



# EDITORIAL

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**A**s of the end of August, it would appear that Covid-19 is finally in retreat in most parts of the country, and although we can't quite breathe easily just yet, a brief glance at our daily lives would almost convince us that things are back to normal. They aren't but this is a 'new normal' we will have to adapt to for some time to come.

It if makes us feel better, we know that we've all been through this tough time together and are slowly starting to make headway in salvaging the last few months of the year. Building sites are hives of activity, working to make up for lost time, and while it saddens me to also see many retrenchments as a result of those months of hard lockdown, I have also noticed the posts on LinkedIn for a number of vacancies have started to pick up from mid August.

With adversity comes opportunity and for as much as sectors such as hospitality and brick and mortar retail are facing a tough time, conversely those in the logistics sector are busier than ever, with the move to online purchases leading to increased demand for warehousing. In a recent release, Paragon Group Director, Estelle Meiring noted that the general rule of thumb is that e-commerce requires three times the logistics space of traditional storefronts. "Therefore it is reasonable to assume that we will see a much greater investment in warehouse space to support local e-commerce. In addition to this, warehousing demand might be accelerated by the growth of e-commerce in the rest of Africa. Improvements in racking, logistics and building technology have seen an increase in warehouse clear eave heights, often as high as 15m, as well as an increase in yard depths, sometimes in excess of 45m. We have also noticed more requests for cross-docking and an increase in the number of warehouse doors required, as inputs and outputs are maximised," reveals Meiring.

Plans for over 50 Strategic Integrated Projects were recently announced by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure in July, which is obviously good news but it remains to be seen how successfully this programme will be implemented and whether the substantial funds required will actually materialise. Regardless, companies must remain ready to seize those opportunities should they arise.