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Cape Town has the ninth-worst traffic congestion in the world

The City of Cape Town will spend R444-million to relieve traffic congestion over the next three years.

By Larry Claasen

TRAFFIC congestion in Cape Town ranks among the worst in the world. This is according to the 2023 INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard, which placed Cape Town 9 out of 100 urban areas.

INRIX measures congestion against its Impact Rank, which is the number of hours lost in peak commute periods compared to off-peak conditions relative to a city's population.

Cape Town's Impact Rank deteriorated from 13th in 2022 to 9th due to drivers spending an extra 83 hours in traffic — a 32% increase. Though congestion is 10% lower than its pre-COVID-19 levels, INRIX's scorecard notes a 7% rise in the first quarter of 2024.

The scale of congestion can be seen in Cape Town, with its population of 4,6-million, ranking ahead of 10th-placed Jakarta, Indonesia, which has 10,5-million people.

Boston, ranked 8th, has a population of 4,4-million, is the only city comparable to Cape Town in terms of population ahead of it on the scorecard. The other cities ranked higher than it are New York, Mexico City, London, Paris, Chicago, Istanbul, and Los Angeles, which are some of the world's major metropolises.

INRIX's scorecard is not the only traffic ranking that gives the 'Mother City' a poor score for its congestion.

The 2023 TomTom Traffic Index says Cape Town has the second-worst congestion in Africa after Cairo, Egypt. TomTom measures congestion as the average additional time lost to traffic in 2023 when compared to driving in free-flowing conditions.

According to TomTom, residents spent 127 hours in traffic in 2023, 48 hours of which were due to congestion. The congestion also meant an extra R882 a year was spent on filling petrol tanks.

The City of Cape Town says it takes traffic congestion seriously and has set aside billions to improve its public transport services and its road network.

"The Urban Mobility Directorate's capital budget over the medium-term, starting on 1 July 2024 until 30 June 2027, amounts to nearly R8,9-billion," says councillor Rob Quintas, the city's mayoral committee member for urban mobility. This sees the city setting aside



Traffic congestion is on the rise in Cape Town. Attribution: Coolcaesar.

R444-million for road projects, which include sidewalks and cycle lanes to relieve traffic congestion at pressure points in Kuils River, Durbanville, Belhar, Salt River, along the M3, Maitland, along Kommetjie Main Road and Diep River.

The city is also expanding its public transport services, with R6,28-billion being set aside for the new Khayelitsha/Mitchells Plain MyCiTi route.

It will also spend R668-million on MyCiTi buses, R221-million on MyCiTi bus stops, and R176-million on upgrades to 65 public transport interchanges.

The road network will also get a boost, with R764-million budgeted for repairs to streetlights and R826 million set aside for road maintenance and pothole repairs in the 2024/2025 period. R735-million has also been set aside for road upgrades for the three-year period.

"Our expenditure priorities for the next three financial years demonstrate our intention to keep people, goods, and services on the move. This is why we are setting aside billions to create new infrastructure to improve public transport not only for those who are currently using public transport services but also to provide a viable alternative to single occupancy vehicles," says Quintas.

Quintas is not blind to how congestion can easily impede the city's economic growth.

"Congestion affects productivity as it impedes mobility in terms of time spent on commuting and costs – be it for operators of public transport services, commuters, or those travelling in private vehicles. For our local economy to grow at pace and to create jobs, we need to ensure that goods, services, and, most importantly, people can get to where they need to be in the most equitable, dignified and sustainable way possible."

Aside from stemming economic growth, congestion was also detrimental to the environment. For example, TomTom calculated that the average vehicle emitted 754kg of CO₂ a year, of which 88kg was due to congestion.

Quintas says, "The impact of carbon emissions on our natural environment by road-based transport is a huge concern."

This is why the city is adding universally accessible footways and cycle lanes to support its sustainability and zero-emission commitments. Quintas says doing this will make "communities more walkable and cycling friendly, therefore encouraging non-motorised transport as the mode of choice for shorter distances, and where practical and possible."

Another way to reduce congestion is to have more people work from home. TomTom says working from home for three days will reduce time in traffic by 78 hours, save R4 192 and cut emissions by 456 kg a year.

Electric taxis: A complicated process



SOUTH Africa's minibus-taxi industry is a key part of the country's economy, providing affordable, accessible mass transport. At the same time, the taxi fleet uses carbon-emitting internal combustion engines. Reducing South Africa's environmental impact must consider the electrification of the minibus-taxi sector.

However, this is a complex process, and electrification will introduce many challenges. A paper to be presented at the forthcoming Southern African Transport Conference (SATC) outlines some key considerations.

The conference addresses the theme, "Upskilling and reskilling the transport industry for current and future challenges". The analysis of prospects for an electrified taxi industry underscores the importance of electric-vehicle upskilling in the Southern African transport sector.

South Africa's minibus taxi industry is the main mode of transport for approximately 10,7-million citizens.

Environmental impacts

In 2022, 14% of all new cars sold worldwide were electric vehicles (EVs), while in South Africa only 0,1% of vehicles sold in the same period were electric.

Currently, Eskom provides the bulk of the country's energy, with 79% coming from coal-fired power stations.

With South Africa lagging in terms of electric vehicle adoption, the paper's authors, A Jahur, MJWA Vanderschuren and MJ Booysen, write that "stronger efforts are required to ensure the country's automotive industry transitions to electric mobility".

They say that, considering the impor-

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BUTEC Group rebrands and expands in South Africa

By Larry Claasen

BUTEC Group, a Lebanese based contracting company, is cementing its move into South Africa by rebranding the two local companies it recently acquired.

BUTEC bought Thermaire, a commercial heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) specialist, and Ampair, a facility management and maintenance services provider, from French multinational ENGIE in 2022.

The rebranding, following the takeover of the privately held company headquartered in Beirut and Dubai, sees Thermaire become BUTEC and Ampair become BUTEC Services. The DUCTSHOP brand remains and will continue its focus on high-quality metal and PAL ducting manufacturing and expand to specialised steel products at its Johannesburg facility.

The acquisitions and rebrandings are part of BUTEC's strategy for expanding its services



and footprint across the continent. The deal with ENGIE saw it buy 17 companies based in 15 African countries from the French group.

The acquisitions have expanded BUTEC's presence to 21 countries in Africa and the Middle East, and it now employs 7 500 people, including 400 in South Africa.

BUTEC's expansion into Africa has been further underlined by its takeover of the Moroccan businesses of the Société des Eaux de Marseille (SEM), a subsidiary of Veolia Group, in January 2024.

A broader offering

According to BUTEC chairperson Ziad Younes, the deal to buy Thermaire and Ampair not only established his group in South Africa, it also provided a base for expanding its offerings in the country.

In addition to HVAC and facility management, the group will also offer engineering and contracting, electro-mechanical solutions, facility services, and utility services. Younes noted that one of the new services it will offer is running electricity grids on

behalf of municipalities.

Though BUTEC has not been in South Africa that long, it is excited by its potential.

"We are inspired by the potential that South Africa and its Southern African neighbours offer and by the talent of the local building industry and allied services leaders," said BUTEC director, Fady Abou Jaoude.

"As one of Africa's largest electro-mechanical contractors, facility management and service providers, we are looking

forward to creating shared value with key economic role-players so that we can accelerate the region's growth together, create jobs, and contribute towards the region's prosperity," he added.

Committed to South Africa

As part of its commitment to transforming South Africa, BUTEC established an Employee Share Trust for its black female employees and also invested R7-million into youth employment services programmes, creating over 154 job opportunities.

BUTEC is also looking to employ and develop the skills inside the group.

"Our in-house NQF-accredited skills development centre, BUTEC Academy, with its full-time training team based in Johannesburg, offers a range of courses and qualifications, bringing a new cohort of well-trained and qualified artisans to the industry each year," said Abou Jaoude.

SEW-Eurodrive doubles down on drive innovation at Electra Mining Africa

IT's all systems go for SEW-EURODRIVE at Electra Mining Africa this year, as the company has added another exhibition stand to signal the company's intentions in driving innovations in automation and electronics across Africa.

This will be over and above the company's Hall 6 stand, which has always been a must-see for visitors going to the expo to be held at Nasrec, in Johannesburg, from 2 to 6 September.

With so much innovation to see, SEW-EURODRIVE has expanded its presence at Electra Mining Africa this year with added exhibition space in Hall 7 that showcases its innovations in automation and electronics.

This exciting addition complements the

company's large landmark stand in Hall 6, which has always been a favourite for the event's visitors, according to Jonathan McKey, national sales and marketing manager at SEW-EURODRIVE.

"This means diversifying into a range of other opportunities within the mining and industrial sector value chains, with new products being introduced to support this strategy," he explains.

"We are already achieving this in agriculture, for instance, where in addition to our conveyor and pump solutions and variable speed drives in pack houses, we will further expand into pivot and wheel drives for applications on the lands."

Visitors will also see how sustainability



Jonathan McKey, national sales and marketing manager at SEW-EURODRIVE South Africa.

is built into the business's growth into the continent, including the intensive upskilling underway at its local facilities in various African countries.

"As leaders in this industry, we play a key role in empower-

ing artisans – both in-house and for customers – through our Drive Academy which pushes the boundaries in augmented reality (AR) as a learning tool," he says.

"This all helps consolidate our foundation

of expertise upon which the market relies."

At the SEW-EURODRIVE stand in Hall 6, visitors can witness new solutions like the purpose-built SEW X.e agitator, fresh from its launch in Europe last year. Also being

launched is a range of planetary solutions that will close the loop in new market segments, as well as the new ECO2 design drive that features environmentally friendly manufacture.

"We also look forward to discussing our DriveRadar technology with visitors, as the mining sector embraces predictive maintenance to achieve better uptime levels and enhance equipment lifespans," he says.

"Another sustainability focus as a good neighbour is our careful use of natural resources, including our own lubrication solution."

Among the insights to be gained at SEW-EURODRIVE's Hall 7 stand is the potential of the latest generation

SEW MOVI-C® modular automation technology. This delivers advanced features in a format that is simpler to commission and use, says McKey.

"We've refined this offering to ensure we can give customers those elements relevant to their business – so you get just what you need and have the advantage of being able to supplement later with more features," he says. "It is easy to be overwhelmed by the complexity of automation in drive technology, so we remove this daunting experience and work closely with customers to migrate smoothly."

Visit SEW-EURODRIVE at Hall 6 Stand J20 and Hall 7 Stand D4.



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The Economic Regulation of Transport Act could prove to be a major departure from what has been the status quo



By Chris Hattingh, Centre for Risk Analysis

POSSIBLY lost in the noise and uncertainty swirling around South Africa's 2024 national and provincial elections, on 11 June a potentially momentous event in the country's macro logistics space took place, President Ramaphosa signed the Economic Regulation of Transport Act into law.

"The regulator will be able to set prices for access to markets, entities and facilities in the transport sector."

Should the momentum of this piece of legislation be used effectively, the country's ailing railway networks and ports will be given precisely the kind of reforms they have long needed.

The act consolidates the economic regulation of transport of passengers and goods into a single framework, whether by land, sea or air, and by road or rail or through ports or airports. Furthermore, the act establishes the Transport Economic Regulator.

The regulator will be able to set prices for

access to markets, entities and facilities in the transport sector, and to set levels of service in the sector. This new regulator will also have the power to conduct hearings and market inquiries.

The potential upside here lies in the fact that there will be one port of call for the controlling of prices across the transport sector.

On the risk side, should the entity lean into over- or minute-regulation, and impede competition, market signals would be ignored, and reforms could take even longer (or possibly be delayed indefinitely).

An additional aspect of the act pertains to rail; provisions governing third parties' (including private sector players') access to rail infrastructure are introduced.

It should be relatively early to see whether the act, and the regulator, are used in the best-intentioned manner; do they consult and engage with industry players, or are decisions made absent of inputs from those very businesses that are crucial to the running of the country's trade arteries?

The country's railways and ports underperform due to equip-

ment breakdowns and shortages, systems and processes that are not as modern and up to date as they need to be, and a lack of competition (as Transnet, for all intents and purposes, has enjoyed a monopoly position for many years).

To fix these various problems will take a long time.

But the significance of the Act cannot be underestimated, as it aims toward the long-term state where there is real private sector participation in, and ultimately competition between government and private players.

This would be a major departure from what has been the status quo.

South Africa's ports of Ngqura in the Eastern Cape (404th) and Cape Town (405th) occupy the very bottom of the table in the latest Global Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) produced by the World Bank and S&P Global.

The index ranks 405 ports and facilities across the world, using 2023 data. The port of Durban, which handles nearly 50% of South Africa's port traffic, was ranked 399th.

The honour of highest-ranked South African port went to the port of Port Elizabeth, in an unimpressive 391st place. While the various operational, processes, and equipment issues at the various ports cannot be fixed overnight, progress could be rapid if the Transnet Ports Authority focuses on getting the basics right.

For more information - <https://www.gov.za/documents/acts/economic-regulation-transport-act-6-2024-english-isizulu-11-jun-2024>

IO-Link from ifm offers higher performance with less effort

IO-Link sensors from ifm open up completely new possibilities for the user. From easy and quick setup to additionally available machine monitoring data to process transparency from the machine level to the ERP software: IO-Link offers convincing efficiency gains and cost savings.

Manufacturing plants worldwide are increasingly relying on high-performance data and information technology to improve their overall equipment efficiency. IO-Link's break-

through technology enables sensors to simultaneously transmit diagnostic information to the PLC and to higher-level IT infrastructures.

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fieldbus systems (such as EtherNet/IP, PROFINET, AS-i).

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- Uses standard, unshielded M8 or M12 cables of up to 20 metres.
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- Parameter setting and monitoring via software.
- Reading and logging of event and diagnostic data.
- Binary use of sensors in SIO mode.
- Use of additional digital functions in COM mode.

Bottom line

IO-Link provides an easy and comfortable way to build a future-proof foundation for smart industrial automation.



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Unveiling the future of rail: SAHHA’s strategic vision for Heavy Haul, Pit-to-Port

SINCE its inception, the South African Heavy Haul Association (SAHHA) has been at the forefront of driving excellence and innovation and has achieved significant milestones in enhancing the industry. Through hosting conferences, technical workshops, and strategy seminars, SAHHA has facilitated the dissemination of best practices and state-of-the-art technological advancements.

By writing and publishing Best Practice manuals, papers, articles, and books, the association has built a robust repository of knowledge that supports continuous learning and improvement. SAHHA’s impact extends beyond mere knowledge sharing. The association plays a pivotal role in advocating for rail-friendly freight solutions, fostering a collaborative environment among industry stakeholders including researchers, suppliers, customers, regulators, and rail operators.

This holistic approach ensures that every link in the Heavy Haul value chain is strengthened, from train loading at the mines to vessel loading at the ports. As part of its ongoing efforts to shape the future of the Heavy Haul industry, SAHHA will host its biennial conference from 26 to 29 of August 2024.

Themed “Positioning Heavy Haul for Success - from Pit to Port,” the conference will cover the entire Heavy Haul logistics value chain, addressing both strategic and technical aspects.

The conference will kick off with discussions among policy-makers, regulators, and key decision-makers to align on the strategic implementation plan that will position Heavy Haul for success.

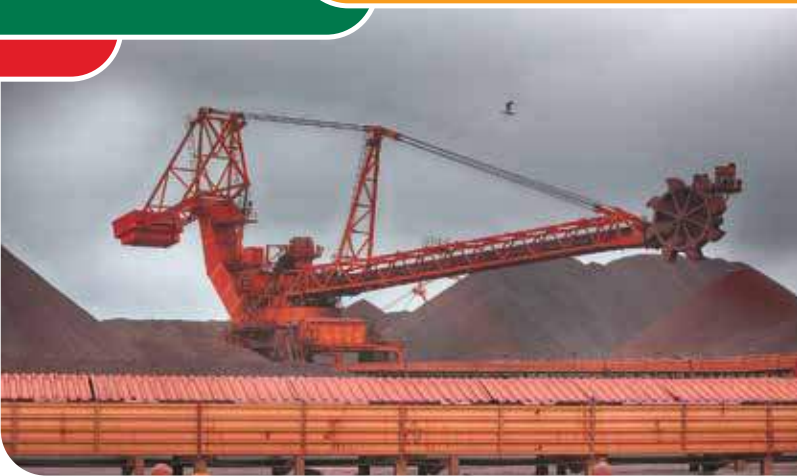
The first day’s plenary session will focus on building a strong foundation for successful rail reform implementation, including updates on the National Freight Logistics Roadmap.

The second day’s session will tackle major challenges and opportunities facing the freight logistics industry, aiming to find solutions by leveraging local and global best practices.

Day three will feature Think Tank sessions in the form of panel discussions, promoting collaboration and partnership.

The “From Cradle to Grave - Fundamentals of Heavy Haul Railway Asset Management” technical workshop will precede the main conference, offering in-depth insights into asset management in Heavy Haul operations.

“Through collaborative efforts and shared expertise, we are poised to unlock the full potential of South Africa’s Heavy Haul industry,” said SAHHA founder and chairman Brian Monakali.



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Celebrating 40 years of unparalleled partnership: Goscor Lift Trucks and Crown Equipment



GOSCOR Lift Trucks, a prominent name in materials handling solutions, commemorates four decades of a robust partnership with Crown Equipment Corporation, one of the world's leading manufacturers of materials handling equipment.

"Goscor Lift Trucks - PQ "Over the years, Goscor Lift Trucks has demonstrated unwavering commitment, having supplied in excess of 12 000 Crown machines to the Southern African market."

In 1984, Goscor Lift Trucks marked its inception with Crown's electric warehousing equipment, setting a precedent for excellence and reliability in the Southern African market.

Since then, as the sole distributor of Crown forklifts in the region, Goscor Lift Trucks has cemented its position as one of the largest Crown dealers worldwide, amongst top-tier company-owned branches and independent dealers across the EMEA region. In April, Goscor Lift Trucks received an award from Crown at their Dealer Conference held in Munich for being the longest-standing Crown dealer

worldwide. 2024 marks forty years of partnership with this leading manufacturer.

"Over the years, Goscor Lift Trucks has demonstrated unwavering commitment, having supplied in excess of 12 000 Crown machines to the Southern African market," states Patrick Barber, Goscor Lift Trucks' director for business development.

"Notably, original sites continue to operate equipment surpassing the two-decade mark, a testament to the enduring quality and product longevity facilitated by the robust partnership between Crown and Goscor Lift Trucks," he adds.

Product Longevity and Quality

Crown is known for the durability and reliability of its products, a reputation built on meticulous engineering, rigorous testing, and continuous improvement.

Crown forklifts and warehousing equipment are designed to withstand the most demanding environments, ensuring minimal downtime and maximum productivity for users.

This product longevity is a key factor behind the success and widespread adoption of Crown equipment in the Southern African market.

