

# Southern African Institute of Forestry



Delivering a professional service to forestry

*Southern African Institute of Forestry, Postnet Suite 329, Private Bag X4, Menlopark, 0102  
www.saif.org.za, saif@mweb.co.za*

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## From the President's Desk Artificial Intelligence : Threat or Opportunity ?

One of the buzzwords of our time is the issue of AI or artificial Intelligence. What does it really mean and which implications would or could it hold for the world, Africa , South Africa and more specifically the Forest and Forest Products Industry in S.A.

This is not a term or definition that you will find in an old Oxford Dictionary. The Oxford Languages website on the Internet offers a definition however namely " the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages." Another one found on the Internet : "What is Artificial Intelligence? Artificial intelligence (AI) involves **using computers to do things that traditionally require human intelligence**. AI can process large amounts of data in ways that humans cannot. The goal for AI is to be able to do things like recognize patterns, make decisions, and judge like humans."

According to an an article posted on Linked in, in 2022, Artificial intelligence is the science of making machines that can think like humans. It can do things that are considered "smart."

Some authors (experts) suggest that there are three types of AI : Artificial Narrow intelligence(ANI), Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI). Other authors identify four types of AI namely 1)Reactive Machines, 2)Limited memory, 3)Theory of mind and 4)Self-aware. The latter is regarded as the final stage of AI



FIRE ... TO PROTECT FROM FIRE. LOTHAIR | Photographer: Sanele Zuma | Branch: MPU

SAIF Calendar : Jun 2023 : Fire to Protect from Fire ;  
Potographer Sanele Zuma , Mpumalanga Branch



that has evolved to be human-like with independent intelligence which according to the experts lies somewhere in the future.

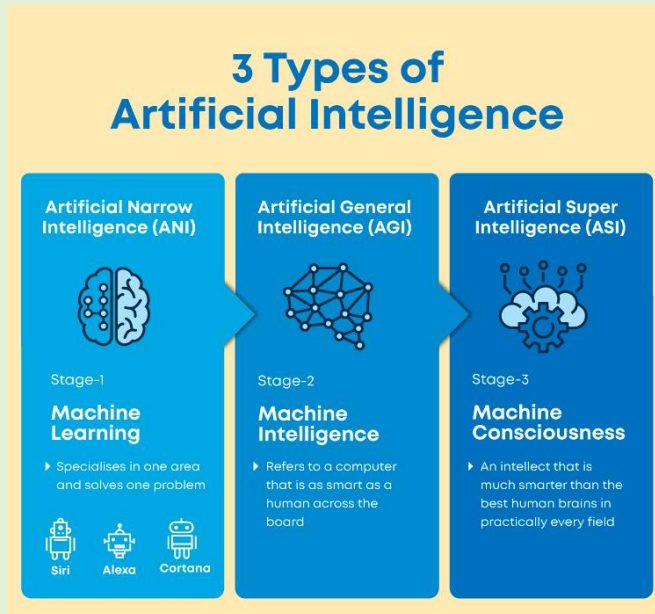


Fig 1: The 3 Types of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence offers several critical benefits that make it an excellent tool, such as:

- **Automation** – AI can automate tedious processes/tasks, without any fatigue.
- **Enhancement** – AI can enhance all the products and services effectively by improving experiences for end-users and delivering better product recommendations.
- **Analysis and Accuracy**– AI analysis is much faster and more accurate than humans. AI can use its ability to interpret data with better decisions.

From the benefits mentioned above, it appears that AI will help organizations to make better decisions and improve processes and therefore productivity.

In agriculture (and one can assume also forestry), deep learning helps to predict the yield of the crops. The water levels and plant diseases can be detected so that farmers and foresters can respond in time. AI clearly promises significant benefits for the forest and forest products industry which could be to the advantages of health and safety and productivity.

There are however several voices of concern on the potential implications of AI on society.

One well-known and influential person who recently expressed his reservations on Ai, is the innovator and

one of the wealthiest persons on the planet, namely Elon Musk. He is quoted saying that the world is woefully unprepared for the impact of artificial intelligence. He said that the technology (AI) will hit people like an asteroid although he has been promoting AI. Speaking at the Viva Tech conference in Paris, Elon Musk warned that regulations were needed to prevent artificial intelligence from morphing into something that can't be controlled. He further warned that it could result in a catastrophic outcome for humanity.

