

The South African
Council *for* Planners
S A C P L A N

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The Registrar's Foreword

Nontsundu Ndonga

Registrar, South African Council for Planners

Progress Made in 2026

Planning is about people and it shapes whether a family can reach opportunities, whether a community feels safe, and whether the places we help shape allow people to live with dignity. However too often, the work behind this and its importance goes unseen.

This year, SACPLAN has made a deliberate effort to change that. Through our engagements, initiatives and campaigns, we have been present where decisions about the built environment are made. Our First State of the Planning Profession Report gave us an honest picture of where the profession stands, including the progress made on transformation and the work that remains. I am proud of what the Council and the team have

achieved together, and this bulletin records some of those milestones.



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Key Focus Areas for 2026

Our work this year has been guided by clear priorities: strengthening the planning profession, deepening our engagement with stakeholders, supporting the development of students and young planners, upholding professional ethics, and advancing transformation. These priorities speak to one purpose, which is a profession that is trusted, represented and valued by the communities it serves.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, SACPLAN remains committed to Reinforcing, Reforming, Re-engineering and Enhancing the planning profession, while strengthening our collaborations with stakeholders and creating more opportunities for engagement.

I invite you to join us at the National Planning Indaba taking place on 9 and 10 November 2026; the registration link and confirmation will be out soon. Themed “People-Centred Planning in a World of Uncertainties: Communities at the Heart of Positive Change”, the Indaba presents an opportunity to share ideas, hear from colleagues and communities on how to better shape the direction of our profession and the spaces we create for our people.

The voice of planning is strongest when it is heard together. I thank every planner, partner and colleague who has walked this journey with us this year, and I look forward to continuing it with you.

Introducing Planning to the Next Generation: What We Heard From Learners

Thabang Phaahla



to introduce learners to planning, to explain what planners do and why planning matters, and to show them how to get there. We spoke about educational pathways and about the requirements for registration through accredited town planning programmes and universities.

The conversations at our stand were remarkably consistent, whether in a church hall in Soweto, a classroom in Limpopo or an expo in Pretoria. Many learners told us they had never heard of town planning before they reached our stand. Others had heard the name but were not sure what a town planner actually does. Some assumed it had something to do with construction or with the municipality's offices, without knowing how planning decisions shape the streets they walk, the transport they use and the neighbourhoods they live in.



Over the past few months, SACPLAN took the planning profession to learners across the country. We participated in the Global Career Day hosted by Grace Bible Church in Soweto (26 June), the CARE Enough Youth Empowerment Winter School hosted by the Council for the Built Environment at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (2 July), the Rural School Awareness Campaign at Ditsepu Secondary School in Limpopo (23 July), and the CSIR Career Day Expo in Pretoria as part of National Science Month (6 to 7 August).

At each of these events, the aim was resonating:



SACPLAN values these opportunities to inspire and empower the next generation of planners, and to raise awareness of the important role that town and regional planning professionals play in shaping the country's future. We thank the organisers of each event for the invitation, and we thank the learners for their questions, their energy and their curiosity.

We look forward to meeting more of them !

SACPLAN Registrar Delivers A Keynote Address at the North-West SAPI Regional Event

Thabang Phaahla

The Registrar of the South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN), Ms Nontsundu Ndonga, was invited as one of the keynote speakers at the North-West South African Planning Institute (SAPI) Regional Event on 21 August 2026, as part of the Women's Month celebrations. SACPLAN participated in the event, which brought together planning stakeholders, academics, SAPI officials, the SAPI North-West team and students to engage on the future of the planning profession.

From margins to makers

SACPLAN Registrar, Ms Nontsundu Ndonga, delivered a keynote address titled "From Margins to Makers: Women and Youth as Catalysts for Rural Transformation in a Digital Age." She highlighted the importance of using technology intentionally and responsibly to support people-centred development, while recognising women and youth as important drivers of innovation and change.