Superior Aftermarket Support by Goscor Lift Trucks

The exceptional longevity of Crown's products is significantly bolstered by Goscor Lift Trucks's superior aftermarket support, which ensures that these machines remain operational and efficient throughout their lifecycle.

"Goscor Lift Trucks ensures optimal equipment performance and minimal downtime by maintaining a vast inventory of genuine OEM parts and employing certified technicians specialising in OEM equipment," asserts Barber.

"Technicians provide timely maintenance and repairs using the latest tools and training. Additionally, Goscor Lift Trucks's tailored preventative maintenance programmes address potential issues early, extending equipment lifespan and ensuring consistent performance. With around-the-clock support, Goscor Lift Trucks promptly addresses urgent issues to keep operations running smoothly."

Global Accolades for Crown's SP High-Level Order Picker

The Crown SP 1500 Series high-level order picker secured Crown's fifth International

Intralogistics and Forklift Truck of the Year (IFOY) Award in 2023.

"As winners in the "Warehouse Truck Highlifter" category, this accolade highlights the product's outstanding performance and innovative design. Key features include exceptional all-round visibility, customisable operating elements, industry-leading travel speeds up to 12 km/h, and a high-speed lift function. The SP 1500 Series is praised for its efficiency, ergonomics, and energy-saving regenerative lowering feature. The award recognises Crown's commitment to productivity, ergonomics, and safety in their high-performance lift trucks," adds Barber.

The 2024 IFOY Awards once again see Crown in the spotlight, with the recently developed ESR 1200 being nominated.

The ESR 1200, boasting a load capacity of two tons and a lifting height of 14.2 metres, stands out for its comprehensive commitment to sustainability and productivity.

This reach truck features several enhancements, including a new mast design that provides improved stability and visibility, alongside a modernised production process that reduces its ecological footprint.

Electric taxis: A complicated process

Continued from P1

tance of minibus taxis to South African paratransit, our EV transition must prioritise minibus taxi electrification.

Mobility operations

Currently, minibus taxi travel is loosely scheduled and timetabled. Taxis with licences for specific routes aim to complete trips at particular parts of the day, with day-to-day operations dependent on passenger demand.

There is flexibility, and drivers pick up or drop off passengers at sub-destinations depending on their needs.

However, for electric vehicles, where ranges and charging locations are limited, more formal schedules and timetables will likely be required.

The paper suggests that taxi owners and associations work with government, and technical experts, to decide how taxis will balance charging schedules with daily trip planning.

Charging operations

As of September 2023, there were more than 2 200 registered electric vehicles and approximately 435 total charging stations in South Africa, with these numbers growing steadily. To accommodate the



country's entire network of minibus taxis, a significantly greater number of stations would be required.

However, building a charging network for the minibus taxi industry would almost certainly be out of reach for private enterprise alone.

Cost impact

There are significant cost differences between the petrol minibus taxis currently used and their equivalent electric counterparts.

"South Africa's minibus taxi industry must investigate options for producing electric taxis locally to minimise capital costs," the authors write.

Range factors

Battery capacity and the associated range achievable on a single

charge have been some of the key limitations of electric vehicles.

Optimal operational planning will be required to maximise the number of trips electric minibus taxis can complete without recharging, while integrated battery swapping can be used to enhance efficiency at charging stations.

Even optimistically assuming a taxi would have a 100kWh battery, this implies only 200km of range. Current ICE taxis have a range of 500km+ on a full tank. This highlights the need to ensure ranges are maximised through efficient driving.

The authors recommend that further research be conducted into the social aspects of electrifying the minibus taxi industry, and note that regulation will affect its success.

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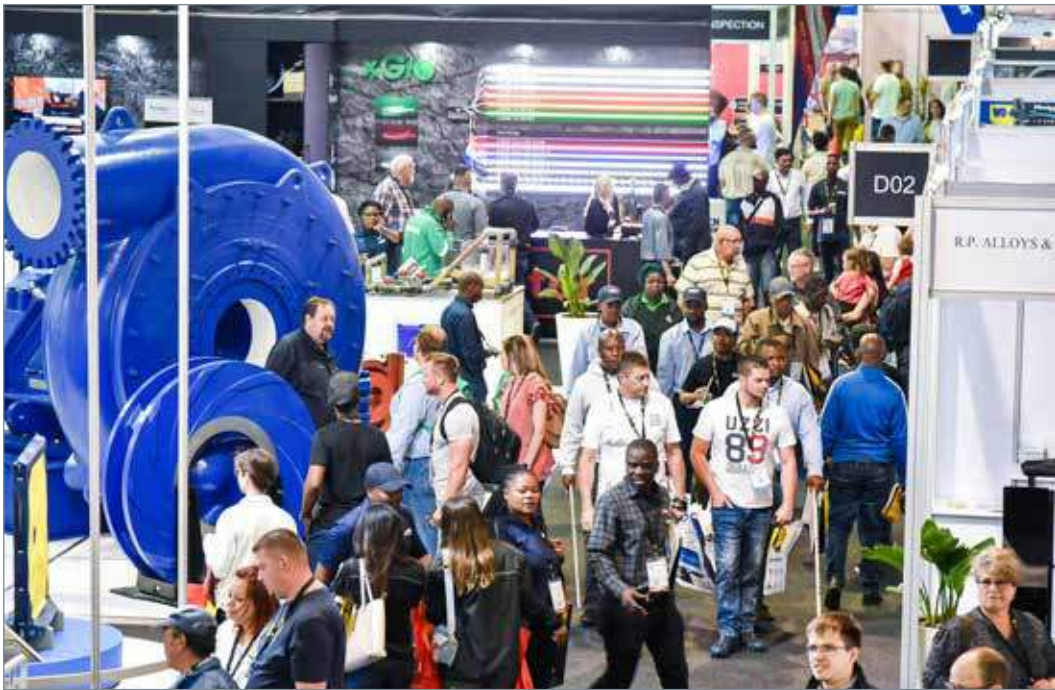
Electra Mining Africa: where inspiration and innovation meet

FROM drones to the Cloud to AI, the world is progressing at the speed of light. It's not always easy staying on top of the latest innovations in your field. But at Electra Mining Africa 2024, you'll find all the latest cutting-edge technology on display, hear talks from trailblazers in the industry and meet hundreds of exhibitors across the areas of mining, electrical, automation, manufacturing, power and transport all in one place.

Taking place at the Expo Centre in Nasrec, Johannesburg from 2-6 September, this year's event will be one of the biggest Electra Mining Africa exhibitions to date.

The show will extend across 35 000m² of exhibition space and accommodate over 850 exhibitors, demonstrating the popularity of the show.

Its focus is largely on local industry suppliers and manufacturers with top brands



participating, together with an international contingent from countries including the UK, US, Canada, Australia, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Taiwan, India and China.

As the largest trade show of its kind in Southern Africa and with its over five dec-

ades of experience, Electra Mining Africa offers an outstanding opportunity for both exhibitors and visitors, buyers and sellers, to connect face-to-face and develop long-lasting business relationships.

Hundreds of live demonstrations will

bring machinery and equipment to life, with thousands of new products and innovations displayed throughout the five exhibition halls and extensive outside exhibit areas.

"We're looking forward to this year's show," says Gary Corin, MD of Specialised

Exhibitions, a division of Montgomery Group.

"The industry gave its full support to Electra Mining Africa 2022, which had just over 30 000 visitors through the gates. We're expecting to exceed those numbers this year. Large organisations and SMMEs will be repre-

sented across the areas of mining, electrical, automation, manufacturing, power and transport."

Corin says, "Some have exhibited with us for over 50 years, with their businesses growing alongside the growth of Electra Mining Africa. What better way to bring a brand to life: on the floor of an exhibition where you're engaging with your target market face-to-face. It's a unique value-proposition to participate in an exhibition like this."

The Electra Mining Africa Innovation and New Products Awards will be taking place again this year, following its success in 2022. Organised in partnership with the South African Capital Equipment Export Council (SACEEC), the awards recognise the outstanding levels of innovation at the show. Many entries are anticipated again this year.

Charlene Hefer, portfolio director at

Specialised Exhibitions, spoke about the various attractions, citing the Forklift Driver competition and the focused automation hall as two of the exciting elements at this year's show.

"The Forklift Driver competition organised in conjunction with Lifting Africa and LEEASA is back this year on a much bigger scale. It's where exceptional forklift driver skills will be put to the test with Forklift operators competing for the coveted title of Forklift Driver Champion," explains Hefer.

"We're also thrilled that the automation hall, a huge attraction in 2022, has received overwhelming support from industry again this year and will be filled with ground-breaking innovations. In addition, for the first time this year, Electra Mining Africa is incorporating the Local Southern African Manufacturing Expo."

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Leading transport operators are not born they are made

AN increased demand for road transport, largely driven by the rail service challenges South Africa has faced, has left many local supply chains heavily reliant on road fleet operators. This increased demand has led to growing pains as the industry adjusts.

“The factors that will determine the leading transport operators in the near future are very different to those that have traditionally been accepted as benchmarks for success,” says Erik Bergvall, MD, Scania Southern Africa. Historically, transport businesses have been considered easy to replicate. Transport operators had access to the same trucks, trailers and routes. Now the transport industry is on the brink of a significant transformation driven by technological advancements, sustainability measures and evolving consumer demands. The operators who lead this shift will gain a competitive advantage that slow adopters will find difficult to match.

Simply adding more trucks to a fleet is no longer enough. Transport operators need to increase efficiencies too. The adoption of innovative capabilities is allowing progressive operators to move faster than competitors, introduce differentiated services and adopt new systems. Increasingly, the ability to collect, understand and apply data intelligence, from vehicles and other assets, will mean the difference between operations as usual and operational transformation.

“Leading transport operators aren’t born,” says Bergvall, “they are made”. Technology is playing a pivotal role in supporting transport companies to adapt and thrive. The potential for fleets to harness intelligent insights from diverse data sources is revolutionising fleet management. Real-time tracking, data analytics and predictive modeling are enabling transport operators to respond efficiently to disruptions, while staying ahead of the curve.

Data sourced from sensors and cameras is enabling significant cost efficiencies. By tracking factors such as vehicle idling, route planning and driving styles, fuel saving improvements can be made. Data-led predictive maintenance supports cost savings by identifying issues before they cause downtime. Long-term data tracking can measure these improvements, so operators can accelerate their efforts. Transport operators who win at cost efficiencies are made.

Data is also playing a significant role in helping transport operators to reach their sustainability goals. To reduce the environmental impacts of transport operations, real-time data insights are key. Data can support operators to decide how and where to start their transition to sustainable vehicle solutions. Metrics include lifetime usage and average daily utilisation rates. Sustainable

vehicles are designed to maximise fuel economy and total cost of ownership, while reducing harmful emissions. They have a significant role to play in assisting transport companies to optimise efficiencies that will deliver a competitive advantage.

Growing pains can be overcome with a supportive relationship between transport operators and OEM’s. Customers are

seeking value for money and trusted relationships for the whole life cycle of a truck or bus. The ability to make product advancements work for customers, coupled with a deep understanding of how value-added services, that leverage data, can optimise fleet operational efficiencies, will position OEM’s as valued partners in building South Africa’s new transport leaders.



THEY ARE BOTH MADE TO LEAD



When a transport operator, with just four trucks, learns how to use data to save more fuel than his competitors, he is made. When a farmer learns he can use seasonal cash flow to pay for new trucks, he knows it is a deal made especially for him. He is made. When a bus operator’s customers compliment him on his vehicle’s quality and comfort, he understands that they were made for each other. When a sustainability pioneer uses data to watch his carbon footprint drop, he can already see the difference he’s made. When a fleet manager can rely on technologically leading safety features to keep his drivers safe, he knows he’s made the right call. When a procurement manager calculates how Preventative Maintenance can minimise downtime, his decision is made. When a driver can access 24/7 roadside support, with just one phone call, his day is made.

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SCANIA

How Webfleet is digitising daily fleet tasks to boost driver confidence and enhance road safety

By Diane Silcock

FLEET managers have an onerous task when it comes to managing a fleet of vehicles. Missed schedules, lower driver safety, higher fuel costs, and poor driver performance, are just some of the issues they face daily. Adopting a digitised and automated process, simplifies fleet management ensuring that managers are kept fully informed around all matters affecting their fleet.

Webfleet South Africa – part of BridgeStone Mobility solutions – specialises in fleet management solutions which are geared around improving efficiencies in business and driving down costs, especially diesel costs.

Sales director, Justin Manson, says, “Depending on the solution the customer opts for, the system provides information to the fleet controllers and managers around where the vehicle is, how it is being driven as well as feedback to the drivers on their actual driving performance. This could be driving events such as speeding, harsh braking and cornering, and idling too long.”

From a dispatching perspective, the con-



trol room is connected directly with the drivers. Using an in-cab device, the driver's entire trip sheet for the day can be optimised by the Webfleet platform, navigating the driver to each stop and taking traffic and road conditions into account. In-cab, the driver will receive an audible alert with a visual, in real time, advising transgressions such as speeding, for instance.

The Webfleet platform is in-depth and the OptiDrive element which has a strong focus on safety, generates a driver scorecard. Drivers are measured on KPI's such as driving events, fuel consumption, constant speed, coasting, gear shifting, wearing a

seatbelt, and unsafe following distance. At the end of a trip, the driver can access the OptiDrive indicator on the driver terminal to see exactly what the score is. This alerts the driver to where they went wrong, where they scored well or not so well, and what improvements need to be made. This serves to empower the driver and boost their confidence, having goals to work towards, and there are no surprises at the debriefing.

“Recently added to OptiDrive is the fleet overview component,” says Manson, “which takes the various KPI's into account providing fleet managers with a very nice graphical display of the perfor-

mance of their entire fleet with the ability to drill down into the details.”

Webfleet goes the extra mile when it comes to road safety and recently launched its annual Road Safety Survey, aimed to gather valuable insights and feedback from professionals in the industry. “We present our findings through various forums and platforms and take two to three key aspects that we believe are hot topics and focus on those over the next 12 months. It's our intention to start conversations around road safety, share the data with customers, industry associations, and our partners at different government entities.”

Western Cape coal exports surged 395% to R8,12-billion at the Port of Cape Town

By Larry Claasen

THE Western Cape has seen a sharp rise in coal exports according to Wesgro's Western Cape Trade Flows & Developments 2022 report, which said that “coal; briquettes, ovoids and similar solid fuels manufactured from coal” rose from R1,63-billion in 2021 to R8,12-billion in 2022.

This surge saw it account for 4,36% of the Western Cape's exports for the 2022 period, placing it between the 5,67% coming from wine related exports and the 2,11% related to iron or non-alloy steel.

The rise in coal exports was so huge, it contributed approximately 30% toward the year-on-year growth of 12,8% in value export growth for that period.

“Upon closer analysis, the export value of coal by-products surged by 395% in 2022, which was largely driven by record high levels of global coal consumption, coupled by a surge in global coal prices,” said Wesgro in its 2024|25 Annual Performance Plan.

Global events played a notable role in the

demand for coal from South Africa, said Wesgro, the tourism, trade and investment promotion agency for Cape Town and the Western Cape.

“South Africa's share of global coal supply has risen substantially in 2022, mainly due to the European ban on Russian coal due to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.”

This in turn led to the Netherlands ranking the Western Cape as its second largest export coal market in 2022 after Mauritius.

Though the Port of Cape Town is known for its congestion issues, the problem at the country's other ports led to the surge in coal and chromium exports from the Western Cape.

“Cape Town's exports were recorded for antiques and chromium, which is not locally mined [in the Western Cape].

The logistical rerouting of chromium, coal and other mineral substance exports due to infrastructure failures continue to drive the increase of non-local commodity exports from the Port of Cape Town,” according to the EPIC - Economic Performance Indica-

tors for Cape Town 2023 Fourth Quarter report. EPIC publication is a collaboration between the Economic Development and Investment and Policy and Strategy departments of the City of Cape Town.

The increase in exports from the Port of Cape Town coincides with the drop in coal exports from the Port of Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal, which is home to the largest coal terminal in Africa.

Coal exports from the Richards Bay Coal Terminal dropped to 47,92-million tons in 2023 from 50,4-million tons in 2022, as a result of continuing problems on the Transnet Freight Rail (TFR) export coal line.

Though coal exports from the Port of Cape Town experienced the largest year-on-year decline in value, dropping 24,8% in the last quarter, it is still a leading export from the city.

“Refined petroleum remained the highest-value export from Cape Town in the fourth quarter of 2023, worth R4,9-billion, followed by antiques (R1,9-billion) and coal (R1,47-billion),” said the EPIC report.

Economic Regulation of Transport Act is a marked step towards rail reform and privatisation

VIVIEN Chaplin, Director and Gaby Wesson, associate in the corporate & commercial practice at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr

On 11 June 2024, President Ramaphosa signed the Economic Regulation of Transport Act 6 of 2024 into law, marking a significant development in the economic regulation of transport and rail reform in South Africa.

The act introduces substantial changes to the transport sector by establishing the Transport Economic Regulator, a pivotal step following Transnet gazetting of the draft Network Statement on 19 March 2024, which we discussed previously on 2 May 2024.

A central feature of the act is the empowerment of the regulator to oversee price controls

across transport sectors including road, rail, shipping, ports, and aviation. This role mirrors the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa), approving tariffs proposed by regulated entities like Transnet to prevent monopolistic pricing and inefficiencies, while promoting fair competition.

The regulator is envisaged to act similarly to the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa), and will approve price tariffs of regulated entities, such as Transnet, for use of the infrastructure in those sectors. This aims to prevent monopolistic pricing by regulated entities and inefficiencies, while also levelling the playing field. Importantly, the regulator has the discretion to tailor the price controls in respect



Vivien Chaplin.

of each sector. The process entails the submission of tariff proposals by regulated entities for approval.

Notably, there is no mention of capacity as a rate determinant as historically applied by Nersa, which has resulted in hiked up tariffs. Importantly, the regulator is also mandated to consult with industry players and the public regarding the proposed price tar-

iffs before approval.

Tariffs will be tailored by the regulator considering factors such as operational efficiency, investment needs, and economic impacts. Public and industry consultations will precede tariff approvals.

Existing and new price regulations set by the regulator will remain effective until revised, with provisions for extraordinary reviews and



Gaby Wesson.

complaint-driven investigations.

The act also facilitates access to Transnet's rail infrastructure by third parties through standardised terms or bilateral agreements. This provision opens doors for private sector involvement in rail operations, subject to approval by the regulator and payment of access fees. However, concerns over the proposed mini-

mum access fee of 19,79 cents/gross ton per kilometre, based on gross rather than net weight, have sparked industry criticism.

The act also establishes the Transport Economic Council as the adjudicative body for disputes related to price controls, providing a forum for affected parties to seek redress.

Overall, the act represents a significant stride towards liberalising South Africa's rail sector, aligning with the National Rail Policy and the Freight Logistics Roadmap.

Ultimately, the principles in the act, if implemented effectively, coupled with the increased regulatory oversight of the regulator, and with due consideration to industry stakeholders, may assist in eliminating

market abuse by monopolies and corruption, as well as increasing competition and transparency.

