



## Media Release

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### WESTOWN TRAINING CENTRE TO GROW CAPACITY AND SKILLS IN THE OUTER WEST

**Durban, KwaZulu-Natal** - The Westown Foundation, in collaboration with Stefanutti Stocks Academy, today launched the 2 700m<sup>2</sup> Westown Training Centre on the site of the new city of the west, Westown Shongweni. The Westown Foundation with a focus on skills development, education and literacy, has been set up to foster the sustainable participation of the greater Shongweni community, in the socio-economic and environmental opportunities that the development of Westown will create. The new centre was officially opened by eThekweni Mayor, Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda.

Stefanutti Stocks has officially been developing and offering internal industry best-practice training since 2010 and since February 2023, with the introduction of the Stefanutti Stocks Academy, the company has been able to offer CETA-accredited Plant Operator training, an accredited Apprenticeship Programme, and cater to skills training requirements specific to the needs of the Group. The academy's courses are presented by Stefanutti Stocks' registered facilitators, assessors, and moderators.

Both the Westown Foundation and the Stefanutti Stocks Academy have skills development and literacy as cornerstones that will enable self-sufficient local communities to access opportunities, both in the immediate area and further afield, to live, work and thrive in the long term.

"The Outer-West has lagged behind many of the province's regions in terms of development, investment and growth opportunities, and the Westown Foundation has been set up to facilitate and amplify local socio-economic opportunities that the development of Westown will create in the surrounding communities," says Sean Bergsma, Chairperson of The Westown Foundation.

Over the next two years, the training facility, constructed by the Stefanutti Stocks Academy, will provide development and training opportunities for up to 15 qualifying individuals per intake, to accumulate knowledge, gain experience, increase their employability, and be CETA certified in certain specific construction skills. These include, Construction Hand Tools, Safety Awareness, Brick Work, Plaster, Painting, Basic Concrete, Reinforcing and Formwork training. A construction plant simulator, equipped with a variety of modules for Operator training and staffed by various qualified trainers, will give trainees a sense of life 'on the job'.

It is anticipated that over the two-year period 60-80 Operators will qualify and around 500 people will pass through the Academy equipped with the relevant skills to find work in the construction sector within the province, some of which will be at Westown.

“Where-ever and whenever possible, Stefanutti Stocks offers development opportunities to individuals from the community even if they are not directly employed on the project/s we are working on,” says Matthew Horwill, Managing Director of Stefanutti Stocks Coastal Civils Discipline.

“Our community operator training will create capacity beyond the project’s requirement, thus contributing to a provincial pool of accredited, local surface machinery operators that are able to offer an accredited skill when seeking employment on other developments and construction sites across the province.”

The launch of the Westown Training Centre, sees the roll-out of two key book-end projects for the Westown Foundation – education at the one end and job creation at the other. Working in conjunction with The Learn Project, The Westown Foundation will fund the installation of Book Corners (reading spaces) in a primary school in each of the two wards in which Westown is located. “Literacy is not just about the joy of being able to access a world of stories and imagination, it builds the foundation for critical thinking and problem solving that, in turn, develops empowered communities,” says Cara Reilly, Westown Place Marketing & Communication Executive.

“The launch of the Westown Training Centre is the first of many socio-economic and community development projects the Westown Foundation will be involved in over the coming years and we want to ensure that each of them has a meaningful and lasting impact. This is why we have started this journey with partners like the Stefanutti Stocks Academy and The Learn Project, which have proven track records of good planning and long-term success,” concluded Carlos Correia CEO Fundamentum Dev Co (FDC).

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\* **FOR MORE ABOUT WESTOWN** - [www.westown.co.za](http://www.westown.co.za)

**Westown** is a place - the new City of the West. A ground-breaking, locally-driven initiative that connects people with spaces and experiences, bringing new opportunities to live, work and thrive. The Shongweni area has a unique character in terms of its topography and history. Borrowing from the natural beauty of the area, characterised by extensive green spaces and outdoor pastimes, this is a place that will develop organically and according to the needs of the people that live there. A mixed-use node of urban and green spaces, Westown is a significant socio-economic investment for the region, balancing uses and activities, visual appeal and comfort, accessibility and linkage, in order to activate the full potential of the Outer West and sustain it for generations to come. The development of Westown is led by Durban-based **Fundamentum Property Group through the Fundamentum Dev Co (FDC)** which owns the development rights to Westown.

\* **THE WESTOWN FOUNDATION**

The Westown Foundation has been set up to foster the sustainable participation of the greater Shongweni community in the socio-economic and environmental opportunities that the development of Westown will create. With a focus on skills development, education, and literacy the Westown Foundation looks to enable self-sufficient local communities that can access opportunities to live, work and thrive.

\* **FUNDAMENTUM PROPERTY GROUP** - <http://www.fundamentum.co.za/>

**Fundamentum** specialises in asset management, property development, consulting and retail leasing, with a passion for building trusted relationships with their Partners. With substantial combined experience, they own, develop and manage a portfolio of quality properties. Founded in Durban, South Africa in 2012, the Fundamentum Property Group has grown exponentially. Their dynamic, future-forward view offers a fresh approach to their investment portfolio - spread over retail, commercial, industrial and logistics - and informs their philosophy 'to do things quickly and correctly'. Their executive team came together with a common vision - to bring together property proficiency, financial know-how and an entrepreneurial spirit to create something unique within the property sector.

\* **THE STEFANUTTI STOCKS ACADEMY**

Since February 2023, following the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) audit, the **Stefanutti Stocks Academy** is able to offer accredited Plant Operator training, an accredited Apprenticeship Programme, and cater for Group-specific skills training requirements. The academy's courses are presented by Stefanutti Stocks' registered facilitators, assessors, and moderators.

***Job-specific Skills Development*** - Site-based employees are required to understand both construction industry safety, as well as the production of the quality process. The training focus will be on safety awareness, construction hand tools, basic concrete training, reinforcing, and formwork. Brickwork, plasterwork and painting training will also be offered. A key objective of this labour-focused training will include preparing and empowering individuals working on-site with the skills required to participate in a construction workplace, in a safe and meaningful way – even once the Westown development has been completed.

***Community Operator Training*** - Stefanutti Stocks’ mobile training simulator units have, since 2014, provided state-of-the-art operator training to local community candidates in geographic proximity to Stefanutti Stocks’ construction sites. From April 2023 the simulator unit will be based at the Westown Foundation Stefanutti Stocks Academy, where it will be utilised as part of the accredited earth moving and processing skills training for new recruits.

Candidates will be selected based on minimum requirements (Code 10 to 14, South African ID Document) and subject to passing the Dover/Vienna Test assessment, the LAB assessment as well as meeting medical fitness requirements. Each monthly intake of five trainees will first complete an e-learning programme, after which they will be introduced to the components and functions of the specific machinery – Tipper, ADT, Grader, Excavator, Loader, Dozer – they will be trained to operate. After completing a pre-practical assessment on the simulator, the group moves on to gaining experience on the actual machines in a working environment i.e., on the Westown site. Once qualified, and if employment opportunities exist operators may be absorbed by Stefanutti Stocks. It is envisaged that the labour-based training capacity of the Westown Stefanutti Stocks Academy training facility will be met through the site-based local employees.