Transformation of the profession

Drawing on SACPLAN's First State of the Planning Profession Report (SPPR), Ms Ndonga also emphasised the need for continued transformation in the profession, including:

- stronger advocacy for the value of planning,
- improved planning education and processes,
- greater collaborations,
- and strengthened municipal planning capacity.

The programme also included a practical workshop for Urban and Regional Planning students, facilitated by Dr Thehann Van Niekerk of H & W Town Planners. The session explored key spatial planning and land-use management instruments, including Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs), Land Use Schemes (LUS), title deeds and municipal by-laws, providing students with practical insights into planning and land-use management.



SACPLAN Participates in ASA Technical Forum on Innovative Building Technologies

Avanya Dehaloo

SACPLAN attended the Agrément South Africa (ASA) Industry and Stakeholder Technical Forum on 8 September 2026 at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). The forum was held under the theme “Diffusing Certified Innovative Building Technologies for a Sustainable Built Environment” and brought together built environment stakeholders to discuss how innovative building technologies (IBTs) are certified, selected and applied in practice.

From certification to the construction site

The programme looked at innovation from several angles. A case study on a certified system gave participants a practical view of what it takes for a technology to move from approval to delivery. Discussions also covered the adoption of certified IBTs in the private and social infrastructure sectors, where the need for housing, schools, clinics and other public facilities continues to grow. Speakers and delegates also considered the research and partnerships needed to turn innovative technologies into projects that communities can use.

Why planning belongs in the conversation

SACPLAN used the opportunity to highlight the role of planning in the successful adoption of innovative building technologies. We therefore emphasised that planning and land use considerations should be addressed from the outset of a project, and not only once construction is under way. Raising these questions early helps to avoid delays, rework and costly changes later.

The forum also considered the Agrément South Africa Amendment Bill and its implications for the evolving legislative and regulatory framework. For a sector that depends on clear rules and consistent standards, understanding where this framework is heading is important for everyone who plans, approves and builds.

SACPLAN thanks Agrément South Africa for the invitation and for creating a platform for this engagement. The Council remains committed to taking part in forums where planning can contribute to the decisions that shape the built environment.



SACPLAN Takes Part in the Second Quarter National Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Forum

Ayanda Jack

The Department of Land Reform and Rural Development convened the second quarter National Spatial Planning and Land Use Management (SPLUM) Forum in Gauteng, bringing together planning stakeholders from across the country. The South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN) participated as a key stakeholder and used the platform to introduce the new Council, report on the state of the planning profession, and invite planners to take part in shaping the work ahead.

Introducing the new Council

SACPLAN Deputy Chairperson, Ms Nosipho Hlatshwayo, introduced the new Council to forum participants and shared key highlights from its programme of action for the term ahead. She also outlined the milestones achieved since the start of the term, giving planners and stakeholders a clear view of the Council's priorities and the progress made so far.

The introduction was significant because the forum brings together role players with a direct interest in how planning is practised and regulated. For the new Council, it was an opportunity to speak directly to the profession and to the institutions it works with, and to set out how it intends to carry out its mandate in the years ahead.

Strengthening professional practice

SACPLAN Operations Manager, Mr Bongumusa Ndwandwe, presented on strengthening professional practice through continuous professional development (CPD) and advocacy. His presentation highlighted that a profession which serves the public must keep its knowledge and skills current. CPD supports planners in keeping pace with changing legislation, emerging practice and the evolving needs of communities.

Advocacy was presented as the other pillar of a strong profession. A profession that is visible, understood and valued by the public and by government is better placed to influence the decisions that shape human settlements. Together, CPD and advocacy form part of SACPLAN's continued efforts to support planners and to raise the position of the profession.



SACPLAN Takes Part in the Second Quarter National Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Forum

Ayanda Jack

The First State of the Planning Profession Report

The Council Registrar, Ms Nontsundu Ndonga, delivered a detailed report on the First State of the Planning Profession Report. She outlined the progress made thus far in the transformation of the planning profession, which the report documents. A report of this kind gives the sector a shared evidence base: where the profession stands, what has changed, and where work remains.

