



**MINISTRY
HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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MEDIA STATEMENT

**MINISTER BUTI MANAMELA MOURNS THE PASSING OF EDUCATION PIONEER
JENNIFER GLENNIE**

TO ALL MEDIA

DATE: 4 DECEMBER 2025

For Immediate Release

The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Buti Manamela, has learned with sadness of the passing of Ms Jennifer Glennie, the founding Executive Director of the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE).

Minister Manamela extends his deepest and most heartfelt condolences to Ms Glennie's family, friends, colleagues, and the entire higher education sector. Her passing represents a significant loss to our country.

Ms Glennie was a visionary leader whose lifelong passion for education, particularly in distance learning, has left an indelible mark. From the dark days of apartheid, her work was steadfastly committed to expanding access, equity, and justice in education.

She was a pioneering force in developing contextually appropriate, activity-based learning materials and innovative student support mechanisms that transformed the landscape of South Africa's distance education.

Her exceptional contributions were far reaching. She played a key role in shaping the national higher education architecture, including leadership in establishing the Council on Higher Education, a two-decade contribution to the Council of the University of South Africa (Unisa), and representing South Africa on the Commonwealth of Learning. She was also instrumental in the founding of Sol Plaatje University.

A recognised advocate for harnessing technology for the public good, Ms Glennie was at the forefront of promoting Open Educational Resources (OER), to create meaningful educational opportunities for poor and marginalised groups.

“The higher education sector would not be what it is today without the dedication of pioneers like Jennifer Glennie. Her deep love for the people of this country and her abhorrence for injustice touched and improved many lives. Her role in expanding access to higher education for Africans and her legacy will continue to inspire us,” said Minister Manamela.

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