The act is ambitious in its scope and represents a significant step towards achieving rail reform in South Africa, as it is one of three instruments outlining implementation of the reform, in addition to the National Rail Policy and the Freight Logistics Roadmap.

The underlying principle of the rail reform is liberalisation and the opening of the door to private investment, which if achieved, can reduce Transnet's historic debt, increase freight volumes in the rail network, reduce transport costs for the public and ultimately expand and improve the economy.

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Micro-Credentials offer bite-sized skills to boost youth employability

AT 45,4%, South Africa's youth unemployment rate dwarfs the national average (32,9%), highlighting the struggle many young people face entering the workforce.

Though a traditional university degree can increase job prospects, factors like cost, time commitment, and location often make it inaccessible. Furthermore, 35,5% of young South Africans are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), further compounding the problem.

"A means to reducing this is through online micro-credentials, which are compact courses certifying specific skills and knowledge that can overcome these barriers by providing young people with access to learning, thereby improving their chances of employability," says Dr Andrew Dickson, engineering executive at CBI-electric: low voltage.

"These could expedite the journey from learning to earning, particularly in sectors where



Dr Andrew Dickson, engineering executive at CBI-electric: low voltage.

specific industry skills are lacking, such as those required for South Africa's energy transition, and where employers are looking to address talent shortages. Additionally, online micro-credentials could provide older people with opportunities to upskill themselves."

He explains that unlike university degrees with their broad curriculum, micro-credentials focus on specific skills and knowledge, delivered through short, personalised, and often on-demand learning experiences, catering to learners seeking flexible and affordable learning opportunities.

"A quick skills upgrade in a specific area can enable learners to develop competencies that are in-demand, potentially making them stronger candidates in today's competitive job market."

"Along with being a more cost-effective way to upskill in a shorter time, micro-credentials can be stacked to create a unique skills-based CV showcasing a candidate's evolving skillset," adds Dickson.

"Stacking micro-credentials allows learners to progressively build their proficiencies, keeping them relevant in a changing job market. These portable skills

empower them to consider lateral career moves and demonstrate their current capabilities to potential employers."

South Africa faces a R1,6-trillion loss in unrealised economic potential due to the skills gap. "Micro-credentials offer a solution for employers seeking to bridge this gap and nurture talent," he shares. "By offering micro-credential opportunities, companies can attract individuals invested in continuous learning and retain valuable employees. This ongoing development allows employees to gain niche skills quickly, enabling them to adapt within the company and contribute to overall productivity."

"Unfortunately, micro-credentials are still viewed as non-credit bearing in South Africa, yet policies are slowly being introduced to recognise their value. While formal recognition is underway, there's an opportunity for businesses across the board to take the lead."

Transforming the workforce through strategic training alliances

The impact of long-term training partnerships on skills development.

SKILLS Development has the power to transform individuals and companies. And, the eight-year partnership between Daly Credit Corporation and EduPower Skills Academy clearly illustrates this. These two companies have woven essential skills into the fabric of Daly's operations, elevating the workforce and helping to combat youth unemployment. Their unwavering commitment to inclusive growth has raised the bar for what it truly means to invest in people.

According to Aumitha Ramash, the group human resources executive for Daly Credit Corporation, EduPower's credibility and effective delivery have fostered a long-standing relationship.

"A standout aspect of our collaboration is EduPower's dedication to facilitating learnership programmes that meet Daly's goals. Their approach to Skills Development not only helps us achieve our B-BBEE objectives but also ensures our learnership graduates enter the workforce with the skills they need to be productive from day one," states Ramash.

"Ensuring that Daly's learners add immediate value is one of our key deliverables," says Rajan Naidoo, MD of EduPower. "The benefit of long-term partnerships with companies like them is that we can tailor our training to give learners the best possible start for their future careers."

Enhancing Diversity

"Over the years, EduPower has facilitated 500 learnerships at Daly, enabling us to contribute meaningfully

towards youth employment in South Africa," Ramash elaborates. "In selecting candidates for our learnerships, we have intentionally included specific demographics and age groups to leverage the benefits of diversity."

This focus extends to accommodating learners with disabilities. EduPower's Naidoo says it has been possible due to the Academy's customised learning environment coupled with its adaptive learning methods and flexible classroom hours.

"Our learning environments are focused on providing everyone the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background or disabilities," he adds.

Continuous Monitoring and Support

Another key to the success of the partnership has been the constant monitoring of the learnerships by both Daly and EduPower. Ramash says this ensures learner commitment and results-oriented execution.

"EduPower goes the extra mile to resolve any queries that the learner or Daly might have," she explains. "From onboarding, induction, facilitation and general administrative support, the team is flexible and responsive to the needs and circumstances of learners, accommodating unexpected events that may affect learner engagement."

This level of support is non-negotiable emphasises Naidoo and is essential for maintaining the high standards and effectiveness of the learnerships.

Absorption

Ramash also praises EduPower's thorough



Aumitha Ramash, the group human resources executive for Daly Credit Corporation, EduPower

learner assessments and evaluations which allow Daly to measure their ROI. Coupled with a fixed-term employment contract for the duration of the learnership, these measurables often lead to permanent employment for top performers.

"EduPower's learnerships enable us to target the skills needed for our entry-level employees, continuously upgrading and broadening their skill sets and knowledge within the company," she notes. "This makes excellent business sense for both the employee and Daly."

Building Trust

Both Ramash and Naidoo agree that having a strong relationship built on trust ensures that both the businesses and the learners come out as winners. "Trust is the foundation of any successful partnership and for us, this has been built over years of consistent, dedicated service and a shared vision for growth and development," Ramash concludes.

The crucial role of reskilling and upskilling in new economic paradigms

By Sarah Babb, managing partner at Laminar Leadership

THE stark disparities illuminated by global reports on poverty, unemployment, and inequality signal a failing education and training system.

"The current educational and training systems are largely designed for a bygone era"

The International Labor Organisation's outlook on rising unemployment and the persistent issue of working poverty underscores an economy in disarray, unable to secure dignified living for all.

Amidst this backdrop, the clarion call for new economic models resounds louder than ever.

The transition to economies that prioritise ecological sustainability and social equity demands a workforce adept in not only the

technical know-how of green technologies but also in the soft skills of creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. World Economic Forum (WEF) Future of Jobs report anticipates a significant transformation in job profiles, with new roles emerging in the domains of digital, green, and care economies.

This shift is not merely a trend but a necessary evolution to address the dual crises of climate change and social disparity.

The current educational and training systems are largely designed for a bygone era, emphasising skills for jobs that may no longer exist in the near future.

The gap between the skills possessed by the current workforce and those required for the "jobs of tomorrow" is widening, threatening to leave many behind, especially the youth, women, and older workers.

Brazil's Skills Accelerator initiative exemplifies a successful model for bridging this gap.

Through strategic partnerships between national bodies and private sector companies, the program has made significant strides in reskilling and upskilling, impacting millions.

Such collaborative efforts highlight the potential of targeted education and training programs to prepare individuals for the emerging job market, thereby contributing to a more resilient and equitable economy.

Moreover, the skills needed for the future extend beyond mere technical proficiency. The top ten skills identified by the WEF, including analytical thinking, resilience, and leadership, underscore the importance of a holistic approach to learning.

Developing these competencies is crucial for fostering a workforce capable of inno-

vation and adaptation in rapidly changing environments.

The call to action is clear: governments, educators, and industry leaders must unite in reimagining our educational frameworks to align with the demands of future economies.

By investing in the development of a diverse set of skills, we can ensure that individuals are not only employable but also equipped to contribute meaningfully to a sustainable and just society.

In conclusion, by prioritising reskilling and upskilling, we can pave the way for a future that is not only economically viable but also socially equitable and environmentally sustainable.

Babb is a facilitator on executive development programmes at Stellenbosch Business School Executive Development and this column first appeared in its ED Talk publication.

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Are lithium-ion batteries a ticking bomb?



Photograph courtesy of FSRI.

By Diane Silcock

LITHIUM-ION batteries are part of our daily lives. They are used in solar power backup storage, inverters, forklifts, pallet trucks, small industrial robots, electric vehicles, and more personal items include cellphones, tablets, laptops, electric toothbrushes, tools, even vaping devices.

"Once the battery is alight, as soon as there is enough hydrogen in the air, you have a bomb."

South Africa is one of the leading consumers of inverters in the world. Five million have already been imported into the country and that is just one particular brand of inverter.

This is according to Anthony Schewitz, regional director (Highveld region) of the Electrical Contractors' Association of SA (ECA SA), speaking at the Fire Protection Association of Southern Africa's InFIREs seminar held in Midrand on 12 June 2024.

He says, "Lithium-ion batteries have a very scary phenomenon, as the main risk around them is what is known as thermal runaway. It occurs when a lithium-ion cell enters an uncontrollable, self-heating

state and it starts the cycle in the next cell and the next. Added to that, there might be a secondary explosion formed which will fill the environment with hydrogen which is extremely volatile. An example is a solar installation in a homeowner's garage. Once the battery is alight, as soon as there is enough hydrogen in the air, you have a bomb."

It is not unexpected, therefore, that fire departments globally are grappling with a surge in fire incidents linked to lithium-ion battery-powered devices.

"Fires from lithium batteries have very different fire behaviour to what we are used to," says Willem Venter of Group Insurance – also a speaker at the conference. "The causes of lithium battery fires include electrical short-circuit, mechanical damage, overcharging, faulty design and sub-standard manufacturing."

At the conference, Jasmine Jansen of the City of Johannesburg's Emergency Management Services, expressed that firefighters in South Africa need to be upskilled and equipped to deal with the types of fires caused by lithium-ion batteries. Responsible reporting of fires in so far as informing the fire department of the type of fire, is vital to ensure firefighters come prepared.

Correct location of lithium-ion batteries is crucial for safety

In the interest of safety, Venter is proposing that, as companies move over to lithium battery forklifts and reach trucks, they construct a dedicated battery bay or charge the batteries outside the building.

International standards provide guidelines on where to store batteries but South Africa is falling short in addressing this important issue as South African National Standards have not been updated to adequately address safety issues.

"From a local authority perspective," says Jansen, "by-laws need to be reviewed to ensure the safe storage and use of lithium-ion batteries, to protect lives and property."

Schewitz indicates that the ECA SA has been engaging with all manufacturers to devise an electrical standard that adequately addresses battery location and associated issues.

He stresses that fire risks can be mitigated through correct location, mounting, protection, inspection and maintenance, adequate risk management, and use of qualified installation personnel.

Venter succinctly concludes: "Knowledge must be shared, awareness must be made, people must be trained."

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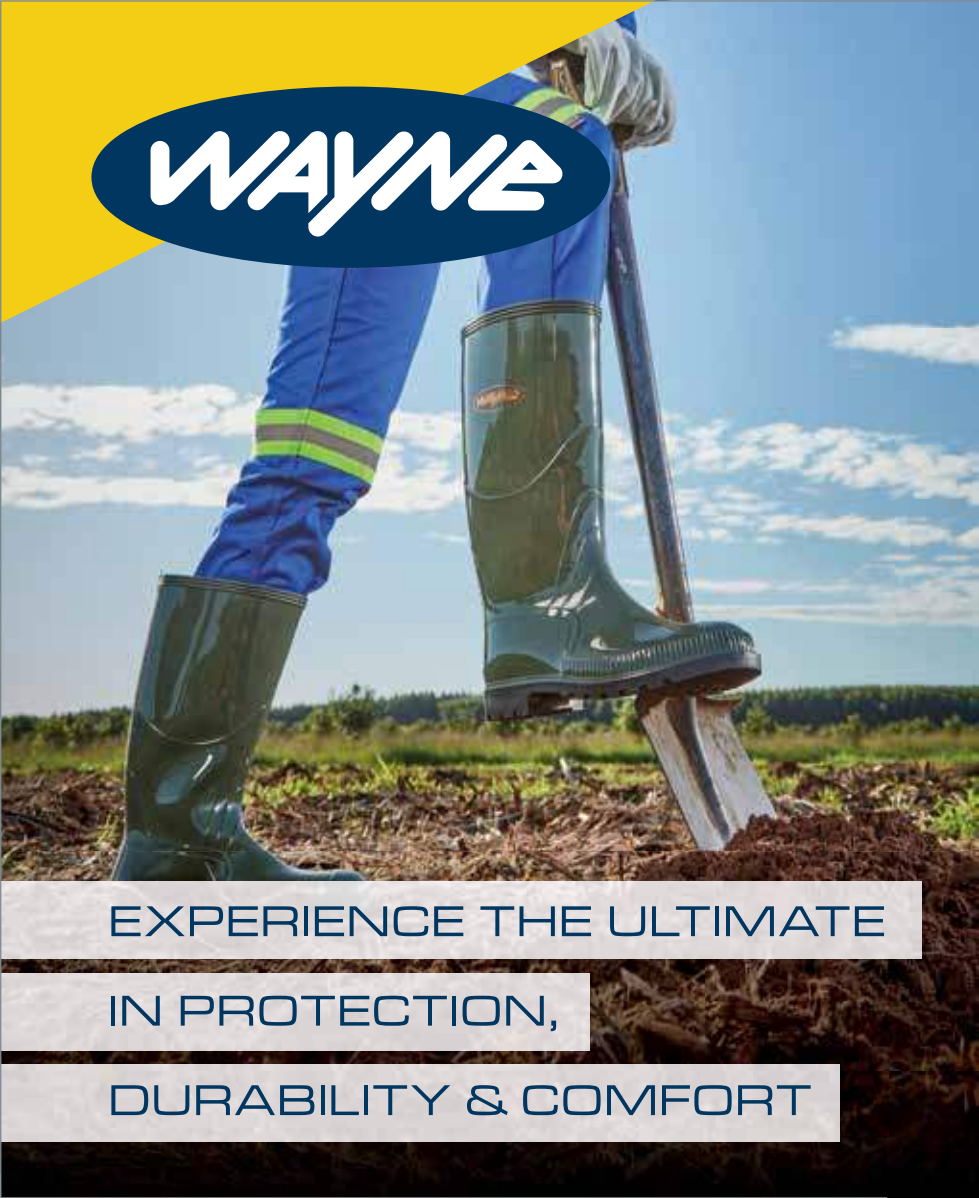
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Toyota Material Handling debuts Vector A-series Man-Up Combis for warehouse revolution



IN the ever-evolving warehouse industry, Toyota Material Handling, a division of CFAO Equipment South Africa, debuts its new Vector A-series Man-Up Combi, an articulated forklift truck designed to revolutionise warehouse operations.

This innovative solution promises enhanced agility, precision, and safety standards.

The Vector A-series Man-Up Combi boasts high rack handling capabilities, allowing operators to efficiently handle goods or conduct order picking from various rack levels. Stephen Mostert, national technical manager at

CFAO Equipment SA, highlights the company's commitment to efficiency and safety in warehouse operations through the introduction of the Vector A-series.

The unique design of the Vector A-series ensures stability and precision, particularly when handling heavy loads.

Equipped with tri-plex masts and three-way forks, this articulated four-wheel chassis minimises aisle space requirements while maximising stability during operations.

Furthermore, the Vector A-series features staggered quad set support wheels for

a smoother ride and extended lifespan of polyurethane wheels.

Its ability to navigate through narrow aisles allows for increased storage capacity without expanding floor space.

Toyota Material Handling's patented Advanced Lifting System reduces battery energy consumption, facilitating longer operating hours on a single charge.

The ergonomic design of the cabin prioritises operator comfort and includes a Human Machine Interface (HMI) for improved interaction and visibility.

Safety remains paramount with the inclusion of Toyota Material Handling's Personal Protection System (PPS) and advanced stability sensors. These features detect obstructions and personnel, ensuring a safe working environment.

With its ground-breaking features and unwavering support from CFAO Equipment SA, the Vector A-series Man-Up Combis aim to redefine productivity and safety standards in the South African warehouse sector.

'5-in-1 Trade Show' brings important industries, buyers and sellers, together

THIS year's event is set to be one of the biggest Electra Mining Africa exhibitions to date with over 850 companies exhibiting across six exhibition halls and four sizable outside exhibit areas.

Visitors will get to see the latest industry innovations with thousands of new products and technologies on show, and hundreds of live demonstrations showcasing machinery and equipment in action.

Taking place in Nasrec, Johannesburg, from 2-6 September, Electra Mining Africa is recognised as a '5-in-1 Trade Show'. The five incorporated shows – Electra Mining Africa, Automation Expo, Ele-nex Africa, POWERex, and Transport Expo – will put the spotlight

on mining, manufacturing, engineering and related industries; automation, instrumentation, mechatronics and control; the electronics, electrical and electro-mechanical sectors; as well as power generation, power transmission and distribution, power application and renewable energy.

The Local Southern African Manufacturing Expo has also been incorporated for the first time with its focus on local manufacturing.

"Electra Mining Africa has built its reputation as a platform for trade; the place where buyers and sellers meet to do business. Deals are made and beneficial partnerships are formed," says Gary Corin, MD of Specialised Exhibitions, organisers of Electra Mining

Africa and a division of Montgomery Group. Seminar topics will also be aligned with the show's theme days of sustainability, women's day and skills development, safety and lifting, innovation, and South Africa day. The Lifting Equipment Engineering Association of SA (LEEASA) and the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (SAIMM) will be hosting conferences alongside the show sharing valuable content.

Visitors can look out for the Forklift Driver competition, organised in conjunction with Lifting Africa and LEEASA, taking place on each day of the show.

For further information, visit www.electramining.co.za

visionAI turns reactive CCTV cameras into proactive AI sensors to improve production efficiencies in manufacturing

By Diane Silcock

visionAI, the brainchild of Mint Technology Group, is helping manufacturers to achieve greater production efficiencies, profitability and sustainability through the use of visual Artificial Intelligence (AI).

An early adopter of AI technology, visionAI initially focused on visual elements which included facial recognition and document intelligence, which is the digital conversion of text into machine-encoded text.

In 2022, however, the company took a decision to accelerate investment and growth, evolving into a Software as a Service (SaaS) organisation with a primary focus on manufacturing.

VisionAI's locally-developed AI-driven technology leverages a customer's existing CCTV cameras to track business critical production and supply chain activities to provide a holistic view over production operations.

The system is able to detect, monitor, and analyse production. This allows it to provide deep analytics - which unlocks visual intelligence data - enabling the customer to make better informed decisions and ensure a safe, productive factory environment.

"Our customers are typically high-volume manufacturers with low



Johann de Wet, visionAI's chief revenue officer (Western Cape).

variation production lines that struggle with unplanned downtime. Each downtime minute costs manufacturers, on average, \$22 000, therefore, every incremental efficiency improvement has a significant bottom line impact, especially in South Africa where the manufacturing sector has been struggling for some time," says Johann de Wet, visionAI's chief revenue officer (Western Cape).

