



South African
Furniture Initiative

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MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

After a tough 2020, the first three months of 2021 proved to be an opportunity for the furniture sector to take stock and pivot to making essential changes in order to not only survive, but to move forward towards a better future for everyone in the industry.

For SAFI, what better time to take stock than celebrating 5 years of serving the industry as an organisation and to take a look at the highlights and low points we experienced in this time. The development of the Furniture Design Qualification that were registered with SAQA in May 2020, the establishment of the Furniture Directory, as well as the annual Furniture Sector Forum (where the industry is promoted), are three more highlights we want to celebrate.

In this issue we take a look at the progress made in the adoption of the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP), which, together with the action plans put in place, should be finalised by July this year. We also took comfort from a story where buying local is part of the South African Retail, Clothing, Textile, Footwear and Leather Value Chain Master Plan and its successful implementation thereof to ensure sustainability to small businesses in that sector.

We are proud to be a partner in the SA Furniture Design Competition and we were astonished by the quality of skills and design from the entries received. We take a look at the winners, and we are also excited to announce that entries for 2021/22 are now open. The theme, HOME OFFICE WORKSPACE is sure to inspire student and professional designers to provide local, quality and innovative solutions to the "working from home" challenges.

It seems that our favourite expos and shows, like Decorex, The African Trade Week and the Hotel & Hospitality Show are going ahead to showcase the best of manufacturing and design the country and continent has to offer. We will be updating you on dates and bookings on a regular basis.

Finally, the positive outlook on the furniture industry is discussed and we are looking forward to playing our part in growing the industry and ensuring the sector keeps playing an essential role in what can be offered to the country and the continent.

Best wishes for the next couple of exciting months and above all, please stay safe and take care.

Bernadette Isaacs
Managing Director

Bernadette Isaacs



SAFI TURNS 5 YEARS OLD AND PLANS TO CELEBRATE

What started in August 2016 as a national initiative to promote and develop the furniture industry for the benefit of all stakeholders, has since escalated into SAFI playing a significant role in the furniture value chain, as well as being a reputable facilitator in the furniture manufacturing and design sector.

"We at SAFI are super proud of our many achievements over the past five years, with our role in the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP) a bright red cherry on the proverbial cake," said Bernadette Isaacs, Managing Director of SAFI.

"Since day one we have been committed to our cause, and that is to support yours to be recognized locally and internationally in specific market segments by 2025, resulting in employment and productivity growth, and positive transformation across the furniture value chain," Isaacs promised the members of SAFI. "I want to reaffirm our commitment to work relentlessly and continuously towards a better future for everyone in the sector."

To celebrate the past five years of supporting the furniture industry, a commemorative visual element is launched with this newsletter to recognise the unconditional support and hard work by everyone in the organisation.

"The staff, together with the Board of Directors, are excited to keep our promise and look forward to the next five years of making a difference and developing the sector towards becoming the major force in the South African economy it strives to be," Isaacs concluded.



The South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI) has welcomed the overwhelming support of the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP) Version 1.0, which was tabled and discussed during an online meeting between furniture industry stakeholders and Minister Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) on 29th March 2021.

Bernadette Isaacs, managing director of SAFI, says the setting of 30 June 2021 as a deadline for the adoption of the FIMP, is a huge step forward to ensure the industry is set up for growth and to reach its full potential in terms of skills development, job creation, investment in local manufacturing and procurement, as well as nurturing design skills.

"Today, once again, proved the pivotal role SAFI is playing in the furniture industry by promoting development and growth to the benefit of all stakeholders," says Isaacs. "A great deal of time and effort has been put into the FIMP over the past 15 months to ensure the full support from the industry, government and labour. Today we saw it blossom into a workable and supported plan by all parties involved."

During the online meeting, Minister Patel said the various master plans that are currently being introduced to the South African manufacturing sectors are a direct result of the 2019 State Of The Nation (SONA) address by President Cyril Ramaphosa to enhance South Africa's development prospects, with a strong emphasis on partnerships within the sector.

