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Blue Downs Rail Link - PRASA prioritises Cape Town rail expansion

The rail project will only begin phasing in once signalling contracts are awarded – a process CEO Hishaam Emeran says will take 18 to 24 months – following the recent reopening of the central line corridor, which had blocked progress since 2019.



By Larry Claasen

THE Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) says line expansion is one of its top priorities, which includes the creation of the Blue Downs Rail Link, a proposed 9,5km rail connection between the existing Khayelitsha and Bellville-Strand lines.

The proposed link will connect the large residential areas in the city directly to Bellville, the second-largest and most important work destination in Cape Town.

Currently, commuters travelling between these two nodes by rail must travel via Cape Town to connect between the Khayelitsha and Bellville lines.

PRASA CEO Hishaam Emeran said at the Rail Africa Expo in Sandton in July that the rail company has been stabilised and was now in a position to focus on expanding its rail network.

"We are pretty much at that point. The focus and attention is also switching to expansion. The Blue Downs Rail Link is one

of the priority projects we have at PRASA."

Sorting out its numerous governance issues, ageing equipment and poor maintenance has taken up a lot of Emeran's time, but now with most of these matters dealt with, he says the group is set up to do a much-needed line expansion.

"In 40 years, when it comes to the commuter rail network, we've only built 7km of railway line. That is 4km in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, and 3km in KwaMashu in Durban. That's all we've built."

A congested city

The creation of the Blue Downs Rail Link connection between Nollungile Station and Kuilsriver Station will go some way to alleviating Cape Town's traffic congestion. The city's population grew from 3,74 million to 4,77 million between 2011 and 2022, and was one of the reasons the 2025 INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard showed it rose from ninth to the sixth-worst in congestion among 942 urban areas analysed

worldwide.

This growth, along with the closure of the central line rail corridor – which connects Khayelitsha with the city's CBD and was out of service from November 2019 to February 2026 – compounded the congestion.

Signalling problems

Emeran said PRASA could not go ahead with the Blue Downs Rail Link until the central line rail corridor was reopened. Limited signal capacity in the Western Cape is the other issue holding up the development of the new rail link, but that was being addressed.

"The priorities for PRASA for now are to get the signalling and depot modernised. Once the signalling contracts are awarded for the Western Cape, we're talking 18 months to two years. And then you can start phasing in the Blue Downs Link," he said.

Emeran said PRASA was hesitant to develop the link with the existing signalling system, as it would mean it would be offering a limited service on the rail connection.

Improved signalling will allow more trains to run on the railway network at a greater frequency. The current signalling infrastructure caps speeds at 60km/h, despite PRASA's X'Trapolis Mega train sets being able to reach 120km/h.

The encroachment issue

Aside from improved signalling, the project also has to ensure that the land set aside for the rail corridor has not been encroached upon. This type of encroachment was why the central line rail corridor was closed, as during the pandemic, people built informal housing on the tracks.

"One thing, though, that is key when we talk about new corridors ... is the protection of the rail reserve. Because we often see these reserves that are meant for new lines are encroached upon. And that also delays the pro-

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Plastics SA celebrates 30 years of inspiring South Africans to take action against litter

South Africans invited to join the 30th Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week



EVERY piece of litter picked up, every recyclable separated and every person who chooses not to litter is proof that meaningful environmental change starts with individual action.

That is the message behind Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week 2026, taking place from 14-20 September 2026, during which South Africans are once again encouraged to roll up their sleeves and take pride in the places where they live, work, learn and play.

This year's campaign carries the inspiring theme, "It Starts With Me," reminding every citizen that creating a cleaner South Africa begins with individual action.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Plastics SA coordinating this national environmental awareness campaign, which has mobilised hundreds of thousands of volunteers to remove litter from neighbourhoods, rivers, beaches and public spaces while promoting recycling and responsible waste management.

Today, the initiative has grown into one of South Africa's largest collaborative environmental campaigns, supported by the country's Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs), including Petco, Polyco, The Southern African Vinyls Association (SAVA), EWASA, ...

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Blue Downs Rail Link - PRASA prioritises Cape Town rail expansion

Continued from p1

ject ... this is something that must be done on a daily and weekly basis," said Emeran.

The City of Cape Town, in its Integrated Human Settlements Five-Year Sector Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27, also

pointed out that setting aside land for the corridor would force thousands of people to find new homes.

"The railway line will cross through various settlements and four informal settlements,

namely Khayelitsha, two in Mfuleni, and one north of the proposed Wimbledon Station. Residents of the latter settlements, which number about 5,000 households, need to be relocated prior to the

commencement of construction."

New growth nodes

Despite this, the investment in the rail link will not only facilitate the transport

needs of the city's residents, but could also result in the addition of three stations – Mfuleni, Blue Downs and Wimbledon – which could drive urban development, with these stations acting as

growth nodes.

The City of Cape Town, in its Business Plan for the Assignment of Urban Rail report, published in 2017, said the link could support its Transit-Oriented Develop-

ment (TOD) Strategic Framework. TOD is a spatial planning initiative by the City of Cape Town aimed at integrating previously marginalised communities through reliable transport.

BMG's biodegradable chain lubricant improves industrial equipment performance

GO Chain Wax, from BMG's extensive lubrication range, is a biodegradable, wax-based, non-toxic and solvent-free lubricant, developed to meet the requirements of performance, environmental responsibility and cost efficiency in many industrial sectors.

The lubricant is designed for dependable use in chains and equipment operating in demanding industrial environments, as well as for motorcycle chains. The high wax content and ease of use make it a cost-effective and practical solution for multiple industries, from mining and manufacturing to agriculture and transport.

According to Basil Nair, BMG's National Product Manager, Lubricants, "The development of GO Chain Wax addresses two critical industry challenges: equipment reliability in harsh operating environments; and the need for environmental responsibility. This highly efficient product is biodegradable, non-flammable and solvent-free and meets occupational health and safety requirements in sectors where aerosols are restricted.

"GO Chain Wax is especially effective in dusty or contaminated conditions, like cement works, sawmills, fertiliser plants, mining and agriculture, where



GO Chain Wax, available from BMG, is designed for dependable use in chains and equipment operating in demanding industrial environments, as well as for motorcycle chains.

conventional oil-based lubricants tend to attract and hold dirt. The product, with a wax content of over 40% in a water-based emulsion, provides a thicker

inated mining operations can be extended from two weeks to over six weeks using **GO Chain Wax**. By reducing friction and preventing the formation

squeeze bottle, brush, feeder system or dipping, without the need for pre-cleaning.

Unlike conventional aerosol-based lubricants, it is non-hazardous and safe to use in areas where flammable materials or confined spaces prevent the use of solvent-based products. Excess material expelled during use hardens and falls away, minimising build-up and eliminating the need for degreasing between applications.

This product is suitable for most motor-driven chains and general lubrication applications not exceeding 70°C. Typical applications are in conveyors, forklifts, hoists, cranes, crawlers and woodworking machinery.

It is available from BMG in 500 millilitre, five litre, 25 litre and 180 litre containers, offering flexibility for both small-scale and large industrial users.

BMG specialists offer a technical advisory service on correct chain and lubrication selection, application and care.

For further information, contact: Basil Nair, National Product Manager – Lubricants, BMG, Telephone: +27 11 620 1601, Cell: +27 82 774 1402, Email: basiln@bmgworld.net, Website: www.bmgworld.net

Cold-store efficiency starts with the right reach truck

WORKING in sub-zero temperatures is challenging, especially in cold storage facilities where temperatures can drop to a frigid -30°C. For operators relying on reach trucks to move goods and maximise storage capacity, the demanding conditions place additional pressure on both equipment and people. Across South Africa, these challenges are faced daily in cold stores serving the food and beverage, pharmaceutical, agricultural and chemical industries.

In these highly controlled environments, equipment must deliver safe, efficient and reliable performance while operating within space-constrained and temperature-sensitive settings. Equally important are the ergonomic and comfort-enhancing features that help operators remain productive, comfortable and safe throughout their shifts.

CFAO Equipment Product Manager: Warehousing & Automation, Louis Fourie, says cold stores generally have similar material handling requirements to ambient stores. "The colder temperatures, however, make conditions far more demanding for both the people and the equipment operating in these environments."

He adds that cold store operating costs are in the region of two and a half times more than those of ambient stores. "This includes the increased labour cost because of the additional breaks needed by operators. Typically, operators are required to take a 10-minute break every hour, which amounts to a 17% increase in the labour cost."

Because of the high investment required for cold storage facilities, maximising storage density is essential.

This, in turn, requires equipment such as reach trucks that can operate in narrow aisles and access the highest storage locations while maintaining high residual capacities.

Choosing reach trucks that are specifically designed for cold store en-



Choosing reach trucks that are specifically designed for cold store environments help reduce operating costs.

vironments help reduce operating costs by minimising breakdowns, improving energy efficiency and increasing operational uptime. As they are purpose-built for freezer conditions, businesses spend less on repairs, replacement parts and operational delays.

Globally, reach trucks for frozen operations (as low as -30°C) represent about 10% of the market, while those for chilled operations (between zero and 5°C) represent at least 15% of the market. "The South African market reflects a similar trend," notes Fourie. "In the retail sector, chilled operations support the cold chain for fresh produce, dairy products and other perishables, while frozen operations cater for frozen foods."

While the standard reach trucks offered by CFAO Equipment's Toyota Material Handling division, can operate at temperatures down to -10°C, cold store protected trucks are specifically engineered for reliable performance in low-temperature environments.

Condensation is a common challenge for equipment operating in cold stores, particularly when moving between cold and ambient environments. Although it is recommended that reach trucks remain within the cold store during operation, this is not always feasible. For example, when using lead-acid batteries, charging must take place outside the cold store in higher ambient temperatures.

Fourie says the Toyota

BT Reflex range incorporates numerous features to protect it in cold environments. "All switches and electrical components are designed for use in cold store; the hydraulic system uses a specialised oil to withstand the cold; and all welded areas on exposed structures, such as the mast, fork carriage and reach carriage, are double checked during manufacture and quality control."

While reach trucks are available with an open or closed cabin, operators working in sub-zero temperatures benefit most from a heated, closed cabin. This enables them to work comfortably for longer periods, supporting higher productivity while reducing the risk of accidents.

In addition, a unique feature of the BT Reflex range is its tilting cabin, which is designed to enhance operator comfort and efficiency by tackling the physical strains, especially on the neck, of high-level stacking. Tilting the cabin back as the forks move up, creates a more natural viewing angle and better control over the load.

Fourie says with cold-chain operations dependent on consistency, speed and reliability, choosing the right reach truck is critical. "The right equipment helps ensure smooth warehouse operations, minimises disruptions, protects temperature-sensitive goods and improves overall efficiency."

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Overberg Rail Corridor - Sir Lowry's Pass gradient challenges freight revival

Funding model still being pieced together as Phase 2 continues.

By Larry Claasen

DEVELOPING the Overberg rail corridor into a busy freight route is still very much a work in progress, says Western Cape Mobility MEC Isaac Sileku. A year ago, the province unveiled the Overberg Freight Rail Business Case and Implementation Plan as a pilot project in Bredasdorp. The ambition was plain: to breathe new life into freight rail along one of the Western Cape's most important agricultural corridors.

Currently, the corridor shifts about 8,9 million tons of freight a year, but almost all of it goes by road. Trucks carry 99,8% of the load; rail accounts for just 0,2%.

The thinking behind the 211 km rail freight redevelopment corridor between Bellville and Bredasdorp is that, by reconnecting the Caledon agricultural region with the Belcon Inland Terminal and the Port of Cape Town, the province could triple the Western Cape's export

value by 2035. Belcon is a Transnet-owned inland logistics and cold-storage facility in Bellville with a dedicated 23 km rail line to the port. Link that to the Overberg corridor, and transport costs for farmers should fall, making it easier to get produce to export markets.

The pilot's immediate goal was to lay the groundwork for private sector-led freight rail operations and to test ways of revitalising branch lines through private participation. The longer-term goals are lofty, but one physical obstacle stands squarely in the way.

The mountain that bites back

Speaking on the sidelines of the African Rail Conference in Johannesburg in July, Sileku pointed to the steep gradient over the Hottentots Holland Mountains as a serious challenge. The rail route climbs from Somerset West to the Elgin valley via Sir Lowry's Pass on a gradient of 1-in-40. In simple terms, for

every 40 metres the train travels forward, it gains a metre in height, a 2,5% slope. For a railway, that is a severe incline, and it dramatically limits what a locomotive can haul.

Progress so far, and the road ahead

Despite the gradient, the project is moving forward. In February 2026 the Western Cape released its first findings from the Overberg Rail Business Case. Phase 1 had been completed, establishing the demand, service design, and financial viability for the corridor. Phase 2 is now under way. It covers infrastructure rehabilitation costing, refined estimates of road-maintenance savings, the inclusion of additional freight volumes, and the identification of viable funding and investment options.

Beyond the Overberg corridor, another project, the Prioritisation of Other Branch Lines, has been scoped. It will assess and rank additional Western Cape branch lines against set

criteria, pinpoint investable opportunities, and build a pipeline of bankable projects.

How the private sector can get involved

The province sees several ways for private companies to take part in its regional rail plans. They can partner on branch-line revitalisation through concession models that support long-term operational sustainability. They can collaborate on feasibility studies, business cases and pilot projects that advance the shift of freight from road to rail. And they can co-fund infrastructure upgrades that unlock rail access, improve reliability, and offer competitive logistics services.

The money question

Exactly how much all of this will cost has yet to be determined. The province says capital investment will be needed to rehabilitate inactive or underperforming branch lines, upgrade sidings, improve signalling and security, and build an



Western Cape Mobility MEC Isaac Sileku.

integrated terminal network that supports rail-friendly commodities.

Those needs, however, are still dependent on cost baselines that must be confirmed by the Transnet Rail Infrastructure Manager (TRIM) and on the final access regime for the B-network. Given Transnet's constrained balance sheet and the national push for structural reform, the project is expected to lean on a mix of blended finance, provincial support, climate-aligned funding, and private capital. The likely models include concessions, service contracts, and asset-maintenance partnerships, the province said.

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The Next Generation

Electra Mining Africa 2026 Exhibitor's Appointment Calendar

To secure your meet-and-greet exhibitor appointment, click on the exhibitor's e-mail address



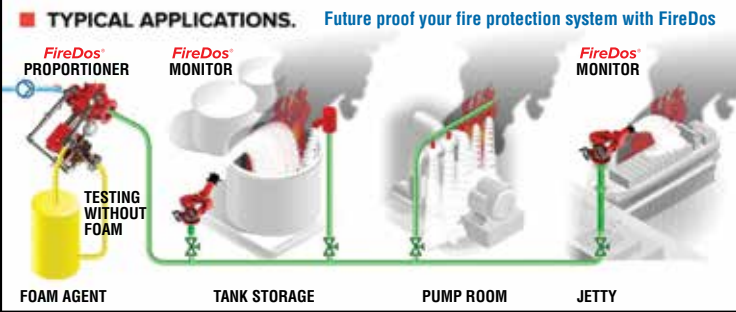
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Electra Mining Africa showcases the technologies shaping tomorrow's industry

AS industrial technologies continue to evolve at pace, mining, manufacturing and industrial businesses are under increasing pressure to improve productivity, strengthen safety, reduce operating costs and meet growing sustainability expectations. At the same time, rapid advances in digital technologies are transforming how organisations design, manage and optimise their operations. The focus has shifted from exploring technological possibilities to implementing practical solutions that deliver measurable business value.

As these technologies continue to mature, organisations are moving beyond stand-alone digital solutions towards connected, intelligent operations. Industrial automation, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, predictive maintenance, digital manufacturing and smart operational systems are increasing-

ly being integrated to improve decision-making, optimise asset performance, reduce downtime and improve safety in the workplace.

For industry professionals looking to explore the latest industrial technologies and solutions, Electra Mining Africa will once again bring together technology solution providers, equipment manufacturers, engineering specialists and industry experts under one roof. The exhibition provides a platform to explore the technologies shaping the next generation of industrial operations.

Taking place from 7-11 September at the Johannesburg Expo Centre in Nasrec, Electra Mining Africa will showcase thousands of products, technologies and services from more than 1,000 local and international exhibitors. From large-scale mining equipment and industrial machinery to automation systems, digital technologies,

power solutions and manufacturing innovations, the exhibition brings together a broad range of technologies, equipment and services for the mining, manufacturing and industrial sectors.

Attendees will also discover products such as pumps and valves, welding and fabrication equipment, safety solutions, personal protective equipment (PPE), tools, components and engineering services. The event provides opportunities to compare solutions, engage directly with technical experts and evaluate products designed for real operational challenges.

While the mining, automation, electrical, power, manufacturing and transport sectors each have their own specialised technologies and expertise, today's industrial operations increasingly rely on integrated solutions to improve productivity, efficiency and safety. Bringing these sectors together under one

roof enables visitors to better appreciate how these complementary capabilities support smarter industrial operations.

Many exhibitors will demonstrate products and technologies throughout the exhibition, but one of the greatest advantages is the opportunity to see equipment first-hand, compare solutions side by side and engage directly with the technical specialists and company representatives exhibiting them. Whether evaluating new machinery, intelligent monitoring systems, digital platforms or specialised industrial equipment, industry professionals can gain practical insights into how these technologies can be applied within their own operations.

Sustainability and local manufacturing also feature throughout the exhibition. As organisations work to improve energy efficiency, reduce environmental impact and strength-



en supply chain resilience, exhibitors will showcase solutions that support environmental, social and governance (ESG) objectives while maintaining operational performance.

Electra Mining Africa also offers opportunities for networking, collaboration and knowledge-sharing during the exhibition through seminars and technical workshops, and engaging with industry experts.

The Southern Afri-

can Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (SAIMM) hosted Seminar Theatre will present a free-to-attend programme covering technical developments and practical operational solutions; the Society for Automation Instrumentation Mechatronics and Computer Engineering (SAIMC) workshops will focus on latest advancements in automation and mechatronics; while WiMSA's Women

in Mining workshop will provide a platform for discussion around leadership, opportunity and professional growth. In addition, the Forklift Drivers Competition, LEEASA's two-day conference, and the SAIMEchE Skills & Career Hub will take place alongside the show.