The environment is monitored with no human interaction 24/7. The system provides real time data, enabling the customer to improve efficiencies and avoid unplanned, costly downtime.

"This holistic view over production operations helps move the

needle to, firstly, increased production efficiency, ultimately driving additional output and revenue, and secondly, to reduced operational risk, such as a lower potential threat of fines and compliance risk," adds de Wet.

Companies often have insufficient transparency when it comes to the movement of pallets, resulting in stock discrepancies with handovers between production, warehousing and despatch. This leads to meaningful stock write-offs/losses occurring which visionAI's system can help avoid.

When it comes to health and safety, which is given high priority in countries like Australia and the UK,

largely due to huge fines being imposed for non-compliance, visionAI helps provide increased transparency and alerts of emerging security incidents in factory and warehouse settings, commonly related to forklift movement and loading/offloading of trucks.

De Wet sites an interesting use case where their system monitors the customer's open truck beds using camera images and a custom-built GPT that detects and provides alerts when truck loads are not sufficiently secured, appear unstable or if there is movement of the truck load during the trip. This demonstrates the use of visual AI combined with ChatGPT-like prompts (generative AI).

Other application examples include tracking stock movement in the manufacture of bread, proactive condition monitoring in steel manufacturing, truck load identification in the agricultural supply chain, and truck load safety using generative AI.

"Helping manufacturers to be more efficient is an opportunity where we can make significant impact that can help factory operations be more productive, profitable and sustainable," concludes de Wet.

Learn more at <https://visionaisuite.net/>

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Maersk opens its first low GHG emissions warehouse in Denmark



LESS than two years ago, Maersk started construction works for its first low greenhouse gas emission warehouse in Denmark, located in Taulov Dry Port in Fredericia, Denmark.

On 24 June 2024, the facility was officially launched, bringing together customers, local authorities and partners for a symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremony and the tour of the new site.

This facility is Maersk's first low-emission warehouse and sets new international standards for the development

of low-emission warehouses and logistics facilities, in line with the company's ambition to achieve net-zero CO₂ emission by 2040 throughout its operations.

It will also play a key role in Maersk's logistics footprint in the Nordics, significantly improving the handling of cargoes that arrive to the region by road, sea and air.

"We are bringing to life a true logistics hub located right in the centre of the Danish Triangle Region. This will be a new centre of gravity, with easy access to the main infrastruc-

ture elements – ports, rail and road, but also our air hub in Billund – making it a perfect and tangible example of integrated logistics solutions that are at the heart of Maersk's strategy. But more importantly, this facility also directly responds to the needs of our customers, many of whom are operating their own distribution centres and production facilities in the area," said Birna Ödefors, MD, Nordics at Maersk.

"The project is a joint enterprise between Maersk and Taulov Dry Port, owner of the land. The warehouse

was built according to BREEAM Excellent standards with zero direct emissions from operations. "It is a great honour to hold the inauguration of Maersk's new warehouse in Taulov Dry Port. Maersk has seen the value in locating their storage facility here, at Denmark's multimodal transportation hub. Our good collaboration has now entered a new phase, and we look forward to its continuation," said Rune Rasmussen, CEO of ADP A/S, operator of the Port of Fredericia and Taulov Dry Port.

The new facility complies with high environmental standards. All indoor and outdoor equipment in the warehouse is electrified, with solar panels installed on the entire roof and excess renewable energy produced being fed to the grid.

Battery driven trucks will be used for all shunting operations and hydrogen stations are planned within 150 metres from the site.

New E-Commerce measures will level the playing field for entrepreneurs

IN a significant move to support local e-commerce entrepreneurs, the Trade, Industry, and Competition Ministry has announced new measures aimed at levelling the playing field between international e-commerce giants and local businesses.

Starting in July, clothing items bought from international e-commerce retailers and packaged in small quantities will be taxed at the same rate as large quantities.

embedded in the last-mile delivery sector. With 70% of its 1 500 clients involved in e-commerce, the company has been proactive in developing a range of facilities to support this growing industry. These include pick and pack fulfilment services, flexible warehousing, and a range of logistics facilities. Additionally, Inospace provides technology that offers the most competitive and optimal courier rates, further supporting its

parcels below this amount were previously subject to minimal duty. From July 1, these parcels will now attract the same 45% duty plus VAT, ensuring fair treatment for all retailers.

Anthony Thunström, CEO of TFG, recently highlighted the collaborative efforts with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and customs authorities. "We have been working closely with SARS and customs to ensure we operate on a level playing field," said Thunström.

"Over the last few months, there has been significantly better enforcement from SARS and customs."

Levitt, the founder of multi-billion rand Inospace, echoed this sentiment, noting the importance of supporting local entrepreneurs in the fast-growing and highly competitive e-commerce sector.

"At Inospace, our focus on the e-commerce sector for smaller companies remains central to our organisation," said Levitt.

"We are committed to the growth of local industrial entrepreneurs. These new measures will help protect our clients and ensure they can compete fairly in the market."

While the Trade and Industry Ministry has been known to micro-manage and create red tape, Levitt praised this legislation as a critical intervention. "This piece of legislation is crucial in protecting local businesses from unfair competition and supporting the development of a robust e-commerce sector in South Africa," he said.

"At Inospace, our focus on the e-commerce sector for smaller companies remains central to our organisation."

This measure is expected to curb tax loopholes exploited by international platforms and foster fair competition.

Rael Levitt, CEO of Inospace, a leading provider of micro logistics parks in South Africa, expressed strong support for the new measures.

"We are fully supportive of free market dynamics, especially when they benefit entrepreneurs," said Levitt. "It is crucial that local businesses are given a fair chance to compete. These new regulations are a necessary step to ensure that South African companies can operate on a level playing field."

Inospace, which manages 50 micro logistics parks across the country, is deeply

clients' logistics and operational needs.

Outgoing Minister of Trade, Industry, and Competition, Ebrahim Patel, emphasised the importance of equality of treatment in the marketplace. "Everyone has to pay the full customs duties and the full VAT," Patel stated.

"This ensures that South Africa is not left poorer as a result of any gaps in our regulatory environment."

Several local retailers have welcomed the move, noting that international platforms such as Temu and Shein have been using tax loopholes by bringing in products in small quantities to avoid higher import duties. South Africa imposes a 45% import duty plus VAT on imported clothing packages worth over R500, but

Recovery in the logistics sector continued in May, albeit at a slower pace - Ctrack

THE Ctrack Transport and Freight Index increased in May to reach an index level of 125,6, an increase of 1,7% compared to April's level, and 2,5% above year-ago levels.

This marks the third consecutive monthly increase in the index and an early signal that the transport sector's contribution to overall GDP could again move into positive territory in the second quarter of the year.

The Air Freight has been a star performer among the sub-sectors since the start of 2024. Comparing May's index level to December 2023, revealed a notable increase of 15,4% in air freight activity.

Following a horrendous month for the Sea Freight sub-component in April due to a multiplicity of factors, the sector bounced back in May.

Overall, for all ports

in South Africa, the number of containers that landed increased by 14,5% m/m in May (vs -17,9% in April), and the number of containers shipped rocketed by 45,5% m/m following the drop of 32,5% during April.

The heavily weighted Road Freight sub-sector, which has grown notably in recent years and currently accounts for 83,6% of all freight payload in South

Africa, recovered further in May, the third consecutive positive monthly growth rate following a downward trend that lasted almost a year.

The Rail Freight sub-sector lost a bit of ground in May, but continues its very gradual recovery overall. For the first five months of 2024, rail freight increased by 11% compared to the corresponding period in 2023.

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AI in Check: Don't underestimate the importance of risk management when it comes to AI

By Ryan Boyes,
Governance, Risk and
Compliance Officer at
Galix



ARTIFICIAL Intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming embedded in our everyday lives, from the apps we use, to search engines, facial recognition, smart devices in our homes, and more. However, while AI has many applications and benefits, and businesses are exploring its use in a variety of ways, there is also a level of risk involved, particularly when it comes to the data that AI uses.

Risk management around AI is critical for any business, whether you have an AI strategy or not, because AI, simply put, is everywhere.

Global standardisation

Having an international standard in place to manage the long-term risk of AI is critical, especially in light of companies like OpenAI recently disbanding their long-term risk team.

The need for this is highlighted by the introduction of the International Standards Organisation

(ISO) 42001 standard in December 2023.

ISO 42001 provides organisations with best practices for governing AI effectively, with formalised standards around AI management systems and a focus on understanding the risk of AI. It offers a comprehensive approach to managing AI systems throughout their lifecycle.

While ISO 42001 is a separate standard and certification, it is also intrinsically linked to ISO 27001, which is the standard for information security, because AI relies on data to perform its functions.

It is therefore impossible to effectively manage AI without addressing information management systems as well.

Every time anyone makes use of any AI system, whether this is part of corporate strategy or not, there is information that is used and processed.

It has become imperative that this is better understood and better managed; otherwise, organisations run the risk of information leaks, compliance breaches, and other issues around data security.

Intelligence requires information

The reality is that AI and automation are frequently applied to information in today's world, often without our noticing or being fully aware.

Even storing information in SharePoint and then using Micro-

soft Copilot could potentially be problematic, as the AI servers may be located outside of your jurisdiction, and this may breach laws that your company is required to adhere to.

If there is an information breach, the potential implications could be dire.

Organisations today need to be aware of how to manage the risks around AI when it comes to their information, and this needs to form an intrinsic part of both compliance and cybersecurity strategy.

Not just an IT problem

Information and information security are no longer just an IT problem; everyone uses information, and it is critical that it is managed and protected effectively.

While becoming certified on ISO standards is not a legal requirement, they do provide excellent frameworks to guide the process of risk mitigation and to ensure that effective, holistic information and cybersecurity strategies are in place.

An experienced third-party security and risk provider can be an invaluable partner on this journey, helping businesses to understand risks and their impact, how to manage, mitigate, or accept risk, and implement the systems and controls to manage information security effectively as part of a holistic, overarching cybersecurity and cyber resilience strategy.

NGBS showcases groundbreaking innovations at GITEX Africa 2024

NGBS, a leading Moroccan company specialising in engineering and digital services, participated in GITEX Africa 2024 (www.GITEXAfrica.com), held from May 21-24, 2024, in Marrakech, Morocco.

The event provided a platform for NGBS to unveil its latest technological advancements and engage with industry leaders from around the globe.

Innovations on Display

At GITEX Africa 2024, NGBS showcased a variety of state-of-the-art solutions designed to drive digital transformation across multiple sectors.

Highlights included:

- **Field Force Automation Platform:** Demonstrated enhanced operational efficiency through advanced automation and real-time data manage-

ment capabilities.

- **Contract Management Platform:** Presented innovative tools for streamlining contract lifecycle management with robust and secure digital solutions.
- **Digital Business Card Platform:** Introduced a revolutionary approach to professional networking with seamless and eco-friendly digital business cards.



Adil ALIGOD, GM of NGBS, reflected on the event: "Our participation in GITEX Africa 2024 was an incredible opportunity to connect with industry peers and showcase our innovative solutions. Africa is rapidly emerging as a global tech hub, and we are excited to contribute to this growth by providing high-quality business and technological solutions tailored to the needs of our clients." NGBS's presence at

GITEX Africa underscored its dedication to innovation and excellence in the fields of IT outsourcing (ITO), engineering services outsourcing (ESO), and business process outsourcing (BPO).

With a proven track record in the European markets, NGBS is poised to support the accelerating technological development across Africa, addressing the demand for digital solu-

tions and leveraging the continent's rich talent pool.

During the event, NGBS engaged with over 200 CIOs and decision-makers from potential customer organisations.

The team had productive discussions on industry trends, the significance of Africa on the global stage, and explored opportunities for collaboration to drive mutual growth.

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Artic Driers' compressed air solutions limits production downtime and save on maintenance costs

CLEAN and dry compressed air is essential for any modern manufacturing facility. Contamination in air lines increases production line downtime, as well as tool and pneumatics maintenance costs. Apart from the direct cost of parts and labour, the loss of production adds to increasing unit costs caused by sub-standard compressed air quality.

The CDK range of refrigeration air dryers manufactured in Thailand to international standards is distributed in South Africa by Artic Driers. The range provides a consistent compressed air dew-point over the full range of operating conditions and air flows.

Artic Driers MD Paul Cockfield says, "Oil-free air compressors generate condensates with low pH values that soon corrode mild steel pipework. The CDK range overcomes this

problem with the use of stainless steel. Any part of the CDK series that is in contact with wet, compressed air is manufactured in stainless steel. The larger models of the CDK dryer range are fitted with multiple heat exchangers piped in parallel. The inlet and outlet pipe galleries to these exchangers are constructed in stainless steel. This feature makes the range a perfect long-term partner for oil-free compressors."

The comprehensive instrumentation built into CDK dryers enables the control and monitoring of all parameters, such as inlet compressed air temperature, dew-point temperature, air/gas temperatures, and ambient temperature.

CDK dryers restart automatically on resumption of power via an adjustable restart timer. The dew-point set point is also adjustable

by the controller. These features are some of many that are password protected to prevent unauthorised changes to the dryer's settings.

"Artic Driers provides a huge range of imported and locally-produced air filter housings that contain different grades of filter elements to suit any requirements," says Cockfield. "Locally-produced filter casings are SANS 347 coded and plated, and are coated to resist interior and exterior corrosion. All the element fixings are stainless steel. We carry stock of casings with capacities of up to 150 m³/min at 7 bar."

A broad range of instrumentation focused on compressed air and gas volume, pressure, power consumption and compressed air quality, is available for monitoring. The S551 mobile data logger from SUTO iTEC provides instant access to all the parameters of flow, pressure,

dew-point, temperature, power consumption, oil vapour content as well as particle content.

Artic Driers offer ultrasonic leak detection solutions that are difficult to match. The reporting software provides immediate data on the cost of compressed air wastage, giving volume of air wasted to atmosphere. Reports are provided in PDF and Excel formats that allow the customer to plan rectification programmes.

Leaders in the air treatment business for over three decades, Artic Driers has an exceptional range of equipment along with in-house manufacturing capabilities, making it the go-to-company for compressed air solutions.

To learn more, speak to Artic Driers' sales team on +27 11 420 0274 or visit <https://articdriers.co.za/>

Atlas Copco's compressed air solutions for efficient pneumatic conveying

A rapidly growing global population is driving the endless need for goods hence there is an ever-growing demand for the movement of bulk materials.

"Moving goods through pipes from one point to another using air i.e. pneumatic conveying, is an extremely efficient method of transporting a great variety of products, provided that the right system is used and that it's done correctly," states JC Lombard, Atlas Copco Compressor technique business line manager, oil-free air division.

Air can be used to move materials ranging from powders, sand and grains to pellets, plastics and fly ash.

Given the tremendous versatility and efficiency of pneumatic conveying, combined with the process's ability to move vast types of different materials, it's easily one of the most widely used

forms of materials handling.

Unsurprisingly pneumatic conveying is favoured by a great many diverse industries such as food & beverage, pharmaceuticals, mining, and even wastewater treatment.

Atlas Copco Compressor Technique offers a broad range of pneumatic conveying solutions that include air compressors, air blowers (screw, lobe, centrifugal and turbo) and ancillary products to meet the bespoke needs of these industries.

"Due to the wide range of materials that can be transported via pneumatic conveying, a one-size-fits-all solution is simply not possible," continues Lombard. "While some materials can be moved more quickly and in greater volumes, other more fragile materials require careful transportation to avoid damage."

To meet the varying requirements of the materials, there are different pneumatic conveying methods i.e. Dilute phase, Dense phase and Transient phase.

Lombard says that it's therefore imperative to know the properties and requirements of the material that will be conveyed in order to be able to select the most appropriate conveying system that will guarantee optimum performance and product quality, and mitigate the risk of potential blockages and combustion.

Dilute phase uses a blower or low-pressure compressor to send material through the pipeline in a high-velocity stream, as though the material is floating, without material accumulation at the bottom of the pipe. As this process moves material at high speed, it is ideal for transporting any form of granular materials.

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Immobazyme secures R24,5-million VC boost to catapult global biotech commercialisation

IMMOBAZYME, a pioneering biotechnology start-up from Stellenbosch, has successfully secured its latest round of funding, bringing its total investment raised to R24,5-million.

Rapidly gaining prominence for its novel enzyme immobilisation platform and work with precision fermentation, this injection of capital will significantly support its expansion.

"The investment in Immobazyme is another great case study demonstrating that local university technology."

The company plans to double the size of its facility and dramatically scale its production capabilities, positioning itself at the forefront of South Africa's biotech industry.

Since its founding in 2019 by Dominic Nicholas, Ethan Hunter, and Nicholas Enslin, Immobazyme has seen impressive year-on-year growth, culminating in the opening of their state-of-the-art independent laboratory in 2023.

This major infrastructure milestone, supported by the doubling of their research team, brought Immobazyme one step closer

to its overarching goal of providing sustainable and affordable biologics to the global market.

Utilising precision fermentation, Immobazyme manipulates microorganisms to cultivate high-value proteins and enzymes.

Its products range from growth factors, a primary ingredient in cell-cultured meat, to enzymes like dextranase, which is used to break down contaminants in sugar.

The Immobazyme team has even recently ventured into the food and beverage industry with a variety of novel food ingredients created using their precision fermentation platform.

The most recent co-investment was led by the University Technology Fund (UTF) and University of Stellenbosch Enterprises.

Commenting on the bright prospects ahead, primary investor Wayne Stocks of the UTF said, "Immobazyme personifies our vision to innovate for purpose and planet. The University Technology Fund actively identifies global game-changing companies to invest in. The company's enzyme immobilisation platform is unique to the biotechnology industry. This excites us to sup-

port their ambitions for sustainable solutions."

Anita Nel, chief director of Innovation and Commercialisation of Stellenbosch University and CEO of University of Stellenbosch Enterprises, the university's holding company, explains, "The investment in Immobazyme is another great case study demonstrating that local university technology is an overlooked but very promising asset class. Immobazyme's success is also a great example of the fast growth in the Stellenbosch University group of companies, which currently boasts nearly 30 spinout companies."

Dominic Nicholas, CEO of Immobazyme, expressed his gratitude in achieving this milestone, stating, "We're incredibly grateful to all our investors and partners for recognising the value and impact of our work. We are poised to tackle real-world challenges, delivering economic, social, and environmental benefits to the private sector through our technology. With this funding, we can now set our sights on bigger, more ambitious goals. Our immediate focus is on scaling our facility to introduce our products to the global market."

Three-way company cooperation wins crane order



Wide-span crane under manufacture at Condra's Johannesburg factory. Rovic's cranes will have spans of 28 metres.

ROVIC, a leading South African manufacturer of agricultural machinery, is to modify shopfloor workflow to cut component assembly times, improve staff safety and increase the rate of production.

The new production sequencing will be applied to the company's large and small grain planter range, and is an outcome of a lifting equipment tender submitted as a joint project by three South African companies working in close cooperation: BB Cranes (which took the order), iTek Drives and Condra.

