

# May the best furniture win

Furniture designers are set to battle it out at the annual Furniture Design Competition hosted by the Department of Trade and Industry (dti).



Akhona Thusi, a young designer from Durban University of Technology (DUT) is in the running to win in this year's Furniture Design Competition.

The competition is hosted in partnership with the South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI) and its partners. It is one of the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) furniture programmes to respond to the design skills shortage in the furniture industry.

“The main objective of the design competition is to raise and nurture design capabilities in the furniture sector, raise the image of the furniture manufacturing industry in the country, to reposition and to grow the industry’s competitiveness by encouraging new product design and differentiation,” said Trade and Industry minister Rob Davies on Wednesday, 15 March.

The competition will take place in Durban on 20 March 2017.

Competitors will compete in three categories, which are the student, the established manufactures categories and the newly introduced development category.

Davies said the exhibition and announcement of the winners will take place alongside the Durban Decorex, scheduled to take place from 18-21 March 2017.

“This year’s theme, ‘Collaborative and Innovative Workspaces’, seeks to provide collaborative and innovative workspace solutions. This theme seeks to address the changes in workspaces and align this with how people interact in the work environment,” said Davies.

According to the dti, the competition will benefit the industry and influence products manufactured locally, promote industrial growth through differentiated products, as well as the use of local inputs such as wood and textiles in the furniture manufacturing sector.

The finalists of the design competition hail mainly from Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West. They include current and former students, established manufacturers as well as new designers.

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