

# CT appoints first chief resilience officer

The City of Cape Town, on Friday, 19 May, announced the appointment of Craig Kesson as its first chief resilience officer (CRO). As part of 100 Resilient Cities (100RC), the announcement was made during the city's resilience agenda-setting workshop.



The CRO position was created to lead the city's resilience efforts and to engage with stakeholders, resilience experts, and 100RC staff in developing a comprehensive resilience strategy. Kesson's appointment as the CRO has been officially endorsed by council.

Kesson's designation as CRO is an addition to his existing duties as executive director in the Directorate of the Mayor. He will not receive any additional remuneration in his position as the CRO.

Kesson has fulfilled a number of senior strategy, policy, management, and communication roles during his six years in the city administration. He has also advised a number of metro governments.

He is a graduate of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of Stellenbosch Business School, the University of Liverpool, and the University of Oxford where he was a Rhodes Scholar. His specialisations are in public policy and strategy, project portfolios, and operations modelling.

## High expectations

"I am pleased that council has endorsed Craig's appointment as CRO. We have high expectations of the CRO. Craig has impressive abilities to align strategy with implementation, monitoring, and evaluation and hence I am confident that he will be able to institutionalise improved resilience responses into the city administration," said City of Cape Town executive mayor Patricia de Lille.

Kesson's appointment has also been welcomed by the 100 Resilient Cities president Michael Berkowitz.

"City governments are on the front line of dealing with acute shocks and chronic stress. Cape Town is part of a group of cities leading the way on resilience to better prepare for, withstand, and recover more effectively when disruption hits. Craig joins a network of peers from cities across the globe that will share best practice and surface innovative thinking. Through this partnership, Craig will become a global leader in resilience, and will be an asset for Cape Town and other cities around the world – forging new partnerships and new solutions for the city," said Berkowitz.

## **Priority challenges**

The workshop brought together a diverse set of stakeholders from across city government, academia, non-profit organisations, and the private sector in an effort to identify the resilience vulnerabilities that the city is facing.

Participants identified and discussed the city's priority challenges and the extent to which further resilience can be attained. More information on the identified stresses and shocks will be shared with the public as the process of crafting the city's first resilience strategy unfolds.

"We are thrilled to formally begin our partnership with 100RC. With the support of 100RC, we will identify some of the key resilience challenges that the city is facing, develop a strategy to address these challenges, and put resources in place to implement that plan. For the City of Cape Town, urban resilience is a core factor in achieving our strategic objectives to build a caring, inclusive, safe, opportunity and well-run city. Cities are the drivers of change and we stand ready to tackle the challenges and create a better Cape Town for the people of our great city," added De Lille.

The process of developing this strategy and further consultations will be led by the CRO who will use the data and information sourced from the workshop as a starting point.

For more information on 100RC, go to [www.100ResilientCities.org](http://www.100ResilientCities.org).

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