

Q&A With Bheki Mdlalose, Group Managing Director, Grinaker-LTA

What was the background for the acquisition of Grinaker-LTA from Aveng by Laula Consortium?

- Aveng made a strategic decision to exit the South African construction market and focus on mining contracting (Moolmans) and its Australian operations (McConnell Dowell).
- Construction in South Africa employs mostly black African people and thus it made business sense to hand over the business to black entrepreneurs.
- Laula is a consortium made up of three businesspeople, representing investment businesses they are controlling, namely: OTEO Holdings (Mlu Manci - Chairperson), Bruce Zungu (Non-Executive Director), Raymond Cele (Executive Director) and Bhekani Mdlalose (Group Managing Director). The major drive was to be a part of the team that will make a difference in South Africa and contribute to the infrastructure in the country. Contractors build monuments that create legacies and last for a long time.

How is Grinaker-LTA dealing with the coronavirus lockdown?

- This has been the most challenging time for the business and South Africa as a whole. Our message is consistent with that of Government: people should adhere to the lockdown rules and remain at home except for when they require essentials services. If the virus is spread the virus through movement and contact, minimising movement will curb the spread.
- G-LTA's leadership has encouraged employees who do not feel well or were in contact with people who have / had been travelling to get tested.
- Good governance is never more necessary than during a crisis and at a time of significant change. The tough decisions G-LTA leadership has had to take during the crisis and will continue to take in months ahead to ensure that our employees are taken care of and the business is sustainable remains the paramount goal.
- We have extended our hands to the needy communities that we operate within in the form of food parcels, providing water and essential PPE (this is what we call Ubuntu).



Bheki Mdlalose, Group Managing
 Director, Grinaker-LTA

What are Grinaker-LTA's future plans?

- Grinaker-LTA has a lot to offer to South Africa's troubled construction and infrastructure sector. Having pioneered the construction of monuments, the company possesses the skills and tenacity to accelerate the infrastructure stimulus as set out by the President.
- Our ability to connect and develop meaningful bonds with communities in which we operate will ensure we play a key role in rolling out of infrastructure stimulus.
- We are familiar with rural and underdeveloped communities – this will make it easy for us to deliver projects in environments we understand.
- Our commitment to the economic growth of South Africa will position us to deliver the much-needed infrastructure built in South Africa.
- We are a smaller business now, so we pay more attention to our clients' needs for better returns. We are also able to make decisions quicker, which will minimise unnecessary delays and costly overruns in the projects we are involved with.
- We are looking to get involved through the lifecycle and value-chain of the project development. ■

