

Alstom Ubunye opens welding school for unemployed youth

- **Welding school is accredited by the South African Institute of Welding**
- **Virtual reality welding is part of the training modules**

04 April 2023 – A class of unemployed youth from local communities in the greater Nigel area (Ekurhuleni) will start free accredited and certified professional welding training today, at the newly opened Alstom Ubunye Welding School.

The welding school which is accredited by the South African Institute of Welding (SAIW), was officially opened by the Premier of Gauteng Province, Mr Panyaza Lesufi on Friday, 31 March 2023. Based at Alstom Ubunye in Nigel, the school will provide a wide range of theory and practical modules, which are developed under the guidance of industry experts and presented by qualified educators.

In line with the digital and technology evolution, a state-of-the-art Virtual Reality training program will be part of the training modules. Apart from welding practice, initiating a learner with virtual reality welding first, allows the learner to gain a comprehension of welding terms and the familiarity of the look and feel of welding before entering the physical welding lab.

Speaking at the school's inauguration, Gauteng Premier Lesufi said; "I support skills development and today I'm really pleased to officially open the Alstom Ubunye welding school which will equip youth with key skills. There's a huge potential to link up with neighbouring schools of specialisation and develop future rail industry employees from high school level. To re-industrialise Gauteng, we need industrial skills and welding is key in that skills revolution."

The welding course duration is three (3 years) on a learner contract. Upon completion, learners receive a QCTO (Quality Council for Trades and Occupations) Registered Qualification. The Occupational Certificate for the Welder is NQF level 4.

"Welding is a core skill in our production process of core mechanical components for trains and locomotives. Considering our growing operations and the need for rail specific skills, we decided to invest in a welding school. This school will create a talent database of trained welders who will benefit from employment opportunities that arise in our operations as well as other companies running similar operations which require professional welding skills and expertise," said Logan Naicker, Alstom Ubunye CEO.

Alstom Ubunye manufactures electrical and mechanical components which include end-under-frames, bogies, and bogie frames. The electrical components include electrical boxes such as the traction converter, static converter as well as the high voltage boxes. The site also makes looming products for the trains and provides service and maintenance solutions for locomotives and trains.

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