For more information and visitor registration, visit www.electramining.co.za



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Heavy Lift aftermarket support: The real driver of heavy equipment uptime

FOR operations that use heavy industrial equipment, downtime is one of the most significant operational challenges. Unlike smaller assets that can be easily replaced or moved, heavy equipment is often highly specialised and costly to transport.

In many cases, moving a machine requires abnormal load permits and extensive logistical planning, making every hour of downtime a direct threat to productivity and profitability.

Lenny Naidoo, National Product Specialist for Heavy Lift, a division of CFAO Equipment, says for fleet operators working in demanding environments, purchasing equipment is no longer simply about acquiring a machine.

“Increasingly, the true value of an investment is determined by what happens after delivery such as the quality of service support, availability of parts, maintenance expertise and the ability to keep equipment operating safely and efficiently throughout its lifecycle”.

At the same time, safety compliance requirements continue to evolve across industries. Equipment owners are increasingly required to implement new technologies and safety enhancements to meet regulatory standards.

Recent examples include machine safety lighting systems that create a visible operating zone around equipment, helping workers maintain safe distances while equipment is in operation. Failure to comply with safety requirements can have serious consequences, including site shutdowns and operational delays.

Against this backdrop, aftermarket support has become a critical component of fleet management strategies. Equipment owners depend on reliable service partners to maximise uptime, ensure compliance and maintain consistent service levels for their own customers. Customer expectations have also changed significantly in recent years with advances in fleet management technology and telematics systems providing operators with real-time visibility into equipment performance and maintenance requirements. This access to data has increased the demand for responsive, informed support from equipment suppliers. Naidoo says successful aftermarket partnerships are built on a deep understanding of customer operations, market conditions and production requirements. “Effective support needs to extend beyond routine servicing to include 24/7

responsiveness, technical expertise, proactive maintenance planning and access to quality replacement parts.” A proactive approach to maintenance plays a particularly important role in preventing costly breakdowns. In addition to scheduled servicing, equipment inspections can identify potential

failures before they develop into major issues. This layered approach provides an additional safeguard against unexpected downtime and helps extend equipment life. The use of genuine, high-quality aftermarket parts is equally important as quality components contribute directly to equipment reliability,

operational safety and regulatory compliance. “In industries where a single safety-related incident can bring an entire site to a standstill, the value of reliable parts and support cannot be overstated,” adds Naidoo.

Data-driven maintenance planning is also transforming the way fleets are managed. By

analysing operational data and equipment utilisation patterns, maintenance schedules can be aligned with customer production requirements, allowing service activities to be completed with minimal disruption to operations.

Naidoo says Heavy Lift differentiates itself in the market through rapid

response times, strong OEM partnerships, highly trained technicians and a commitment to customer uptime. “On-going technical training, including annual programmes delivered by OEM specialists, ensures service teams remain equipped to support increasingly sophisticated equipment.”

As industries continue to prioritise productivity, safety and operational efficiency, aftermarket support has become a strategic advantage. “Ultimately, it is not only the quality of the machine that determines performance, but the strength of the support behind it,” concludes Naidoo.



Driving Sustainable Partnerships

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Plastics SA celebrates 30 years of inspiring South Africans to take action against litter

South Africans invited to join the 30th Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week



EVERY piece of litter picked up, every recyclable separated and every person who chooses not to litter is proof that meaningful environmental change starts with individual action. That is the message behind Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week 2026,

taking place from 14-20 September 2026, during which South Africans are once again encouraged to roll up their sleeves and take pride in the places where they live, work, learn and play. This year's campaign carries the inspiring

theme, "It Starts With Me," reminding every citizen that creating a cleaner South Africa begins with individual action. This year marks the 30th anniversary of Plastics SA coordinating this national environmental awareness

campaign, which has mobilised hundreds of thousands of volunteers to remove litter from neighbourhoods, rivers, beaches and public spaces while promoting recycling and responsible waste management. Today, the initiative has grown into one of South Africa's largest collaborative environmental campaigns, supported by the country's Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs), including Petco, Polyco, The Southern African Vinyls Association (SAVA), EWASA, MetPac-SA, Fibre Circle and The Glass Recycling Company, together with national and provincial government departments, municipalities, environmental NGOs, schools, community organisations and thousands of volunteers across the country.



This broad partnership demonstrates that keeping South Africa clean is a shared responsibility that transcends industries, organisations and communities. Throughout the month of September, clean-up activities will be taking place nationwide, with the main focus falling during Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week. To support these efforts, Plastics SA will once again distribute 500 000 of its iconic bright yellow clean-up bags to coordinators across South Africa, supporting thousands of volunteers taking part in organised clean-up activities across the country.

Explains Douw Steyn, Sustainability Director at Plastics SA: "The first Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week took place in 1996 and was built on the simple belief that ordinary South Africans could make an extraordinary difference simply by taking responsibility for the environment around them. Three decades

Beyond improving the appearance of neighbourhoods, these clean-ups help protect wildlife, prevent blocked stormwater systems, reduce pollution and promote the responsible use and recycling of valuable materials. Litter that is left unmanaged can be carried by wind and rain into stormwater systems, rivers and eventually the ocean, making community clean-ups one of the simplest yet most effective ways of preventing environmental pollution at source. Key dates during Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week 2026

- National River Clean-Up Day – Wednesday, 16 September 2026
- National Recycling Day South Africa – Friday, 18 September 2026
- International Coastal Clean-Up Day – Saturday, 19 September 2026
- World Clean-Up Day – Sunday, 20 September 2026

and inspire long-term behavioural change. "Cleaning up the environment is only the beginning. Every clean-up starts conversations about recycling, responsible consumption and preventing litter in the first place. When communities come together, they don't just remove waste. They build community pride, strengthen neighbourhoods and inspire others to do the same. Real environmental change starts with individual choices, and those choices spread from one person to another," says Steyn, highlighting that their active involvement in these campaigns is about far more than simply collecting litter. The organisers are encouraging schools, businesses, community organisations, municipalities, environmental groups and individuals to either participate in an existing clean-up or organise one of their own. Information about registered clean-up coordinators

Plastics | SA

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14-20 September 2026

National River Clean-Up Day
16 September 2026

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18 September 2026

International Coastal Clean-Up Day
19 September 2026

World Clean-Up Day
20 September 2026

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later, that vision is stronger than ever. Every clean-up, every volunteer and every yellow bag filled represents someone who chose to be part of the solution. That is exactly what this year's theme, 'It Starts With Me', is all about". For more than three decades, the local plastics industry has encouraged South Africans to become active environmental custodians by participating in clean-up initiatives that remove litter before it reaches rivers, streams, beaches and ultimately the ocean.

Plastics SA, in partnership with the Sustainable Seas Trust (SST) is South Africa's national coordinator for the International Coastal Clean-Up - the world's largest volunteer effort for ocean health. The organisation is also an active member of the Let's Do It Foundation (the movement behind World Clean-Up Day) which works alongside the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to mobilise millions of volunteers worldwide to remove litter, raise awareness about waste pollution

across South Africa is available at www.cleanupandrecycle.co.za and www.plasticsinfo.co.za. Members of the public are encouraged to contact the coordinator nearest to them to join an existing clean-up, or to register and organise one of their own. Whether you can spare an hour or an entire day, your contribution matters. Because a cleaner South Africa doesn't begin with someone else. It starts with me. It starts with you. It starts with all of us.

Bio360 Africa 2027 - SABIA confirms return after successful Johannesburg debut



By Larry Claasen

FOLLOWING the success of the inaugural Bio360 Africa exhibition and conference held in June, the Southern African Biogas Industry Association (SABIA) said it will host the event again next year.

Organised by Bioenergy Events and Services (BEES) in collaboration with SABIA, Bio360 ran from Wednesday, 17 June to Thursday, 18 June 2026, and was followed by specialised site tours on Friday, 19 June 2026.

"Landfill management has long been a worsening problem for the country's municipalities. The City of Cape Town"

The conference featured two parallel streams, including keynote addresses, technical presentations and expert panel discussions. The programme was designed to facilitate practical collaboration between stakeholders and to accelerate the deployment of viable bioenergy solutions across African markets.

Solutions for municipalities

SABIA secretary Gordon Ayres said Bio360 was a powerful catalyst

for the local biogas industry as a whole and was especially relevant to local municipalities, which are struggling to manage their landfills with the technological options available to them.

Landfill management has long been a worsening problem for the country's municipalities. The City of Cape Town, for instance, said in its 2023 Infrastructure Report that its Coastal Park landfill in Muizenberg was running out of capacity and that once it is full, all waste will have to be transported to its other landfill,

Vissershok near Table View.

Ayres said many municipalities had their eyes opened to proven solutions to their waste and energy challenges. They came across companies that were deriving biogas from landfills.

The conference served as a vital educational tool for risk-averse municipalities, allowing them to see that the technology is well-established and effective, rather than experimental.

"In Germany, this technology has been

in place since the late 1980s. Over 9,000 biogas plants in Germany operate at scale, at municipality scale."

"For players in the local biogas sector, Bio360 was a way to get decision-makers in government, finance, operations, and waste management into the same room."

Whereas before, municipal leaders thought there were no options available to them, they came away from Bio360 with an understanding that there was "light at the end of the tunnel."

A unifying event

For players in the local biogas sector, Bio360 was a way to get decision-makers in government, finance, operations, and waste management into the same room.

"It was really amazingly positive," said Ayres. "We've really seen a shot in the arm, a place where people have become much more aware that this is a real thing. This is a genuine industry."

As successful as Bio360 Africa was, Ayres said that looking ahead at the next iteration, he saw ways it could be made even bigger and better.

"From the management team's perspective, we had ideas. We really thought, for ex-

ample, next time we must really get more financial guys here."

Possible partnerships

But it is not just the local bioenergy sector that gained from Bio360. Ayres said the international companies coming to South Africa for the first time also saw opportunities in the country. They were impressed by the infrastructural quality and the manufacturing that's been done here. "I think that we will see some interesting partnerships developed here."

More than 60 exhibitors participated in

The leadership dial

Read your people before you read the strategy deck.

By Joni Peddie, CEO: Resilient People #BounceForward™

STRATEGY is 90% execution. And 90% of that execution is people.

You already know this. We all do. It's why we spend enormous amounts of time, energy and money putting our strategies together through workshops, offsites, decks refined until every arrow points the right way. But here's the question worth sitting with: what do we actually do, week in and week out, about observing the people who are meant to execute all of it?

Because a strategy doesn't fail on the PPT slides. It fails in the gap between what leadership plans and what the team actually executes.

"This isn't a box-ticking exercise at your weekly checkin, where you ask everyone how they're doing and half-listen to the answer."

Businesses are run by people and people only align with a strategy when they understand it and feel genuinely part of it. Yet as leaders, we plan, then spend half the year fighting fires and rewriting those plans because of macroeconomics, supply issues, new regulations – the list is endless. Somewhere in all that fire-fighting, the observing stops.

So, here's what I think we need more of as leaders navigating a world of unprecedented change and turbulence: we need to be mindfully present and really observe who needs what? This isn't a box-ticking exercise at your weekly checkin, where you ask everyone how they're doing and half-listen to the answer. It's observing the genuine differences in style and personality among your key players. (Using the Enneagram system can make this a lot easier.)

Being an inspiring, dynamic, change-fit leader means not just having the mental sharpness to read a market, but the same sharpness turned toward the humans standing in front of you.

We often forget that our people aren't one uniform mass of "resources." On any given team, we've probably got:

- The ones who need a two-minute nudge, not a



- The ones who need a clear boundary and something worth walking toward.

two-second question that saves a week of misreading someone.

3. Name the boundaries (and the carrot) out loud

Boundaries without a reason to move toward feel like punishment. Say both parts.

4. Build recognition into the routine, not the review

Quiet achievers won't ask. If you wait for the annual review to notice them, you've already waited too long.

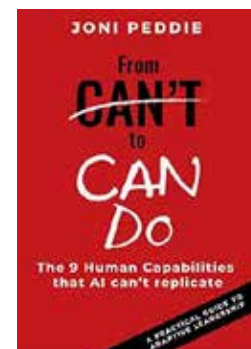
5. Check your read against theirs

Ask your team, occasionally, whether what you think they need matches what they actually need. The gap between the two is where the real leadership happens.

I know relationships and trust don't get built in one sitting. But the noticing can start today.

Who on your team needs what and have you actually asked them, or just assumed?

Build change-fit teams. #BounceForward™ together.



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Cape Town Tech exits - billion-rand deals cement city's VC leadership



SA SME Fund CEO Ketso Gordhan.

By Larry Claasen

CAPE TOWN is once again proving itself to be a hub for tech innovation in the country, as several of the Mother City's companies have been sold off for billions of rands.

card platform, Gyft, but the report estimated that it was sold for between \$50 million to \$100 million, which equates to around R800 million to R1,65 billion.

These latest exits build on the disposal of several technology

founders and strong technology capability. What has been less visible is the proof that investors can realise meaningful returns from backing these companies.

These studies show that the exit market is no longer theoretical. It is starting to happen, and it is happening across different pathways," says Gordhan.

The Western Cape's prominence in the funding of emerging businesses can also be seen in Wesgro's report, 'Venture Capital: A Strategic Investment Opportunity in Cape Town & the Western Cape' (July 2025).

The Wesgro report said, in 2023 alone 92 South African startups raised \$162 million through 184 deals supported by 72 active funds, driving the VC asset class to \$597,4 million, up 17,8% year-on-year.

"Over the period, the Western Cape drew more than half of South Africa's VC activity – 49% by value and 55,6% by deal volume – cementing its role as the heart of South Africa's start-up ecosystem."

"The VC sector was delivering as an investment class as it found that realised cash returns substantially exceeded invested capital."

Wesgro said Cape Town ranks among the top emerging start-up ecosystems worldwide, and that about a third of South Africa's fund manager offices are

in the province, with Cape Town and Stellenbosch attracting significant VC decision-making capacity and deal flow.

It also noted that the region had specialised clusters in fintech, edtech, agritech, healthtech, traveltech, and e-commerce that offer sector-specific growth opportunities and attract targeted investment.

SAVCA pointed out in its report that on the whole, the VC sector was starting to mature and was moving beyond isolated success stories - there was a 12-year gap between the Thawte and Fundamo exits - towards a more mature investment market capable of attracting greater institutional capital.

"The research also found that South African VC has delivered realised return characteristics broadly in line with those observed in more mature markets, including the US, the UK, Europe and India, providing growing evidence that venture capital is becoming an increasingly attractive asset class for long-term investors," it said

in its Exit & Performance Analysis.

The VC sector was delivering as an investment class as it found that realised cash returns substantially exceeded invested capital, with capital-weighted realised returns ranging from 2,01x to 2,45x invested capital across the scenarios analysed.

The accompanying Exit Case Studies Analysis found that the sampled exits delivered a median gross internal rate of return (IRR) of 54%, a median gross money-on-invested-capital (MOIC) of 3.5x, and a median valuation at exit of approximately R1,6 billion.

Collectively, the exited companies created more than 4,000 direct jobs, averaging around 230 South African jobs per company, highlighting the broader economic impact of South Africa's high-growth scale-ups.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Cut your tax bill in half: How the 12L Incentive rewards energy-saving in businesses

The little-known government incentive has already saved manufacturers R20 billion in taxes and slashed 20 megatons of CO₂ emissions.

By Larry Claasen

THE 12L Tax Incentive, designed to reward businesses for being energy efficient, can cut their tax bill in half, according to the South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI).

Speaking at the Manufacturing Indaba, SANEDI Senior Advisor for Measurement and Verification (M&V), Stalin Ndlovu, said the 12L Tax Incentive was a "carrot" meant to encourage cleaner production and energy efficiency within the industrial and manufacturing sectors.

"So the regulation itself incentivises good behaviour in terms of energy efficiency, whereby companies implement energy projects and demonstrate energy savings, and they are awarded 95c per kWh saved," Ndlovu said.

First introduced in 2008 as a response to the first load-shedding crisis, the incentive is now designed to work alongside the carbon tax to influence corporate behaviour. The carbon tax was introduced in June 2019 and charged polluters R120 per ton for CO₂ emissions.

The 12L Tax Incentive is administered by SANEDI, a state-owned government agency tasked with driving clean energy research, technology innovation, and energy efficiency.

In 2019, the incentive's first sunset clause was extended from January 2020 to December 2022. The second sunset clause was extended to December 2025 in February 2022, and the benefit has since been extended to 31 December 2030.

"We are on our third extension, so we have this benefit up until December 2030... manufacturers and industry players need to optimise and leverage this benefit while it still exists," Ndlovu said.

How the application process works

Businesses wanting to access the incentive must first register their project online. They must then



appoint a South African National Accreditation System (SANAS)-accredited M&V consultant to assess the energy savings of their project.

SANEDI reviews the baseline submission and either rejects or approves the project. The business then implements the energy-saving project and, after 12 months, has the M&V consultant compile a Performance Assessment report, which is submitted to SANEDI.

Once the Performance Assessment report is approved, a tax certificate is issued.

There is no charge to the business for SANEDI's administration, but it will have to pay the M&V consultant for its services.

"We don't charge anything. We are an entity of government. We are administering this incentive on behalf of the National Treasury and the South African Revenue Service, so there is no charge directly to us."

The financial impact can be significant

Ndlovu said a 1 million kWh saving could yield a tax deduction of about R950,000. This meant that a company which made a R2,000,000 profit would see its tax liability reduced by R256,500.

This, however, did not mean the company would receive a direct cash injection from the incentive.

"It is not money paid to your account, but it is money reduced from your taxable income."

Making a tangible difference

Though the 12L Tax Incentive does not make many headlines, it has made a notable difference in making the manufacturing sector

more energy efficient.

As at the end of June 2026, SANEDI had registered 183 projects, which collectively had generated 21 Tera-watt-hours (TWh), accessed R20 billion in incentives, and avoided 20 megatons of CO₂ emissions.

Ndlovu said the largest energy savings were seen in the paper and pulp, chemical, fertilisers, plastics and rubber, and refined petroleum sectors.