Other people argue that AI poses dangerous privacy risks, exacerbates racism by standardizing people, and costs workers their jobs, leading to greater unemployment. Another limitation according to known sources, is the fact that Ai (despite the name) does not make room for creativity, i.e. it cannot think outside the box as it can only learn from past experience and pre-fed data.

In a recent article on AI titled "When Adam and Eve create a God machine, will it be heaven or hell?" which appeared in Daily Maverick DM168 (6- 12 May 2023) , the author discuss the rise in AI and refers to ChatGPT, Midjourney and Google's Bard as recent additions to the AI world. He further some raise pertinent issues like "We are not here yet, but the nature of the technology means it is exceptionally difficult to predict exactly when we will get there. God-like AI could be a force beyond our control or understanding.

Yuval Noah Harari a historian and futurist philosopher wrote in the Economist that AI can still be regulated but that we have to act quickly. He further noted that if one of us is having a conversation with someone and you cannot tell whether it is a human or an "AI", that will be the end of democracy. It is clear that there are many opinions on AI , some positive and some negative. I do believe that AI holds both opportunities but definitely also serious threats to society and our industry.

**Resources:**

- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/artificial-intelligence-simple-terms-aruna-pattam>
- <https://digitaltransformationpro.com/types-of-artificial-intelligence/>
- <https://www.mygreatlearning.com/blog/what-is-artificial-intelligence/>
- Daily Maverick , Maverick Life : Don Bayley, 6-12 May 2023



## **Sanity does not prevail**

**by Rob Thompson**

It was on route to Nelson Mandela University (Saasveld Forestry campus) to impart knowledge to the youth, that I discovered, via observations of my fellow human's behaviour, that I am clearly the last remaining sane and intelligent being left on the planet.

Breakfast at the airport started well enough with a commendable lapse time of five minutes between order and delivery. Sadly however, eating soft eggs with a floppy plastic spoon is not a situation that ends well. Ask me about that. Neither is having to wait half an hour for the bill to arrive.

My journey started with a two-hour delay on the tarmac due to fog in Johannesburg...come on people...airplanes can fly at night, surely fog is similar to night conditions? Can we not employ artificial intelligence teachers to teach auto pilots how to fly in low light conditions? Our human pilot announced that he would provide an update on the hour. Captain...my Captain...10 past 9 is not on the hour! The delay would have been tolerable had it not been for the animated evangelist seated behind me, who in process of converting a disciple via his cell phone, decided that he may as well administer his raucous wisdom simultaneously to all passengers on board.

Having eventually become airborne, we were truly delighted when our time challenged Captain announced a 10-minute delay in landing (due to fog again) which translated to a half hour of circuits. On landing, our hostess announced that we should remain seated whilst the first three rows, front and back, would disembark in orderly fashion. Thereafter the next three rows. Sound great in theory but a real dog's breakfast in reality. The ensuing melee was a sight to behold, and interesting educational discoveries made. For instance, did you know that 4 people cannot exit via a plane door simultaneously? Also, a mad sprint towards the airport passenger bus does not get one to the concourse any faster than the rest given the little-known law of airport buses which edicts that the bus must move for it to get to the airport building, and, first in - last out!

Arriving in the concourse at 12:30, I needed to then take a connecting flight. All of the flight information boards displayed all flights until 11:30 which was incredibly useful...not.

Asking for assistance from an airport official with half

closed eyes, was rewarded with a vague and desultory thumb gesture is some general direction. Again, very useful...not.

Having eventually intuitively discovered the correct route to follow to get to my departure gate, my progress was severely hampered by a series of obstacles, cleverly placed to test the mental agility and overall fitness of passengers. The escalators to the departure gates were cordoned off and all route signs ended abruptly. I had reached the proverbial crossroad and had to decide on the correct wind direction. First attempt was incorrect by far. Second attempt led to alternative escalators, also out of service, but nevertheless providing a means to ascend...manually.

On checking in for the connecting flight, the security guards gathered around the x ray screen depicting the contents of my bag and started chattering excitedly. I was kindly invited to unpack my bag on the conveyor along with a steady stream of incoming laptops, belts and trays from those behind me. My shaving cream tin was eventually isolated and examined by two guards. Satisfied that it was not a claymore mine, I was urged by said guards to pack up my scattered belongings quickly as I was holding up the queue.

