SAIA PULSE

21 AUGUST 2026

SECRETARIAT NEWS

New adventures, new faces

Changes at the SAIA Secretariat

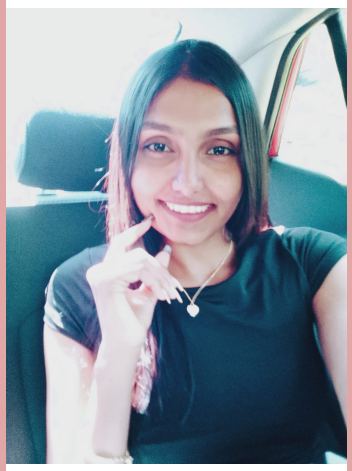
After six months with SAIA, Tshwanelo Cecilia Khambule has said goodbye to the Secretariat to set off travelling. Tshwanelo has been a familiar and steady presence for members and Regions alike, and her care, diligence and good humour will be missed around the office.

We wish her wonderful adventures ahead and hope she will stay in touch with the SAIA family wherever the road takes her.

MICHELLE DOOKI

Membership, Practice, Finance & CPD Administration

Michelle will be many members' first point of contact for enrolment, practice declarations and CPD queries.



TSHEPISO MOTSILA

Executive Support, Governance, Marketing & Events

Tshepiso will work closely with Arch. Hugh Fraser, CMO, on communications and with SAIA's committees and Board.



Please welcome Michelle Dooki and Tshepiso Motsila. They will be in Bloemfontein to greet.

- **The SAIA Secretariat now comprises:**

CEO: Arch Dr Peta de Jager
CMO: Arch Hugh Fraser
Membership, Practice, Finance and CPD: Michelle Dooki
Executive Support, Governance, Marketing and Events: Tshepiso Motsila

IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of Dr Gwendoline Elizabeth Fagan

25 September 1924 - 17 July 2026.



Dr Gwendoline Elizabeth "Gwen" Fagan (1924-2026).

Dr Gwendoline Elizabeth "Gwen" Fagan - medical doctor, historical researcher, landscape architect and author - passed away peacefully in July 2026, just short of her 102nd birthday. A visionary in the preservation of South African heritage, she leaves an extraordinary legacy of intellect, passion and deep love for her family and community.

Born in Victoria West in the Little Karoo, Gwen developed a lasting affinity for the soil while growing up on a farm near Moorreesburg. She matriculated from Rhenish Girls' High School in Stellenbosch in 1942 and graduated as a medical doctor from the University of Cape Town in 1948, breaking barriers for women of her generation. She practised medicine with immense dedication for more than two decades.

In 1969, Gwen changed direction to join her husband and lifelong sweetheart, celebrated architect Gabriël "Gawie" Fagan, whom she had married in 1949. Together they formed a formidable professional partnership at Gabriël Fagan Architects in Cape Town. Gwen applied her analytical mind to historical research and landscape design; her meticulous reconstructions supported major restoration projects including the Castle of Good Hope and the post-earthquake restoration of Tulbagh.

A lifelong learner, she earned a PhD in Landscape Architecture from UCT in 1995 and received an honorary DPhil from Stellenbosch University in 1993. She received numerous awards for her cultural and botanical research and held honorary memberships of APES, the Institute of Landscape Architects and the South African Institute of Architects.

Her landscape work included the eighteenth-century parterre garden at Tuynhuys; Boschendal, where she established a heritage rose nursery; Mayville's nineteenth-century rose garden; Rust en Vrede; the Mossel Bay Museum; Dock House at the V&A Waterfront; Welgelegen; and the Castle landscapes. She also authored or co-authored five books, ensuring that her knowledge and passion will continue to inspire future generations. Courtesy of CIfA



This is a link to events surrounding Gawie's memorial in April 2021.

ADVOCACY & REGULATION

Two opportunities to have your say

Public-comment deadlines affecting the built environment

National Building Regulations Amendment Bill

COMMENTS CLOSE: THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 12:00

The National Building Regulations and Building Standards Amendment Bill, 2026 is open for public comment. Published in Government Gazette No. 54941, the Bill proposes changes intended to modernise building-regulation enforcement and strengthen municipalities' monitoring powers - matters that directly affect architectural practice.

