

COVERING THE WORLD OF CONSTRUCTION

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**Leadership:
HOW
EXCELLENCE
IS BUILT**

**Building South Africa's next chapter
THROUGH SUSTAINABLE
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Tackling mental health
IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**



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ON THE COVER

Energy security continues to shape infrastructure investment across Southern Africa. In Botswana, this imperative has taken shape through a landmark project delivered by Trotech in partnership with Botswana Oil Limited (BOL). The initiative, based in Francistown, demonstrates how disciplined construction management and collaborative execution can deliver infrastructure that meets national objectives while setting new benchmarks for safety and quality.

Botswana Oil's mandate is clear: secure, manage and distribute petroleum products in a way that supports operational efficiency and long-term sustainability. The Francistown project was designed to strengthen national fuel storage capacity and ensure reliability across the supply chain.

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COMMENT

In 2026, geotechnical engineering has quietly reasserted itself as one of the most telling barometers of the health of South Africa's construction industry. Often operating out of the spotlight, geotechnical professionals are typically among the first on site and the last to leave, shaping decisions that determine feasibility, cost, risk and long-term performance. For this reason, the level and nature of geotechnical activity offers a clear early signal of where construction is heading, long before cranes dominate the skyline.

After several difficult years marked by stalled public projects, budget constraints and investor caution, the current uptick in geotechnical investigations suggests renewed confidence. Activity levels in 2025 and early 2026 point to a pipeline that is broader and more diverse than it has been in some time.

Geotechnical engineering sits at the intersection of engineering judgement, risk management and economic reality.

South Africa's geology is both a challenge and an opportunity. From expansive clays and dolomitic ground to deep residual soils and complex

rock profiles, few countries demand as much from geotechnical engineers. In 2026, there is growing recognition that these conditions cannot be treated as a box ticking exercise. The consequences of inadequate investigation are well known, including foundation failures, excessive settlement, sinkholes and escalating claims.

This shift is particularly evident in public sector and utility projects, where past failures have resulted in reputational damage and financial loss. There is a renewed emphasis on independent review, peer assessment and long-term performance. While procurement pressures remain, especially around fees and timelines, there is a gradual move towards valuing competence and experience over lowest price. Technology is also reshaping the discipline. Improved in situ testing, remote sensing, data analytics and numerical modelling are allowing engineers to extract more value from investigations and communicate risk more clearly to non-specialists. In 2026, geotechnical data is increasingly integrated into digital project platforms, supporting better collaboration between civil

engineers, structural designers and contractors. This integration improves constructability and reduces surprises on site, which in turn supports project delivery and profitability.

From a market perspective, the diversity of geotechnical work is another positive indicator. When activity is limited to a narrow sector, it suggests fragility. The current spread across energy, transport, water, mining and private development indicates a more balanced construction environment. Importantly, smaller and mid-sized projects are also returning, which is often where employment growth and skills development are strongest.

However, challenges remain. Skills shortages, particularly at senior and specialist level, continue to place pressure on the profession. Transformation and succession planning are critical issues that must be addressed to ensure long term resilience. There is also a need for ongoing education of clients about the value of geotechnical engineering, especially in an environment where cost cutting instincts can still override technical judgement.

As the industry looks ahead, one thing is clear. The state of geotechnical engineering in South Africa is not just a reflection of ground conditions, but of confidence, governance and intent. When the ground is properly investigated, understood and respected, it usually means projects are being planned with care and realism. In 2026, the increased tempo and maturity of geotechnical activity suggests that, at last, the construction industry may be building on firmer ground.

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AUREX CONSTRUCTORS LOOKS AHEAD WITH CONFIDENCE

Leading industrial construction, turnaround, and maintenance company Aurex Constructors closed out 2025 on a strong footing, navigating shifting market conditions while delivering record progress across its renewables portfolio and expanding its geographic reach. CEO Stuart Kent says the year demonstrated the strength of Aurex's diversified business model and its ability to adapt in a rapidly evolving energy landscape.

“Our renewables business has delivered strong growth this year, even as oil and gas faced headwinds,” explains Kent. “By redeploying core resources across sectors, we have maintained agility and positioned ourselves to capture emerging opportunities.”

The continued decline of local refining capacity in South Africa has required operators to re-evaluate their strategic positioning. Kent notes that importing of refined products remains necessary for South Africa, reinforcing Aurex's decision to strengthen its presence in tankage and terminals to support the storage and distribution of these fuels.

2025 highlights: driving growth and innovation

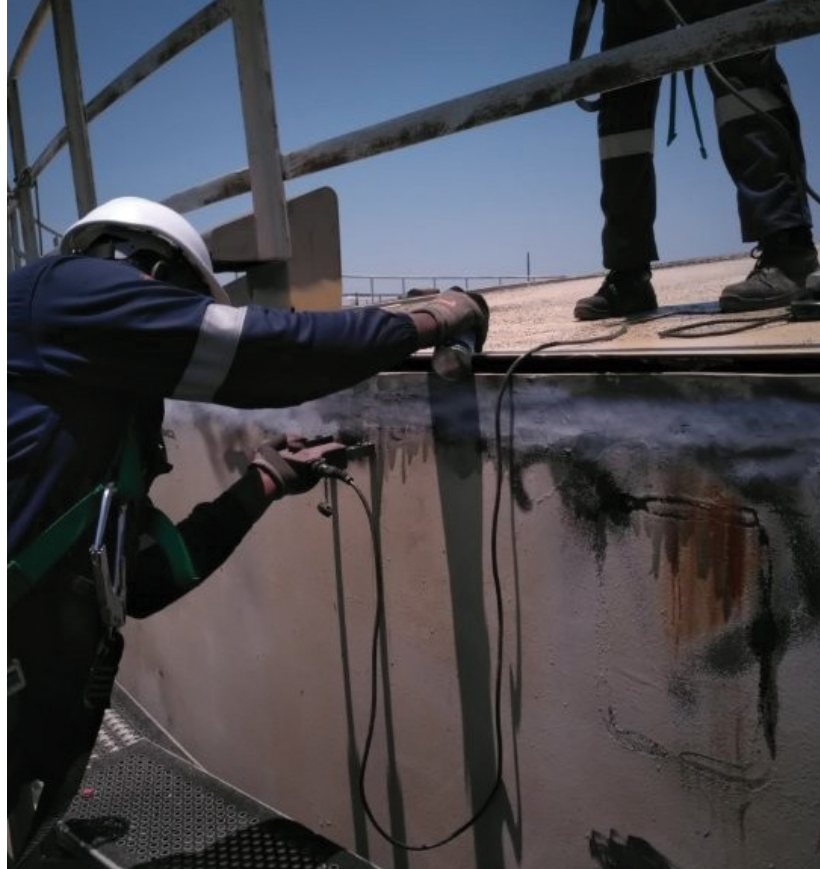
A central highlight of 2025 was the execution of eight renewable energy projects in parallel, each at different stages of engineering, construction, and commissioning. “Executing eight renewable projects in parallel last year was a milestone that speaks to our team's capability and commitment. It is also a clear indicator of where the market is heading, and we are well positioned to lead that transition,” Kent says.

Aurex has strengthened its ability to carry out solar PV EPC projects, which remain a major source of opportunity in the years ahead. This capability is supported by an engineering department established over the past 24 months, dedicated exclusively to the renewables sector.

In addition, the company completed the construction of two new fuel storage tanks in Durban and undertook the refurbishment of 29 tanks across seven geographical locations in three countries, reinforcing its expertise in tankage and terminals to support the storage and distribution infrastructure, critical as South Africa's refining capacity continues to decline and imports become essential.

Regional expansion into Namibia and Mozambique

Expansion into Namibia and Mozambique has gained traction. “Establishing operations in these regions strengthens our presence and opens new opportunities in mining and energy. This positions Aurex strategically and creates a solid platform



Aurex has built two new fuel storage tanks in Durban.

for sustainable growth in the years ahead,” adds Kent. The company has already secured new project awards in these territories and continues to invest in local capability and training to address skills shortages.

At the heart of Aurex’s success is a culture that embraces collaboration and agility. Kent emphasises that the company’s people are its most valuable asset. “Our people are the foundation of our success. By investing in their growth, we empower them to create lasting value for our customers and communities, driving sustainable progress for Aurex.”

Accelerating digital transformation

Digital transformation accelerated in 2025, with AI integration becoming a key priority to improve operational efficiency. “Digital transformation is accelerating across Aurex, with AI integration at the forefront. These technologies are enabling smarter, more efficient operations and unlocking new ways to deliver value,” stresses Kent.

Commitment to ESG and community upliftment

Aurex maintains a strong commitment to community upliftment and ESG leadership. “Every project is an opportunity to make a positive impact. Our goal is to leave communities stronger and more empowered than when we arrived,” says Kent.

The company engages early with community leaders and invests in education and training initiatives that support long-term empowerment. “Appointing an ESG champion reinforces our commitment to sustainability and accountability. It

ensures these principles are embedded in our operations and transparently reported,” adds Kent.

Looking ahead to 2026

Kent expects the oil and gas, mining, and renewables sectors to perform better in 2026. Aurex continues to pursue select prospects in the Middle East while strengthening its Southern African footprint.

“South Africa’s growing energy demands create opportunities for innovative solutions, from renewable power projects to small-scale nuclear, optimising ageing power stations, and improving transmission between regions,” he says.

Strategic planning remains focused on a two-to-three-year horizon to ensure Aurex stays agile in a rapidly changing environment. “Adaptability is a defining strength of our leadership team. We embrace change, learn from every decision, whether it works or not, and use these lessons to build resilience. The challenges make our success even more rewarding,” reflects Kent.

Looking to the year ahead, Kent expresses confidence and excitement: “Our ambition is to be the partner of choice for customers shaping the future of energy. We will continue to deliver, focusing on markets and relationships that align with our values and vision.” ☺

“A central highlight of 2025 was the execution of eight renewable energy projects in parallel, each at different stages of engineering, construction, and commissioning.”

The unsung hero of **ENGINEERING SUCCESS**

Smarter underwriting, stronger risk management and collaboration between insurers and engineers are shaping the industry's future.

Engineering has always been about progress - stretching the limits of knowledge, materials and technology to solve complex problems. But innovation and risk are inseparable. Every project carries uncertainty and managing that risk effectively is what allows great ideas to become reality.

"Specialist Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance plays a crucial role in this process. It gives engineers the confidence to take calculated risks, knowing they have protection against unforeseen failures or liabilities. In doing so, it fuels innovation while maintaining financial and operational resilience. But achieving this balance requires skill - and that's where the role of risk officers becomes indispensable," says Clarissa Rizzo, Business Unit Head for Professional Risks at Aon South Africa.



