

December 2023

Gauteng Region Highlights Newsletter



Cheers to 150 years of Shaping Futures...

Define tomorrow.

Foreword from the Regional Director

Colleagues, how time flies! The year is almost gone and what a busy one 2023 has been. Moreover, we had to incorporate the University's 150-year celebration in almost all we did, including interactions with stakeholders at all levels. Thank you, colleagues, for rallying behind this august occasion and making it known, the best way we could and with pride that Unisa is the mother of all universities in the land.

My sincere gratitude goes to the Deputy Director, Ms Erin Naude, affectionately known as "Mevrou" in the region; for holding the fort as acting Regional Director, for the three months that I was away on executive development leave. I also appreciate the managers and the regional staff at large, for working with and supporting her in my absence. I cannot thank you enough for keeping the Region afloat and ensuring that it continues to deliver on its mandate!

This newsletter is meant for us to reflect on our work and identify possible improvements for the future. But it is also meant for us to appreciate our efforts and achievements as a collective; and most importantly to celebrate us - indulge!

MC Masalesa, Regional Director: Gauteng Region



STAFF SUPPORT

HEALTH (AND WELLNESS) IS WEALTH

“You can’t pour from an empty cup.”

In line with this statement, the Region is doing its best to take care of its staff’s well-being first, so that it can take care of its stakeholders.

The HR Unit arranged a pamper day where staff had a back and neck massage stint, some in the comfort of their offices.



Ms. Erin Naude and Ms Pearl Maluleka were pampered with a neck and back massage respectively.

The Counselling Unit hosted a Wellness Day, open to both staff and students in Sunnyside, on 1 August 2023.



Various health organisations put up stalls for consultation

Staff is also made aware and encouraged to participate in the health and wellness interventions offered by the Directorate: Employee Health and Wellness.

STAFF SUPPORT

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

"Let's talk about us."

In an attempt to improve staff morale and employee relations, the Office of the Manager: Finance and Operations has piloted a Staff Engagement initiative in Sunnyside, where staff was allowed to talk, suggest, comment and vent in a safe space. The platform will further be explored and expanded to other centres in the new year

CENTRE VISITS

Management touching base with staff.

Instead of the traditional regional staff assemblies, in 2023 the office of the Regional Director took a different, more effective approach with management visits to each centre, for "heart to heart" talks with staff in the comfort of their familiar environment.



The RD, Ms Moipone Masalesa addressed staff during a Johannesburg centre visit.



Management engaging Florida staff members.



Embracing unity- Johannesburg Regional Staff members

STAFF SUPPORT

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.”

Staff competencies are also regularly revived with reskilling and upskilling opportunities.



In April, website administrators had a WEM refresher course, facilitated by Mr Nkululeko Mpakama, DIA.

Staff was also offered introductory training in Power BI, facilitated by ADOVH.



**Staff members soaking up the knowledge during the Power BI training session.
Sunnyside campus**

Staff is made aware of and encouraged to take advantage of all training interventions that are in line with and would improve their work, offered by various environments within the University

PERSONALIA

congratulations

Celebrating with achievers

Ms Louisa Maile, a Regional Academic Coordinator based at the Ekurhuleni Regional Service Centre graduated with a Master of Science degree, during the Spring Graduations.



Welcoming new family members

"For all the things my hands have held, the best by far is you."



PERSONALIA

COMPASSION

"If my brother is in trouble, so am I."

The region rallied behind colleagues who were sick and those who lost their loved ones during the year.

Mr Calvin Sias lost a son.
Mr Hlony Rakhomo lost a mother.
Ms Pulane Mphasane lost a mother.
Ms Mamashu Mabowa lost a mother.
Ms Nomaswazi Twala lost a father.
Ms Pat Lethole lost a brother.
Ms Erin Naude lost a sister.
Ms Christa Prinsloo lost an aunt.



STUDENT SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE STUDENT WALK

As a Region, we truly understand and take our mandate seriously. We appreciate that our core business is student support - contributing to student access, success, retention, and throughput rate.

APPLICATIONS SEASON AWARENESS STRATEGY

“The beginning is the most important part of the work.”