Members are encouraged to review the Bill and submit comments to the dtic, for the attention of Ms Anna-Marie Lötter, before the deadline.

Email: nbrcomments@thedtic.gov.za

VIEW THE GAZETTE NOTICE AND BILL >

Draft Standard for Uniformity in Construction Procurement

COMMENTS CLOSE: MONDAY, 31 AUGUST 2026

Built-environment stakeholders are invited to review and comment on the Draft Second Edition of the cidb Standard for Uniformity in Construction Procurement. The draft sets out updated requirements for uniform construction procurement and delivery management across South Africa.

A workshop has been requested from the cidb team to facilitate further engagement. The date will be communicated in due course. Your participation and technical input are highly valued as part of this consultative process.

READ THE DRAFT STANDARD >

SUBMIT COMMENTS TO THE CIDB >

EMERGING PROFESSIONALS

Pathway to Practice returns to Wits

Bridging the gap between university and professional practice

On 14 August 2026, SAIA joined GIfA and the University of the Witwatersrand School of Architecture and Planning Student Council for Series Two of the Pathway to Practice Programme.



Students, presenters and participating organisations at the Pathway to Practice Programme at Wits.

Building on the strong response to the first event, Pathway to Practice continues to bridge the gap between academia and practice and to clarify the road from graduation to professional registration.

This student-led session brought regulatory councils and professional bodies together with Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning students. Nancy Hamity and Dr Peta de Jager were

among the presenters who introduced Wits students to the roles of regulators and voluntary associations within the built-environment professions.

WHAT STUDENTS GAINED

- A practical overview of professional registration and membership for students and graduates
- Direct engagement with practising architects about the move from architecture school into the workplace
- Clearer insight into the benefits and opportunities offered by early membership of GIfA and SAIA
- A networking session with SAIA and the other participating organisations

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

UFS Architecture Winter School opens new possibilities

University of the Free State | 8-9 July 2026

The Department of Architecture at the University of the Free State hosted an Architecture Winter School for school learners from across the country, including learners from a marginalised community in Bloemfontein.



Winter School participants at the UFS Department of Architecture.

Through presentations and practical assignments, participants were introduced to architecture as a profession. They conceptualised a basic shelter through sketching and model-making, then presented their ideas to the group.

The Winter School was facilitated by Department of Architecture lecturers Kobus Du Preez, Dr David van der Merwe and Lefu Namane, assisted by the department's student representative body, A5.

ARCHITECTURE WINTER SCHOOL CONTINUED

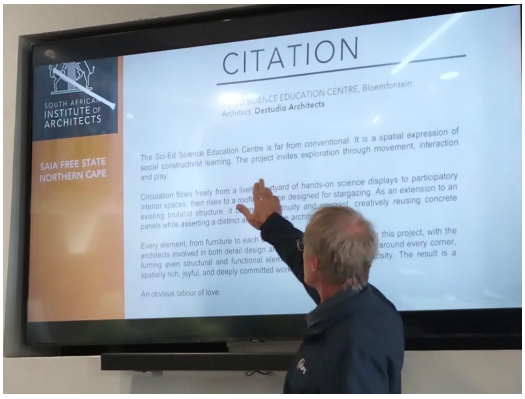
Learning through making and experiencing

From first sketches to an award-winning learning environment



Learners developed their shelter ideas through hands-on cardboard model-making.

Bloemfontein architect and urban planner Adéle De Jong, a director of Destudio Architects, shared her professional experience. She emphasised collaboration across disciplines and explained how architects engage with every scale of a building, from furniture and interior details to landscaping.



The SAIA Free State/Northern Cape Award of Merit citation for the Sci-Ed Science Education Centre formed part of the learners' visit.

Participants toured the Science Education Centre designed by Destudio Architects, a recent recipient of a SAIA Free State/Northern Cape Award of Merit. The centre's users explained how the SAIA citation captures the vision embodied in the building and is shared with visiting groups.

