

# CAPE Business News

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## Electric buses in South Africa gain ground as diesel prices spike

*Diesel's 54% year-on-year spike to around R30/litre is strengthening the case for electric buses, but high purchase prices, charging infrastructure and battery import duties still slow mass adoption.*



MyCiTi's Volvo BZRLE.

By Larry Claasen

THE battery powered electric buses (E-Buses) fleet is growing fast but though current higher fuel prices are supporting demand, the high upfront cost per unit compared to diesel counterparts remains a barrier to uptake.

The war in the Middle East has seen the diesel spike by about 54% to around R30/litre in September year-on-year, adding to the cost burden of bus fleet operators. But if they switched to E-Buses, they could reduce energy costs by 33% to 57% compared to diesel, according to the [Electrifying Public Transportation](#) report by GreenCape.

GreenCape projects a total fleet of E-Buses to reach 576 by 2030, but research group Marqstats says this figure could rise to as much as 3,200 by 3031.

The appetite for these vehicles are growing as cost saving and their commitment to reduce emissions have already seen several municipalities starting to include E-Buses as part of their commuter fleets.

**Municipal fleets and pilots are growing**

Cape Town based Golden Arrow Bus Services operates 120 BYD vehicles, the city's MyCiTi services plans to add 38 Volvo

BZRLE, and the cities of Tshwane, Johannesburg and eThekweni are either running E-Buses pilots and or plan to run them this year.

Aside from city-operated commuter operators, the University of Johannesburg has deployed 15 vehicles for its Inter-campus shuttle service and the Paruk Group, a private bus/passenger transport group has ordered 100 from MAN Truck & Bus.

The local bus industry is also starting to produce alternatively powered buses. Chinese based SANY, which is better known for making mining and earth moving equipment recently launched its first E-Bus, made in partnership with Busmark, while Gauteng Bus and Coach Centre (GBCC) was selected to build MyCiTi's Volvo BZRLE buses.

**The upfront cost barrier**

Though there are considerable savings when it comes to energy usage, the trade off is not a neat calculation. Several costs associated with the switch — like putting in place charging stations, possible solar power facilities, investing in high capacity powerlines and the higher ticket prices for E-Buses — pushes up the cost of conversion.

Moving from diesel to battery power, for example, could see the total cost of owner-

ship — which includes infrastructure costs — only reach breakeven in year 13 after the switch. This is according to the [Accelerating a Market Transition in South Africa: Insights into the Bus Industry and Emerging Electric Bus Models](#) report, produced by the C40 Cities.

**Breakeven: 13 years or 12–18 months?**

Avinash Singh, director of sales and marketing for electric vehicles and hydrogen trucks at Sany Southern Africa, disputes this, saying that the breakeven timeframe is a lot lower.

"We're now at a point where we can get to a breakeven, in terms of the capital outlay, in something between 12 to 18 months. It basically pays for itself in less than two years including infrastructure, and then you've got an EV Bus that's basically 70% to 80% lower on operating cost."

The upfront cost of buying an E-Bus, however, compared to a diesel powered one remains a hurdle, as it can cost between double and four times that of a diesel powered one.

**Battery localisation: the missing policy piece**

The cost of batteries when it comes to powering E-Buses is the primary factor driving up the ticket price. They won't come down without government policy that favours local content and removes tariff penalties on imported battery cells, says South African Battery Manufacturers Association (SABMA) chairperson Dr. Louis Serfontein.

SABMA is an association of local battery manufacturers formed last year with the goal of advocating for the sector.

The problem when it comes to sourcing batteries locally is that the EV-grade lithium-ion cells needed to power buses are not yet manufactured in South Africa, Serfontein said.

Continued on p2

## Water independence starts with backup storage you can deploy quickly



By Dawid Bredenkamp, Damsak®

AS pressure on water resources continues to grow, flexibility is becoming less of a luxury and more of a practical necessity. Sometimes resilience is not about building bigger. It is about having the right solution ready when circumstances change.

South Africa already knows what prolonged shortage looks like. Cape Town's Day Zero threat showed how quickly taps can run dry when drought bites. With a strong El Niño cycle expected to intensify dry conditions, many municipalities, farms, mines and communities face the real prospect of water levels dropping and supplies tightening. Emergency backup storage is no longer a nice-to-have. It is practical preparation.

In 2007 Gordon Bredenkamp sat down in Cullinan and designed a portable, closed water reservoir that could go where rigid tanks simply could not. Nearly twenty years later the family business he runs with his son Dawid is taking that same idea into international markets.

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# Earthmoving equipment South Africa: DISA delivers end-to-end DEVELON solutions



Leon Schelvis, DISA Equipment's National Sales Manager, in front of their brand journey on their stand at Electra Mining.

By Diane Silcock

RISING operating costs, skills shortages, equipment downtime and pressure to improve safety and productivity are challenges that customers across Africa's construction, earthmoving and material handling industries face. A company addressing these challenges is DISA Equipment, whose approach is to provide end-to-end solutions that keep construction and earthmoving equipment productive throughout the equipment lifecycle.

Customers may be tempted to purchase lower-priced machinery that offers an initial cost saving, but does it come with the equipment support, maintenance, parts availability and technical expertise needed to ensure reliability, minimise downtime and control total cost of ownership?

DISA Equipment is a South African company whose commitment extends beyond providing machines. As the official distributor in Southern Africa of DEVELON equipment (previously Doosan and prior to that Daewoo) for over 50 years, the company recently showcased its latest range of construction, earthmoving and material handling equipment at the 2026 Electra Mining show.

Cape Business News spoke to DISA Equipment's National Sales Manager, Leon Schelvis. He explained the company's focus on delivering complete solutions that improve productivity, reduce operating costs, enhance safety and support the

long-term success of customers across mining, construction and earthmoving industries.

"We provide a combination of high-quality equipment, technical expertise, operator training, preventative maintenance programmes and responsive aftermarket support. Our focus is not only on supplying machines but also on ensuring customers achieve the best possible performance through the equipment lifecycle. We take time to understand the customer's operating environment, production targets and budget requirements," said Schelvis.

"We work closely with contractors, mining operations, construction companies, government entities and plant hire businesses. Each customer segment has unique requirements, and we tailor our equipment recommendations and services accordingly."

DEVELON equipment is designed to maximise productivity, while minimising total cost of ownership, which is achieved through fuel-efficient machines, advanced hydraulic systems, robust machine components and intelligent machine management technologies.

At the show, DISA Equipment also highlighted the advances in telematics and fleet management systems that allow customers to remotely monitor performance, utilisation, maintenance schedules and operating costs in real time.

"With digital technology becoming increasingly important in our industry, we are committed to offering solutions that help our

customers make data-driven decisions to improve efficiency and uptime," Schelvis noted.

The My DEVELON digital platform enables customers to remotely monitor machines. Some of the many features include fuel consumption monitoring and the length of time a machine has been idling for. A machine can also be geofenced so that the minute it goes out of set parameters, an alarm indication is received.

A pertinent feature of the platform is its ability to send notifications when a machine requires service. This proactive approach helps both DISA Equipment and customers stay ahead of potential issues, thereby optimising uptime and ensuring that equipment remains in peak condition.

Machine training awareness forms an integral part of their customer support programme. "The objective is to improve operator competency, reduce unnecessary machine wear, enhance workplace safety and ensure equipment is used in accordance with manufacturer guidelines. Well-trained operators contribute significantly to improved productivity and reduce operating costs," noted Schelvis.

DISA Equipment's approach helps their customers maximise return on investment while building long-term relationships based on trust, performance and ongoing support.

DISA Equipment forms part of the Capital Equipment Group, a division of Invicta Holdings Limited.

<https://disaequipment.co.za/>

## Electric buses in South Africa gain ground as diesel prices spike

Continued from p1

"Automotive-grade battery packs require ISO 26262 functional safety, crash-safety integration, and OEM-specific homologation"

That said, he noted that SABMA members — including Solar MD, Freedom Won, Balan-Cell, Maxwell & Spark and others — already produce high-voltage, high-reliability lithium packs that are technically adaptable for commercial EV plat-

forms. This has seen several bus operators approach SABMA members for feasibility assessments, integration studies and cost modelling.

### What SABMA wants government to do

Despite this interest from operators, Serfontein said the government could support manufacturers by putting in place local content designations

in their procurement policies.

Serfontein also suggests that removing the 20% duty on Completely Knocked Down (CKD) imported cells would immediately reduce pack costs by 12% to 18%, making local assembly competitive with imported packs. He added that Introducing a split-importation framework for EVs and buses, would allow buses to be imported without batter-

ies and fitted locally.

"South Africa can produce world-class EV batteries at competitive prices, create industrial jobs, open export markets, and ensure that our bus and truck operators are supported by local manufacturing OEMs who understand African conditions in design and support. The capability exists; what's missing is the enabling framework to unlock it," Serfontein said.

## Eskom green hydrogen plan: How ammonia co-firing could cut coal power emissions

Green Hydrogen could see coal powered power plants cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by as much as 50%.

By Larry Claasen

ESKOM's Green Hydrogen venture will see it reduce the carbon footprint of its fleet of coal fired power plants, which are the biggest greenhouse gas emitters in the country. Eskom's total greenhouse gas emissions reach about 188,8 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) annually, representing about 42% of South Africa's total emissions.

Under the Just Energy Transition (JET) strategy, however, the power utility plans to cut emissions on some gases by as much as 68% by 2035 by closing down some power stations and adopting a host of new technologies.

### How ammonia co-firing works

One way it plans to achieve this is by feeding ammonia, created from a Green Hydrogen production process, into the power plant's boiler alongside the coal. The ammonia burns and provides heat, but because it has no carbon, it doesn't produce CO<sub>2</sub>, and the only direct emissions from burning it are nitrogen and water vapor.

This means by replacing a portion of the coal with ammonia, it reduces the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> coming out of the smokestack.

### The pilot programme

Eskom says its pilot programme of co-firing ammonia and coal

is showing promise. It has tested co-firing at 5% to 7%, where ammonia replaced 5% to 7% of the coal. It plans to push the ratio test 10% to 20% in the current financial year.

The plan is to eventually push this figure to 50%, which would be a massive reduction in coal use.

The group plans to construct a pilot renewable green hydrogen facility (RHF) at its Research, Testing and Development (RT&D) unit in Johannesburg.

Once the Green Hydrogen facility is operational, the green ammonia produced will be used directly for Eskom's own co-firing production, creating a circular, decarbonised fuel cycle.

### Building a local market

Aside from reducing emissions, Eskom's plans also have the potential to create a local market for Green Hydrogen.

South Africa's Green Hydrogen plans have largely focused on creating it for offshore markets, but in creating it for local use, Eskom has the potential to foster security of supply, especially in light of the looming "Gas Cliff."

Though the potential is huge, Eskom's GM for RT&D Prudence Madiba pointed out that it needs local industry to support it as the group as it does not plan to produce Green Hydrogen based products itself.

"Our role is to prove



Eskom GM for RT&D Prudence Madiba.

the concept. We need to stimulate the market, and the market needs to respond to help us," said Madiba.

### Beyond Ammonia

Aside from its Green Hydrogen plans, Madiba said Eskom was looking developing Clean Coal Technologies (CCTs) like Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS); Direct Sorbent Injection Flue Gas Desulphurisation; and High-Efficiency, Low-Emission (HELE) technologies. Madiba said the group was making progress in developing these technologies.

She said the CCUS feasibility studies were concluded in 2025 and the next stage was to finalise engineering studies for a proposed carbon-capture demonstration plant at Kusile Power Station in Mpumalanga, designed to capture 22,000 tons of carbon dioxide a year.

Madiba said Eskom was looking to produce a range of derivative products from its CCUS projects. Some

carbon would be captured to produce fertilizer and at others it would be to produce methanol.

The group has also made progress with HELE, and is expected to have a technology demonstration by 2030.

Besides co-firing ammonia, Eskom is also testing co-firing of torrefied wood pellets and corn biomass. Testing at a 20% co-firing ratio indicated reductions in carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide, with a full-scale demonstration planned at Kriel Power Station by March 2027.

### Coal is not the enemy

Madiba noted that though coal fired power plants have a reputation for emitting greenhouse gases, she pointed out that the use of coal was not the issue but rather emissions were.

She said an argument could be made that by using technology to cap emissions, using coal derived power would not come at a cost to the environment.

# Capitec business banking earnings jump 52% as client base more than doubles

Capitec says its low-cost, data-driven model lifted business banking headline earnings 52% to R609m, with entrepreneur sign-ups pushing business clients to 545,000 and POS merchants to 141,000.



By Larry Claasen

CAPITEC's move into business banking is paying off, with the bank more than doubling its business banking client base helping the division's headline earnings rise by more than 52% to R609 million for the six months to the end of August 2026.

The Stellenbosch-based retail bank made its name by offering low-cost transactional banking services to consumers and is now replicating this model in its business banking offering.

**Business clients more than double to 545,000**

Capitec executive for business banking, Karl Kumbier, said the number of business clients more than doubled from 244,000 to 545,000 over the period. The biggest driver

of this growth was the signing up of about 237,000 entrepreneurs as business banking clients.

**Low-cost model extended to SMEs**

Kumbier said the goal was to attract customers with its low-cost, easy-to-use offering — it prices personal and business banking exactly the same.

"We believe SMEs have paid too much for bank charges in the past. Businesses moving to us now save up to 50% on charges, and larger ones moving to us save as much as 90%," he said.

**Data fuels lending and product sales**

Capitec then uses data from these customers' accounts to extend loans and sell other products, driving revenue growth that is rein-

vested to improve client experience and reduce costs.

Kumbier said Capitec's business offering is now comparable to that of any other bank.

"We have a fully fledged business now. We offer commercial property loans, car finance, asset finance and overdrafts."

**Overdraft approved in two minutes**

Its products include an overdraft facility that can be approved in two minutes using a "selfie" for verification. It also offers a term loan for high-risk customers, where it collects repayment daily.

"Every single day we collect a little bit out of the account. So if you have a good day we collect a little bit more, and if you have a bad day we collect a little bit less."

**Ninety One: lending against cash flows, not collateral**

The move to sign up entrepreneurs is part of its strategy of targeting businesses that were too small to fit into a typical corporate banking framework, according to a 2024 research note by Ninety One.

The asset manager said Capitec would eventually develop alternative approaches to business financing.

"Capitec is in the process of acquiring business clients while gaining a better understanding of their transactional activities and cash flows. This will allow the bank to unlock an alternative approach to business financing, effectively lending funds against the cash flows of a business rather than its assets," Ninety One said in the note.

Capitec could make loan-granting decisions based on monitoring transactions on the point-of-sale (POS) machines it provides to customers, rather than on business collateral.

**POS merchant numbers surge**

This strategy is paying

off for Capitec: while other banks charge R450 a month to rent a POS device, Capitec charges a once-off R699. The number of merchants using its POS devices has risen from 32,000 two years ago to 85,000 last year and 141,000 this year.

Total turnover through those devices rose from R27,1 billion two years ago to R42,4 billion last year and R61,8 billion this year.

**Lending book grows 37%**

The data it has collected has helped it grow its lending book by 37% to R35,5 billion in the period.

What excited Kumbier was growth in the "scored" part of its lending book, which rose 175% to R4,2 billion, as these are loans to very small businesses.

**Higher-risk loans lift impairments**

Although the value of business loans it has issued is sharply up and impairments doubled in rand terms, Kumbier pointed out that this was largely because it is issuing higher-risk loans, with the risk priced into the product.

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# ISA releases inventory of R395 billion in infrastructure projects

INFRASTRUCTURE South Africa (ISA) has released the third edition of South Africa's Construction Book, an inventory of 110 projects across six infrastructure sectors with a combined value of approximately R395 billion.

The Construction Book provides details of infrastructure projects with allocated budgets expected to enter procurement and construction over the next 12–18 months, giving the construction industry greater visibility of the country's infrastructure pipeline.

It was launched at the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium South Af-

rica (SIDSSA) in Cape Town, where President Cyril Ramaphosa said improved project preparation was helping accelerate the implementation of Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs).

The President said: "We recognised that our infrastructure system was too fragmented, causing delays and escalating costs, and there were too many projects that did not progress. That gave rise to the reform processes through which we have strengthened coordination through the Infrastructure Development Act and the work of ISA to help prepare and advance the SIP pipeline. ISA identifies blockages

and brings the relevant institutions together to solve them."

The inventory includes 10 municipal projects valued at around R112 billion in metros including Polokwane, eThek-wini, Johannesburg and Mogale City. For the first time, it also includes Public-Private Partnership projects.

Three digital infrastructure projects, valued at around R28 billion, include investments associated with MeerKAT and the SAeX East Subsea Fibre-Optic Cable.

The water sector includes 18 projects totaling R35 billion, while 41 transport projects worth R81 billion include up-

grades to national rail and container corridors and procurement of a new Gautrain concessionaire.

A further 29 energy projects, worth around R86 billion, include the Aries-Aggenys 400kV Line in the Northern Cape and refurbishment of the Steenbras main plant in the Western Cape.

Sixteen social infrastructure projects, valued at R52 billion, include work on Tygerberg and Belhar hospitals, Durban Film City, modernisation of the Joburg Fresh Produce Market and new hospitals.

Mameetse Masemola, Head of ISA, says: "The Construction Book



will complement, rather than replace formal procurement platforms such as National Treasury's eTender Portal. Our intention is to create a clearer line of sight between the forward infra-

structure pipeline and the tenders that subsequently enter the market. This enables contractors, professional service providers, suppliers and financiers to plan and position themselves earlier."

ISA says the Construction Book will be strengthened through more regular reporting on projects coming to market. [View the ISA Construction Book 3rd Edition](#)

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# Discovery Green launches EnergyOS to manage renewable energy procurement risk

New offering aims to turn uncertain renewable supply and pricing into more predictable savings, lower emissions and manageable financial risk.



