



Meet SAIW's acting Executive Director

African Fusion talks to Confidence Lekoane, currently acting Executive Director of the SAIW, about her history and hopes for the Institute's future.

Confidence Lekoane grew up in Thembisa on the East Rand of Gauteng and spent her high school years at Rhodesfield Technical High School near Kempton Park. "I never really knew what a technical high school was before I started, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. I enjoyed the practical aspects of being in a technical school, working with my hands to take things apart and putting them together again. It is part of my character," she tells AF.

Having matriculated in 2006, Confidence went to the University of Johannesburg (UJ) to study metallurgical engineering and was awarded her National Diploma in Engineering Metallurgy. "During my undergrad studies, I got industrial exposure in production quality control, which included looking at the accuracy of the casting alloys," she says, adding that it was here that she first gained experience of mechanical and metallurgical testing.

"In 2011, while studying for my B-Tech

in Engineering Metallurgy from UJ, I was employed by SCAW Metals on its Graduate Training Programme where I was conducting research on new methodology to enhance product quality in the foundry, characterising steel microstructures and managing heat treatment trials to improve wear resistance – for vertical spindle mills, for example," she tells AF.

Confidence joined the SAIW in February 2012 and was instrumental in establishing the Institute's newly formed mechanical testing lab. "After setting up the laboratory, I was responsible for managing and coordinating day-to-day laboratory operations and ensuring adherence to ISO/IEC 17025 quality management standards; operating and maintaining all the testing equipment; interpreting test results; and issuing reports in line with client specifications and regulatory standards," she says.

"I also provided mentorship to in-service training students and ensured the laboratory maintained a high level of organisation



Confidence Lekoane has been appointed to the role of active Executive Director of the SAIW.

and efficiency," she adds.

Confidence Lekoane also found the time and energy to continue to study while managing the SAIW Mechanical Testing Laboratory, and she was awarded an IIW International Welding Technologist (IWT) Diploma by the SAIW in 2017.

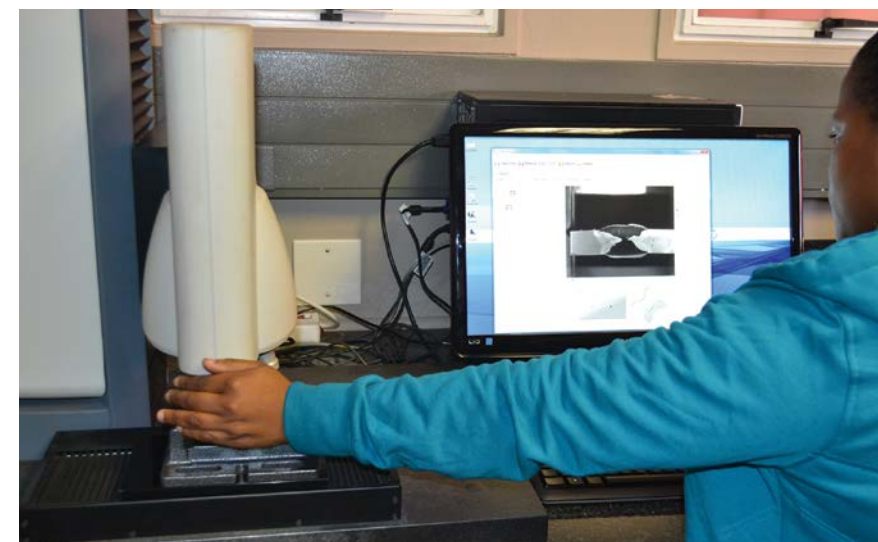
This led to a promotion within the SAIW's Technical Services Department, where she became a welding consultant, doing qualifications for welding procedures and personnel, and assisting clients

and SAIW members with welding related problems. "I was helping clients towards compliance with international standards such as ISO 15614-1 for welding procedure specifications (WPSs); ISO 9606-1 for the qualification testing of welders; and the ASME IX, and AWS D1.1 welded construction codes for pressure vessels and structures, respectively.

"This work is at the core of the SAIW's national role in raising and upholding industry standards," she points out, adding that her Technical Services role at the SAIW also included coordinating welder performance qualification, ensuring adherence to quality standards, leading the development of welding procedures, troubleshooting and resolving welding problems for clients, managing client relations, and developing tailored solutions to meet individual client needs.

In April 2023, Lekoane was promoted again to become the SAIW's Technical Services and Practical Welding Manager. Now in 2025, she has again been chosen – this time in the roll of acting Executive Director – to lead the Institute through a difficult transformation. "It's a big job, but I am a hard working person," she comments.

"The SAIW is evolving, focusing on



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digitalising systems, programmes and automating company processes. We are moving with the times to become increasingly relevant to the industry. I am looking forward to being instrumental in delivering this vision, which is being made possible under the leadership and guidance of our President, Mr Joseph Zinyana.

"The SAIW should be the home of the welding Industry, where people come to find solutions. My hope is we can again

become the preferred partner for our membership and the wider welding community.

"My management style is collaborative: I want to cultivate a culture where our staff feel happy, energetic and proud when they come to work. "Most importantly, all our services need to be highly valued by customers, members and the South African welding industry. We need to put them first," Confidence Lekoane concludes.

www.saiw.co.za

IIW Annual Assembly and International Conference 2025

In June 2025, The Italian Institute of Welding (IIS) will host the IIW Annual Assembly and International Conference, an event of global importance, in the wonderful atmosphere of Genoa, Italy, giving attendees a chance to visit Italian industry and experience Italian culture, hospitality, arts and food.

The 78th IIW Annual Assembly & International Conference on Welding and Joining will take place from June 22 to 27, 2025 in the Genoa, Italy.

The history of Genoa is a mixture of democracy, commerce and finance: it was one of the first Republics in the world; Genoese merchants sailed across the world; and the first bank was established there in 1407. So the city has always been open to influences from different cultures. In the modern age, the city has been promoting the industrial culture in Italy, which originated in Italy's industrial triangle: Milan-Turin-Genoa.

Nowadays Genoa is a dynamic city aspiring at becoming the cradle of new technologies, with the highest quality of life as a result of its size, climate, environment and atmosphere.

The Italian Institute of Welding (IIS) has selected the old harbour district for the Assembly and Conference venue, which has been renovated to create a unique working and leisure environment, right on the seafront. IIS has also designed a set of wonderful events to accompany the IIW ceremonies, including concerts and a visit to the biggest aquarium in Europe.

Assembly and Conference participants and companions can enjoy the city, where all the main attractions are at walking distance: old palaces, small shops, fine arts and local food and wines. At short distances by train or bus, the most beautiful attractions of the 'Riviera' can be easily reached, such as Portofino, '5 Terre', consisting of five villages almost uncontaminated by modernity, as well as the many pleasant beaches and seaside villages.



The IIS has selected the old harbour district for the venue of the 78th IIW Annual Assembly & International Conference in June 2025.

The International Conference will be held in conjunction with the Italian national welding days (GNS), an event that gathers more than 1 500 participants every other year from all over the country. This is also a unique opportunity to get in touch with the Italian industry related to joining and to expand perspectives for the world of welding.

The deadline for Early Bird registration has been extended to March 31, 2025. For those planning to submit a technical contribution, submissions remain open, but if attendance depends on securing a presentation slot, presenters are encouraged to submit their contributions as soon as possible through the designated submission portal.

<https://online.aristea.com/event/iiw2025>

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