

Dominic Collett



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**“It is important to make a difference
and add value to society.”**

Principal and Market Segment Leader: Urban
Drainage and Sanitation, Royal HaskoningDHV

DOMINIC COLLETT is a professional engineer whose career has been driven by the desire to participate in initiatives that enhance society.

Collett matriculated from Beachwood High School in Durban North, followed by a series of qualifications at the then Technikon Natal (now DUT), which led to a Bachelor's Degree in Technology in Civil Engineering.

He says that during his 18 years as a professional engineer he has been fortunate to have strong mentors. Collett said, "They guided and assisted me during difficult career decisions and also kept emphasizing the importance of getting involved with voluntary organisations that enhance society."

Consequently, in the early years of his career, Collett became a member of the Young Professionals Forum of the South African Institute of Civil Engineers, which he enjoyed. In the spirit of giving back to the community, he has been involved with the iLembe Chamber of Commerce Tourism and Industry from its inception and currently sits on its Board as treasurer.

Collett worked through his training years for Bradford Conning and Partners (BCP) and after a short stint of two years with BKS returned to BCP Engineers where, at 35 years old, was invited to join the Board of Directors of BCP Engineers.

BCP then merged with SSI which is now Royal HaskoningDHV. He says that his main strengths came from the support of the mentors and the teams that he has worked together with on many successful and exciting projects. Collett commented that a noteworthy project was supervising the initial Tongaat Hulett La Lucia Ridge design and development in 1991. He says that seeing the sugar cane fields evolve and the infrastructure taking shape was very fulfilling.

Collett says, "Time, cost and people are the key inputs to successful projects. I enjoy motivating a

team to work efficiently. Without motivated teams, it is impossible to achieve success and I would think my strength lies in being able to motivate people and allow them to achieve their personal goals. When team members feel comfortable approaching you with difficult issues, these can be resolved at an early stage before they become a crisis." He added that his leadership style is that of respect and honesty.

As a project director, the challenge is always to provide the engineering services required with an often limited budget to have a maximum impact for the community.

"It is important to look at the big picture, which guides conversations and allows the team to slow down and assess what is required before attending to the details. On top of budget constraints, we now find ourselves in a position where we have limited water and energy resources. The challenge is to design projects in a way that takes advantage of the available resources but not in a manner that is detrimental to the environment and other stakeholders." He added that he obtains joy in delivering cutting edge technology to engineering solutions. "I have been fortunate to have private sector clients that have the same vision and a highlight of my career has been that I have been able to work with many of these forward thinking clients that value development which is innovative."

Collett's passion for development is in keeping with Royal HaskoningDHV's ethos, which is to enhance society together through new technologies, engineering innovation and human spirit.

A current project that is giving him much enjoyment is the Blythedale Coastal Resort development, which embraces global innovative trends. Collett and his team are able to offer a number of solutions to the resource limitations that the homeowners would have faced using gas reticulation, a desalination plant, solar energy, and grey water recycling among other innovations.

Collett says, "I enjoy the support of a wonderful family." He has been married for 19 years and has two sons. In his free time, he plays the double bass in the Durban City Orchestra and sails a Flying Fifteen.