

## ■ PRESIDENTS REPORT Jan Willem Ras Pr Arch MIArch

### EXORDIUM

I was inaugurated as President of SAIA on Friday, 30 August 2002. It is a requirement of the SAIA Constitution (adopted in 1996), that the President should present a report at the conclusion of the term of office to ensure transparency and accountability to the members. On Friday 27 August 2004 a new President will be inaugurated and my term of office will be over . . . . and my report due.

It would have been much easier for me to send photocopies of my diaries to members instead of compiling a report on all the activities and initiatives that took place over the last two years. I considered this and thought of ways to make the report more visual; perhaps I could add photo's of the different piles of paper in my private practice - each pile representing a different request, initiative or meeting - to illustrate the number of hours spent by a (limited) number of people to make architecture alive with possibility; or perhaps I could make a collage of the invitations I received to attend functions on behalf of the members.

And then I came to the conclusion that apart from it being a duty, it has also been a huge privilege to report on the eventful 727 days between August 2002 and August 2004, and I do it gladly.

The report should not be considered in isolation without reference to the previous session. During the 2001/2002 term, under the leadership of my predecessor Mr Llewellyn van Wyk, the Board adopted a Vision Statement that saw the Institute as the *Centre of Architectural Excellence in South Africa*, and the marketing logo, *Architecture for All*, was approved. Furthermore, several policies were developed and adopted by the Board to set the basis for future initiatives.

I was challenged by this idea of excellence and the implementation of the different policies, but realised soon – after a thorough study of the 1996 SAIA Constitution – that the structure for interaction between regional and national level had to be extended and broadened. The authors of the Constitution had crystallised the SAIA's main functions into seven focussed objectives; each requiring expertise and interest in a different aspect of the profession which, together, complete the overall picture.

It was just not possible for SAIA to become a centre for excellence with the financial and human resources available to us. What was required was that the regions had to assume ownership of the activities and participate actively. The reconstitution of the renamed Institute in 1996 had specifically this in mind : participation from the bottom upwards.

The Institute's Practice Committee had provided support and advice on practice-related matters for a period of over thirty years. The procedures contained in the practice manual have become the 'best practice standards' for the profession, and presented an excellent example of how experts could set the tone of excellence for the Institute.

I realised that the only way to address all seven objectives of the constitution equally was to create a similar structure for each objective and to involve the experts through the regions more effectively in the activities. This could only be achieved through the re-alignment of the committee and meeting structure of SAIA.

After two years and many hours of discussion, the activities of SAIA are now grouped into seven committees; each in support of one of the objectives. I will report accordingly, using a typical SAIA Management Committee Agenda as structure.



## 1. THE BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES

SAIA members are the 'Institute'. The role of the regionally appointed representatives that serve on the Board should never be underestimated, because they represent each and every member in a particular region. One of the initial concerns during my term in office was that the members of the Board (apart from those serving on the Management Committee) did not have adequate opportunity to contribute to Institute activities. As a group of individuals, each bringing his or her own passion and expertise, the Board members of SAIA could add considerably to the Institute's ability to address our objectives more effectively.

After the realignment, every Board Member can now make a meaningful contribution. Participation is structured in accordance with the individual's interests and the different committees can only benefit from this. My sincere thanks go to each and every individual member of the Board for their support over the past two years, and for their efforts with the implementation of the new structure.

## 2. THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The environment in which we practice architecture is changing rapidly, with the establishment of more councils, the drafting of more charters, the impact of more legislation, more of everything, except more time. Deadlines are becoming shorter and shorter as e-mail and electronic communication change the rules of interaction.

Thank you Trish Emmett (Vice-President), Llewellyn van Wyk and Hassan Asmal, the elected members of the Management Committee (ManCom). You helped steer the Institute, you regularly advised on the most appropriate action to take and you commented on numerous draft submissions required at short notice. Your participation in the Institute's interaction with the changing world around us was tremendously valuable over the last two years.

ManCom had been mandated to manage interim urgent activities. In future the duties of each ManCom member will also include the co-ordination of the activities of several related committees to avoid duplication of our efforts.