Ms Ndonga emphasised that transformation is central to the profession and must be pursued deliberately. She noted the importance of recognising and celebrating significant calendar months such as Heritage Month, which invite the profession to reflect on whom planning serves and how well it reflects the communities it plans for.

In this regard, she posed a question to the forum: are people able to practise their cultural practices within modern urban environments? She encouraged planners to reflect on this question in fulfilling their role. The question speaks to a core concern of the profession. Cities and towns are shaped by planning decisions, and those decisions affect whether spaces allow people to express their heritage, gather, and observe traditions in the places where they live and work. Planners are called on to consider this when preparing and assessing spatial plans and land use decisions.

An interactive engagement

The engagement was highly interactive. Planners in attendance gave input directly on the Council's programme of action and identified areas for improvement. SACPLAN welcomes these contributions, which help ensure that the Council's work remains informed by the experience of practising planners.

The way forward

SACPLAN looks forward to further engagement with planners through the SPLUM Forum. The Council regards the forum as a valuable channel for dialogue between the profession, government and other stakeholders, and remains committed to working with planners to advance a profession that is transformed, professional and responsive to the people it serves.



SACPLAN Exhibits at the 2026 Public Works and Infrastructure Summit

Ayanda Jack



The South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN) exhibited at the 2nd Public Works and Infrastructure Summit, hosted by the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) on Friday, 3 July 2026, in Sandton, Johannesburg. The Summit was held under the theme "From Collapse to Confidence: Strengthening Public and Building Safety, Asset Management and Infrastructure Delivery."

The Summit brought together government, municipalities, regulators, financiers, academia, industry leaders, contractors and built environment professionals. Its purpose was to find practical solutions for safer and more accountable infrastructure delivery, strengthen collaboration across the sector, and accelerate reform. The programme followed a series of building collapses in George, Redcliffe and Ormonde, which have raised serious public concern about safety and accountability in the built environment.

Two national milestones

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Hon. Dean Macpherson, delivered the keynote address and launched two initiatives:

- The National Built Environment and Construction Safety Framework. This is a multi-sector approach to improving construction safety, preventing building collapses and combating illegal building activities. It also seeks to strengthen regulatory systems, improve accountability and embed a culture of safety across the sector.

-The Public Infrastructure Confidence Index. This is a new tool that will provide a periodic measure of how key stakeholders perceive the performance, readiness, capability and credibility of the country's public infrastructure system. It will help government track whether confidence is improving, identify bottlenecks and test whether reforms are being felt.



The Summit closed with a shared call for better coordination, stronger accountability and greater investment in skills to restore public confidence in infrastructure delivery.

SACPLAN Exhibits at the 2026 Public Works and Infrastructure Summit

Ayanda Jack

Why this matters to planning

Safe and resilient infrastructure begins long before construction. Decisions on where and how development takes place, how land is used, and how infrastructure is sequenced are planning decisions, and they have a direct bearing on public safety. Planners therefore have an important role to play alongside the other built environment professions in building a safer and more resilient South Africa.

SACPLAN's participation forms part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen stakeholder relations and to ensure that the planning profession is visible and represented in national built environment platforms.



SACPLAN Attends the MISA Young Graduates and Apprentices Recognition Function

Ayanda Jack

SACPLAN attended the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) Young Graduates and Apprentices Recognition Function on 9 July 2026 at the Premier Hotel, OR Tambo International Airport. The function was presided over by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Hon. Velenkosini Hlabisa.

The function recognised young graduates and apprentices participating in MISA's skills development programmes. It also showcased the impact of MISA's mentorship and workplace learning initiatives in strengthening municipal infrastructure delivery, and promoted career opportunities across the built environment, including planning.

SACPLAN was identified at the function as one of the key role players and stakeholders in the Young Graduates Programme, with a role to play in the progression of young graduates as they advance in their careers. This recognition reflects the importance of the Council's work in supporting young planners as they move from graduate placements towards professional registration and practice.



