



South African Furniture Initiative

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MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



As we approach the final quarter of 2024, I'm thrilled to share some exciting developments within SAFI. We are pleased to welcome two exceptional professionals to our team: Tracy Symons, who joins us as our new Marketing Manager and Lynn Adonis, our newly appointed Administrative Manager. Tracy brings a wealth of experience in operational relationship management, sales and marketing, which will be invaluable as we continue to elevate the profile of SAFI. Lynn, with her expertise in administrative leadership, will be instrumental in enhancing our operational efficiency.

I'm also proud to report that our membership has seen remarkable growth, increasing from approximately 100 members to just over 700 in less than 10 months. This significant expansion is a testament to the value and impact of our work within the South African furniture industry. However, our journey is far from over. We are now focused on increasing our Associate Membership, which will prove valuable for businesses that supply raw materials, offer essential services, or have a vested interest in our industry, including retailers and other stakeholders. Expanding this network will further strengthen the value-chain that supports furniture manufacturing in South Africa.

Another area of focus is our commitment to localisation. We are actively working with manufacturers to promote the use of locally sourced materials and to reduce our industry's reliance on imports and I am encouraged by the strong support of Mr Parks Tau, new minister of the dtic. By prioritising localisation, we aim to strengthen the domestic supply chain, support local businesses and create more job opportunities.

Finally, we are excited to announce the prospect of an international Furniture Industry Trade Show, which promises to showcase South African innovation and craftsmanship to the world. This event promises to be a significant milestone for our industry, attracting global buyers and opening new markets for our members.

Thank you for your continued support as we drive the industry forward together.

Warm regards,

Greg Boule

Managing Director

SAFI CALLS ON RETAILERS

to Support Registered Furniture Manufacturers

The South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI), a non-profit organisation dedicated to representing and supporting the nation's furniture manufacturing industry, continues to play a pivotal role in advancing the sector.

Comprising various Furniture Manufacturer Associations and Affiliated Unions, SAFI's membership is united in its mission to elevate the industry through collaboration, advocacy and resource-sharing.

SAFI's Managing Director, Greg Boule, highlights the importance of industry alignment and the benefits of being part of a larger network. He encourages individual manufacturing companies that are registered with the Bargaining Council to join SAFI and take advantage of the numerous resources, networking opportunities, and industry insights that the organisation provides. "By becoming members, manufacturers can strengthen their position in the market, access critical support, and contribute to the collective advancement of the industry," Boule explains.

However, Boule also voiced concern over the significant number of local furniture manufacturing businesses that remain unregistered with a Furniture Bargaining Council (FBC). "This is a

serious issue that compromises the integrity of the industry," Boule stated. "FBCs are essential for ensuring fair labour practices, such as equitable wages, competitive equality and overall sector stability. When companies operate outside of this framework, it creates an uneven playing field that can harm both the industry and its workers."

To safeguard the industry's future, Boule stressed the critical role that retailers play in supporting ethical and equitable business practices. "Retailers have a responsibility not only to promote the growth of the industry but also to ensure that their business practices contribute to a fair and stable marketplace," he said. "We strongly urge retailers to act responsibly by sourcing their furniture, bedding and upholstery products exclusively from manufacturers that are registered with an FBC."

In South Africa, regulatory requirements stipulate that furniture manufacturers must register with an FBC within 30 days of commencing operations. These councils oversee compliance with

collective agreements, ensuring consistent employment conditions and wages across the industry. This oversight is crucial for fostering fair competition, protecting both manufacturers and employees, and maintaining the overall health of the sector. The four FBCs in South Africa regulate the provinces of Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Free State, Western Cape, and Northern Cape, as well as specific areas in KwaZulu-Natal.

By sourcing exclusively from registered manufacturers, retailers can make a significant contribution to ensuring the long-term sustainability and growth of South Africa's furniture sector. Their support is vital in promoting a fair, competitive, and ethically sound industry that benefits everyone involved.

To verify if a retailer is a member of a relevant Furniture Bargaining Council (FBC), visit <https://www.southafricanfurnitureinitiative.co.za/business-directory/> or contact: Lynn Adonis at safi.admin@furnitureasa.org.za



CHAMPIONING RELATIONSHIPS AND INNOVATION IN SOUTH AFRICA'S FURNITURE INDUSTRY

Tracy Symons, the newly appointed Marketing Manager at the South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI), has extensive experience in operational relationship management, sales and marketing. With over two decades of expertise in cultivating key relationships and driving business growth, Tracy is set to play a crucial role in shaping the future of South Africa's furniture industry.

Tracy's primary focus at SAFI is on building and nurturing relationships with furniture manufacturers and stakeholders—an essential task for the organisation's ongoing success. "I will be involved in marketing the benefits of SAFI Membership to manufacturers and developing compelling value propositions for Associate Members," she explains.