## 3. EXECUTIVE MATTERS

### 3.1 Ministerial interaction

I had hoped to increase the profession's profile through direct contact with several Ministers of central government, and to follow that up with closer working relationships with the relevant departments. This proved to be a frustrating exercise, as it was difficult to finalise the initial appointments. Apart from the Department of Public Works, interaction with the following Ministries are also of significance to the profession and we should continue our efforts in this regard with the national departments of:

- Labour (skills development, et cetera)
- Education (schools, et cetera)
- Health and Welfare (clinics, hospitals, et cetera)
- Sport (2010 soccer, et cetera)
- Art, Culture, Science and Technology (heritage, art, development)
- Trade and Industry (export of professional services)
- Housing (community housing, et cetera)
- Tourism and Environment (leisure facilities, sustainability)

### 3.2 National interaction

In a further effort to highlight the role of the profession to the broader building public, I focussed on close interaction with other organisations in the building industry. Whenever possible I participated in the activities organised by them.

This included the annual conferences of SAPOA (South African Property Owners Association) and BIFSA (Building Industry Federation of South African), the Awards functions of SAISC (Southern African Institute of Steel Construction), SAACE (South African Association of Consulting Engineers), NHBRC (National Home Builders Registration Council), CCI (Concrete and Cement Institute) and numerous others. We continue to be party to the adjudication of many of the awards conferred in the industry, and I thank several SAIA members who also participated on behalf of the Institute.

SAIA participates in the Built Environment Professions (BEP) Grouping of Voluntary Associations, an informal forum where the organisations representing architects, engineers, quantity surveyors and other disciplines consult on matters of mutual concern.



We are involved in the preparation for the Construction Summit, facilitated by Nedlac and have committed ourselves to the parallel drafting processes for the development of Transformation Charters for the Construction and Property industries respectively. The scorecards to be developed for the Transformation Charters will have an enormous influence on the way we do business in future. These activities will be presented in more detail during the Biennial Convention in Bloemfontein.

The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) presented its Status Report earlier this year at a gala function hosted by the Minister of Public Works. There was a perception that the quality of professional services was deteriorating, and the matter was under further consideration. The SAIA will have to address this if the perception was found to be true.

### 3.3 International affiliations

- *Africa Union of Architects (AUA)*

After a decision of the Board, I attended a meeting for presidents of institutes in Africa which took place in Khartoum, Sudan. This was a unique experience and I came away from the meeting convinced of the following :

Firstly: we – all professional architects in South Africa - are privileged to practice and operate under conditions that we so easily complain about.

Secondly: we – the SAIA – can really play a significant roll in strengthening the profession in Africa by sharing knowledge and expertise with our colleagues throughout the continent.

The SAIA will host the next AUA Council Meeting in September. The meeting has been incorporated in the Sustainable Building Africa '04 Conference programme which takes place at Spier near Stellenbosch. The new President acting as host on behalf of the SAIA will hopefully build even closer relationships.

- *Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA)*

The SAIA was requested to host the CAA General Assembly and Conference in South Africa during August 2003. 130 Delegates from many Commonwealth countries attended the event in Bloemfontein. Again it was an ideal opportunity to share knowledge and ideas from across the world, which is crucial for growth in the profession.

I also extend sincere congratulations to the SAIA Past-President, Mr Llewellyn van Wyk who was elected President of the CAA for the next three years. I believe his influence in the affairs of the CAA will be considerable.

- *International Union of Architects (UIA)*

We continue our membership of the UIA where, in accordance with a decision taken in Berlin in 2002, the annual subscriptions have been reduced significantly. I had the privilege to attend the first UIA Conference on Education in Alexandria, Egypt during February 2003. Again I was proud to be part of the South African Education system.

The Institute participated in the 'Celebration of Cities', a global competition, and submitted 1 student and 5 professional entries. I am proud to report that the entry of Barbara Southworth and her Cape Town team received an *ex-aequo* prize and the entry of Piet Louw, Dave Dewar and Anton Roux an honourable mention. We sincerely congratulate our members with these achievements, but I believe everyone who participated in the competition was awarded in the process. It was reported that the group who worked on the project in Durban met often and were invigorated and inspired through the regular interaction with colleagues.