By Larry Claasen

DISCOVERY Green's new EnergyOS service allows businesses to better manage energy supply and pricing that comes with sourcing power from the renewable-energy market, where reliability can be uncertain.

With EnergyOS, Discovery Green, a renewable energy trading platform launched by the Discovery Group, is aiming at a specific dilemma for businesses, as they can increasingly procure renewable energy, but struggle to guarantee that it delivers the savings, emissions reductions and financial stability they expected.

"Many businesses typically assess renewable energy procurement based on its price and quantity, treating it as a commodity in a stable world," says Andre Nep-

gen, CEO of Discovery Green.

"But this is a dangerously narrow view. The real measure of success is whether that energy delivers sustained savings, manageable risk and meaningful emission reductions across a wide range of potential futures," said Nepgen at the launch of the service in Johannesburg, in September.

### The renewable-energy trilemma

Discovery Green says EnergyOS addresses what it calls the renewable-energy trilemma: maximising savings, reducing emissions and managing financial risk.

Traditionally, procurement has focused on securing supply and an attractive starting price. But that leaves businesses exposed to three uncertainties: how much wind or solar generation they actu-

ally get, how their own electricity consumption varies, and how future energy market prices move.

When these factors do not align, the financial outcome can deteriorate sharply.

The group's research found annual savings can vary by as much as 35% either way for wind and 19% for solar. In some scenarios, expected savings can turn into losses. That matters to finance directors, treasurers and sustainability heads because it can hit the balance sheet, undermine budgets and put decarbonisation targets at risk.

As South Africa's renewable-energy market grows and becomes more complex, Nepgen argues that securing energy is no longer enough. Businesses need to understand, quantify and manage the risk around it.

### Forecasting, customisation and allocation

Discovery Green says EnergyOS, a proprietary operating system, addresses this by forecasting generation, consumption and market prices. It then applies customisation and ener-

gy-allocation models to find the best energy allocation for a portfolio of businesses.

Discovery Green says 10,000 consumption simulations, 87 million generation simulations and more than 200,000 future market price points have shown that, on average, EnergyOS produces a reduction of 88% in risk and an increase of 105% in savings relative to traditional procurement approaches, while achieving a 90% reduction in electricity emissions.

This means that, with EnergyOS, a business is not just buying renewable energy; it is managing renewable energy as a strategic asset, so that savings, risk and emissions outcomes are more predictable across a range of possible futures.

### A new phase for renewable energy

The launch of EnergyOS comes as the renewable-energy market is entering a new phase, says the group.

It believes that renewable energy can be pooled, modelled and managed, much like the approach taken to manage individual insurance risks.

This begins with forecasting, where millions of potential generation outcomes are considered against thousands of unique energy consumption patterns. These outcomes are tested against an array of future market prices to create a statistical distribution of likely outcomes, instead of a single data point.

"No one can predict with complete certainty how the wind will blow, how the sun will shine, how a business's electricity needs will change or how the energy market will evolve," says Nepgen. "The answer is not to pretend that this uncertainty does not exist. It is to understand it, quantify it and manage it more effectively on behalf of businesses."

# WEG powers mining today for tomorrow at Electra Mining Africa 2026

THOUSANDS of visitors attended Electra Mining Africa 2026 to see the latest and most impressive mining technologies and services. WEG's outdoor stand attracted experts and onlookers who inspected the equipment on show and conversed with WEG's experts on the floor.

"The turnout has been fantastic. WEG's electric motors, the workhorses of African mining, are front and centre, and what we are best known for. But we have the breadth of WEG's divisions and products on display, from our locally manufactured switchgear and transformers to our customised generators, hybrid energy solutions including solar and battery storage, and demonstrations of our market-leading e-house designs," says Rodrigo Cetenaeski, Sales and Marketing Director at WEG Africa.

Attendees could get up-close to the industrial electrical technology provider's market-leading electric motors, which included the large WEG W51 heavy-duty electric motor, the W22 Severe Duty motors, and the next generation of electric motor technology, the highly efficient W22 Prime IE5.

Latest innovations and emerging technologies included the W80 AXgen family of compact axial flux motors, demonstrating how WEG continues to push the boundaries of electric motor technology. Experts were on hand to share insights into the latest efficiency standards, in particular the transition from Minimum Energy Performance Standards in South Africa that bring electric motors to the IE3 baseline to the next level IE4 and IE5 motors.

With six manufacturing sites in the country, WEG manufactures and assembles a range of high-quality, crucial electrical components, including medium-voltage soft starters, medi-



Addressing the media at their Electra Mining stand is Eduardo Werninghaus, CEO of WEG Africa.

um-voltage switchgear, and motor control centres.

There were also demonstrations and models on display of the company's custom and turnkey modular substations and e-houses, the next generation in substation design and portability.

WEG's variety of energy systems included their growing solar systems division, which covers components such as panels, three-phase inverters, and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

The many applications and configurations for generators stood out, with particular emphasis on customised solutions for harsh mining environments and "power plant" designs that integrate several gensets with management technologies for optimal and instant power generation.

WEG also showcased its capability to support generator maintenance with critical spares, technical assistance, and skilled technicians, even for other generator brands.

In addition, a generator engine from a major Chinese manufacturer, brought to African markets by WEG for generator OEMs and genset assemblers, was on display. WEG complements these engines with its AG10 high-performance industrial synchronous alternators and AW10 industrial, four-pole synchronous alternators.

Mini-substations,

compressor and turbine maintenance, small-frame alternators, and industrial variable speed drives with advanced smart and automation features were displayed. Visitors had the opportunity to tap into how WEG approaches design, supports system integrators and OEMs, and brings projects online through its respected EC&I teams.

"Powering Africa Today for Tomorrow reflects our belief in what is possible for Africa and the role that industry can play in building that future," says Cetenaeski. "Africa's continued growth will require investment in how we generate and transport energy, but equally important is how efficiently and reliably we use that energy to power our industries, businesses, and communities. We believe this is something we must build together."

"WEG wants to contribute through our technology, our people and our partnerships, working alongside our customers and the broader industry to strengthen Africa's energy infrastructure, improve efficiency and support sustainable economic growth across the continent. Electra Mining gives us an opportunity not only to showcase the technologies that can support this journey, but to engage with the people and organisations who share the ambition of building a stronger Africa and a better world."



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# Commercial solar battery storage: NID project shows value of peak demand management



By Kris van der Bijl

A 100kWh battery might seem modest alongside a 1MWp solar installation, but at the National Institute for the Deaf's (NID) De La Bat campus in Worcester, that imbalance is deliberate.

Here, the battery was selected to help manage peak electricity demand and shift consumption away from higher-tariff periods, a distinction that could have implications for how commercial and institutional customers approach solar and storage projects.

The 1MWp solar PV and 100kWh battery system was modelled using HOMER, an economic modelling tool, with the objective of achieving the highest possible lifetime savings for the NID, rather than simply minimising upfront capital costs or maximising backup duration.

**"The battery charges from surplus solar and discharges during the more expensive tariff periods."**

According to Herman Bührmann, director at Bührmann Consulting Engineers, the modelling showed that a relatively large solar installation combined with a smaller battery offered the strongest economic outcome for the site.

"The battery was primarily sized to assist with peak demand management and the use of stored energy

during higher tariff periods," says Bührmann.

## Peak demand management in practice

According to Bührmann, a power plant controller weighs four inputs: the site's load profile, solar output, tariff periods and a maximum-demand target.

When demand approaches that target, the controller discharges the battery to trim the peak power the campus draws from the municipality. That peak sets the maximum-demand charge on the institute's monthly electricity account.

The battery charges from surplus solar and discharges during the more expensive tariff periods.

A solar-only design would cut the campus's maximum-demand charges by 18%, according to Bührmann's modelling. The battery

lifts that reduction to 37%.

The battery makes a smaller difference to energy charges, lifting the reduction from 80% to 81%.

## Solar payback and lifetime savings

The combined system will cut the campus's electricity bill by 71%, against 66% for a solar-only design.

The battery adds 9% to the capital cost and lifts annual savings by 5%. The combined system's lifetime cost comes in 4% below the solar-only option.

The solar-only design would pay back in 3.9 years, against four years for the combined

the plant as one of the larger embedded generation systems in the Worcester area. Its capacity places it near the upper limit for a Category A generator, which covers systems below 1MVA.

Breede Valley Municipality, where the

**"In some applications, a smaller battery used strategically for peak shaving and tariff optimisation can provide a better financial return."**

system. It would post an internal rate of return of 25.6%, against 24.8%.

"In some applications, a smaller battery used strategically for peak shaving and tariff optimisation can provide a better financial return," says Bührmann.

He says the battery provides limited backup power as a secondary benefit. It gives the system room for tariff changes and future expansion.

Bührmann points to the value of sizing solar and storage to a customer's actual load profile and tariff.

## A model for power grid connections in smaller Western Cape municipalities

Sustainable Power Solutions built the ground-mounted plant. It steps its output up to 11kV and feeds the campus's existing medium-voltage network. The institute sells its surplus power to Breede Valley Municipality.

Bührmann describes

school is located, required a Grid Impact Study because the plant exceeds 350kW. His firm completed the study. Bührmann credits the municipality with strong cooperation throughout the process.

He says many smaller municipalities may have limited internal capacity to assess such studies. In those towns, he argues, the consulting engineer must guide the municipality and flag risks to weaker networks.

According to him, the lesson for other commercial and institutional sites is to appoint the right team from the outset, and therefore advises clients to engage an independent consulting engineer and a contractor with a record of long-term support.

He recommends agreeing the point of connection, tie-in arrangements, switch-room space, protection requirements and shutdown planning with the municipality at the start of the project.

# Atlantis SEZ secures infrastructure funding and customs status, but tax and PPP hurdles remain

*The Western Cape special economic zone has overcome bulk infrastructure and customs hurdles, yet National Treasury remains firm on tax incentives and no new PPP framework is in sight.*



By Larry Claassen

THE Atlantis Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has had some of the obstacles holding up its development addressed, but others remain unresolved.

In a presentation to Parliament in June, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) and the Atlantis SEZ said access to funding for bulk infrastructure, a lack of tax incentives, and the absence of a streamlined framework for public-private partnerships (PPPs) were impediments to its development. SEZs are seen as a key way to attract offshore investment into the country.

The presentation noted that although incentives provided to businesses in the SEZs between 2016 and 2024 amounted to R24,2 billion, only R14,8 billion was collected in personal and corporate taxes and rates. It noted that key constraints to the financial performance of the SEZ programme were that only six SEZs out of the 12 benefited from the current tax incentives, and only 30 companies from the 224 across all operational SEZs benefit from the tax incentives, due to stringent qualifying criteria.

## Bulk infrastructure funding exceeds expectations

Since the presentation, however, progress has been made on some fronts for the Atlantis SEZ. At the time, it said it needed funding for bulk infrastructure. Not only did the funding come through, but its scale surprised the SEZ.

"They have come through well beyond our expectations. The Atlantis SEZ is now in a position to complete the civil works for Zones 2 and 3, and to construct three new factories," said its CEO, Matthew Cullinan.

In September, the Atlantis SEZ said it had spent R95,5 million on civil works at Zone 1. Of that, 35% of construction spend was directed to SMMEs, creating 451 construction jobs.

## Customs Controlled Area status offers duty benefits

Aside from funding for bulk infrastructure, the zone received a further boost when Atlantis Zone 1 was registered as a Customs Controlled Area.

Cullinan said it was too soon to say whether this would make a positive impact, but added that on paper it would substantially benefit any company importing components required to manufacture goods in the zone, as these would come in duty-free.

"Should these be exported, there will be no duty payable. If manufactured for the South African market, duty [is payable] only," he said.

## Tax incentives: National Treasury still unconvinced

Despite these changes, issues around tax incentives and PPPs remain unresolved.

In June, it called on the National Treasury to consider expanding tax incentives to all designated SEZs. But from what he has seen, Cullinan said the

treasury is reluctant to change its mind on the issue.

"To the best of our knowledge, the National Treasury is still quite firm in its position that the tax incentives do not provide value for money to the fiscus. It continues to express concern around transfers and under-reporting," he said.

The tax issue has far-reaching implications for the SEZs. The complexity of the incentives, for example, led companies such as Samsung to disinvest in an SEZ.

## PPP framework: No movement from Treasury

There has also been no movement on the National Treasury considering a new PPP framework.

"As far as we know, no steps have been taken to consider this. The issue for us is that the Public Finance Management Act regulations make flexible, rapid and responsive management of the zone impossible. This makes it hard to run a zone effectively," said Cullinan.

## R3 billion investment and 800 jobs

Though progress still needs to be made on tax incentives and a PPP framework, the Atlantis SEZ has attracted over R3 billion in investments and created over 800 jobs.

This includes the R18 million Quantum V3 facility, which is currently under construction using hempcrete and will produce acetylene gas. It is South Africa's first factory built using the lower-carbon material.

# Entry-level hiring can grow South Africa’s talent pipeline



By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

BUSINESSES are struggling to fill entry-level roles at the same time as millions of young people remain outside the labour market. That disconnect is raising questions about whether the problem lies only with jobseekers, or whether employers are making it harder to find the talent they need. Rene Rademeyer, Client Relations Manager: Business Development at [Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator](#) (Harambee), says many companies still rely on recruitment practices that favour candidates with formal work experience, established networks and conventional CVs. “It doesn’t mean that suitable young talent is

absent. It means employers and work-seekers are not always able to find, understand and access one another effectively,” she says. One of the clearest pressure points is the way entry-level jobs are defined. Businesses often advertise junior roles but still require previous experience, immediately narrowing the available pool. impact on talent pipelines. Companies end up competing for the same group of experienced candidates instead of bringing new entrants into the workforce and developing them internally. It also creates a cycle for first-time jobseekers, who are expected to show experience before they have had an opportunity to gain it. Long job specifica-

“It also creates a cycle for first-time jobseekers, who are expected to show experience before they have had an opportunity to gain it.”

“The mistake is calling a role entry-level and then designing the process for an experienced hire,” Rademeyer says. That has a direct

onboarding and workplace training. Rademeyer says employers should be more deliberate about which requirements are genuinely linked to performance. demonstrating reliability and responsibility. Those capabilities are easily missed when recruitment is built around formal job titles and previous employers.

“A young person who sells products in their community may already have customer service, sales and cash-handling skills, while someone who regularly looks after homes or pets may be demonstrating reliability and responsibility.”

Qualifications remain important in regulated and technically specialised roles, but they do not always provide the clearest measure of whether someone will succeed in a junior position. Communication, problem-solving, reliability, adaptability and the ability to learn can carry equal weight in roles where technical knowledge can be developed on the job. Traditional CV screening can also hide useful experience. A young person who sells products in their community may already have customer service, sales and cash-handling skills, while someone who regularly looks after homes or pets may be

pool and allow them to develop employees around their own systems, service standards and operating models. That can also create a stronger internal pipeline into supervisory and team leader roles, reducing the need to recruit externally every time a vacancy opens. Global Business Services is one sector already creating entry points into customer service, sales, finance support and technology-enabled work. Retail and wholesale, tourism and hospitality, construction, manufacturing, logistics and parts of the green economy also have capacity to absorb younger workers where recruitment is linked to real demand. Employment remains concentrated in economic hubs, while many young jobseekers live far from those opportunities. A person may meet every requirement for a role but still be unable to afford the daily commute or reach an early shift. Short-notice interview requests can create the same barrier. She adds that recruitment needs to account for where jobs are based, when shifts start and whether candidates can reasonably access the workplace. Rademeyer believes the biggest shift would be to remove unnecessary experience requirements from entry-level roles and replace them with structured assessments of potential and

“First-time hires can give businesses access to a larger talent pool and allow them to develop employees around their own systems, service standards and operating models.”

The mismatch, however, is not only about skills. Location and transport continue to shape whether a candidate can realistically take up a job. capability, supported by recruitment tools such as SA Youth that make it easier for employers to discover more talent, simplify hiring and reach candidates across the country.



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# ESG in business is an imperative driving savings and growth - RS South Africa

Distributor says sustainability drives cost savings, revenue growth and talent attraction



By Larry Claasen

ENVIRONMENTAL, Social, and Governance (ESG) is a business imperative says RS South Africa sales director, Eric Wessels.

Wessels was speaking at the Electra Mining Africa 2026 Expo, where he gave a seminar on how ESG is increasingly influencing everything from investment decisions and operational efficiency to talent attraction and long-term growth.

He said RS — a distributor of electrical, electronic, mechanical, tools and industrial products that operates in 32 countries — has embedded ESG into the KPIs of every decision-making group, not just the boardroom.

"This commitment has seen RS achieve EcoVadis Platinum status, placing it in the top 1% of more than 25,000 companies reviewed."

### Sustainability across the industrial lifecycle

Wessels argues that sustainability is relevant across the entire industrial lifecycle — R&D, procurement, operations, maintenance and end of life. It is a value creation enabler, not a cost centre, as it drives operational efficiency, resource reduction and innovation. It also creates new revenue streams through greener products and services.

He said the com-

pany's six strategic pillars — customers, operational excellence, people, experience, solutions, and products and suppliers — are all enabled by ESG.

### Ratings and recognition

This commitment has seen RS achieve EcoVadis Platinum status, placing it in the top 1% of more than 25,000 companies reviewed. It also holds a Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) A-rating and a Climate Leadership Score in the top 1% for 2025.

### Bottom-line benefits

But its ESG efforts have not just been good for the environment — they have also benefited the bottom

### Revenue growth linked to ESG

On the revenue side, ESG criteria now account for up to 25% of bids and tenders, driving £50 million in high-value customer revenue. A further £79 million in global customer revenue is linked to its CDP A-List status.