The region mostly uses its website, the active and popular Facebook page, the regional SRC, and its student structures to create awareness.

Staff voluntarily put posters on their personal Facebook pages and WhatsApp statuses.

Posters are also placed on conventional noticeboards placed at strategic points around the regional service centres.

Any events/visits taking place during the application period are also used to create awareness.

REGISTRATIONS SUPPORT

The region set up a stall at the E'skia Mphahlele Registration Hall throughout the registration period in January/February 2023, to assist students with system access immediately after registering.



Mr Ronald Mulaudzi, Digital Learning Advisor, assisting a new student claiming myUnisa account.

SUPPORT FOR OUR STUDENTS

STUDENT ORIENTATION

Once registered, the new students are oriented on the support services the region offers to enhance teaching and learning at the University. The region recorded high numbers, with both face-to-face and online attendance at all its centres.



Registration desk in Florida



Session in the Vaal

GAUTENG OPEN DAY

Each year, the University hosts a series of Open Days at its regional centres across the country, to support potential and current students to make informed decisions about their studies. Gauteng Open Day was held at the Ekurhuleni Regional Services Centre, Daveyton on 8 & 9 September 2023.



The 2023 Open Day was more popular with local schools.



Team Gauteng and exhibitors from colleges and support departments across the University

SUPPORT FOR OUR STUDENTS

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY DAY

The regional branch library and the Technology Enhanced Learning Unit jointly held an International Literacy and Technology Day on 15 September 2023, with the theme: "Promoting literacy for a world in transition: Building the foundation for sustainable and peaceful societies."

Topics discussed included information literacy, academic literacies, digital literacy, and technologies that support students with disabilities.



Part of the audience in the room packed to capacity



Ms Nokuthula Khoza, a postgraduate student from Ekurhuleni showcased her new book



Mr Victor Mbuqe, Manager: Library Services with the presenters Ms Ntombizodwa Madima: Regional Academic Coordinator and Ms Damarice Pitseng: Senior Librarian (from left to right)



ARCSWiD displayed gadgets for students with disabilities.

SUPPORT FOR OUR STUDENTS

STUDENT TRAINING ON MS 365

The MS365 training was facilitated using a synchronous approach, incorporating live facilitation along with online open-access course content. It featured hybrid sessions, combining online webinars with face-to-face sessions in selective Unisa labs. Face-to-face training was a trial in Sunnyside, Johannesburg, Florida, and Vaal. The total number of students who participated in the hybrid learning was 19,076.