Clarissa Rizzo, Business Unit Head for Professional Risks at Aon South Africa.

Why professional indemnity matters

"It's often only when a claim arises that clients realise how vital PI insurance cover truly is. Project costing is complex enough and adding insurance to the mix can feel daunting. Yet, the right policy and partner can determine how well a business weathers a challenge," says Rizzo.

"In South Africa, annual PI policies negotiated with local insurers often offer broader coverage and better pricing than single-project PI cover. Still, understanding what is required contractually - and why - is essential," she adds.

"Negligence claims can cripple both professional reputation and financial stability. With litigation on the rise, the current loss ratio sits at around 45%. PI insurance also has a long tail - a typical claim can take up to seven years to settle. In such an environment, sustainability and continuity matter far more than the lowest premium. Unfortunately, economic pressures often push price to the forefront of decision-making, sometimes at the cost of adequate protection," Rizzo explains.

Market trends and shifting dynamics

Recent years have seen larger, costlier claims driving higher premiums and stricter underwriting. While these measures protect insurers' balance sheets, they also encourage improved risk management across the sector with loss ratios expected to decline below 40% in the near future.

"Despite these challenges, South Africa's insurance market remains strong and competitive. Local insurers provide sufficient capacity, expertise and flexibility - even for large-scale and complex projects. This adaptability allows for meaningful collaboration when policies need to evolve alongside project or contractual changes," says Rizzo.

The foundation of sustainable projects

At the heart of every successful engineering project lies solid

risk management. It's the foundation of sustainability and innovation, ensuring that quality and safety are deliberately built into every phase of design and delivery.

"Insurers are already factoring a firm's risk maturity into pricing decisions. Businesses that demonstrate robust risk management practices often benefit from more favourable terms - reinforcing the link between proactive risk control and financial efficiency," says Rizzo.

Insurance, in this context, is not a burden but an enabler of progress. By transferring risk, it allows businesses to pursue innovation and growth with

confidence. "Professional Indemnity cover, in particular, should be viewed not as a grudge purchase but as a strategic investment in long-term resilience," she adds.

A common challenge lies in managing the tension between budget constraints and comprehensive cover. "We believe the solution lies in education. Clients make their own choices, but informed decisions require full understanding of both risk and consequence. We often draw on real-world claim examples to illustrate how underinsurance can lead to greater long-term costs - helping individuals and organisations to find the right balance between protection and affordability," Rizzo explains.

The future of professional indemnity

The PI landscape is shifting toward dynamic, risk-based underwriting. Insurers are increasingly focusing on each firm's overall risk profile, not just its claims history. While premiums are unlikely to decrease significantly, the market is stable and expected to remain so for the foreseeable future.

However, misconceptions persist. "Many still view PI as a catch-all safety net, assuming any loss or dispute will automatically be covered. Professional Indemnity is designed to address negligence, not poor decisions or intentional acts. Understanding policy exclusions, limits of indemnity and scope of cover is vital to avoiding unpleasant surprises," Rizzo emphasises.

"Insurance should never be left to the last minute. Including your broker and insurer from the start - particularly on large or complex projects - ensures the right cover is in place and aligned with contractual obligations. Your insurance policy may well become one of the most important documents you hold as an engineering professional," she adds.

"Ultimately, insurance provides the security to innovate boldly, build confidently and grow sustainably. When managed proactively, it becomes a tool not just for protection - but for progress," Rizzo concludes. ©

The South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP) is a statutory body established, through an act of Parliament.

Benefits of SACPCMP Registration

Public Recognition

Being listed on a national register (database) signifies that professionals are properly qualified in accordance with legislation; the register is available to the general public.

Proof of Competency

Registration means that your client or employee is competent and has been independently verified by an impartial statutory body.

Proof of Continuous Excellence

Because registered professionals must be CPD compliant, they engage in regular skills and self-development.

Public Protection & Recourse for Unethical Behaviour

Transgressors of the code of conduct can be removed from the public register actions of misconduct or conduct unbecoming are proven.

How to Register via the SACPCMP

Construction Health and Safety:

<https://mychs.sacpcmp.org.za>

Construction Project Management:

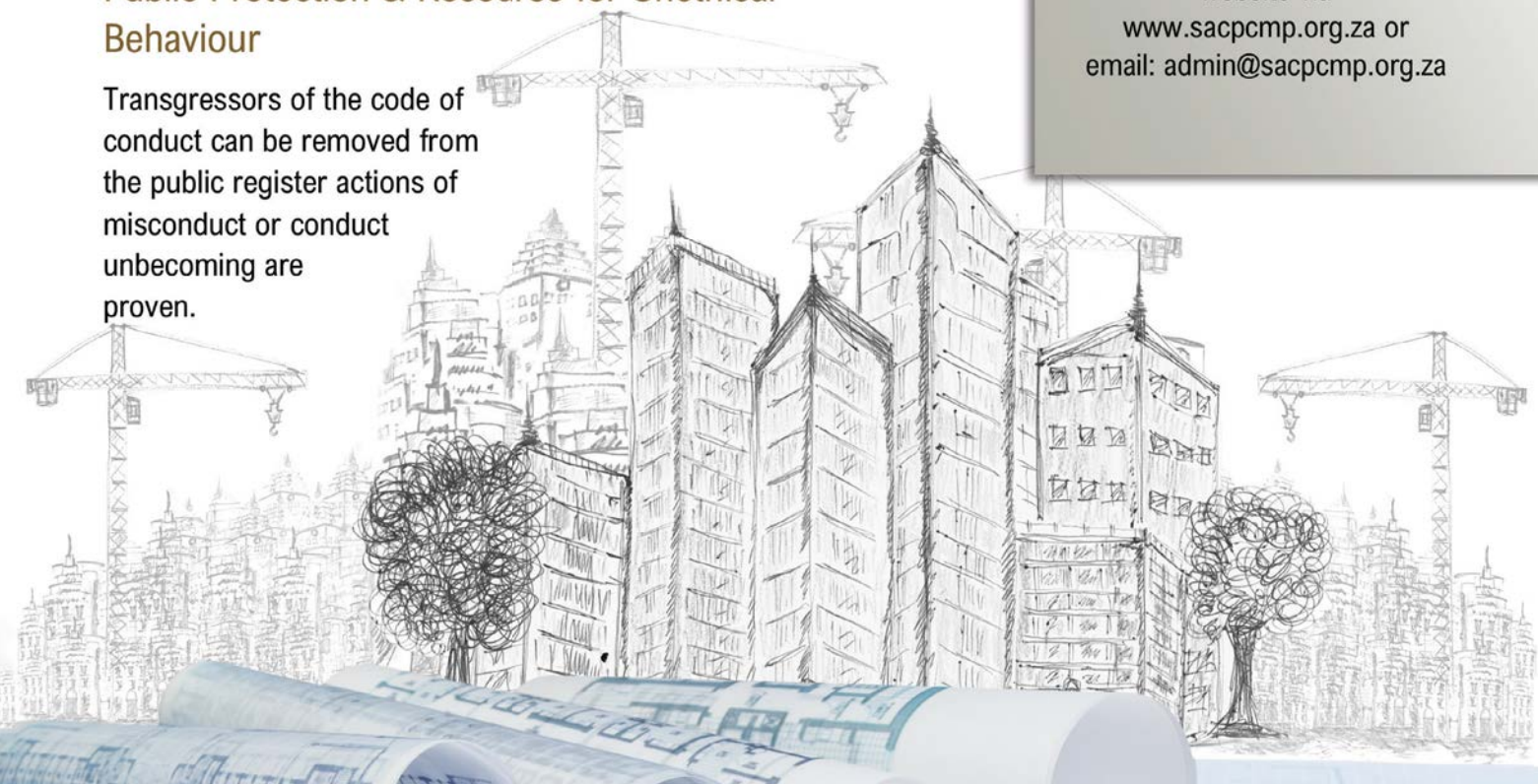
<https://mypcm.sacpcmp.org.za>

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WHAT WILL ACTUALLY MOVE THE NEEDLE IN CONSTRUCTION

*When I speak with executives across the built environment, I hear the same question in different forms. What should we prioritise next year so that we do not simply survive, but create an advantage? The answer is not a shopping list of buzzwords. It is a small set of choices that change how you win work, deliver it, and operate assets over time. **By Morag Evans, CEO of Databuild.***

Modular and off-site build move from “interesting” to “useful”

Factory-built components are no longer a novelty. In our market, modular methods reduce on-site time and waste, and limit disruption in dense urban areas. They also help manage labour pressures by moving repeatable work into controlled environments. The firms that benefit are not those that talk about modular; they are the ones that design for it early, align crane and transport logistics, and build supplier capability close to the site.

Digital tools are now a baseline, not a pilot

BIM adoption is widening, and the shift to data-rich models and digital twins is accelerating. This matters because decisions are increasingly made on total lifecycle value, not just capex. Predictive scheduling, cost and risk models, and better field data help leaders commit to dates and margins with more confidence. In the South African context of volatile inputs and tight programmes, digital maturity is less about prestige and more about repeatability.

Smart, lower-carbon materials are reshaping specifications

Material choices are moving beyond aesthetics and unit price. Clients are asking about embodied carbon, durability and circularity, and regulators are tightening expectations. For local contractors and developers, this will be a way to defend margins by offering designs that cost less to operate and last longer in our climate. Early engagement with suppliers to secure low-carbon options and to track metrics will separate leaders from followers.

Smart buildings shift value from build to operate

More projects are embedding sensors and analytics during construction rather than retrofitting later. The prize is lower running costs, better occupant experience, and operational resilience. In our region, where many assets are under-maintained, the opportunity is significant. The practical move is to align early with owners and facilities teams on what data matters, then integrate those requirements into scope and sequencing.

People strategy becomes a project strategy

Automation does not replace the human in the loop. It raises the bar on the skills we need. Teams that can manage robotics, assemble modular systems, and read data from site sensors will outperform those that treat these as side projects. The immediate step is a workforce plan that adds digital literacy and off-site capability to traditional trades, supported by focused training.

Resilience is a scope item

Floods, storms, and heat are shaping design and material choices. For South Africa and the broader region, infrastructure backlogs and climate risk mean resilience work will grow, particularly as energy and water constraints bite. Bringing risk assessment into early planning and selecting systems for local conditions will reduce lifecycle cost and claims pain later.

What does this add up to for decision-makers?