"The Plan is based on an extensive process of discussion and consultation within the industry," he acknowledged. "It shows that, while the industry experienced significant disruption and decline over the last decade, there have been a number of shifts that have created the conditions for recovery." Minister Patel also emphasised the importance of substituting current imported products with locally manufactured goods, using local raw materials.

According to Lael Bethlehem, an external facilitator of the FIMP for the office of the dtic, it is significant to understand that most furniture manufacturers are dynamic, medium-sized companies with great growth potential. "This is at the heart of the FIMP and growth can be fostered by an innovative partnership between manufacturers, retailers, government and labour to foster capital investment, improve skills and nurture South African design skills," says Bethlehem.

Bethlehem also commended SAFI for being a driving force behind the FIMP and a huge step forward for the industry, continuously stepping up to ensure all aspects of the sector are improved.

"The key to successfully implement the FIMP will be partnerships," Bethlehem said. "To expand and nurture existing medium-sized companies to help them grow and supply retailers more successfully, will require an innovative partnership between Government, retailers and manufacturers."

Bethlehem continued by pointing out the importance of the initial proposed pillars on which the FIMP depends, namely the support of local manufactured products, supplier development, trade interventions, institutional improvements and addressing the raw materials shortage.

Isaacs indicated that SAFI has been involved with numerous interventions, including facilitating industry engagement on board and steel supply and demand. "We are constantly in discussions to determine the needs of the sector and the possibility of additional supply," says Isaacs. "An action plan on measures to address raw material shortages should be concluded by July 2021," says Isaacs.

The South African Furniture Initiative also committed to reorganising its structure to accommodate the segments of the industry accurately and to enhance the participation of SMMEs. "We will accelerate our discussions with stakeholders aimed at creating better participation from, and better value for the furniture industry with a report to be completed by 31 July 2021 for the minister," says Isaacs.

With the FIMP sign-off planned for the end of June 2021, an Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) will be established between the minister of the dtic, SAFI, the CEOs of companies across the value chain, as well as senior leadership of trade unions in the sector. This will be important in relation to the various implementation plans that need to be concluded within the six-month period following the adoption of the FIMP.

The minister concluded the meeting by saying the action plans, deadlines and overwhelming support of all in attendance are an exciting step toward fulfilling the potential of the industry where China is currently exporting furniture to the value of R55 billion a year to Africa. "Providing the necessary partnerships, substituting imported products with locally manufactured products can be achieved," says Minister Patel.



POSITIVE OUTLOOK FOR FURNITURE INDUSTRY



BUYING LOCAL DEMONSTRATES HOW PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY

With the current focus on action steps to adopt and implement the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP), we are pleased to note how the South African Retail, Clothing, Textile, Footwear and Leather Value Chain Master Plan has brought optimism to the Keates Drift Community in KZN, where the Msinga Clothing Factory employs 100 females and supplies locally manufactured garments to the Foschini Group, Mr Price and Ackermans.

The intent shown by these companies, including Truworths, to support locally produced clothes and textiles through which the local cotton industry also stands to benefit, needs to be applauded. Cotton, a versatile and drought-resistant crop, is used by many local manufacturers in our industry, once again underlining the significance of collaboration between and commitment from government, industry and labour in implementing the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP) where partnerships are key.

It further demonstrates the importance of buying and manufacturing locally, but also ensures the sustainable and reliable supply of raw materials. SAFI is optimistic that the FIMP will generate similar success stories in our industry.

HOTEL & HOSPITALITY SHOW AND AFRICA TRADE WEEK: 23-25 JUNE 2021

SAFI is a strategic partner of this year's Hotel & Hospitality Show and Africa Trade Week, which will be taking place at the Ticketpro Dome in Johannesburg from 23-25 August 2021. With almost 70 countries and more than 90 exhibitors participating, 10 000 local and international industry professionals will be welcomed over the three days.

SAFI has always supported these must-attend events where our members can increase sales, promote their brands, meet key buyers and engage with industry stakeholders and thought leaders. Attendees are able to source products, services, equipment, supplies, innovations, technology and solutions at these events, establishing South Africa as the gateway to the continent in the hospitality, tourism, food & beverage and the retail sectors.