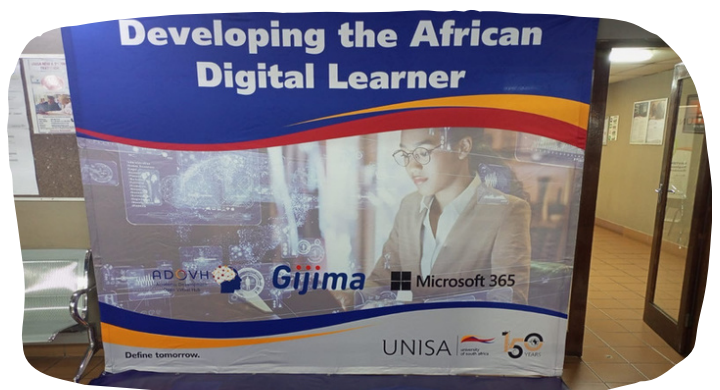
Sunnyside Regional Hub computer lab



Johannesburg Regional Centre computer lab



Florida Regional Centre computer lab

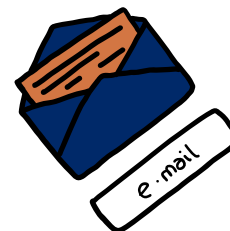
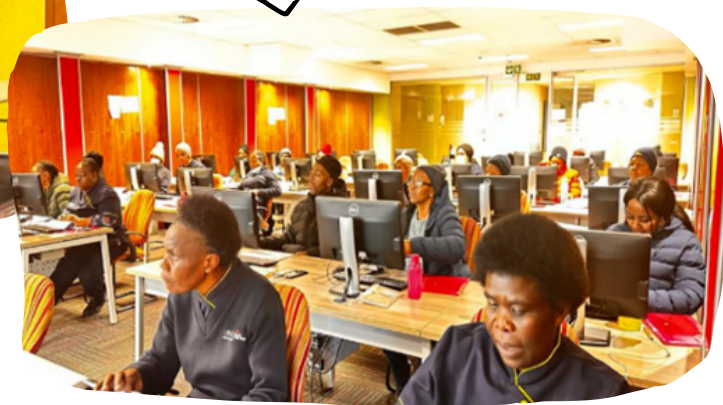
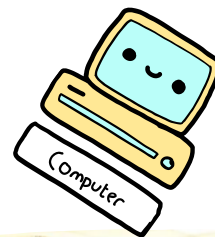
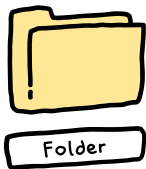


ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

"No one has ever become poor by giving."

DIGITAL LITERACIES FOR GENERAL STAFF MEMBERS AT UNISA

Gauteng Region collaborated with the College of Science Engineering and Technology to empower general staff members with technology skills. It is a fact that technology has become a driving force in our lives. Every individual needs to have basic computer skills for them to function effectively and be able to manage their personal affairs without the assistance of other people. Over the years Unisa staff assisted general staff members in retrieving payslips, applying for leave on Oracle and typing personal documents. Gauteng together with CSET decided to work together and fill this gap by offering basic digital literacy training to these staff members.



Cleaning staff learning basic computer skills in a computer laboratory

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CAREER FAIR

On 4 May 2023, the Region held a Career Fair at the Ramoshidi Technical High School near Hammanskraal.



UNISA Colleges, various professional bodies and organizations had a presence at the Career Fair.

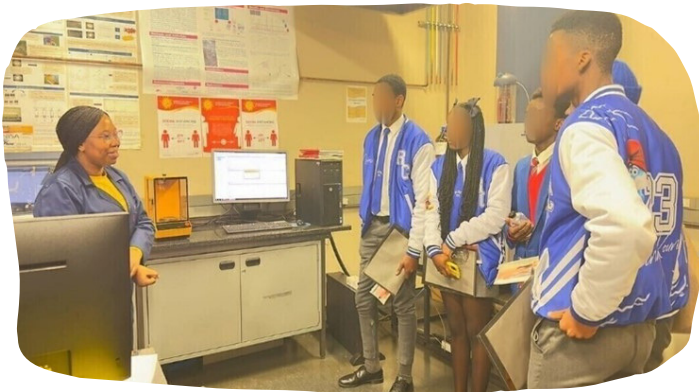
In collaboration with the College of Accounting Sciences, the region held the exclusive Accounting Profession Career Day at the Regional Hub, Sunnyside on 27 July 2023.



ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TAKE A CHILD TO WORK DAY

The purpose of the event was to inspire high school learners to pursue their dreams and expose them to a wide variety of study fields, expanding their horizons when it comes to choosing a career path. The learners had the opportunity to participate in live-streamed online sessions where they learned about various career options. Professionals from diverse fields shared insights about their professions and how one can enter those fields. The careers discussed included accounting, law, psychology, social media influencing, videography, robotics, aviation engineering, agriculture, nanotechnology, water sustainability, and hospitality. Additionally, the presentations emphasized the significance of volunteering, provided information about bursaries and student funding, and offered guidance on making informed career decisions.