For some learners, the Winter School provided valuable insight for choosing their future studies; for others, it confirmed and strengthened their resolve to pursue architecture as a career.

UKZN Architectural tour of Johannesburg and Pretoria

Architectural tour of memory, institutional power and contemporary connection and place making.



22 students from UKZN under the leadership of Dr Viloshin Govender spent a day exploring, the Constitutional Court precinct, Soweto, Marshalltown, the Link Building at Wits (Lemon Pebble & SRS Architects) and Khanyisa St Mary's (Rebel Collective Architects). Content on social media.

Day 2 included a visit to Freedom Park, Church Square, the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The students also visited Award of Excellence projects like Village Walk, Hazelwood (Neo Architects); Lucky Bread (Earthworld Architects) and then back in Johannesburg, the offices of DHK to gain some insight into commercial architecture.

Left: a mobile crit session on the bus.



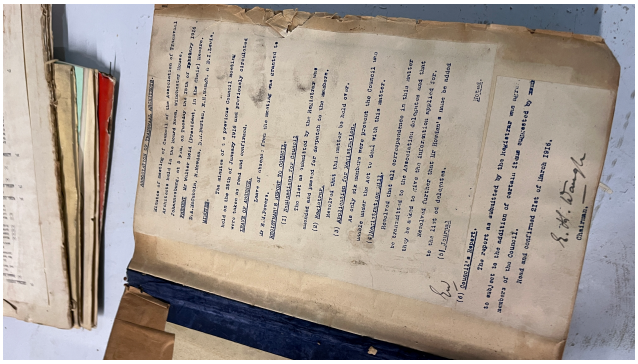
Peter Fehrsen, Martin Lardner-Burke and Zanele Kingsley from DHK spoke to the students about commercial architecture @DHK

HISTORY OF THE PROFESSION

How South Africa pioneered architectural registration

Guest contribution by Patrick Zamarian, Senior Lecturer, University of Liverpool

During August 2025, Patrick Zamarian contacted SAIA to enquire whether we had any documentation relating the profession during the early 20th century. As luck would have it, the Transvaal Institute of Architects had some journals to examine. Patrick came out from the UK for a week to record them for his research.





Journals from the early 20th century still retained in the GIfA office.

How can architects guard themselves against other building professionals and, more importantly, how can the public be protected from unqualified charlatans? These questions preoccupied architects across the British Empire at the turn of the twentieth century.

How can architects guard themselves against other building professionals and how – more importantly – can the public be protected from unqualified charlatans? These were the questions that preoccupied architects across the British Empire at the turn of the twentieth century. The movement for professional registration originated in the British provinces, but vested metropolitan interests prevented it from making much headway there. Things moved more quickly in the 'periphery' – and nowhere more so than in South Africa. In 1909 the Transvaal became the first British territory to enact legislation to protect the title of 'architect', and from the following year there was a concerted effort to extend professional registration across the newly established Union of South Africa.

The Association of Transvaal Architects (ATA, precursor to SACA/P), the body established to register architects, joined forces with the much older professional institutes of the Cape, Natal, and the Transvaal to frame nationwide legislation and move it through parliament. As one would expect, provincial rivalries complicated the process, as did the uneasy coexistence of voluntary and compulsory professional bodies, which often stepped on each other's toes. We find echoes of this in the sometimes tense relations between SAIA and SACAP or – in my country – the ongoing clash over

education between the RIBA and the ARB, the Architects' Registration Board. In early twentieth-century South Africa, there was the added complication of imperial bodies meddling in the country's affairs: the RIBA maintained alliances with the three provincial institutes, while the rivalling Society of Architects maintained its only overseas branch in Johannesburg, specifically to promote professional registration in the country.

How these different organisations collaborated, what challenges they faced and how they eventually overcame them remains obscure. To find out, I recently spent a week at the Gauteng Institute of Architects, with funding from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. The purpose of my visit was to consult historic records of the ATA that have miraculously survived on the shelves of GIfA, its direct successor. I am indebted to my new friends at GIfA, who allowed me unrestricted access to these records, and I am particularly grateful to Hugh Fraser of SAIA, who facilitated my visit and showed me parts of Johannesburg and Pretoria which, I suspect, few visitors ever get to see.

