

GBCSA's 16th Convention: Driving sustainability in built environment

Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA) will host the 16th Green Building Convention from Wednesday, 15 November to Friday, 17 November, at the Century City Conference Centre in Cape Town.



Source: Supplied. Lisa Reynolds, chief executive officer of GBCSA.

The convention is the annual gathering of like-minded roleplayers in sustainability in the built environment, attracting more than 800 delegates, more than 40 exhibitors and 100 speakers. Over 120 companies are engaged during the convention, recognising innovative solutions and sharing trusted best practices.

The theme for this year's convention is "space", emphasising the need to create space for robust discussion and the celebration of victories while identifying key actions needed to achieve a positive impact.

The convention is a space to define the built environment as a force for change, and through rethinking space, buildings and places are brought to life to achieve necessary transformation.

Lisa Reynolds, the chief executive officer of GBCSA, says: "Our vision is to be a vital part of the transformation of the built environment to a place where people and the planet thrive. The global goal is to halve carbon emissions by 2050. To achieve both of these goals, and if South Africa is going to mitigate climate change, we need to ramp up our efforts, and that is going to require exponential 'green thinking'."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres clearly expressed the level of crisis we are facing at last year's Cop27: "Our planet is still in the emergency room and humanity is on a highway to climate hell."

The built environment generates around 40% of annual global CO2 emissions. Transformation is non-negotiable to divert us from a "climate hell". GBCSA recently reached the significant milestone of its 1000th certification, a milestone that reflects both the enormous strides taken towards shifting the paradigm in the built environment, and the long road ahead.

GBCSA's growth and the call to action

It is encouraging to note that the first 50 certifications took place during the first eight years of GBCSA's history, and exponential growth of certifications happened over the following eight years.

Reynolds says: "We've made good progress, but there's also a call to action. The next thousand certifications await, and with them, a more sustainable future for South Africa's built environment sector.

"Certifications are a means and measurement tool to assist us in achieving a greener and resource-efficient future."

Lead sponsors for the event are Nedbank and Rand Water, both committed to a vision of fostering the planet's health.

“ The countdown is on! Don't miss the chance to be part of [#GBCSA2023](#), 15 - 17 Nov at [@CCCC_ZA](#) in Cape Town. This is your final chance to join industry leaders dedicated to transforming our built environment for people and planet to thrive. <https://t.co/av2gDlray9>. [#greenbuilding](#) pic.twitter.com/oW6MleD9O1— GBCSA (@GBCSA) [November 7, 2023](#) ”

Mbuyiswa Makhubela, general manager of corporate services for Rand Water says: "Our commitment to environmental sustainability is driven by the need to ensure that the organisation's entire operations remain viable while having a positive impact on the environment, employees and customers, for present and future scenarios.

"Rand Water is steadfast in its journey to improve its environmental sustainability on many fronts, including its support of green buildings. GBCSA's objective of sustainable use of resources fits in nicely with Rand Water's position on responsible use of water and supports our water wise mission, hence the partnership."

Insights from industry leaders

Genevieve Naidoo, divisional executive for property finance portfolio management, valuations and sustainability Nedbank CIB, says: "This event is a natural extension of the longstanding relationship that we have with the Green Building Council of South Africa.

"Our organisations share a very similar vision for the future of South Africa's built environment, and the role it can, and must, play in the success of the country's Just Transition imperative."

The exciting programme includes keynote speaker Robert Swan, founder of the 2041 Foundation, renowned polar explorer and energy innovation leader.

Graham Hill, founder of The Carbonauts interview, will present virtually with Lloyd Alter on 'Transforming Space,' and Sara Candiracci, associate director at Arup, will present 'Creating Inclusive Places that Value People and the Planet.'

Gabriel Kaasen, communications co-ordinator for Project 90 by 2030, as well as programme manager for African Climate Alliance, will present 'Engaging the Relationship between People and Public Space within our Built Environment'.

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