SACPLAN's attendance forms part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen stakeholder relations and to support the pipeline of young planners entering the profession.

Remembering Those We Have Lost

Professor Abiodun Matthew Dayomi (1956 to 2026)

It is with great sadness that SACPLAN shares the passing of Professor Abiodun Matthew Dayomi, a planner, teacher and scholar whose working life carried him from Lagos to Aix-en-Provence, from Paris to Victoria, and finally to South Africa, where he left an enduring mark on our profession. He passed away in Nigeria at the age of 70.

Born in Lagos on 19 July 1956, Professor Dayomi earned his Diploma in Town Planning at the Yaba College of Technology before continuing his studies in France. There he completed degrees in Urban and Regional Planning and Geography, and a doctorate in Urban and Regional Planning from the Université d'Aix-Marseille III in 1986. He later specialised in Remote Sensing at the Université de Paris VI. His doctoral research on urban transportation in Lagos grew out of practical work as an urban planner-engineer on the Lagos Metro project and with the RATP in Paris. This grounding in the movement of people through cities remained central to his work, alongside his lifelong interest in the relationship between land use, transportation and the environment.



He held professorships at the University of Ibadan, the University of Limpopo, the University of Venda, where he served as Head of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where he was Professor and Academic Leader for Town and Regional Planning and Housing from 2010 to 2016. Over the course of his career, he supervised dozens of dissertations and theses, shaping the thinking of generations of planners across South Africa and beyond.

Professor Dayomi served two terms on the Council of SACPLAN and chaired its Education and Training Committee from 2008 to 2016. This work directly shaped how an entire generation of South African planners was trained, and its influence continues to be felt in our profession today. He was a registered planner with SACPLAN, and his published work spanned urban transport, remote sensing, land use, and the interrelationship between planning and politics.

Colleagues and students remember him as a generous mentor, a rigorous scholar, and a planner who never lost sight of the people his plans were meant to serve.

Rest in peace, Professor Dayomi. Your legacy lives on in the planners you shaped and the profession you helped build.

Our deepest condolences go out to his family, friends, colleagues, and all who had the privilege of learning from him.

South African Council for Planners

Council requests that registered planners inform the Council of the passing of any colleague within the profession, as and when such an occasion arises.

Remembering Those We Have Lost

Nathan Iyer (1968 to 2026)

The South African Council for Planners and the planning fraternity at large mourn the passing of Nathan Iyer, founder and principal of IYER, whose visionary contributions to planning and urban design have left a lasting mark on South Africa's built environment.

A planner and urban designer, Nathan Iyer qualified in Town and Regional Planning and went on to found IYER, an interdisciplinary practice in planning, urban design and architecture with studios in Durban and Johannesburg. Over his career he led several large-scale urban design projects, including the Point Waterfront, Bridge City Town Centre, Cornubia and Sibaya. He was the lead urban designer for the Moses Mabhida Stadium and its precinct, for which the practice received the President's Award for design excellence from the Institute of Landscape Architects of South Africa.



Beyond his practice, he chaired and served on several design review panels, was a past Planning and Development Commissioner for the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, lectured at Masters level in Town Planning at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and served as an external examiner for several universities. He also presented at academic events and conferences, including the American Planning Association in Washington.

A designer, mentor and trailblazer, his dedication to shaping inclusive, vibrant and people-centred spaces will continue to inspire generations of professionals.

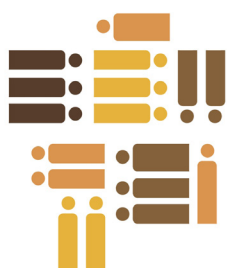
His legacy lives on through the places he helped shape, the knowledge he shared and the many lives he influenced throughout his career.

SACPLAN extends its heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, colleagues and the wider planning and built environment fraternity during this difficult time.

May his legacy live on.

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