Tracy's efforts aim not just at growing membership numbers but also at generating revenue that supports SAFI's initiatives, including the implementation of the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP). This, in turn, directly contributes to the long-term sustainability and growth of the industry.

Although SAFI recently relaunched its website, Tracy is already spearheading efforts to further enhance the organisation's digital presence. By focusing on improving user experience and adding value-driven features, the website is close to becoming a powerful tool for industry stakeholders. "This digital transformation is set to increase

engagement and provide more resources to SAFI members," she notes.

One of the exciting projects under Tracy's leadership is the proposed Furniture Industry Trade Show. Following a promising industry survey, Tracy and her team are exploring various options to ensure the event's success, particularly in attracting foreign buyers. This project has the potential to significantly boost exports and create new opportunities for South African manufacturers on the global stage. In addition to the trade show, Tracy will oversee other SAFI-hosted events, further solidifying the organisation's position as a leader in the industry.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SAFI's advocacy efforts play a critical role in the industry and Tracy is passionate about the organisation's mission. "SAFI is more than just an industry association; it is the mouthpiece for the industry and the catalyst for innovation and growth in the South African furniture sector," she said.

SAFI's initiatives range from skills development programs to networking opportunities, all aimed at elevating the industry. As the implementing agent for the FIMP, SAFI's work directly impacts the future success of the sector.

A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION

Tracy's professional achievements are complemented by her personal journey of resilience and determination. Last year, she conquered the Fish River Canyon in honour of her late son, a deeply personal and demanding challenge that shaped her perspective on life and work. Following this, she founded the Cameron Chubb Foundation, a Non-Profit Company (NPC) in his memory, successfully raising significant funds and donations for the Hout Bay community.

LOOKING AHEAD

In her brief time at SAFI, Tracy foresees a growing embrace of sustainable practices, LEAN manufacturing principles and the adoption of digital tools and technologies. These changes, coupled with SAFI's efforts to boost exports and reduce imports, are expected to lead to job creation and industry growth.

Outside of her professional role, Tracy is passionate about the outdoors, enjoys hiking and is a scuba diver. She also treasures quality time with her 8-year-old daughter and is dedicated to giving back to the community through her son's charity.

Tracy Symons



DRIVES QUALIFICATION DEVELOPMENT FOR FURNITURE INDUSTRY

The South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI), backed by the FP&M SETA, is leading a significant effort to develop essential Occupational Qualifications for the furniture industry. This initiative aligns with the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP), focusing on the urgent need to reskill and upskill the workforce in this vital sector.

In collaboration with Judith Smith Development Services, SAFI has finalised the learning materials for the Furniture Upholsterer and Designer qualifications. These materials are awaiting approval from Community Expert Practitioners (CEPs). Meanwhile, the development of the Furniture Maker qualification is underway, with a review set for September 2024.

In August 2024, SAFI's recruitment campaign successfully attracted 42 CEPs to review the qualifications. Additionally, SAFI is launching an Accredited Facilitator Training Programme, enrolling 36 industry stakeholders. This programme starts on August 30, 2024, with online sessions running through December, culminating in participants becoming accredited Facilitators and Assessors.



INDUSTRIAL POLICY

AT THE HEART OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



In a pivotal move to reshape South Africa's economic landscape, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), Mr Parks Tau, has declared industrial policy as the cornerstone of the nation's economic strategy. During his address at the department's Budget Vote in Parliament recently, Minister Tau emphasized the critical need for a collaborative approach, involving government, civil society, labour and the private sector, to drive this ambitious initiative.

"Our industrial policy will serve as the anchor for aligning and deploying trade instruments, incentives, tools, and regulations," Minister Tau stated. He identified key focus areas such as the development of new energy vehicles, the advancement of green industrialization, and the growth of high-value service sectors like Global Business Services. This industrial policy, the Minister affirmed, is not just a roadmap for economic strategy but a rallying call for a government-wide and society-wide effort.

Minister Tau committed to accelerating the implementation of eight sector-specific master plans, developed in partnership with various industries, by working closely with the private sector. Notable successes include the creation of 20,000 jobs in the clothing, textile, leather and footwear sectors, along with the preservation of 54,000 jobs in the poultry industry and 80,000 jobs in the sugar industry.

"These master plans have bolstered localisation, driven investment, increased exports and safeguarded jobs," Minister Tau noted, underscoring the necessity for integrated implementation mechanisms and a cohesive set of tools across all levels of government.

Highlighting the vital role of manufacturing in job creation, the Minister pledged to allocate resources to further strengthen this sector. "Manufacturing generates stable, well-paying jobs that offer opportunities for skills development and career advancement," he explained. However, Minister Tau also recognised the limitations of South Africa's domestic market, stressing the urgency of expanding export initiatives to reduce dependency on local demand.