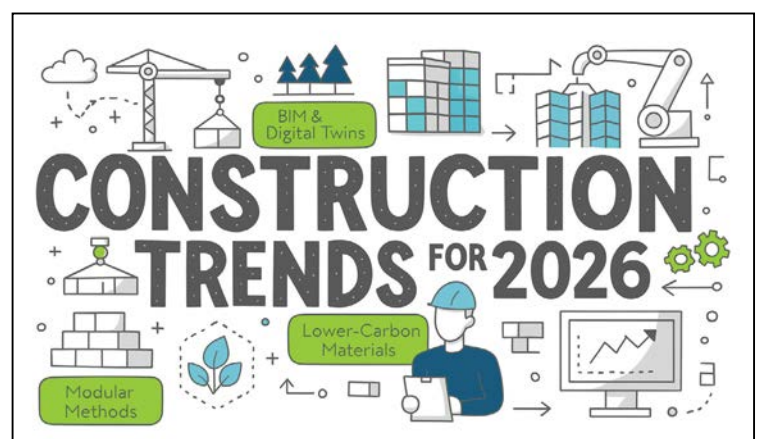
First, start earlier. If modular is on the table, design for it. If smart systems will matter in operations, define the data and interfaces before concrete is poured. If lower-carbon materials will be a tender requirement, engage the supply chain now. These are choices that create value in pre-construction, not line items to bolt on at the end.

Second, budget for capability, not experiments. A pilot that never scales has little value. Budget for the tools you will actually use on live work: model coordination linked to schedules, drone and site telemetry where it improves measurement or safety, and the training that lets supervisors and foremen use these tools confidently.

Third, localise the global playbook. Importing trends without adapting them to our logistics, regulatory realities, skills base and climate is a fast way to lose money. The winners adapt methods to South African constraints and make pragmatic progress.

Finally, a word on the pipeline. Trends only matter if they translate into work. Knowing which projects are moving, who the role players are, and where the real specifications are being set remains the difference between hoping and planning. That is the gap we built Databuild to close.

As we look to 2026, the strategic move is simple. Invest in the few capabilities that change outcomes. Focus less on novelty and more on what reliably wins work, delivers it well, and leaves an asset that performs. That is where the advantage lies, and it is within reach. ☺



Building South Africa's next chapter through **SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

As nations and industries shift from ambition to execution in sustainability strategies, South Africa stands at a pivotal moment to redefine infrastructure as a vehicle for climate-resilient development, economic inclusion and measurable environmental impact, moving beyond traditional engineering outcomes toward holistic, people-centred systems.

In 2026, the sustainability narrative is expected to shift globally: businesses and investors are prioritising execution over aspiration, with corporate strategies focused on outcomes that deliver resilience, competitiveness, circularity and measurable ESG performance.

This shift aligns with broader trends in sustainable finance, where Africa is increasing its sustainable debt and climate finance flows, yet continues to face gaps between investment needs and available capital for infrastructure and climate adaptation.

These themes were central to a recent industry roundtable hosted by engineering and architecture firm GIBB, where leaders across the built environment reflected on the structural shifts needed to move South Africa from ambition to action.

According to GIBB Group CEO, Vishaal Lutchman, in 2026 sustainability can no longer be treated as a project-level consideration. He noted that it is imperative it become the organising principle of infrastructure systems, integrating economic growth, environmental responsibility, social upliftment and cultural relevance into a single delivery framework.

Infrastructure, he argued, must be people-centred and designed for long-term sustainability rather than short-term outputs.

A persistent challenge undermining delivery is fragmentation across policy, planning, procurement and execution. Siloed approaches have weakened accountability and limited value creation. The roundtable emphasised the need for ecosystem-based thinking, where public and private stakeholders collaborate across value chains to deliver infrastructure that connects people to opportunity and supports economic participation.

Infrastructure's declining contribution to GDP further underscores the urgency of reform. GIBB General Manager: Engineering, Procurement and Construction Management, Ntshavheni Phidza, noted that inadequate maintenance, underinvestment and constrained transport and logistics networks continue to limit trade efficiency and market access. Reversing this trend will require smarter investment prioritisation, long-term planning certainty and credible public-private partnerships.

Transformation and inclusion remain equally critical. Danny Masimene, President of the Black Business Council in the Built Environment, highlighted how weak enforcement of procurement legislation and concentrated supply chains continue to inhibit meaningful participation by emerging players. Shifting procurement models away from lowest-cost outcomes toward quality, resilience and measurable social



From left: GIBB Group CEO, Vishaal Lutchman; GIBB General Manager: Engineering, Procurement and Construction Management - Ntshavheni Phidza; Danny Masimene, President of the Black Business Council in the Built Environment and Lufuno Ratsiku, President of the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions.

impact is essential to unlocking sustainable value.

Governance and professional excellence were identified as non-negotiables. Lufuno Ratsiku, President of the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions, warned that declining professional standards and limited accountability threaten delivery outcomes and public trust. Performance-based contracts, skills transfer and enforceable professional oversight are critical to improving quality and restoring confidence in the sector.

In conclusion, the key outcomes the panellists committed to implementing within their organisations are a decisive shift toward inclusive, bottom-up planning models that reflect community needs and local realities. By aligning governance, investment and skills development within integrated ecosystems, South Africa can unlock infrastructure that not only supports economic growth, but actively drives social equity and long-term resilience. ☉

HOW EXCELLENCE IS BUILT

The difference between short-lived entrepreneurs and those who build institutions that last is simplicity – applying their own version of Occam's razor within the milieu of commercial imperatives.

By Roelof van den Berg, CEO of the Gap Infrastructure Corporation (GIC).

This is not simplicity for simplicity's sake. Complexity in business is part and parcel of leadership. A leader's role is to weigh different choices and make decisions based on the inputs received, applying judgment and acting in line with the organisation's strategic imperatives.

Simplicity is an organising principle that breaks down complexity so that the consequences of every decision remain manageable rather than overwhelming. As an avid follower of sport, I've seen this behaviour repeated in microcosm by the very best. They're calm in crisis, energetic amid lethargy, and focused when surrounded by distraction.

Yet, simplicity alone isn't enough. It's the simple behaviours you exude in pursuit of excellence that matter. If I were to summarise some of these behaviours, they would be:

- Holding yourself accountable
- Being present
- Listening actively

This isn't an exhaustive list, but these behaviours sit at the core of daily organisational life. Their consistent application promotes an environment where disciplined progress becomes part of the internal culture.

Accountability: A strength to set standards in pursuit of excellence

I co-founded Gap Infrastructure Corporation (GIC) in 2009. My ambition was to build a multifaceted organisation that would make a discernible and positive impact on South African society.

Today, while we're very proud of the progress we've made, we're nowhere near finished. As a leading infrastructure developer, our mission at GIC is to change lives. If we're not changing lives through the projects we deliver, we're not creating value for the communities that rely on our expertise and the stakeholders who support our work.

It's a mission I feel personally accountable for, and accountability is a non-negotiable for every GIC team member.

So, where does simplicity fit in? Accountability is the simplicity of success or setback. Were you successful in what you sought to achieve? Did you do everything you could to achieve the desired outcome? If you weren't successful, what did you learn?

These questions can largely be answered with a yes or no. The moment "but" enters the conversation, I'm immediately concerned. "But" immediately usually introduces justifications and complexity, often as a way to avoid an



**Roelof van den Berg, CEO
of the Gap Infrastructure
Corporation (GIC).**

uncomfortable truth about why a desired outcome wasn't reached.

Avoiding accountability is human. It's rooted in self-preservation, since it's an impulse that anticipates a negative result. That's why it's a behaviour I cherish, as true accountability rests with the individual. Systems may encourage it, but the choice is always personal.

If a person holds themselves accountable, it suggests a predisposition that's open to feedback and prioritises the interests of the collective in pursuit of common objectives.

In this way, accountability is strength. It means owning your responsibilities, not wallowing in what went wrong, or too easily celebrating success. It demands an answer to the question: "What's next?"

Accountable teams and environments foster shared trust more quickly than otherwise possible. Team members are empowered to share their true opinions because there is a shared understanding that, regardless of how they're communicated, ultimately, the organisation benefits.

If the organisation benefits, it's moving closer to achieving its mission.

Take everything in, be present, and listen actively

Entrepreneurship isn't for the fainthearted. Survival alone is an achievement. Every moment matters because it can be difficult to discern the value of a promising conversation or meeting until it's too late.

Throughout my career, I've had countless conversations that initially appeared commercially promising. However, when considered in the quiet of the day, I've often tempered my expectations because I have processed all the information received in that interaction.

It could be the way a person shook my hand at the conclusion of the meeting, their body language when discussing their motivations, or how they described solving a particular problem.

To gather meaningful information, you must be present. Showing up isn't enough. Being present means devoting your full attention to what's in front of you. It means engaging both with the person and the subject matter to the degree that it becomes your only focus in that moment.

Active listening follows. It means to truly listen to what a person says and not make immediate judgments based on your personal biases. By doing so, you give your mind the best possible opportunity to weigh the merits of what's said as objectively as possible.

Described simply, active listening is the effort required to maintain an open mind.

Modern society and constant digital distractions work against this. Studies have shown that it can take up to 25 minutes to regain focus after an interruption.

Leadership means gathering as much insight as possible



so that your decision-making is informed to the maximum degree.

That means listening more than speaking, while remaining accountable and present. When you tell a person they have your full attention, you must mean it. This is how you ultimately build trust, get people on your side, and get deals done. ☺



New draft regulations seek to reinforce **SA's CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**



Craig Laskey, Group
SHEQ Manager for
GVK Siya-Zama Building
Contractors.

The publication of South Africa's Draft Construction Regulations 2025 represents more than a routine regulatory update; it signals a fundamental shift in how our industry approaches safety, accountability and professional responsibility. For construction professionals, clients and developers, understanding these changes is essential for survival and success in an evolving landscape where the stakes have never been higher.

With construction accounting for 40% of work-related fatalities in industrialised nations despite employing only 6% to 10% of the workforce, the proposed regulations respond to an urgent need for systemic change. "When construction accounts for four out of every 10 workplace deaths while employing less than one in 10 workers, we have a moral and business imperative to transform our safety culture fundamentally," says Craig Laskey, Group SHEQ Manager.

Construction creates jobs, stimulates investment and builds infrastructure that benefits future generations. Effective regulation ensures public safety, consumer protection and industry sustainability. Like the buildings we construct, our industry must rest on a firm foundation of integrity and professionalism.

Recent events have underscored this need for reform. The tragic George building collapse in 2024 was one of the most devastating structural failures in recent memory and a stark reminder of the consequences when oversight, competency and accountability are compromised. As investigations and lessons continue to unfold, the message is clear: complacency is not an option.

