
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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It is with pleasure that I submit my report for the period August 1999 to August 2000: in doing so I am mindful that much of this report was made possible by the participation and support of Members of the Board of Representatives, the Executive Officer and her staff at the offices of the South African Institute of Architects. I am therefore indebted to them for their contribution.

The period under review was heralded by the tragic death of Vivienne Japha: the Board and I are acutely aware that she did not have the opportunity to submit a report on the substantial progress she had made in growing the Institute nationally and internationally. Her efforts and influence have been recognised globally and we recognise that much of our current successes have been possible as a result of her efforts.

I, on behalf of the Board, wish to place on record our admiration and appreciation for the great work she did for the Institute, the profession and the many students of architecture who will continue to reap the benefits of her efforts.

The last six months of the 20th Century was a momentous time for all: globally the Y2K threat caused much concern whilst at the same time, the dawn of a new century was perceived as a time for renewal and a new vision of a better future.

The Board of Representatives shared the call for a new Vision and took active steps to review its role within the national and international arena, and having regard for the emerging global transformation already underway, set about to prepare a synoptic document clearly defining its position.

We are pleased to announce that the National Board has adopted a new **Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan, Code of Ethics, and Sponsorship Policy**. All of these documents act holistically to achieve **Excellence in the Practice of Architecture** and to reaffirm the unique role of the architect in our society.

The Vision and Mission as well as the Code of Ethics has been the subject of much consultation with the Regional Institutes through both the input and participation of the Regional Presidents as Board members and through members meetings addressed by myself throughout the country.

The forthcoming Convention will see the public launch of this initiative and will set the objectives for the ensuing two years. The purpose of this initiative is twofold: firstly, we must ensure that the Institute remains relevant to the time, and secondly, that we are able to extend the range of services to our members in an affordable way.

The normal workings of the Institute have of course occurred in conjunction with this initiative, and the extent of this interaction is listed below for your information.

1 LEGISLATION

The period under review has seen a number of Bills published for public comment. The legislative environment governing our society and our profession is changing dramatically: the Institute engaged fully throughout the drafting of the Bills and submitted its comments through the appropriate channels whenever necessary. We understand that it is the intention of government to pass this legislation during the current session of Parliament.

1.1 The Architectural Professions Bill

The SAIA has put much effort into participating with the government on the drafting of this new legislation. Following upon the consideration of a number of drafts, the final draft went before the Portfolio Committee on the 06th and 07th of July 2000 with an opportunity for all the organisations participating in the Built Environment to make verbal presentations to the Committee. Regrettably, much of the good intention behind the government's public commitment to participatory government is undone by actions such as experienced by myself: I had an appointment to address the Portfolio Committee at 14h00, but when I arrived at 13h00 I was advised that the Committee had adjourned and would not be reconvening on this matter. Needless to say, it is this kind of unilateral action that undermines the confidence of many in the real commitment of government to be transparent and accountable.

1.2 The Council for the Built Environment

This legislation lies at the heart of the various pieces of legislation governing the practice of professionals. We submitted comments on this Bill and were due to make an oral presentation to the above-mentioned Committee as well. The Institute generally welcomes the new legislation governing the profession as well as the formation of the Council for the Built Environment: we are indeed pleased that the built environment is receiving the attention this Bill provides. Our comments have therefore tended to focus on the practicalities and have made suggestions, which, in our opinion, could improve the performance and effectiveness of the Bills.

1.3 The Construction Industry Development Board

The SAIA was a member of the Forum established to work with Public Works on the drafting of this critically important piece of legislation. Although the consultative process has been tough, we believe that a new understanding has emerged between the Industry and Government. The SAIA will support any attempts by government to secure the long-term sustainability of the industry and to improve its performance.

1.4 Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000, Draft Regulations

The SAIA has submitted its comments to the Department of State Expenditure with regard to the drafting of the Regulations supporting the Act. We welcomed the intended broadening of the definition of Historically Disadvantaged Persons and the cut-off date set for classification as an HDI. We also stressed the need for government to co-ordinate its definitions within its departments, as there are departments that do not share the same definition or intention. We are also concerned that the requirement for goals to be measurable and quantifiable, are too ambiguous.