INDUSTRY CONNECTION

Concrete Connect: free industry reading

A communication platform for South Africa's wider construction sector

CASA has endorsed Concrete Connect as a valuable communication medium for the local construction industry. SAIA members and practices are invited to subscribe free of charge.

WHAT READERS CAN EXPECT

- Local industry news and project updates
- Technical articles and best-practice guidance
- Equipment developments and new technologies
- Standards, sustainability initiatives and sector developments

The publication also welcomes information from industry bodies and professional associations, helping valuable technical knowledge reach a wider audience.

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POSITION PAPER: Dr Peta de Jager: CEO SAIA

Why SAIA is rethinking how it recognises architectural achievement.

Architecture is seldom the work of a single individual. It emerges through partnership, collaboration and the sustained contribution of practices, teams and wider professional networks.

In response to concerns raised by respected members of the profession, the SAIA Board has reconsidered how the Institute recognises architectural excellence. While SAIA's Individual Awards will remain, a new Gold Medal of Architectural Practice will provide an additional form of recognition where achievement is more accurately attributed to a partnership or practice.

The position paper, Beyond the Solitary Genius, explains the thinking behind this development and what it signals about SAIA's evolving approach to authorship, professional integrity and collective achievement.

Members are invited to read the paper and direct any comments or questions to the SAIA national secretariat.

Beyond the Solitary Genius

1. The problem with the myth of the lone author

Architectural culture has long been organised around a seductive fiction: that great buildings are the expression of a single, exceptional mind. The "starchitect" model - in which a name, a signature style, and a biography stand in for the work of dozens of collaborators, engineers, technicians and partners - is not a neutral convention. It is a specific, historically recent way of allocating credit, and it carries a specific cost: it erases the collective conditions under which architecture is actually produced.

This year, several eminent members of the profession raised that concern directly with the SAIA Board, in relation to our Individual Awards. Their point was not sentimental. It was ethical, and it deserves to be treated as such. Some potential recipients found themselves in what can only be described as a conflict of conscience: accepting an award as an individual would have required them, implicitly, to accept sole credit for work that was - as a matter of professional and personal integrity - a partnership achievement. The individual award as offered would have meant either declining a recognition they had earned, or accepting it in a form that misrepresented how the work was actually done.

The Board listened. This paper sets out why we think they were right to.

2. Architecture has never been a solitary practice

SAIA's Individual Awards, since 1927, have honoured outstanding contribution to Architecture made by an individual. That framing was never a claim that buildings are made by one hand - it was a convenient way of organising recognition, and for much of the twentieth century, a largely unexamined one. But conventions can outlive their justification, and the practice of architecture in

South Africa today - multidisciplinary studios, co-directed firms, collaborative design-build partnerships - makes individual authorship increasingly hard to defend as the only legitimate form of recognition.

Two philosophical resources are useful here, precisely because they were not written about architecture but describe exactly the situation our members find themselves in.

Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of a "practice." In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre distinguishes a practice - a "coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity" through which goods internal to that activity are realised - from the pursuit of external goods like status or fame. A practice, on his account, is inherently communal: sustained by a tradition, carried forward by a community, its standards of excellence intelligible only with reference to that community. Architecture, understood this way, is not merely something individuals do well or badly; it is something a practice - a firm, a partnership, a studio culture built up over years - does well or badly. This is not a rhetorical convenience for SAIA's new category name. It is the more accurate description of where architectural excellence actually resides.

Foucault and Barthes on the "author-function." Michel Foucault's *What Is an Author?* and Roland Barthes's *The Death of the Author* both interrogate how the concept of a singular "author" is itself a historically constructed device for organising credit, rather than a simple description of how creative work is made. Architecture has imported this device wholesale, often without noticing. When we ask who "authored" a building, we are frequently asking a question the mode of production cannot honestly answer.