A new era of accountability

The draft regulations usher in a new era of accountability. Their most significant departure from the 2014 Regulations lies in the expanded web of responsibility. Clients can no longer remain passive project sponsors.

"The new regulations make it clear: if you commission a building, you're accountable for ensuring safety is embedded from day one. This isn't about pointing fingers; it's about creating shared ownership of outcomes," explains Gareth Robb, GVK-Siya Zama's contracts director in the Western Cape.

Under the proposed framework, clients must prepare documented design risk assessments before construction begins, develop comprehensive health and safety specifications and ensure designers integrate these considerations from inception. Safety is now embedded at the project's conceptual stage.

The entire construction value chain stands to benefit. For contractors, the introduction of Construction Health and Safety Managers as statutory appointments on complex projects elevates safety from a compliance checkbox to a strategic imperative. "By creating statutory roles for Construction Health and Safety Managers, we're professionalising safety management. These individuals will have the authority and professional standing to stop unsafe work before someone gets hurt or killed," says Laskey.

Principal contractors must actively coordinate cooperation between multiple contractors on site. Accountability cannot be diluted through subcontracting. Dual-signature requirements eliminate ambiguity about professional responsibility when critical decisions are made.

Designers face heightened scrutiny. Where soil stability remains uncertain during excavation work, both the competent person and the engineer or technologist must sign off jointly. These dual-signature requirements eliminate ambiguity about professional responsibility when critical decisions are made.

Contractors must review risk assessments whenever design changes alter the risk profile, when incidents occur, or at minimum annually. Risk assessment documents must be accessible to employees, trade union representatives and health and safety committees – not just inspectors and clients.

The shift from paper-based to electronic health and safety files reflects practical modernisation, but the substance matters more than the format. These files must capture the complete project lifecycle, creating an institutional memory that informs future maintenance and prevents disasters during a structure's operational life.

Building capacity, not just structures

Perhaps the most forward-thinking aspect of the 2025 framework is its emphasis on professionalism and skills development. The introduction of Construction Health and Safety Officers and Managers as distinct roles – both requiring registration with statutory bodies approved by the Chief Inspector – establishes clear career pathways in construction safety management. By mandating professional registration, the new regulations seek to enhance standards, enable mentorship and build a generation of safety leaders who can elevate industry practice.

Significantly, the regulations' attention to ergonomics – optimising human well-being and system performance – is a recognition that construction workers' long-term health matters. With 30% of construction workers suffering musculoskeletal disorders, this acknowledges that sustainable construction requires sustainable work practices.

Sustainability beyond compliance

While primarily focused on occupational health and safety, the 2025 regulations intersect with environmental responsibility. The demolition provisions requiring compliance with Asbestos Abatement and Lead Regulations demonstrate integrated thinking. The removal of Approved

Inspection Authorities streamlines oversight but places greater onus on contractors to self-regulate effectively.

Building for the future

The transition period will test our industry, but any discomfort will become benefit in the long term. “Those who embrace this as an opportunity to build better systems and earn client trust will emerge as industry leaders. The question isn’t whether you can afford to comply; it’s whether you can afford not to,” adds Laskey.

Smaller contractors may struggle with the administrative burden of enhanced documentation. Project costs will increase as safety infrastructure and professional appointments become non-negotiable. However, these short-term challenges will create long-term competitive advantages. Companies embracing the new framework will differentiate themselves as professional, credible partners.

Clients increasingly recognise that the cheapest tender often carries hidden costs: delays, rework, accidents and reputational damage. The 2025 regulations create a level playing field where cutting corners on safety no longer offers a competitive edge.

Bold action required

The Draft Construction Regulations 2025 are by no means final. The industry must engage constructively in the public comment process. But the direction is clear: over the next five years, with collective commitment, we can build a better sector. Companies that treat this transition as a mere compliance exercise will struggle. Those who recognise



it as a catalyst for operational excellence, professional development and sustainable growth will lead South Africa’s construction industry into a safer, more credible future. ©

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BUILDING BOTSWANA'S ENERGY FUTURE: INSIDE TROTECH'S STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

A collaborative fuel storage development in Francistown highlights how disciplined delivery and engineering rigour can strengthen Botswana's energy security.

Energy security continues to shape infrastructure investment across Southern Africa. In Botswana, this imperative has taken shape through a landmark project delivered by Trotech in partnership with Botswana Oil Limited (BOL). The initiative, based in Francistown, demonstrates how disciplined construction management and collaborative execution can deliver infrastructure that meets national objectives while setting new benchmarks for safety and quality.

A strategic brief with national impact

Botswana Oil's mandate is clear: secure, manage and distribute petroleum products in a way that supports operational efficiency and long-term sustainability. The Francistown project was designed to strengthen national fuel storage capacity and ensure reliability across the supply chain. From the outset, the brief demanded more than a physical build. It required a solution aligned with regulatory compliance, safety excellence and adaptability for future expansion.

Scope and delivery

The works were executed within a live operational environment, under heightened audit and compliance scrutiny. Key deliverables included the design, procurement,

prefabrication, installation and corrosion protection of four above-ground storage tanks, each with a capacity of 15 000 m³. The project also incorporated four aluminium geodesic dome roofs and two aluminium internal floating roofs, engineered to reduce vapour loss and improve environmental performance.

Despite the complexity of working within an active fuel facility, the project was completed within the approved contractual framework of 14 months. Final close-out confirmed full alignment with technical requirements and client expectations.

Engineering approach and innovation

Trotech's methodology was anchored in three priorities: safety, quality and programme discipline. Operating in a high-risk oil environment demanded uncompromising safety standards. Comprehensive risk assessments, permit-to-work systems and continuous monitoring ensured zero compromise throughout execution.

Quality assurance was embedded at every stage, with all works delivered in accordance with international codes for bulk storage tanks and Botswana's regulatory standards. Programme discipline was equally critical. The team adopted a structured schedule, enabling real-time adjustments without



impacting delivery milestones. Innovation played a decisive role in overcoming technical challenges. Design engineers identified opportunities to optimise shell stake thickness on tanks, reducing welding requirements and material costs. A temporary stiffener ring was introduced to prevent shell collapse during heavy winds, and wind girder designs were revised mid-fabrication to simplify installation. These interventions improved efficiency without sacrificing safety or integrity.

Local engagement and skills development

Beyond technical delivery, the project prioritised local

participation and skills transfer. Botswana-based labour and subcontractors were engaged across multiple work fronts, from scaffolding and painting to safety oversight and non-destructive testing. Structured on-the-job training exposed local teams to tank erection methodologies, inspection processes and compliance systems, reinforcing Botswana Oil's commitment to building national technical capacity.

Workforce development extended beyond the site. Initiatives such as developing a welding school, and internal promotions created pathways for long-term employment, strengthening community relations and earning commendation from both client and media.





Storme Wilson, Trotech Senior Project Manager, during tank construction works at Botswana Oil's Francistown depot.



Safety and environmental performance

Health, safety and environmental performance were central to the project's success. Despite operating under forensic audit conditions, the team achieved zero lost-time incidents over 329 129 manhours. Strict adherence to isolation procedures and permit-to-work systems ensured operational integrity, while environmental controls prevented contamination and managed waste streams in line with regulatory requirements.

Results and impact

The project delivered outstanding results against a backdrop of logistical and operational challenges. All major milestones were achieved on schedule, with progress often ahead of plan. Cost savings were realised through strategic procurement and the transition from imported labour to locally trained workers. Effective stakeholder engagement and robust site welfare facilities enhanced productivity and morale, while contractual claims were managed under FIDIC provisions to secure time extensions without compromising cost control.

A benchmark for future projects

For Botswana, the Francistown development represents more than an infrastructure upgrade. It is a statement of intent - a commitment to energy security and operational resilience. For the construction industry, it offers a case study in balancing safety, quality and programme certainty within complex environments.

Senior Project Manager, Storme Wilson, commented, "As Botswana continues to invest in its energy infrastructure, projects like this highlight the role of experienced construction partners in delivering assets that stand the test of time. Trotech's success in Francistown underscores the value of collaboration, innovation and disciplined execution in shaping the region's energy future". ☺



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STRENGTH IN STEEL, SECURITY IN SUPPLY

Structa Technology, based in Meyerton, Gauteng, is a proudly South African company and part of the Structa Group founded in 2002. A Level 1 B-BBEE entity, the business has built a strong reputation as a leading manufacturer of custom-built steel structures for electrification and telecommunications, water storage solutions, and infrastructure products that serve municipalities, utilities and industry nationwide.

A leader in its field, Structa Technology operates a 28 000 m² manufacturing facility, equipped with advanced steel fabrication technology to deliver best-in-class process efficiencies and quality. The strategic focus is on turnkey execution, from design and manufacturing through to galvanising, transport and site erection on projects throughout South Africa and Africa.

This capability is backed by an in-house engineering team responsible for research and development (R&D), product design optimisation, plus erection recommendations. The latter include foundations for tanks and towers. Across the board, Structa operates under ISO 9001:2015 and meets all relevant SANS standards, ensuring durability, safety, and compliance.

Cutting-edge fabrication techniques

Central to its focus on engineering innovation is an ongoing

investment in world class fabrication technologies. In this respect, Structa Technology has recently acquired a state-of-the-art 700 tonne automated CNC tandem press with 14 m bending lengths, which will further enhance its ability to handle large-scale steel forming projects.

Within the Group, we have further strengthened our capabilities through investment in the latest cutting-edge laser technology. A prime example is the recent acquisition of a 15-metre-long, 20 kW tube laser cutting machine with a 3,5 m wide bed, which – like the 700 tonne CNC bending press – is believed to be the first of its kind installed in South Africa.

“The new laser machine further strengthens our market offering in terms of fabricating products such as telecommunications and power transmission towers,” explains Hercules Rossouw, Managing Director of Structa Technology. “This investment has also significantly



improved production throughout the Group, enabling us to deliver within faster timeframes with unprecedented accuracy.”

In terms of cutting technology, Structa employs laser, plasma and angle processing for both thin and heavy plate and structural steel. This is followed by key processes that include semi-automated long seam welding, beam drilling, and assembly. For its water storage lines, Structa employs specialist 6 kW laser cutting machines for fabrication of the tank plates.

“Each product line has its own specific production set-

up, backed by specific technologies,” adds Rossouw. “The employment of the latest CAD software enables a seamless transition from design to the factory floor. Here the software is directly linked to CNC drilling lines and angle workers, as well as to laser and plasma cutters, with every component marked with a specific fabrication code for quality control.”