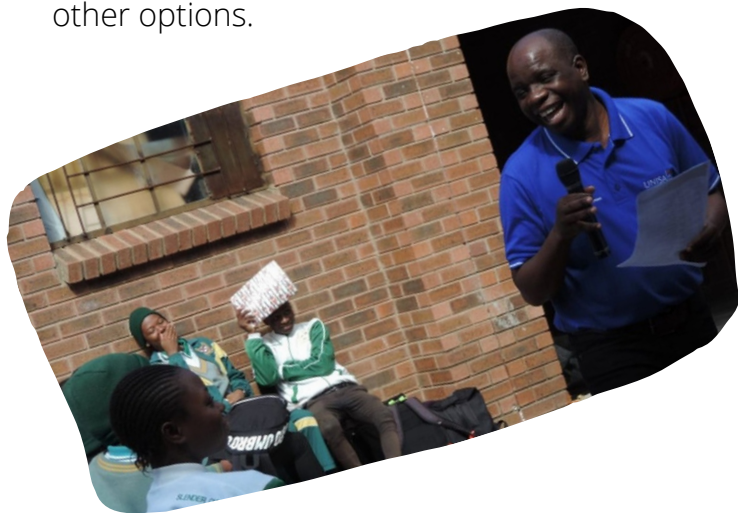
Learners visited the branch libraries, the iNano science labs, the computer labs, and other facilities.

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

MANDELA DAY COMMEMORATED

On 4 August 2023, the Gauteng Counselling team, Engaged Scholarship and Tirisano project (Mr Leon Roets), DCCD and Tshwane University of Technology (Ms Nelly Pulumo), descended to Ramoshidi Technical School near Hammanskraal, to commemorate Mandela Day with the learners. This is the third year that the event is being held at the school and according to the Organiser, Dr Bunki Pitsoane: Head of Counselling Unit, the objective is to make it an annual event.

The main purpose of the event was to deliver the sanitary towels and toiletries, collected through donations, for use by the learners. Secondly, to have motivational talks, empower and share with the learners, information, and life skills on transitioning into Institutions of Higher Learning and other options.



Group dialogue on transitioning into the HEIs



Motivational talk for the grade 11 and 12 learners

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”

LIBRARY WEEK



UNISA Library, Gauteng Region celebrated the 2023 SA Library Week in collaboration with its newly acquired partner, the City of Ekurhuleni at the Germiston Municipal Library on Friday, 24 March 2023 under the theme “Libraries: Telling powerful stories.”

In line with the theme, Mr Victor Mbuqe, Manager: Library Services, Gauteng Region told the UNISA powerful story – from its inception as the College of Good Hope in 1873 to where it is today, celebrating 150 years of reclaiming African intellectual futures; much to the excitement and astonishment from the audience, young and old.

On the purpose of the UNISA-CoE partnership (and with other municipalities), Mr Mbuqe emphasized that the goal is to render services to our students, wherever they are to assist them to succeed and be able to compete with students from other institutions for equal opportunities.

He elaborated further that these partnerships will also be used as a vehicle to bring in other student support services such as Technology Enhanced Learning and Counselling Services.



After the fact, UNISA & CoE staff mingled for a group photo.



Mr Mbuqe and the host, Ms Sukiswa Peter, Library Information and Education Development Manager: Ekurhuleni Municipal Libraries

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

WORLD BOOK DAY

UNISA Library, Gauteng Region celebrated the 2023 World Book Day in collaboration with its other partner, the City of Johannesburg on two separate occasions.

World Book Day is a global event celebrated on April 23 every year to promote reading, publishing, and copyright. It is a day to celebrate books and their role in society. This year, the Florida Community Library in collaboration with Unisa hosted the event on Friday, 21 April 2023 and the theme of the day was copyright, referencing, and plagiarism. The event was attended by grade 12 learners from Royal College.



Learners from Royal College with Unisa Gauteng Region and the City of Johannesburg Librarians.



Mr Collen Molefe, Branch Librarian from the Johannesburg RSC engaging the learners.



Coj Library and Information services Staff and Gauteng Region Librarians

WORLD BOOK DAY

On Friday, 24 April 2023 again, Gauteng Region attended the City of Johannesburg Libraries 2023 World Book and Copyright Day Celebration hosted at the Sandton Library, Mandela Square.