BB Cranes' contract comprises three double-girder electric overhead travelling cranes to be installed in the new Rovic factory under construc-

tion in Blackheath, Cape Town.

Key to the improved workflow will be a simplified and very precise positioning of grain-planter components. Twin overhead BB cranes fitted with multiple hoists will service the production line to allow simultaneous assembly of various planters without having to move the cranes.

Precise hoist load positioning will be achieved by Invertek Optidrive variable-speed drives supplied by iTek Drives.

The old assembly sequence made use of forklifts to move planter components to a number of fixed gantries on an as-and-when-required basis. Gantry staff positioned and fastened them in a time-consuming process that included fit-

ting up to 53 identical planting units one by one to each machine.

In the new assembly sequence, two identical double-girder overhead cranes spanning the entire 28-metre width of the factory floor will service multiple planters arranged in a row, allowing simultaneous assembly of an increased number of machines, and removing from the shop floor the obstruction to movement represented by the fixed gantries.

Each of the twin overhead cranes will feature two 3,2-ton crab-mounted units for the chassis components, and four under-slung 1-ton hoists fitted two to each girder for the planting units. All six hoists on each crane will work simultaneously across the row

being serviced.

The third overhead crane, the 20-tonner, will be used to move completed planters out of the factory for shipping.

When Rovic commissioned construction of a second larger factory, the approach was unusual: management communicated a willingness to reconsider and radically modify current workflow and assembly sequences, leaving it up to the companies submitting tenders to optimise their proposed solutions.

BB Cranes steered the compilation of the proposal and secured the order, with Condra supplying design office support and cooperating closely with iTek Drives and BB Cranes throughout the design phase.

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Citrus SuperPower – powering up to unlock leadership and growth in citrus industry



Citrus SuperPower training participants (left to right): Neil Ndlovu, Louisa Maloka-Mogotsi, Pheladi Tlomatsane, Lucky Nyakallo Comba, Mia Brits.

THE Citrus Academy hopes to create even more dynamic leaders in the citrus industry through the new Citrus SuperPower programme. This unique training programme aims to develop the skills and knowledge of supervisors, opening up growth and progression opportunities, and to give workers the opportunity to become supervisors.

It was recently launched in Centurion, Gauteng, with a pilot Train-the-Trainer event. The full workplace training programme will be rolled out to the rest of South Africa this year.

"There is a need for quality supervisor training in the citrus workplace. This programme was designed to address that and to make sure our industry continues to have top talent to go along with

our world-class citrus," says Sam Louw, engagement manager of the Citrus Academy.

The Citrus Academy falls under the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) group of companies. The CGA aims to export 260 million 15kg cartons of citrus by 2032. To achieve this, the industry is investing in growing the skills of the industry. Skilled supervisors are vital to the industry's success as they ensure operational efficiency, and that high levels of quality are maintained.

"Often a focus is placed on infrastructure and production investment – for instance in freight transport and farm-level technology – and while these investments are indeed essential, we sometimes need to be reminded of how

important the development of high-level agricultural skills are. The truth is, without quality skills there can be no sustainable growth in agriculture," says Jacomien de Klerk, general manager of the Citrus Academy.

Sive Silo, project coordinator at the academy says: "In the past, the focus has been on prioritising essential technical and production skills development programmes in the citrus industry. It is now time for us to tackle the development of effective business management, to take the industry to the next level."

A participant in the first Train-the-Trainer workshop, Mia Brits, says: "This course for me personally has been very enriching and a transformational experience. It offered a well-organised curriculum that covered

essential aspects in the workplace and each module is very cleverly designed to build upon the previous one, ensuring a good learning journey. One of the standout features of the workshop was its emphasis on practical application. The scenarios, role-plays, and group discussions were highly relevant to the challenges we face as trainers, providing us with actionable strategies and techniques to implement in our own training sessions."

Pheladi Tlomatsane, another participant and a citrus grower at Zebediela in the Limpopo province, says, "This course will have a huge impact, profitable to the farmers. It aims to deal with the root causes of challenges many farmers are facing, whereas many other courses don't deal with the subject matter."

The Citrus SuperPower Workplace component is customised for different workplaces and typically spans several weeks, combining classroom modules with practical work. The programmes are facilitated in the local language whenever possible. Citrus SuperPower Train-the-Trainer workshops will take place later this year in Gqeberha and Cape Town.

For more information on these programmes, visit the Citrus Academy website.

AgriSA announces Green Horizons 2024 Agricultural Congress in Cape Town

AGRISA is excited to reveal the details for the Green Horizons 2024 Agricultural Congress scheduled to take place at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town on 9 and 10 October 2024.

Says AgriSA CEO Johann Kotzé, "The theme of 'green horizons' embodies the essence of the congress, highlighting its dedication to sustainable agriculture, forward-looking strategies to tackle future challenges, and our unwavering commitment to nurturing growth, innovation, and collaboration within the industry."



AgriSA CEO Johann Kotzé

"The discussion sessions on 10 October will feature five thought-provoking topics each hosted at five carefully selected venues across three nearby locations."

The congress will commence with AgriSA's annual general meeting on the afternoon of 9 October, followed by a welcoming cocktail function for AgriSA-affiliated members at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA), carved from the structure of the historic Grain Silo

Complex.

With a new, innovative format, the discussion sessions on 10 October will feature five thought-provoking topics each hosted at five carefully selected venues across three nearby locations all within a short walking distance from each other in the V&A Waterfront.

Throughout the day, three sessions on each topic will be presented, inviting speakers and delegates to delve deep into the challenges and opportunities shaping the South African agricultural landscape. Discussions will revolve around future strategies aimed at ensuring the sustainability

and prosperity of the sector.

In addition to the discussion sessions, the congress programme promises ample networking opportunities. Attendees will have the chance to connect after each session in the various venues.

"A highlight of the congress will be the gala dinner on 10 October, where we will commemorate AgriSA's 120-year journey and pay tribute to other companies that have surpassed the century mark. This celebration is a testament to the unwavering dedication, resilience, and innovation that define the agricultural sector."

Reaping what we sow: unlocking opportunities for youth in agribusiness



Mandla Mpofu, MD of Omnia Agriculture.

IN the past, the agricultural sector may have been accused of not proactively positioning itself as 'youth-friendly', failing to present accessible and rewarding career opportunities for most young people. How-

ever, this is now changing, as new opportunities within the sector emerge, driven by the advent of technology. This is the view of Mandla Mpofu, MD of Omnia Agriculture. Mpofu is a keen proponent of supporting and encouraging young people to build careers in agriculture.

"The youth tend to associate a career in agriculture with being a farmer. Farmers are integral and important to agriculture, but farming is not easily accessible to every South African. If there is an opportunity to get into farming for the youth, that is great. However, it is not

always an easy career path given that it tends to be a "generational" career; where farmers often pass their land, businesses, and learnings down to their children, who then pick up the baton.

"What the youth need to realise – and what we as key industry players need to convey – is that there is now a multitude of opportunities available within modern-day agriculture.

Thus, we need to make the all-important mindset shift from agriculture to agribusiness, and everything that comes with it. Young people may not be interested in becoming farmers,

but they may very well be eager to become agronomists or even agripreneurs, who can service the industry using game-changing technology," he says.

"In an age where technology will become the greatest equaliser between the developing and developed worlds, we have an unprecedented chance to shift this narrative. Let us rather see farmers as innovators, who have the technological tools and know-how to build a more future-fit, resilient sector," he says.

New horizons for agripreneurs

Landmark develop-

ments in precision farming, automated steering systems, and advanced telematics for monitoring and optimising farm operations will play a pivotal role in the evolution of agriculture.

These technological milestones have intersected with a greater focus on sustainability, as the world gears up to mitigate the effects of climate change.

With Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) objectives now being key considerations in how agribusinesses conduct their operations, the sector also holds bright prospects in terms of much-needed

employment opportunities and social upliftment. In Mpofu's opinion, developments in agriculture impact lives and livelihoods, ultimately touching us all.

This "futuristic lens" on the potential of the sector is what Mpofu believes to be the main reason why bringing more young people into agriculture is so important.

"It's more than just farming. It's about all the changes we're seeing along the entire value chain – exciting, new challenges in robotics, satellite imaging, drone technology and engineering."

Sowing the seeds of success

Investing in the youth is one of Omnia Agriculture's key impact areas.

The group is currently a core sponsor of initiatives such as the Boereplanne Farmer Innovation Competition, hosted at NAMPO – one of the largest agricultural exhibitions in the southern hemisphere. The competition welcomes engineering students, agronomists, and economists to enter their ideas or inventions for agricultural solutions to stand a chance of winning a significant cash prize, potential funding, scholarships, and other career-enhancing opportunities.

Heineken steps up sustainability drive, moving to 65% returnable glass for beer portfolio in 2024 with R2,3-billion investment



HEINEKEN, the renowned global premium beer maker, has invested R2,3-billion in its returnable bottling programme in South Africa, more than doubling its share of returnable beer bottles.

The move, which will see the Heineken beer brand move into returnable glass, aligns to the company's global ambition of net zero carbon by 2040 as per the Dutch Brewers' "Brew a Better World" strategy.

Heineken beer, which has the same bottle design in 190 countries world-wide, will break with tradition unveiling a bold new design for its returnable bottle in South Africa, a change not made anywhere

else in the world.

The 650ml returnable bottle, dubbed the "Star Bottle" features the iconic Heineken® star on its body with the Heineken name deep etched into the glass.

Jordi Borrut, MD of Heineken Beverages, shares his enthusiasm: "This is an important decision for our global business, with the first returnable Heineken bottle to be sold on South African soil. Sustainability is a journey, and we are starting with a few footsteps in the right direction."

Heineken continues to demonstrate its dedication to sustainable business practices. In 2022 the company invested in a cutting-edge water reclamation facility

and a state-of-the-art solar power plant with over 14 000 panels for its Sedibeng brewery, achieving an energy generation capacity of 65MW, reducing the brewery's carbon emissions by approximately 30%.

Among its ambitions, the company aims to reach net zero carbon emissions across its value chain by 2040, which would position Heineken 10 years ahead of the 2050 Paris Climate Agreement target, making the company the first global brewer to commit to such an ambitious timeline.

With the launch of its returnable bottle, Heineken will be opening several Heineken Green Zones - a col-

lection of open parks and meadows complemented by food and flower gardens, as well as creative arts spaces in communities across the country, including Phillippi, Cape Town, Eldorado Park, and Lawley in Johannesburg.

This initiative aims to promote sustainability-driven behaviors within communities and provide essential recreational areas that integrate food gardens and inspiring art installations. The initiative will be run in partnership with GreenPop, a group dedicated to reforestation and urban green zones in Sub-Saharan Africa. The company aims to complete 5 green zones in the first half of 2024 covering over 30 000 square metres of indigenous plants.

"The Heineken Returnable Star bottle isn't just about clearing glass; we should always push ourselves to do more to create sustainable change in the communities where our business operates. The Heineken Green Zones are another way in which we can achieve that ambition," explains Borrut.

Heineken has joined a number of global sustainability and net-zero initiatives, including the Climate Group's RE100 programme, We Mean Business Coalition, the Race to Zero movement, the Business Ambition for 1,5C, and the Climate Pledge.

"We recognise that sustainability is non-negotiable globally and we remain committed to maintaining sustainable business operations, and the introduction of the new Heineken returnable bottle, along with the investment in the Green Zones, marks small but meaningful steps in the right direction," says Borrut.

How automated tank cleaning is eliminating manual methods

DESPITE being a common practice in many industries, manual tank cleaning methods are riddled with drawbacks that hinder efficiency, increase risks, and compromise effectiveness. These are challenges faced by the beverage and wine industries, but also extend to food, petrochemical and pharmaceutical operations.

In the realm of Intermediate Bulk Container (IBC), tanker, and tote cleaning, the need for efficiency and sustainability has become more crucial than ever. "With automated cleaning systems", says Monitor Engineering MD Grant Orsmond, "businesses now have a solution to optimise their



"Compared to manual methods, automated tank cleaners slash the need for high water consumption, chemical usage, and energy consumption."

cleaning processes and enhance productivity."

The challenges and concerns around manual tank cleaning extend to issues of time wastage, safety hazards, production loss, cross-contamination, and inconsistent cleaning results.

Manual tanker, vessel or tote cleaning is labour-intensive and time-consuming resulting in downtime and lost productivity, while harsh chemicals, extremely hot water, and high-pressure hoses pose risks of chemical exposure, burns, and accidents. Added to this, inadequate systems can lead to residual dust and contaminants, which can affect subsequent production runs and result in cross-contamination issues. Achieving consistent and effective tank cleaning outcomes with manual methods is a considerable challenge.

"Automated tank

cleaning has emerged as a game-changing solution for achieving optimal cleanliness," says Orsmond. "These advanced systems utilise cutting-edge technology and specialised equipment to efficiently clean tanks. By streamlining the tank cleaning process, businesses ensure consistent, reliable, and repeatable results, minimising safety hazards, equipment malfunctions, and productivity losses."

Reduced water, chemical and energy use

Compared to manual methods, automated tank cleaners slash the need for high water consumption, chemical usage, and energy consumption. Precise application of cleaning liquid reduces waste, resulting in lower water costs and decreased disposal expenses. Controlled chemical dosing enhances vessel cleaning effectiveness while minimising environmental impact. Reduced water and chemical usage also lead to significant energy savings, contributing to greener operations and aligning with sustainability goals.

A bigger focus on sustainability

Less resource consumption has a knock-on effect that minimises waste as well. With less water and energy used, companies not only use fewer resources but can reduce their harmful emissions. Adopting

an automated tank cleaning system demonstrates a commitment to sustainability, fostering positive relationships with the community and promoting an environmentally-conscious image.

Increased savings

Maintenance costs decrease due to minimised breakdowns and repairs. Labour costs associated with manual vessel cleaning processes are reduced, as automated systems optimise workforce allocation. The elimination of physical cleaning risks enhances workplace safety, preventing accidents and related costs.

Important factors to assess before purchasing an automated tank cleaning system

Investing in an automated cleaning system requires careful evaluation and consideration of several crucial factors. "Understanding these key aspects is essential to choosing the most suitable solution for a company's specific cleaning needs. Tank size and geometry, internal obstructions, and residue types are important factors to be taken into account when purchasing spray nozzles. We therefore offer a no-charge tank cleaning audit, to identify the best cleaning solution for a company's operations," concludes Orsmond.

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Raise a glass to Rand Air’s rental power solutions that keep South Africa’s wine flowing



RAND AIR has been a trusted rental partner to some of South Africa’s premium wine producers in the Western Cape with the supply of portable power solutions for close on 10 years.

South Africa has six wine regions, predominantly situated in the Western Cape province, and ranks eight out of the top ten traditional wine-producing countries, contributing 4% of total global production. The South African wine industry is a major contributor to the country’s GDP, bringing R55-billion to the local economy and employing over 269 000 people, both directly and indirectly.

Ashley Bailey, Rand Air’s external sales representative, based at the Cape Town depot, explains that during their busy annual harvesting period between January and April, wine producers need to scale up their energy requirements to keep their production and packaging lines operating.

power units, insufficient. Taking into account that the wine producers are prime exporters and that an hour of downtime can result in anything up to R500 000 in production losses, downtime

Bailey also points out that this configuration, with its fast-paralleling system, allows the two generators to work independently or in parallel with each other. “Moreover, owing to the Twin-

"During their harvesting period, wine producers need to scale up their energy requirements to keep their production and packaging lines operating."

is completely out of the question.

“They subsequently turned to Rand Air for a hire solution to meet their power challenges by mitigating load shedding, especially during their critical production periods to ensure seamless operations.”

Rand Air’s power rental solutions for three leading wine farms in the Western Cape comprise TwinPower QAC 1100 units. TwinPower conveniently houses two fully

Power concept, one generator can run at 50% while the other is being serviced, offering end-users a built-in back-up as standard for seamless 24/7 power supply.”

According to Bailey, Covid highlighted the added value of renting air and power as a seamless solution. “The wine producers realised that hiring air compressors and generators eliminated the hassle of servicing and repairs in the event of unexpected breakdowns.”

In closing, Bailey urges wine farm customers to get their generator orders in before November for next year’s harvest period to ensure availability and timely delivery during the critical harvest season. “Placing orders early helps Rand-Air plan and allocate the necessary equipment, ensuring that customers have reliable power solutions when they need them most. This proactive approach guarantees that wine farms have the necessary support to maintain productivity and protect their valuable crops during the busy harvest period.”

"Hiring air compressors and generators eliminated the hassle of servicing and repairs in the event of unexpected breakdowns."

Bailey explains that Rand Air originally started supplying generators to wine farm customers simply to serve as back-up units. However, the unwelcome onset of load shedding with back-to-back high stages, rendered the wine producers’ own generators, including their back-up

loaded QAC 500 kVA generators side-by-side in one custom 20-foot container. With up to 1MW of predictable power packaged on a single platform, power has essentially been doubled, providing the ultimate reliable and flexible prime and critical standby power solution to customers.

The SAB Foundation and Industrial Development Corporation launch Township Energy Fund to mitigate energy challenges for SMMEs

RECOGNISING the negative impact of load shedding on SMMEs and the additional costs associated with adopting alternative energy sources, the SAB Foundation has partnered with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to create and co-fund the Township Energy Fund.

This R15-million initiative is aimed at providing grant funding to small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises in townships, rural areas, and small towns, enabling them to implement renewable energy solutions, stabilise operations and catalyse their business growth.

The IDC has committed R10-million towards the fund, with a co-contribution of R5-million pledged by the SAB Foundation.

These funds will be used towards the installation of renewable energy solutions for carefully selected alumni who have been supported over the past 10 years by the SAB Foundation’s entrepreneurial programmes.

“Recently we conducted a survey amongst our entrepreneurs which revealed that 60% of businesses have experi-



Pic source: <https://www.sabfoundation.co.za>

enced a reduction in production capacity due to load shedding,” explains Bridgit Evans, executive director of the SAB Foundation.

“This not only affects their current operations, but also hampers future growth and expansion for these business owners.”

“One example given by one of the survey respondents is that the power cuts taking place during their manufacturing process have impacted production momentum and rhythm, resulting in wasted material,” she reports.

“This forces business owners to find alternative power sources, such as

generators, which can be expensive to operate and maintain.”

Grants will range between R50 000 and R250 000, based on a needs analysis to ensure customised support for each business.

“The energy crisis has placed a significant burden on small business owners, many of whom are already struggling to keep their doors open,” says Evans. “Through the roll out of the Township Energy Fund, we aim to provide these businesses with the resources they need to adopt renewable energy solutions, reduce their operational costs, and

focus on growth rather than survival.”

“We will be prioritising green energy solutions,” she adds. “This will not only address immediate energy needs, but also contribute to long-term environmental sustainability.”

Stuart Bartlett, programme manager at the IDC, stated, “The IDC is dedicated to enabling sustainable development and growth for South African businesses. By investing in renewable energy solutions, we are not only helping businesses to withstand load shedding, but also to expand their operations sustainably.”