"RS now has 33,000 "Better World" products across over 35 product families, and that portfolio has grown revenue by 66% since March 2024."

RS now has 33,000 "Better World" products across over 35 product families, and that portfolio has grown revenue by 66% since March 2024.

### Supply chain impact

The impact of RS's commitment to ESG, however, does not stop at its gates, as 58% of its suppliers, by spend, are rated by EcoVadis, and 41% have science-based carbon targets to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>.

The group's Scanstock vendor-managed inventory platform is eliminating product and logistics waste and delivering customer savings of more than £30,000 per year.

### A disrupted supply chain.

These global trends are reshaping industrial competitiveness. Supply chain disruptions — such as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz — exposed supposedly

robust supply chains, said Wessels.

Cost pressures are forcing businesses to optimise. Sustainability compliance is now embedded in procurement policies and carbon footprints are under scrutiny, with companies rethinking transportation and logistics.

### Talent and customer relationships

When it comes to attracting and retaining talent, a commitment to sustainability has also proven to be useful in that 68% of engineering and technology students say they will choose ESG as a career. "We see these sort of activist engineers coming through," Wessels says.

He also pointed out that the group's commitment to ESG also solidifies its relationship with its customers, which often have their own sustainability requirements in place.

### The bottom line

Andrea Barrett, RS Group's chief sustainability officer, puts it: "The future will be saved by those who can design solutions that are not only technically sound, but economically viable, socially responsible, and environmentally sound."

# Operate with energy, not on fumes

Why the final quarter is won by managing your energy, not your diary.

By Joni Peddie, CEO, Resilient People

THERE'S an old piece of Comrades wisdom: you run the first half with your legs and the second half with your head. I can vouch for this; I have run five Comrades. Somewhere past halfway, my legs, feet (and blisters) usually lodge a few formal complaints, and my head has to take over the negotiations.

October is the business equivalent of that second half. The adrenaline of January is long gone, December is visible but not close, and the diary is filling with year-end functions, budget reviews and 'quick catch-ups' that are never quick. Matric exams are about to start, and plenty of leaders are quietly parenting through those too.

Last month I wrote about leaders who had slipped into December mode before September was out. This month, I want to talk about the ones who haven't, and who are trying to push through by managing their time harder: earlier starts, later finishes, calendars colour-coded to within an inch of their lives. I understand the instinct. I own a planner with more tabs than my web browser.

But here's what I keep seeing in the team performance workshops that I facilitate. People are attempting to work harder, not smarter, and trying to schedule their way out of an energy deficit. Perfectly blocked diaries run by depleted people is a very organised way to be exhausted.

So for October, O is for Operate with energy. Time is fixed. Energy is renewable, if you manage it deliberately.

In my book 'From CAN'T to CAN DO - 9 Human Capabilities that AI can't replicate', I have included a CAN DO Adaptive Leadership Framework that outlines three dimensions: Mental Clarity, Emotional Agility and Physical Nexus (Vitality). Neglect one and the other two pick up the bill.

Here's how.

1. **Audit your energy, not your diary.** For five working days, mark every meeting and task with a plus or a minus: did it give you energy or drain it? By Friday you'll see a pattern.



Most leaders find two or three predictable drains they can shorten, delegate or move.

2. **Guard your first 90 minutes.** Your sharpest thinking happens early, before the inbox gets its hands on you. Use that window for the one decision or piece of work that actually moves the year forward. Mental Clarity is a morning resource, so stop spending it on email. Your cognitive powers deplete by the afternoon.
3. **Work in laps, then recover.** The brain and body run in cycles of roughly 90 minutes. Do one focused block, then take a genuine break: daylight, water, five minutes on your feet. Comrades taught me this too: the runners who walk the hills on purpose often pass the heroes who sprinted them.
4. **Name it to tame it.** When frustration or anxiety spikes, label the feeling in one word before you respond. Research on 'emotion labelling' shows that by simply naming an emotion, the brain's alarm system calms down. And besides that, your team will feel the difference. This is 'emotional agility' in action.
5. **Treat sleep like a client deadline.** As a Cognitive Behaviour Therapist for Insomnia (CBT-I), here's a simple suggestion and it's easy-peasy: keep a consistent

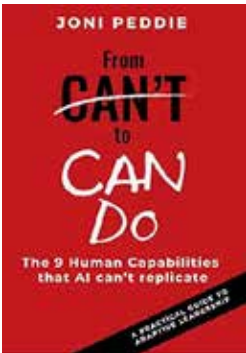
go-to-bed time and a consistent wake-up time (80% of the time), weekends included, even through year-end function season. Sleep isn't a reward for finishing the work. It's what makes the work possible. If you have a consistent wake-up time, your body clock will start to reward you.

None of this needs a retreat or a new app. Pick the strategy that made you wince slightly and start there. The wince is usually the tell. I'm working on number three myself this month, mostly because my planner and I have had words.

And remember, energy is contagious. Your team reads your state before they read your emails. When you operate with energy, you give them permission to do the same.

October isn't a month to grit your teeth and survive. It's a month to pace. Three months remain. Run them with your head. Change your words to change your world.

**Build change-fit teams. Bounce Forward™ together.**



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# Data centre water use misunderstood, says Equinix as Cape Town debate grows

DBSA says there might be underinvestment in data centres as "the market continues to trail the demand" for them.



By Larry Claasen

US based data centre operator, Equinix says there is a misconception about how much water data centres consume.

The company made news after acquiring land in Cape Town for the possible development of a data centre there in future. Equinix South Africa MD Sandile Dube says the group has no immediate plans to develop a facility in Cape Town, but this has not stopped discussion about how a data centre would affect electricity consumption and water usage in the region.

Data centres are seen as key economic drivers for cloud-based computing services and AI, but there are growing concerns about their resource consumption, especially in a water-scarce region like South Africa and the Western Cape in particular.

large volumes of water for electricity generation if sites are independently powered, as well as for cooling servers."

**JN1 closed-loop water system filled once, says Equinix SA MD**

Dube says there is a misconception about how much water data centres actually consume. Equinix, for example, uses a closed-loop water system at its flagship R7.5 billion Johannesburg data centre (JN1) in Germiston, where it is filled with water effectively once. "So you actually fill that water system up with water once, and that's it. You never have to fill it up again," he says.

**Cape Town land buy: no immediate data centre development planned**

On the Cape Town land acquisition, Dube says an unfortunate perception was creat-

to enable data centre operators to operate in this market."

**South Africa lacks unified data centre rules as EU and California tighten reporting**

In South Africa, however, there is no one set of standards and regulations when it comes to governing the resources used by data centres. The European Union (EU) regulates data centres primarily through the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED), which mandates annual energy performance reporting for facilities with an IT power demand of 500 kW or higher.

Last month, California passed a seven-bill package that requires data centres to report on water, electricity, and land use.

When it comes to power usage at JN1, Data Centres cannot physically run only on renewable electrons at all times. This has seen Equinix purchase renewable energy certificates, contracts, or credits to match 100% of the facility's total electricity consumption.

JN1 uses 4 MW of power, but there are plans to expand the facility where it will eventually consume 20 MW.

**Heat reuse could power schools and pools, says Dube**

Dube said he wishes South Africa had the infrastructure to reuse the heat generated by data centres in the same way some of Equinix's facilities around the world do. "This heat reuse could power schools or communities. In Europe we have used data centre heat for pools."

Though there is much debate about the intense resource usage of data centres, Dube says they make a notable but not separately measured contribution to the economy. "The contribution of our sector is continuing to grow year on year. Unfortunately, we don't measure the contribution of our sector in isolation."

**DBSA warns AI demand will outpace data centre investment**

The DBSA report said there might be underinvestment in data centres as "the market continues to trail the demand" for them.

It said that as AI adoption gains momentum, the need to process and store AI workloads in data centres will drive demand for more facilities.

"AI workloads consume more power than other IT workloads and require higher rack densities. It will be necessary for the local data centres to evolve by upgrading their existing infrastructure and expanding to accommodate the AI workload requirements," the report said.

It said another factor exacerbating the shortage of data centre space is growing demand for digital services. South Africa is experiencing strong growth in internet usage and cloud services, outpacing the development of data centre infrastructure.

This, however, is recognised by both the government and the private sector, with new investment being committed to expanding and upgrading existing facilities and developing new data centres.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

# SME funding in South Africa: How Capitec and GoTyme are reshaping business finance

Two South African banks are using POS data and collateral-free working capital to give small businesses faster access to finance — but the model carries its own risks.

By Larry Claasen

THERE is a silent revolution when it comes to business finance in South Africa.

Local entrepreneurs have long complained that the country's banks pay lip service when it comes to supporting them. They apply for funding, but more often than not get rejected because they don't have the collateral to bank the loan.

To be fair to the banks, issuing loans to emerging businesses is high risk, so it would be irresponsible of them to fund them without some safeguards, as it would put their depositors funds at risk.

So to offset this risk, they charge a high interest rate and set in place strict lending requirements.

But this approach exacerbates the SME funding problem because it makes funding expensive and hard to access.

**"GoTyme's working capital offering, which does not require collateral, has seen it grant R17 billion in working capital loans to 90,000 businesses to date."**

**A new funding model: Cashflow, not collateral**

Two banks, GoTyme Bank and Capitec, however, are introducing a new funding model. Instead of granting a loan on the collateral inside a business, they are basing it on how much cash it generates.

Capitec, for example, uses data generated from the Point of Sale (POS) devices it sells to its customers to monitor how much cash they generate. It uses this information to do a credit assessment to determine the size of the loan it can grant them.

This formula is paying off for Capitec. Its business clients more than doubled from



244,000 to 545,000 year-on-year in the six months to the end of August 2026. Its number of merchants using its POS devices has risen from 32,000 two years ago to 141,000 this year.

And total turnover through its POS devices rose from R27,1 billion two years ago to R61,8 billion this year.

This saw its lending books grow by 37% to R35,5 billion in the period, and the part of this book that lends to very small businesses rose by 175% to R4,2 billion.

**GoTyme: Collateral-free working capital**

For its part, GoTyme's working capital offering, which does not require collateral, has seen it grant R17 billion in working capital loans to 90,000 businesses to date.

Clearly, GoTyme Bank and Capitec are developing SME funding products that are meeting the moment. Entrepreneurs need funding models that are not onerous to access much needed liquidity quickly, and these funders have developed products that cater for their needs.

**The risks of cashflow lending**

It should be noted that basing loans on cashflow is not risk free. It requires the lenders to have sophisticated automated credit scoring systems, which can expose them to loan defaults if they get it wrong.

Then there is also the performance of the broader economy. If it

starts to take strain, cash generation will be affected, putting pressure on their clients to pay them back. With no collateral, the lenders will have few options to get their money back if clients go under.

**Why this matters for SA entrepreneurs**

Even so, the growth in cashflow based lending should be welcomed, as it provides a funding source at a difficult time for up and coming ventures. They are generally still trying to figure out what makes them tick and at the same time need liquidity to cover their expenses.

**"Capitec's business clients more than doubled from 244,000 to 545,000 year-on-year."**

GoTyme business group executive, Miguel Da Silva noted that while his group took pride in helping to grow businesses, it was also happy to provide them with the liquidity just to pay the rent until their invoices were paid.

The bottom line is that the country's entrepreneurs need all the support they can get and the introduction of cashflow based lending products are probably some of the most useful provided by the financial services sector in a long time.

**"Data Center - So you actually fill that water system up with water once, and that's it. You never have to fill it up again."**

The debate has led the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to invite the public, civil society and the sector to make written submissions on the implications of the rapid expansion of data centres in the country.

A report by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) noted that "data centres consume

ed that the group did not follow due process. This, he says, is not true, as Equinix works closely with all levels of government and local regulators when setting up data centres.

Overall, he says he is very happy with the state support he has received for data centre development. "We're quite privileged in South Africa to have a government willing

# Port of Cape Town improvements face their real test in the next fruit season



By Adrian Ephraim

FOR an industry that lives and dies by whether a container reaches an international customer on time, a global ranking that labels the Port of Cape Town one of the worst in the world was always going to sting. But the City of Cape Town's economic growth chief says that headline number was never the point and that the true measure of the port lies somewhere far more practical.

Alderman James Vos, Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Growth, has spent years pressing national government to reform a port he calls one of the biggest constraints on economic growth in the Western Cape. His letter to Transport Minister Barbara Creecy, he says, was not a complaint about a ranking. It was a list of fixes.

"My letter was not simply a complaint about a ranking," Vos says. "I put forward practical measures that I believe can help improve the performance of the Port of Cape Town." Those measures included accelerating private sector participation, improving equipment reliability, strengthening digital cargo planning, building skills capacity and lifting terminal productivity.

He has since had movement to point to. Transnet has called for a private partner to finance, redevelop and operate the multipurpose terminal under a 25-year concession, following similar processes for the liquid bulk and cold storage terminals. "That is significant, and it is exactly the direction of reform the City has been advocating for," Vos says. But he is careful to separate an announcement from a result. "Announcing a process and delivering an operational part-

nership are two different things."

### A flawed yardstick

On the World Bank ranking that put Cape Town near the bottom of more than 400 container ports, Vos sides, at least partly, with the freight forwarders who called it misleading. The South African Association of Freight Forwarders argued the index measures only vessel time in port and ignores throughput, cargo dwell time, land-side evacuation and cost. "I think SAAFF makes an important point," Vos says. "The Container Port Performance Index is one indicator. It measures an important part of port performance, but it does not measure the entire logistics chain. So I would certainly not argue that we should judge the Port of Cape Town on that ranking alone."

What businesses actually care about, he argues, is a basket of measures: vessel turnaround, crane productivity, truck turnaround, cargo dwell time, cold chain reliability, rail utilisation and the final cost to the cargo owner. "The World Bank ranking can tell us something, but the experience of the exporter trying to get fruit, wine or manufactured goods to an international customer tells us much more."

### Welcoming the gains, without declaring victory

Vos readily acknowledges the port is improving. Transnet has reported ship turnaround at the container terminal falling from 103 hours in 2023/24 to 83 hours the next year and then to 74 hours in 2025/26, with container volumes in the first quarter of 2026/27 running 16% higher than the year before.

"Those are positive developments and we should recognise them,"

he says. "But improvement from a low base is not the same thing as having a globally competitive, consistently reliable port." His concern is whether the gains survive the pressure of peak export season, when volumes and Cape Town's high winds test the whole system at once.

### The number that really matters

Ask Vos for the evidence behind his push for reform and he moves quickly past the ranking to the provincial balance sheet. Western Cape Government research estimated the port's container logistics chain contributes around R69 billion to provincial GVA and sustains roughly 225,000 jobs. An efficient port, the same research found, could unlock about R6 billion in additional exports and 20,000 more jobs.

The cost of failure is just as concrete. During the 2025/26 season, around 55,000 tonnes of Western Cape table grapes were diverted to Eastern Cape ports, dropping Cape Town's share of table grape exports from 90% to 76%. Industry put the hit to the table grape sector at about R3.2 billion, with stone fruit losing a further R1.05 billion.

"Exporters were putting produce on trucks and moving it hundreds of kilometres to another port because they needed to protect access to international markets," Vos says. "That is a very real business decision."

So how will he know reform has worked? Not from a government statement, and not from a ranking. "Does the business owner notice the difference?" he asks. "If exporters can move more products through Cape Town, more reliably and at a competitive cost, then we will know the reforms are working."



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# Engineering the turnaround: How technical excellence and innovation will drive South Africa's rail recovery



**By Professors Pilate Moyo and Hannes Gräbe, Co-chairs, SAHHA Technical Committee**

AS South Africa charts a definitive course toward economic renewal, the revitalisation of our national freight rail network stands as an absolute priority. The structural reforms underway, alongside a powerful spirit of collaboration between the government and the private sector, are reshaping the economic landscape. Private sector participation is no longer a pipe dream. It is happening and already yielding returns. Yet, while policy frameworks and strategic partnerships set the direction, the actual realisation of this recovery relies heavily on technical execution, world-class engineering, and technological innovation.

At the South African Heavy Haul Association (SAHHA), we view this pivotal moment through a highly practical, technical lens. Heavy haul operations are the backbone of South Africa's freight logistics value chain. The Government has set an ambitious national target to move 250 million tons of freight by 2030, and heavy haul corridors are expected to carry 60% of that total volume. Meeting this target is not a matter of incremental adjustments. It requires a radical optimisation of our rail infrastructure, driven by technical innovation and engineering excellence.

It is against this backdrop that our upcoming conference from 17-19 November 2026, under the theme 'Integrated Heavy Haul For Sustainable Growth', will not only ensure we contribute as a sector but

take us from dialogue to delivery. As SAHHA's technical team, we have evaluated an impressive array of abstracts submitted by local and international industry experts. It is clear that the global heavy haul community is ready to provide the practical, field-tested answers South Africa needs right now.

The conference topics tackle the most pressing, high-stakes realities facing our rail networks today, covering the critical pillars of modern rail operation, including:

- Rolling stock, manufacturing & vehicle-track interaction;
- Track & structural infrastructure;
- Electrical, signalling & telecommunications;
- Artificial intelligence & digitalisation;
- Operations, planning & capacity;
- Safety, security, sustainability & human factors.

We are not just discussing abstract theories. We are evaluating concrete engineering solutions, from advanced metallurgy to real-time

data analytics, to optimise locomotive performance.

As South Africa's rail sector undergoes a profound structural transformation driven by open access, private sector participation, and a multi-operator environment, the challenge moves from policy design to practical execution. SAHHA is directly addressing these operational bottlenecks by shifting the industry conversation from traditional knowledge sharing to collaborative, practitioner-led problem-solving.

