

Green design convention offers international perspectives

The 3rd annual Green Building Council of SA (GBCSA) Convention & Exhibition will be held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 20-22 September 2010. Sponsored by Nedbank Corporate Property Finance, it will spotlight success factors for green and environmentally sustainable design.



GBCSA CEO Nicola Douglas

"Green design and sustainability are crucial topics for all built environment professions," says GBCSA CEO Nicola Douglas. "We've handpicked high-profile local and international speakers to tackle our industry's most pressing green design concerns."

Keynote speakers

US-based planning consultant, design process facilitator and sustainability proponent, Bill Reed, will deliver one of the convention's keynote addresses, with a focus on the role of regenerative design. He is a founding member of the US Green Building Council; a long-time co-chair of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Technical Committee; a published author and principal in three firms - working with green building consulting, living system design and education.

"The purpose of any design and building process is to function as an acupuncture point - to engage in the conscious practice of becoming whole," explains Reed. "This means becoming aware of how to take care of, and love ourselves, our communities and our planet."



Keynote speaker, Bill Reed

One of the major drivers of greener design, he believes, will be the realisation that green solutions address symptoms and the underlying causes or issues. "Crises may be the provocateur of the dawning awareness that the real issues are the fractured relationships between people and the web of life," he adds.

"Built environment professionals need to take on a healing role in nature and our communities," he says, arguing that more energy needs to be spent on re-imagining and transforming sustainable development, rather than simply trying to slow down existing damage to the environment.

"Ultimately, it's about the will to take on the task."

"With his holistic and passionate approach coupled with his extensive experience, he was one of the most popular speakers at the convention."

at last year's Greenbuild conference in the US, which attracted 28000 delegates," continues Douglas.

Australian architect and sustainability consultant Digby Hall believes that built environment professionals are meeting the challenge of green design with gusto. "There is widespread acceptance that green buildings are our only future and regardless of people's motivations, the general direction is certainly green," he says.

Also scheduled to present his perspective on green materials and interior fitouts at the convention, Hall believes that collaboration is a key piece of successful green design. "The paradigm shift in the design professions, to my mind, is not much what is being designed - many have been designing green buildings for decades - but in the need to work collaboratively as one design team," he explains. "There's no room for wallflowers and every single consultant has a role to play in creating a green building."

Other speakers

In addition to Reed and Hall, delegates will have the opportunity to hear other international experts like keynote speaker and pioneering developer Joe van Belleghem from Canada; Pooran Desai, co-founder of BioRegional Development Group and Technical Director of One Planet Communities; and Shane Esmore of Umow Lai, Melbourne, one of Australia's foremost ESD (environmentally sustainable design) consultants.

"The convention will strongly highlight how important green and environmentally sustainable design considerations are in the property industry," says Frank Berkeley, managing executive of Nedbank Corporate Property Finance. "We were very proud to be awarded the first Green Star SA Rating for our Phase II building at last year's convention and are again leading the way in this space. The building is currently registered for an 'as built' rating, which will hopefully be complete by the end of this year."

Established in 2007, the GBCSA is a full member of the World Green Building Council and the official Green Star SA accreditation body. The convention is a key piece of the agency's strategy to empower SA property professionals with global green tools customised to local conditions and in so doing assist in the transformation of the commercial property industry towards more environmentally sustainable building practices.

The Convention has been planned with ample networking opportunities in mind, so that industry players can gather informally with both local and global colleagues.

For further information and registration go to www.gbcsa-convention.org.za or phone Lisa Parkes on +27 (0) 21 659 5990

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