Whilst standing in the boarding queue for the George flight, two smart looking pilots walked by dragging their wheelie bags on route to the plane. It took them three attempts and a number of engagements with ground staff to find the exit to the tarmac. Now my own sense of direction is not superb, but I did experience some severe angst knowing that these guys had to find their way to George, without signboards. Of course, the George flight was also delayed but fortunately entertainment was provided via the assembled passengers. One particularly interesting piece was an obviously very special woman demanding to be personally summoned from the passenger lounge when the delay was over as she simply could not stand waiting around. Further interesting distractions were the overhead announcements being made regarding people leaving their cell phones under the scanner once boarding passes had been scanned. Paper remains the best option for some!

I think I will leave out any discussion re the priority queue for which privilege people pay, but which service is literally allowed to become a free for all. To board the plane, one has to go through one of two doors leading out of the loading corridor.

I gave my seat number to the disinterested and curt official who responded “Back!”. “Cool” I said, “But which door?” I asked. His eyes rolled to the back of his head as he barked “Back!”. We played this game for awhile until he clicked his tongue and capitulated his position with a sharp “Right”. I thanked him for his service and went right!

Once seated, I was challenged by an incoming passenger. “That’s my seat” was his opening line to me “I booked it”. “What number did you book?” I asked looking at my app which stated 30A. “Seat 30” my obviously alphabetically challenged seat partner responded. Go figure.’

Not having flown since COVID, I did not realise that nowadays one must order and buy your onboard snack. What struck me was the amount of ostensibly bright people voluntarily buying airline food. Shame. The interior of the plane was incredibly cold, and I overheard the hostesses complaining to each other about how cold it was. Interestingly, it was only when a passenger suggested to them that the heat be turned up that they approached the flight deck for a twist of the temperature control knob.

A mysterious force apparently takes over the brains of passengers and hostesses walking up and down the center aisle of the plane. Not too dissimilar to the well-known zombie virus, this force cancels any sense of distance or space that the afflicted may have enjoyed previously outside of the force field. That person then proceeds to collide with as many seated passengers as possible during the aisle journey. Trolleys being pushed are smashed into exposed knees and bags being loaded are swung with impunity at the heads of those seated. Watching these possessed individuals loading the overhead luggage rack, initiated flashbacks to the 2021 looting spree where we witnessed puzzle challenged individuals battling to load oversize TV’s and fridges into small cars or “borrowed” shopping trolleys. Very definitely, some form of force-resistant headgear needs to be invented and made compulsory onboard wearing.

Talking of inventions, our landing in George was more like a controlled crash than a planned landing which got me thinking about artificial intelligence once again. Whilst teaching auto pilots to fly in fog, a further AI module regarding smooth landings needs to be added to the curriculum. After all, AI can design anything from books to biscuits, so a gentle touch down is not asking too much. Come on people we can do this!

Once again, our hopeful hostess called for an orderly disembarkation process and being an obvious optimist even added the request that passengers cross their safety belts on their chairs as they left. Mmmmm? Another dog’s breakfast. The experience gave me a much clearer understanding of the reasons why the South Korean passenger, recently reported in the media, chose to open the emergency door as his plane was in process of landing, because he wanted to get off first.

And so, after an eventual and insightful journey amongst the untamed hordes, I ended up on campus in front of a class full of BTech students. “Surely my experiences to date are limited to persons in transit?” I thought. “Definitely” I argued with myself and convinced myself to go the full hog. What could go wrong? “OK guys” I announced, “I need you to divide yourself into three equal groupings for a group task”.

I’m not going to describe what happened, but it was not pretty!

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*Birthday Wishes : The SAIF Council and all the readers of the Newsletter would like to wish Rob a happy birthday and joyful year ahead !*

## Working on Fire Symposium



### Working on Fire@20 Fire Management Symposium

The Organizing Committee of **Working on Fire@20 Fire Management Symposium** is calling for abstract submissions. We enclose the symposium themes and sub themes which the Organizing Committee (Working on Fire – Kishugu Joint Venture, Nelson Mandela University - Forestry, Wood Technology and Veldfire Management & Kruger National Park) will use to select abstract and develop a final programme.

The presenters of the selected proposals will be informed as soon as possible after the closing date mentioned below. The symposium programme will also be communicated well before the symposium dates.

