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# Richard's Bay overpass gets under way

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**T**HE ceremonial first sod was turned in the construction of a new R75 million overpass bridge, link road and on-ramps at the intersection of the West Central Arterial and the John Ross Highway in Richards Bay last week.

Speaking at the sod-turning ceremony Aluminium SA asset president Gustav Griessel said the project would improve the overall road safety of the Richards Bay community at large.

"This marks the start of an important project that will evolve into a new intersection that will facilitate the safe movement of traffic for all parties concerned," he said.

"Much work has gone into the project thus far over an extended period of time in respect of approvals, consultation and evaluating all the options to improve this intersection which brings us together to turn the sod for the bridge. The upgrade project involves the construction of a three-lane overpass bridge accommodating traffic travelling north or south along the West Central Arterial. This will mitigate the current risk related to the level crossing with the John Ross," said Griessel.

He added that the main construction phase - incorporating the bridge - was to start in mid August and was due for completion in May 2011. The construction would also include on and off ramps and a link road, facilitating traffic wanting to travel via the John Ross to the West Central Arterial or in the opposite direction.

Griessel said the doubling of the John Ross Highway - the main access road to Richards Bay - would see a more complex intersection at the West Central Arterial. This was the main route from the town's central business district, passing



The new West Central Arterial and John Ross Highway intersection in Richards Bay where an overpass and new link road will improve road safety. **Inset:** Marking the start of the R75 million project were, from left, BHP Billiton Aluminium project director Danie Murray, uThungulu District mayor Stan Larkan, City of uMhlatuze mayor Zakhele Mnqayi and Aluminium SA asset president Gustav Griessel.

the Hillside smelter, to the harbour.

Although the aluminium smelting giant has a zero-incident record in transferring, on average, 704 000 tpa solid metal from its Hillside smelter to the Richards Bay harbour and a maximum of 90 000 tpa

hot metal to its Bayside smelter along this route, it was decided to go ahead with this major project as an additional safety measure.

On the project, environmental consultants Argus Gibb, design engineers Ilifa and main contractor

Scribante, will partner with BHP Billiton on the construction phase under the management of the BHP Billiton Aluminium project team headed by Danie Murray.

Commenting on the project, uThungulu District mayor Stan



PICTURES: COURTESY BHP BILLITON

Larkan praised this public-private partnership initiative, saying it that was a clear indication of the positive impact companies like BHP Billiton could have on the communities surrounding their place of work.