To book your stand or register to visit, go to <https://www.africabig7.com/africa-trade-week/>

Remember to share your stories with us should you exhibit or attend, so we can relay it to the industry! Send them to safi.ct@furnitureza.org.za



HOTEL &
HOSPITALITY
SHOW

UPSKILLING IN MANUFACTURING SECTOR IS CRUCIAL

During the past 12 months, all industries have been affected by the pandemic and lockdown, with the unfortunate consequence of staff being retrenched. SAFI was pleased to note that PlasticSA, in partnership with the merSETA's Retrenchment Assistance Programme, is giving workers the opportunity to be retrained or upskilled for re-employment.

The upskilling programme is not limited to former employees in only the Plastics industry, but it's open to merSETA-registered companies in the manufacturing sector as a whole.

Should your company want to participate, please contact Kim.Arendse@plasticssa.co.za (Western Cape & Gqeberha the former PE), Fhatu@plasticssa.co.za (Gauteng) or Desiree.Reddy@plasticssa.co.za (KZN & East London).

The School of Concrete has also noticed changes with the evolvement of traditional furniture raw materials like concrete. Detailed knowledge of all the important concrete concepts and practices needed to produce top quality precast and other concrete products needed in the manufacturing industry is important, and employees need the necessary skills to use the latest technology and skills to meet the needs of the designers. The SCT20 Concrete Practice is the ideal training and upskilling programme for learners. For more information go to: <https://www.theconcreteinstitute.org.za/courses>





WINNERS OF FURNITURE DESIGN COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

The winners of the 7th National Furniture Design Competition, presented by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), were announced by Deputy Minister Nomalungelo Gina during the recent online Proudly SA Buy Local Summit & Expo.

Ian Perry from the Durban-based furniture manufacturer, Homewood, won the Established Manufacturers category, while the honour of winning the Student category went to the University of Johannesburg trio Mikhayla Peterson, Amukelani Mathebula and Michael Sushan.

According to Prof. Desmond Laubscher, chairperson of the judging panel, the theme of the 2020 competition was “This is mine and these are ours”, with the brief to design furniture for young, newly-employed people who have come together to rent a modest apartment. “The aim of the design was to use a minimal budget, while designing a range of multipurpose and functional furniture that is modular, that can be purchased as budgets allow,” says Prof. Laubscher.

“Possibly the most important criteria when judging the entrants were innovation and how contestants were able to interpret and incorporate functionality and useability, with the design aesthetics, and the identity having a distinct South African flair,” Prof. Laubscher said. “We judged the ease of how the designed product can be manufactured, the number of parts that must be produced, the size and shape of the product and finally, what makes the most impact when the final product just looks right.”

Bernadette Isaacs, Managing Director of the South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI), says that the competition is extremely important to identify and nurture furniture design and talent in the industry. SAFI is a partner and one of the main stakeholders in the competition. “In terms of quality and cutting edge design South Africa is up there with the best in the world, but we still have to work on capturing

our story, building a truly African design identity. The furniture design competition goes a long way towards reaching that goal,” said Isaacs.

When announcing the winners, Deputy Minister Gina emphasised how important to the South African economy the furniture sector is. “I believe it is possible to position the local furniture industry as the producer of high-value niche furniture products that are globally competitive and based on quality and differentiated design,” Minister Gina said.

“Consumers must have access to local products and Proudly SA plays a pivotal role in achieving this,” she said. She explained to the delegates how the Furniture Design competition assisted in achieving some of the outcomes contained in the Furniture Industry Master Plan and how locally manufactured and designed furniture demand was on the increase.

“The competition is part of our efforts to raise and nurture design capabilities in the country, raise the image of the furniture manufacturing industry and to grow the industry’s competitiveness by encouraging new product design and differentiation. The furniture industry is an important sector in the South African economy because it has the potential to contribute to the reduction of unemployment, increase of exports and boost the development of the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs),” she said.

“By encouraging participation in the furniture industry, promoting the use of design to respond to changing living space, the use of locally manufactured inputs and getting continuous investments, maximum impact will be achieved,” she said.