He gave the example of how Algoa Brick, the largest plaster brick (NFP) production facility in the Eastern Cape, benefited from the incentive when it replaced kiln burners, implemented Variable Speed Drive (VSD) technology, and installed waste heat recovery.

It saw a 10,33% reduction in energy consumption, saving 9,084,870 kWh, resulting in 1,506 tons of CO₂ emissions being mitigated.

For its part, retail group Woolworths deployed multiple energy-saving technologies, including LED lighting, CO₂ refrigeration, VSDs, and automated controls. Since 2015, it has saved 20,524,736 kWh, equating to approximately R35 million in electricity savings and reducing Scope 2 emissions by 19,293 tons of CO₂.

Ndlovu pointed out that businesses accessing the incentive not only benefit financially, but they also improve their operating performance.

"You will have benefits which not only have an energy impact. You will be producing more with less energy, see a reduction in cost, improve product quality, and also improve working conditions."

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Uptime is no longer a maintenance metric. It's a business strategy.



Thava Govender, CEO: Engineering, Babcock.

**By Thava Govender,
CEO: Engineering,
Babcock**

ACROSS Africa's industrial sector, there is a growing recognition that competitive advantage is increasingly determined by asset performance.

"The challenge is therefore not simply maintaining equipment, but extracting maximum value from existing assets while maintaining safety, reliability and operational performance."

In industries where margins are under pressure, capital investment remains constrained and production demands continue to increase, the organisations that consistently outperform are often not those with the newest facilities or equipment. They are the ones that achieve the highest levels of reliability, availability and operational uptime from the assets they already own.

For many years, maintenance was viewed primarily as a support function, necessary to keep equipment running but largely disconnected from broader business objectives. Today, that mindset is changing.

The reality is that every hour of unplanned downtime has consequences that extend far beyond the maintenance department. Lost production, delayed deliveries, increased operating costs, safety risks and reduced customer confidence can quickly turn a technical issue into a business challenge.

As a result, uptime is no longer simply a maintenance metric. It has become a strategic

business metric.

This shift is particularly relevant in Africa, where many industrial operators are balancing ageing infrastructure with the need to remain competitive in demanding local and global markets. Replacing major plant infrastructure is

operational discipline, condition monitoring, planned interventions and a deep understanding of how assets perform under real operating conditions.

Successful organisations recognise that reliability begins long before a failure occurs.

By identifying potential issues early, optimising maintenance strategies and implementing targeted upgrades where necessary, operators can significantly reduce the likelihood of unplanned outages while improving overall plant performance.

This proactive approach is becoming increasingly important as industries seek to maximise the return on existing investments. Rather than focusing solely on repairing equipment when problems arise, organisations are investing in strategies that improve asset performance throughout the entire lifecycle of the plant.

By identifying potential issues early, optimising maintenance strategies and implementing targeted upgrades where necessary, operators can significantly reduce the likelihood of unplanned outages

Through major outage programmes, maintenance interventions and lifecycle support projects at some of South Africa's most critical industrial facilities, Babcock has seen first-hand how reliability-focused engineering strategies can improve plant performance while reducing operational risk.

Projects at large-scale power generation, petrochemical and industrial facilities continue to demonstrate that disciplined plan-

ning, technical expertise and proactive asset management can deliver significant improvements in availability and reliability. In many cases, the greatest gains are achieved not through major capital expenditure, but through targeted interventions that optimise the performance of existing assets.

Importantly, the value of uptime extends beyond operational efficiency. Reliable assets support safer workplaces, improve environmental performance, enhance customer service and strengthen long-term business sustainability.

This is why leading organisations increasingly view uptime as a boardroom issue rather than a maintenance issue.

The companies that will succeed in the years ahead will not necessarily be those with the largest asset base. They will be those that extract the greatest value from the assets they already have.

At Babcock, we partner with customers across the energy, petrochemical, manufacturing, pulp and paper, sugar and mining sectors to improve reliability, optimise asset performance and support long-term operational resilience. As both an engineering services provider and OEM partner, we combine engineering expertise, lifecycle support and practical operational insight, to help organisations maximise uptime and extend the value of critical infra-

structure.

In an increasingly competitive industrial environment, uptime is no longer simply about keeping equipment running. It is about creating resilient operations capable of delivering consistent performance, managing risk and supporting sustainable growth.

Ultimately, reliability is not a maintenance objective. It is a business strategy.

<https://www.babcock.co.za/>

Public Procurement Act: What government suppliers must know now

By Adrian Ephraim

SOUTH Africa's public procurement system has just undergone its most significant overhaul since the dawn of democracy, and for the thousands of businesses that sell goods and services to government, the rules of engagement have fundamentally changed.

For years, the procurement system was a labyrinth, fragmented across the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, various National Treasury notes and instructions, and a patchwork of local municipal regulations. Now, the Public Procurement Act 28 of 2024 consolidates and replaces much of this complexity with a single primary law governing public procurement. President Ramaphosa signed the Act into law on 23 July 2024, and on 16 April 2026, the National Treasury published the draft General Public Procurement Regulations for public comment, the detailed operational requirements necessary for its

structure, with contracts categorised by estimated value, each tier triggering distinct mandatory requirements.

For contracts below R20 million, the procuring institution must set aside the bid exclusively for one or more identified categories of persons, including black people, black women, women, persons with disabilities, military veterans, youth, and small enterprises within a geographical area. To qualify for a set-aside, a bidder must demonstrate 100% ownership by members of that specific category.

Partial ownership is not enough.

Previously, set-asides were often treated as 'nice-to-have' suggestions. Under the 2024 Act, they become a central tool for economic rebalancing. If a tender is set aside for SMMEs, you are not competing against multinational corporations. That is good news for qualifying businesses. But the documentation requirements are correspondingly tighter.

curement reform must not create a system so rigid and centrally controlled that it becomes fertile ground for corruption. Procurement Performance Institute CEO Nduduzo Ngema called for a more decentralised and responsive support system that "strengthens capacity at provincial and municipal levels and improves accessibility for local businesses, deepens participation in township and rural economies, and creates a procurement ecosystem that is more inclusive and responsive to local development needs."

Adding further complexity, a Public Procurement Amendment Bill, B7-2026, is already in Parliament, proposing to repeal the provisions related to set-asides and prequalification criteria. The pace of change is such that businesses are being asked to adapt to a framework that is still being debated.

What Western Cape businesses need to do now

"Previously, set-asides were often treated as 'nice-to-have' suggestions. Under the 2024 Act, they become a central tool for economic rebalancing."

full implementation.

The Act is not yet fully operational, its commencement date is still to be proclaimed, but implementation is phased, with various sections coming into effect throughout 2025 and 2026. The direction of travel is unmistakable, and the window to prepare is closing faster than most business owners realise.

What has actually changed

Previously, procurement was guided by a patchwork of laws and circulars under the PFMA, MFMA, and PPPFA, making compliance cumbersome and uneven across entities. The new 34-page Act consolidates much of this complexity, though it references the earlier frameworks more than sixty times.

The most consequential change for businesses that tender is the restructuring of preferential procurement. The draft regulations introduce a tiered

A contested reform

The regulations are not without controversy. A joint stakeholder engagement involving the B-BBEE Commission and the Black Management Forum, presented to National Treasury this month, argued that public procurement should not merely be viewed as an administrative function, but as one of the state's most strategic instruments for driving economic transformation, industrialisation, job creation, localisation, and broad-based black economic empowerment.

B-BBEE Commissioner Tshediso Matona acknowledged the significance of the reforms: "The Public Procurement Act and the Draft General Public Procurement Regulations present an opportunity to strengthen governance, improve efficiency, and modernise procurement administration across the public sector." But stakeholders also warned that pro-

Procurement specialists advise a practical three-step approach: go beyond a basic BEE affidavit and ensure ownership structures are clearly documented with a current SARS status; specialise on two to three specific commodity codes on the Central Supplier Database rather than being a generalist supplier; and use the current consultation period on the draft regulations to understand which tier your typical contract value falls into.

MEC for Economic Development James Vos has noted that the City's Business Hub supplier development programmes have been "hugely successful, with many of the smaller vendors gaining insight into how they can position themselves to successfully compete in the bidding process."

South Africa's public procurement market, estimated at over R800 billion annually, remains one of the most significant commercial opportunities available to local businesses. The Act changes how that opportunity is accessed. For businesses that prepare now, it may also be more accessible than it has ever been.

Women's Month event: From Burnout to Brilliance



By Chantelle Botha

BURNOUT affects women across every stage of life and career, often long before they recognise the signs. This Women's Month, the *From Burnout to Brilliance* event brings together five women from three countries to explore why burnout isn't simply exhaustion.

Sleeping more, taking a holiday, and improving work-life balance matter. But for many women, exhaustion isn't the beginning

of burnout. It's the end result.

Long before a woman reaches breaking point, she has spent years abandoning herself. She says yes when she wants to say no. She carries responsibilities that were never hers alone. She postpones the things that bring her joy because everyone else's needs feel more urgent. She becomes so good at being everything for everyone else that she slowly loses connection with herself.

Eventually the body

speaks the truth the woman has been unable to. We call it burnout. We believe it can become the beginning of brilliance.

During Women's Month we celebrate women's resilience. And we should. But perhaps resilience isn't about carrying more. Perhaps it's about remembering that you matter too.

That's why *From Burnout to Brilliance* isn't another event about productivity or pushing through. It's an invitation to stop surviving and start reconnecting with the woman underneath all the roles she performs.

We're grateful to be joined by partners who share that belief. Morebo champions women's financial confidence and future security. Dermalogica reminds us that self-care isn't a luxury but an essential part of living well. And Cape Business News

continues to champion the conversations that inspire leadership, innovation and meaningful impact across South Africa.

"That's why *From Burnout to Brilliance* isn't another event about productivity or pushing through. It's an invitation to stop surviving and start reconnecting with the woman underneath all the roles she performs."

What makes this event different is that no single speaker has all the answers.

Instead, five women with very different stories explore one shared belief: brilliance isn't something you achieve by doing more. It's something you uncover when you stop abandoning yourself.

Our host, Erin Anastasopoulos, describes herself as the golden thread, weaving together conversations that remind every

woman she is the MC of her own life.

Claire Boscq understands what it means to rebuild after profound personal loss and

teaches women how to restore energy and flow rather than simply manage fatigue.

Joni Peddie has lived through burnout, grief and reinvention, and now helps people build resilience through sustainable habits instead of relentless pressure.

Carolyn Strauss knows what happens when success outgrows identity and shows women how to reinvent themselves without losing who they are.

And my work asks a different question altogether: *What would you want if you weren't ashamed of wanting it?* Because I spent 40 years believing shame had the final say. Like so many women, I learned that wanting more might cost me love and belonging.

Burnout isn't always solved by doing less. Most often healing begins when you become more honest about who you've stopped being.

If you've been running on empty, constantly giving to everyone else, or wondering where your spark has gone, perhaps this Women's Month isn't asking you to become stronger.

Brilliance isn't something you have to become. It's what remains when shame no longer gets the final word.

Whether you're investing in yourself or investing in the women who help shape your business, From Burnout to Brilliance is more than an event. It's an investment in energy, leadership and possibility. Individual tickets and group bookings are available, with special rates for teams. We invite you to join us this Women's Month.

Cape Town -
21 August 2026: <https://phoenixconfidence.com/event/b2bct/>
Johannesburg -
28 August 2026: <https://phoenixconfidence.com/event/b2b-jhb/>

W&RSETA and SPAR champion women empowerment through sport



Mpudi Maubane, Group PR, Communications & Sponsorships Manager at The SPAR Group

THE Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA) is proud to partner with SPAR South Africa for the 2026 SPAR National Netball Championships.

As one of the W&RSETA's valued stakeholder companies, SPAR continues to demonstrate that business has a critical role to play in developing talent, empowering communities and creating opportunities for young South Africans.

"For more than 25 years, SPAR has invested in growing women's netball in South Africa, from the SPAR Proteas and SPAR Baby Proteas to the senior and under-21 national championships. This commitment is about more than simply supporting competitions; it is about creating visibility, opportunity and stronger pathways for women and girls through sport.

During Women's Month, the SPAR National Netball Championships give us a powerful platform to showcase South Africa's talent while advancing our SPAR End Gender-Based Violence and End Period Poverty programmes, which directly address two very concerning issues facing South African women and girls. Together with participating partners such as the W&RSETA, we are committed to using the reach of netball to amplify women's voices and help build a safer, more equal society," said Mpudi Maubane, Group PR, Communications & Sponsorships Manager at The SPAR Group.

Sport has the power to inspire confidence, build resilience, develop leadership and foster teamwork -qualities that are equally essential in the modern workplace. Through this partnership, the W&RSETA aims to encourage young women to see themselves

not only as athletes, but as future professionals, entrepreneurs and leaders who can shape South Africa's retail sector and economy.

As the retail sector undergoes rapid transformation driven by technology, innovation and changing consumer expectations, the country needs a new generation of future-ready women equipped with the skills, confidence and leadership capabilities to thrive. The SPAR National Netball Championships provide an ideal platform to inspire girls to pursue education, skills development and career opportunities within one of South Africa's largest employment sectors.

Beyond the competition, the partnership seeks to expose the community to the diverse career pathways available across the Wholesale and Retail Sector, from store operations, logistics and supply chain management to merchandising, digital commerce, marketing, finance and executive leadership.

Through skills development, workplace learning and strategic partnerships, the W&RSETA is helping build a pipeline of capable women leaders who will drive innovation and inclusive economic growth.

The partnership also reinforces the W&RSETA's commitment to advancing gender equality and supporting national efforts to combat gender-based violence and femicide.

"Our partnership with SPAR demonstrates what can be achieved when industry and the skills development sector work together to invest in the next generation of women leaders," said W&RSETA Chief Executive Officer, Tom Mkhwanazi.

Visit www.spar.co.za or <https://thespargroup.com>

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S MONTH

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MultiChoice launches 'She Can Be' campaign in celebration of women

FOR this year's Women's month, MultiChoice launches its She Can Be campaign, rooted in recognising, supporting and platforming women across MultiChoice and its wider ecosystem by recognising women in the fullness of who they are, what they are building and the futures they are helping shape.



Lara Kantor, General Manager: Regulatory Affairs, MultiChoice.

The open-ended 'She Can Be' message speaks to the limitless

potential of women in the local and international business space, with MultiChoice continuing to platform women across leadership; wellness and workplace culture; broadcasting industry stewardship; anti-piracy and content protection; innovation and entrepreneurship, and the broader creative economy – now and beyond Women's Month.

She Can Be launches through fireside conversations-style vodcast, The Multi-Perspective Series. Over five weekly episodes, Claire Mawisa will engage in conversations with high-profile women across broadcast and content regulation, HR, engineering, technology and media. Through the wisdom gleaned from each speaker's years of experience in leadership, they will tackle the ways in which they embody 'She Can Be', how

fellow women may be inspired to do the same and how industries can foster environments where women are fully actualised.



MultiChoice Innovation Fund (MIF) beneficiaries - Limu co-founders Sifiso Danisa (CEO) and Sphumelelo Sibeko (Chief Marketing Officer) with Claire Mawisa.

The series includes contributions from internal MultiChoice leaders Lara Kantor, General Manager: Regulatory and Kezia Malinga, Head of

HR and representatives from three MultiChoice Innovation Fund (MIF) beneficiaries: Takalani Leago (Founder and CEO of Luvhona Engineering and Consulting Partners); Limu co-founders Sifiso Danisa (CEO) and Sphumelelo Sibeko (Chief Marketing Officer) and Fazila Bismilla, Director at FazMedia.

"She Can Be not only allows us to showcase the tangible outcomes of the opportunities MultiChoice continues to provide to women, but platforms the potential of the heights women can reach. When we spotlight a female filmmaker, a tech pioneer, or a sporting icon under the campaign banner, we are not just celebrating a person; we are showcasing the result of a culture that fosters growth and provides the tools for greatness," explains Itume-



MultiChoice Innovation Fund (MIF) beneficiary Director at FazMedia, Fazila Bismilla.

leng Thulare, Head of Corporate Affairs at MultiChoice.

"Women's Month needs to move beyond celebration into the delivery of perpetual, equal visibility, access, support and opportunity. As a storytelling giant, we have the unique opportunity and authority to continuously empower women in the media and tech landscape," says Thulare.

To affirm this commitment and in contin-

uation of the campaign, MultiChoice will also be lending its weight to September's annual Standard Bank Top Women Conference as a sponsor, leading 'She Can Be' into a broader platform spotlighting women entrepreneurs and innovators.

The first five episodes of the She Can Be Series can be viewed weekly, from Wednesday 5 August 2026, on MultiChoice's YouTube platform, and the conversation can be followed on social media.

- Thursday, 6 August 2026: She Can Be... a Guardian | Safeguarding the Story (Lara Kantor)
- Wednesday, 12 August 2026: She Can Be... Whole | Wellness in Corporate (Kezia Malinga)
- Wednesday, 19 August 2026: She Can Be... Limitless | Engineering New Frontiers (Takalani Leago)

- Wednesday 26 August 2026: She Can Be... Seen | Creating Visibility Where It Matters (Fazila Bismilla)



MultiChoice Innovation Fund (MIF) beneficiary-Takalani Leago (Founder and CEO of Luvhona Engineering and Consulting Partners).

- Wednesday, 2 September 2026: She Can Be... Connected | Building Access Through Technology (Sifiso Danisa & Sphumelelo Sibeko)

Nearly 95 000 women are driving South Africa's automotive industry forward

WOMEN's Month is an opportunity not only to celebrate the growing contribution women are making across South Africa's automotive industry, but also to acknowledge the work still required to ensure they have equal opportunities to succeed.

While traditionally regarded as a male-dominated sector, the automotive industry is steadily evolving as more women enter technical, management and leadership roles. New Motor Industry Bargaining Council (MIBCO) workforce data shows that women now make up almost 95 000 employees across South Africa's organised automotive retail aftermarket, representing approximately 30% of the industry's 316 945 employees. While this reflects steady progress, it also highlights the significant opportunity to grow female participation in technical, operational and leadership roles.

The Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI) believes this momentum must continue if the industry is to address critical skills shortages while building a workforce that better reflects the country it serves.