3. A philosophy closer to home: Ubuntu

South African architecture has its own, older resource for thinking about this: Ubuntu - *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, a person is a person through other persons. Ubuntu holds that individual flourishing is constituted through relationship and community, not achieved despite them. An award philosophy grounded in Ubuntu does not ask "who, singularly, made this?" It asks "whose collective labour made this possible?" - and treats that as the more honest question. For an Institute that already places real weight on legacy and tradition, Ubuntu offers a way to honour those values more faithfully, not less: the legacies architecture depends on have always been collective ones - master and apprentice, principal and associate, partner and partner.

4. Why this is not a retreat from honouring individuals

It would be a misreading of this development to see it as SAIA downgrading individual excellence. It is the opposite: SAIA declining to force individual excellence into a frame that sometimes misattributes it, and building a second frame that can hold the truth when the truth is collective. The Individual Awards remain fully intact for cases where individual contribution is the accurate account. The new Gold Medal of Architectural Practice exists alongside them, not above or below, for the cases - increasingly common - where the honest account of excellence is a partnership.

Crucially, the Board's approach respects the autonomy and conscience of the recipients themselves. This year's nominees who accepted an Individual Award nomination in good faith are

being offered the opportunity to elect the practice category instead - not compelled into it. An award regime that claims to honour integrity cannot itself proceed by administrative fiat over the very individuals whose integrity is at issue; consent, offered transparently after the fact of nomination, is the only mechanism consistent with the principle being defended. Going forward, nominators will be asked from the outset whether they are nominating a person or a practice, removing the retrofitted conflict entirely from future award cycles.

5. What this signals about SAIA

This is a small procedural change with a larger implication: SAIA is willing to revisit inherited conventions when members show, with specific and reasoned concern, that those conventions no longer serve the ethical commitments they were meant to express. That is what it means to hold tradition seriously - not as a fixed inheritance defended unexamined, but as a living set of commitments occasionally re-argued in light of what practitioners actually owe one another. The Institute is not abandoning its regard for individual distinction. It is refusing to let a category error - mistaking a convenient convention for a philosophical necessity - put members in a position where honouring one obligation required violating another. Architecture is, and has largely always been, a practice in MacIntyre's full sense of the word. It is time our awards said so.

Prepared for the South African Institute of Architects Board and membership. Comments and questions may be directed to the SAIA national secretariat.

PRACTICE MATTERS

Standard Bank Shoptalk: Building Financial Know-how for architects

Architects' Wealth Forum

What Banks Really Fund in Construction

16 October 2026 | 14h30–15h45

Online | In partnership with SAIA | Register to Receive the Link: https://form.jotform.com/262293915030554

What does a bank actually look for when deciding whether to fund a construction project? Join us for a candid and practical conversation designed specifically for architects, practice owners and aspiring practice owners, exploring the realities of construction finance from the bank's perspective. The session will unpack what types of construction projects are typically funded, what makes a project fundable, and where applications commonly encounter challenges.

We will also explore real-world examples and exceptional cases, offering insight into how banks assess construction risk, the information they need, and the factors that can influence a funding decision.Architects are encouraged to bring their own questions about financing construction projects, whether from the perspective of their clients, their practices, or projects they are currently working on.

This is an opportunity to ask the questions that rarely get answered in the design studio — and understand how construction finance really works.

COMPETITIONS

CPDI Africa 2026 Global Design Competition

Join the global call to redefine Africa's housing landscape through contemporary, culturally inspired African architecture

👥 *Who Can Participate?*

The competition is open to all nationalities! We welcome built environment professionals, students, creatives and all who are passionate about Afrocentric Design!

🏆 *Total in Prizes: $9,000*

📅 *Key Dates:*

Competition Launches: June 2026

Submission Deadline: November 30th, 2026

For entry details and to register, visit https://www.cpdiafrica.org/competition-2026 or

email: competitions@cpdiafrica.org.

CALL for nominations

The committees are the real work horses of SAIA we are seeking nominations for the drafting and review JBCC committees of SAIA. Please consider





If you can't attend the National Convention in Bloemfontein next week, you can follow us on social media or streaming. Links will be sent out next week. Off particular interest are the Gold Medals that will presented. Watch this space.



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