Unisans flew the regional flag high and had the audience glued to their seats when Ms. Ntombizodwa Madima, Regional Academic Coordinator presented on **academic literacies** while Ms. Damarice Pitseng, Senior Librarian presented on **information literacy**



**Ms. Ntombizodwa Madima,
Regional Academic Coordinator**



Part of the attentive audience



The "traditional" group photo: Unisans and Joburgers

UNISA REGIONS PUT HEADS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP AN ATS DASHBOARD

The six Unisa regions held a face-to-face workshop hosted at the Gauteng Region, Sunnyside Campus on 14-15 August 2023. This was the first face-to-face meeting post the COVID-19 restrictions and the team enjoyed the vibrant discussion aimed at developing an Academic and Technology Dashboard for reporting, decision-making and research purposes. The team agreed on the significance of standardising reporting templates across regions to create a standard database for all Academic and Technology Support Services. Furthermore, the team acknowledged the existence of other dashboards and databases within the university and agreed that the envisaged ATS dashboard will not duplicate such. Although the workshop was mainly aimed at developing the dashboard specifications, the group used the opportunity to discuss research and community engagement, catalytic niches, and regions as centres of academic excellence. The team was honoured with the presence of the Gauteng Regional Director, Ms Moipone Masalesa and the acting Deputy Registrar, Mr Mathews Kokong.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

WORLD TEACHERS DAY

In collaboration with the College of Education, the region commemorated World Teachers Day on Monday, 9 October 2023, to honour “the mother of all professions”. This was one of the events where the College was celebrating the University’s 150-year milestone with its various stakeholders.



auteng region and CEDU staff members



PARTNERSHIPS

THE 3RD OR TAMBO ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Region hosted the 3rd Oliver Tambo Annual Memorial Lecture on Friday, 27 October 2023, with the theme: Reclaiming Africa's Intellectual Futures.



Prof Puleng LenkaBula, Principal and Vice-Chancellor delivered a hearty, Unisa welcome to all in attendance



Keynote speaker: Ms Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, Minister in the Presidency



Ms Erin Naude, Acting Regional Director: Gauteng Region



Ambassador Nomatamba Tambo Trustee, Oliver & Adelaide Tambo Foundation

"Growing our own timber."



Mr Xolile Gaba, Digital Learning Advisor: Gauteng Region



Mr Collen Molefe, Branch Librarian: Gauteng Region

Programme Directors



PARTNERSHIPS

CHANCELLOR'S GOLF DAY

In partnership with the Directorate: UNISA Foundation and Alumni Relations, the Region held yet another great, fundraising Chancellor's Golf Day at The Country Club Johannesburg, Woodmead on 13 October 2023. Like last year, the Chancellor, Dr Thabo Mbeki graced the day with his presence.



The Chancellor's ceremonial tee-off

The Unisa Chancellor's Gauteng Shaping Futures Golf Challenge 2023



Some of the players of the day



Each guest received the Mmabatho Rose voucher as a token of appreciation for their participation in this day.



Mr Peter Modiselle, Johannesburg Regional Service Centre Manager, delivered the Gauteng warm welcome message.



Mr Frankie Mojapelo, DD: Unisa Foundation & Alumni Relations (left) and Prof SK Ndlovu, VP: Strategy, Risk & Advisory services presenting prizes to the winners.

PS: In 2022, the region managed to raise funds of over R500 000, which were used to clear accounts of students who have completed their studies but could not graduate due to outstanding fees.

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

“Management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right things.”

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR

“Blowing our own horn.”

The region went all out to make it known that the University of the Land is turning 150 years old in 2023, on the occasion of the official opening of the academic year on Friday, 10 February 2023.



Regional Hub, Sunnyside Campus



Florida Regional Centre



Ekurhuleni Regional Centre



Johannesburg Regional Centre



SOD TURNING CEREMONY – CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

At the sod-turning ceremony held onsite, marking the new Centre of Excellence development at the Sunnyside Campus on 29 August 2023, Ms Moipone Masalesa, Regional Director acknowledged the pivotal role played by Protection Services in providing student support services and declared renewed commitment to serve and support the students even better, together with the Student Leadership at this state-of-the-art premises; the sentiments shared by the two Gauteng SRC Chairpersons, Mr Siyabonga Lushaba and Mr Nkosinathi Neo.



Ms Moipone Masalesa, Regional Director: Gauteng addressing the audience. With her is Mr Peu Matlala, Protection Services appreciating a compliment.



Some of Gauteng staff members came to witness a turning point occasion in their sphere of student support



Management, student leadership and staff are excited about and embracing the new development.