DGB wins the triple crown by securing third consecutive “best South African producer” at ProWein

DGB, one of South Africa’s most successful premium wine producers and has claimed the title of “Best South African Producer” for the third consecutive year at MUNDUS VINI Spring Tasting 2024

DGB, South Africa’s leading premium wine producer, has been awarded Best South African Producer at the 34th Great International Wine Award MUNDUS VINI presented at ProWein, the world’s leading trade fair for wines and spirits.

In addition to receiving the South African recognition, DGB were also announced as being one of the top five most successful global producers at this year’s competition who collectively accumulated 163 of the total awarded medals in the silver, gold and grand gold categories.

Upon the announcement of the award DGB chairman Tim Hutchinson commented, “This award, for the third consecutive year, is a tremendous tribute to everyone in our winemaking and viticultural teams. I am very proud of their excellent performance. It is fantastic recognition of our ongoing commitment to producing premium South African wines, and it’s a privilege to have them shine on the global stage.”

Looking at the medals, DGB scooped up 20 gold medals across their portfolio.

Boschendal led the way with four gold medals, followed by The Old Road Wine Co. and Brampton with three each, and Backsberg, Bellingham, Douglas Green and Franschhoek Cellars each taking a pair. Fryers Cove and Vineyard Friends rounded

up the 20 medals with a piece per winery.

The MUNDUS VINI award ceremony honouring the producers and winemakers whose wines have received a special award at ProWein, the world largest Wine Trade Fair with over 49 000 wine professionals in attendance.

The full list of gold medals received by DGB (by winery):

- Backsberg Gravel Road Chenin Blanc 2023
- Backsberg Blueberry Row Pinotage 2022
- Bellingham Founder Series Freda 2022
- Bellingham The Bernard Series Vintage Pinotage 2021
- Boschendal 1685 Pinotage 2021
- Boschendal MCC Brut NV
- Boschendal MCC Jean Le Long 2012

- Boschendal Pavillion Chenin Blanc 2023
- Brampton Roxton 2019
- Brampton Roxton Black Cabernet Sauvignon 2020
- Brampton Sauvignon Blanc 2023
- Douglas Green Chardonnay 2023
- Douglas Green Chenin Blanc 2023
- Franschhoek Cellar Chenin Blanc 2023
- Franschhoek Cellar Shiraz 2022
- Fryers Cove Chenin Blanc 2023
- Old Road Wine Co. Juliette Sauvignon Blanc 2023
- Old Road Wine Co. Le Courier Chenin Blanc 2023
- Old Road Wine Co. The Butcher and Cleaver 2020
- Vineyard Friends Chenin Blanc 2023

Cubic invests in LOPE and Jingding Electric to create a comprehensive supply chain for premixed gas condensing boilers

CUBIC Sensor and Instrument announced its strategic investment in Zhongshan LOPE Thermal Technology Ltd. LOPE and Guangzhou Jingding Electric Technology (Jingding Electric) at the signing ceremony at Cubic R&D center.

Cubic will acquire a 57.14% equity stake in LOPE and a 51% stake in Jingding Electric through a combination of capital transfer and capital increase.

This strategic move marks a significant expansion in Cubic's portfolio and deepened cooperation within the industry.

Leveraging its gas sensor technology platform and the technical and industrial accumulation of its core management team in the field of combustion science and technology, Cubic has established a strong R&D team in 2022 and initiated the development of low-carbon gas combustion technologies, aiming to build an ecosystem for residential, commercial, and industrial gas fired boilers with sensors, actuators, and controllers as the core supply chain. Currently, Cubic has made breakthroughs in the R&D of gas sensors for new types of full premixed condensing wall-mounted gas boilers, brushless direct current (BLDC) fans and intelligent gas combustion controllers, earning recognition from experts within the industry.

Simultaneously, experimental facilities have been established for key components, including gas proportional valves, gas burners, and heat exchangers for full premixed condensing wall-mounted gas boilers.

Cubic has initiated business negotiations for cooperation with Chinese core component supply enterprises.

Through the strategic investment, Cubic aims to integrate resources related to stainless steel heat exchangers, burners, gas proportional valves, BLDC fans, gas sensors, intelligent gas combustion controllers, and other components involved in full premixed condensing wall-mounted gas boilers, establishing a "sensor-actuator-controller" one-stop supply chain solution in this field.

Dr. Youhui Xiong,

chairman of Cubic, has high expectations for this strategic investment in LOPE and Jingding Electric.

He thinks that LOPE has become one of the few enterprises globally capable of mass-production of stainless-steel condensing heat exchangers after seven years of innovation, leveraging international scientific and technological resources.

Jingding Electric, with nearly two decade experience in the gas proportional valve field, is an important standard drafting or participating member in the China gas appliance industry.

Cubic possesses significant technological and industrial advantages in gas sensors, gas metering, and intelligent gas controllers.

By leveraging significant industrial opportunities and the expansive, cohesive domestic market fostered by the 'low-carbon' goals, their tripartite collaboration and deep cooperation are set to powerfully accelerate the evolution of China's full premixed condensing wall-mounted gas boiler sector towards premium branding.

Wash-bay water treatment improves wastewater compliance

INDUSTRIAL wash-bays are designed to clean vehicles of hydrocarbons like oil, grease, fuel and chemicals. It's therefore important that wash-bay wastewater is properly treated to ensure compliance with water management and environmental regulations.

Anelia Hough, water treatment consultant at Allmech, explains that wash-bay wastewater treatment ensures companies are undertaking responsible water management, as well as compliance with environmental regulations and more cost-effective business operations.

"Water treatment ensures there's no contamination of ground-water or surface water sources, which would potentially affect drinking water supplies and pose health risks to communities," she says.

"Plus, if wash-bay water is treated correctly, 70%-95% of the water is reusable, which has a direct impact on wash-bay businesses' monthly operating costs."

Rheini-Chem, an expert tank-cleaning company, manages various wash-bays for commercial trucking companies, servicing light commercial vehicles through to heavy-duty industrial trucks



and tankers.

The company operates with a special effluent permit, which means it needs to comply with specific wastewater limits, or it risks financial penalties.

Rheini-Chem therefore approached Allmech, leading boiler manufacturers and suppliers to the water treatment industry, to set up a water treatment system for one of its wash-bay facilities in Johannesburg South.

Based on the results, the company is partnering with Allmech for a system at a second wash-bay in Brackenfell in the Western Cape.

"Allmech designed a wastewater treatment plant that ensures we

reduce total suspended solids (TSS), hydrocarbons, turbidity, reduce Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) and Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels in the wastewater. Then depending on the wastewater permit limits, municipalities generally monitor pH, TSS, BOD and COD levels in the wastewater and if these parameters are out, they impose penalties to the clients. For wastewater treatment plants, the BOD is important as it shows the organic pollution in the water. It tells us how much oxygen is needed in the water to break down the organic material. This is critical when dealing with biological wastewater

treatment plants," says Hough. "We also have an online pH monitoring and correction system to ensure pH levels are within permit specifications."

Allmech also undertakes monthly water treatment service and monitoring of boilers at the wash-bays, as well as supplying boiler water treatment chemicals.

Hough says the company is also able to design, install and service water recycling plants to help wash-bay clients with reducing water consumption.

"By treating and recycling water, industries can reduce the demand for municipal feed water, which is particularly important in areas

with water scarcity or where clients are looking at alternatives to reduce daily operating costs," she says.

"Recycling water can reduce the water demand from feed water sources between 70%-95%, depending on site conditions. An additional benefit of a wastewater recycling system is that the client has a constant back up of water and is not affected by municipal shutdowns."

In Rheini-Chem's case, Hough says the water treatment plant incorporates several phases.

The primary treatment phase is called anaerobic settling. Wastewater is piped into settling tanks, and separates into layers: an upper liquid layer (generally oils), and a sludge layer at the bottom. The phase is a biological process where microorganisms degrade organic contaminants in the absence of oxygen.

"It is typically deployed for streams with high concentrations of organic material, often seen in wash-bays," says Hough. "The benefit of including this process in wash-bay application is that it's efficient in the removal of organic compounds, to lower BOD and COD levels."



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Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) head office

Transnet seeks proposals for construction of two Solar-Powered Seawater Desalination Plants

To enable climate-resilient infrastructure at its Nelson Mandela Bay Ports, Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) has issued three Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the construction of two Solar-Powered Seawater Desalination Plants and a Renewable Energy Power System.

In response to its exposure to a range of climate change risks, Transnet is leveraging opportunities offered by green and cleaner options such as renewable energy as part of the transition to a lower carbon-intensive business.

These projects align with TNPA's strategic plan to enhance sustainability in response to climate change and reduce energy costs across its commercial ports.

TNPA has issued two RFPs for the design, construction and operation of Solar-Powered Seawater Desalination plants which will have a daily production capacity of approximately 0,8ml (megalitres) and 0,5ml of potable water for the ports of Port Elizabeth and Ngqura, respectively. These plants are set to improve the reliability of freshwater supply for port users.

The third RFP is for the design, construction and operation of a 7 MW hybrid renewable energy plant that has a battery energy storage system of 6 MWh at the Port of Ngqura. This renewable energy plant will assist in decarbonising port operations and improve the reliability and availability of supply.

Advocate Phyllis Difeto, TNPA acting chief executive, said, "Global shipping trends highlight sustainability as one of the most impactful strategic tactics in promoting greener and cleaner initiatives. This requires the Ports Authority to accelerate its plans of developing a port system that is efficient, cost effective and environmentally friendly."



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City proposes modification of weirs at Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei to improve water quality



THE City of Cape Town proposes the redevelopment and upgrade of the weirs at Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei that are located within the False Bay Nature Reserve.

The proposed redevelopment of the 'weir complex' is to supplement other medium-term interventions, amongst which the dredging of Zeekoevlei, to improve the overall water quality of this Ramsar site.

The False Bay Nature Reserve is a site of international importance according to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Both Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei are managed by a system of penstock sluice gates to allow for the water level to be dropped to a minimum depth, which is known as the annual 'drawdown', usually at the end of the summer sailing season.

The intention of the drawdown is to remove nutrient-rich water and sediment from the system, and to increase the capacity of the vleis prior to the winter rainfall season to reduce the risk of flooding of surrounding areas.

The current manually operated weirs limit the depth of water which can be drawn down. The weir walls, built in the 1950s, prevent the move-

ment of marine and estuarine fish into and from the vleis.

"Our intention is to lower the weirs at both Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei and to install mechanically-operated sluice gates, as opposed to the current systems where we remove the penstocks manually for the drawdown," said the city's deputy mayor and mayoral committee member for spatial planning and environment, alderman Eddie Andrew.

"Many residents and interest groups from the False Bay Nature Reserve join us for the annual drawdown and are well aware of what this task entails. With mechanically-operated sluice gates we will be able to do drawdowns quicker, and the lower weirs will allow for a lower level drawdown of the vlei water."

Andrews said, "We intend to keep the existing penstocks, but will modify the Zeekoevlei weir with a new sluice channel with channel gates in addition to the wooden penstocks."

The installation of fish swim ways will assist with the reintroduction of natural estuarine fish into the vleis, restore fish diversity and abundance, restore the nursery function of the two estuaries,

and enhance the conservation status of estuarine dependent marine fish species.

"We are extremely excited about the prospect of having our indigenous fish back in the two vleis."

The proposed redevelopment of the weir complex is in addition to the city's medium-term interventions, amongst which is to dredge a large part of Zeekoevlei to get rid of the contaminated nutrient-rich sludge. Also, by limiting nutrient and pollutant inflow into the vlei, the overall condition and functioning of the system can be improved, and water quality can be enhanced.

Andrews encouraged residents and interested parties to participate in the process by registering, and to read the documents, and submit comments.

"I want to add that the proposed construction work will result in limited disturbance of existing dune vegetation, but we undertake to do specialist dune rehabilitation afterwards that will involve the rescuing of plants before the earthworks commence at the site. We will then keep these plants in a nursery and replant them after construction."

Three reasons why energy resilience and water management are inseparable

The more we protect water, the more we can produce cheap and reliable power.



By Chetan Mistry, strategy and marketing manager at Xylem Africa

ENERGY powers the world. Water keeps it alive. These resources are under severe strain as urban areas grow and modernisation expands to create greater possibilities for our future.

Yet, while energy and water are essential, few realise they are closely connected. Nations that look after their water also create more ways to improve energy output and resilience.

"If there are water shortages or water quality problems, most energy infrastructure will fall."

"Water and energy depend on each other," says Chetan Mistry, strategy and marketing manager at Xylem Africa.

"You need energy to clean water and pump it to where people can use it. You need water to help generate energy and cool energy systems. If there are water shortages or water quality problems, most energy infrastructure will fail. While we can create energy through many ingenious techniques, we cannot create water and must protect it."

Here are three reasons that demonstrate the Water-Energy nexus:

Energy production relies on water

Both coal and nuclear power use water to generate steam that powers electricity-generating turbines. Hydroelectric power uses moving water to move turbines.

tion capacity is 58 000 megawatts. As water levels and availability deplete, the effectiveness of coal-fired power stations reduces. Renewable energy systems also have water demands, but pale compared to coal extraction and energy processes thereby posing far smaller pollution risks to water sources.

Water+Power impacts

GDP

Electricity is a crucial part of GDP; experts estimate that power generation represents about 15% of South Africa's GDP. Even though power generation is not the thirstiest sector—it consumes around 2% of the country's water—it will need more water in the future. If there are water shortages, power will be one of the groups taking precedence.

"There is healthy debate about which power generation options are the best for our future," says Mistry, "but water often gets left out of the conversation even though it is one of the best

ways to improve energy yields and profitability. We can make big gains for both water and energy by using energy-efficient pumping solutions, smarter water technologies, and digital water management platforms. And when we prioritise protecting our local water sources such as our dams, rivers and wetlands, we are investing indirectly in cheap and efficient power."

Whether it's power to clean sewage at wastewater sites, pumping clean water to our homes, spinning generation units and cool power equipment, or mining energy resources, energy relies on water. Water also creates unique opportunities for clean, reliable, and cheap energy, such as micro-hydroelectric systems that can be used on industrial sites. But without clean and reliable water sources, all energy options start to dry up.

Without water, there is no energy, and without energy, there is no water. When we respect the Water-Energy nexus, we create a better future.

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WearCheck Water helps industries comply with by-laws

DO you need to know the chemical composition of industrial wastewater before discarding it? How important, in your business, is the cleanliness of water for medical use, human consumption or irrigation/agriculture? WearCheck Water, a division of condition monitoring specialist company, WearCheck, provides deep insight into the composition of water that comes from multiple sources, and that is used in a broad range of industries. The company conducts an extensive selection of water analysis services. Using a variety of high-tech lab instruments, expert water scientists process water samples to determine the water's quality and suitability. WearCheck Water's clients include industrial operations that must follow municipal by-laws by ensuring that effluent/wastewater is compliant and



Moses Lelaka, WearCheck Water's technical water lab manager, processes water samples in preparation for analysis at the company's state-of-the-art laboratory in Johannesburg.

safe for disposal into streams and rivers. Compliance with the laws and environmental safety standards ensures the harmless disposal of wastewater into sewers, streams and rivers - crucial in today's environmentally conscious landscape. Furthermore, it helps avoid financial penalties for non-compliance.

Municipalities rely on WearCheck Water, which is ISO 17025:2017 accredited, for maintaining water quality. With urban populations expanding, the demand for safe drinking water is growing. WearCheck's analysis ensures that municipal water supplies meet the required health standards, providing peace of mind

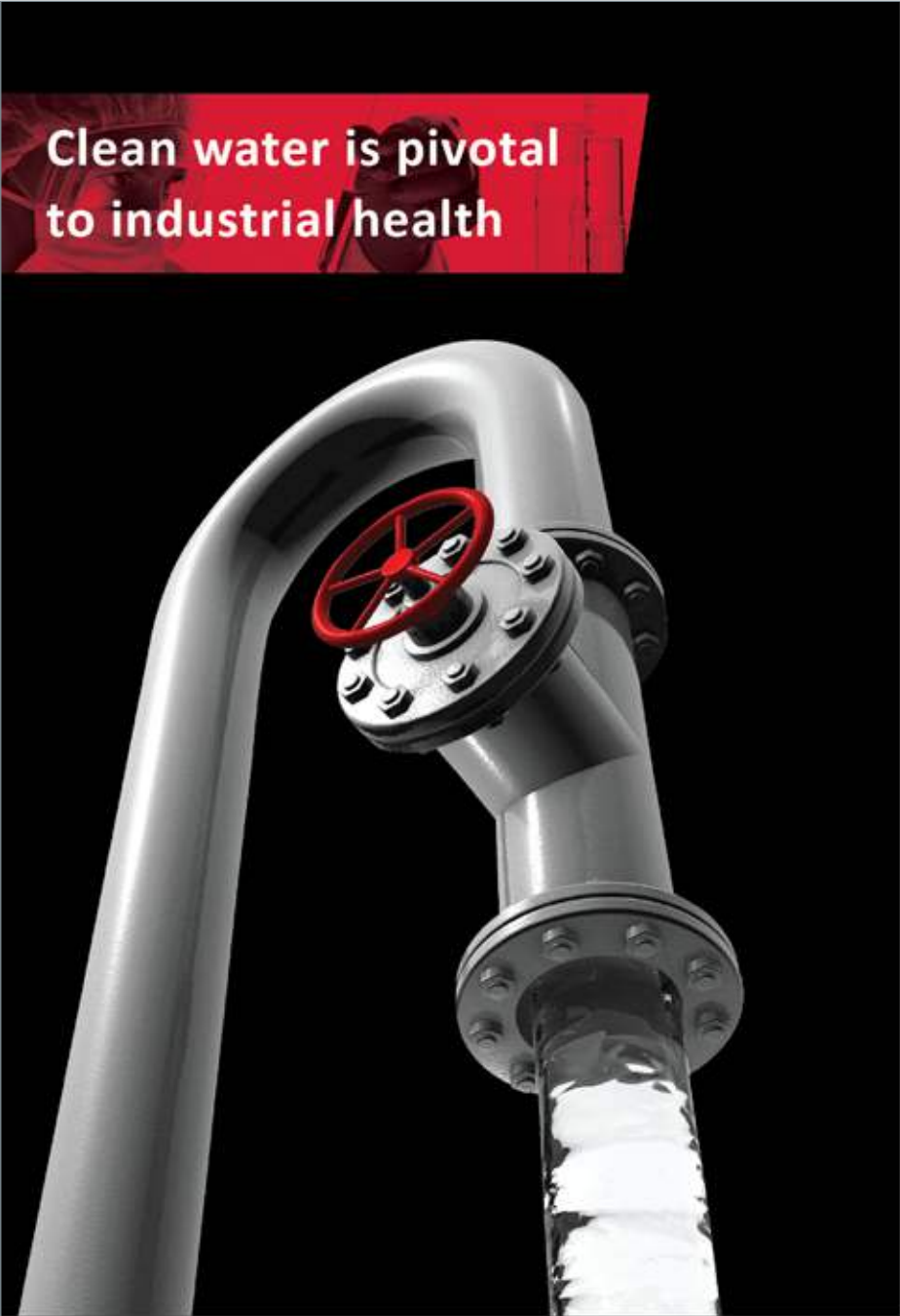
to both authorities and residents. In the hospitality and medical industries, water quality is paramount. Hospitals, clinics, hotels, and restaurants must ensure that their water is safe for consumption and use. Detailed analysis confirms whether the water meets stringent health standards. This is crucial for maintaining the health and safety of patients and guests, as well as the reputation of establishments. WearCheck Water also serves the mining industry - wastewater compliance and quarterly testing of groundwater and surface water in areas surrounding mining and exploration sites are conducted, to assess environmental impact. Rigorous testing ensures that mining operations do not contaminate local water sources, thereby safeguarding ecosystems and local communities.