Through focused technical streams probing the granular details of heavy haul performance, rolling stock and real-time compliance monitoring, SAHHA is providing the industry with the exact engineering and operational blueprints required to safely manage a complex, multi-operator network. Rather than debating the theory of reform, these technical contributions focus on immediate, actionable solutions, such as standardising incident investigations and optimising train design within existing infrastructure constraints, to ensure the network remains reliable and accountable.

Crucially, rail recovery cannot happen in isolation, making SAHHA's focus on network-wide integration a vital catalyst for national logistics efficiency. By tackling the "pit-to-port" supply chain, SAHHA's framework bridges the critical interfaces between mines, ports, and heavy-haul infrastructure to drive end-to-end corridor throughput. Through complex scenario planning that balances track maintenance windows with fair capacity slot execution under open access, SAHHA serves as a vital neutral platform where regulators, infrastructure managers, and competing operators can align their standards. These technical interventions offer a pragmatic, data-driven roadmap that translates high-level national rail policy into tangible, day-to-day operational realities, ultimately safeguarding the productivity of South Africa's key economic corridors.

The momentum created by recent policy reforms and private sector participation frameworks has opened the door for deep operational modernisation. However, transforming these opportunities into actual tons moved, requires rigorous engineering discipline and advanced technology.

By bringing together the brightest minds in heavy haul engineering this November, SAHHA is proud to anchor South Africa's rail recovery journey in technical excellence. The solutions showcased here will provide the blueprint for stabilising our network, exceeding our 2030 targets, and building an integrated, sustainable logistics foundation capable of driving robust economic growth for decades to come.



## Transnet Freight Rail iron ore volumes rise but Sishen–Saldanha line remains below capacity

*Transnet Freight Rail moved 52,75 million tons of iron ore on the 861km Sishen–Saldanha line in the year to end-March 2026, up 4,23% year on year, but locomotive, wagon, network and port constraints kept it below the 60 million ton design capacity.*

**By Larry Claasen**

TRANSNET Freight Rail's volumes on its line connecting Sishen in the Northern Cape to Saldanha on the Western Cape coast were up but its performance remained significantly below design capacity.

The 861km rail line is one of the two main heavy-haulage routes in South Africa and its turnaround is critical to the rail and port monopoly's success.

Though iron ore volume increased 4,23% to 52,75 million tons year-on-year for the 12 months to end March 2026, it was still well below the line's annual capacity of 60 million tons. The iron ore line cycle time improved to 91 hours from the 98,28 hours, but remained above the target of 88,8 hours.

In its annual report Transnet Rail said this under performance was primarily due to locomotive and wagon availability constraints, rail network reliability challenges and port-related disruptions.

These issues had a marked impact on its operations. "Operational variability manifested in train cancellations, late departures, and extended cycle times, and continued to reduce throughput predictability," it said.

It noted, however, there was improved operational stability, which was evident in the third and fourth quarters and was by a "well-executed October 2025 shutdown, scenario-based planning, and heightened leadership focus."

**Locomotive and wagon availability remain the key constraint**

Even so, locomotive and wagon availability continues to weigh on Transnet as a whole.

Transnet Engineering, which maintains the group's locomotive and wagon fleet, said its own performance was "significantly impacted by structural



*The massive industrial stacker reclaimer at the Saldanha Iron Ore Terminal.*

constraints."

It said availability of critical materials, inadequate original equipment manufacturer (OEM) support for specific fleets, and capacity limitations within rolling stock maintenance affected its operations.

Transnet Engineering's maintenance issues have had a far reaching impact. "These factors contributed to a decline in locomotive reliability, increased traction-related delays, train cancellations, and associated volume losses across key corridors, notably the North, Ore, and Northeast Corridors."

**Transnet Engineering misses most RSM KPIs as maintenance delays bite**

It said its Rolling Stock Maintenance (RSM) Department failed to achieve most of its KPIs in the 2025/26 financial year, resulting in delays and deferrals of planned maintenance activities and component change-out programmes.

One way Transnet Engineering is trying to address its maintenance issues on the Sishen / Saldanha line is to bring in more personnel. "To mitigate the labour shortfall, technical employees were permanently redeployed from other areas to support maintenance execution."

It added that while ongoing recruitment was underway, employees were temporarily seconded as an interim measure, and that focused interventions were also being implemented to ad-

dress ongoing material shortages and improve maintenance turnaround times.

Transnet Engineering said it was addressing its operational issues by securing a three-year rolling stock maintenance budget for long-term planning with Transnet Freight Rail.

It is also implementing and monitoring the multi-year master services agreement and service level agreements to meet and exceed rolling stock availability and reliability.

A revised and approved Transnet Engineering / Transnet Freight Rail business model has been implemented. Its goal is to improve integration from planning, budgeting and execution to support the volume ramp-up.

**Transnet Freight Rail returns 216 locomotives to service; CRRC repair project continues**

For its part Transnet Freight Rail said it was making operational improvements. It returned 216 long-standing locomotives back into service since the inception of the master service level agreement implementation.

It also said one of 48 units under rehabilitation (CRRC fleet repair project) was delivered, with the second locomotive undergoing static testing and hand-over dynamic commissioning.

Manganese volumes transported from Sishen to Saldanha increased by 11,20%, reaching 5,83 million tons.

# LCL Shipping from China to South Africa: Contra launches weekly Cape Town service



By Kris van der Bijl

CONTRA Consolidations is offering freight forwarders a weekly direct LCL service from Hong Kong, Ningbo, Shanghai and Shenzhen to Cape Town, with advertised transit times of 25 to 31 days.

Groupage, or less-than-container-load (LCL) shipping, lets several importers share one container, each paying for the space or weight its cargo takes up.

The service runs at a frequent consolidation cycle, thereby allowing forwarders to group

smaller shipments and plan them around a fixed departure from China to Cape Town.

A weekly service gives forwarders a fixed departure frequency around which they can quote, book, schedule, and plan customers' cargo between the two nations' ports.

## Weekly sailings matter to groupage

A direct LCL service depends on having sufficient and predictable cargo flows to make the dedicated consolidation commercially viable.

Where volumes or schedules do not support a direct consolidation, cargo may instead be routed through a hub, where it can be combined with other shipments moving towards the same destination.

LCL primarily exists because an importer does not need to fill an entire container. A consolidator collects smaller shipments, packs them into a container and separates them again at the destination.

That model creates a basic commercial problem: the consolidator needs enough cargo

to make a container worth sailing, while the importer wants cargo to move as soon as it is ready. If those requirements do not line up, cargo waits for the next consolidation.

A weekly sailing closes this scheduled gap. A shipment that misses one sailing window has a clear next opportunity as opposed to an open-ended wait for sufficient cargo next time.

## China gives the service a large trade base

The Western Cape's China trade has both the volume to attract more shipments and a mix requiring LCL service providers.

China supplied USD 3.59 billion of the Western Cape's imports in 2025, more than any other country, according to Wesgro research from March 2026.

The breadth of the import basket illustrates why China-to-Western Cape trade is relevant to a consolidation service: imports span cate-

gories including machinery and electrical equipment, vehicles and components, clothing and textiles, and furniture and other manufactured goods, rather than being concentrated in a single commodity with single shipping and logistical frameworks.

Across the entire continent, China-Africa trade hit a record RMB 1.41 trillion in the first half of 2026, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on 27 July 2026. He said full-year trade would reach a new high.

Lin said capital goods and intermediate goods made up 75% of China's exports to Africa. He described these goods as production inputs for Africa's industrialisation and agricultural modernisation.

These figures establish the scale and nature of China-Africa trade. While continent wide, they can get towards an accurate picture relevant to the Western Cape exporter.

## What it means for Cape Town as a groupage hub

The potential advantage of a weekly LCL service is scheduling rather than simply additional capacity: a regular consolidation cycle gives forwarders a predictable departure rhythm.

Retailers, workshops and small manufacturers rarely need a full box at once; they need parts, components and finished goods in job-sized lots.

A fixed weekly sailings pattern lets them plan stock, cash flow and production runs around a known cut-off and arrival window, instead of guessing when the next consolidation will fill.

For Western Cape businesses, a weekly direct box turns China sourcing into a timetable: a fixed cut-off at origin, one sea leg and an unpack close to the buyer.

That makes smaller, more frequent orders practical and lets a buyer test a new supplier without committing to a full container.

## Supply chain chiefs redesign networks to navigate uncertainty - DP World report

SUPPLY chain leaders are redesigning their networks around greater choice and flexibility, as resilience increasingly becomes a source of competitive advantage and growth, according to new research from DP World's Global Trade Observatory.

The Chief Supply Chain Officer (CSCO) Pulse Report, based on a survey in August of 103 CSCOs across 14 markets and nine industries, finds that 84% say resilience and optionality have overtaken cost reduction as the primary drivers of supply-chain strategy.

The shift is already changing how businesses design their networks. 71% plan to diversify their supplier base over the next 12 months, with CSCOs also considering changes across inventory, production locations and sourcing as they seek to preserve room to manoeuvre when conditions change.

The report describes this shift as a move from optimisation to optionality: away from designing supply chains primarily around cost and efficiency, towards creating viable alter-

natives that businesses can call upon as trade rules, tariffs, demand and geopolitical conditions change.

Yuvraj Narayan, Group CEO of DP World, said: "Global trade is not standing still, and neither are the supply chains that underpin it. Businesses are responding to uncertainty not by retreating from growth, but by creating more choices about where they source, how they move goods and how they reach customers."

"The role of the Chief Supply Chain Officer is changing with that environment. Supply-chain decisions increasingly shape where a business can grow, how quickly it can enter new markets and how effectively it can respond when circumstances change. The opportunity is to build networks that combine efficiency with flexibility - giving businesses the options, visibility and connectivity they need to keep growing through uncertainty."

The report finds that this changing operating model is being accompanied by a broader transformation in the

role of supply-chain leadership.

93% of CSCOs say their role in driving business growth has become more central over the past three years, while the research shows supply-chain leaders increasingly contributing to decisions around market entry, investment and risk.

Optionality is also moving beyond protection against disruption to become a tool for growth. 86% say access to alternative and multimodal trade routes is becoming a competitive advantage, giving businesses greater ability to adapt how goods move as conditions change and new opportunities emerge.

The CSCO Pulse Report 2026 explores three major shifts shaping the future of supply-chain leadership: the CSCO's expanding role as an enabler of business growth; the move from optimisation towards greater optionality; and the capabilities - including digital integration, visibility and lower-carbon supply chains - expected to become increasingly important for future growth.

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## Why data is becoming a truck fleet's most valuable asset



Connectivity transforms heavy-duty trucks into intelligent, data-sharing assets that can help reduce operating costs, increase vehicle uptime and improve service reliability.

**By Mark Gavin, Sales Director: DAF Trucks at Babcock**

THERE is growing industry consensus that data is becoming every truck fleet's most valuable asset, providing the insights operators need to improve efficiency, reduce costs, make smarter decisions and keep vehicles on the road.

Connectivity is the foundation of data-driven decision-making and has become a key driver behind the professionalisation and growth of modern truck fleets. In such a competitive industry, turning everyday fleet data into actionable insights can give transport operators a powerful advantage.

A professional truck fleet is one that takes a disciplined, data-driven approach to every aspect of its operation. It closely manages costs, prioritises safety, adopts proactive maintenance practices, ensures regulatory compliance and invests in skilled driver management.

Together, these elements help create a fleet that operates safely, reliably and efficiently. Increasingly, data-driven decision-making provides the foundation for managing all of these areas effectively, turning fleet data into actionable insights that support better day-to-day decisions and long-term performance.

Vehicle and fleet data can also play a critical role in route optimisation. Telematics and fleet intelligence platforms such as Executrax, the in-house system supplied and integrated as standard on DAF trucks, give fleet managers greater visibility of vehicle movements and

operating conditions.

This information enables planners to select more efficient routes, reduce unnecessary mileage and limit time spent in congestion. With live GPS data, dispatchers can also re-direct vehicles around traffic, roadworks and adverse weather, helping keep trucks moving efficiently.

Fuel is another area where data can have a significant impact. Accounting for up to 60% of total fleet operating costs, fuel represents one of the biggest expenses for transport operators. Monitoring idling time, engine performance and driver behaviour in real time allows fleets to identify where fuel is being wasted and take corrective action.

Eco-driving technology takes this a step further by using vehicle and driver data to identify behaviours that affect fuel consumption. Excessive acceleration, high speeds and unnecessary idling can all increase fuel use, while real-time feedback helps drivers adopt more efficient driving techniques. Research suggests that eco-driving systems can reduce fuel consumption by as much as 17,5%.

For heavy-duty fleets, combining real-time data, digital insights and driver engagement can deliver lower operating costs, reduced emissions and more sustainable transport operations.

While there are many benefits to connected trucks and the data they generate, I believe they ultimately come down to three key areas: safety, driver comfort and efficiency. Of these, safety is the most important.

Protecting drivers not only improves road safety, but also helps build trust between drivers and the

transport businesses they work for. Today, many fleets use driver behaviour monitoring systems to understand driving patterns in real time. They can help drivers improve fuel consumption, monitor their performance and plan ahead for upcoming servicing requirements.

Perhaps most importantly, direct communication between the truck and the driver through the dashboard improves safety by reducing the need to use a mobile phone while driving. Providing drivers with relevant information and alerts in real time allows them to stay focused on the road while ensuring they have the information they need. The result is greater protection for both drivers and their cargo.

A comfortable, supported driver is better able to maintain concentration and consistent performance over long shifts. By reducing fatigue and helping to minimise unnecessary stops and downtime, connectivity can contribute to safer and more efficient operations.

Truck connectivity is rapidly becoming part of the future of the transport industry. It is no longer simply a 'nice-to-have' feature; it is increasingly becoming a competitive differentiator.

Connectivity transforms heavy-duty trucks into intelligent, data-sharing assets that can help reduce operating costs, increase vehicle uptime and improve service reliability. Fleets that harness real-time data are better positioned to anticipate problems, support their drivers and optimise operations than those relying solely on manual tracking and reactive decision-making.

## Clicks electric truck fleet aims to cut costs and strengthen distribution

**By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons**

CLICKS Group expects its move into heavy-duty electric trucks to lower operating costs and reduce its exposure to diesel-price increases as it expands its national distribution network.

Speaking exclusively to Cape Business News, Clicks Group CEO Bertina Engelbrecht said the company had tested electric vehicles through its pharmaceutical distribution operations.

The retailer has secured 30 SANY heavy-duty electric trucks and invested more than R65 million in solar photovoltaic generation, battery storage and charging infrastructure.

Montague Gardens is expected to operate a fully electric truck fleet by the end of October, which Clicks says will make it the first retail distribution centre in Africa to do so.



Clicks' electric trucks at its Montague Gardens distribution centre, where the group is testing how EVs can lower fuel costs and improve delivery efficiency. Photo: Jaco Cilliers Photography

shocks globally that impact the fuel price. When you can begin to control that, it is so much better for you," she said.

Electric trucks carry a higher upfront cost, but Clicks evaluates the investment over several years.

"We never look at only a single year. We look at the impact over multiple years."

Reuben Jordaan, Head of Supply Chain

### Route planning changes

The move away from diesel has changed daily transport planning.

Jordaan said one of the biggest hurdles was shifting a fleet system built around conventional fuel.

"You can't stop at the filling station to top them up. You need to plan better," he said.

The trucks can travel

by diesel at this point," Jordaan said.

Longer routes are the next area of work, with range and charging schedules requiring more planning.

### Target brought forward

Clicks had initially targeted 30% of its truck fleet to be electric by the end of 2029.

It now expects to have 68 electric trucks on the road by the end of 2027, representing about 62% of its current fleet, and is targeting more than 90% by September 2028.

Fourteen of the new trucks will operate from Montague Gardens, which services about 290 stores, while another 14 will be based at Centurion. KwaZulu-Natal is expected to follow by September 2027.

Five women have also been appointed to drive the electric trucks.

With Transport Month taking place in October, Engelbrecht believes greater commercial adoption could help lower EV prices.

"The greater the adoption is, the more the prices come down," she said.

Jordaan expects more operators to consider electric fleets as the technology proves itself in daily use.

"I think the market will catch on quickly, and we'll see a significant change on the roads in South Africa in the near future."



Reuben Jordaan; Bongwiwe Ntuli; Bertina Engelbrecht; Pieter Strydom & Gustav Schoeman.

"We could see it would create for us a competitive advantage," Engelbrecht told CBN.

Clicks had already introduced electric vehicles through United Pharmaceutical Distributors (UPD), giving the group experience before extending the model into retail distribution.

### Fuel costs strengthen the case

Clicks expects the 30 trucks to save about 780 000 litres of diesel a year.

The group projects annual fuel savings of between R20 million and R25 million, while maintenance costs could fall by another R2 million to R3 million.

Engelbrecht pointed to fuel-price volatility as part of the commercial case.

"There are so many

and Logistics at Clicks Group, said the trucks had been operating in the retail fleet following a testing period.

"We've seen some real great success. It's definitely getting those kilometres with a lot less fuel being consumed," he told CBN.

He said lower operating costs could also support investment elsewhere in the business.

about 480km unloaded and around 400km when fully loaded.

That range allows most short-distance deliveries from Montague Gardens to be completed before the vehicles return for charging.

"Essentially, 100% of our short distance has been taken up by the electric fleet, with only marginal kilometres being driven



## World EV Day: CHARGE puts real-world EV performance to the test on the N3



EV drivers interested in participating in CHARGE'S N3 EV Real-World Test, can sign up through their website.

TO mark World EV Day on 9 September 2026, Zero Carbon Charge (CHARGE) launched the N3 EV Real-World Test, an initiative that will turn everyday electric vehicle journeys between Johannesburg and Durban into a growing source of real-world data for South African motorists and fleet operators considering the switch to electric.