Water storage solutions

Alongside its mast range, Structa is well known for its Prestank sectional steel water tanks, proven in municipal, industrial, mining and power projects. An iconic example

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is the 4,2 Mℓ firefighting tank installed at Eskom's Medupi power station. Designed, fabricated and commissioned by the Group in 2014, this tank represented a major milestone in Prestank R&D as it is the largest unit produced by Structa to date.

Prestank models range in size from around 1,5 Mℓ up to 4,2 Mℓ or higher and are designed in accordance with SANS 10329:2004 guidelines. In turn, the steel truss stands on which they are mounted are fabricated strictly in accordance with SANS 10160 for wind and SANS 10162 for Structural Steel Work.

To perfect these designs, Structa's engineering team employs finite element structural analysis to optimise plate design and positioning of internal bracing, and

computational fluid dynamic (CFD) analysis to optimise wind resistance. Then as part of the final quality control protocol, laboratory testing confirms ultimate leak-free structural integrity.

"As a demonstration of our design innovation, we custom design our Prestanks to meet specific customer requirements. Past examples include the development of L-shaped tanks to fit around building footprints," says Rossouw.

In parallel with its Prestank series, Structa also fields round modular tanks in the form of the Circotank Maxi (100 kℓ to 1 500 kℓ) and Midi (1 000 to 20 000 litres). The former meets the needs of industrial water storage and bulk rural water supply schemes, while the latter is well-suited



for markets like schools, clinics, offices and small-scale rural water storage.

Erection of Maxi tanks is performed using a strake lifting system that requires no craneage. In turn, the Midi tanks are easily assembled on site in kit form with a small crew and can be mounted on a tower if required.

Supporting national power infrastructure

In every instance, electrification is the essential enabler for water network performance and reservoir supply, alongside all other industrial and municipal energy demand requirements.

As part of its integrated solutions, Structa Technology is a leading supplier of transmission and distribution powerline pylons in Southern Africa, with Eskom being one of its largest clients.

Typical products manufactured for Eskom and municipal use include monopole pylons (11k V – 220 kV); double pole pylons (132 kV – 220 kV); lattice pylons (132 kV – 400 kV); and utility poles for low voltage (11 kV) distribution.

The utility pole range has now found wide application as a long-term reliable replacement for wooden poles. These structures offer a much lighter, easily transportable option, resistant to fire and rot, as well as ease of maintenance.

In addition, Structa Technology manufactures specialised tower products for the wireless telecommunications sector – including the current 5G roll-out – and provides area high mast lighting solutions, supporting safer communities and enhanced connectivity. “Through the supply of high masts, lattice towers and specialist structures, Structa

plays a direct role in strengthening South Africa’s power network, ensuring reliable electricity delivery to millions of households and industries,” Rossouw explains.

Partnering with municipal engineers

Working across all 257 municipalities in South Africa, Structa has proven itself to be a trusted partner and a key interface for municipal engineers in devising flexible solutions. These extend across the full spectrum from mega infrastructure developments to community-level projects.

A recent example in the water segment is a 1,7 Mℓ Prestank tank designed and delivered in Bosplaas, North West province. Installed on a 10 m high steel truss stand, the installation was commissioned in May 2025 and provides vital potable water supply for the surrounding rural community.

Value engineered for the long-term

“Upgrading our electrification networks nationally and within our towns and cities is a top priority. However, even more pressing is the need for water security. We’re dedicated to providing solutions in both areas with 100% locally manufactured products that combine cost-effectiveness with long-term durability, making them a strong fit for South Africa’s service delivery needs,” adds Rossouw.

“Leading from the front, Structa will continue to invest in our proudly South African team and the world’s best technologies to provide sustainable one-stop solutions,” Rossouw concludes. ☺



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AfriSam concrete supports complex water **TOWER PROJECT IN GAUTENG**

AfriSam is playing a pivotal role in the construction of one of Gauteng's largest and most technically complex water towers, supplying specially designed readymix concrete to meet both structural and seismic performance requirements. Located near Main Reef Road south of Johannesburg, the 43 metre high water tower will store 3,2 mega litres of water to support the new Goudrand mega city development.



With construction led by M&D Construction and engineering design by SCIP Engineering Group, the project has demanded highly customised concrete solutions from AfriSam. The structure is located in a seismically active zone and required additional reinforcement in the lower section of the shaft to withstand ground acceleration above 0,1g. This called for increased steel density and a concrete mix that could deliver strength, flowability and controlled heat of hydration.

AfriSam's Product Technical Team Leader, Mduduzi Ndlovu, explains that the concrete mix was developed with a high proportion of supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) to reduce the heat generated during curing. "The base mix comprised 70% ground granulated blastfurnace slag (GGBS) and 30% AfriSam High Strength Cement, reducing the ordinary Portland cement (OPC) content to just 20%," says Ndlovu. "Despite the low OPC content, the mix exceeded expectations - achieving the target strength of 51 MPa was achieved in only 28 days in relation to the designed 56 day requirement."

The construction process placed high demands on the readymix in terms of both slump control and delivery precision. With over 210 kg of rebar per cubic metre in

some sections, AfriSam developed a high slump pump mix for vertical pours, while limiting slump to 130 mm for slanted sections to avoid concrete sliding off shuttering.

Sheldon Temlett, Contracts Manager at M&D Construction, highlights the importance of this mix performance. "With such dense steel and complex geometry, AfriSam's mix gave us the workability we needed without compromising quality. Their team worked closely with us to adjust slump levels and plan deliveries around our 12 m³/hour pour rate."

AfriSam Territory Manager Toni Williams adds that logistics were carefully aligned with construction progress to avoid delays or idle time on site. "Coordination was key to supporting M&D's controlled rise rate of 1 metre per hour, especially as the concrete had to partially set before each formwork lift could proceed."

Construction of the Main Reef water tower began in September 2024 and is scheduled for completion in April 2026. Once commissioned, it will provide essential water infrastructure to approximately 20 000 homes in the Goudrand housing development - a major project spearheaded by the Gauteng Department of Housing, the City of Johannesburg and Blue Print Housing. ©



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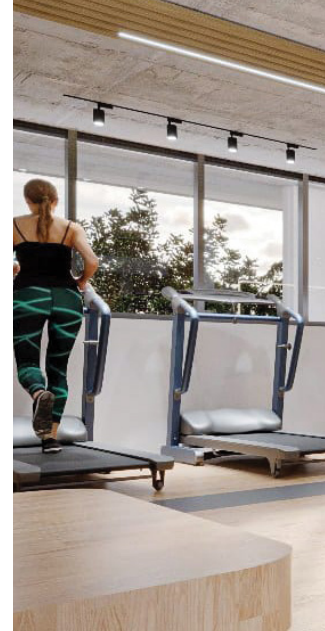


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Mixed success for **MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS?**

Mixed-use developments have been on the rise for several years globally, and for valid reasons. However, automatic success is not guaranteed, says Marike Louw, candidate architect at BPAS Architects – an understanding (and implementation of) core design principles is essential.

Reasons behind the shift

“The global (and local) shift towards mixed-use is largely due to lifestyle preferences, the shift in traditional workspaces, risk diversification, land scarcity and efficiency, sustainability and place-making,” says Louw. “There’s a shift towards experimental environments rather than merely functional ones. People are looking for authenticity, social interaction and community, with convenience and urban living. Workplace shifts have increased the demand for flexibility and spaces that can accommodate different functions. Mixed-use developments create a more vibrant urban fabric and thus support sustainability: less commuting, more walkability and diverse uses to create better-

connected neighbourhoods.”

However, she says, one of the biggest misconceptions about mixed-use developments is that combining residential, retail and commercial elements in a single building will automatically generate vibrancy, community and sustainability. “In reality, poorly designed spaces can easily become empty, unsafe and disjointed. Mixed-use developments are not just made by stacking apartments on top of retail and commercial spaces and opening the ground floor to the public. It’s important to ensure that the combination of functions within mixed-use developments is strategic and not overcomplex and that the development matches its surrounding context.”

Growthpoint officially opens **SANDTON DRIVE LINK BRIDGE**

Growthpoint Properties has officially opened the Sandton Drive Link Bridge, a R26-million infrastructure investment. Spanning the key arterial route of Sandton Drive, the new pedestrian bridge directly connects Growthpoint’s premium office building, The Place at 1 Sandton Drive, with Sandton City shopping centre.

Designed for safety, accessibility and visual impact, the bridge not only significantly improves convenience for tenants of The Place but also makes it safer for pedestrians to move through Sandton Central, South Africa’s leading business district. By directly linking the two buildings the bridge also connects commercial, retail, residential and public spaces in Sandton Central and Sandown. Further, it also provides street-level pedestrian access convenient for those accessing the services of the U.S. Consulate, which neighbours The Place.

Built through persistence, partnerships and placemaking

The new bridge was developed in close partnership with Sandton City, the Sandton Central Management District and the City of Johannesburg. It is the result of years of planning and a shared commitment to the future of Sandton’s economic hub.

“Sandton Drive Link Bridge is a safe crossing that stands as a beacon to the persistence and partnerships that got this project across the line,” says Estienne de Klerk, SA CEO of Growthpoint



Town, and a (as yet unbuilt) Rosebank development in Gauteng – as examples of mixed-use principles applied with care.

The Radley responds to the growing demand for urban housing while still fostering a sense of community. Its elevated courtyard creates a shared social space that reconnects residents with the city beyond the building's walls. By shaping this courtyard as the heart

Principles for success

Beyond blending functions, Louw says, successful mixed-use design requires a clear understanding of how different users move through and experience a site; when spaces are active; and where boundaries between public and private life should be drawn.

Key considerations include:

- Designing with time in mind: anticipating when each part of the development will be used to avoid overcrowding or periods of inactivity.
- Separating where necessary and integrating where beneficial: balancing privacy for residents with activity in public spaces: separate the private and public spaces and create spaces that can act as buffers where needed.
- Creating a strong ground-floor interface: shaping the street edge as the “social interface” that makes or breaks the development’s connection to its neighbourhood.

When these elements come together, mixed-use developments can strengthen community life, improve walkability, support sustainability and increase long-term property value.

Context-led mixed-use in practice

BPAS points to two of its designs – The Radley in Bellville, Cape

of the development, BPAS has ensured that communal life is not an afterthought but a defining feature of the resident experience.

The Rosebank development is envisioned as a mixed-use high-rise in one of Johannesburg’s most popular suburbs. Given its dense, pedestrian-orientated setting, Louw explains, the building is designed to sit on a dynamic plinth of aluminium slats that conceals structured parking and enriches the streetscape. “This solution strengthens the public interface and supports the vibrant urban character of the precinct, while internal programming offers residents and visitors a blend of amenities without compromising clarity or circulation,” she says.

