

# SA Rugby Welcomes First Woman Member of the Executive Council

SA Rugby has welcomed the appointment of Ilhaam Groenewald, its first female Executive Council member, along with the returning Monde Tabata as

independent members of the Exco.

Mrs Groenewald and Mr Tabata were elected last week and will attend their

first meeting of the newly constituted Exco in Cape Town next week.

Mrs Groenewald succeeds Mr Mputumi Damani as one of two independent members of the 12-person Executive Council. Mr Damani was warmly thanked for his contribution since being elected in 2011.

“My passion is sport management and development so when I was asked if I was happy to have my name put forward, I had no hesitation,” said Mrs Groenewald. “You cannot work in sports administration in the Western Cape and not know about rugby so I have very good insight into the work that SA Rugby does. I have also received very positive support from Stellenbosch University management.”

Mrs Groenewald and Mr Tabata bring a wealth of sporting and commercial expertise to the Executive Council.

Mr Tabata is a graduate of Rhodes University and holds an honorary degree from Australia’s Monash University. He is a former managing director of Megapro – the commercial agents of SA Rugby – and served for 16 years on the board of Directors of Permont Global Group and was chair of the various Trusts linked to the group. He also owns granite quarrying busi-

nesses in the Eastern Cape. He is currently acting on behalf of SA Rugby as the administrator of the Eastern Province Rugby Union, having discharged a similar role at Border Rugby Union.

Mrs Groenewald was the first woman to be appointed to hold a position once occupied by legendary former Springbok player, captain, coach and Union president, Dr Danie Craven, as head of sport at Stellenbosch University in a role now called: Chief Director: Maties Sport, to which she was appointed in August 2014.

She joined Stellenbosch from the University of the Western Cape where she held the position of Director of Sport Administration for more than a decade. She has a degree in business administration and a masters degree in sports management.

Mrs Groenewald also has broad sports experience and among numerous positions held was the first woman to be chairperson of University Sports South Africa and is the current First Vice-President of University Sport South Africa; she has been head of delegation for SA teams at multisport events; served on committees of SAS-COC; is chairperson of the Heads of Sport forum; a member of Varsity Sports, a board member and a trustee

of Varsity Cup rugby.

Mrs Groenewald said: “I know SA Rugby has a very good story to tell and they are working hard to change the shape of the sport – as well as converting misplaced perceptions about it. I am excited to be joining them to offer experience and support in that process.

“I believe I have a very good understanding of sport at the grassroots level in our country and the challenges that are faced by our young athletes. I hope that type of background – as well as my experience in sports management – will offer some value to the Executive Council.”

Mrs Groenewald is the first woman to become a member of the SA Rugby Executive Council. The body – which reports of the General Council (made up of representatives of the 14 provincial unions) – was constituted at the beginning of 2011 as a consequence of the merging of the old amateur and professional arms of SA Rugby.

Under that structure the now-defunct President’s Council did feature two female members in Mandisa Kalako-Williams and Viwe Qegu. They served as co-opted members in 2006 and 2007.



*Ilhaam Groenewald\_SA Rugby Exco Member*