**Coordinating Efforts for Effective Wildland Fire Management:  
A Collaborative Approach to Safeguard Communities and Ecosystems**

8-10 November 2023  
Skukuza Conference Centre  
Kruger National Park

**Sponsor of the Month : June 2023**  
**Nelson Mandela University**



<https://www.mandela.ac.za>

The Nelson Mandela University with its Main Campus in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) has more than 500 study programmes in seven excellent faculties that help our students achieve academic excellence. We are well-known for art and design, building, chartered accounting, engineering, health and environmental sciences, and information technology.

The Faculty of Science consists of four divisions one of which, the School of Natural Resource Management is located at the George Campus formerly known as Saasveld. The School presents tertiary qualifications in Agricultural Management, Forestry, Nature Conservation and Wood Technology. This campus also offer a Higher Certificate in Veldfire Management for the last almost ten years.

The history of the campus at George and the development of forestry and natural resource education in South Africa is an interesting and exciting one. George Campus has its origins in 1911 when a forestry college was established at Tokai near Cape Town. In 1932 the government of the day moved the college to a new location, Saasveld, near George in the Southern Cape. From 1932 to 1985 almost 1300 foresters were trained at this campus. A proud tradition of excellence and service to the forestry industry was established over these years. Since January 2005, the campus formed part of the new Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, an institution that was established after the merger of the PE Technikon, University of Port Elizabeth and a campus of Vista. Being part of this new comprehensive institution which was rebranded and relaunched as Nelson Mandela University in July 2017, this campus faces exciting new opportunities for training and education in the broader field of natural resource management.

George Campus offers a range of formal programmes that allows students to progress to the highest levels of academic training. After two academic years, and a year of experiential training, the Diploma is awarded. Currently the BTech degree in Forestry or Wood Technology enables students to specialize in specific disciplines to prepare them for careers in management or research (Note: BTech degrees are being phased out - to be replaced by equivalent Advanced Diplomas). Masters and doctoral degrees provide students with the advanced levels of training necessary for applied management and research within the fields of forestry and wood processing.

**Reminder : Focus on Forestry 2023**

**FOCUS ON FORESTRY 2023**

The theme of the conference is:  
**The Value of Forestry in a Greening Economy**

**07 to 09 November**  
**Karkloof Country Club**  
(Near Howick in the KZN Midlands, South Africa)

**Keynote speaker:**  
**Dr Ole Sand**  
(Managing Partner – CAP – Criterion African Partners)

For inquiries about the conference contact:  
[focus@cmogroup.io](mailto:focus@cmogroup.io)

Logos for CMO (Supply Chain Integrity), Nelson Mandela University, and Forestry South Africa.

A special word of thanks and appreciation from the SAIF to Forestry South Africa and SA Forestry Online for your support



## Top NMU forestry & wood tech students applauded



Top achievers in Forestry, Wood Technology and Veldfire Management at Nelson Mandela University's George campus, and staff members.

*Top achievers in Forestry, Wood Technology and Veldfire Management at Nelson Mandela University's George campus, and staff members*

A special awards ceremony was held at the Nelson Mandela George campus recently to acknowledge the top achievers in Forestry, Wood Technology and Veldfire Management.

“Today we celebrate your excellence, hard work and perseverance shown during the period of acquiring your qualification, and we encourage you to continue and be responsible ambassadors of our institution and carry the Nelson Mandela University name with pride in the work place and communities you will serve in,” said Forestry Department head Tiaan Pool.

In the Forestry Diploma, Benjamin Ringwood received the award for best student in Forest Engineering, Forest Management and Fire Management modules, whilst Mushaisano Ndou and Sandisiwe Langman received awards for best students in the Silviculture and Human Resource Management modules respectively.

In the Wood Technology Diploma, Mponeng Pina received an award for the best student in Timber Seasoning and Iviwe Dangazela for Timber Processing. In the Higher Certificate in Veld Fire Management, Hlobisile Madlala and Amanda Rodo received awards for the best students.

The Nelson Mandela Forestry Association committee which served in 2022 was also recognised for their excellence in leadership. The committee members were Avelile Cishe, Lelonathemba Ndalenj, Ronewa Sathuma and Minenhle Machi.