People-shaped cities

BPAS is committed to people-centred design and argues that as urban areas densify, South Africa needs a more strategic approach to mixed-use. “Without careful planning and a nuanced understanding of context, mixed-use developments risk becoming overcomplicated, underutilised or disconnected from the communities they aim to serve,” says Louw. “Mixed-use is about creating places where people genuinely want to live, work and spend time. That requires design that understands people.” ☺

Properties. “Thank you to everyone who believed in this vision and made it a reality. This is an investment that will benefit countless people for many years to come.”

Representatives of Growthpoint, Sandton City and its co-owners Liberty, Standard Bank Group and Pareto Limited, and the bridge’s professional team, together with tenants of 1 Sandton Drive and representatives of Sandton Central Management District, the U.S. Consulate and the media were among the first to walk across the bridge, and over Sandton Drive, at the official opening today.

Strategic infrastructure and value creation

The bridge underscores Growthpoint’s continued investment in its core portfolio, driven by active asset management and a commitment to precinct-led value creation.

“This is placemaking in action,” says Timothy Irvine, Head of Asset Management: Offices at Growthpoint. “We’ve enhanced the value and positioning of The Place while improving the safety and experience of everyone moving through this important node.”

Constructed with a focus on durability, safety and design, the bridge features stainless steel balustrades, a glass-covered viewing deck, and lighting that adds a dynamic presence to the

Sandton skyline.

Shaping the future

Growthpoint’s investment in Sandton Central extends beyond its property ownership, which includes assets

directly adjacent to The Place and Sandton City, such as The Towers in Alice Lane as well as the Discovery head office, which anchors the Sandton Summit mixed-use precinct where the residential development, Olympus Sandton, recently commenced construction work.

“Through projects like the Sandton Drive Link Bridge, Growthpoint continues to shape South Africa’s leading urban environments by creating places where people, business and investment thrive. It reflects our strategy of value-adding investment in our quality portfolio of core assets and precincts,” concludes Neil Schloss, Head of Asset Management at Growthpoint Properties. ☺



From dust control to water conservation, Concor ensures every site activity respects the surrounding ecosystem.



PRIORITISING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Concor's role in the construction of Mulilo De Aar 2 South Wind Energy Facility in the Northern Cape, one of the company's first fully wrapped Balance of Plant (BoP) contracts, extends far beyond engineering and project delivery. With a firm commitment to environmental stewardship, the company is ensuring that its operations meet the highest standards of compliance while actively protecting biodiversity and managing sensitive ecosystems in the Northern Cape.

The company's environmental approach is guided by strict adherence to the project's Environmental Authorisation (EA), Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) and all other relevant permits and licences. Beyond regulatory compliance, Concor embeds best practice environmental management principles throughout the project. According to Zimasa Nodangala, Environmental Officer on the project, this approach forms part of Concor's culture of accountability and responsibility.

"Environmental protection is not a box-ticking exercise for us," she explains. "We see it as part of how we build - responsibly, ethically and in partnership with the environment. Every activity on site is managed to minimise impact, whether it relates to dust control, water conservation or biodiversity protection."

During the current phases of civil and infrastructure work, Concor has developed an aspects-and-impacts register aligned with the EMPr to identify and address environmental risks. "Dust suppression measures include restricting vehicle speeds on access roads to 40 km/h - and 20 km/h in unconsolidated areas - and using water carts for dust suppression. The project team has also implemented controlled blasting techniques to minimise both dust and fly rock," Nodangala says.

Water usage is another key focus area. All abstractions are authorised by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and daily monitoring through tally sheets and flow meters ensures responsible consumption. "We monitor water use daily

and reinforce awareness through toolbox talks," she adds. "Water is a scarce resource in this region, so it is essential that we use every drop wisely."

Stormwater management has also been prioritised with drainage systems designed to prevent erosion and direct clean water around active work areas. "Our goal is to avoid sedimentation and protect surrounding ecosystems," Nodangala notes. "By managing runoff carefully, we reduce the risk of environmental damage during heavy rainfall."

Waste management forms another critical component of Concor's strategy. Waste is segregated at source and transported to licensed landfill sites, with recycling implemented wherever possible. "We take waste separation very seriously - not only to meet compliance requirements but because it is the right thing to do," Nodangala says. "We also ensure that hazardous substances are stored safely and that spill kits and drip trays are available at all times."

The protection of biodiversity has been a major focus since the start of the project. "Before construction began, a registered specialist conducted a search-and-rescue operation under project-specific permits," she explains. "Indigenous vegetation was relocated where necessary and biodiversity awareness training was rolled out to every employee, subcontractor and supplier."

Construction activities are confined to authorised servitudes to prevent disturbance of previously relocated species and sensitive habitats. "We work very hard to ensure that no

unauthorised clearing takes place outside the approved footprint,” Nodangala emphasises. “Rehabilitation is done concurrently with construction so that we can restore disturbed areas as quickly as possible using indigenous plants. This helps stabilise soils, prevent erosion and promote long term ecological resilience.”

Cultural heritage management has also been important, with the team ensuring that rock kraals - heritage features of cultural significance - are properly demarcated and protected. “Access to some of these sites was challenging at first, but they are now all labelled and designated as no-go areas,” she says. “We have also appointed gate minders and worked closely with local landowners to ensure mutual respect and understanding.”

Environmental performance is continuously monitored through monthly Environmental Compliance Reports, Environmental Control Officer (ECO) audits and quarterly HSE audits. “We take a proactive approach,” Nodangala explains. “If a potential non-compliance is identified, corrective action is taken immediately. It is about maintaining high standards every day, not just during inspections.”

All subcontractors and service providers undergo mandatory environmental induction before commencing work, with training offered in multiple languages to ensure full comprehension.

“Everyone who sets foot on site needs to understand the environmental rules and why they matter,” Nodangala says. “We want people to take ownership of their actions and understand that environmental care is part of their daily job.”

As construction progresses on the Mulilo De Aar 2 South Wind Energy Facility, Concor’s goal is not only to deliver a renewable-energy project of national importance, but to leave behind a landscape where biodiversity and ecological stability have been protected for generations to come. “Environmental responsibility is part of Concor’s DNA and it is something we take great pride in demonstrating on this project,” she concludes. ☺



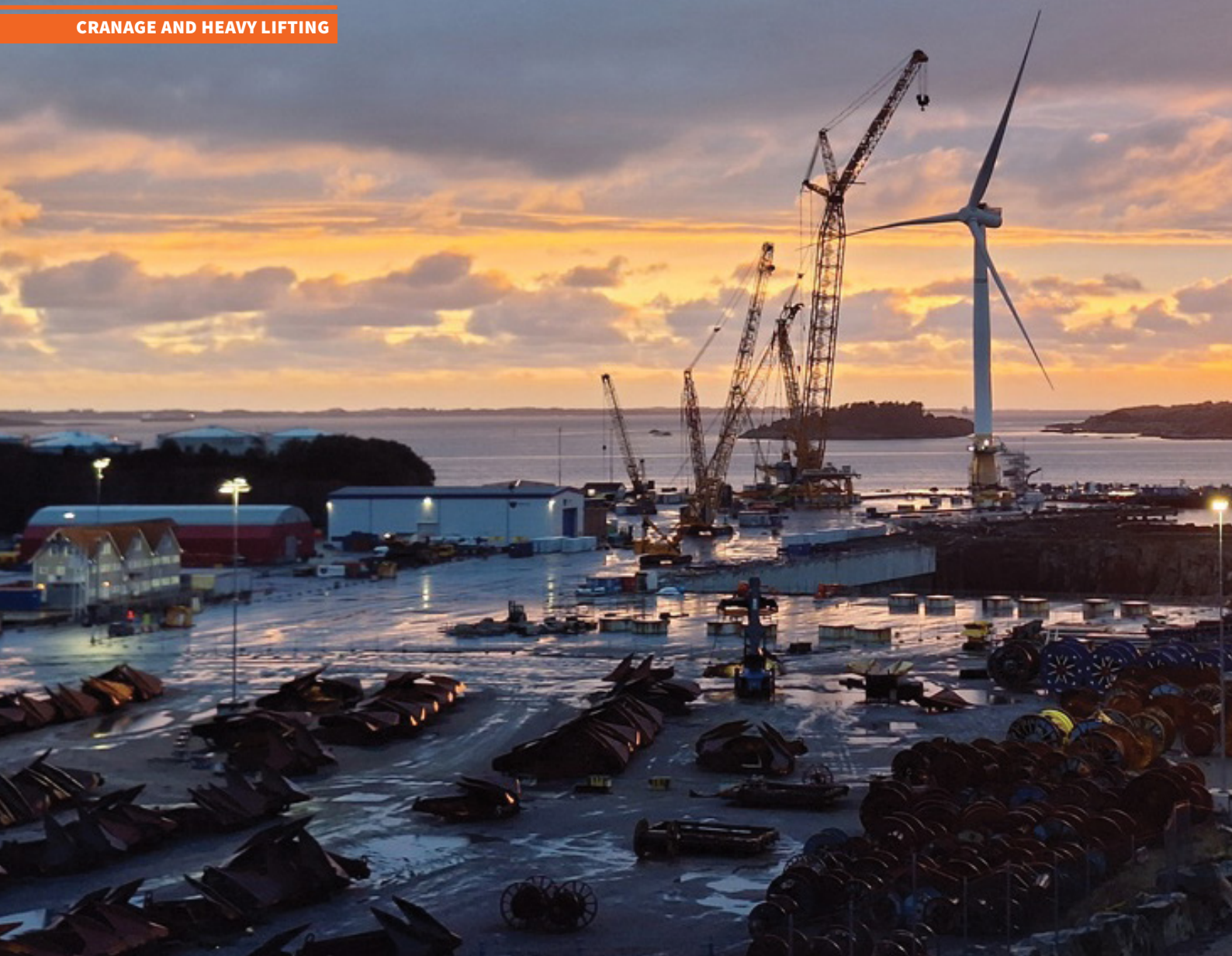
Biodiversity protection and rehabilitation are integral to Concor’s work on the De Aar 2 South Wind project.



Concor’s teams have demarcated and protected culturally significant rock kraals, ensuring local history is preserved alongside progress.



Concor’s Mulilo De Aar 2 South Wind Energy Facility project combines engineering excellence with environmental care at every step.



The wind industry in SA will generate **UP TO 35 700 NEW JOBS BY 2030**

As a support development response to this demand of specialised workforce, Sarens operates a technical training centre in South Africa specialising in onshore wind energy, renewable energy construction, and heavy lifting operations, with a strong focus on safety and technical excellence aligned with Global Wind Organisation (GWO) standards.

