year later with the unveiling of a plague by the Minister of Agriculture – the Hon. Hendrick Schoeman on Tuesday 1 May 1973.

Over the past half century the buildings served the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and its clients well, but as with any building of this age, maintenance issues increased annually and over the years building codes, regulations and requirements have also changed significantly. Our building has now reached that point where routine maintenance is no longer able to address all the challenges and building compliance must also be addressed.

The Department of Transport of Public Works has made a significant amount of funds available for an extensive renovation and compliance upgrade project to be done at the Provincial Veterinary Laboratory. This project is due to start towards the latter part of 2022, with the exact start date still unknown at this stage. The scope of the project is quite extensive and will include amongst other things making the building more accessible to persons with disabilities which will include the installation of a wheelchair lift, new wheelchair ramps and increasing the number of disabled friendly restrooms. Not only will this increase access for members of the public with disabilities, but also current staff members with disabilities. From a safety perspective the electrical systems dating back to 1972 will be made compliant and updated, a fire protection system will be installed, ventilation and air flow will be upgraded throughout the building. Furthermore, damaged ceilings and other damaged internal structures will be repaired and the original asbestos roof that has been repaired numerous times throughout the years will be replaced. Some of the cosmetic upgrades will include; internal and external painting, cleaning and resurfacing of all laboratory floors, re-fitting laboratory benches with new tops, fixing windows, installations of new basins and taps in the laboratory sections, as well as repairing water leaks and much more.

A project of this magnitude and scope does, however, come with various challenges, one of which is the impact it will have on service delivery to our clients. As an ISO 17025 accredited laboratory, the Provincial Veterinary Laboratory can unfortunately not just relocate its services to another location without having to follow lengthy and costly processes in order to obtain accreditation at the new location and without accreditation, the laboratory will not be able to offer many of its services. Since a disruption in service delivery is expected, we would like to sensitize our clients to this possibility at this early stage already. The Department is investigating various possibilities and options in order to minimise the disruption to you our clients where practical and financially feasible.

The staff of the Provincial Veterinary Laboratory is looking forward to start the next 50 years in a renovated building. As details on the project dates and time frames become available these would be communicated to our clients swiftly to ensure the least impact on client needs and services delivered.

We trust that you will find this in order and be ensured of our continued support to the agricultural sector and its stakeholders.

Yours sincerely

**DR MP SEBOPETSA**  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**