According to Nonhlanhla (Noni) Tshabalala, RMI HR

Manager and Transformation Director, creating opportunities for women is no longer simply a transformation imperative - it is essential for the future sustainability of the industry.

"Our industry is built around people. Every time a young artisan qualifies, a woman steps into a leadership position or a small business grows, we strengthen not only our sector but the South African economy," says Tshabalala.

"What inspires me most is seeing barriers come down. When innovation is matched with inclusion, we create an industry that is stronger, more resilient and better equipped for the future."

RMI National Director: Training, Louis van Huyssteen, says the latest workforce and apprenticeship data shows that while more women are entering the automotive skills pipeline, the industry's focus must now shift towards ensuring they complete their training, qualify and build sustainable careers.

"Women are already contributing across every level of the automotive aftermarket, from dealerships and independent workshops to collision repair businesses and

parts operations," says Van Huyssteen. "The next step is ensuring access translates into qualification, employment, leadership and lasting careers. Sustainable transformation is measured not simply by how many women enter the industry, but by how many remain, progress and succeed."

He says representation varies across different sectors. Women make up almost one-third of employees in vehicle dealerships, where they serve as sales professionals, service advisers, departmental managers and dealer principals. They are also increasingly establishing themselves as workshop owners, qualified technicians, diagnostic specialists, spray painters, panel beaters and vehicle damage quantifiers, proving that technical ability is defined by skill and commitment rather than gender.

South Africa continues to experience a shortage of qualified artisans, making it even more important to expand the industry's talent pipeline. National artisan development statistics for 2025/26 show that women accounted for approximately 38% of all artisan registrations where gender was reported. Within one an-

onymised RMI-linked apprenticeship cohort, women represented 60% of apprentices, demonstrating that targeted recruitment programmes can successfully attract women into technical trades that have historically been dominated by men.

"These figures are encouraging because they show that when industry intentionally creates opportunities, young women respond," says Van Huyssteen. "The real measure of success, however, is ensuring they receive meaningful workplace exposure, quality mentorship, practical experience and every opportunity to qualify and build long-term careers."

There has definitely been progress, says Tshabalala, but the industry cannot afford to become complacent.

"Across the RMI and our associations we are seeing more women entering the industry through targeted skills development, mentorship and leadership initiatives. Those programmes are making a real difference, but we still need to address barriers such as access to funding, career progression and outdated perceptions about gender roles."

One of the RMI's

flagship transformation initiatives, Project Dineo, demonstrates what can be achieved through collaboration. Developed in partnership with merSETA, the Department of Higher Education and Training, Harambee and the Presidency, the programme aims to train 300 young people over three years, with a deliberate target of ensuring at least 40% of participants are women, while also creating opportunities for youth with disabilities and previously disadvantaged communities.

Van Huyssteen says initiatives such as Project Dineo illustrate how deliberate recruitment strategies can reshape the future workforce, but success depends on creating workplaces where apprentices have access to proper mentoring, practical training, suitable equipment and equal opportunities to develop their technical skills.

The organisation's annual Women Driving Change initiative continues to provide an important platform to celebrate women across the automotive value chain, while creating visibility for female role models and encouraging more young women to consider careers in the industry.

Skills development

programmes, apprenticeships, artisan training and career awareness initiatives such as the MIWA Motor Mech Shows are also introducing more young women to technical careers that were once rarely considered.

Tshabalala believes visible role models are critical in changing perceptions.

"In industries like ours, recognition matters because it shows other women what is possible. When young women see successful technicians, workshop owners, engineers and executives, they begin to picture themselves following the same path. That visibility helps change mindsets and builds confidence."

She says the industry's greatest strength lies not only with those receiving awards or public recognition, but with the thousands of women whose professionalism and dedication keep businesses operating every day.

"Women across South Africa are making an impact in workshops, dealerships, testing stations, parts businesses and corporate offices every single day. Their contribution is helping reshape this industry, often quietly and without fanfare. Women's Month gives us an opportunity to recognise those



Nonhlanhla (Noni) Tshabalala, RMI HR Manager and Transformation Director.

achievements while inspiring the next generation."

Looking ahead, Tshabalala says meaningful transformation will require continued collaboration between industry, government and business.

"We need to keep creating practical pathways into the industry, strengthen mentorship, support women-owned businesses and ensure that inclusion becomes part of everyday business strategy rather than a once-a-year conversation," she says.

"The RMI is committed to helping build an automotive industry where talent, commitment and ability determine opportunity. That is how we will grow a stronger, more innovative and more inclusive sector for future generations."

Marsh rebrand strengthens risk advice in South Africa



Harry Doyne-Ditmas, Managing Director and Specialty Growth Leader at Marsh Africa.

By Kris van der Bijl

MARSH retired the Marsh McLennan brand on 14 January 2026, rebranding its broking arm to Marsh Risk.

"What will change is our connectedness as a firm," says Harry Doyne-Ditmas, Managing Director and Specialty Growth Leader at Marsh Africa, in an interview with Cape Business News.

"It doesn't affect the day-to-day engagement that we have with clients, but it does allow us to deliver our services more holistically and with an industry lens."

Under the new brand, after the transition period, Marsh Risk and Mercer will each go to market under Marsh. Marsh Risk continues to focus on broking and risk advisory, Guy Carpenter will become Marsh Re and Oliver Wyman who provide strategic consulting will go to market as Oliver Wyman, a Marsh business, while the operating unit Oliver Wyman Group will become Marsh Management Consulting.

What the Marsh rebrand changes for South African clients

For Western Cape businesses, Doyne-Ditmas says the first practical difference is a more integrated approach to managing risk.

Rather than treating its consulting, risk management and insurance broking businesses as separate services, Marsh is organising its teams around industries so clients receive appropriate strategic advice, risk analysis and insurance solutions through a single engagement.

He argues that delivering an integrated consulting approach alongside risk management and insurance broking will deliver greater impact and ultimately drive down costs.

"Marsh's marine practice works with many soft commodity exporters in the Western Cape."

"Transactional relationships with risk advisers have historically been the status quo," he says. "But that consulting-type engagement is getting more momentum as the complexities of risks confronting businesses are working themselves through."

Fertiliser supply risk for Western Cape exporters

Doyne-Ditmas notes that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, in addition to disrupting

energy supply globally, has disrupted 30% of the world's phosphate, a mineral key to fertiliser.

This impacts the supply and pricing of key commodities for the agricultural sector.

"A grower who is unable to secure enough fertiliser or misses a fertiliser application will see yields fall short of what the operation needs, unless it is able to adapt its strategy to deal with the supply constraints and higher input costs," says Doyne-Ditmas.

Doyne-Ditmas mentions that through taking an industry approach to the agricultural sector, Marsh is able to better pool its global knowledge to deliver solutions to support specific challenges, whether these be related to climate, changes in global regulation or interruption in supply chain.

Marsh's insurance offerings include political risk insurance to protect companies against actions by foreign governments and trade disruption insurance to protect exporters against losses

which can often take time and resources to fully understand. As such, the simplicity, transparency and fast payout of a parametric solution can be a real advantage over conventional products.

"The greatest thing these challenges in the Middle East have shown us," Doyne-Ditmas notes, "is just how interconnected the world now is. One commodity can impact several globally."

Marine cargo insurance gaps on the Cape route

Marsh's marine practice works with many soft commodity exporters in the Western Cape. According to Doyne-Ditmas, the most common weakness is that cargo is insured for less than its full value.

"It is important that the client insures their cargo for the full delivered cost including any duties and shipping costs," he says.

Policies written on invoice value leave exporters recovering less than the total cost of moving the goods. Freight costs on the Cape route have risen, which widens the shortfall.

Other common gaps include temporary storage cover and a poor understanding of policy exclusions.

Marsh negotiates policy wordings covering blocking and trapping, packing, concealed damage and difference in conditions for imports.

Where project cargo is involved, insurers typically require a pre-shipment survey covering the route, together with the stowage and securing of the cargo.

Marine risks remain elevated

Cargo insurance rates have changed little over the past 12 months, with a client's claims history remaining the primary driver of premiums.

The underlying risks, however, have evolved.

Doyne-Ditmas identifies fires on board vessels as a major concern for insurers, particularly those vessels carrying lithium-ion batteries and vehicles fitted with them.

He also points to rougher sea conditions and the rerouting of vessels around the Cape of Good Hope as factors contributing to containers being lost overboard.

Capital investment in South Africa hinges on policy certainty



Frank Blackmore, lead economist at KPMG, says businesses are placing greater emphasis on policy certainty, infrastructure and execution when making long-term capital investment decisions.

By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

BUSINESSES planning major capital investment projects in South Africa are looking well beyond the current economic cycle, placing greater emphasis on policy certainty, infrastructure and the long-term operating environment before deploying capital.

That is according to Frank Blackmore, lead economist at KPMG, who says major investment decisions are rarely driven by short-term movements in economic growth or business confidence.

"Capital investments are generally planned over many months or even years," Blackmore told Cape Business News.

"What investors need most is certainty and predictability."

He said businesses need confidence that the regulatory, policy and macroeconomic environment will remain stable enough over the life of a project to deliver an acceptable return.

For many companies, investment decisions now extend beyond financing costs. Boards are increasingly assessing whether South Africa's operating environment can support long-term growth.

Infrastructure remains a key factor in investment decisions

The country's infrastructure challenges weigh heavily on capital investment decisions across several sectors.

Blackmore said businesses are assessing how unreliable electricity and water supply, transport costs linked to rail

inefficiencies and deteriorating municipal infrastructure could affect long-term competitiveness.

"These factors can materially affect long-term competitiveness and profitability."

Businesses are also evaluating whether municipalities are investing in infrastructure or allowing existing assets to deteriorate. Those assessments increasingly form part of the due diligence process before capital is committed.

Alongside operational risks, boards continue to monitor policy and macroeconomic developments as they assess whether South Africa's investment environment is becoming more supportive.

Companies are deploying capital more selectively

While financing conditions have improved, businesses remain disciplined in how they allocate capital.

Blackmore said many companies are prioritising investment that strengthens existing operations instead of pursuing large expansion projects.

That includes replacing ageing assets, maintaining productive capacity and investing in projects that improve resilience through alternative energy, water security and logistics.

Companies are also favouring phased investment programmes and funding structures that preserve balance-sheet flexibility while allowing them to respond to changing market conditions.

The approach signals a growing focus on disciplined capital allocation as businesses balance growth opportunities with execution risk.

Energy and technology continue to attract investment

Investment continues in sectors where long-term demand and structural reforms support growth.

Blackmore identified energy, digital infrastructure, technology-enabled services and logistics as areas continuing to attract investment.

Energy security remains a key driver, while automation and digital transformation are increasingly viewed as essential investments that improve productivity, strengthen supply chains and enhance operational efficiency.

Blackmore said government infrastructure programmes and reforms in network industries could provide additional support for capital investment in South Africa over the medium term if implementation continues.

Strong execution will determine long-term returns

Blackmore said businesses often underestimate implementation risks while overestimating how quickly projects will generate returns.

Organisations should look beyond upfront capital costs and factor in lifecycle costs, operational readiness and changing market conditions before committing funds, he said.

Robust scenario planning and strong governance remain essential for projects expected to deliver returns over many years.

Artificial intelligence, automation, sustainability and supply-chain resilience are expected to remain key drivers of corporate investment over the next 12 to 24 months.

"Business leaders should recognise that capital investment is increasingly a strategic decision rather than simply a financial one," he said.

"The most successful investments will be those that enhance adaptability, support workforce transformation and position organisations to compete in a rapidly evolving economy."

Blackmore said South Africa continues to attract investment, but delivery will determine its long-term value.

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SME development in South Africa: Why government support keeps falling short

A report calls for a new Receivables Finance Act, a central registry and digital modernisation to unlock the estimated R350 billion SME funding gap.



Lebogang Machaba is one of the EntreprenHER programme beneficiaries who exhibited their businesses at the AWIEF Forum, highlighting pathways from training to market-ready enterprises. Photo courtesy of AWIEF.

By Larry Claasen

THE South African receivables finance market – the practice of businesses using unpaid customer invoices to get immediate cash – has more than doubled in less than a decade.

According to FCI, the global body for factoring and financing, it rose from €22,17 billion (R364,68 billion) in 2018 to €42,62 billion (R828,88 billion) in 2025.

But as much as the receivables finance market – commonly called factoring – has grown, it could grow even larger if it were adapted to facilitate the funding needs of SMEs.

The Building a modern receivables finance ecosystem in South Africa report, published by the Centre of Excellence in Financial Services pointed out that these figures reflect traditional factoring only, typically structured around large corporate-to-corporate facilities, with little direct SME benefit.

Putting the recommendations of the report into place could be a significant and much needed boost to SMEs, said Centre of Excellence executive director, Mark Brits.

“Receivables finance is underutilised in South Africa, with an SME funding gap estimated at R350 billion, and by learning from the best international practices adopted in other jurisdictions, we should be able to support our economy by simplifying access to finance.”

By selling off their

invoices, SMEs can quickly turn an asset into cash without incurring costs.

“In the absence of a contractually enforceable payment period, at no cost to the SME, receivables finance may be the only practical approach to resolving the cash conversion cycle for SMEs,” said Brits.

The report recommended changes to the receivables finance ecosystem like:

- Reform the legal environment to enable assignment while protecting buyer rights
- Establish a centralised, digital receivables and security-interest registry
- Enhance regulatory oversight through improved reporting and data visibility
- Support responsible growth and market conduct across all receivables finance models
- Promote a competitive, multi-product market that encourages innovation and lowers funding costs
- Strengthen supply chain resilience by improving SME liquidity

A new law

To achieve these recommendations, the report said a dedicated Receivables Finance Act aligned with international norms, like the EU Assignment of Claims Directive, the US UCC Article 9, and UNCITRAL standards should be introduced.

Such a law would explicitly enable the assignment of receivables, including public-sector

invoices, while embedding proportionate protections for buyers, providing clarity on notice, priority, dispute resolution, and dilution of claims.

Changes to the BA900

Expanding the BA900, a monthly regulatory return form mandated by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) that collects institutional and maturity breakdowns of assets and liabilities from all registered domestic banking institutions, can also boost the sector.

This type of expansion would improve visibility of SME exposures, segmentation of receivables portfolios, payment-behaviour trends, and asset-quality metrics, including disputes and invoice dilutions.

Modernisation is a must

It also said banks and financiers should adopt transparent, consistent practices, standardising cession processes, notice procedures, and dispute-management protocols in line with international norms. Digitisation and automation should be leveraged to reduce onboarding friction for SMEs and improve operational efficiency.

Corporate buy-in

Corporate buyers can also support reform by shifting from blanket anti-cession clauses – contractual clauses that prohibit a party from transferring or ceding rights without consent – to managed, conditional assignment pro-

visions.

Such changes would be underpinned by registry verification, standard dispute notification processes and confidentiality safeguards, ensuring that both buyer and supplier interests are protected.

A digital age

The report said fintechs and technology providers underpin the digital infrastructure required for modern receivables finance. They should develop systems that are fully compatible with a national receivables registry, provide seamless digital onboarding for SMEs, and enable automated verification for financiers.

Time to work together

It said also SMEs and their representative associations should take proactive steps to strengthen internal governance and mitigate operational risk. They should conduct contract reviews to identify anti-cession clauses and implementing basic governance processes can reduce errors, prevent unintentional multiple financing, and enhance overall financial discipline.

Industry associations can also play an important role in convening stakeholders and harmonising practices across the receivables finance ecosystem. They should develop industry-wide guidelines covering assignment notices, dispute processes, documentation standards, and supplier onboarding.

A golden opportunity

The country already possesses many of the building blocks required for success: strong financial institutions, a robust legal system and sophisticated supply chains.

What is missing, however, are the modern foundations – legal clarity, centralised transparency and aligned incentives – that enable receivables finance to scale safely, efficiently and inclusively.

South Africa investment outlook remains under pressure from structural risks

By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

SOUTH Africa's financial markets continue to perform well, but businesses remain cautious about committing capital to long-term investment projects.

That is the view of Efficient Group chief economist Dawie Roodt, who argues that the country's biggest constraint to higher levels of fixed investment is not the interest-rate cycle, but structural and policy-related risks that continue to influence boardroom decisions.

Roodt believes it is important to distinguish between South Africa's financial markets and investment in the productive economy.

“When you talk about financial instruments like the bond market and equities, that's actually quite good. We have very well-managed and solid financial markets,” he told Cape Business News.

"Interest rates are a very important factor, but relatively high interest rates are only temporary and are likely to come down"

Fixed capital formation, however, presents a different picture.

“When you talk about fixed capital, like factories and so on, that's certainly very bad.”

The comments come as South African companies continue to weigh capital allocation decisions against a backdrop of modest economic growth, infrastructure constraints and policy uncertainty. While the South African Reserve Bank recently left the repo rate unchanged at 7%, economists generally agree that monetary policy alone cannot drive a sustained recovery in private-sector investment.

Financial markets remain resilient

For Roodt, the reasons are structural rather than cyclical.

“The reason for that has to do with the wrong macroeconomic



Dawie Roodt, chief economist at Efficient Group, discusses the economic and policy factors influencing investment decisions in South Africa.

policies and things like crime and dysfunctional local authorities.”

For companies evaluating expansion projects, borrowing costs are only one part of the investment equation. Boards also assess policy certainty, regulatory stability, the reliability of municipal services, logistics infrastructure, energy security and the broader cost of doing business. Weaknesses across those areas increase project risk and can delay or redirect capital investment.

Although interest rates influence the cost of finance, Roodt does not regard them as the

argues that changes to monetary policy will have a limited impact if businesses remain uncertain about the country's long-term operating environment.

“Interest rates certainly affect business. In the short term, people are concerned about interest rates, but I'm not too concerned about the interest rate cycle.”

Sector outlook remains uneven

The divergence between financial markets and fixed investment is also evident across sectors.

Roodt identifies financial services as one of the sectors continuing to attract investment, reflecting confidence in South Africa's banking system and capital markets.

“The financial sector is a sector that people like to invest in because it's part of the service industry.”

Mining, despite its strategic importance to the economy, tells a different story.