QUALITY ASSURANCE

"Quality is everyone's responsibility."

COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL VISIT

The region hosted the CHE delegate at its various centres in July. The CHE visit aimed to engage with the region regarding its audit report on the university and to develop improvement plans based on the findings and recommendations of the report.



CHE Audit visit at the Hub



CHE Audit visit at the Florida RSC.

QUALITY



CHE Audit visit at the Johannesburg RSC.



Student Leader engaging the panel



MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

CELEBRATING UNISA'S 150 YEARS MILESTONE IN STYLE

Management photoshoot

The Regional Management had prepared for a photoshoot in 2023, to leave a legacy for the generations of staff to come. What an opportune time this was to celebrate Unisa's 150-year milestone in style! **A special appreciation to Dimela Designs for donating the cake.**

Under the leadership of the colleagues appearing in the photograph below, Unisa's Gauteng Region offers a variety of support services to a cohort of just over 100,000 students, through its various regional service centres located across Gauteng. Key services include counselling and career development, library services, academic literacies and tutorials, student administration and technology support.





Management PHOTOSHOOT





Management PHOTOSHOOT



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

“Research is formalized curiosity.....”

The Gauteng Research and Innovation Committee's (GRIC) highlights for 2023 include the output and impact of staff and student research from the Gauteng Region. The committee's mission is to spearhead institutional efforts to boost student achievement and research output. Gauteng had three articles published in reputable journals and three that were accepted and pending. Nine more articles are currently being carried out. Additionally, there are seven enrolled doctoral candidates. Two staff members received master's degrees. Research training workshops for staff and students are carried out. Staff members presented about eighteen papers at national and international conferences.

REGIONAL ANNUAL RESEARCH SEMINAR

The 12th annual seminar for staff and postgraduate students from various directorates, colleges, and institutions was successfully held by the region online in October.



Dr Smangele (Mangi) Ntuli,
Head: Facilitation of Learning

PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Smangele Ntuli contributed to the regional research wealth as follows:

- Co-authored a book chapter on the book called: Women's Empowerment for a Sustainable Future The book chapter is: Ubuntu: A Strategy for Empowering Rural Women and Transforming Life through Food Security Projects. PUBLISHER: SPRINGER.
- Presented a paper in an online international conference called Informing Science and Information Technology Education (InSITE). The title of the paper is called The Africanisation of Tutor Support in Open Distance Learning.
- Presented a paper in a Journal for Educational Studies (JES) at Skukuza South Africa.
- TITLE: The transition of student support programmes during and beyond COVID-19: a case of the University of South Africa. *stodianship and Praxis*

REGIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

STUDENT LEADERS SHINE AT THE AUTUMN GRADUATIONS

Adding “A Feather In Their Caps”

Shining in their leadership roles already, the Regional SRC members have now joined the #Unisa150, #circle of excellence graduates.



Mr Siyabonga Lushaba: Former Chairperson and Ms Sanelisiwe Siyothula: former Sports Officer - Johannesburg RSRC

A NEW REGIONAL SRC 2023 – 2025 INDUCTED

The newly elected Regional Student Representative Council was inducted on 21 and 22 November 2023 (Tshwane) and on 30 November – 01 December 2023 (Johannesburg).



The Region, Office of the Dean of Students and the newly inducted RSRC

WHERE WE WANT TO BE IN 2024

“The future belongs to those who prepare for it”

The regional management held a strategic planning session on 9 – 10 November 2023, in preparation for the 2024 academic year, with the theme ***“The Quest in Building Centres of Academic Excellence through Continuous Integrated Student Support.”***



On our marks, get setwe are ready for 2024!

150-years Celebrations continue till 26 June 2024



Editorial Team



Thembeke Ntuli-Mpapama

Communication and Marketing Manager
Gauteng Region



Obakeng Motsamai

Communication and Marketing Officer
Gauteng Region



Mary Marodi

Communication and Marketing Officer
Gauteng Region

Gauteng Regional Offices
Pretoria | Johannesburg, Florida, Ekurhuleni | Vaal Triangle