South Africa's construction sector showed a net increase of 55 000 jobs in the second quarter of this year compared to 2024, according to figures from the Quarterly Labor Force Survey from StatsSA.

As the workforce scales up to deliver on renewable energy targets, the demand for skilled wind technicians is growing faster than ever. Global Wind Organisation (GWO) forecasts the wind sector (globally) will need a workforce of 532 000 technicians by 2028 - 40% of whom will be new recruits -. Sarens Academy focuses on GWO (Global Wind Organisation) and scarce-skills training, among other courses related to the renewable energy sector and beyond.

The wind industry in South Africa will generate between 22 300 and 35 700 new jobs by 2030 according to the Just Energy Transition Skilling for Employment Programme (JET SEP). This forecast for growth in employment in the sector comes at a time when the latest data from the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2025, developed by the South African government's Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), points to an onshore wind generation capacity in the country of 34 000 MW by 2039. Such enormous potential highlights the urgency for the country to develop a technically skilled workforce.

In this context, Sarens, world leader in heavy lifting,



engineered transport and crane rental services, operates a technical training centre in South Africa specialising in training that supports onshore wind energy, renewable energy construction, and heavy lifting operations, with a strong focus on safety and technical excellence aligned with Global Wind Organization (GWO) standards.

The wind energy sector is not the only one driving job creation in South Africa, as construction showed a net increase of 55 000 jobs in the second quarter of 2025, according to figures from the Quarterly Labor Force Survey from StatsSA. This growth of 4,6% represents a clear opportunity in the sector, which requires highly qualified personnel to undertake all kinds of projects. With this in mind, Sarens Academy is not limited to wind energy, but also works in other sectors that require safety training, such as construction, offering all mandatory health and safety training for the construction, onshore, offshore, oil and gas, transport, and crane sectors.

In fact, a unique and differentiating feature of the Sarens Academy, in addition

to being part of the Sarens group, with international experience in thousands of lifting and heavy transport engineering projects, is its multidisciplinary nature, covering crane operation, lifting, logistics, and wind energy, within an accredited framework.

In turn, the Sarens Academy provides access to accredited and internationally recognised technical training, which remains limited in Africa. Although Sarens Academy's main market is South Africa, with headquarters in Cape Town, many of its students come to GWO-accredited facilities in South Africa to receive internationally recognised training before returning to their home countries to support local wind energy and heavy lifting projects. This model ensures regional capacity building and cross-border knowledge transfer.

While the latest Quarterly Labor Force Survey (QLFS) for the second quarter of 2025 reveals that disparities between men and women in the South African labour market continue to exist, the differences are narrowing. There remains work to be done to reduce the differences in specific sectors that have always been dominated by men, such as mining and transportation. In this context, Sarens Academy thrives on inclusive development, encouraging and actively promoting inclusion of women and unemployed youth.

Sarens has extensive experience in lifting and heavy transport in southeastern Africa. In Zambia, they have been involved in the Zambia Fertilizer Project since November 2024, contributing their expertise in the global and local market in the region and their machinery to carry out critical lifting and transport operations, using a Terex Demag CC2800-1 crane. In Namibia, they contributed to the construction of the InnoVent Diaz wind farm by installing the wind turbine generators (WTG), each weighing 125 tons. These and other projects earned Sarens the Excellence in Engineering Award at the 2025 Lifting Africa Awards. ☺

“While the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the second quarter of 2025 reveals that disparities between men and women in the South African labor market continue to exist, the differences are narrowing.”

UNITY AGAINST CONSTRUCTION MAFIA MAYHEM

South Africa's Public Works & Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson said at the National Construction Summit in November 2025 that more than 700 construction-related extortion and intimidation cases had been reported country-wide, with 241 arrests and 176 convictions since November 2024. By Alessandra Pardini, Wihan Meintjes and Simonne Heunis, Partners, and Sarah Longdon, Candidate Legal Practitioner, Bowmans



From left: Wihan Meintjes, Simone Heunis and Alessandra Pardini.

Amid positive signs that government action against the 'construction mafia' may be ramping up, there is room for the construction industry itself to be more proactive in mitigating the risks of construction-related extortion and disruption.

Through a combination of contractual measures and practical steps, it should be possible to prevent, or at least mitigate, the damage and disruption of construction sites and projects.

Up to now, contractual remedies aimed at managing the risk of disruptions from the construction mafia have been reactive and almost fatalistic, limited largely to the granting of time relief under *force majeure* clauses. In some instances, there is no relief at all where conservative employers and lenders in large infrastructure projects fail to appreciate the multi-faceted nature of this challenge. There has been little focus on measures that require contractors to take pre-emptive action to address and mitigate the risks.

Employers and contractors should be less reactive and more collaborative, which would include contractors agreeing to take on certain contractual obligations around risk assessment, mitigation planning, reporting, insurance, security, community engagement and emergency preparedness, among others.

These obligations need not be spelt out in precise detail in the contract, but should rather be broadly framed – with some minimum requirements and standards – because the construction mafia and their operations are opportunistic, constantly shifting and evolving to gain maximum advantage.

Good planning can mitigate construction mafia risks

A cornerstone of contractors' contractual obligations would be a community unrest mitigation plan (CUMP). This

should include an initial risk assessment; an analysis of the potential impact of disruption on the project's timelines, budgets and overall success; the form and frequency of engagement between the contractor and employer on risks; a private security strategy; an emergency response plan to deal with significant disruption or security breaches; and, crucially, a community engagement plan.

While all these measures are key components of a sound CUMP, the importance of effective community engagement cannot be overstated.

The 2017 Preferential Procurement Regulations provide for 30% of the value of contracts advertised for public tender to be subcontracted to certain designated groups, including exempted micro and small enterprises wholly owned by black people classified as youth, women or military veterans. Construction mafia have often exploited or misused this 30% provision by operating under the guise of local 'community forums' or 'business forums' claiming to represent the interests of designated groups.

It is vital to know what the legitimate community structures are and to cooperate with them to ensure credible local procurement of materials and labour, address any community concerns, mediate disputes, and keep the community informed about project progress – and prevent the construction mafia from getting a foot in the door. Credible local intelligence, coupled with a knowledge of historic data on construction mafia in the area, can make all the difference when conducting a risk assessment or, should worse come to worst, lodging an effective urgent interdict application.

Urgent interdict preparedness

Knowing the leadership and dynamics in a particular community can make it easier to identify the individuals behind construction site disruption. One of the reasons why

urgent interdict applications can be ineffective in the context of construction mafia threats, violence or work disruptions is that identifying the respondents can be challenging if they are not easily identifiable or operate under aliases.

Serving applications and court orders on respondents can also be problematic, especially if they are elusive or local law enforcement is uncooperative.

Given these potential hurdles, urgent interdict preparedness should be a fundamental part of the contractor's emergency response plan within the CUMP, which means proactively assembling a rapid-response legal team and being ready early on with a streamlined process to gather and document evidence of disruption or threats.

These and related steps to address and mitigate construction mafia disruption are not quick fixes that can be put into

place at a moment's notice. They will take time and effort to establish, test and perfect, but putting in the effort as early on as possible is preferable by far to being caught off guard and suffering project delays, overruns and financial losses.

Further, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure's Construction Industry Development Board is collaborating with the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority to address the problem of extortionists posing as private security firms. Construction-related regulations to the Public Procurement Act are also in progress.

The threat that the construction mafia presents to the industry and the economy is urgent and severe but, with government signalling the will to act and employers and contractors being proactive and practical, there is light at the end of the tunnel. ☺





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TACKLING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mental health pressures across South Africa continue to rise. For those working in construction this is exacerbated by long hours, high-risk environments, tight deadlines, job insecurity, and a culture of stoicism creating an environment of stress, anxiety and emotional fatigue. These pressures affect not only safety and productivity but also the lives of workers, their families, and the wider community.

“International research echoes the severity of the problem,” says Petra Devereux, Executive Director, Master Builders Association Western Cape (MBAWC). “We need to intensify our efforts, highlighting mental health as an essential and urgent industry priority.”

A 2020 Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) survey of 2,081 construction workers found that more than a quarter (26%) had experienced suicidal thoughts, while almost half reported poor mental health and only 56% said their workplace had a mental-health policy. The updated 2025 report shows little improvement: workers remain reluctant to seek help, often suffering in silence until the strain becomes overwhelming. Of the 865 respondents in 2025, 24% reported stress, 20% fatigue, 18% anxiety, 7% depression and 2% suicidal thoughts. Rising pressures such as limited-term contracts, long commutes, time away from family, and a ‘macho’ culture further exacerbate the problem.

These global concerns mirror South Africa’s own

construction landscape. Local research from the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) and the Department of Employment & Labour confirms that construction workers shoulder significantly higher mental-health risks than most other sectors.

The reasons are systemic: unstable work opportunities, hazardous conditions, economic stress, lack of diversity, substance abuse as a coping mechanism, and the persistent stigma that discourages openness. Further, the South African Forum of Civil Engineering Contractors’ (SAFCEC) recent workplace trends also pointed to a rise in anxiety and burnout among supervisors and site managers due to increased administrative and compliance demands.

“Mental health challenges have become impossible to ignore,” says Devereux. “We’re seeing increased pressure and mental fatigue across all levels from business owners to labourers who start their day with long, expensive commutes. With the surge in developments in the Western Cape and frequent project commencement

delays, many contractors are being pushed into impossible timelines. By raising awareness, we want to shine a light on the often-overlooked mental well-being of our workforce. Mental health is a legitimate safety concern, not an optional extra.”

The human impact is profound. Workers under strain are more vulnerable to accidents, near misses, reduced concentration and slower reaction times. Productivity suffers, team cohesion breaks down, and communication, essential on fast-moving sites, weakens. As Devereux notes, “A safe site is not only one free of physical hazards. It is one where mental wellness is protected.”

Chandré Abrahams, Chairperson of the MBAWC Marketing Committee, agrees that cultural and systemic barriers compound the problem. “Construction has long been shaped by a ‘work through it’ mindset,” he says. “Many workers fear judgement or even job loss if they speak up. Stigma remains one of the biggest obstacles, especially in male-dominated environments. But talking about stress should be as normal as talking about scaffolding safety. That’s the shift we need.”

This cultural shift must begin with leadership. MBAWC emphasises that site



managers and senior staff play a pivotal role in breaking down stigma and creating a climate where workers feel safe to voice concerns. “Leadership must show visible support,” says Devereux. “If managers don’t acknowledge mental health as a real issue, no policy or poster will make a difference.”