GM of WearCheck Water, Thelma Horsfield, clarifies, "We conduct a range of tests on water from any source, determining the presence and levels of potentially harmful substances, to ensure that the water is safe for its intended purpose." WearCheck's two world-class water-testing laboratories - in Cape Town and Johannesburg - conduct water analysis for a wide range of clients in different sectors. WearCheck's water analysis services are available in every region in Africa where the company has a presence (South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Namibia, Mozambique, and the DRC). Many of the water clients also use WearCheck's extensive range of condition monitoring services, including the scientific analysis of used oil, asset reliability care (ARC), and transformer oil testing, amongst others.

WEC Water supplies filter water treatment plant to mine in the DRC

WEC Water secured and successfully completed a project for the design, manufacturing, delivery, installation supervision and commissioning of the largest packaged filtered water treatment plant the company has built to date. Destined for a large copper mine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the plant has been designed to produce 680 m³/h filtered water to be used for service water for the mine. The plant consists of two treatment trains each with a flocculation tank, three clarifiers, four multimedia filters, and intermediate storage tanks. WEC Water engineered an automated chemical dosing system designed to provide precision control of all chemical dosing. The feedwater is sourced

from the mine's tailing dam, boreholes and surface water. Says Nigel Birchall, senior project manager at WEC Water, "Not only is this the largest packaged water treatment plant of its type that we have delivered anywhere in Africa, but the project also required considerable logistical management of a total of 18 trucks. The plant itself is based on WEC's standard filtered water treatment package plant with several customisations integrated into the basic design to meet the requirements of the client." The design and manufacturing phases of the project took seven months. Once built and assembled in South Africa, the plant was packed and transported to site, which took another two months.



Clean water is pivotal to industrial health

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The Water Institute of Southern Africa’s (WISA) biennial conference provides renewed vigour to ‘turn the tide’ on water matters



CSIR research group leader for smart water use, Dr Harrison Pienaar.

By Diane Silcock

THE Water Institute of Southern Africa’s (WISA) Biennial 2024

Conference took place in Durban in June 2024. Professionals and thought leaders in the water space came together to collaborate

and provide valuable insights and innovative solutions, to help steer the progress towards the achievement of SDG2030.

Chairing the ‘Conventional water sources: groundwater and surface water’ session was CSIR research group leader for smart water use, Dr Harrison Pienaar. In an interview following the conference he provides an encouraging viewpoint regarding water challenges in South Africa. He believes that getting the basics right, public and private sector collaboration, involving stakeholders from early stages of planning, sharing knowledge and best practices, building trust, establishing an online water monitoring system, and helping citizens to realise the value of water, are all critical.

“A fundamental shift is necessary in our

approach to water and sanitation,” says Dr Pienaar. “There are three pillars that stood out from the conference: collaboration, performance improvement, and robust accountability. We structured our discussions around these pillars with the idea to bring together institutions and professionals to discuss and showcase how we can improve our water management systems. I am quite pleased with the outcome of the conference as it confirmed that collaboration is absolutely key to addressing fragmented governance arrangements with water management being spread across various entities.”

At WISA, the minister of water and sanitation launched the formation and establishment of four catchment management agencies (CMA’s). “The beauty of catchment

management agencies,” says Dr Pienaar, “is that water is managed from a national, regional and local perspective, but by one agency. CMA’s are not only water resource specialists but have engineering and environmental capabilities, and are also experts in other sectors, such as agriculture and energy.”

The CSIR’s research group concerns itself with providing systemic support in regard to smart water use in the different sectors, looking at interventions like water conservation and demand management as well as providing R&D and innovation support towards improving the country’s water quality.

Dr Pienaar explains that whilst technological innovation is a business enabler to achieve improvement in service delivery and efficiency, it is equally important to provide operational,

management, and technical support in the industry, to get the basics right, as that will help develop an appetite for the uptake of new technologies.

“Data-driven decision making should become the norm coupled with continuous improvement in technologies and methodologies to optimise water treatment and distribution.”

Water sources can only be managed effectively when the availability and quality can be determined. This is where collection of quality data over a consistent period of time, is key.

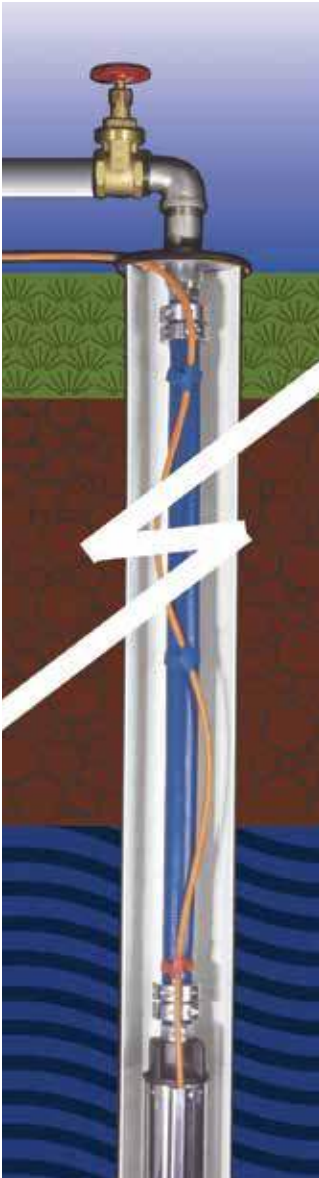
Dr Pienaar says that if data collected from multiple institutions could be fed into a national centralised data repository - an open and transparent platform - it would guide water management decision making especially considering

water is a catalyst for development in other sectors. This is the kind of support that the CSIR can offer government by providing the different sectors with technical and strategic solutions and responses to the issues they are confronted with. The CSIR’s centre for high-performance computing, that sets it apart on the continent, can store large amounts of very complex data including handle data interfacing.

“Our multidisciplinary approach at the CSIR is our unique value proposition in how we manage to get things done in the most structured way, collaborating with others and sharing best practices and knowledge. No one single institution knows it all when it comes to any problem in any sector, so we have to collaborate, it’s very important,” concludes Dr Pienaar.

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Relieving the strain: Streamlining water pressure monitoring with VEGA

ENSURING the efficiency and reliability of water treatment systems in urban settings requires vigilant oversight and strategic management across extensive networks. Pressure Transmitters are unsung heroes of process automation, providing support to the

personnel tasked with the intricate operations of water and water treatment facilities. Choosing VEGA means more than using precise and dependable pressure sensors; it signifies a commitment to accurate and seamless process automation. Recognising the advan-

tages of using pressure sensors throughout their facilities, water treatment companies initially sought to streamline their operations, aiming for more efficient processes and reduced downtime. Not all instrumentation and solutions are created equal. Inaccurate read-

ings can lead to substantial setbacks, resulting in equipment damage and process delays costing thousands in repairs and lost productivity. Employing sensors from multiple manufacturers is technically possible, but proves to be challenging in practice. The vastly different con-

figuration methods and troubleshooting protocols can pose significant challenges for end-users. Standardisation is the solution, with VEGA offering a comprehensive range of pressure sensors that simplify operations across water treatment plants.

VEGA's unwavering support extends beyond product offerings, with dedicated teams providing individual custom solutions to address unique challenges. The integration of Bluetooth connectivity in VEGA sensors revolutionises monitoring and configuration, empowering operators to manage devices wirelessly through the intuitive VEGA Tools App, available for download on both Google Play and the Apple App Store.

VEGADIF 85, a universal pressure transmitter, is a cornerstone in influent and effluent flow metering. Its integrated overload diaphragm ensures reliability, while multivariable sensing capabilities deliver precise measurements essential for informed decision-making.

For tank levels and chemical systems, the VEGABAR 38 pressure sensor surfaces as a reliable partner. Its configurable LED light ring and intuitive VDMA menu structure simplify on-site operations, facilitating seamless integration into control systems via IO-Link communication.

In facing the challenges of extreme conditions, the VEGABAR 82 pressure transmitter offers superior accuracy. It offers an abrasion-resistant ceramic measuring cell for unparalleled reliability.

Its precision enables substantial savings on maintenance costs, ensuring uninterrupted operations in the harshest environments.

Venturing into deep wells and reservoirs, the VEGAWELL 51 stands tall, offering continuous level measurement with unrivalled durability. Its robust ceramic measuring cell withstands extreme conditions, making it an indispensable asset in water treatment facilities.

VEGA's commitment to process automation empowers companies in the water and wastewater industries, offering a blend of precision instruments and unparalleled customer support.

By alleviating the complexities of pressure measurement, VEGA enables plant operators to focus on their core responsibilities, ushering in an era of streamlined operations and enhanced efficiency.

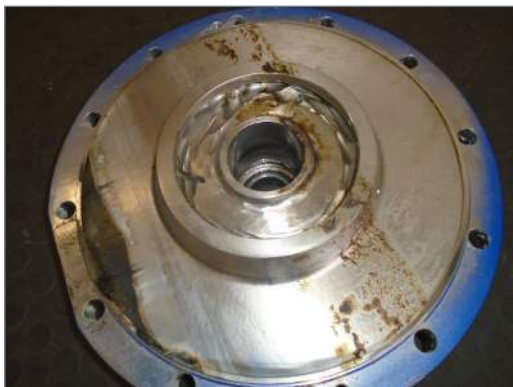
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Consider silt loads before specifying pumping systems



Damage to both sides of a pump's impeller as well as internal damage occurred within just months due to incorrect specification of pumps and other irrigation components

OVERLOOKING the impact of sediment loads on the functionality of pumping systems can be costly, as it can result in the premature failure of many abstraction projects for irrigation and other purposes.

Despite the innocent appearance of sediments in waterways, the free-floating materials have been known to render entire pumping systems inoperable in as little as three months.

Sediments, comprising sand, silt, clay and gravel pose a significant challenge to the efficiency and reliability of water abstraction processes and should be carefully studied before undertaking projects, cautions pumping specialist Darren Ward, area manager for KSB Pumps and Valves.

"The presence of sediments in rivers poses multifaceted challenges for pumping systems, with abrasive particles such as sand and gravel causing wear and tear on critical pump components, notably the impeller and casing. This wear not only compromises pump efficiency but also escalates maintenance requirements and operational costs.

"Fine sediments like silt and clay are identified as stealthy culprits, capable of clogging pump intake screens and filters, thereby obstructing water flow and impeding pump performance. This phenomenon often leads to a cascade of inefficiencies and frequent breakdowns within poorly specified pumping systems.

"Few people realise

the impact of sediments on the hydraulic characteristics of pump systems, resulting in reduced efficiency, heightened energy consumption and increased operating costs. The corrosive nature of sediments, containing minerals and chemicals that accelerate the deterioration of pump components, worsen the situation necessitating costly replacements and repairs."

He adds: "The incorrect specification of pumps, valves, pipes and components unfortunately also have a financial toll with operators grappling with escalated maintenance demands, frequent cleaning requirements and the need for part replacements, all of which strain operational budgets."

Ward says the importance of proactive measures, including the use of abrasion-resistant materials for pumps, installation of sediment filters and adherence to stringent maintenance schedules is paramount.

However, the threat of sediment load extends beyond pumps, with pipes and valves within water systems also vulnerable to wear, reduced flow capacity, valve malfunction, corrosion and maintenance nightmares.

"It is always a safe option to make use of an accredited SABI engineer with the skills and credentials to evaluate the requirements and specify a system based on the average and seasonal sediment loads in our waterways," Ward concludes.

IPR's SlurrySucker puts sewage works back on track

BY effectively dredging the emergency water dams at a Gauteng wastewater treatment facility, IPR helped to put the operation on a stronger footing to serve the community.

IPR Business development manager Warren Spann says it was IPR's new generation SlurrySucker that came to the rescue.

Developed by local pump and dredging expert IPR, the SlurrySucker dredging system recently provided the ideal solution for getting the emergency water dams at a Gauteng wastewater treatment plant back to optimal condition.

Warren Spann, business development manager at IPR, explains that the emergency dams had filled with sludge over time, and were presenting an operational risk to the plant.

Dredging the dams with hydraulic excavators was not effective for a number of reasons, and the manual removal of sludge in trucks caused environmental challenges.

The dams are vital sources of additional water for the treatment plant during times when insufficient volumes are flowing into the facility.

"IPR was contracted to conduct the dredging of these emergency water dams, and we put our new generation SlurrySucker Maxi onto the job," says Spann.

"This powerful dredging system is equipped with three Toyo K30 heavy-duty submersible slurry pumps, and was able to remove 50 dry tons per hour."

Importantly, these specialised heavy duty 22kW Toyo pumps are capable of dealing with the wide variety of solids that accompany the wastewater to the plant including rags, nappies and even pillows. The pumps' capacity allowed them to pump the sludge through 450 m of pipeline on this contract, without the need for inline boosting.

Mounted on a purpose-designed pontoon, the SlurrySucker Maxi was drawn from across the 250 m long dams using ropes and a winching system. The operation was managed through remote controls in the hands of a trained and experienced technician, ensuring optimum safety. "There were also two Atlas Copco WEDA D70H jetting pumps on the pontoon, to help stir up the sediment in the



The powerful SlurrySucker dredging system is equipped with three Toyo K30 heavy-duty submersible slurry pumps.

dams," he says.

"The first pump jets water down to the dredge head to agitate compacted sludge on the bottom of the dam, while the second pump jets water into sludge that is near – or even protruding from – the surface of the water. The latter is necessary as the pontoon needs 350 mm to 400 mm of

water on which to float."

To ensure that the discharge from the dredging activity complied with environmental standards, the dredged material was pumped into large dewatering bags. Each bag held 25 000 tons of material, and measured 30 m in circumference and was 60m long.

These bags allowed

water to weep out into a catchment pond, and IPR added a flocculant to the pipeline to help the solid materials to settle out. This strategy helped the wastewater plant to conserve water, as the filtrate was pumped back to the plant for re-use. The added flocculant in the filtrate assisted the plant further by con-

tributing to the levels of flocculant that the plant would be adding as part of its normal process.

Lime was used to reduce the odour from the dewatering bags, giving the customer various options related to removing the material later including the provision of activated sludge to the agricultural sector.



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I-MAK, one of the premium global brands in the stable of bearings and power transmissions specialist, Bearings International (BI), has led the global market with a wide portfolio of gearbox and drive solutions for over 50 years.

With more than 1 000 000 references and hundreds of different product lines, I-MAK's unique power transmission solutions cater to a large scale of

applications in virtually all industrial segments. I-MAK gearboxes are widely used for diverse pump applications in the oil and gas, and food and beverage sectors around the world.

I-MAK's IR Series of Helical gearboxes is perfectly adapted to meet the stringent demands of pumps and transfer technologies which represent key applications across a broad range of industries.

"The IR Series is available in twelve different sizes ranging from 90 Nm to 18 000 Nm and is ideally suited for gear and lube pump machinery," says Kobus Groenewald, BI product leader: gears.

Fitted with either an input shaft or a direct IEC motor coupling and a standard foot configuration, these easy-to-mount and dismount gearboxes minimise downtime and scale up production, subsequently offering key cost-related advantages for end-users.

As a preferred supplier for thousands of crude oil producers, refineries and engineering companies, I-MAK is a key purveyor to Middle Eastern and North American oil & gas industries. The company is actively involved in several major oil & gas projects in the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. SIPCO-I-MAK in Houston, Texas, serves the US oil industry with a dedicated team of experts.

All I-MAK products are available in ATEX configuration to meet sector standards in the

North American market as well as the needs of technological partners.

I-MAK has enhanced its product offering to the food and beverage industry over the past few years with the addition of several key features to meet this segment's strict hygiene and food security demands.

The application of special easy-to-wash paint and coatings on I-MAK gearboxes limit material deposits and rust, subsequently contributing to the maintenance of top hygienic standards at customers' sites. Moreover, optional food grade oil and resistance to high temperatures and aggressive environments, reduce the potential risk of oil leakage.

"Innovation, quality and precision are woven into the fabric of I-MAK's world-class quality, affordable, two-year-warranty products which are backed by specialist local and international support," says Robert Sillis, GM: product management at BI.

"Our strategic partnership with I-MAK therefore presents the backbone of our blueprint to provide superior quality, reliable solutions that are uniquely tailored to meet the diverse needs of a raft of industrial applications. The very high local added value of all I-MAK products aligns perfectly with our mission to enhance production uptime and efficiency, delivering our value proposition of keeping our customers 'in motion'."

Integrated Pump Technology to unveil expanded pump solutions at Electra Mining Africa

INTEGRATED Pump Technology, a leading provider of pump solutions to the mining industry, will showcase its expanded range at Electra Mining Africa. Highlights include the Grindex submersible pumps and the new addition of Godwin diesel-driven dewatering pumps. Visitors can engage with the team and explore the latest in pump technology tailored for the demanding African mining sector.

Already recognised as the sub-Saharan distributor for the world class Grindex submersible pumps, the company has now expanded its portfolio to include the highly sought-after Godwin diesel-driven dewatering pump range.

Jordan Marsh, MD of Integrated Pump Technology, emphasises the company's goal of becoming a leading single-source provider of pump solutions.

"The addition of a solid range of diesel-driven pump solutions allows us to cater to a much wider spectrum of applications," says Marsh. "Godwin recognised our team's extensive experience with both electrical and diesel-driven pumps, making us the ideal partner to expand their footprint in Africa."

Integrated Pump Technology's strategic distributor network ensures extensive reach and high levels of support in major mining areas across South Africa, as well as Namibia, Botswana,



The Godwin diesel-driven range meets needs from small dewatering requirements to surface mining and quarrying applications with lifts up to 300 metres.

Mozambique, Zambia and the DRC.

The company's strong presence on the Copperbelt underscores its capability to support both large and small mining operations with its expanded range of pump solutions.

Marsh underscores the importance of the distributor network, stating, "Our operating model allows for rapid response times to customer requests. Our commitment to localisation in the regions where we operate is based on the understanding that local people know their own country, culture and mining operations best. By upskilling local teams, we are giving back to the countries where we operate and ensuring that we provide appropriate pump equipment and solutions with the correct level of parts stockholding and support."

