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City of Johannesburg  
Johannesburg Roads Agency

66 Pixley Seme  
Cnr. Rahima Moosa Str.  
Johannesburg  
2001

P/Bag X70  
Braamfontein  
South Africa  
2017

Tel +27(0) 11 298 5000  
Fax +27(0) 11 298 5178  
[www.jra.org.za](http://www.jra.org.za)  
[www.joburg.org.za](http://www.joburg.org.za)

## MEDIA RELEASE

25 May 2015

For immediate release

### JRA ROLLING OUT ALTERNATIVE MANHOLE COVERS TO COUNTER THEFT AND VANDALISM

The **Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA)** is introducing alternative non-metal manhole covers and drainage grates as part of its enormous fight to save the City of Johannesburg (CoJ)'s road assets from rampant theft and vandalism.

“As an entity entrusted with the road assets of the City of Johannesburg, the JRA is implementing an initiative to replace all cast iron and steel manhole covers and drainage grates with alternative materials such as ductile iron, plastic, fibre glass and polymer. The new materials will weigh considerably less (approximately three quarters) than the existing covers which can weigh in excess of 140kg, are more robust, carry the JRA branded logo, have no significant resale value and comply with JRA and SABS standard specifications. The JRA piloted the alternative manhole covers in selected areas city-wide and the results proved positive. The specification has been approved and we are now procuring the alternative products,” confirmed **JRA Acting Managing Director Mpho Kau**.

Due to the market value of the metals in manhole covers and drainage grates, they have become the targets of thieves and vandals. The problem with theft is global and generally worsens when the price of scrap metal is high. The City and the JRA is experiencing huge financial losses due to theft of its steel roads infrastructure assets namely manhole covers and frames, kerb inlet covers, water meter covers, sewer manhole covers, channel posts and guard rails, traffic poles, bridge hand railings and so forth. Over the past 12 months, 3200 missing manhole covers were reported to the JRA. Stolen manhole covers cost the JRA a substantial amount of money, during the 2013/214 financial year alone, the JRA spent R2.9 million on covers.

This spate of infrastructure theft and vandalism is a direct sabotage and devaluation of the City's infrastructure assets and poses a safety hazard to road users. The missing covers on walkways and roads creates a huge problem for pedestrians and other road users including small children who have fallen into the manholes and storm water channels and have been fatally injured. As an interim measure, once the JRA is notified of open manholes, it barricades the area to secure the hole and warn the community.

Directors:  
Chairman: J Manche, Acting Managing Director: M Kau, CFO: G Mbatha  
Non-Executive Directors: M Ramasia, J Maina, A Torres, N Msezane, E Ngomane,  
L Mashamaite, L Nxumalo, H Mashele, Company Secretary: K Mills

Registration No. 2000/028993/07

Mpho Kau said the JRA condemns illegal scrap metal dealers who are complicit in the increasing assault on the City's infrastructure and urges unsuspecting dealers to examine the metals before accepting them.

"We appeal to scrapyards owners not to purchase CoJ and JRA assets from criminals. Also, community members are requested to engage in the City's Active Citizenry initiative and report all acts of vandalism and theft of road infrastructure to the City of Johannesburg's Call Centre 0860 562 874 or report these criminal activities to SAPS or JMPD."

**ENDS**

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#### **About the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA)**

The JRA is a City-owned agency responsible for the maintenance, repair and development of Johannesburg's road network and storm water infrastructure, including bridges and culverts, traffic lights and signage.

The organisation is committed to providing quality roads that are accessible, safe and liveable for our communities.

***The JRA encourages residents to report road and storm water issues to 0860 562 874/ [hotline@jra.org.za](mailto:hotline@jra.org.za) / twitter @MyJra so that we may be of service.***

#### **Issued by:**

Bertha Peters-Scheepers

Ops Manager: Marketing and Communications

Johannesburg Roads Agency

Tel: 011 298 5023 / 079 510 4186

Email: [bscheepers@jra.org.za](mailto:bscheepers@jra.org.za)