To further boost economic activity, Minister Tau unveiled plans to accelerate the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Industrial Parks, particularly in underdeveloped regions. He reported that the department's support for seven SEZs has already attracted investments amounting to R19.6 billion.

In addition, the Minister announced that the department, in collaboration with the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Commission, will engage with organized business, labour and other stakeholders to ensure compliance with economic transformation legislation.

Through these initiatives, Minister Tau aims to build a robust foundation for sustainable economic growth, job creation, and broader social equity in South Africa.

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SAFI PARTNERS WITH DTIC TO SHOWCASE INDUSTRY VALUE AT DECOREX

SAFI recently joined forces with the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (dtic) at Decorex Joburg where we had the privilege of showcasing our organisation, presenting our compelling value proposition and unveiling the revamped SAFI website.

Lynn Adonis, Administrative Manager of SAFI, noted that the event provided an excellent opportunity to engage directly with furniture-related exhibitors. Key topics of discussion included the advantages of Bargaining Council membership, the extensive benefits of SAFI membership and the critical role of Community Expert Practitioners (CEPs) to review Qualifications learning material, before approval by the QTCO.

"We were delighted by the enthusiasm shown by experienced artisans eager to become CEPs. This reflects a growing recognition of the need to preserve and pass on essential industry skills," Adonis said.

The event also allowed SAFI to introduce the Facilitator Training Programme (FTP) and gauge exhibitors' interest in workplace approvals and potential accreditation as training venues. "The response was overwhelmingly positive, with significant interest in both the FTP and the possibility of workplaces gaining approval and accreditation," Adonis added.

However, the event also highlighted a challenge: many exhibitors were previously unaware of SAFI and the comprehensive services on offer. This underscores the need for increased awareness and outreach. Despite this, the notable interest in the SAFI website and its membership benefits expressed by exhibitors was encouraging.

Both Decorex Joburg and Decorex Cape Town proved to be invaluable platforms for elevating SAFI's profile, boosting awareness and deepening engagement with the broader furniture industry.



SOUTH AFRICA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH MUST BE MANUFACTURING-LED



Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Mr Andrew Whitfield, emphasised the critical need for South Africa's economic growth to be anchored in manufacturing and driven by exports. Speaking during the Budget Vote debate for the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (the dtic) in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) in Parliament, Whitfield outlined the department's strategy to bolster local industries.

"It is essential that South Africa's economic growth is grounded in manufacturing-led growth. Manufacturing is less volatile and less vulnerable to economic downturns, creating real, sustainable, and decent-paying jobs for our people. South Africa must also create an export-oriented economy," Whitfield said.

The Deputy Minister stressed that a renewed focus on manufacturing growth will directly contribute to expanding exports. One of the dtic's primary objectives under the new administration is to drive a robust export agenda, which Whitfield believes is crucial to mitigating the risks posed by slow domestic growth and unlocking high-growth opportunities.

He detailed the steps the department will take to achieve this, including enhancing the competitiveness of local industries, streamlining export processes, lowering trade barriers, and fostering beneficial trade alliances.

Whitfield highlighted the country's export performance, noting that South Africa's exports in May 2024 totalled over R178 billion, resulting in a trade surplus exceeding R20 billion—the highest in six months. He attributed this success to the vital role of exports in strengthening the country's economy.

"We will build a supportive and competitive ecosystem to drive manufacturing growth and identify markets where our products can thrive," Whitfield concluded.



Diarise

30 SEPTEMBER 2024: DTIC DESIGN COMPETITION CLOSING DATE

Brought to you by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), SAFI, Proudly South African and industry partners, entries for the FURNITURE DESIGN COMPETITION closes on 30 September 2024. Whether you're a student or an established manufacturer, showcase your creativity and originality. Let your designs reflect local materials, sustainability and the South African story to reflect the theme of Shedding Light on Great Design.

To enter, please go here: <https://www.thedtic.gov.za/furniture-design-competition-call-for-entries-2024/>

22-23 OCTOBER 2024: MANUFACTURING INDABA

The Manufacturing Indaba, happening on 22-23 October 22-23 at the Sandton Convention Centre, is where industry leaders, policymakers and key stakeholders will converge to discuss the latest trends, tackle challenges and explore new opportunities in the sector. This is your chance to network, exchange knowledge, and collaborate with the best in the industry. Don't miss out on being part of the conversation shaping the future of manufacturing in Africa!

Register NOW to attend the conference: <https://manufacturingindaba.co.za/register-conference-jhb/>

Book your Exhibition Space: <https://manufacturingindaba.co.za/exhibitor-enquiry/>



www.southafricanfurnitureinitiative.co.za

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