The SAIA is bidding to host the 2011 UIA International Conference in South Africa. Our best wishes to Ms Trish Emmett and her team for the preparation of the bid.

### 3.4 Professional interaction

The SAIA is privileged that one of our members, Mr Malcolm Campbell is the President of both the Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) and the Council for the Built Environment (CBE). Huge challenges face the CBE, in its capacity as umbrella body, and the six professional councils that are currently drafting new regulations for the respective professions. Several SAIA members participated in the committees set up by SACAP, and I extend my appreciation to them for their time and effort.

SACAP published the *Guideline Fees* in 2001 and the tables have been updated annually, the *Code of Professional Conduct* was published earlier this year, and the *Identification of Work Regulations* was published for public comment.

The "traditional" world of architecture in South Africa is now wide open and draughtspersons, technologists and senior technologist are also recognised. We welcome this and the SAIA supports closer relationships between ourselves and the SA Institute of Architectural Technology and the two recognised organisations for Draughtspersons.



### 3.5 Finance and administration

The report by the Executive Officer of the SAIA, Mrs Su Linning, covers these aspects of the SAIA. I can only testify to the dedication of the E/O and her staff. Without the five ladies in Johannesburg there will be no President, no Institute : absolutely nothing. Thank you for all your hours behind the pc's, in the meetings, thank you for standing in, often at short notice, when it is impossible for a member to attend a meeting.

## 4. NATIONAL COMMITTEES

### 4.1 Practice Committee

This committee is a well-established group of "wise men". Without their expertise and dedication to practice matters the profession would have been much poorer. As the demands on their input have increased considerably over the last few years, I believe the realigned structure will benefit the work of this committee specifically and they will be able to focus on practice-related matters only.

Messrs Eyvind Finsen and Eugene Barnard presented a most successful CPD course on the management of a project during 2001, 2002 and 2003. Because of popular demand, the course was repeated in several regions, and the overall attendance during this time totalled nearly 500 people. In addition over 400 people attended the recent half-day course on Professional Fees by Mr Eyvind Finsen.

### 4.2 Benefits Committee

This committee was established to coordinate benefits. The two most significant benefits that result from membership of SAIA are APIGIS, the Professional Indemnity Group Insurance Scheme, and Bepmeds.

The APIGIS scheme is owned by the members of SAIA and managed on their behalf by a Board of Trustees chaired by Mr Ronald Remmers. Our representative on the Bepmeds Trust is a past member of the Management Committee, Mr Niël Crafford. I thank these members and the other trustees for their input on behalf of the SAIA.

#### APIGIS : Report by Ronald Remmers (Managing Trustee)

Amidst changes and realignments in the insurance industry the APIGIS scheme has remained intact and continues to offer PI cover which is affordable to both small and large practices. Marsh, who has themselves undergone changes in their structure and personnel, manages the scheme on our behalf.

A Board of Trustees representative of all the regions meets once a year to oversee the scheme. The management committee deals with day-to-day matters and interacts with the scheme managers regularly. Finances are conservatively managed and overheads are kept to a minimum by making use of SAIA and the PIA's infrastructure and administrative capacity.

There are at present 373 architect practices under the APIGIS scheme which represents a steady growth in line with previous years. The APIGIS Trust's offer to contribute up to 50% of the excess payment of a claim has, as expected, not resulted in any claims or cash outflow. The offer still stands and the Trustees may consider raising the present contribution limit to R15 000. This and other measures are directed at the scheme progressively becoming more self-insuring.

APIGIS has established itself in the market and will hopefully continue to attract architects into becoming institute members. Contact details are available on the Institute's website.

#### Bepmeds : Report by Niël Crafford (Trustee: SAIA Representative)

Bepmeds (Built Environment Professional Association's Medical Scheme) was registered on 9 November 2002 as a restricted Medical Scheme, only available to members who are registered with relevant professional Institutes/Associations of Engineers, Architects and Quantity Surveys and their staff.