South Africa remains one of the world's leading producers of several critical minerals, yet investment in new mining projects has been hampered by a combination of infrastructure bottlenecks, regulatory uncertainty and operational challenges.

“Mining is an obvious place where people would like to invest, but they can't because of all sorts of obstacles there.”

Political certainty key to investment

For Roodt, the dominant investment risk remains political.

“The major risk has to do with politics. It's about government that is incompetent and destructive.”

Structural risks outweigh interest rates

Instead, he identifies governance failures and policy uncertainty as the factors weighing most heavily on investor confidence.

“The negative factors have to do mostly with the wrong macroeconomic policies and, of course, incompetence and corruption. We've also got policies like expropriation.”

“So, we've got a bad government, in short.”

Roodt had expected the Reserve Bank to increase interest rates and acknowledges that the cost of capital affects investment decisions. However, he



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VEGA delivers accurate silo level measurement for South African breweries

With its radar sensors and vibrating switches, VEGA is addressing one of brewing's most overlooked operational challenges: accurate silo level measurement.

LONG before fermentation begins, a brewery's success is already being shaped in the silo. Barley storage directly affects efficiency, quality and worker safety, making reliable and accurate level mea-

surement essential for South Africa's growing brewing sector. The stakes are significant. South Africa's beer market, valued at around USD 3.5 billion, is projected to reach USD 6 billion by

2030, contributing an estimated R71 billion to the economy and supporting close to 249 000 jobs across agriculture, manufacturing and the logistics sector. Brewers know that silo storage presents its

own set of challenges. Filling generates dust that undermines sensor accuracy and creates safety hazards, while barley forms a shifting cone shape that makes accurate level readings difficult. Without re-

liable data, breweries risk overfilling, causing spillage and over-pressurisation, or underfilling, which wastes capacity and disrupts production. VEGA's instrumentation addresses this directly. The VEGA-

PULS 6X radar sensor delivers continuous, non-contact level measurement unaffected by dust, with no wear or clogging and a tightly focused antenna suited to tall or complex silo geometries. At the top of the fill zone, the VEGAVIB 63 vibrating rod switch prevents overflow and spillage, resisting build-up even with aerated or low-density barley. At the base, the VEGAVIB 61 provides low-level protection against complete draw-down, with a switching point that stays consistent across barley batches, with no recalibration required.

Together, these tools deliver measurable results: maximised silo capacity, reduced spillage and grain loss, improved workplace safety, and significantly less manual maintenance. Because the systems are straightforward to configure and hold performance steady across varying conditions, breweries can scale production without sacrificing predictability.

For brewers of every size, the barley silo plays a large role in performance and profitability. By combining VEGAPULS 6X radar with VEGAVIB 63 and VEGAVIB 61 vibrating switches, brewers gain the accuracy and reliability needed to run lean, safer operations. A win not just for individual breweries, but for the entire value chain that beer supports.

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Precision spray technology drives efficiency in food and beverage processing



WITH food and beverage manufacturers facing razor-thin margins, stricter food safety regulations and growing pressure to reduce water, chemical and product waste, precision spray technology is helping processors in food, beverage, and dairy sectors boost efficiency, ensure compliance and achieve sustainability goals.

In processing plants, where spray technology is used for everything from applying uniform coatings to snacks to sanitising dairy tanks, even minor inefficiencies can result in unnecessary water, chemical and coating waste, driving up operating costs and impacting the bottom line.

Precision in food processing

Consistency is key in food processing with operations depending on spray technology for applications ranging from coating and spray drying to cleaning, tank washing and lubrication.

A snack producer significantly reduced operating expenses through automated precision coating, while a sweets maker achieved substantial

annual savings by eliminating wasted release agent. Tank cleaning solutions have dramatically shortened cleaning times for food ingredient manufacturers, delivering major cost reductions in some cases.

Beverage sector gains

Beverage production shares many of these challenges. Today's spray technology can vastly improve operations in the beverage industry, from can coating and washing to bottle rinsing and drying, assuring quality, safety and productivity that are critical for high-speed lines where downtime equals lost revenue.

Dairy: Consistency meets compliance

Dairy processing presents unique hurdles: inconsistent powder quality in spray drying, mould risks in cheese, and water-heavy Clean-In-Place (CIP) systems.

Spray nozzles provide precise control over particle size, moisture content, and bulk density for consistent powdered milk products. Sanitary nozzles deliver powerful

CIP cleaning with significant water savings while meeting strict hygiene standards. For cheese, the right nozzles ensure targeted mould inhibitor application, reducing waste by up to 75% and extending shelf life.

Tightening of standards and meeting consumer demands

As regulators tighten standards and consumers demand greener practices, processors turning to more specialised technology gain a competitive edge. Whether reducing antimicrobial overuse, shortening cleaning cycles, or ensuring uniform coatings, even the smallest drops can drive the biggest operational wins.

Choosing the right spray technology partner

Spraying Systems Co. offers advanced solutions for coating applications, applying spray oils, release agents, and viscous coatings only where needed. Their AutoJet® systems, paired with PulsaJet® automatic nozzles and Precision Spray Control (PSC), deliver accurate, con-

sistent coverage with minimal overspray.

The company's experts help each customer achieve specific performance goals while placing highest priority on food safety.

With over 85 years of innovation, over 100 sales offices, and deep industry knowledge, Spraying Systems Co., represented in Southern African by Monitor Engineering, acts as an extension of their customers' teams. Sustainability assessments

help plants identify further savings, while "boots on the ground" experts provide localised support.

"Our unmatched product line ensures we have the right nozzles, spray headers, and automated systems," says Monitor Engineering's MD Grant Orsmond, "helping plants meet production demands while advancing sustainability. In food and beverage manufacturing, precision isn't a luxury, it's the new



baseline and Spraying Systems Co. is setting it," he says.

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SCAN ME



Bühler food processing technology drives food security and innovation in Southern Africa

By Diane Silcock

WITH food security, food waste and the need for more resilient local food production high on Southern Africa's agenda, food processing technology is playing an increasingly important role in strengthening regional food systems.

Bühler, a Swiss privately-owned company and a global leader in food and feed processing technology and solutions, combines innovation, local expertise, skills development and aftersales support to help customers improve efficiency, food safety and productivity across the food value chain.



Marco Sutter,
Managing Director,
Bühler Southern Africa.

Globally, two billion people consume foods every day that are made using Bühler processes, including flour, rice, pasta, chocolate,

biscuits, wafers, feed, coffee and beer. With more than 50 years in South Africa, the company has built long-standing relationships with customers across the region, supporting them throughout the lifecycle of their plants, from initial concept and project execution to modernisation, training and ongoing technical support.

"Bühler invests around five to six percent of its yearly revenue in research and development, which puts us at the forefront of our industry," says Marco Sutter, Managing Director, Bühler Southern Africa. "Our business is not only about the machines; it's about the process, food safety and security, digital products and the overall performance of manufacturing plants."

Building a resilient food chain

Building resilience in food systems from farm to fork starts with the raw material, Sutter says. "Our solutions can reduce post-harvest losses by around 30%. Our technology dries, cleans, and colour sorts, helping to remove contaminated raw material early in the process."

The aim is to maximise the value extracted from raw materials. "In wheat and maize

milling, for instance, we aim to get the most out of the kernel to achieve the best quality in the safest way," says Sutter. "Our digital products are key here, preventing cross-contamination and reducing product losses in the most energy efficient way."

Sutter believes that more local production of crops will help build a more resilient food chain across Southern Africa.

Data and AI are changing food processing

Automation and data are also changing how food processing plants are operated.

"What's changed is the degree of automation," says Sutter. "The key is data-driven interconnected and resource-driven sites."

Large milling groups increasingly compare energy use, yields, resource utilisation and overall equipment efficiency (OEE) across sites to benchmark performance globally. AI is also emerging as a decision-support tool. "It cannot replace a miller, but it can make more calculated decisions based on data."

Developing the skills needed for the future

Bühler works with the public and private sectors, local universities,

training institutes, and industry associations to identify industry challenges and strengthen the broader food processing ecosystem.

With a shortage of skilled workers both locally and globally, skills development is a priority. "Bühler is a role model when it comes to apprenticeship programmes," says Sutter. He notes that around 70% of Swiss school leavers enter a trade and believes South Africa could benefit from a stronger apprenticeship culture.

Making sustainability practical

Sutter believes sustainability gains greater traction when translated into practical outcomes, such as higher yields, less waste and better quality, together with lower water and power consumption. He adds that investing in operator skills is equally important, as advanced technology can only deliver results when it is properly operated and maintained.

For Bühler, the combination of technology, skills and local knowledge is central to building more resilient food systems across Southern Africa. Its local presence enables the company to understand regional challenges while draw-



The Bühler PastaSense in-line quality monitoring system for industrial pasta production.

ing on its Swiss R&D teams to develop solutions suited to the local environment.

Bühler will be exhib-

iting at the 36th IAOM Mideast and Africa Conference & Expo from 23 to 26 November in Cape Town. The

event is the premier annual gathering for the milling, grain and animal feed processing industry.

Proudly SA Local Wine Expo welcomes 3,000 visitors, with 83% women-led wine exhibitors

PROUDLY South African painted the town red when it hosted a resoundingly successful three-day wine exhibition, the Local Wine Expo, where 29 established and emerging

winemakers unveiled their finest local vintages to wine lovers and industry stakeholders alike.

About 3,000 wine enthusiasts attended the Local Wine Expo

over the three-day period at the Prison Break Market in northern Johannesburg, the traditional home of this annual wine-tasting extravaganza.

The Proudly South African Local Wine Expo is an annual event that provides a platform for local winemakers to showcase the finest selection of South African wines. From internationally acclaimed, award-winning wineries to exciting emerging brands winning over the palates of wine connoisseurs and casual drinkers alike, the expo celebrates the diversity and excellence of the local wine industry.

The exhibitors' wines were sampled and evaluated for possible inclusion on retail shelves and wine lists across the country.

"In addition to promoting wine appreciation and education, we are pleased that we can leverage this platform to generate significant business opportunities for exhibitors and create viable and sustainable commercial pathways for winemakers, thereby supporting the growth of the wine, tourism and hospitality sectors," said Eustace Mashimbye, CEO of Proudly South African.

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Modular water purification facility expands Aquazania's national footprint

SOUTH African water infrastructure company Aquazania has unveiled a containerised water purification and bottling facility as it invests in modular production to strengthen its national manufacturing footprint.

Known as Aquazania in a Box, the mobile facility is housed inside a standard 40-foot shipping container and was conceived, designed and engineered by the company's in-house team.

The development forms part of Aquazania's strategy to grow its national footprint while giving the business greater flexibility to establish production capacity where demand exists.

"This innovation solves multiple challenges at once," said Thomas Looser, chief executive officer of Aquazania.

"It allows us to expand into new regions faster, strengthen our ability to serve national customers, and significantly reduce operational risk. Instead of relying solely on traditional brick and mortar infrastructure, we have created a network of mobile production facilities that can operate wherever they are needed most."

Each Aquazania in a Box unit incorporates automated purification technology and remote monitoring systems that continuously track water quality throughout the production process. If water falls outside required specifications, the system automatically shuts down until the issue is resolved.

Expansion plans underway

Aquazania plans to deploy five Aquazania in a Box units before the end of the year as part of its national expansion strategy.

New production facilities are planned for Rustenburg and Witbank, while operations in Bloemfontein, Gqeberha and East London will be upgraded using the mobile production system.

Beyond bottled water production, Aquazania believes the technology has wider applications where reliable access to purified drinking water is essential.

Potential uses include large corporate campuses, mining operations, disaster relief initiatives and remote locations where conventional water infrastructure may be limited or unavailable.

"As a proudly South African company and a Level 1 B-BBEE contributor, we are committed to building solutions that not only benefit our customers but also contribute to local innovation, skills development and economic growth," Looser said.

With water security and infrastructure resilience becoming increasingly important

for both businesses and communities, modular production systems are expected to play a growing role in expanding access to reliable water treatment solutions.



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Tiger Brands invests R200m in Paarl culinary mega-site



From left: Roger Schierhout, Plant Manager Paarl Culinary; Dumo Mfini, MD Culinary Tiger Brands; Premier of the Western Cape, Alan Winde; Tjaart Kruger, CEO Tiger Brands; and Werna Oberholzer, Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer, Tiger Brands.

TIGER Brands has unveiled a significant transformation of its historic Paarl manufacturing facility in the Western Cape, turning the site, first established in 1903, into a state-of-the-art Culinary mega-site with three dedicated production plants.

The R200 million-plus investment in the mega-site is the first of the company's structural investments to go live as part of its strategic journey to drive growth.

"Investments such as the Paarl mega-site are about building a stronger Tiger Brands for the future. By modernising our manufacturing network and improving how we operate, we are creating a more efficient, resilient and competitive business that is better positioned for long-term growth. Just

as importantly, these investments help us to continue delivering the quality, value and affordability that South African consumers rely on every day," says Tjaart Kruger, CEO Tiger Brands.

lines have been installed to produce the 290g, 480g and 900g packs and other future innovation pack sizes.

"By bringing Mrs Ball's in-house, by securing our vinegar supply, and by improv-

our Growth for Jobs strategy, we have set out a bold roadmap to achieve breakout economic growth. This initiative is building a stronger job creation environment for companies such as Tiger Brands, aimed at making it as easy as possible to do business in our province."

The Paarl investment forms part of Tiger Brands' broader programme of structural investments aimed at strengthening the company's manufacturing base and delivering efficiencies to support its focus on driving affordability across its portfolio. As outlined in the company's in-

"Investments such as the Paarl mega-site are about building a stronger Tiger Brands for the future."

The mega-site now houses three distinct production capabilities, each designed to deliver meaningful improvements in supply security, cost efficiency and product quality.

The first major development is a dedicated vinegar production plant with a production capacity of three million litres per annum. Vinegar is a critical input for several key Tiger Brands products, including: Mrs Ball's Chutney, All Gold Tomato Sauce and Crosse & Blackwell Mayonnaise. The new plant secures a significant portion of the internal supply for these brands, eliminating complete dependency on external sources and ensuring stable production.

The second major development is the commissioning of Mrs Ball's Chutney production at the Paarl facility, with three production lines installed for the 470g glass pack, 375g, 800g, and 1.1kg PET packs, as well as the bulk 3kg and 6.25kg ranges. Previously produced by a third party, bringing production of the iconic South African brand under Tiger Brands' roof for the first time strengthens quality assurance and supply security.

The third development is the transition of jam packaging from cans to recyclable PET (polyethylene terephthalate) containers. Tiger Brands is the first in South Africa to make this transition in the Jam category. PET

ing our packaging, we are focused on driving growth and better meeting consumer needs with convenient packaging solutions. This reinforces our



From left: Roger Schierhout, Plant Manager Tiger Brands Paarl Culinary; Western Cape Premier, Alan Winde (middle) and Tjaart Kruger, CEO Tiger Brands, at the opening of the Tiger Brands Paarl Culinary mega-site in Paarl, Western Cape.

commitment to driving economic development, localisation, supply security and affordability of some of the country's most beloved food brands," says Dumo Mfini, MD Culinary, Tiger Brands.

terim results in June 2026, Tiger Brands is committed to investing approximately R1.5 billion annually in capital expenditure for the next three years, with peak investment reaching R2 billion.

The localisation of

"The mega-site now houses three distinct production capabilities, each designed to deliver meaningful improvements in supply security, cost efficiency and product quality."

Premier of the Western Cape, Alan Winde, attended the ribbon-cutting, saying, "The Western Cape Government's apex priority is nurturing strong, sustainable and inclusive economic growth to create jobs. Through plans such as

production at Paarl carries significant benefits for consumers and the economy. Raw materials are sourced from qualified local suppliers, supporting South African agriculture and contributing to local economic activity in the area.



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Food and beverage wastewater treatment: How DAF improves compliance and water reuse



Xylem's DAF systems are increasingly being used by F&B companies to remove solids and fats at the front end of treatment.

SOUTH Africa's food and beverage industry, worth more than US\$20 billion, depends on water at every stage of production, from preparation to cleaning. Managing wastewater, however, remains one of the sector's biggest operational and environmental challenges, increasing treatment costs, compliance obligations and pressure to recycle and reuse water efficiently.

F&B companies need a flexible and high-value water treatment solution that is also exceptionally effective at capturing organic and oily contaminants. A modern and modular solution called dissolved water floatation (DAF) provides the answer.

"Water touches every part of F&B production, and wastewater is one of the biggest operational risks the sector faces," says Chetan Mistry, Strategy and Marketing Manager, Xylem WSS (AMETI). "Effluent from food and beverage plants carries high levels of organic contaminants, which puts processors under pressure to meet compliance standards and limits their ability to reuse water. Removing this organic load is a constant challenge, and that's why DAF is gaining so much traction as a reliable, fast-acting treatment step, easy to deploy in existing systems."

Organic load: An environmental and compliance concern

Organic matter in water poses unique environmental, regulatory, and food safety risks. Wastewater from F&B operations contains high levels of biodegradable material and suspended solids. As microbes break down this organic load, they consume dissolved oxygen, which can degrade receiving environments, suffocating fish and other aquatic organisms.

ic organisms.

To manage the impact, manufacturers monitor key indicators such as biological oxygen demand (BOD), chemical oxygen demand (COD), total suspended solids (TSS), and fats, oils and grease (FOG). These parameters guide how water must be treated for reuse, irrigation, or safe discharge under national regulations.

"Organic effluent poses unique challenges to other types of contaminants, and organic material is ever-present across F&B processes. It's a constant challenge for companies that want to reuse water, recycle organic material from waste streams for by-products, or meet their environmental responsibilities," says Mistry.

The F&B sector manages multiple distinct waste streams, from ingredient-contact water to washdown and utility water, each requiring different treatment processes. This complexity is one of the reasons technologies such as DAF are increasingly used to remove solids and fats at the front end of treatment.

Managing organic matter with DAF

DAF systems are compact and modular that make them easier to install and operate, and they can be permanent or temporary, even rented.

The DAF floatation technique is also particularly effective at removing fats, oil, and grease, and fine solids and colloids. A DAF system dissolves air into water under pressure, then exposes the water to atmospheric pressure, creating microscopic bubbles that surface small and hydrophobic particles to be skimmed away.