The African mining sector demands robust and high performance products, and both Grindex and Godwin

have established reputations for quality and reliability.

The Grindex electrical submersible range covers applications from dewatering to slurry, while the extensive Godwin diesel-driven range meets needs from small dewatering requirements to surface mining and quarrying applications with lifts up to 300 metres.

Grindex submersible pumps are renowned for their reliability and efficiency, particularly in challenging mining environments. The range includes dewatering, sludge and slurry pumps, designed to handle various applications. The dewatering pumps are ideal for draining water from surface and underground mine sites and flooded areas. They are capable of handling high volumes of water and are built to withstand harsh conditions.

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New research by Discovery Green reveals the risks of over-investing in solar

By Larry Claasen

DISCOVERY Green, a division of the Discovery group says there is a risk of businesses over-investing in solar power generation.

It said in its white paper on renewable energy procurement that there were risks associated with an over-reliance on solar energy, particularly amidst South Africa's rapidly expanding solar industry.

According to its findings, this trend could potentially increase businesses' energy costs by more than 50% in the long term. Though South Africa's abundant renewable resources present a ripe opportunity for such transitions, Andre Nepgen, Discovery Green, warns that current strategies may not be appropriate or scalable.

"With traditional largely coal-generated electricity, you pay for what you use; with renewables, you pay for what was generated, regardless of whether your business uses the energy or not. This is the fundamental difference between the procurement of renewable energy and utility-supplied electricity - the point of payment. This is why it is critical to optimise the mix of renewable energy and match it to a business' consumption patterns up front," says Nepgen.

"Our research shows that no industry has an electricity consumption profile that perfectly matches the solar generation profile. It also explains why businesses shouldn't assume they can solve for the remainder of their renewable energy needs in the future - it is more complicated than that."

After replacing about 45% of their energy needs with solar, businesses face a 77% premium to fulfil the remaining 55% with renewable sources. This is because they must find a supply of renewable energy only for their leftover nighttime consumption, which is an extremely expensive product to offer for any renewable energy supplier.

As a result, they tend to settle for a low level of renewable energy coverage after procuring solar, but there is a cost to this too. With only a small portion of their total energy demand covered by renewables, businesses remain heavily exposed to high utility-price increases in future years, projected to be well above inflation.

These long-term costs are frequently not spoken of during the sales process and decision makers do not know enough to understand all these dynamics.

Businesses also often underestimate the variability in renewable energy generation, such

as solar and wind, as well as their own electricity consumption patterns.

Solar facilities can experience output fluctuations exceeding 14% between consecutive months, while wind plants can vary by up to 33%. This variability complicates financial

planning and underscores the imperative for diversified energy portfolios to effectively mitigate risks.

Diversify the supply

Discovery Green advises businesses to follow traditional insurance princi-

ples of risk pooling and diversification to renewable energy strategies. By diversifying energy sources and consumption profiles, they can create more resilient energy portfolios. This approach minimises the impact of generation fluctuations and

enhances the reliability of renewable energy supplies.

Nepgen says, "By pooling together renewable energy from various sources, you have the ability to create a diversified energy portfolio that is more resilient to fluctuations in gener-

ation. This diversification helps to smooth out the variability inherent in renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, ensuring a more stable and reliable energy supply and a less risky product proposition to businesses."

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Deregulated energy market opens up opportunities but also comes with challenges for new entrants - Rystad Energy

By Larry Claasen

THE opening up of the South African energy market has created new opportunities but companies looking to enter this space should also be aware of the challenges that comes with dereg-

ulation, says Rystad Energy, an independent energy research company based in Oslo, Norway. With Independent Power Producers (IPPs) increasingly playing a larger role in electricity generation, it does not necessarily mean that the new players are set

to succeed, even as state-owned power provider Eskom struggles to supply sufficient electricity. For one, a lack of investment in the sector could see IPPs struggle to get their power to their clients. The country needs about R390-billion to upgrade and expand

its transmission network to allow new energy projects to come online. “The country’s aging grid infrastructure and insufficient capacity in some regions - especially the cape provinces can impede the efficient operation and flow of investments into the mar-

ket,” says Rystad Energy vice president – business development South Africa, Nkululeko “NK” Ngcobo. “Maintaining grid stability and reliability is paramount in a deregulated market where potentially multiple developers can integrate a lot

of wind and solar capacity into the grid posing technical and operational challenges,” he adds.

Power players

Ngcobo also warns that though Eskom will no longer be the monopoly electricity generator and

transmitter, deregulation does not mean there would be no concentration of market power in the sector. “Deregulation might lead to the concentration of a few major players in the market leading to monopolistic practices such as price fixing or barriers for new competitors. If not co-ordinated and managed carefully, this could potentially compromise competition and limit choices available to the consumer.” Eskom is also set to have significant market power for the foreseeable future, despite the move to deregulate the market.

New rules

Ngcobo also warns there is huge danger in underestimating the complexity that comes with operating in a deregulated energy market that will necessitate new players getting into complex agreements with multiple partners. “Introducing a new energy system entails a multitude of changes across various aspects such as forecasting, notifications, system balancing, and grid capacity allocation, among others. Many of these elements do not currently exist, and hence the transition to a deregulated market could possibly take time.” He says participants in the market need to understand the high likelihood that parties involved in these agreements will need to renegotiate terms as the government’s reform efforts become more defined and implemented.

The pricing problem

Another thing participants in the sector also need to understand is the complexity around pricing, which will have to take into account tariffs imposed by the energy regulator, and transmission arrangements with Eskom and municipalities. “Previously, monopolistic firms in the power sector enjoyed financial stability – unlike with Eskom as the utility ended up being debt ridden. Such firms resorted to increasing consumer tariff rates to compensate for fluctuations, which would not be possible in a deregulated market as it would pose a risk on their competitive edge.” Despite the challenges, Ngcobo says it’s a positive move for the country, as it removes entry barriers, enabling smaller firms to enter the industry, enhancing corporate efficiency, enabling companies to compete to attract more customers.



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Boost for beer tourism with introduction
of a new training course for tour guides

THE Craft Beer Association of South Africa (CBASA) and Beer Route recently launched a new training program designed to equip local tour guides with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead travellers on explorations of local breweries and artisanal beer tastings. The unique Certified Craft Beer Guide Training Course marks a significant step forward in establishing beer tourism and showcasing South Africa's rich beer heritage. It aims to create employment opportunities not only in the beer sector but also in tourism and hospitality.

South Africa boasts over 200 craft breweries that offer world-class products and uniquely local experiences. Craft beer is an economic driver in many communities across the country. Currently, craft beer tourism is underutilised as an economic resource and job creator. This new training program aims to change that.

"Craft beer tourism presents an opportunity for tour guides to diversify their offerings and attract a new segment of travellers. Beer tourism isn't solely about beer tours; a brewery can also be included as a stop on an existing route, providing an authentic experience of South African culture," said Wendy Pienaar, chairperson of CBASA.

"In Belgium, beer tourism attracts over 1.6 million visitors each year, significantly boosting local hospitality and retail sectors. That shows the potential.



Brewing is intrinsically part of African culture and history. After all, beer has been brewed in Africa for thousands of years and remains the drink of choice in South Africa. Beer routes offer significant benefits to local economies."

The new Certified Craft Beer Guide Training Course will equip local tour guides with the knowledge, skills, and accreditation necessary to conduct engaging and informative brewery tours.

Upon completion, participating tour guides will be able to showcase local craft brewers and educate tourists on the various styles and brewing techniques. The course will also provide participants with marketing strategies to promote and sell brewery tours.

Charlene Louw, CEO of the Beer As-

sociation of South Africa (BASA), welcomed the launch of the course: "From the Cederberg to the hills of KwaZulu-Natal, from the Highveld to Jeffrey's Bay, almost every region in our country has great craft beer offerings. BASA salutes the efforts of CBASA's training program as a driver of economic growth."

Courses will be offered across various provinces in South Africa, with sessions already scheduled for Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, and Stellenbosch.

The program is open to all participants, from individuals aspiring to become tour guides to established guides and tourism organisations.

The training course was launched as part of CBASA's Beer Bootcamp, a day-long symposium on the craft beer industry in South Africa. Local and international speakers provided insights into the business, science, and culture of craft beer.

"By promoting its unique beer culture and diverse range of craft breweries, South Africa can attract international tourists, create jobs, and stimulate local businesses. Additionally, integrating beer tourism with South Africa's rich cultural and natural attractions could enhance the overall tourist experience, increase visitor spending, and foster sustainable tourism growth," said Pienaar.

For more information, visit www.beer-bootcamp.co.za.

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Dell Technologies, CDW and Small
Projects Foundation launch Solar
Community Hub in South Africa

DELL Technologies (NYSE:Dell), in partnership with Computer Aid International, CDW and Small Projects Foundation, has launched a new Solar Community Hub in Newlands, South Africa, to connect underserved communities with access to technology, enable skill development and increase community capacity building.

Dell Technologies' support of hubs has reached over 2,48-million students and community members in countries across the world, including Brazil, Colombia, Kenya, Mexico, India, Morocco, Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa.

The Newlands facility brings the current number of hubs to 49 and is the 14th in South Africa. These Solar Community Hubs will help community members learn about STEM careers and develop critical skills needed to participate in the digital economy. In the just-launched Newlands hub, additional services also provide increased access to economic opportunities and healthcare.

Dell Technologies and Computer Aid International have collaborated on Solar Community Hubs since 2011. Fixed hubs have an increased footprint for community support, networking and capacity to support remote areas. They are made of two recycled shipping containers transformed into a well-lit, well-ventilated internet centre. Fixed hubs are powered by solar power, to run energy-efficient desktops, Latitude Rugged notebooks and air-cooled servers.

Digitising the Region

The residents of Newlands can access to electricity, healthcare and resources for environmental preservation available in the hub. It also combines digital literacy offerings with new services based on the community's needs, bringing digital tools like desktops, laptops, servers, projectors, and Wi-Fi to community members.

Additional programmes combat HIV/



AIDS and unwanted pregnancies, support mothers to raise healthy children, provide support over the first two years of a child's life, and establish growing gardens to help provide nutritious meals to children.

Key characteristics of the new Solar Community Hub include:

- Designed with two connected recycled shipping containers to provide more space and accommodate more local community members and their needs.

- Job creation and greater financial sustainability with new revenue-generating services in community service in the health, education and social care sectors. Small Projects Foundation also supports young women and girls from the whole province to complete school, study further and find employment opportunities.

- Help to educate participants in basic computer skills while learning essential life skills like entrepreneurship, résumé building, university and scholarship applications, job search skills and career guidance.

- Computer literacy classes are provided to Grade 6 and 7 learners from the local primary schools, ensuring they are computer literate by the time they advance to secondary school. Thirty Youth Service Ambassadors are undergoing computer five-day computer literacy training and are supported by a highly-skilled Solar Hub Supervisor.

- Leverages a community-first approach to customise service and product offerings, including education, an HIV Prevention Programme, a Moms Mentorship Programme, an Early Childhood Development Programme and the Umbono Project, which identifies children with vision problems and provides spectacles.
- The hub is a community centre managed by the community, ensuring more value and social validation.

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Ramaphosa, Steenhuisen and the only way to go

LUKE the Dude entered the local Pub & Grill to find the convivial conversationalists deeply divided. Some quoted DA leader John Steenhuisen's optimism that a new dawn would see South Africa build a vibrant, successful economy with jobs and growth; others preferred amaBungane's and Daily Friend's warnings that it will be more of the same old Ramaphosa.

Luke cornered The Prof for some clarity. "Don't tell me all this sound and fury is about the Government of National Unity, with the emphasis on unity?"

"Good guess, young Lucas, so it is." "No politics in the bar," shouted the frowning Governor. "Oh come on Governor," Stevie the Poet-cum-advocate argued, "these are unusual times and we all have opinions. Don't you?"

On the button. Another victory for our learned friend. "I'll tell you what," improvised The Governor, "speak one at a time

and I'll suspend the rule for today." Right. Stevie was unopposed as chairman and took his position on the little stage in the corner.

"Please order your next round as I sum up very briefly," said Stevie, "The GNU is the same animal we had after the 1994 election. This time we did not even have a change of government and the ANC still rules, albeit now with the DA and other partners. Please lift your hand to speak; you first, William."

Bill the Beard stepped forward. "The problem is," growled he, "the ANC has simply swallowed the DA, which disappears in the appointment of Cabinet ministers and Deputies. Hardly a trace left. It's a disgrace!"

"No way!" exclaimed Jon the Joker, "The DA has a talented and powerful group in government. Here's Steenhuisen, I've got the text: 'The configuration we have managed to negotiate ensures that, alongside

the ANC, the DA is the only other party that is now represented across every one of the clusters in government. This means that, for the first time ever, the voices of DA voters will be heard in every sector ... where decisions are made about our country's future.'

"These are the priorities: 'The urgent need to grow the economy and create jobs, to bring an end to the energy crisis, to combat corruption and maladministration, and to improve the quality of services like education.' That is tackling government failure," asserted Jon.

"My first thoughts were the same as William's," said The Prof, "but I don't feel that way now. The six DA Ministers and six Deputies cover portfolios in a range of clusters, giving the DA an ear and an input all over government. This places them in a much better position – no longer shouting from outside.

"At one point the DA was one step from

OPINION

ON THE CONTRARY

The columnist is a journalist and editor based in Onrusrivier. His awards for journalistic excellence include the Mond and the Sanlam Awards.

Pieter Schoombie



walking out. Had they done that, they would have caused the exact result John Steenhuisen had repeatedly pledged to prevent: a 'Doomsday Coalition' between the ANC and EFF or MK or both."

"I agree," thundered Big Ben. "The only way to go!" And The Governor, good humour restored, announced a round on the house, can you believe it.

Please give me your feedback at noag@maxitec.co.za

Professionalisation is key to ensuring long-awaited GNU is not a false dawn: Institute of Directors in South Africa

PRESIDENT Ramaphosa's announcement of the multiparty cabinet of the Government of National Unity (GNU) has been broadly welcomed as a move towards a more inclusive government that could make progress in addressing the multiple challenges the country faces.

There's no denying that this is an historic moment, says Professor Parmi Natesan, CEO of the Institute of Directors in South Africa (IoDSA), but the right choices need to be made.

"It's very heartening that the President has committed the GNU to professionalising the public service based on 'integrity and good governance', and that they intend appointing people who are 'committed, capable, hard-working and also have integrity'," she says.

These criteria outlined by the President align well with the qualities of ethical and effective leadership outlined in King IV: integrity, competence, responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency.

"These are noble intentions, but time will tell whether the right people have been appointed and whether the results truly benefit of South Africa Inc and its citizens," Natesan adds.

Principle 1 of King IV says, "The governing body should lead ethically and effectively." King IV's linking of ethics and effectiveness is an important connection that is all too often forgotten, she notes. Such an approach is also consistent with s 195 of the South African Constitution, which states, amongst other things, that 'a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained'.

It is thus critical to have the right people in leadership positions of our country and of our public sector entities. Principle 7 of

King IV spells it out: the governing body must possess the "appropriate balance of knowledge, skills, experience, diversity and independence", and its practices provide recommendations for how to achieve this.

It's equally important that the executive team is also appointed based on their competence and moral compass; and with the needs of the organisation and its strategic goals in mind.

For many years, the IoDSA has been urging the public sector to adopt the principles of good governance as outlined in the King Reports.

State-owned enterprises (SOEs) have experienced challenges because appointments to both their boards and executives have been made largely on political grounds rather than merit. By exploiting its position as the single and thus powerful shareholder, and the inadequacies of some of the founding legislation, government has been able to side-step the principles of good governance as outlined in King IV.

"Only if the new government commits itself to good governance and professionalising the public service will it be able to deliver on its mandate of, amongst other things, much-needed improvements in service delivery. The IoDSA has long argued that professionalising directorship is a key step in the journey towards better governance and thus better-performing organisations."

Professor Natesan concludes, "I strongly urge the newly appointed ministers, their deputies and the leadership of SOEs and other public-sector entities to reaffirm their commitment to King IV's principles—they are the key to turning the optimism of the current moment into reality."

OPINION - A renewed hope for South Africa's home affairs department

By Stefanie de Saude Darbandi immigration & citizenship law specialist at DSD Attorneys

AS South Africa stands on the cusp of a transformative period under the stewardship of Home Affairs newly appointed Minister Leon Schreiber and the new Government of National Unity, there is a collective sense of optimism and opportunity for real change.

In celebrating the principles of unity embraced by the ANC and the new Government of National Unity, we recognise the importance of putting national interests above partisan divides.

This collaborative spirit is necessary as we work towards a Home Affairs Department that embodies transparency, efficiency, and integrity.

Schreiber's appointment marks a pivotal moment in our nation's approach to immigration. With a background steeped in academic rigour and a commitment to principled governance, his leadership promises a departure from the status quo.

This brings renewed hope for addressing the longstanding issues that have plagued our Home Affairs Department.

Our current immigration landscape is marked by inefficiencies, bureaucratic backlogs, and regulatory ambiguities. While the recent promulgation of new regulations on 19 May 2024 represents progress, it falls short of the comprehensive reforms needed to propel South Africa onto a competitive global stage.

Schreiber's tenure presents an opportunity to revisit and refine these regulations, ensuring they not only streamline processes but also foster an environment conducive to economic growth and social cohesion.

A critical area in need of reform is the point system for working visas.

The new regulations reference these points, yet clarity is lacking in how they align with the existing Immigration Act.

Schreiber's leadership is essential in provid-

ing clarity and coherence in these regulations, ensuring transparency and fairness in the application process for skilled professionals who can contribute significantly to our workforce and economy. Additionally, there is a pressing need to adapt the visitor visa option to accommodate remote work.

More could be done, such as reconsidering the minimum requirement of a gross income of one million rand per annum and enabling these applicants to apply for permanent residence from within South Africa.

These adjustments would significantly broaden opportunities for individuals to work remotely from South Africa, thereby stimulating local economies and fostering cultural exchange.

The recent White Paper on immigration, while a step forward, highlights the need for a more ambitious vision.

Drawing inspiration from successful immigration models globally, such as those in Canada and Australia, we can develop policies that balance national security with openness and inclusivity. These models demonstrate that effective immigration management not only addresses labour market gaps but also enriches our cultural fabric and drives innovation.

Beyond regulatory adjustments, we must address systemic issues within Home Affairs that have perpetuated injustice and deterred potential investors and skilled immigrants.

The prevalence of wrongful rejections, which send many needed individuals and families in South Africa back into the system through an appeal process that either takes years to resolve or requires litigation to correct, undermines our credibility as a welcoming nation.

Additionally, inconsistent service standards among Home Affairs officials abroad further exacerbate these challenges.

Schreiber's commitment to accountability and efficiency presents an opportunity to overhaul these practices, ensuring fairness and respect for all applicants.