

Train more artisans, government urged

SOUTH Africa was warned yesterday that it should not only be training artisans for current needs, but also to replace the ageing workforce, a human resources company said in Johannesburg.

“The current artisan population is ageing, with an average age of 50-55 years so we should not merely be training for our current needs, but also to replace the ageing workforce,” said CEO of Landelahni Business Leaders, Sandra Burmeister, at the release of the company’s 2008 mining survey.

Government’s Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition said at least 12 500 artisans should be produced each year for the next four years to meet demand.

‘Artisan training requires a significantly increased investment by government and private sector,’ CEO of Landelahni Business Leaders says.

However, SA continues to suffer a severe shortage of qualified, competent and experienced artisans.

The number of artisans tested across all trades increased from 15 000 in 1970 to 26 500 in 1986, while those who passed trade tests increased from 6 000 to 13 500, the survey found.

From 1986, however, the numbers tested dropped to 9 041 and

those who passed dropped to a low of 3 222, or 42%.

The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) target registration for artisans in 2008 was 1 766, against 1 034 actual registrations.

Assuming an average pass rate of 42%, some 434 artisans were trained each year under MQA auspices with specific qualifications in mining.

The survey also concluded that black representation in the mining industry at top management level more than doubled from 12,5% in 2001 to 30,6% in 2006, ahead of the all industry average of 22,2%.

The single biggest shift occurred at non-executive director level – from 0,05% to 37%. – Sapa.