1.5 Public Works Professional Appointment Roster

Ron Remmers, acting on behalf of the SAIA, has been very involved over the past year as an ADP member of the Monitoring Committee established by the DPW to monitor and evaluate the appointment process. Recognition must be given to the Department for establishing such an independent committee as it is surely the first time that the process of appointing consultants has been so open to public scrutiny. A number of problem areas became apparent during this period and these have been brought to the attention of the department. Notwithstanding this commendable action, a number of problems remain and the SAIA has recorded its opposition to them. The major concern relates to the preference been given to previously disadvantaged individuals: I must make it quite clear that the SAIA is supportive of the need to promote the empowerment of PDI's. However, it is our view that it is not empowerment that is taking place but enrichment. We understand that SABTACO have indicated that the one-third rotation and the opportunity for PDI's to nominate two additional office locations even though they do not operate an office in those locations, is to be extended until such time as the profile of the professions matches that of the demographics of the country. The National Board will have to give very serious consideration to this aberration of principles and may have to take the matter to the Constitutional Court for determination. The recent statements from the State President, read together with other positions published in legislation like the Regulations relating to The Preferential Procurement Policy Act, would seem to indicate that the DPW are fundamentally out of alignment with other government departments.

2 NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

2.1 National Affiliations	<p>The SAIA is called upon to participate in a number of initiatives with organisations in the building industry. As the Executive Officer has identified all of these involvements in her report, I do not intend to report on it here: nonetheless I must stress that much – if not all – our participation is made possible by members of the Institute sacrificing their time to sit in lengthy meetings, often.</p>
2.2 Requests and Queries	<p>The SAIA receives numerous requests from within the country and from international organisations for information or for inputs into a wide range of initiatives. These range for assistance in preparing competition rules to interviewing students on behalf of international Universities.</p>
2.3 Awards	<p>We are pleased to announce that there are now more opportunities for members to receive recognition of their work than before. The AAAMSA Awards have been rejuvenated and the panel this year consisted of Heather Dodd, Jan Nauta and myself. Of particular note was the invitation by AAAMSA to Ken Yeang to deliver two lectures in Johannesburg as part of the Awards Ceremony. The exposure of the thinking of such notable and important architects as Ken is of immeasurable value to our profession. Both Dulux and Plascon held their Colour Awards, and in the case of the former, went to extraordinary lengths to invite architects to make submissions and to secure the participation of some of the leading lights in our profession to serve as adjudicators. The Corobrik Student of the Year Award was announced earlier this year after elimination rounds were held at the various Universities. Debbie Preller, Kahn and myself constituted the adjudication panel. The SAIA Award of Merit was held last year and the PFG Award for Excellence recipient/s will be announced at this years SAIA Convention in Bloemfontein together with the winner of this years SAIA Rome Scholarship. We commend these companies for their commitment to excellence and to the promotion of the work of our profession. I also wish to thank Willie Meyer, Lucien le Grange, Fred Eboka, Jakob Jordaan and Suzanne du Toit, Paul Kotze, Ivor Prinsloo, Melinda Silverman and Robert de Jager respectively for assisting us in the adjudication of these two competitions.</p>
2.4 Practice Matters	<p>In a changing legislative environment, it is incumbent on the Institute to keep its members informed of the consequences, if any, of the legislation on the way in which they practice. I draw your attention to the revised Practice Manual which was developed and published for us by this Committee. This Publication and the availability of new standard documents highlight the significant work done to ensure the interests of members are addressed.</p>
2.5 National Heritage Committee	<p>We were able to reconvene this committee for the first time in many years and are pleased to announce that the next meeting will take place in April 2001 in Cape Town, hopefully on Robben Island. The new heritage legislation will impact upon the work of our members and advisory notes in this regard will be produced to assist our members in meeting the requirements of the Act. At the same time it is my desire that the Institute prepare policy documents that will unequivocally state our position on a number of critical issues, of which heritage is but one. The Committee has been charged therefore to prepare such a Policy for adoption by the National Board.</p>
2.6 National Housing Committee	<p>The SAIA was invited by the Minister to discuss the formulation of a new housing delivery model by her Department. Lucien le Grange and myself met with the Minister and I have given her the assurance that the Institute will co-operate fully with her department in this regard. We are thankful that she has agreed to be the Keynote Speaker at the ADP Workshop that will be held in Bloemfontein as part of the Mokete. It is our intention to establish a Housing Committee to deal with this matter on an ongoing basis.</p>
2.7 Competitions	<p>The holding of competitions, and in particular, the rules governing such competitions, is one of the most contentious issues affecting our members. For some inexplicable reason, each organisation wishing to hold a competition, prepares their own set of rules and guidelines that are often so onerous and unreasonable as to make the competition a farce. Two recent examples are the Parliament in the North West province and the Cape Town Convention Centre. In each case members have expressed their very deep concern about the manner in which these competitions have been run. The problem is not a local one only: the subject has attracted much interest within the UIA who have not only issued guidelines on the matter, but are actively advising members around the world about competitions that do not meet their criteria. The SAIA has had a set of guidelines for competitions for many years but will now print a Guidelines Booklet for distribution through the various levels of government as well as organised commercial organisations such as PROCSA and SAPOA.</p>