## FSA plays key role in national crisis control



*Outgoing FSA Executive Committee chairperson Themba Vilane applauded the resilience of the forest sector despite another challenging year. (Photo: Samora Chapman)*

Forestry South Africa held its 21st AGM in the KZN midlands in May, attended by a record number of members and invited guests who were treated to two blockbuster keynote presentations that helped to put the crises facing South Africa into perspective ... What a year 2022 turned out to be for the South African forestry sector! After surviving the Covid pandemic in 2020 and the failed insurrection and looting spree that took place in KZN and Gauteng in 2021, forestry stakeholders were hoping for a more stable and prosperous 2022. But the crises just shifted ... to energy (or the lack of it) with load shedding ramping ever upwards; and to logistics where a strike by Transnet workers brought freight rail – that was already in a state of decline – to a standstill in October, costing the battered SA economy R1 billion per day in lost opportunities.

Meanwhile the impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine disrupted international markets, creating logistics bottlenecks and causing prices of commodities like fuel, coal, tyres and fertilizer to skyrocket.

In between all of that, the resilient forest sector survived – even thrived in many instances – aided and abetted by the Forestry South Africa team which muscled its way closer to the levers of power to help find solutions for a number of pressing national issues. Here is a brief highlights package of FSA activities during the year 2022 that were covered by outgoing FSA chairperson Themba Vilane during his address at the recent FSA AGM, and were elaborated upon in his Foreword in the recently published FSA Annual Report.

## Ports and rail

The FSA team established regular meetings with the CEO of Transnet and her top management team, and task teams working on ports and rail met throughout the year, playing a hand in bringing the Transnet strike to an end. As a result of this involvement, Executive Director Michael Peter was asked to serve in a President-led task team working on the reforms needed to address the use and recapitalisation of rail and ports in South Africa.

FSA is also serving on a Presidency-led energy committee which is playing a key role in addressing the energy crisis.

“Having our association at the forefront of these national crises interventions is a great testimony to the regard in which our sector is held,” said Themba.

## Research and innovation

Forestry’s growing partnerships with government also bore fruit with FSA securing Sector Innovation Funding of R35.2 million from the Department of Science and Innovation. This funding serves to increase forestry’s research capacity in crucial areas.

Furthermore, the signing of an MoU between FSA and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) will bring an additional R9 million per year for forest protection.

## Recommissioning of state plantations

Perhaps the biggest news of the year came just before Christmas when the DFFE called for expressions of interest from the private sector for the operation of 22 000 ha of state-owned forestry plantations in the Western Cape. These former pine plantations have been lying dormant for anything between five to 20 years, as they were handed over to the receiving agents after clear-felling at rotation end by the previous lease holder, MTO Forestry. They were originally part of government’s forestry exit strategy in the Western Cape, but following an outcry from industry stakeholders and further research, Cabinet decided in 2008 to recommission these plantations.

After years of lobbying by FSA and other stakeholders, the process of bringing them back into forestry has begun at last. This is good news indeed and will revitalise forestry and sawmilling in the Western Cape (see story on SAF Online - <https://saforestryonline.co.za/articles/w-cape-state-plantation>).

“We hope that this signals the start of the process for the rest of the Category B and C state plantations which have been overrun by timber thieves and criminal syndicates ...” said Themba.

## Land reform

On the land reform front, the FSA Land Committee has come up with concrete proposals to bolster support for communities who have come into forestry through land reform initiatives, in an effort to ensure that a sustainable fibre supply from these plantations is maintained. These include a feasibility study stage in the land restitution process to better inform settlement negotiations; a suite of appropriate settlement models; a crop ownership transfer model and the provision of appropriate post-settlement support for land reform beneficiaries.

## Timber volumes up

Finally, Themba applauded the fact that timber sales recorded by FSA members during 2022 were the highest since 2018 at 13.970 million tons (6.2% higher than 2021 volumes). Gum sales were the best performer at 7 million tons (18.5% higher than 2021 volumes), wattle was second best at 1.4 million tons (up 15.5% on 2021 volumes) and pine at 5.5 million tons (down by 7.8% vs 2021 volumes).

These timber sales volumes would have been much higher had it not been for the devastating floods that occurred in KZN in April and the impacts of the rail and port strike in October, the consequences of which are still being felt across all sectors of the economy.

“Should the country succeed in addressing the two biggest challenges we are facing in logistics and energy, this bodes very well for the future of timber growers, especially with the major investments which have been made by our sector in pulp and paper, particle board, sawmilling and renewable energy,” said Themba.