Practical, accessible interventions are essential. MBAWC encourages companies to embed mental well-being into their health and safety systems, just as they do with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or fall protection. Recommended steps include:

- Incorporating mental health into site-specific health & safety policies
- Providing access to counselling or Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) services
- Scheduling monthly mental-health toolbox talks
- Training supervisors in mental-health literacy and supportive communication
- Appointing mental-health champions or ‘first aiders’ on site
- Offering anonymous reporting channels
- Ensuring fair workloads and realistic deadlines
- Encouraging peer-support groups and fostering work-life balance where possible

Many South African firms are already adopting these measures, demonstrating that meaningful progress is possible even in high-pressure environments. Abrahams stresses that small, consistent habits can transform site culture. “Real change doesn’t only happen in workshops; it happens in daily check-ins, in supervisors asking, ‘Are you okay?’ and in teams knowing they won’t be judged for speaking up.”

MBAWC’s commitment includes providing members with guidance, awareness materials, toolbox talk templates, and links to established resources such as the South African Depression and Anxiety Group’s (SADAG)



Petra Devereux, Executive Director, Master Builders Association Western Cape (MBAWC).

counselling line, community mental-health organisations, and sector-specific guidance from the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) and MBAWC. For employers and site managers, MBAWC’s message is clear. “Mental health is not a personal issue. It’s a safety issue, a productivity issue and a people issue,” says Abrahams. “When workers feel supported, they work more safely, more efficiently, and with greater resilience. Healthy businesses are built on healthy people.”

Devereux echoes this, “Employers must prioritise mental wellness with urgency. Our industry is built on human effort, and those individuals deserve care, support and understanding. Strong foundations aren’t only made of concrete. They are built on the wellbeing of the people who bring our projects to life.” ☺





LESSONS FROM 2025: WHAT SOUTH AFRICA'S PROPERTY MARKET TAUGHT US THIS YEAR

If the property market in 2025 had a theme, it was the return of confidence, but with its feet firmly on the ground. The market kept moving even as many households continued to feel the pinch, and we saw a renewed willingness to make long-term decisions again. By Paul Stevens, CEO of Just Property

That shift showed up in the Absa Homeowner Sentiment Index for Q3 2025, where investing sentiment held at 84%, and buying versus renting sentiment held at 75%. South Africans still believe ownership and property-led wealth creation are worth working towards, even when affordability is tight.

So what did the market teach us this year, and what should homeowners and investors take into 2026?

Lesson 1 – confidence is back but it is being earned

One of the most encouraging developments in 2025 was the improvement in sentiment around South Africa's economic direction. The South African Reserve Bank's Quarterly Bulletin points to several shifts that lifted investor confidence, including South Africa's removal from the Financial Action Task Force's grey list, an improved fiscal outlook in the 2025 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement, the move to a 3% inflation target and an S&P foreign-currency sovereign rating upgrade, the first in two decades.

That matters for property because property is a long game. People do not buy homes or build portfolios

when the future feels unmanageable. They do it when they believe they can make decisions that will still look sensible five or 10 years from now.

At the same time, confidence has to be matched with realism. GDP expanded by 0,5% in Q3 2025. This is a recovery that still needs protecting.

National house price inflation stayed positive through the year, even as the pace cooled. The FNB House Price Index eased to 4,9% year on year in October 2025, with month-on-month growth slowing to 0,1%. Prices continued to rise, but the market began to breathe more normally.

The deeper lesson is what drove performance where it was strongest. FNB's view that constrained supply is a primary force behind current price growth lines up with what many of us have seen: well-priced, well-located homes still attract demand.

It also reinforced a point investors forget at their peril: "the market" is never one market. FNB noted stronger performance in Cape Town and Tshwane, with Mangaung and Buffalo City under pressure. Wealth creation comes from choosing the right micro-market, not trying to time the country.

Lesson 2 – rentals stayed resilient, but affordability pressure increased

The PayProp Rental Index for Q3 2025 shows national rental growth at 4.9% year on year, with the average rent at R9 286. Demand for rental accommodation remained a key driver of investor interest, but the year also made it clear that affordability pressure is building.

The share of tenants in arrears rose to 17,2% in Q3 2025, the highest since Q3 2024. PayProp's measure of average disposable income after rent and debt payments fell to 20,9% in Q3 2025, down from 22.3% a year earlier, despite average earnings being higher. The message for landlords is straightforward: tenant selection and professional management are not optional extras. They are risk controls.

Lesson 3 – the rate cycle helped, but it did not solve everything

Interest rate relief was one of the year's biggest practical wins, the latest cut in November bringing the repo rate down to 6,75% and prime to 10,25%. That easing supports affordability, improves confidence and gives first-time buyers in particular a bit more room to move. It also reinforces a wider point: when inflation expectations are drifting lower, it becomes easier for households and businesses to plan. Still, 2025 reminded us not to build a property plan on the assumption that rates will keep falling. Affordability needs a buffer, and good property decisions should hold up even if conditions tighten again.

Lesson 4 – the best property decisions were boring, consistent and long-term

When you look past the noise, the strongest outcomes in 2025 came from people who did the basics well. Homeowners who treated their bond like a wealth-building tool made progress. Investors who bought for sustainable yield, in areas with dependable demand, held their ground. Landlords who maintained their properties and priced correctly reduced vacancy risk.

The Absa HSI drivers tell the same story. The biggest reasons people feel positive about investing are practical: property accumulates value, it can deliver returns and it can generate income, supported by steady demand for rentals. The biggest concerns are equally practical: the economy, high prices, crime, job security and the Rand (though, at the time of writing, 15 December 2025, the Rand was trading at 16,78 against the dollar, sustaining its break below R17, and gold was at a seven-week high). But we are right to be wary of the volatility. The lesson is to plan around it: stress-test affordability, be conservative with escalation assumptions, and keep liquidity in reserve.

Commercial property – momentum is back, but it's node-led and quality-led

Commercial property ended 2025 on firmer footing too, with industrial still setting the pace, retail stabilising in the right formats and office space improving in selective pockets. Broker data points to better liquidity, with demand reported to be ahead of supply across industrial, office and retail, and shorter time on market.

In office space, the direction is clear: tenants are choosing less space if it means better space. That puts the spotlight on quality, amenities, security and operational resilience. Owners of B- and C-grade stock will need refurbishment, repurposing or smarter tenant-fit leasing to stay relevant.

The improving outlook for commercial property investors is being reinforced in the listed market. According to the SA REIT Association, South Africa's listed property sector delivered a +9,1% total return in November 2025, taking year-to-date performance to 37,9% – ahead of the Global REIT Index and major developed markets over the same period, and beating both the equity market and bonds.

Ian Anderson, Head of Listed Property and Portfolio Manager at Merchant West Investments and compiler of the monthly SA REIT Chart Book, attributed this to “improving property fundamentals across South Africa over the past two years, which have translated into lower vacancy rates and positive market rental growth”.

Importantly, it also aligns with what we are seeing on the ground in real assets, signalling a more constructive, opportunity-led stance as fundamentals stabilise.

What this means for 2026 – cautious optimism, real opportunities

I am optimistic about 2026, but it is the kind of optimism that comes with clear conditions. If inflation expectations remain anchored and borrowing costs continue to ease over time, the market has room to strengthen. If household finances keep improving incrementally, confidence can translate into activity.

For buyers, the lesson is to focus less on finding “the perfect time” and more on finding the right property at the right price in the right area. A cooling pace of price growth can create negotiating room where sellers are realistic, but the best homes in the best pockets will still attract competition.

For investors, rental demand remains a powerful opportunity: to pair yield with discipline, buy where demand is deep, keep the property in good condition, screen tenants properly and manage proactively. In commercial property, the same discipline applies. Industrial and logistics remain compelling where supply is constrained, retail will favour the right format in the right catchment, and offices will continue to reward quality and tenant fit.

2025 reminded us that property wealth is rarely built in a single leap. It is built by making good decisions consistently, protecting against the downside and giving time the space to do its work.

If we take that lesson into 2026, there is every reason to believe the next chapter can be stronger than the last. ☺

“Commercial property ended 2025 on firmer footing too, with industrial still setting the pace, retail stabilising in the right formats and office space improving in selective pockets.”



To ensure full compliance with relevant standards and specifications, AfriSam conducts a range of aggregate tests both in-house and through external laboratories.

QUALITY AGGREGATES ARE THE FOUNDATION OF STRONG, DURABLE CONSTRUCTION

In the world of construction, the quality of materials directly determines the strength, durability and long-term performance of any structure. Among these materials, aggregates - whether used in concrete, asphalt or base layers - play an essential role.

Ensuring that aggregates are correctly sized and properly graded is not just a technicality - it is a vital factor in achieving structural integrity, performance consistency and compliance with design specifications.

"Aggregate grading is about more than just particle size," Amit Dawneerangen, Construction Materials Executive: Sales & Product Technical at leading construction materials supplier, AfriSam explains. "It determines how the material compacts, how concrete mixes perform and how well load bearing structures can handle stress over time."

When aggregates are incorrectly sized or poorly graded voids can occur within the mix, reducing density and compromising strength. This often leads to issues such as cracking, shrinkage and water ingress - all of which can shorten the lifespan of roads, buildings or infrastructure.

Conversely, well-graded aggregates create dense cohesive mixtures that enhance workability, reduce cement or binder demand, and ensure more uniform compaction and stability.

Beyond physical performance, consistent aggregate quality ensures that engineers and contractors can meet design standards and regulatory specifications. Projects designed around specific grading envelopes depend on accurate and repeatable aggregate properties to perform as intended.

However, achieving this level of precision requires

technical expertise, process control and rigorous testing which is why working with a reputable quarry or construction materials supplier is critical. Trusted suppliers operate under strict quality management systems, implement regular laboratory testing and maintain calibrated crushing, screening and blending processes to ensure product consistency.

"Partnering with an established, credible supplier provides confidence that every load delivered meets specification," Dawneerangen adds. "It also means access to reliable technical advice and traceability - from the source rock right through to the final product."

Reputable suppliers invest heavily in quality assurance infrastructure, from advanced testing laboratories to on-site quality control technicians. Their focus extends beyond supply - they actively collaborate with engineers and contractors to ensure that the correct material is selected for each layer or mix design, reducing the risk of costly rework and ensuring long term performance.

In a market where quality, compliance and sustainability are non-negotiable, correct aggregate sizing and grading are the cornerstones of successful construction. "Working with a trusted technically capable supplier is therefore not just a purchasing decision - it is a quality assurance choice that safeguards the integrity and longevity of every project," Dawneerangen concludes. ©



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