This technique has several advantages:

- Removes FOG, solids and particulate-bound organics,

reducing downstream BOD/COD loads.

- Optimises chemical use by improving coagulation and flocculation efficiency.
- Contains few moving parts, resulting in relatively low maintenance requirements.
- Enables recovery of valuable solids or byproducts where applicable.

DAF systems are very productive on their own and when combined as a pretreatment ahead of other systems. A case study published in the National Library of Medicine journal found that DAF feeding a membrane system removed 92% of COD and 94% of total suspended solids. These results are compelling, says Mistry.

"DAF systems were first adopted in pulp and paper applications, and today they are used across many industries that manage high-strength wastewater. Those industries include F&B companies, where DAF is changing the value that they produce from their water streams," Mistry concludes.

To learn more, visit [Xylem](https://www.xylem.com).

SAFLA and AMIE SA sign MoC to advance South Africa's meat-trade logistics

THE South African Freight and Logistics Association (SAFLA) and the Association of Meat Importers and Exporters of South Africa (AMIE SA) have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to deepen collaboration on the logistics, port-operational and regulatory issues affecting South Africa's meat trade.

SAFLA and AMIE SA will use the MoC to identify recurring constraints, exchange evidence and develop practical, solutions-focused proposals for engagement with government agencies and stakeholders. The partnership will support constructive dialogue on port operations, border processes, veterinary and sanitary requirements, market access, rail and road connectivity, and supply-chain resilience.

A united voice to find practical solutions

"Logistics is fundamental to food security, trade competitiveness and economic growth," says Jonathan McDonald, vice chair-



man of SAFLA. "This MoC gives SAFLA and AMIE SA a stronger platform to speak with one informed voice, engage constructively with government agencies and work with them to resolve issues that affect cargo flow, costs and reliability. We are most effective when industry brings evidence, expertise and practical solutions to the table."

Paul Matthew, CEO of AMIE SA, adds that improved collaboration between industry and government is essential if South Africa is to turn trade opportunities into measurable growth. "We have the product, the capability and markets that are ready to buy South African meat," Matthew notes. "What is required is effective coordination:

clear communication between national and provincial authorities, efficient certification and inspection processes, and a willingness to bring the private sector into the solution."

For meat exporters, the ability to supply international customers consistently is crucial. Delays in market-access processes and veterinary approvals can cause buyers to source from alternative suppliers. Animal-health events remain a trade risk, underlining the importance of robust traceability, credible controls and internationally accepted approaches to regionalisation.

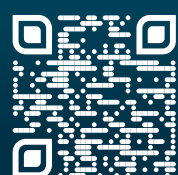
Matthew highlights that trade is not a zero-sum choice between exports and domestic affordability.

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Compressed air dryer dew point monitoring prevents costly contamination and downtime



A compressed air dryer can appear to be operating normally while delivering air with an unacceptable dew point, increasing the risk of contamination, production downtime, equipment damage and unnecessary energy costs. Yet while most plants have compressed air dryers installed as standalone units or built into the compressor, fewer than five percent have a dew point performance monitoring system in place.

A standard refrigeration air dryer is fitted with a thermal probe that measures the physical temperature of the compressed air and not the actual moisture content in ppm or °C Td of the compressed air leaving the air dryer.

These probes are basic fitments to most air dryers. They normally measure the actual physical temperature in the compressed air/Freon heat exchanger – the coldest part of the dryer. It does not reflect the actual pressure dew point of the compressed air being introduced into the factory. The dew point (compressed air dryness) of the compressor system can fluctuate significantly for a number of reasons.

Causes of dew point variation can be the result of many factors. These are summarised as:

- Compressed air volume overloading, thus exceeding the

dryer capacity and elevating dew points.

- Low inlet compressed air pressures; normally when < 7 bar G.
- A jammed condensate drain valve. Condensates are formed but are not drained.
- High inlet air temperatures and high compressor room temperatures, for example, above the dryer's standard selection criteria.
- Poor setting of gas expansion and/or a hot gas bypass valve.
- A bypass valve left open.
- Poorly designed inlet/outlet air piping to the dryer.

- The air dryer's refrigeration compressor is tripped on internal overload. Rarely is it ever reflected on a dryer's fascia display.
- An Eskom mains failure, with no auto restart system on the air dryer.

These faults can dramatically affect an air dryer's performance.

Most operators performing their shift walk-through will rarely spot the problem. And the majority will struggle to identify the cause of the fault. If one analyses the effect of any of the problems above, the results are a high-pressure dew point.

The solution is to fit an independent dew point monitor on the air line, after the air dryer, to highlight the high dew point problem. The S305 Suto Dew Point Monitor, from Artic Driers International, will sound a warning horn and flash large LED lights in the compressor room/area. The operator screen flashes its red backlight and the 4 ... 20 mA output can be used to connect this dew point monitor to a PLC or a SCADA system. The S305 unit also has volt-free contacts.

It is advisable for

every compressed air dryer to have an independent dew point monitor. The investment cost is very affordable, especially when compared to the cost of contamination to the compressed air system. There are also systems to monitor compressor oil vapour carry-over to the plant. The Suto S120 is for oil vapour and the S130 is a particle counter system. The S132 is an air quality system that includes all the outputs needed to monitor the system. The S305v is available in two measurement ranges: -60 to +20 °C Td and -20 to +50 °C Td.

Artic Driers International is a trusted supplier for compressed air treatment equipment. It now manufactures air dryers in South Africa, offering short lead times on local dryer builds. Other offerings include air leak detection, onsite mobile air quality measurement, pressure testing, air volume measurement, and also air dryer refurbishment, servicing, and hire. Special air dryer skid packages can be designed to the client's specifications.

<https://articdriers.co.za>

The Alizza fruit is here: Checkers' latest fresh produce innovation

SOUTH African shoppers can now get their hands on an award-winning citrus variety as Checkers brings The Alizza fruit exclusively to stores nationwide.

The premium fruit, which is naturally seedless, easy to peel and exceptionally juicy, is the latest addition to Checkers' growing portfolio of differentiated fresh-produce offerings designed to give consumers access to new and convenient eating experiences.

A hybrid of mandarin and pomelo, the Alizza fruit is distinguished by its generous size, vibrant golden-orange skin and fragrant aroma. Its combination of sweetness, juiciness and convenience makes it suitable for both fresh juicing and everyday snacking, from lunchboxes and post-workout refreshment to an on-the-go option.

The launch is the result of a partnership between Checkers and global fresh food company Amfresh Group, which has supported the commercial introduction of the next-generation citrus cultivar

in South Africa.

Developed through Amfresh's varietal innovation platform, Genesis Fresh, the Alizza fruit has twice received the International Taste Institute's highest 3-Star Superior Taste Award, most recently in 2026.

For Checkers, the exclusive launch reflects the retailer's broader strategy of using fresh-produce innovation to respond to changing consumer expectations around quality, health and convenience.

"We're constantly looking for ways to make healthy eating more exciting and accessible. The Alizza fruit is a fantastic addition to our citrus range, as it perfectly addresses the modern shopper's need for both premium quality and everyday convenience," says Quintin Paladin, GM of Freshmark, Checkers' fruit and vegetable procurement and distribution arm.

"Bringing a seedless, easy-to-peel fruit of this calibre to South African stores highlights our ongoing focus on varietal innovation," he adds.

Fresh produce as a platform for innovation

The Alizza fruit joins a growing selection of differentiated varieties offered by Checkers, including locally grown Pink Lemons and Finger Limes, as well as Spanish-grown Onix blood oranges.

These exclusive varieties allow retailers to introduce consumers to new fruit experiences while generating insights into purchasing behaviour, preferences and demand. Those insights can, in turn, help inform future crop development and create opportunities for local growers.

The model points to an increasingly sophisticated role for fresh-produce retail, where innovation is not limited to packaging or merchandising, but extends to the varieties being cultivated and brought to market.

For Amfresh, the partnership also highlights the potential for international varietal innovation to support South Africa's agricultural sector.

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Vodacom and MTN AI-ready data centres support enterprise AI growth



Inside Vodacom Cape Town Data Centre.

By Kris Van der Bijl

WESTERN Cape businesses are changing how they use telecom data centres, with demand moving towards AI-ready cloud environments, high-performance connectivity and cloud interconnection.

In response to questions posed by Cape Business News, MTN has confirmed that AI-enabled data centres are a strategic priority, although it declined to disclose where South African capacity will be built or when it will come online.

petitive value of a data centre in the network and cloud services surrounding it, alongside the physical facility itself.

AI-ready data centres support changing enterprise workloads

Vodacom's Cape-based facilities form part of a wider digital infrastructure ecosystem that supports cloud adoption and AI services through connectivity, managed services and multi-cloud capabilities.

The company said demand continues to

Investment in digital infrastructure continues, although the company did not disclose planned capacity additions at its Cape facilities.

Currently, the Vodacom Cape Town data centre is located in the Foreshore.

Vodacom declined to disclose compute procurement volumes or how workloads are divided between its own infrastructure and partner cloud platforms.

MTN confirms direction but leaves deployment questions open

At its capital markets day in June, MTN set a target to lift greenfield data centre capacity from 80MW to 150MW by 2030.

MTN's Ambition 2030 strategy identifies digital infrastructure as one of the group's strategic platforms and states that fibre and data centres have been combined because of "the exponential growth in digital workloads ... especially in light of the adoption of AI".

The company also states that it is building "the backbone of Africa's digital transfor-

mation" through "an integrated FibreCo and AI-enabled data centre strategy".

In its response to Cape Business News, MTN said it is progressing AI-ready digital infrastructure in South Africa and other priority markets to support cloud and digital service providers, enterprise customers, regulated sectors and its own operations.

Nigeria is also named in their data centre strategy.

MTN's response establishes the intended users of the infrastructure, although it leaves several operational questions unanswered.

MTN said the delivery model is determined by the requirements of each deployment, drawing on its own infrastructure capabilities alongside technology and delivery partnerships.

It did not disclose whether future South African AI capacity will include the Western Cape, when the first deployments are expected to enter service, or the scale of planned investment.

The company said investment decisions are guided by customer demand, commercial viability, technical requirements, partnership opportunities and enabling infrastructure.

It added that planning includes grid connectivity, backup capacity and renewable energy opportunities where appropriate.

Taken together, the responses indicate that enterprise AI is influencing how telecom operators position their data centres. That said, operators have provided limited detail on future capacity expansion, investment timelines and deployment plans.

Legrand helps businesses strengthen power continuity with high-efficiency UPS offering

LEGRAND SA's next-generation Keor DK single-phase Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) has been designed to deliver high levels of power continuity, efficiency and operational flexibility in commercial, technical and infrastructure installations, where consistent power quality is essential.

The Keor DK range, with ratings from 1 kVA to 20 kVA, is available in both tower and rack versions and for flexibility, this UPS operates with VRLA or lithium batteries.

This energy-efficient system has been developed around high-frequency PWM and on-line double-conversion technology. This design provides continuous isolation between the mains supply and connected loads, ensuring stable output during disturbances, like voltage fluctuations, transients and outages. A unity output power factor (kVA = kW) enables full real power availability, while advanced AC-AC technology achieves an efficiency of up to 96%, rising to 98% in advanced Eco Mode. These features contribute to lower operating costs, reduced energy losses and minimal environmental impact.

Keor DK offers users maximum adaptability for safe installation and dependable performance in different electrical infrastructures. Smaller models up to 10 kVA feature a convertible rack or tower design, while higher-capacity versions are available in 19-inch rack configurations up to 20 kVA. Multiple input and output wiring options allow the sys-



Legrand SA's next-generation Keor DK single-phase UPS delivers high levels of power continuity, efficiency and operational flexibility.

tem to accommodate single- or three-phase supplies, depending on site requirements.

For user-friendly operation, a colour touchscreen interface with an integrated gravity sensor, allows automatic screen rotation to suit specific requirements. Communication and monitoring capabilities include USB, RS232 and network interfaces, while embedded dry contacts and emergency power-off functionality integrates easily into other site safety and control systems. Parallel operation is supported on selected models, enabling redundancy or capacity expansion where higher availability is required.

Battery flexibility is another key design advantage. The Keor DK range is available with both VRLA and lithium battery technologies, with internal and external battery cabinet options.

High-capacity internal chargers enable faster recharge times, which is important, particularly in applications where rapid recovery after power events is

critical. The Keor DK system is also generator-compatible, ensuring continuity during extended outages.

In line with Legrand's global sustainability strategy, this UPS system has been developed using eco-design principles focused on efficiency, durability and recyclability. Environmental Product Declarations and life-cycle assessments form part of the company's product development process.

The Legrand team offers technical assistance, commissioning, testing and maintenance services throughout Southern Africa, to ensure operational continuity, reliability, safety and extended service life of every system.

The online site configurator www.ups.legrand.com assists with the selection of the correct UPS, by providing easy power selection and calculation of the necessary back-up time required.

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ebm-papst supplies axial and centrifugal fans.

Data centre cooling: How ebm-papst is improving energy efficiency

How intelligent fan technology is redefining energy-efficient data centre cooling

AS South Africa's digital economy continues to expand, data centres have become essential infrastructure supporting cloud computing, artificial intelligence, financial services and digital communications. With

growing demand comes a critical challenge: managing the heat generated by increasingly powerful IT equipment. Effective cooling is essential to maintain uptime, protect sensitive hardware and control operational costs.

Because no two data centres are identical, cooling systems must be tailored to specific operational requirements. Whether using in-row cooling, chillers, precision air-conditioning units or air handling

units (AHUs), every solution depends on reliable airflow management to maintain optimal temperature and humidity levels. Poor climate control can result in equipment failure, reduced performance

and costly downtime. Modern electronically commutated (EC) fan technology is helping operators improve cooling efficiency while reducing energy consumption. ebm-papst's AxiBlade and AxiEco axial fan ranges have been developed for the demanding conditions found in data centres. AxiBlade fans provide high power density with low noise emissions, making them suitable for facilities located near residential or commercial developments. AxiEco fans are designed for applications requiring higher pressure performance and specialised heat exchanger configurations.

For precision cooling systems, RadiPac centrifugal fans have set new standards in efficiency and performance. Their optimised impeller and outlet design minimises airflow losses, allowing cooling equipment to operate effectively at lower fan speeds. This reduces energy consumption, lowers operating costs and improves system efficiency across a broad operating range.

Reliability remains a priority in mission-critical environments. One of the most significant advances in fan technology is automatic resonance detection. By using integrated vibration sensors and intelligent control software, fans can identify and avoid critical operating speeds that may cause excessive vibration and premature bearing wear. These sensors also support condition monitoring and predictive maintenance, helping operators reduce unplanned downtime and improve maintenance planning.

Power quality is another important consideration. Variable-speed motors can generate electrical harmonics that place strain on power infrastructure. Integrated Active Power Factor Correction (aPFC) technology addresses this challenge by preventing harmonics from being generated, improving energy efficiency while reducing demands on transformers, UPS systems and backup generators.

As the South African data centre sector grows, operators must balance performance, reliability, efficiency and sustainability. Advanced fan technologies are proving to be a key enabler of this transition, helping facilities lower operating costs, improve resilience and support long-term environmental goals while ensuring uninterrupted digital services.






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When it comes to IT cooling and sensitive data, reliability and cost efficiency are key. the RadiPac provides valuable fan data and can be networked intelligently. Predictive maintenance means that you have complete planning reliability and can maximize the service life of the fans thanks to automatic resonance detection. With integrated 3-phase active PFC, you can also save on the grid design, with no need for external filtering. Save costs for the installation, operation and maintenance. We call this "Think Benchmark"

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Faster asset audits & interventions



Many data centres are increasing asset density to support growing demand for computational power, driven by AI and Internet of Things-applications. How are data centres managing all these physical assets?

HIGHER DATA CENTRE ASSET DENSITIES

More apps, more connectivity. Billions of people talking to each other via technology, joined by trillions of things. All that interaction needs computation. Add to that artificial intelligence algorithms that need gigantic, and growing, computational power. These trends have clear consequences for data centre infrastructure. They require more cables. More servers. More ports. Higher density racks. And larger server rooms in bigger data centres.

"How to maintain efficiency for moves, adds and changes on so many assets? That is a question we regularly hear when talking to data centre managers", said Linda Chochoy, Product Manager Market Development at Brady Corporation, a supplier of automated identification and data capture solutions. "How to keep physical asset audits feasible? How to keep the data centre's real world, tangible assets aligned with its DCIM or core asset databases?"

"A great, tried and tested way to manage overwhelming and growing numbers of assets is automation with machine readable serial numbers or barcodes. When scanned, they instantly generate digital data and can connect a specific physical asset to the right digital record. The barcode's advanced siblings, the datamatrix and QR-code, are even better suited for very high density asset environments. They allow data parsing, and enable multiple, automated and fast applications based on the same code. If that is not yet fast enough however, if you need asset identification hyperspeed, label-integrated UHF RFID technology is the nec plus ultra."

TINY QR OR DATAMATRIX CODES

"The advantage of barcodes is that, when scanned, they instantly generate a digital data trail. But let's face the truth: barcodes have been around since the 1960's. In data centres, they take too much space, require labels that are too large, and as a result they can hardly be used to identify each server port separately. Due to their size, they also need considerable cable flag labels to maintain code legibility. All those large flags can create a big mess, certainly in high density racking."

"Enter the QR-code or industrial data matrix code. Smaller, able to include more information, these codes can be printed in millimeters while maintaining scanner readability. They can fit tiny cable flags and every port in high density servers, routers and switches."

"To read these codes, classic retail scanners do not suffice. They require high accuracy image capture devices that can include near-field and far-field technology, or a combination of both. Advanced Linux-based scanners exist that feature native JavaScript to enable hundreds of custom, user-defined applications. To create labels for these applications, using tiny, high-resolution datamatrix and QR-codes, high accuracy and high precision label printers are needed that can print 203 or even 600 dots per inch (DPI). Printers can be set up to print asset codes straight from your systems as a QR- or datamatrix code on reliable, machine readable labels."

THE IMPORTANCE OF TAG AND LABEL RELIABILITY

Some data centre managers have become wary of using labels because of negative experiences. Labels take time to create and apply, and when they are about to pay off, lower quality labels can be found at the bottom of the server rack.