2.8 Publications

We have also placed a reference to these guidelines on our website as it recently came to our attention that at least one organisation had consulted the SAIA Website for guidance on this matter.

The Official Journal of the Institute remains **SA Architect**: it is also the only accredited architectural magazine in South Africa. We know that the Editorial Board is still endeavouring to establish the benchmark standard for the magazine and your inputs into this will be welcomed. The Institute has an agreement with Picasso to produce **The Digest** each year – this is really a summary of, in the Board's opinion, some of the finer buildings produced in any one year. We were able to produce a **Millennium Edition** this year that follows a time-line format and maps the development of architecture in South Africa from pre-history to the current time.

It was intended to do two things: firstly, to make a start on the preparation of a more complete historical review, and secondly, stimulate a debate about the future having regard for all the influences of the past. We have been encouraged by the very positive response that has been forwarded to us from all around South Africa. Furthermore, we are currently in discussion with a publisher about the production of a more complete textbook.

3 INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Our re-emergence as a player within the international world has opened up new opportunities – and demands – on the Institute. Participation in international architectural organisations requires the payment of membership fees, and whilst the percentages are relatively modest, our currency values places us at a great disadvantage. We are thankful that our international partners recognise this and do much to alleviate this difficulty. We are also indebted to SACA for making funding available where membership fees benefit the teaching of architecture, as is the case with the Commonwealth Association of Architects who is responsible for the validation of the courses at our Universities and Technikons. It is also notable that the Institute and members of the profession are respected highly internationally: notwithstanding the long years of isolation, much of what is happening in our legislative environment exceeds the standards and requirements of many of our international partners.

3.1 The Commonwealth Association of Architects

I was privileged to attend the CAA's General Assembly meeting held in Wellington New Zealand in April of this year. The new "Red Book" – Guidelines for Validation – was released on this occasion and it sets out quite unequivocally the requirements for validation of schools by the CAA who will, in future, be solely responsible for the validation of courses.

I was also elected as Chairperson of Practice for the CAA and look forward to developing programmes that can strengthen the bonds between architects within the Commonwealth. I have prepared a draft Practice Policy Document and it is currently under consideration by the various members of the Council. I am also pleased to report that the CAA has again voted a substantial sum of money toward the promotion and teaching of architecture within South Africa: we wish to thank them for this most welcome contribution.

3.2 The Union of International Architects

We are participating in a number of initiatives with the UIA: these include a listing of significant modern buildings in South Africa, providing inputs into the role of international competitions; a review of the state of the profession; and the completion of questionnaires on practice and professional matters impacting on architects in South Africa.

3.3 The African Union of Architects

The SAIA has resolved, in recognition of our role in Africa, to participate in international affairs primarily through the AUA. Brian Johnson is our representative on this body and co-ordinates our involvement at this level.

THE WAY FORWARD

The SAIA has not only survived the transition from compulsory to voluntary membership, but has emerged as a much stronger and more focussed organisation. There is of course much still to be done: our services need to be expanded to empower and enable our members to respond quickly and effectively to developments within the profession and the building industry.

It is my view that the attainment and promotion of excellence and competence will distinguish our members from others practising in our field: the SAIA is committed to this objective and will continue building upon the solid foundation that has been laid.