The initiative aims to establish a single source of information for the real-world performance of both passenger and commercial electric vehicles, using one consistent test route, the CHARGE N3 Test Route, to create a benchmark against which different EVs can be compared over time.

While prospective EV buyers have access to

manufacturer specifications on range, battery capacity, and efficiency, these figures do not always tell motorists and fleet owners what they most want to know: how an EV will actually perform on a South African long-distance journey under real road, weather, and driving conditions. CHARGE aims to help answer that question.

EV owners travelling between Johannesburg and Durban are being invited to use the N3 as a benchmark test route by using the two charging hubs that CHARGE has opened on the highway - CHARGE N3 Roadside at Leeukop Padstal in the Free State and CHARGE N3 Tugela at Three Towers Farm Stall in KwaZulu-Natal.

The hubs, which oper-

ate entirely off-grid using solar-powered microgrids and battery storage, currently have 360kW charging capacity, with upgrades to up to 720kW planned. This high-capacity infrastructure is designed to meet the charging needs of both passenger and commercial EVs, including vehicles capable of ultra-fast charging, providing a more accurate picture of real-world charging performance.

In exchange for sharing their vehicle and journey data, participating drivers who sign up for the initiative will receive CHARGE credits to cover their charging costs on the N3 test route.

Joubert Roux, CHARGE Co-Founder and Chair, says, "Mo-

torists and fleet operators want to know what range they can realistically expect on the open road, how much energy a vehicle uses between Johannesburg and Durban, and how factors such as elevation, weather and driving conditions affect performance. The best way to answer those questions is to start building a body of South African real-world data. Ultimately, we want potential buyers to be able to compare apples with apples. By testing passenger and commercial EVs on the same route and collecting actual driving and charging data, the CHARGE Test can establish a consistent South African benchmark that consumers and businesses can use to make more informed decisions."

Once participants sign up through the CHARGE website and download the CHARGE app, they receive a free charging voucher linked to their account and have two months to complete their N3 EV Test. During the journey, charging data from participating vehicles, including charging duration, energy delivered (kWh), charging speed and charging session information, will be collected. Participants will also complete a short post-test questionnaire to provide additional information about their vehicle and journey.

Rather than attempting to compare vehicles under artificial or identical test conditions, the project is designed to capture the reality of EV ownership. Different cars, drivers, loads, weather conditions and driving styles will all contribute to a growing picture of how electric vehicles perform on one of South Africa's major intercity routes.

"One trip gives us one data point. Hundreds of trips across different vehicles and conditions begin to give South African consumers something much more useful," said Roux.

Once sufficient test data has been collected, CHARGE will publish aggregated results on its website, creating an accessible real-world resource for prospective EV buyers, fleet operators, existing EV owners, vehicle manufacturers and the wider electric mobility industry.

[www.charge.co.za](http://www.charge.co.za)

## Mayor unveils vision for new bridge and neighbourhood to replace Cape Town's unfinished highways

CAPE Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis has unveiled the City's vision to transform the Foreshore's unfinished highways into a new link bridge, promenade and vibrant neighbourhood. The proposal aims to relieve CBD congestion and unlock economic opportunity for a growing Cape Town.

The Foreshore Precinct Project will unlock a new neighbourhood on 15 hectares of land around the existing unfinished highways, which has remained undeveloped for over 50 years and is among the last vacant CBD land available.

A new bridge will directly link the inbound freeway to Helen Suzman Boulevard, bypassing Buitengracht below. The outbound freeway will be replaced by an underground tunnel running next to Duncan Road.

"Well, today I am excited to unveil this vision for a new Foreshore precinct that will see these legendary bridges being finished at last. We've been working on this project for the last few years in detail, but in truth, we're getting the ball rolling on finishing some 50-year-old unfinished business. And these are not just bridges. They will help address some of Cape Town's biggest congestion headaches, while unlocking huge investment, job creation, and more affordable homes for Capetonians.

"The project will transform Cape Town's unfinished highways into a new link bridge and tunnel to relieve inner city congestion and fix the connection between the foreshore and Atlantic Seaboard. And most importantly, over the decades ahead, a brand new vibrant Foreshore neighbourhood will be unlocked, including affordable housing, walkable streets, and a tree-lined promenade along the harbour's edge all the way to Sea Point," said Mayor Hill-Lewis.

The City proposes two construction phases, keeping the existing freeways operational to avoid crippling traffic congestion.

"During the first phase of construction, an iconic new bridge will be built over Buitengracht, and the incoming el-



evated freeway will be widened, linking the inbound freeway directly to Helen Suzman Boulevard. This will include a large new public park and public spaces below. This means everyone heading from the foreshore towards Green Point, Sea Point and beyond, will effectively bypass the CBD altogether. This will make a big difference in alleviating congestion.

"In the second phase, an outbound tunnel will be constructed, with the existing outbound elevated freeway being demolished," said Hill-Lewis.

The bridges and tunnel will take the best part of the next decade to construct, with the new neighbourhoods developing beyond that. The project will unlock growth and development over the next two to three decades.

To build the tunnel south of Duncan Road, the City is engaging Transnet on land owned by the Port Authority.

City Manager Lungelo Mbandazayo said the project is an opportunity to transform and future-proof Cape Town's CBD.

"Every generation has the responsibility to plan ahead for what is needed in decades to come, and this is our turn. We have been working on these solutions for many years, we have and continue to engage stakeholders across the three spheres of government, as well as our colleagues at the relevant Stated-owned Entities.

"The most important phase is now: where we are presenting our proposals to Capetonians. We have created a special online hub where you, the public, can see all of the detailed proposals and announcements. We will update the information as we go along, and inform you of the engagement and public participation opportunities. Please register, and be part of this exciting and important journey. This is your city, and we want you to be involved," said the city manager.

### Phase 1 project summary

- Construction to commence during Council's next term of office.
- Two additional inbound freeway lanes.
- A link bridge from the inbound freeways to Helen Suzman Boulevard.
- A new elevated outbound ramp connecting Buitengracht over Dock Road to the existing outbound freeway.
- FW de Klerk Boulevard becomes a pedestrian-oriented street.
- A new canal links Buitengracht Park to the V&A Canal.
- A new park beneath the Buitengracht link bridge.
- Bus lanes across Buitengracht.
- Three land parcels become available for residential development.

### Phase 2 summary

- A new outbound bridge links Helen Suzman Boulevard with the outbound tunnel.
- The tunnel runs through vacant land between the Port and Customs House, continuing next to Duncan Road to connect with the N1 and N2 freeways.
- Demolition of the outbound elevated freeway viaduct.
- Creation of a promenade, parks and public spaces along the harbour edge.
- All remaining land parcels become available for development.
- Construction of this larger phase runs until 2040.
- Public participation

The City will begin the first of several public participation processes required to realise the proposed vision.

Register for regular project updates at [www.foreshore.capetown](http://www.foreshore.capetown)



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## Xylem showcases smarter water management for mining at Electra Mining Africa 2026



Xylem's exhibition stand at Electra Mining Africa 2026.

AT Electra Mining Africa 2026, Xylem showcased its water management solutions that help mines manage their water, from routine work such as dewatering to advanced digital water management and wastewater treatment.

Visitors to their stand had the opportunity to view products such as the Flygt submersible pumps, Godwin dri-prime dewatering pumps, Flygt Pareo smart pump controllers, and a scale model demonstrating the principles and effectiveness of dissolved air flotation treatment.

Chetan Mistry, Xylem's WSS Growth Markets Strategy and Marketing Director explained, "Water is inseparable from mining. It can be a hazard to workers and equipment, a crucial part of processing and refinement, underpin risk management for tailings and discharge, and much more. Mines recognise the role water management plays in operational efficiency, safety, compliance, and reliability."

By showcasing this at Electra Mining, Xylem demonstrated its global expertise and innovation to help mines and mining service

providers do more with their water resources.

### DAF on display

At the stand was a working scale version of the compact dissolved air flotation (DAF) system. DAF is a modern wastewater treatment technology that uses tiny air bubbles to float waste particles toward the top of a water stream, where scrapers remove the particles.

"DAF systems are often valued for their compact and modular design relative to many conventional treatment approaches, enabling mines to do more with limited space to enhance or introduce wastewater treatment for specific focus areas. We commissioned a special scale demo model to demonstrate DAF's principles in action, and it's been great to see people react to it and grasp DAF's effectiveness," said Mistry.

### The dewatering workhorse

Mistry noted that the Godwin dri-prime pumps have proven their worth on countless mining sites, which use them for routine dewatering, emergency deployments, and

maintenance bypass jobs. "They are specifically designed to keep working under harsh conditions, supporting remote monitoring and independent operations. Our customers consider these as pumping workhorses they can deploy at a moment's notice and receive reliable performance," said Mistry.

### Best of breed submersible pumps

Xylem's Flygt submersible pumps were also prominently featured at the stand, accompanied by scale cutaway models to reveal their inner workings. Mines across the world rely on this family of pumps to manage treacherous and hard-to-reach pumping jobs, draining sumps and removing water pools from tunnels and around equipment.

Submersible pumps have to manage incredibly demanding conditions at mines. Xylem develops and improves the Flygt family of submersible pumps based on those experiences, ensuring they can handle the challenging solids and debris commonly encountered in mining applications. Many models incorporate features such as

remote monitoring and operation to support safer and more efficient site management.

### Better and smarter water management

Xylem's latest digital water management systems that were showcased enabled visitors to experience hands-on demonstrations. These included integrated systems such as Flygt Pareo smart pump controllers, Xylem Nexicon modular monitoring and control platform designed and pre-configured for bespoke water applications, and the advanced telemetry, cloud-based Xylem Field Smart Technology platform for remote monitoring and control of pumping and drive systems.

Increasingly, mines are looking beyond individual equipment investments and focusing on integrated water strategies that improve efficiency, support water reuse, strengthen operational resilience, and reduce overall lifecycle costs.

"Mining use cases are very specific and must show value quickly," said Mistry. "Xylem doesn't just focus on products. Water management is an end-to-end requirement, from the pumping systems at one end through to treatment and discharge on the other, with digital monitoring, operational intelligence, and cybersecurity-focused system design to shape strategic water decisions. Our priorities are to minimise maintenance, improve safety conditions, and align seamlessly with existing site infrastructure. These principles work well together to offer mines what they need, from specific improvements to total water management."

[www.xylem.com](http://www.xylem.com)

## Cape Flats Aquifer Recharge Project on track as Macpherson praises progress

By Kris van der Bijl

PUBLIC Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson said the City of Cape Town is on track to complete its aquifer recharge project on time.

He visited the Cape Flats Aquifer Recharge Project on 23 August with African ministers and mayors.

"It's groundbreaking what they are doing here and very impressive, and it's about focusing budgets on infrastructure," he said during the visit.

He went on to say that the City is weighing an outsourced model, with a private operator maintaining the facility after completion.

Macpherson said he wants other municipalities to replicate the project across South Africa.

### The Cape Flats Aquifer Project

The City of Cape Town first commissioned the project in response to the Cape Town water crisis of 2018.

The project centres on the City's Advanced Water Reclamation Plant, beside the Cape Flats Wastewater Treatment Works in Pelican Park.

The plant treats secondary effluent for injection into the Cape Flats Aquifer, where the water undergoes further natural filtration before groundwater is abstracted and treated to potable standards.

Gravity moves the water through four linear filtration buildings that follow an artificial slope, according to SALT Architects' Architizer entry.

Injection boreholes will feed the purified water into the Cape Flats Aquifer, where it will filter through sand and rock. The City will draw



the water from production boreholes and treat it to SANS 241 drinking water standards at separate plants.

The City's 2026/27 budget allocates R297 million to the recharge project. The scheme now has 74 completed production boreholes across the Cape Flats.

Other projects include the Table Mountain Group Aquifer, which is the biggest of the three aquifers comprising approximately 11 000 km<sup>2</sup>.

### Operator model and the next plants

Macpherson said the City is looking at an outsourced model for the plant.

"What they are looking at is an outsourced model which will then bring an operator to maintain this facility, which is innovative," he said.

That raises a question that will become increasingly relevant as the City's alternative-water infrastructure expands: how these assets will be operated over the long term.

David McGibbon, a principal geologist at Umvoto who has worked on the Cape Flats Aquifer Management Scheme, presented the project at the International Symposium on Managed Aquifer Recharge in 2025.

Umvoto says that, because South Africa currently has no legisla-

tion governing managed aquifer recharge, international best practices are being adopted to minimise health risks, clogging and water-quality problems.

### What it means for Cape Town

The City's New Water Programme includes groundwater, reuse, desalination and other supply interventions; the City says these are intended to diversify supply and reduce reliance on dams, which remain vulnerable to changing rainfall patterns and drought.

The Cape Flats project is relevant therefore because it illustrates the infrastructure and technical requirements that come with developing alternative sources at municipal scale.

Mayoral Committee Member for Water and Sanitation Zahid Badroodien said in April 2025 the plant was on track for full operation by April 2027.

The City's 19 August update on its 2026 Water Outlook rates the risk of water restrictions higher than in previous years. Water demand rose above the City's 1.5% target in the 2025/26 financial year, according to the outlook.

The update anticipates first water from two schemes of up to 70 million litres a day, for reuse and desalination, between 2031 and 2036.

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# PWTSA delivers water treatment, purification and reuse solutions

AS water scarcity, aging infrastructure, and increasing environmental compliance requirements place greater pressure on industries and municipalities across Southern Africa, the need for reliable and sustainable water treatment solutions has become more important than ever. Effective water management is now a strategic priority for organisations seeking to secure operations, reduce costs, and improve environmental performance.

Process Water Technologies (PWTSA) has established itself as a leading provider of water and wastewater treatment solutions, delivering advanced systems that support water security, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability. The company specialises in the design, manufacture, and implementation of treatment technologies that incorporate physical,

chemical, membrane, and biological processes to meet the diverse needs of industrial, commercial, and municipal clients.

PWTSA's solutions utilise proven technologies such as coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration, ultrafiltration, reverse osmosis, ion exchange, and specialised biological treatment systems. These technologies enable the treatment of raw water, wastewater, and industrial effluent for applications including cooling systems, boiler feed water, manufacturing processes, potable water production, and water reuse initiatives.

As water becomes an increasingly valuable resource, industries are actively seeking methods to reduce freshwater consumption and maximise recovery opportunities. PWTSA assists clients in achieving these objectives through customised water purification and

reclamation systems that convert challenging water sources, including rivers, dams, municipal wastewater, and industrial effluent, into valuable reusable water resources. This approach not only reduces operating costs but also strengthens environmental stewardship and regulatory compliance.

A key differentiator for PWTSA is its commitment to in-house engineering and design. All potable water, industrial water, desalination, sewage, effluent, filtration, and reverse osmosis plants are engineered by the company's experienced technical team. This integrated approach ensures greater flexibility, enhanced quality control, and tailored solutions suited to site-specific operating conditions.

The company's extensive portfolio includes industrial and potable water treatment plants, sewage treatment facilities,

effluent treatment systems, desalination plants, media filtration units, ultrafiltration systems, and containerised treatment solutions. PWTSA has successfully delivered projects throughout South Africa, across the African continent, and in island nations such as Madagascar, Mauritius, and the Seychelles, providing sustainable water solutions that support economic growth and responsible resource management.

Among its innovative offerings is a trailer-mounted mobile water purification system, designed to deliver safe drinking water wherever it is needed.

This self-contained, rapid-deployment solution combines ozone pre-treatment, multi-stage filtration, reverse osmosis technology, and final chlorine disinfection to produce high-quality potable water from even the most challenging water sources.



*Process Water Technologies' advanced water treatment and mobile purification solutions help industries and communities achieve sustainable water security and resource recovery across Africa.*

The mobile system is ideally suited for disaster relief operations, mining camps, rural communities, construction projects, military deployments, and temporary municipal water supply support. Available in capacities ranging from 1 m<sup>3</sup>/hr to 10 m<sup>3</sup>/hr, the unit features automated controls, real-time monitoring,

optional solar or generator power, and integrated water storage, enabling reliable operation in remote and off-grid environments.

As water challenges continue to evolve, Process Water Technologies remains committed to delivering innovative, reliable, and cost-effective treatment and reuse

solutions that help industries and communities secure their water future. Through technical excellence, customised engineering, and a focus on sustainable resource management, PWTSA continues to play a vital role in strengthening water resilience across Africa.

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## Water independence starts with backup storage you can deploy quickly



*A water bladder that holds process or municipal water on an ordinary day becomes immediate emergency reserve when fire season hits, when drought deepens, or when supply is interrupted.*

**By Dawid Bredenkamp, Damsak®**

AS pressure on water resources continues to grow, flexibility is becoming less of a luxury and more of a practical necessity. Sometimes resilience is not about building bigger. It is about having the right solution ready when circumstances change.

South Africa already knows what prolonged shortage looks like. Cape Town's Day Zero threat showed how quickly taps can run dry when drought bites. With a strong El Niño cycle expected to intensify dry conditions, many municipalities, farms, mines and communities face the real prospect of water levels dropping and supplies tightening. Emergency backup storage is no longer a nice-to-have. It is practical preparation.

In 2007 Gordon Bredenkamp sat down in Cullinan and designed

a portable, closed water reservoir that could go where rigid tanks simply could not. Nearly twenty years later the family business he runs with his son Dawid is taking that same idea into international markets.

Damsak® was built for exactly these conditions. The reservoirs are flexible bladders made from polyester-reinforced, food-grade plasticised PVC. They ship folded, deploy on any reasonably level surface without permanent foundations or heavy civil works, and can be ready in hours rather than months. Once filled they form a sealed, dark environment that stops evaporation, keeps out contamination and prevents algae growth. Drinkable water can be stored in them and it stays drinkable. Sizes now reach 500 000 litres - enough to keep a mid-sized operation, a municipal depot or a community functioning as an instant solution that serves in the

long term.