"Labels that cannot stay attached serve no purpose at all. A data centre is a challenging environment that requires professional, quality labels. Server-generated heat is detrimental to lesser label adhesives. In addition, curved cable surfaces require specialised label materials. Brady has researched and developed a range of professional labels made out of nylon cloth and advanced polymers. These labels can keep all data centre cables and components identified. Laboratory-testing, using internationally accepted FINAT- and ASTM-methods indicate they stay attached and remain legible for up to 10 years in data centre environments. That's more than the lifecycle of most data centre assets."

5 OUTCOMES FOR WELL IDENTIFIED DATA CENTRES

A well-identified data centre has every cable identified, including all fibre, UTP, power and other utility cables. All server, router and switch ports will also have a unique, coded identity. This enables DCIM or system updates with just two 1 second code scans: scan cable, scan port.

"Well-identified data centres enable 5 considerable benefits:

- ❗ More accurate and faster moves, adds and changes (MACs), through faster identification of the right assets, with greatly reduced risk of unplugging the wrong cable
- ❗ Faster troubleshooting with clear identification on every cable and asset
- ❗ Faster rack and server room audits by scanning physical assets against digital infrastructure records or DCIM-data
- ❗ Faster, feasible data centre inventory checks
- ❗ More smoothless server rack commissioning and decommissioning

Next to cable and port identification, many higher tier data centres also label transformers, pipes and other infrastructure to increase the speed and precision of a wider range of interventions that may be required to protect uptime and high service levels."

RFID: A PHYSICAL ASSET RADAR

To achieve even higher asset identification speed, RFID technology is the top of the line. Instead of scanning each asset's code, RFID readers will detect all assets in range in a single scan. Passive, UHF RFID labels do not require batteries and feature thin, integrated antennas that provide up to 15 metres read range in open spaces.

"Brady offers specialised on-metal RFID labels that circumvent known radiosignal distortion from metal surfaces. Read range in datacentres is about 3-4 metres, more than enough to very quickly confirm the presence of labelled assets in multiple server racks in a couple of seconds."

"The technology works like radar, in a sense that the labels bounce off radiosignals emitted from UHF RFID readers. A portable RFID reader enables users to select a detected asset's ID number on-screen and to write to that tag or to its record. Through signal strength variation detection, it is even possible to home in on a selected asset with on-board visuals and sounds."

"There is more. If fixed RFID readers are placed at server room entrances, every labelled asset moving in or out can be detected automatically, along with its movement direction. This makes it possible for data centres to automatically update server room inventory lists, to sound a buzzer or send a text message when the wrong asset moves in or out, and to enable server room inventory checks and audits in a minimum of time."

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Linda Chochoy works as Product Manager Market Development for Brady Europe, Middle East and Africa. She analyses customer needs, interviews data centre managers, cable harness production managers and electronics production managers to capture emerging business needs and support Brady's product development.



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The R1.5 billion owed to solar producers, and the plan to pay it by August



By Adrian Ephraim

INDEPENDENT power producers (IPPs) whose solar generation has been curtailed to protect South Africa's electricity grid will now receive the full estimated value of their

compensation upfront, as the National Transmission Company South Africa (NTCSA) moves to clear R1.5 billion in outstanding claims by the end of August.

The new payment mechanism aims to ease mounting cash flow

pressures on renewable energy companies, particularly B-BBEE equity partners, who have been hardest hit by delays.

The approach was announced during a bilateral meeting between NTCSA, its Central Purchasing Agency and the

South African Photovoltaic Industry Association (SAPVIA) on 22 July. The discussions followed a sharp rise in curtailment instructions, which increased from around 100 a month earlier this year to more than 1,000, creating a backlog of com-

pensation claims.

In a statement on 24 July, NTCSA said outstanding claims had fallen from about R2 billion in mid-June to R1.5 billion, with approximately 300 claims already approved under the new process. The company, which manages power purchase agreements covering 117 projects with a combined capacity of 10,083MW, pays renewable producers around R45 billion annually.

"Delayed curtailment compensation has placed significant financial strain on IPPs, and B-BBEE equity partners have been disproportionately affected because they carry the least headroom to absorb a payment delay," said SAPVIA CEO Dr Rethabile Melamu.

Faster payments

NTCSA has introduced a two-step provisional payment system that operates within existing power purchase agreements. Operational data is now sourced directly from the system operator's SCADA control systems rather than regional distribution teams, significantly reducing verification delays.

Under the revised process, producers receive the full estimated value of their claims before technical verification is completed, with only minor adjustments expected where necessary.

Why solar is being curtailed

Curtailment has increased because the national grid must remain balanced during daylight hours. Coal-fired power stations cannot be rapidly switched on and off, meaning they continue operating at minimum stable levels while flexible generation is adjusted first. When excess solar generation remains, the system operator instructs renewable producers to reduce output.

SAPVIA says that curtailment is common in electricity systems with high renewable penetration. The priority, it says, is ensuring producers are compensated quickly and predictably.

"Faster payment addresses the symptom. The structural answer is to build a system that can absorb midday solar rather than waste it," Melamu said.

NTCSA and SAPVIA have agreed to meet monthly to monitor claims, improve grid management and accelerate measures such as battery storage deployment and market incentives that encourage greater daytime electricity use.

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Condra contest finds oldest working crane still operating after 48 years

SHANE Cox and Lizelle Baillie of Heavy Duty Lifting have won Condra's competition to find the company's oldest working crane. They entered a 10-ton, double-girder electric overhead travelling crane that was manufactured at Condra's Elsburg factory 48 years ago and is still operating today.

Baillie and Cox, who carry out all service and maintenance on this particular machine, identified their veteran crane from a database of serviced installations and it was determined as still in use. Verification by Condra confirmed the entry as factory Works Order 1935, the oldest of all submitted entries.

"The idea was to showcase product durability and lower lifetime cost..."

Second place went to a crane commissioned shortly after: Works Order 1970.

Condra's contest ran for eight months ahead of their Diamond Jubilee celebrations held in July. The idea was to showcase product durability and lower lifetime cost, which Condra claimed to be the result of robust manufacture and crane design more carefully aligned to each application when compared with Far Eastern imports. The contest was open to hoists, new cranes and refurbished machines.

Condra received the winners at an open day marking the company's 60th birthday. One hundred and eighty-five guests attended, among them delegates to a complementary event, the Lifting Equipment Engineering Association of South Africa (LEEASA) conference.

Several suppliers took the opportunity to display products to groups touring the Condra factory.

One of the entries to the contest was a refurbished Condra machine manufactured and delivered more than 40 years ago.

A speech highlighted the viability of upgrading veteran cranes to modern, fit-for-purpose standard, and also emphasised the contribution made to machine efficiency by spare parts availability and regular servicing. Condra spares are manufactured locally, obviating the some-

times-lengthy lead times associated with imported parts.

Condra was founded in 1966, moving to its current 9 000m² Gosforth Park factory in 2008. The 22 000m² site allows for ample

expansion. The group comprises eight entities across South Africa, Chile and Bulgaria, with a focus on the design and manufacture of cranes up to and including heavy duty Class 4.

There is an emphasis on product quality and reliability as the foundation of ongoing growth and an extensive service network supports all installed machines.

Cranes are designed

and assembled to specification from hoists, drives, end-carriages, brakes, gearboxes and 250 other component parts manufactured in-house. Only motors, rope and bottom blocks (hooks) are imported.



Condra MD Marc Kleiner (right) with the competition winner, Shane Cox.

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WORLDWIDE

Condra cranes and hoists are without equal in their quality, performance, reliability and overall lifetime cost. Operating data and the experience gathered from installations around the globe are today incorporated in all Condra products, the endurance of which has been proven in highly corrosive and abrasive environments, and under wide extremes of temperature, humidity and altitude. Technical support, service and spare parts delivery are guaranteed worldwide.

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Commercial solar systems deliver two-year payback



By Kris Van der Bijl

COMMERCIAL solar systems in Cape Town are repaying their capital cost within two years, down from an industry benchmark of eight.

This is according to Billionnetworks, the installer of a newly completed rooftop array at the Tribeca development in Bridgetown.

tion. "With grid-tied, our clients are paying it back within two years."

Tribeca houses Vantage Shopping Centre and combines both other retail shops and residential units above. Property owner New Age Property Developments commissioned the system as its second project with Billionnetworks after seeing the results at an earlier site.

According to Bam, an inverter of this type costs close to half the price of a battery-charging unit, because it carries none of the charging electronics.

Dropping the batteries costs the building nothing in backup. The Shoprite store already carries its own backup power as standard company infrastructure, so adding storage to the solar system would duplicate the cover the tenant already pays for.

The two-year payback depends on conditions holding. Load shedding has been suspended for an extended period, and a return of sustained cuts would change the sums for sites without their own backup. Rising tariffs push the other way, compressing payback with each annual increase.

The City of Cape Town's own numbers show how widely that logic has spread. In budget documents tabled in March, the City projected a 1.1% decline in electricity sales volumes for 2026/27, attributing the drop partly to continued growth in small-scale embedded generation.

The same documents retain the SSEG feed-in incentive at 25 c/kWh, excluding VAT.

Solar panel obsolescence catches commercial buyers out

The panels feeding those inverters are 665 W units from AIKO - a Chinese supplier. This specification illustrates a second shift in the market. Bam said a 600 W panel counted as large a year ago.

By the time he specified this project, the 600 W class was obsolete and cost more than the unit replacing it. On his account, panel wattages turn over roughly every six months.

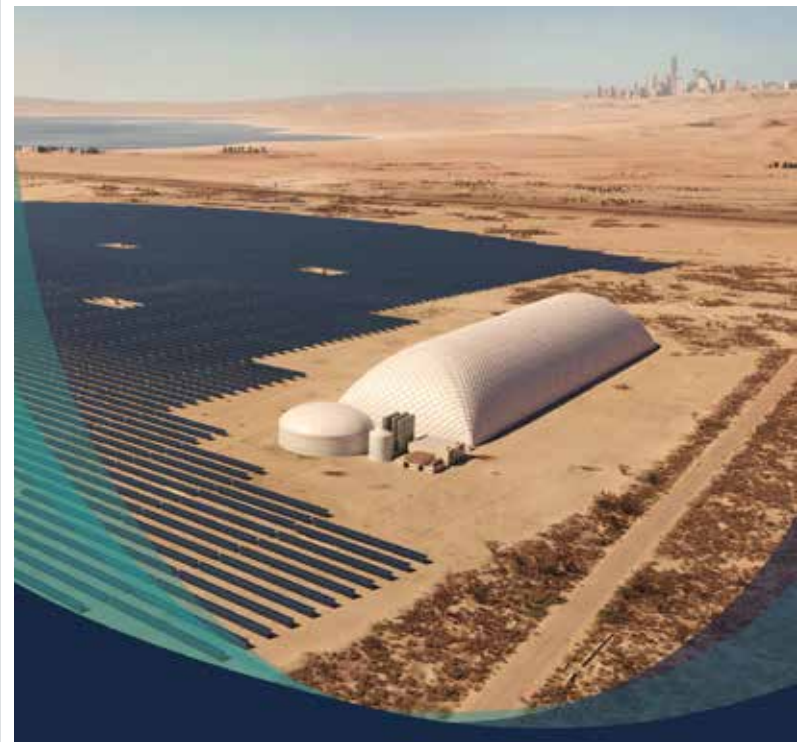
"Your string is only going to be as strong as your weakest panel," Bam said. "I just say the weakest link breaks the chain."

Billionnetworks therefore tells commercial clients to over-order at installation, holding around 20 spare panels on a 400-panel project. The advice serves the installer's order book as much as the client, though the constraint underneath it is real.

Bam compares it to keeping spare tiles when building a house. The difference is that tiles stay on the shelf for decades, and a solar panel's production run now ends before the system's first service.

CO₂ Battery - Proconics brings 18-hour energy storage technology to South Africa

Long-duration storage could solve renewable energy's nighttime gap as recapitalisation of older wind and solar projects gathers pace.



By Larry Claassen

ENGINEERING group Proconics has partnered with Italy's Energy Dome to provide the latter's CO₂ system, which offers energy storage for up to 18 hours, making it a viable solution for businesses that require renewable electricity around the clock.

Though the South African renewable energy market is maturing, with solar and wind power projects coming online regularly, the inability to supply power at night looms large over the sector.

Discovery Green recently cautioned that businesses must be careful when agreeing to power contracts that lock them into a renewable tariff plan which does not take into account their nighttime supply needs.

Discovery Green, a division of the Discovery Group that offers electricity trading and energy consulting services, said businesses might be attracted to the cheaper renewable energy tariffs they can get during the day, but not realise that battery storage can only supply a maximum of four hours.

For its part, the Energy Dome battery provides energy storage for up to 18 hours. During the day, it uses excess (usually renewable) electricity to compress and liquefy CO₂

from a dome at ambient temperatures. Then at night, the now liquid CO₂ is evaporated and expanded through a turbine to generate electricity. The CO₂ is sent back to the dome to start the next charging cycle.

The Energy Dome battery can be configured to store energy for use by its customers. In Australia, for example, it provided a 20 MW/200 MWh CO₂ battery that can last for 10 hours. It has also installed a similar system for Google in Sardinia.

Proconics CEO and founder Melvin Jones said there was already a lot of excitement about the technology in South Africa. "We are looking to bring Energy Dome's technology into the country. There is quite a lot of interest from the Independent Power Producers (IPPs), Eskom and Sasol."

Jones said he saw the potential in using the Energy Dome battery not only for new renewable energy projects but also for older ones.

Projects that were launched in South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPP) Bid Window 1, 2 and 3 - which were launched over 10 years ago - are being recapitalised.

Aside from putting in more modern and efficient equipment, Jones said there was an opportunity to expand

the scope of these projects by adding battery capacity.

"Recapitalisation of those projects is definitely happening. There's a lot of work being done to retrofit renewable energy projects to become hybrid."

Jones said the Energy Dome battery could be the solution to the energy dilemma, where excess renewable power is produced during the day but no power is produced at night.

"If you just look at supply and demand, it's going to mean that long-term power in the middle of the day is going to tend towards being free. But power at the peaks in the morning and the evening, and even through the night, is going to become expensive. Unless we can shift it from when it's produced to when it's dispatched."

Proconics is well placed to introduce this technology, given its background as an engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) project company that specialises in improving and extending the life of factories.

The group was spun out of Sasol in 1995, and initially was a service provider to large industrial companies. As the energy sector started to democratise, it expanded its offering to cater for the needs of new entrants into the sector.

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B.E.D.: Switching from acetylene to alternative fuels for cutting, brazing, soldering and heating



The Harris model 62-5 alternative fuels cutting attachment is available in various torch lengths, torch head angles and with unique mixer systems depending on the gas service selected. Typical applications for this include fabrication, maintenance, shipbuilding and demolition.

ACROSS South African industries from mining and manufacturing to agriculture and energy, acetylene remains the default fuel choice for cutting, brazing, soldering and heating. Yet the case for switching to alternative fuels, such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), propane and MAPP (Methylacetylene-Propadiene Propane) gas, is growing stronger. Bolt and Engineering Distributors Group (B.E.D.), through its appointment as an authorised distributor for the international Harris Products Group, is helping South African industry to make this transition with confidence.

According to Shaun Geyer, B.E.D.'s Harris Products Brand Ambassador and Technical Specialist, the barrier to change is rarely cost or performance, but awareness: "It is surprising that acetylene remains as widely used as it is in South Africa, given the clear safety, cost and performance advantages of alternative fuels. The transition is simpler than may be assumed, and the benefits are compelling."

A complete, optimised system

Central to the switch is the Harris injector mixer, which addresses a fundamental challenge: oxygen and LPG do not blend naturally. "The injector mixer increases oxygen velocity through the torch, creating turbulence which produces a far more homogeneous mixture, resulting in better flame and cut quality," explains Geyer. "What drives cutting perfor-

mance is not flame temperature alone, but how effectively heat transfers into the material being cut."

Harris's high-pre-heat and high-speed alternative fuel nozzles maximise this effect. The injector also draws fuel gas through the system at very low pressure, under two PSIG (Pounds Per Square Inch Gauge) - reducing fuel consumption while almost completely eliminating flashback risk, delivering both a safety and a cost benefit.

Anthony McGuinness, Sales Manager for the

Harris Products Group in Sub-Saharan Africa, points to the company's long history of innovation in this space: "Harris pioneered alternative fuel cutting in the late 1930s and early 1940s with the Model 62-5F injector torch, which is still in use today - a testimony to its quality and longevity."

"The transition from acetylene requires changing just three components: the gas-specific regulator, the hose and the nozzle, with the flashback arrestor remaining the same."

For manual cutting, alternative fuels are superior from 15 millimetres steel plate thickness upwards, producing a clean, carbon-free cutting edge that eliminates the costly grinding step required after acetylene cutting and before welding. Cutting with alternative fuels also requires less operator skill, as the material is very close to the torch, with a nozzle-to-plate distance of only 10 to 15 millimetres.

"It is surprising that acetylene remains as widely used as it is in South Africa, given the clear safety, cost and performance advantages of alternative fuels. The transition is simpler than may be assumed, and the benefits are compelling."

For oxyfuel cutting, LPG covers 90 to 95 percent of applications and is the standard recommendation, being both widely available and cost-effective. For brazing, at 650 to 900 degrees Celsius and soldering, at around 350 degrees Celsius, customers may use MAPP gas or propane

with a trigger torch, which draws in atmospheric oxygen. For industrial heating, LPG is again the appropriate choice.

Importantly, welding cannot be done with alternative fuels, as they lack the carbon content which acetylene has, which is essential for weld pool development.

McGuinness confirms that Harris addresses safety risks through product design, and all products meet international safety standards, including the emerging EN 17931 standard. Locally, B.E.D. ensures customers receive the correct gas-specific equipment, together with hands-on technical guidance on how to use it safely.

"We are focused on supporting our customers through every step of the process to using alternative fuels for cutting, brazing, soldering and heating.

This will be achieved through B.E.D.'s extensive national branch network and distribution centre as well as our substantial regional sales team, logistics infrastructure, excellent longstanding customer relationships and technical credibility," Geyer concludes.

