

## DTIC and Proudly South African launch local online furniture portal

An online furniture portal has been launched to showcase the furniture sector's capabilities. The portal, which is hosted on [Proudly South African's website](#) is a collaboration between the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) and Proudly South African.



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The platform, according to Proudly South African, is in response to the growing demand for locally-manufactured furniture items and to make the sourcing of genuine local producers easier.

The site is currently being populated with qualifying local furniture companies and will be a listing where retailers, architects, property developers and consumers can find what they are looking for.

“ Proudly SA furniture portal launch <https://t.co/wBScCyywOa>— Proudly South African (@ProudlySA) [April 28, 2021](#) ”

Speaking at Wednesday's virtual launch, the dtic's Tsholofelo Motaung said the department has developed policy and programmes to enhance the furniture industry. This, said Motaung, is to raise and nurture design capabilities as well as raise the image of South Africa in the furniture industry.

“This is to address the skills shortage in the industry and attract designers to the furniture industry and promote use of local products. This is also to provide solution to consumer's changing needs,” Motaung said. Motaung also said the platform will ensure market access and competitiveness.

Twenty years ago, the furniture sector in South Africa was an employer of 50,000 people in 3,500 manufacturing plants. Today, it supports around 20,000 direct jobs in just over 1,000 factories. Raw mater inputs provide indirect jobs to many more thousands of people, from fabrics, wood, steel, paint and much more.



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## Simplifying shopping and procurement

Eustace Mashimbye, chief executive officer of Proudly South African said the success of the portals that the organisation introduced in 2020 primarily in response to Covid-19 requirements of masks and personal protective equipment (PPE), highlighted the importance of having one central database of suppliers and how this can make buying local much easier.

“The value of the furniture industry in South Africa is enormous, and we want to tap into the procurement of furniture especially by corporate South Africa, and this portal will be a place to which we can drive demand,” Mashimbye said.



INTERIOR DESIGN

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Nomalungelo Gina, DTIC Deputy Minister, commented, “It is evident that selling and shopping online has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and has now changed consumer behaviour. What we saw in 2020 is only going to continue post-pandemic. These changes aren’t a way simply to make it through, they are permanent and are redefining what a meaningful retail experience could look like,” she said.

Gina said the benefits of the online furniture portal will allow shoppers to peruse products and make buying decisions at any time, day or night.

“This will make shopping easier for customers, and that kind of accessibility will be a huge competitive advantage. Many e-commerce websites extend businesses to people all over the country or around the world, vastly expanding their customer base and potential revenue.

“Selling online also offers the ability to broaden or increase catalogue, the number of items a business can sell online doesn’t need to be limited in the same way as a physical store, which might be a consideration to increase cash flow,” Gina said.

The stakeholders said that the furniture industry is set to benefit from the Furniture Industry Master Plan which was launched recently. This master plan was established to set clear guidelines and targets for the furniture manufacturing industry as well as guide public sector procurement as part of government’s efforts to support and stimulate the industry.