Five finalists each in the Students and Established Manufacturers categories were in line for prizes, which included a one-year internship in the furniture industry, a six-month Furniture Design Incubation Programme by Furntech and a graphic design tablet for the

students, a one-year ‘Proudly South African’ membership, a one-year ‘Institute of the Interior Design Professions’ memberships as well as an opportunity to participate and exhibit at selected platforms for the winning manufacturer.

The competition was presented in partnership with Proudly South Africa, the South African Furniture Initiative, Coricraft Furniture, Mecad Solidworks, Furntech Centre of Excellence, Lewis Stores, the African Institute of Interior Designers and Tsogo Sun Hotels.

2020 Furniture Design Competition Finalists

Students Category:

- Mikhayla Peterson, Amukelani Mathebula and Michael Sushan (UJ) – Winner
- Benedikt Johannes (TUT) – 1st runner up
- Katlego Madumo and James Fowler (UJ) – 2nd runner up
- Natalie Selibas, Dennis Xavier and Anthony Abbotts (UJ)
- Simoné Pretorius (Potch Academy)

Established Manufacturers Category:

- Ian Perry (Homewood, KwaZulu-Natal) – Winner
- Sandile Nkosi (Protovate, Johannesburg) – 1st runner up
- Peet van Straaten (Raw Studio, Pretoria) – 2nd runner up
- Chris Fouché (Karwei Industries, Cape Town)
- Korrie Bross (Caneworld, Cape Town)



Design competition winner, Established Manufacturers Category: Ian Perry (Homewood, KwaZulu-Natal) – Winner

In a world where consumers are flooded with boring digital content it has become imperative to stand out from your competitors and to showcase your company and its products to international clients. In a fast-paced e-commerce market, buyers expect incredible visual experiences and since international travel for sales purposes has come to an almost standstill, companies are looking at ways to boost their sales and revenue with forward-thinking digital experiences.

SAFI strives to continue to bring you the power of choice, this time through two companies namely TF Virtual and 3 Degrees Tech, who will astonish the minds of consumers with virtual showrooms, tours and exhibitions where customers can expect incredible visual experiences of your products online, while at the same time building your brand and strengthening your companies' reputation.

Apart from virtual showrooms, 3D virtual photography is becoming an essential part of the e-commerce experience with more than half of online shoppers, according to Shopify, thinking that product photos are more important than product information, reviews and ratings. Shopper expectations for the number of images per product have also skyrocketed in recent years, going from three in 2016 to upwards of eight today.

To make use of their services, hop on over to:

<https://www.trendforward.co.za/tfvirtualexhibitions>

and

<https://3degreestech.co.za/digital-asset-portfolio/>

and see what they can do for your brand.

TECHNOLOGY FOCUS ON VIRTUAL REALITIES



During the recent Proudly South African Buy Local Summit and Expo, President Cyril Ramaphosa urged South Africans to buy locally manufactured products. "Wherever you may be in the country, be Proudly South African. Wear local, travel local, eat local, watch local content, read local authors, support local music and use local raw materials in your business," he said in a twitter message.

According to Ramaphosa, the government, state-owned enterprises, businesses, individuals and leaders need to set an example and ensure that local products are used. "We have to step up our efforts not just to get locals to buy local, but to improve the entry of our goods, products and services into export markets as well. We have to save existing jobs and stimulate the economy for new ones to be created," he said.

Some of the steps the President has announced include enforcing measures to stop the illegal importation of goods, introducing small business to local procurement thresholds for the public sector and designate 27 sectors for local procurement by the public sector.

South Africa is playing an important role in monitoring compliance with these designations. Whether public or private, we need to appreciate that choosing to procure locally through and across value chains is a solid investment in our economic recovery," he said.

As part of the summit, the 2020 winners of the dtic Furniture Design Competition were also announced.



PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA URGES EVERYONE TO BUY LOCAL



South African
Furniture Initiative



www.furnitureza.org.za

Our mailing address is:

Postal: P O Box 1529, Sanlamhof 7532, Cape Town, 7532