Babcock launches Lincoln Electric partnership for Sub-Saharan Africa



BABCOCK launched its new role as the preferred partner of Lincoln Electric welding products across Sub-Saharan Africa. Hendrik du Toit, MD for Plant Services at Babcock, outlines how the partnership will strengthen product availability, technical support and specialist welding capability for customers across the region.

Babcock is now the preferred partner of Lincoln Electric welding products in South Africa and across Sub-Saharan Africa. From now on, the company will directly import and carry a comprehensive range of Lincoln Electric welding and cutting inverters, consumables, PPE and welder generators for sale and redistribution throughout the region.

The key objective, according to Hendrik du Toit, MD - Plant Services at Babcock, is to improve product availability for local

and regional customers, while making the premium Lincoln Electric range more accessible, affordable and backed by expert local support.

"Our partnership with Lincoln Electric is strengthened by the practical experience gained through Babcock's engineering operations, where Lincoln Electric products are used extensively on high-integrity welding, maintenance and repair projects supporting power generation, boiler and pressure-part maintenance, petrochemical facilities and other heavy industrial applications," says du Toit. "Because we rely on these products ourselves in some of Africa's most demanding operating environments, we are able to offer customers practical expertise, trusted technical support and premium welding solutions that deliver proven performance and long-term value."



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Cape Town superyacht marina boosts local shipbuilding



By Adrian Ephraim

STEEL is being cut in the Port of Cape Town for the V&A Waterfront's R230 million Quay 7 project, and most of the money is staying local.

There is a particular smell to a shipyard when the first plates go down. Hot steel, welding flux, and salt air blowing off the harbour filled the air. On Thursday, 16 July, that smell marked something bigger than a normal day's work at Damen Shipyards Cape Town. It marked the start of construction of South Africa's first marina specifically built for superyachts.

The V&A Waterfront and Damen held a keel-laying ceremony at the Damen yard in the Port of Cape Town to begin production of six floating pontoons for the Quay 7 Superyacht Marina, a R230 million development in the Victoria Basin. In shipbuilding tradition, the keel laying is a vessel's birth certificate, the moment the structural backbone goes in and full-scale construction begins.

What is being built

The six pontoons are based on the Damen 3006 design. Each is 30 metres long and six metres wide, weighing around 48 tonnes before outfitting. Each one is fabricated in three sections, bottom, sides and deck, before being assembled, fitted out and launched.

Once installed at Quay 7, they will provide eight berths, six stern-in and two side-on, able to take vessels of up to 90 metres. Berths will offer water, electricity, fire and lifesaving equipment, bonded fuel supply and IT connectivity, with direct access to the Syncrolift and Robinson Dry Dock for repair and refit work. The pontoons will be finished with bamboo decking, bollards, fenders and shear fenders securing the structures to the quay wall alongside the new Cape Town EDITION hotel, which houses a 200 square metre concierge area for the marina.

Construction is roughly 45% complete. About 120 people are working on the project, including staff from nine local subcontractors. Practical completion is targeted for the end of October 2026, with an official opening planned for November.

A shipbuilder doing something new

Damen Shipyards Cape Town has built patrol vessels, research and supply vessels, dredgers and tugs. A marina is a different animal, and managing director Hermoine Manuel describes Quay 7 as the most technically advanced marina project the yard has taken on.

"This project is an example of international expertise combined with South African talent and local supplier capability, and it demonstrates that

complex maritime infrastructure can be designed, procured, constructed and delivered to international standards right here in Cape Town," Manuel says.

The hardest engineering problem has been below the wa-



terline. The seabed anchoring system required specialist testing protocols to hold up in Cape Town's marine conditions, and the team has relied on 3D modelling, digital scanning and underwater survey systems to get the submerged structures and services right.

Andre Blaine, executive for marine and industrial property at the V&A Waterfront, makes the point that the visible part of the build is the smaller part of the story. "The anchoring systems, the submerged structures, and the utility integration - these are infrastructure built to serve international maritime traffic for decades," he says.

The local content number

For Western Cape suppliers, the number that

matters is 76%. That is the share of procurement spend directed to local suppliers so far. Excluding Damen itself, local supplier spend sits at 35%.

Superyacht arrivals at the V&A have climbed steadily since 2009, reaching 35 vessels in the 2024/25 season, many of them staying for extended periods. Each visit pulls in fuel suppliers, provisioning companies, marine engineers, logistics providers, hospitality operators and marine contractors, with most of that spend landing in the local economy.

The design also answers the seasonality problem that sinks many marina business cases. Outside the superyacht season, the

Manufacturing groups seek clarity on Treasury employment comments

By SEIFSA,
Manufacturing Circle
and POLASA

THE Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of Southern Africa (SEIFSA), Manufacturing Circle and the Powerline and Substation Association (POLASA) have noted with concern recent public comments attributed to the Director-General of the National Treasury suggesting that manufacturing is unlikely to be the primary source of future employment growth in South Africa.

While we acknowledge that the structure of modern economies is evolving and that sectors such as services, tourism and construction have an important role to play in driving economic growth and employment, this comment nevertheless raises important questions regarding the coherence and consistency of South Africa's economic policy direction.

"Public procurement reform, infrastructure investment and industrial competitiveness remain among the most powerful levers available to government..."

Manufacturing has, for many years, been identified by government as a strategic pillar of South Africa's industrial development agenda. It remains central to the country's productive capacity, export competitiveness, technological advancement and long-term economic resilience. As one of the most industrialised economies on the African continent, South Africa cannot afford ambiguity regarding the future role of its manufacturing base.

Our concern is therefore not centred



Source: SEIFSA

on whether other sectors should grow, they absolutely should, but rather on the policy signal that comments of this nature send to investors, manufacturers and businesses making long-term investment decisions.

Economic policy is shaped not only through legislation and budgets, but also through the signals communicated by senior public officials. Institutions such as the National Treasury occupy a uniquely influential position in shaping expectations regarding future policy priorities, investment incentives and fiscal support. For this reason, consistency in public messaging across government institutions is essential.

It is equally important to recognise that South Africa's manufacturing challenges cannot simply be attributed to global structural changes or declining labour intensity. The sector has faced more than a decade of escalating electricity costs, logistics failures, infrastructure constraints, municipal decline and prolonged policy uncertainty. These factors have materially constrained investment, competitiveness and employment growth.

Public procurement reform, infrastructure investment and industrial competitiveness remain among the most powerful levers available to government to stimulate do-

mestic manufacturing demand and improve capacity utilisation. These are the areas in which coherent policy implementation remains critically important.

The manufacturing sector does not seek preferential treatment above other sectors of the economy. Rather, it seeks a stable, predictable and consistent policy environment that reinforces government's stated commitment to industrialisation, investment and economic growth.

It is therefore vitally important that National Treasury provides clarity on how these comments align with government's broader industrial policy objectives and long-standing commitment to growing South Africa's manufacturing capability.

At a time when countries around the world are strengthening their manufacturing sectors through industrial policy and strategic investment, South Africa must ensure that its own policy signals inspire confidence rather than uncertainty.

SEIFSA, the Manufacturing Circle and POLASA remain committed to working constructively with government and all social partners to advance policies that strengthen South Africa's industrial base, create sustainable employment and improve the country's long-term economic competitiveness.



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SOUTH Africa's education crisis is no longer simply about access to universities or bursaries. Thousands of young people receive financial support every year, yet many still fall through the cracks before graduation or struggle to enter the job market afterwards.

The real challenge is not only funding education; it's about creating a support system that carries students from opportunity to employability. This is where InnoVent's bursary programme is quietly doing something different.



InnoVent CFO Zakhe Khuzwayo

The need for initiatives like this has never been more urgent. According to the latest Statistics South Africa labour market data, youth unemployment remains one of the country's biggest economic threats. In Q1 2026, 4.7 million South Africans between the ages of 15 and 34 were unemployed, while unemployment among young people aged 15 to 24 stood at a staggering 60.9%.

"Khuzwayo says rather than ending the relationship once a student completes their studies, InnoVent continues to track graduates, assist with employability, support CV development and help connect students with work opportunities."

Government itself has repeatedly acknowledged that South Africa is facing both a youth unemployment crisis and a growing skills shortage. In 2025, the South African government stated that "one of the root causes of unemployment is the skills mismatch, particularly lack of skills in the digital sector, including Artificial Intelligence."

This concern is increasingly reflected across both government and industry. The National Skills Fund allocated R800 million toward digital and technology skills development programmes linked directly to employment outcomes. The focus on employability rather than education alone is becoming central to South Africa's long term economic strategy.

Against this backdrop, InnoVent's bursary programme stands out because it does not simply fund students and walk away.

While many bursary schemes focus purely on paying tuition fees, InnoVent has built a far more hands-on model designed to help students not only study,

but succeed, graduate, and enter the workforce. InnoVent has extended 153 bursaries since 2015, with a reported success rate of 96.73%.

The programme forms part of InnoVent's broader corporate social responsibility initiatives and aligns with the company's long-standing focus on expanding access to technology and opportunity. Its CSR structure includes a Foundation that owns part of the business and is focused on financing talented students and helping them secure employment after graduating.

What makes the programme notable is not simply the number of bursaries awarded, but the level of involvement with each student throughout their academic journey.

In addition to study fees, students may receive assistance with accommodation, books, data, laptops, iPads and monthly stipends to help them focus on their studies without the constant pressure of survival.

The programme also includes regular academic monitoring, mentorship and even tutoring support where needed. More importantly, the programme targets students who often fall into the gap between financial hardship and traditional funding mechanisms.

"We concentrated on individuals who could not get funding through NSFAS," says InnoVent CFO Zakhe Khuzwayo. "Our goal was to support those who had the potential to succeed but lacked the financial means to pursue further studies."

The programme also reflects South Africa's broader skills development needs. Students supported through the initiative study across multiple disciplines, including accounting, law, culinary arts, engineering and IT related fields. In some cases, the focus has included helping young African women enter industries where representation remains low, including chemical engineering and technology sectors.

But perhaps the strongest differentiator is what happens after graduation.

Khuzwayo says rather than ending the relationship once a student completes their studies, InnoVent continues to track graduates, assist with employability, support CV development and help connect students with work opportunities. "We also maintain a graduate database to monitor where former bursary recipients are working and how they are progressing professionally."

One former bursary recipient who studied accounting reportedly progressed into forensic auditing, highlighting the type of long-term impact the initiative aims to create.

For Nhlakanipho Mkhize, the InnoVent Bursary Programme was the turning point that enabled him to complete his studies and realise his ambition of becoming a Chartered Accountant. Having faced financial exclusion during his university years, he is now a Chartered Accountant (CA(SA)) at Rand Merchant Bank, where he is part of the bank's prestigious Count CA Programme.

"The InnoVent Bursary Programme turned my dream into reality. It gave me the stability to succeed and the con-

"Young people do not only need access to education. They need guidance, mentorship, practical support and someone willing to walk the journey with them until they are able to stand on their own."

fidence to pursue a career that impacts industries, economies and communities," says Mkhize.

The programme's impact has also extended well beyond South Africa's borders. Edivaldo Abranches, who received support after finishing matric, is now an Audit Manager in Bermuda, managing a portfolio of multinational investment management companies, hedge funds, private equity firms and insurance companies.

"InnoVent gave me an equal opportunity that everyone deserves. It took a talented but previously disadvantaged individual and gave me access to rooms I would never have entered otherwise," says Abranches.

Khuzwayo adds: "For InnoVent, the programme is deeply personal rather than compliance driven. It's about leading with heart, helping where we can, paying it forward and living by example."

At a time when South Africa faces rising youth unemployment, widening inequality and increasing concern around graduate employability, programmes like this highlight an important reality: funding alone is not enough.

"Young people do not only need access to education. They need guidance, mentorship, practical support and someone willing to walk the journey with them until they are able to stand on their own. And in a country where many bursary programmes disappear once the cheque clears, that may be the most important investment of all," he concludes.

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Why women burn out differently

By Chantelle Botha



BURNOUT is often treated as exhaustion, but in women, exhaustion is usually the breaking point. Long before women burn out physically, many have begun buckling under the weight of the identities they carry.

Through my research into the relationship between desire and shame, I'm particularly interested in the little-known roles that identity load and emotional suppression play in the contribution to burnout.

Identity load is measured by how many versions of yourself you are expected to be, often simultaneously, each with competing expectations and emotional demands.

Consider my client: the married mother whose partner is disabled, climbing the corporate ladder whilst completing her PhD.

She is not only mother, but also father; both nurturer and disciplinarian. She is married, yet single. Both bread winner and caregiver. At work, she is an employee, but also a leader. Beyond that, her life carries the oft dismissed identities of friend, lover, daughter, sister, aunt, and even roles such as yoga teacher. Each role asks something different of her, and none pauses while she fulfils another.

Burnout in women extends beyond workplace stress – it's related to the identity load we carry and the resultant collision of suppressed desire and internalised shame.

She longs to be a lover, yet spends her evenings as a caregiver. She desires greater influence at work, yet measures every opportunity against the needs waiting at home. She dreams of completing her doctorate, yet ends each day with nothing left to give.

This is the inflection point where internalised shame wreaks havoc. The people in her world are supportive (albeit slightly in awe) of her ability to juggle all these roles, but her internal narrative is "what if they find out I am failing dismally at holding it all together?".

Left unchecked, this pattern of self-abandonment eventually becomes catastrophic burnout. The kind of burnout that goes beyond simple exhaustion, and dismantles your health, relationships, and sense of self.

Recovery from severe burnout can take months or even years, particularly when the underlying identity patterns remain unchanged. Burnout doesn't resolve simply because we rest. It resolves when the patterns that created it begin to change.

We need to understand that burnout is a systemic problem, and as such, there is no quick fix. The identity patterns that lead to burnout are built over years through what we believe, what we suppress, and what we repeatedly ask our bodies to endure. Identity load is carried both mentally and physiologically.

Desire and shame are embodied experiences. We feel shame as contraction and tension; desire as expansion and energy. If burnout is, in part, the accumulated cost of suppressing one and living from the other, then recovery cannot happen through insight alone. It must also involve the body.

Healing begins when women stop asking, "How can I do more?" and start asking, "What have I stopped allowing myself to want?". Every act of self-abandonment begins with withdrawing permission from our own desires. Recovery begins with restoring that permission, through new ways of thinking, new ways of inhabiting our bodies, and the small, courageous choices that bring us back into integrity with ourselves. Identity load explains how we burn out. Shame explains why we stay there. Desire points us home.



Chantelle Botha is the founder of Phoenix and leads research into the relationship between desire, shame and women's vitality. If this article resonated with you, join Chantelle at one of her upcoming August events exploring permission and courageous self-leadership. Details at <https://phoenixconfidence.com/events/>

THE BUSINESS TRAVELLER THE EXECUTIVE GUIDE TO STRATEGIC TRAVEL

Employee hotel room sharing: Legal risks for South African Employers

By Adrian Ephraim

IT sounds trivial until it lands on your desk. A sales team flies to Johannesburg, and someone in finance, eyeing the budget, decides two people can share a room instead of booking two. The saving looks clean on a spreadsheet. Then the complaints start, and HR is fielding a problem no line item warned them about.

So should companies be allowed to make employees share hotel rooms? Mostly they can. But recent South African law has made the "should" far riskier than most employers realise.

Why the question is getting louder

This debate is driven by hard cost pressure. South African business travel grew 17% in 2025, the highest on the continent, according to data reported by Business Report. The numbers behind that are stark.

Corporate Traveller data cited by Flight Centre Travel Group SA CFO Juliette Da Silva shows the average hotel room night climbed from R1,050 in 2023 to R1,301 in 2025, while the average trip stretched from 3.21 to 5.31 days, a 65% jump, as companies batch meetings into longer trips.

Accommodation is now one of the fastest growing lines in the travel budget, and Da Silva has been explicit that companies "need to be watching accommodation spend much more closely than they used to".

So someone eventually asks why the company pays for two rooms when it could pay for one.

On a five-night, two-person trip, sharing saves more than R6,500. Multiply that across a sales force, and the temptation is real.

What the law actually says

Here is where the spreadsheet logic runs into trouble.

No South African law specifically prohibits asking employees to share accommodation on a work trip. In that narrow sense, room sharing is not illegal. But the gap between "not banned" and "safe" widened considerably in 2022.

The Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace took effect on 18 March 2022 under the Employment Equity Act. It matters here for one reason: it extends harassment protection well beyond the office.

As law firm Bowmans summarised, the protection applies "in any situation in which the employee is working, or which is related to their work," and the Code expressly names work-related trips and employer-provided accommodation among the settings it covers.

Read that against a shared hotel room. If something goes wrong between two colleagues sharing employer-arranged accommodation overnight, the complaint falls inside the Code, and the employer can be held vicariously liable for failing to prevent it.

Ivan Israelstam, CEO of Labour Law Management Consulting and one of South Africa's most published labour law commentators, stresses that the Code "covers all types of harassment that affects the dignity of employees." He says that section 60 of the Employment Equity Act "specifically requires employers



to take proactive steps to prevent all types of discrimination". The operative word is proactive. An employer cannot simply react once a complaint arrives; it has a positive duty to anticipate the risk, and knowingly placing two employees in a confined overnight space is hard to square with that.

Layered on top is the constitutional right to dignity, which does not switch off at check in. A policy that forces an employee to surrender privacy or to disclose a medical or religious reason to avoid it invites exactly the kind of challenge that carries weight before the CCMA or Labour Court.

Where this leaves employers

The workable middle ground is simple, and it protects everyone. If a company offers room

sharing, it should be an offer, never a mandate. Any policy should be written into the travel policy, communicated before booking rather than sprung at the airport, and applied consistently rather than imposed on junior staff alone.

Critically, people must be able to opt out without explaining deeply personal reasons to a manager. Where cost is the real driver, gentler levers exist: booking further ahead, negotiating preferred corporate rates, clustering meetings geographically, and considering guesthouses over hotels.

Technically, companies can make employees share rooms. Whether they should build a policy around it is another matter entirely. A well-rested, respected employee delivering a sharp presentation on tomorrow's numbers is worth far more than the price of a second room.



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