The combination of instant installation and long-term service is especially valuable for disaster management and proactive planning. The



*Dawid Bredenkamp, Damsak®.*

same unit that holds process or municipal water on an ordinary day becomes immediate emergency reserve when fire season hits, when drought deepens, or when supply is interrupted. Mines, factories, farms, hospitals, schools, residential estates and municipalities that keep Damsak® capacity on site are choosing preparation over reaction.

Clean water already stored and protected, changes what a water shortage or fire damage actually costs. In practice it means essential services and communities can keep operating instead of waiting for tankers or emergency deliveries.

Because the product was designed and manufactured in South Africa for South African and African conditions - extreme heat, high evaporation, remote sites with limited infrastructure, and the constant need to scale or relocate storage - it has found natural application wherever those same pressures exist. The business has expanded beyond South Africa, carrying the same practical advantages into other demanding environments

facing unreliable supply and rising water stress.

Gordon started with a simple need on a farm. Dawid and the team have turned that need into a scalable solution for operations, municipalities and communities that understand preparation is better than crisis response. The core idea remains unchanged: store the water when it is available, keep it protected, and have it ready the moment demand spikes or supply tightens.

In a season when fire risk is high and drought pressure is expected to intensify, the question is straightforward. Is the backup already in place, or will it still be on order when the taps start running dry or the fire approaches?

[www.damsak.co.za](http://www.damsak.co.za)

## Cape Town water security projects reshape the city's future with R43 billion investment

**By Adrian Ephraim**

EIGHT years after Day Zero taught Cape Town what it means to count down to empty taps, and with dam levels at 75.7%, the City is spending its way to never facing that reckoning again. Water and sanitation now make up 42% of Cape Town's R120 billion 10-year infrastructure pipeline, roughly R43 billion over the next three years, a bigger water build than Johannesburg and Durban combined.

At the centre sits the New Water Programme, the City's plan to add 300 million litres of drinking water a day from sources that do not depend on rain. Reuse, desalination, groundwater and clearing thirsty invasive plants all feature. And in late September 2026 the programme moved from planning into the market, opening real opportunity for engineering, technology and services firms.

**Faure goes to market**

On 25 September the City published the tender for its flagship reuse project, the Faure New Water Scheme, a two-stage process to find a private partner to finance, design, build, operate and maintain the scheme. The project is valued at around R2.83 billion and will eventually produce up to 100 million litres a day, starting at 70.

The engineering is ambitious. Treated effluent from the recently rebuilt Zandvliet Wastewater Treatment Works will be purified through a multi barrier advanced water purification plant at the Faure Water Treatment Plant, blended with dam water, then treated again before reaching

taps across most of the city.

"The Faure New Water Scheme forms part of our broader approach to diversifying our water supply and strengthening our resilience as the city grows," said Councillor Zahid Badroodien, Mayoral Committee Member for Water and Sanitation.

He has been clear that the public-private partnership model keeps the asset in public hands. "By undertaking these projects through a PPP, the City of Cape Town will remain the infrastructure owner and be responsible for providing safe, high-quality drinking water," he said when Council approved the model in December 2025. "This is progress built on trust, delivering jobs, economic opportunity and the certainty our residents and businesses deserve."

**Where the supplier opportunity lies**

An industry briefing prepared through GreenCape mapped the work the Faure scheme alone will generate: storage reservoirs, pump stations, oxidation and filtration systems, disinfection, HVAC and control systems, plus an eight kilometre DN1000 transfer pipeline between Zandvliet and Faure. Contractors with civil, mechanical and electrical, control and instrumentation expertise are all in the frame.

Specialist firms are already circling the programme. Engineering consultancy Zutari was appointed for the environmental work on the desalination component, while design studio Stewart & Partners developed an early concept for

the Faure reuse plant. The transaction advisory team guiding the feasibility work was appointed through National Treasury's Government Technical Advisory Centre, and an independent panel of 12 local and international desalination experts has been assembled to steer the seawater plans.

**The desalination setback**

Not everything is on track. The second flagship, the roughly R5 billion Paarden Eiland Desalination Plant, planned for up to 70 million litres a day, has hit a serious obstacle. Transnet's intention to expand the Port of Cape Town has effectively scuttled the chosen Paarden Eiland site.

Tabling the Water Outlook report in August, Badroodien told Council the search was on for alternative locations. The report warns that finding a new site and running a fresh environmental impact assessment, the scoping for which was already done at Paarden Eiland, could push the project back by five years. On current timelines the full New Water Programme may only be operating around 2036, even as demand is expected to outstrip the city's dam allocation within the next two years.

Cost is the other sensitivity. Badroodien has acknowledged that all capital projects feed into tariffs, with earlier modelling suggesting desalination could add roughly 6.5% to water tariffs in its first years of operation. Residents and ratepayer groups have raised concerns, and that debate will sharpen as procurement advances.





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# AI in water treatment: NICP tests where the technology works - and where it doesn't

By Kris van der Bijl

IT is rare to find an innovative voice in AI who is truly sceptical about the limitation of the machines and technology they build. But a founder of a Johannesburg firm developing AI for water treatment plants wants its first live pilots to show where the technology fails.

Unathi Pretty Mbengwana founded New Innovations Consulting and Projects (NICP), which is building Water Treatment Expert AI (WTE AI) for water and wastewater professionals.

"A successful pilot should not simply confirm that our idea works. It should identify what works, what does not work, what needs improvement and where AI should not be used," she says.

Mbengwana built the concept on more than a decade of engineering, maintenance, reliability and failure analysis work in the wastewater sector. Her reliability work involves analysing equipment failures from maintenance records that vary in con-

sistency and detail.

That experience led her to ask whether AI could compare maintenance history with operational information and plant conditions to flag risks for investigation.

## Water treatment AI pilots

NICP started with a customised minimum viable product (MVP) to validate the need before building a complex standalone platform.

The MVP has recorded more than 700 interactions. Those interactions show NICP the technical and operational questions professionals bring to the platform.

Water Treatment Expert AI was among South Africa's top three nominees for the 2025 BRICS Young Innovator Prize representing South Africa in Brazil.

Mbengwana separates proof of demand from proof of a product inside a treatment plant. NICP's next phase is a standalone platform and its first formal pilots in operating plants.

The pilots will test

the platform against real operational workflows. Her questions cover access to information, consistency of troubleshooting, the platform's mistakes and the design of human oversight.

Two more questions concern structured failure analysis and the information the platform requires. A final question asks which capabilities create measurable operational value.

"Only after generating that evidence should we make strong claims about operational performance and move towards wider commercialisation," she says.

## AI decision support in treatment plants

NICP designed the platform to make technical and organisational knowledge accessible when professionals need it. Treatment facilities depend on experienced personnel, according to Mbengwana. Their knowledge can leave with them when they retire or resign.

Newer employees can wait for senior

colleagues before receiving guidance on unfamiliar problems, she says. A less-experienced professional could draw on structured technical guidance from the platform.

The MVP covers troubleshooting, technical guidance, structured root-cause analysis and compliance guidance. It stands apart from plant equipment, SCADA, PLCs and live plant data.

PLCs and control systems execute control logic, and SCADA provides monitoring and alarms. Mbengwana places AI in a separate knowledge and decision-support layer.

She pictures the platform telling an engineer that a pattern or inconsistency deserves attention, along with the information behind that flag. Future versions could compare present conditions with

plant history and flag emerging risks.

She describes that capability as a development vision for testing in pilots. In her view, incomplete job cards, unreliable instrumentation, miscalibrated sensors and missing operational context all limit such analysis.

## Human oversight of plant decisions

Mbengwana keeps consequential decisions with qualified professionals. Those decisions cover safety, environmental compliance, equipment integrity, process stability and public health.

She notes that a system records "only part of what is happening in the physical plant". An experienced operator hears a change in a machine's sound or notices unusual vibration.

"AI should strengthen engineering judge-



Unathi Pretty Mbengwana founded New Innovations Consulting and Projects (NICP).

ment, not replace it," says Mbengwana.

She sees the biggest opportunity in strengthening the people who operate and maintain South Africa's treatment infrastructure.

She advises South African plants to start with the problem. Her four questions cover the problem, the available information, its reliability and the decisions AI could im-

prove. Facilities can begin at their current level of digital maturity.

Her long-term vision is a plant where automation controls processes and AI helps professionals interpret plant information.

NICP is seeking utilities, treatment facilities, industrial operators, research organisations and technology partners for the pilots.

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# Industrial gear units from BMG engineered for demanding oilseed processing



BMG supplies and supports the Sumitomo Hansen P4 range of Industrial Gear Units which has been engineered for Desolventiser Toaster, Dryer Cooler and combined Desolventiser-Toaster-Dryer-Cooler installations used in vegetable oil extraction plants.

RELIABLE power transmission is essential in every stage of modern oilseed processing, particularly during desolventising, toasting, cooling and drying operations, where equipment operates continuously under high loads, elevated temperatures and humid conditions.

BMG supplies and supports the Sumitomo Hansen P4 range of Industrial Gear Units (IGUs) which has been engineered for Desolventiser Toaster (DT), Dryer Cooler (DC) and combined Desolventiser-Toaster-

Dryer-Cooler (DTDC) installations used in vegetable oil extraction plants.

ity directly influences plant availability and production efficiency," explains Barry

**"The latest Hansen P4 configuration also incorporates an enhanced bearing arrangement, developed through detailed engineering investigations and close collaboration with customers."**

"BMG works closely with customers operating in demanding industrial environments where gearbox reliability

Stoltz, Gears Regional Manager in BMG's Electro-Mechanical division. "The Hansen P4 range, which combines

robust mechanical design with features that simplify maintenance and maximise operational reliability, has been developed specifically for these applications.

"These critical drives are able to withstand fluctuating process conditions, heavy thrust loads and continuous operating cycles typical in modern processing facilities. More than 400 Hansen toaster drives are currently operating worldwide, delivering output torque of up to 1 840 kNm and reduction ratios of up to 280:1, with larger configurations available where required."

A key feature of the Hansen P4 design is its dedicated vertical housing, developed specifically to accommodate the high thrust loads generated during desolventising and toasting processes. Enlarged mounting surfaces distribute loads more effectively into the supporting structure, reducing stresses within the gearbox housing and improving long-term reliability. Where necessary, the mounting surface can be further increased to suit individual installation requirements.

The latest Hansen P4 configuration also incorporates an en-

hanced bearing arrangement, developed through detailed engineering investigations and close collaboration with customers. Additional thrust bearings on the intermediate shafts separate axial and radial loads, improving load distribution across the rollers and increasing

tions."

Because moisture and condensation are constant challenges in processing environments, every Hansen P4 toaster drive is equipped with features that protect internal components against corrosion and premature wear. Standard equipment includes re-greasable

and ensure dependable long-term operation in high-humidity environments.

Ease of maintenance has also been incorporated into the design of this system. Standard oil flow and oil level switches assist with operational monitoring, while optional condition monitoring



the gearbox's ability to withstand the transient loading conditions commonly experienced in desolventiser toaster applications. The arrangement is also available as an upgrade kit for existing installa-

labyrinth shaft seals, silica gel breather filters, condensate drain lines at each bearing location and moisture-resistant paint finishes. These measures help extend lubricant life, simplify oil sampling

systems provide real-time information on oil contamination, temperature and vibration. A large inspection cover positioned above the oil level allows routine inspections to be carried out without unnecessary disruption, while the horizontally split housing enables comprehensive maintenance with minimal dismantling.

As desolventiser toaster systems frequently operate in potentially explosive atmospheres, Hansen P4 drives are available in complete configurations that meet stringent safety requirements.

In addition to supplying Hansen industrial gear units, BMG is the authorised OEM repair partner for Hansen gearboxes in southern Africa.

Repairs are completed using genuine replacement parts and approved factory procedures, enabling customers to restore equipment to original operating specifications, while protecting long-term reliability and service life.

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# Tariff whiplash: How Western Cape agri-processors are engineering a way out

By Adrian Ephraim

FOR an industry that feeds much of the world counter-seasonally, the past 18 months have been an exercise in planning around chaos.

The Western Cape produces almost half of South Africa's agribusiness exports and roughly 70% of its beverage exports, and no sector has felt the turbulence of shifting United States trade policy more sharply than the province's agri-processors, packers and cold chain operators.

The story keeps

changing. The 30% "reciprocal" tariffs that US President Donald Trump imposed in August 2025 fell away after a February 2026 US Supreme Court ruling found they exceeded emergency powers. A temporary 10% framework replaced them. Then, on 24 July 2026, the Trump administration imposed fresh Section 301 tariffs tied to forced-labour trade rules, setting South Africa's rate at 12.5%.

Crucially for the Cape, the impact is split by product. Oranges won a tariff exemption in November 2025 and

continue to enter the US duty-free. Mandarins, wine and table grapes did not.

Commenting on the July measures, Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa, said, "My take is that these tariffs are now final, and unlike 'Liberation Day' tariffs which were ruled to have been noncompliant with statutes in February." The finality matters. Growers and processors can plan around a known cost. They cannot plan around a moving one.

## The stakes for the Cape

The numbers explain the anxiety. Citrus alone, exported mainly from the Western Cape and Limpopo, generates roughly R1.8 billion a year from the US market, and analysts estimate 35,000 citrus jobs could be at risk, with up to 100,000 jobs across agriculture and automotive threatened overall. In rural districts, those jobs have nowhere else to go.

Donald MacKay, CEO of XA Global Trade Advisors, put the geographic risk plainly: "In rural areas in the Western and Northern Cape, where citrus and table grapes are major exports, there's very limited capacity to absorb labour."

The AGOA safety net, meanwhile, has frayed to a thread. The African Growth and Opportunity Act was extended in February

2026, but only to 31 December 2026, and the reciprocal tariffs override its benefits regardless.

## Diversify, add value, hold the line

The response taking shape across the province is focused on three areas: new markets, deeper value-add, and better logistics.

China has emerged as the standout opportunity. In April 2026 an amended cold-treatment protocol for citrus took effect, and a zero-tariff programme opened the door wider. Ntshabele has urged the sector to move fast, noting the China benefit is a two-year window that South Africa should accelerate negotiations to lock in before it expires. His broader message to the industry captures the mood: "Our work is cut out for us, and we should all commit to boosting our exports

to the benefit of South Africa."

For processors specifically, the diversification play is as much about form as destination. Juicing, canning, drying and premium packaging convert tariff-exposed fresh fruit into higher-margin goods with longer shelf lives and broader market access, reducing the impact of any single market closing. That in turn drives demand for processing equipment, automation, cold storage and packaging technology, the suppliers who quietly underpin every export carton.

Logistics is the third front. Cape processors depend on the Port of Cape Town, and the fruit sector has been most affected by its congestion during peak export windows. Recent gains in ship turnaround and reefer handling matter directly to whether Cape fruit

reaches Shanghai or Rotterdam in condition to sell.

## The window ahead

There is one piece of near-term relief. Because the 2025 tariffs landed late in the season, and following the Supreme Court reversal, exporters may reclaim duties paid during the lapse, a liquidity injection ahead of the 2026 harvest that begins in April. Growers have also welcomed the appointment of former agri-culture minister John Steenhuisen as deputy trade minister, hoping his agri-diplomacy experience helps land a bilateral deal.

The lesson of the last two years for the Western Cape's agri-processors is evident in every forward contract: build the business so that no one tariff, in one capital, can decide the season.

## El Niño could expose weak links in SA's agricultural supply chain

WEAK El Niño conditions are expected to strengthen ahead of the 2026/27 summer, raising the risk of warmer and drier conditions across South Africa's summer rainfall regions and potentially putting additional pressure on agricultural production and the supply chains that depend on it.

The South African Weather Service said in its July seasonal outlook that El Niño conditions were expected to continue through the summer, although their effects vary between seasons and locations.

"If production declines, processors receive less raw material, transport schedules change and exporters can miss critical market windows," says Lester Botha, Business and Market Development Executive at Alpha.

Weather is one of several risks capable of affecting multiple agricultural businesses. An outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease can restrict livestock movement and disrupt feedlots, abattoirs, transporters and market access.

Machinery failures can have a similar effect. A breakdown during planting or harvesting can delay production and reduce deliveries to processors. For perishable products, interruptions to packing, cooling or transport can shorten shelf life and reduce their value.

Input costs make these disruptions harder to absorb. The National Agricultural Marketing Council's June 2026 report recorded substantial year-on-year increases in several international fertiliser prices and freight indices.

"A farm, packhouse, cold store and transporter may be independently owned, but operationally they rely on one another," Botha says. "The exposure often sits in the connections between them."

The reliability of roads, municipal electricity networks, cold-storage facilities and ports can also determine whether agricultural products reach their markets in time.

Transnet National Ports Authority reported in July that average container turnaround time at the Port of Cape Town had improved from 74 hours in the 2025/26 financial year to 58 hours in the current year to date. Average anchorage waiting time had fallen from 127 hours in 2023/24 to 79 hours in 2025/26.

However, exporters remain dependent on infrastructure performing consistently during concentrated seasonal export periods.

Botha says mitigation starts with identifying single points of failure, such as machinery without backup, cold-storage facilities dependent on one

power source, critical parts available from only one supplier or transport routes with no viable alternative.

During a review of a cold-storage operation, Alpha found that the refrigeration system depended on a single electricity supply and that the standby generator could not support the full cooling load.

Alpha recommended additional generating capacity, automatic changeover testing and an agreement allowing products to be transferred to a nearby facility during an extended outage. The measures were intended to limit stock deterioration, interruption and financial loss.

