



### **Augmented reality incorporated into Lightstone Property Pro app – first of its kind in SA**

Following the success of their **LIVE** app which won *App of the year* and *Best Android App (Enterprise)* at the 2014 MTN Business App of The Year Awards, Lightstone have just released their latest app called **Lightstone Property Pro**. The app, which is a first of its kind in South Africa, will provide property professionals with immediate access to accurate, credible and verified property information exactly when they need it, on the go.

The app will allow users to obtain property reports, suburb reports, valuation reports, and EzContact reports, using augmented reality camera searches and interactive map searches, in real time.

It is well known that UBER disrupted the market when they had the grand idea to merge the ability and functionality of Google Maps, with a taxi service. As technology advances and internet speeds become faster in SA, Google Maps is becoming more of a desirable element for app developers to incorporate into their apps - as with the Lightstone Property app, which is linked to Google Maps.

In addition to this, a unique feature of the app is its augmented reality camera search. “This feature allows our clients to stand at a property and use their mobile or tablet camera functionality to view all the properties surrounding them. It makes for a quick easily accessible search functionality,” says Hayley Ivins Downes, Head of Property at Lightstone.

Incorporating augmented reality into an app for the property market needed to be well-thought out and developed extremely carefully. In densely populated areas the user would be overwhelmed by the amount of properties that come up for selection, and this could create confusion, so the app was developed optimally with this in mind. Consideration had to also be taken for searches of sectional schemes and how to list all the properties within the scheme, via the augmented reality search.

The ease (and fun) of incorporating augmented reality into the app is one of its best features. “We thought it was a great way to search for a property; no typing in of an address or getting confused on a map – it’s merely a matter of holding your phone up, scanning the properties surrounding you by means of your camera, and clicking on the property you want information on. Its makes it quick and easy to use – enhancing the experience of using the app and finding the right information,” Ivins Downes notes.

Before the introduction of the Lightstone Property app, estate agents would have to login to the Lightstone portal via a desktop at their office or on a tablet, which proved to be time consuming and often difficult to use. It was then that Lightstone identified an ideal opportunity and need for a property professional to have access to useful property information whilst on the go. The Lightstone Property app will best serve estate agents and valuers who are always on the go from one valuation to the next, with house viewings taking place all day. Over and above accessing all the property and suburb information needed the reports can be emailed directly from the app.

The app is only available to Lightstone Property Toolkit subscribers and can be downloaded on iOS and Android devices from each respective app store.

It is the first property specific app that provides information on every property in South Africa. As much as the app is designed specifically for property professionals on the go, it holds just as much value for buyers and sellers wanting immediate information. Buying or selling a house is one of the most important decisions a person can make in their lives and having an estate agent that is armed with useful and accurate information by means of the Lightstone app, to guide a buyer or seller through the process, makes a world of difference.