## Article taken from:

<https://saforestryonline.co.za/articles/fsa-plays-key-role-in-national-crisis-control/>



## Service acknowledgements

The FSA team paid tribute to two stalwarts of the Forestry Sector, Brian Aitken and Murray Mason, both of whom have put in multiple stints as FSA office bearers over the years, and who have contributed enormously to the success of the sector.

FSA Executive Committee for 2023/24

### Ex Large Growers Group

Duane Roothman (SAPPI)  
Themba Vilane (Mondi)  
Sean Brown (Merensky)  
Itumeleng Langeni (MTO)  
Tsepo Monaheng (SAFCOL)  
Ferdie Brauckmann (TWK)  
Penwell Lunga (PG Bison)  
Gerald Stoltz (York Timbers)  
Mark Armour (co-opted)

### Ex Medium Growers Group

Andrew Mason - KZN (MGG Chair) (FSA Chairperson)  
Murray Mason - KZN / S Cape  
Heiner Hinze - Mpumalanga / Limpopo  
Graeme Freese - Past MGG Chairman  
Danny Knoesen - NCT

### Ex Small Growers Group

Buhle Msweli KZN Provincial Chairperson (FSA Vice-Chairperson)  
Musa Mcwensa KZN Deputy Chairperson  
Fhatuwani Netsianda Limpopo Provincial Chairperson



*Celebrating Women... women are playing an increasingly active role in the previously male-dominated forestry sector in South Africa. (Photo: Samora Chapman) ... women are playing an increasingly active role in the previously male-dominated forestry sector in South Africa. (Photo: Samora Chapman)*

Source : <https://saforestryonline.co.za/>

## 2023 on track to be Canada's worst fire season ever, feds warn



A wildfire burns near to Centennial Lake, near Matawatchesan, Ont., on Sunday, June 4, 2023. The wildfire burning around Centennial Lake, about 150 kilometres west of Ottawa, was one of the 21 new fire starts in Ontario since Sunday, said fire advisor Shayne McCool, with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Photo by HO-Mike Coates /THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada's emergency preparedness minister says images of wildfires burning across the country are some of the most severe ever witnessed in Canada and the current forecast for the next few months indicates the potential for continued higher-than-normal fire activity.

Bill Blair and six other federal cabinet ministers provided an update Monday on Canada's wildfire situation, even as smoke from fires north and west of the city covered Parliament Hill's Peace Tower in a grey haze.

The BC Wildfire Service says the Donnie Creek wildfire, which has grown to more than 2,400 square kilometres in size, is now considered the second largest in provincial history, while Nova Scotia's largest ever wildfire continues to burn out of control.

Environment Canada has issued a special air quality statement for a large section of southern Ontario, with the agency warning of high levels of air pollution as a result of smoke plumes from local forest fires as well as forest fires in Quebec. As of late Monday afternoon, 424 fires were burning across Canada, more than 250 of which are considered out of control. Source : Vancouver Sun

<https://forestry.co.za/2023-on-track-to-be-canadas-worst-fire-season-ever-feds-warn>



## Sappi Chair in Climate Change and Plantation Sustainability at Wits University



In celebration of World Environment Day, this initiative aligns with Sappi's drive to generate technical and operational solutions which mitigate against climate change risks and to enhance reporting on carbon emissions, climate change and sustainability. Professor Mary Scholes, who is an internationally recognised authority on tree physiology and climate change and who is affiliated with the research platform in the Wits School of Animal, Plants and Environmental Sciences, will act as the Research Chair.

Through the Research Chair, Professor Scholes is identifying critical research needs and developing research outputs related to climate change, which is one of the University's eight research priorities. She will also lead the development of capacity to manipulate and interpret climate modelling data.

Speaking at the launch, Tracy Wessels, Sappi Group Head of Sustainability and Investor Relations, commented: "The creation of this Chair demonstrates Sappi's commitment to building a thriving world through strong partnerships, supporting innovation and investing in future research capabilities "Like all other agricultural crops, the trees in the 399,996 hectares of land we own and lease are negatively impacted by climate change. While we practise climate-smart forestry and while our research teams have been hard at work developing drought resistant genotypes, the temperatures over the South African interior are projected to rise at about 1.5 to 2 times the global rate of temperature increase. In addition, there is increasing global pressure to account accurately for greenhouse gas emissions from forests, land and

agriculture. Against this backdrop and in line with our commitment to UN SDG13: Climate Action, the need to develop climate solutions has intensified, which is why our sponsorship of the Sappi Chair in Climate Change and Plantation Sustainability makes sound business sense.