Businesses should also establish how long operations can continue without each critical resource, how quickly it can realistically be restored and whether contingency arrangements have been tested under operating conditions.

"A backup plan only reduces risk if it can carry the actual operational demand," Botha says. "The time to discover that a generator cannot support the full cooling load, or that a critical replacement part takes six months to arrive, is not after the failure."

These risks and their mitigation formed part of Alpha's discussions with farmers, agribusinesses and brokers at NAMPO Cape 2026.

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## Distillery spray technology improves cleaning and drying



*Spraying Systems Co. offers a full range of spray products and engineered solutions for spirits production environments to optimise spray operations throughout a facility.*

DISTILLERY operations require reliable cleaning and drying processes to maintain product quality, support sanitation and reduce downtime between production cycles. From fermentation vessels and stills to bottling lines and washdown areas, Spraying Systems Co.'s solutions help distilleries improve cleaning performance, reduce water and chemical use, protect product quality and keep production moving.

### Common challenges in distillery operations

For distilleries to maintain consistent production schedules, vessels, equipment and bottling lines must be

"Spraying Systems Co. offers tank cleaning solutions for a wide range of distillery vessels, from small tanks and barrels to large production vessels."

cleaned efficiently. When cleaning or drying processes are slow, inconsistent or overly manual, they can lead to longer turnaround times, increased labour, higher water and chemical use, and unnecessary downtime. Stubborn soils such as mash residue, sugars, oils and mineral deposits can be difficult to remove without the right spray impact and coverage.

Spraying Systems Co. offers a full range of spray products and engineered solutions

for spirits production environments to optimise spray operations throughout a facility. This includes tank and vessel cleaning, equipment washing, floor and production area washdown, bottle drying and packaging line blow-off.

### Distillery tank, still and vessel cleaning

Fermentation vessels, mash tuns, cookers, stills, storage tanks, barrels and blending tanks all require effective cleaning to remove residue and prepare equipment for the next batch, as well as help maintain spirit quality and reduce downtime. Proper tank cleaning equipment can improve interior coverage, deliver the impact needed to remove stubborn residue and help distilleries reduce manual cleaning.

Spraying Systems Co. offers tank cleaning solutions for a wide range of distillery vessels, from small tanks and barrels to large production vessels. Options include static spray balls, rotary tank cleaners and high-impact tank cleaning machines for more difficult cleaning requirements.

### Distillery floor, equipment and washdown cleaning

Distilleries rely on effective cleaning and washing throughout the production area, still house, barrel room, bottling line and packaging area.

Spray guns, washdown nozzles, hose reels and steam-heated washdown systems help operators clean floors, equipment, conveyors, fillers, tanks, bins and work areas efficiently.

The right spray equipment can improve cleaning impact while helping reduce water waste, overspray and operator fatigue. Durable washdown products are available for hot water, chemical cleaning and everyday production use.

### Bottle and can drying for spirits packaging lines

Moisture on bottles, cans, cartons or packaging can slow production and create problems with labelling, inkjet coding, inspection and case packing. WindJet® air nozzles, air knives and blower-driven systems provide uniform drying and blow-off for distillery bottling and packaging lines.

These systems help remove rinse water and condensation from bottles and cans before labelling or coding, while also supporting cap, closure, conveyor and package blow-off. Blower-driven options can reduce compressed air use and lower operating costs.

Across a distillery, the right spray technology can help improve cleaning consistency, reduce water and chemical consumption and support faster production changeovers. From tank and vessel cleaning to production-area washdown and bottle drying, selecting spray equipment suited to the application can help distilleries maintain hygiene standards, improve operational efficiency and keep production lines running reliably.

For further information, email Monitor Engineering: [grant@monitorspray.co.za](mailto:grant@monitorspray.co.za) [www.spray.co.za](http://www.spray.co.za)

## Stellenbosch solar and battery storage: Wine harvest shows why timing counts

STELLENBOSCH's procurement of up to 41.9 MW of solar photovoltaic capacity and 14.8 MWh of battery storage, awarded, 22 May 2026, comes as new data from Vergenoegd Lōw shows how sharply electricity demand can rise during the wine harvest.

The two developments point to a broader local energy issue: whether new solar and storage can help meet the needs of Stellenbosch's commercial customers when demand is highest, beyond adding lower-cost power over the course of a year.

At Vergenoegd Lōw, an August 2026 PV-monitoring report provided to Cape Business News earlier this month shows what that seasonal demand looks like at an individual commercial operation.

### Harvest drives the electricity surge

In February, the estate used more than twice as much electricity as it did in June. Its solar system generated the equivalent of 63% of that demand, so its grid electricity was only about a third higher.

Grid electricity was only 6 603 kWh higher.

Of interest is the coinciding timing of peak solar potential and the harvest season. February falls within the Cape wine harvest, when electricity demand rises sharply, while solar production is also strong.

March followed the same pattern, with solar again covering more than half of the estate's demand. January, the estate's heaviest month for electricity, relied more on the grid and also drew on a generator.

"Between January and August, the estate's solar system generated the equivalent of almost half its electricity use."



tariffs climb. Eskom's tariff increases this year were close to 9%, from April for its direct customers and from July for municipalities.

every other month, solar covered less than half of the estate's demand.

For a seasonal business, that timing is the central feature of the data: the harvest months, when demand climbs, are also the months in which solar covers the largest share of it.

### Stellenbosch is adding generation and storage

The municipal project is on a very different scale, but its combination of solar and battery storage points to a wider change in Stellenbosch's electricity system.

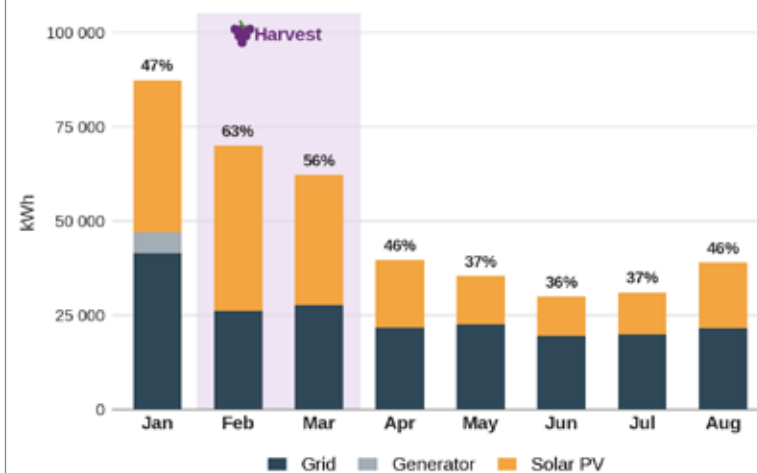
The municipality's tender, BSM 89/25, called for 41.9 MW of solar PV and 14.8 MWh of battery storage, procured through an independent power producer model. The RFP was issued in 2025, and the project was awarded in May 2026.

For commercial electricity users, storage can address the gap between when solar is generated and when power is needed. At Vergenoegd Lōw, the harvest provides a favourable match because its demand rises during a period of strong solar generation.

The municipal buildout is also being accompanied by network investment. Stellenbosch has tendered for two 20 MVA, 66/11 kV transformers to replace three existing 7.5 MVA units at its main substation.

### Vergenoegd Lōw electricity by source, 2026

Monthly kWh. Percentages show solar's share of the estate's use.



Source: RenEnergy PV-monitoring report, August 2026

Compared with June, the estate's reported load was 40 318 kWh higher in Febru-

ary. Grid electricity was only 6 603 kWh higher.

period can limit the increase in power that has to be bought from the grid. That matters as

over the same period.

The harvest figures are more revealing than that average. In



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SCAN ME



# Understanding compressor types, cost, performance and after-sales support

**By Cindy van der Watt, Operations Manager, Rotovane Compressor Sales**

COMPRESSED air is used in almost every industry, from workshops and garages to manufacturing plants, mines and processing facilities. In many operations, it is part of the production process, so an interrupted air supply can stop machines, delay processes and result in production losses.

This is why buying a compressor should involve more than comparing quotations.

The purchase price is important, but electricity, maintenance, spare parts, repairs, installation and downtime all contribute to what a compressor will ultimately cost a business over its working life.

## Start with the application

Before choosing a compressor, the first

question should be simple. What does the application actually require?

Consider the required airflow, operating pressure, hours of operation and, importantly, how the demand changes during production.

Two compressors with the same motor rating can perform very differently. Likewise, two machines using the same compressor technology can have different energy consumption, maintenance requirements and life-cycle costs.

Selecting a compressor because it has a larger motor or produces more air is not necessarily the correct approach.

Oversizing equipment can result in unnecessary capital expenditure and operating costs. Undersizing can leave the compressor working excessively hard and may result in pressure problems or interrup-

tions to production.

The compressor should be selected around the application, not the other way around.

## Rotary vane and rotary screw

Rotary vane compressors use a rotor fitted with sliding vanes to compress air. They provide smooth, continuous operation with relatively low vibration and can be suited to continuous-duty applications. The vanes wear components, however, making correct lubrication, clean operating conditions and regular maintenance important.

Rotary screw compressors use male and female screw rotors and are widely used throughout industry. They are available in fixed-speed and variable-speed configurations. Variable-speed technology adjusts motor speed according to air demand and can re-

duce energy consumption where demand varies, provided the compressor is correctly sized and operated within a suitable range.

Screw compressors also contain precision components and require regular maintenance. Oil, filters and separators on oil-injected machines all need attention, while air-end repairs or overhauls can become substantial costs as equipment ages.

## Motor size is not the whole story

The compressor itself is only one part of a compressed-air installation. The air receiver, dryer, filters, valves, pipework and leaks all influence how effectively the system delivers air to the point of use.

Poorly sized pipework, restrictions or excessive pressure losses can result in operators increasing compressor pressure to compensate, which could lead

to the plant using more electricity without producing any additional useful compressed air.

Therefore, the complete system must be considered when evaluating compressor performance.

## Understanding machine running costs

The total cost of owning a compressor includes capital cost, installation, energy, maintenance, downtime and lifecycle or overhaul costs.

Energy consumption is easily underestimated. A compressor using an additional 50 kW continuously would consume 438,000 kWh a year.

At R3.00/kWh, that represents an additional R1.31 million in annual electricity costs.

This illustrates how relatively small differences in power consumption can become significant when equipment operates continuously.

## One compressor or several?

The configuration of the compressor room also deserves consideration. With relatively stable demand, a fixed-speed compressor may be suitable. Where demand changes, variable-speed technology may offer advantages when correctly applied.

There is also the consideration of using one large compressor or several smaller machines.

Multiple compressors can provide staged capacity and operating flexibility. They can also allow production to continue while another machine is being maintained.

There are additional costs, however, and the decision should be based on the plant's actual demand and what happens to production if the compressed-air supply is lost.

## After-sales support

The compressor is a working industrial asset

requiring maintenance, service, spare parts and technical support throughout its life.

Customers should consider service support, parts availability, response times and the technical expertise of those servicing the equipment.

## What every buyer should consider

The right compressor is not simply the machine with the lowest purchase price or largest motor. It is one that is appropriate for the application, economical to operate and properly supported throughout its working life.

Before accepting a quotation, businesses should consider what air they actually need, what it will cost to produce, how the equipment will be maintained and who will provide support when problems arise.

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# DROMEX workwear and PPE manufacturing drives jobs and skills in Hammarsdale



By Diane Silcock

DROMEX, a South African manufacturer of protective workwear and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which recently exhibited at Electra Mining Africa 2026, is reawakening a historic manufacturing hub in KwaZulu-Natal, supporting skills development and employment while supplying workwear, footwear and PPE for demanding industrial environments.

In the six years since

Dromex expanded to larger premises and built a 25 000 m<sup>2</sup> distribution facility and an 8 000 m<sup>2</sup> SABS-approved manufacturing facility, the number of employees from the nearby Hammarsdale township has grown from 200 to 1000.

## Hammarsdale manufacturing supports jobs and skills

The impact of the investment is particularly evident in Hammarsdale where employees are re-

turning to textile-related skills they developed more than two decades ago, while DROMEX's skills development programme is helping to upskill workers.

Cape Business News interviewed Andrew Mysell, DROMEX's Head of Marketing, at Electra Mining. "It's so good to work for a business that is invested in South Africa and in the local economy," Mysell said. "The fact that we have invested in a factory, with a thousand people working, means a lot.

We went to Hammarsdale township to make our documentary, and when you start to see it through the community's eyes, you understand the positive impact. That is a huge motivator for us to create more jobs."

Mysell says it is equally important to understand the people who use DROMEX's products and wear its garments and footwear. They work in heavy industry and dangerous environments, including mines, foundries, substations and switching stations.

"Each day hardworking men and women get up and go to work in tough, uncompromising environments in order to provide their families with a better future. This is the reason that we design and test our products to the highest international standards to help bring them home safely. It was an eye-opener visiting Marikana seeing the miners going underground and understanding the conditions they work and live in. Our aim is to provide solutions that will make their lives easier, while creat-

ing awareness of safety gear."

DROMEX caters for the changing needs of the workers that they serve, ensuring that their range is continuously evolving to meet these needs. At Electra Mining, they showcased a number of new innovations such as the Evo-Tech range of workwear, a voice amplification device for respirators, as well as new styles of footwear.

## DROMEX innovation wins Electra Mining award

DROMEX won the Electra Mining Africa 2026 Innovation and New Products Award, for its voice amplification innovation which addresses a key challenge that workers face: the ability to communicate effectively and safely while wearing either a half or full-face piece respirator. The device integrates with DROMEX respirators to amplify the user's voice, enabling communication without removing the respirator and potentially exposing the wearer to hazardous airborne substances.



In front of their impressive stand at Electra Mining Africa 2026 showcasing their workwear, PPE and footwear are (left) Bruce Glenday, DROMEX General Manager and Andrew Mysell, DROMEX Head of Marketing.

DROMEX describes the innovation as a South African first and believes it could transform communication on the shop floor while improving compliance, increasing wear time and protecting users.

For DROMEX, the focus extends beyond manufacturing workwear and PPE to creating employment and

developing skills in the communities where it operates. Mysell says the company's desire is to help create a stable economic environment where people can thrive, and challenges other South African businesses to contribute to job creation and local economic development.

[www.dromex.co.za](http://www.dromex.co.za)

# There are recurring weaknesses across parts of the built-environment system - Macpherson

*A series of investigations into four deadly building collapses has exposed systemic failures in South Africa's construction industry, prompting calls for urgent regulatory reform and stronger enforcement.*



Public Works Minister  
Dean Macpherson

PUBLIC Works Minister Dean Macpherson says investigations into four building collapses, when considered together, point to recurring weaknesses across parts of the built-environment system.

"The principal problem identified by these investigations is inconsistent implementation, inadequate oversight, weak enforcement and non-compliance. At the same time, the reports identify areas in which the regulatory framework itself requires modernisation and strengthening," the minister said.

Macpherson was

presenting the findings of investigations into four building and construction incidents that occurred in South Africa between December last year and March this year.

"The reports therefore recommend that the affected municipalities assess and strengthen their building-control capacity and enforcement systems."

## A pattern of failure

The investigations, undertaken by the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) were commissioned against the backdrop of a deeply concerning period for building safety in the country.

The investigations followed serious incidents at Redcliffe in Verulam, eThekweni; Doornkop in Soweto; Ormonde in Johannesburg; and the Magnolia Development in Sea Point, Cape Town.

Across the four incidents, 17 people died,

and 24 were injured.

The Magnolia development is a 10-storey luxury apartment building project which had a structural collapse in February resulting in four people

being injured. It is scheduled to be completed in 2027.

**Building first, approving later**

"The second major finding is that significant unlawful construction can remain outside the formal regulatory system for far too long. Redcliffe and Ormonde are the clearest examples.

"In both cases, substantial construction had progressed without prior building approval. The investigations also raise concerns

about the wider practice of construction proceeding first and approval being sought afterwards. That is unacceptable," the minister said.

He stressed that building approval is not unnecessary red tape.

"It is a public-safety control. The purpose of obtaining approval before construction is precisely to allow the relevant authority to consider whether what is proposed complies with the law before people are exposed to risk.

"A system in which substantial construction can proceed and only afterwards be regularised fundamentally weakens that protection," Macpherson said.

## The 'Oversight Gap'

The third finding concerns what happens after approval has been granted and construction has commenced.

"The reports identify an excessive regulatory focus on the initial building-plan approval

stage. Building control cannot stop when a plan receives a stamp. Authorities need visibility over what happens during construction. They need to know when construction has commenced," the Minister said.

## Stretched municipal capacity

The fourth finding relates to municipal capacity and capability.

"The investigations raise concerns about shortages of suitably qualified building-control personnel, limited inspection capacity and the ability of municipalities to identify

weaknesses in verifying whether people accepting responsibility for specialised or high-risk work have the required competence.

**Information Gaps and Deterrence**

"The sixth finding is that our regulators do not share enough information with one another. Lastly, the finding raised concerns about consequence management.

**Competence and accountability**

The fifth major issue is professional competence and accountability.

"The investigations raise concerns

"The purpose of obtaining approval before construction is precisely to allow the relevant authority to consider whether what is proposed complies with the law before people are exposed to risk."

construction which has never entered the approval system," he said. Macpherson cau-

about inadequate supervision, failures to discharge statutory responsibilities and

The reports recommend strengthening sanctions for violations of planning and construction requirements.

"Taken together, these are not four isolated lessons. They reinforce weaknesses that the government has now seen emerge across successive structural incidents.

# Connected perimeter security: How smart electric fencing improves intrusion detection

PERIMETER security has traditionally been viewed as the first physical line of defence. Today, however, an effective perimeter needs to do more than create a barrier. It needs to detect potential intrusion, communicate events quickly and provide security teams with the information required to respond effectively.

