

## ARCHITECTURE

# Designs on Durban

The days of holding conferences entirely behind closed doors are over. That's the belief of the world's leading architects who will be descending on Durban in August this year



**T**he prestigious 25th International Union of Architects World Conference (UIA) – which will attract more than 5 000 delegates to our city later this year – will feature activations, initiatives and exhibitions that will be open to the public around the city.

The high-powered gathering will be a launch pad to highlight urban rejuvenation projects – and some will leave a legacy that Durbanites will benefit from long after the delegates have returned home.

The conference, staged triennially, will be held at the Durban International Convention Centre from August 3 to 7, and the economic spin is expected to be a whopping R120-million. It is the first time the conference has been held in sub-Saharan Africa.

City architect Jonathan Edkins, Head of the City Architects Department, once predicted that it would be an “architectural invasion on an unprecedented scale.”

Durban boasts some of the most creative and insightful architects and architectural successes in the country

The theme of the conference, which the South African Institute of Architects successfully bid for in 2005, is Architecture Otherwhere, “exploring other thinking ... regions ... practices ... disciplines ... communities ... and other ways of teaching, thinking about and practicing architecture,” organisers explained.

With the majority of people now living in man-made/built environments, delegates will explore how to make them more humane habitats and more socially and economically suitable.

“Cities have become the sites of our evolution and the focus needs to be on prioritising people and the quality of their lives in the city context,” said Nina Saunders from the eThekweni Municipality’s City Architects Strategic Architectural Projects department.

Saunders, a member of the Durban organising committee who was involved in co-ordinating the successful bid to make Durban the host city, said that the congress will be an