The Chair will further focus on developing and mentoring young and upcoming academics and research, through the funding for one post-doctoral fellow as well as bursaries for one Masters and one Honours student. "Our association with Wits is not new: In 2020, we began working on a project with other industry members and the Wits Global Change Institute on a project which involved the generation of raster – a rectangular pattern of parallel scanning lines followed by the electron beam on a television screen or computer monitor – climate surfaces for the entire forestry domain of South Africa, at a resolution of eight kilometres, with monthly time resolution, for the years 2020, 2030 and 2040 to 2100. "We are looking forward to progressing our understanding of, and actions related to, climate change through replicable, workable methodologies."

The work by Wits will help to enhance Sappi's planning process and overall competitiveness. "Because forestry is a long-term crop, the industry needs to know well in advance where to direct their resources and investment and needs the most accurate climate models to rely on," says Scholes. The launch is taking place at the junction of three important developments: Firstly, it aligns with the Wits 2022/2023 centenary campaign which honours the university's work in changing and shaping society for the better. Next, it is taking place at the same time as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in Durban (South Africa), where one of the key topics for discussion is the impact of climate change on the African continent. Finally, today is World Environment Day which this year, is focused on beating plastic pollution and transitioning to a circular economy. This theme is particularly meaningful for Sappi, given their portfolio of a broad range of woodfibre-based sustainable solutions as an alternative to fossil fuel-based, non-renewable packaging across many product segments. Sappi's initial sponsorship of the Research Chair will run until 2026.

**Source:** [Sappi](#) ; This article is tagged in: [Climate Change](#), [plantation](#), [sappi](#), [sustainability](#), [wits university](#)

## SAIF Contact Details

Position	Name	Email
President	Braam du Preez	president@saif.org.za
Vice-president	Vacant	
Past-president	Wayne Jones	past-president@saif.org.za
National secretary	Ms Corine Viljoen	admin@saif.org.za/ saif@mweb.co.za
SF Journal Editor	Dr. David Everard	drdavideverard@gmail.com
KwaZulu-Natal	Dr.Mmoledi Mphahlele	kzn@saif.org.za
Gauteng	Ms. Samantha Bush	gauteng@saif.org.za
Mpumalanga	Vacant	admin@saif.org.za
Southern Cape	Dr. Tatenda Mapeto	southern-cape@saif.org.za
Western Cape	Prof. Bruce Talbot	western-cape@saif.org.za
DFFE representative	Vacant	

*Happy Birthday to all our members who celebrate(d) their birthdays in June*



BIRTHDAYS JUNE 2023			
ILARI GERMISHUIZEN	Jun-01	THOBISELA MHONE	Jun-14
WERNER MEYER	Jun-01	CLIVE HENDERSON	Jun-15
LEIGH WILLIAMS	Jun-03	HEYNS KOTZE	Jun-15
JOCK BOAKE	Jun-04	MARTIN BUCHLER	Jun-16
GLEN MITCHELL	Jun-04	JOHAN BOTHMA	Jun-17
JOHN FEELY	Jun-06	MUEDANYI RAMANTSWANA	Jun-17
DALI LUBALA	Jun-06	ROB THOMPSON	Jun-19
FANELE MABASO	Jun-07	RAJESH RAMSAMY	Jun-20
JOHN CRAWFORD-BRUNT	Jun-08	BENICE SIVPARSAD	Jun-21
ANDREW MORRIS	Jun-08	IAN HARRISON	Jun-23
MARTINA MEINCKEN	Jun-10	JAN JANSEN	Jun-30
WILLI GEVERS	Jun-14	IRVINE KANYEMBA	Jun-30



## Southern African Institute of Forestry

**The SAIF is a professional association of forestry related professionals geared towards delivering a professional service to forestry. Our mission is to assist members to achieve excellence in the practice of forestry, to promote growth and sustainability in the industry whilst being responsible as custodians of a sensitive environment.**



**South African Forestry Handbook**  
SAIF members: R550 (only one copy per member)  
Non-members: R700  
Includes VAT and postage (SA only)  
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**There is Honey in the Forest**  
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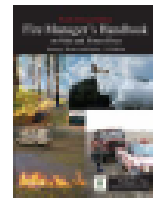
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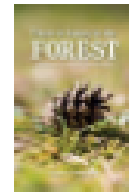
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