"When a fence is cut, shorted or interfered with sufficiently to trigger the configured alarm parameters, the energizer can generate an alarm."

This is driving a move towards more connected perimeter security, where electric fencing forms part of a broader intrusion detection and security management strategy.

Nemtek Connect and the Nemtek Connect Portal have been developed with this

changing environment in mind, extending electric fence monitoring beyond the physical energizer and providing greater visibility across individual sites, multiple zones and geographically dispersed installations.

## From deterrence to detection

A monitored electric fence provides an important advantage at the perimeter: an attempted breach can potentially be detected before an intruder reaches buildings, assets or other internal security layers.

When a fence is cut, shorted or interfered with sufficiently to trigger the configured alarm parameters, the energizer can generate an alarm. Connectivity enables this information to be communicated beyond the fence itself, helping security personnel identify that an event has occurred

and determine the appropriate response.

Nemtek Connect allows compatible energizers to communicate via Bluetooth, Wi-Fi or Cellular GSM providing authorised users with remote access to their electric fence systems through the Nemtek Connect mobile app.

Users can monitor fence status, receive alarm information and interact with connected systems without needing to be physically positioned at the energizer.

## Centralising perimeter visibility

For larger security environments, the challenge is often not monitoring one fence, but managing multiple zones, sites and systems.

The Nemtek Connect Portal expands the Connect ecosystem through a web-based dashboard designed

to provide centralised visibility of connected electric fence installations.

Through the portal, security professionals can view multiple sites and fence zones from a single interface. It provides an overview of connected locations, making the platform particularly relevant to security companies, installers, estates, commercial and industrial operations responsible for geographically dispersed infrastructure.

Role-based access further supports this approach. Owner, advanced, basic and view-level permissions can be assigned according to the responsibilities of individual users, helping organisations control how different people interact with the system.

## Information that supports response

The value of connected perimeter security lies



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not simply in generating more information, but in making that information accessible and useful.

When a perimeter event occurs, visibility into the affected system or zone can assist security teams in assessing the situation and coordinating an appropriate

response. System information and analytics can also contribute to ongoing maintenance and management by providing greater insight into fence performance.

For installers and integrators, remote visibility can support a more proactive ser-

vice model. Instead of the relationship ending once an electric fence has been commissioned, connected technology creates opportunities for ongoing system support, monitoring and maintenance.

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# Recycling facility fires: FireDos targets early detection and prevention

*DoseTech introduces early fire detection and prevention systems from FireDos*

**By Diane Silcock**

RECYCLING facilities are particularly vulnerable to fires as small lithium-ion batteries hidden in products such as vapes, lighters and torches can enter waste streams undetected. Fires involving lithium-ion batteries, shredded waste, plastics or paper stock can develop rapidly, and even one additional minute may significantly influence the scale of property damage and business interruption. Recently reported in the UK media, The

Guardian stated that “the Environment Services Association (ESA), the trade body for waste management companies in the UK, said its members had reported 1,518 fires in the year to March 2026. At least 541 of these fires were directly attributed to lithium-ion batteries, the survey found. There were a further 216 battery fires in bin lorries”.

Commenting on this challenge that recycling facilities face, DoseTech MD, Mike Feldon, says, “Stockpiles of waste coming in is where the biggest problem lies. Lithium-ion batteries get caught up in it and get crushed and burst into fire. For a sprinkler system to activate, sufficient heat is required, therefore a fire has to be quite advanced before a sprinkler system comes into play.”

According to FireDos, which is represented by DoseTech in Southern Africa, detection alone does not stop a fire. Once an abnormal thermal event has been identified, every second that passes before suppression begins allows the incident to develop further. In high-risk industries such as waste recycling, paper production, biomass processing, logistics and alternative fuels, those seconds can determine whether an isolated hotspot becomes a catastrophic fire.



*For recycling facilities, the ability to detect abnormal heat and respond before flames develop can reduce the potential for major fire damage and operational disruption.*

guishing agent is used to prevent a fire,” says Feldon.

To achieve this, the solution offered by FireDos is a combination of thermal intelligence with fire suppression engineering. Thermal intelligence combines infrared sensing, advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, hotspot localisation and continuous risk assessment to understand

could be the source of a potential fire. The FireDos firefighting monitors automatically activate to cool down the precise hotspot to help prevent a fire.

For recycling facilities handling lithium-ion batteries, plastics, paper and other combustible materials, the ability to detect abnormal heat and respond before flames develop can reduce the potential for major fire damage and operational disruption.

DoseTech’s integrated approach using advanced FireDos technology and equipment can help recycling facilities in South Africa move from reactive firefighting to early detection and prevention, forming an important part of a facility’s broader industrial fire protection strategy.

“Fire suppression engineering encompasses monitor technology, hydraulic performance, suppression media, precision positioning and reliable system actuation.”

Reducing the time between detection and suppression is therefore becoming one of the industry’s most important engineering objectives. Instead of optimising individual products, the industry is beginning to integrate detection, intelligence and suppression

what is happening inside a protected facility. Fire suppression engineering encompasses monitor technology, hydraulic performance, suppression media, precision positioning and reliable system actuation.

The system uses an infrared thermal im-

Contact Mike Feldon at DoseTech: [mgf@dosetech.co.za](mailto:mgf@dosetech.co.za). Visit [www.dosetech.co.za](http://www.dosetech.co.za)



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Skills shortage pushes SA businesses to develop talent from within



Businesses are being urged to invest more in developing existing staff as skills shortages, AI and automation reshape workplace needs.

By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

BUSINESSES facing skills shortages may need to spend less time searching for the perfect hire and more time developing the people already on their payroll. That is the view of Marilize Putter, Chief Academic Officer at Milpark Education, who says many employers still favour “ready-made” candidates over building skills internally. “Recruitment will always have a role, but organisations also need to invest in the people they already have,” Putter says.

For employers, that raises a practical question: when does it make more sense to recruit, and when is it better to develop someone already in the business? Putter says internal development can also support staff engagement and retention, while giving businesses a way to build skills around their own needs.

AI changes what employers need

Artificial intelligence, automation and data-driven decision-making are changing job requirements across sectors. Putter says technical ability alone is no longer enough. “As AI and automation reshape roles, technical knowledge needs to be matched with critical thinking, creativity, prob-

lem-solving, adaptability and the ability to use technology responsibly,” she says. Milpark has added more digital content to its programmes, including data analytics, AI and cloud systems. Its BCom General, for example, includes a Digital Transformation module built around real-world business problems. Putter says the aim is not simply to teach the technology, but to show how it can be used to solve business problems. Milpark is also adding digital competencies to its accounting curriculum as automation and data play a bigger role in the profession. For businesses, the concern is cost. Hiring externally every time a new skill is needed can become expensive, especially when several companies are competing for the same people. Building skills internally gives employers another option and allows them to retain staff who already understand the organisation. Training must show a return Putter says businesses should be clear about what they want training to achieve before spending money on it. “Organisations can establish a baseline and track indicators such as productivity, quality, customer satisfaction, retention

or internal progression,” she says. “For us, the real measure is whether learning changes how people work and contributes to the organisation’s objectives.” For employers, that means looking beyond course attendance and certificates. Training should show up in the business, whether through better output, stronger service, improved retention or people moving into more senior roles. Qualifications still matter, but Putter says their value increases when employees can apply what they learn. Milpark’s BCom in Accounting, for example, uses an evolving business scenario that allows students to apply concepts from the start of the degree. Working students can also take what they learn back into their organisations while they study.

Business needs a say

Putter says education providers need stronger input from employers if courses are to keep pace with changing skills needs. “Industry engagement needs to go beyond consultation; it should help shape what is taught,” she says. Milpark works with various leading industry bodies for the accreditation of its courses, including the recently announced CIMA accreditation. Putter says engagement with employers and the insurance sector helped identify an underwriting skills shortage and shape more targeted learning. For SMEs, the challenge is often time. fTaking an employee out of the business for long periods can affect output, which is why shorter courses, CPD and online study can make more sense. These options allow staff to build skills while staying in the business and applying what they learn as they go. Recruitment will still be necessary, but employers may need to be more selective about when they buy skills from the market and when they build them from within.

<https://www.milpark.ac.za/>

Werner Pumps strengthens operator training



On-site training combines technical knowledge with real-life experience, resulting in operators who are more confident, capable and prepared for their daily work.

FOR operators using high-pressure jetting and vacuum equipment, knowing how a machine works is only part of the job. They also need to use it safely and effectively when faced with blocked sewer lines, difficult stormwater drains or challenging site conditions. That’s why Werner Pumps has expanded operator training beyond its factory, taking practical instruction directly to customer sites. According to Lazarus Dikgale, Certified Trainer at Werner Pumps, the aim is to give operators experience in the conditions they encounter in their daily work. “At the factory, we can demonstrate equipment operation in a controlled environment, but on site we are able to train operators in the exact conditions they face every day. This

helps operators gain confidence and develop the skills to operate the equipment safely and efficiently,” he says. From pre-start checks to practical operation Each training visit begins before the equipment is switched on. Dikgale demonstrates a pre-inspection and site-specific risk assessment, then takes operators through the daily inspections and pre-start checks they should perform themselves. Operators are taught correct operating procedures, preventative maintenance and equipment care, as well as the do’s and don’ts of using the unit. “The operators repeat every procedure themselves under supervision until they are confident and competent,” says Dikgale. The training then moves into practical work. This can include unblocking sewer lines, cleaning stormwater drainage systems and vacuum loading. Operators are also shown how to wash and clean the unit correctly after use, an important step in preventative maintenance. Learning in real-world conditions Different blockages, weather, dust and site-specific challenges all influence how equipment is used. Working through these conditions under supervision helps operators understand not only what to do, but how to

respond when the job does not go as expected. “Factory training is excellent for teaching theory and understanding the machine,” says Dikgale. “On-site training combines that technical knowledge with real-life experience, resulting in operators who are more confident, capable and prepared for their daily work.” One common issue is operators assuming that experience with an older machine means they can operate a newer one. Werner Pumps equipment continues to evolve, with changes in technology and operating systems. Previous experience is useful, Dikgale says, but should not replace learning the correct procedures for the unit being used. Protecting the equipment investment Correct operation and regular inspections can help operators identify minor problems before they develop into larger breakdowns. Better preventative maintenance can also improve reliability and extend the working life of the unit. For customers, this can translate into safer operation, greater productivity and less unnecessary downtime. Ultimately, Dikgale says, good equipment operation comes down to both personal responsibility and respect for the machine.

[www.wernerpumps.com](http://www.wernerpumps.com)

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# Why do people keep making the wrong choices?

By Chantelle Botha



MANAGING people often feels harder than it should, even when expectations are clear.

Why do people keep making the wrong choices even when they know what the right choices are?

As leaders, we focus heavily on what our people know. We train them and explain expectations, then wonder why knowing what to do doesn't always translate into doing it.

Knowing better is no guarantee of performance. Behaviour is influenced by several factors including how much capacity we have at any given moment. I'm exploring four neurobiological processes that influence choice:

### 1. Dopamine Dynamics

Our brains pull us towards immediate reward. Dopamine is the reward prediction

chemical which makes novel or immediately rewarding experiences particularly compelling.

Checking email can feel productive. Avoiding the difficult conversation can feel like relief. Doing easy tasks provides an immediate sense of completion.

We can train ourselves, and our people, to notice and value the future reward. When leaders design environments that reward the right things, they spend less time chasing the wrong ones.

### 2. The Thrill of Subversion

There is something strangely satisfying about breaking a rule. Subverting the standard can feel like an act of personal agency: I don't have to do what I'm being told.

What looks like resistance could simply be a need for autonomy.

If work is fully prescribed and monitored, following the rules can feel like surrendering agency. Give people autonomy over how they achieve the required outcome. Paint a picture and give them room to think.

### 3. Cognitive Fatigue

A study of sitting judges showed how decision-making can wear away as the day progresses. Our capacity to make conscious choices is not constant.

When we're tired or overloaded, the brain is more likely to choose what is familiar over what is effective. The solution isn't simply to tell people to "try harder", but to ask whether they have the capacity

required to complete the tasks ahead of them.

Protecting capacity means fewer errors to fix later.

### 4. The Power of Subconscious Suppression

Attempting to suppress an impulse can make it harder to ignore.

Try this: DON'T think about a pink elephant.

Did you notice how your brain immediately pictured one?

In trying not to think about it, your brain keeps checking if you are. This happens in workplaces too: "Don't make mistakes." "Don't forget the report."

Curiosity interrupts the loop. Awareness doesn't demand control, it opens a doorway through which choice becomes possible.

**As leaders, it's time to acknowledge that capacity matters.**

We cannot keep asking people to make better choices while ignoring the conditions under which those choices are made. We cannot demand creativity while removing autonomy. We cannot demand sustained performance while ignoring exhaustion. And we cannot assume that because someone knows better, they will automatically do better.

Capacity isn't another item on the leadership to-do list. It's the condition that makes every other item easier.

Neurobiological capacity and holistic wellness is performance infrastructure.

If we want people to do the hard things, make considered decisions and perform consistently, we have to support their capacity to do that.

Otherwise, managing people will always feel harder than it should.

### Ready to build capacity for better choices?

Phoenix equips highstakes leaders to navigate human complexity with conscious choice and relational integrity. Through keynotes, executive advisory, and transformational frameworks, we build the capacity that drives better decisions and sustained performance.

Contact me to build capacity for your team.



Chantelle Botha is an international speaker, author and Permission Catalyst, helping leaders turn shame into desire and desire into courage. To learn how better choices can change the way you live, love and lead, visit [phoenixconfidence.com](https://phoenixconfidence.com).

## HUMAN RESOURCES & RECRUITMENT

# Entrepreneurs are struggling: Why mental health belongs on the balance sheet

A survey of entrepreneurs found that 87.7% experience at least one mental health challenge in their daily lives. Anxiety was the most common, affecting 50.2%, followed by high stress (45.8%), financial worries (39.2%) and burnout (34.4%).

Peer-reviewed research comparing entrepreneurs with a matched group of non-entrepreneurs found that 72% of founders were affected by mental health conditions, either personally or through their immediate family.

For small businesses, when one person remains responsible for major financial, operational and staffing decisions, prolonged stress or burnout can become a vulnerability for the business.

Gugu Mjadu of Business Partners Limited says the findings reflect what South African business owners often describe in private. "SA's entrepreneurs have built substantial companies, and many of them will tell you how hard it was. They talk about lying awake over payroll and putting their personal savings on the line."

Insomnia and other sleep disorders affected 21.6% of the entrepreneurs surveyed, while 19.8% reported depression and 12.3% described feelings of hopelessness.

She says, "Each year, Entrepreneur of the Year® competition entrants show how closely a founder's personal and financial life can be-

come tied to the business."

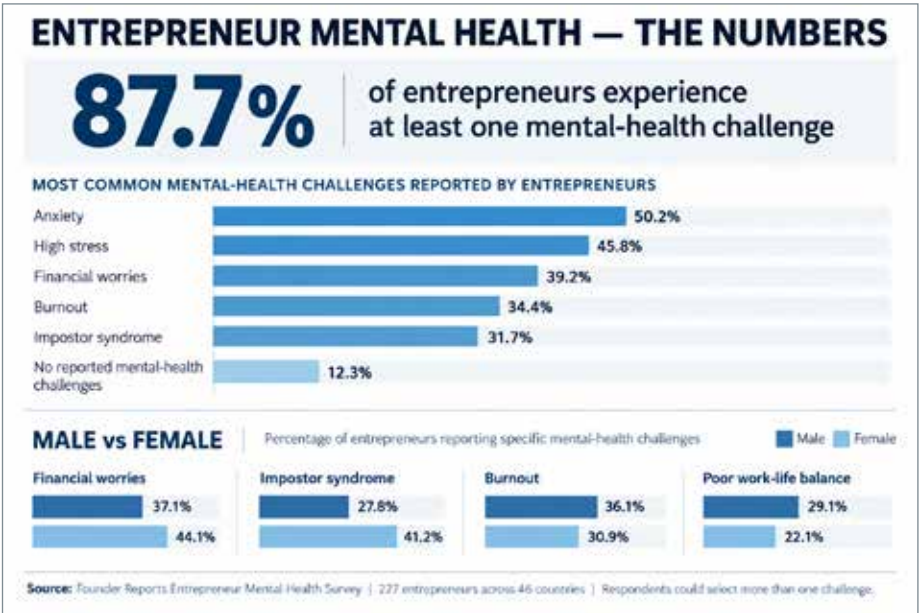
In many small businesses, the owner is the person employees and suppliers approach when something goes wrong. "There isn't always a co-founder, management team or board to share difficult decisions with," notes Mjadu.

This is why she urges founders to build support around themselves as their businesses develop. "A mentor who has faced the same decisions offers perspective."

Separating personal and business finances and, where possible, paying the founder a regular salary creates greater clarity between the needs of the business and those of the individual behind it.

Mjadu says founder wellbeing should be viewed as part of business sustainability rather than something separate from it. "When we assess entries for the competition, we look at whether a business can sustain itself and continue creating jobs over time. In one entry, a business owner calculated that the 15 people she employed were supporting 72 family members.

A company that depends entirely on one exhausted person is fragile. Decisions about cash flow, hiring and growth are difficult enough without one person carrying every problem alone. "A business owner talking about anxiety, stress or exhaustion shouldn't



automatically be seen as someone who isn't coping," she says.

For entrepreneurs who recognise themselves in the statistics, Mjadu's advice is not to wait until the pressure becomes unmanageable. "Speak to someone, whether that's another business owner who understands the

pressure, a mentor or, where needed, a mental health professional. The entrepreneurs who have come through some of the hardest periods often learnt that they didn't have to carry everything on their own."

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