The scheme is financially sound, with cash resources of over R2,6m and over R1m net surplus. A R5m guarantee is also held by the Registrar of Medical Schemes. Membership growth has been slow but steady and the average age of principal members is below the industry norm and bodes well for the overall claims expected. Bepmeds is now in a position to provide members with a comprehensive loyalty programme, competing with the best in South Africa by other medical schemes. The programme, provided by Momentum is known as "Multiply" and offers members a variety of benefits.

The scheme is overseen by a Board of Trustees, chaired by quantity surveyor Des Linder, and representative of the professional bodies and member firms, serving in equal numbers on the Board. The second AGM was held on the 21st



July 2004 and well supported. The administrators, Sovereign Health, are the only such organisation presently accredited with the ISO 9001 and BS 7799 certification.

It is important to note that the scheme will function optimally with a minimum of 2,500 members. The Architects' have been slow in signing up, and this might be a good opportunity to remind SAIA member practices that Bepmeds is their scheme. As with APIGIS, the Scheme belongs to the members and is run by the members and will eventually be of great benefit to members. Already, due to our extremely good risk profile, increases in premiums are lower than the competitors. Once new legislation requires all Medical Schemes to accept HIV positive members (expected in the next few months), Bepmeds will be in an extremely enviable position with fewer than 0.2% of present members being infected.

Contact details are available on the Institute's website.

#### 4.3 Promotions Committee

The establishment of this committee has created a structure to focus on promoting the Institute and the profession to a broader public audience. The committee met for the first time in May, and aims to make SAIA more visible through participation in trade exhibitions, articles in popular magazines, et cetera.

Architectural competitions can play a valuable role in furthering the profession, and a formal accreditation process has been adopted by SAIA. Although one international and several national competitions took place under the auspices of the SAIA, the process and requirements are under constant review.

Several Regions exhibited the Awards of Merit entries in their areas last year, and the SAIA Merit Award projects will be exhibited in Bloemfontein during the convention.

#### 4.4 Education Committee

One of the unfortunate legacies of the structure that existed before 1996, is that the SAIA did not participate actively in the ongoing debate regarding education, and the relationship between the Institute and the tertiary institutions needs to be enhanced. I believe the establishment of this Committee will create closer ties, and I invite all teaching staff at universities and technikons to participate in the committee's work.

Ongoing development in any profession is now more critical than ever before and it will be the duty of this committee to address not only mid-career courses on practice-related problems, but also to address additional topics like heritage, habitat and sustainability.

Considerable funds are available through the skills levies paid by employers, and the committee will be required to create the necessary structures to access CETA (Construction Education Training Authority) funds.

#### 4.5 Communications Committee

The two official publications of the SAIA, namely the Journal (*Architecture South Africa*) and the Digest continue to grow in excellence and stature. Both publications serve an important dual role; i.e. to communicate and educate. My appreciation to the editors and editorial advisory boards for their dedication.

ManCom is currently investigating ways in which SAIA can publish residential work. I believe such an initiative will create a wider understanding of good residential design.

During the past two years much consideration was given to more effective ways in which SAIA can communicate with members. The SAIA website was restructured at the beginning of the year and revised a second time earlier this month. As part of the revamp we are also now able to send out news and notices to members directly. This will become extremely important over the next months as the Transformation Charter process unfolds, and we respectfully urge members to respond to the queries they receive in this regard.

#### 4.6 Heritage Committee

Along with practice, this was the only other committee that functioned actively in the previous SAIA structure. Due to limited funds, the committee was able to meet only once annually, but achieved much within these limitations. Practitioners who specialise in this field are passionate about the preservation of the architectural heritage of our country, and through their efforts many buildings that were doomed to be demolished were saved.

Heritage is however not only for a selected few. More and more architects are commissioned to do work in culturally sensitive areas. Are you equipped to tackle these challenges, reserved for professional architects only in the new draft regulations?



The committee will be challenged to develop appropriate CPD courses on heritage and thereby ensuring the role of professional architects as the custodians of in the built heritage environment.

#### 4.7 Habitat Committee

There was concern when the Minister of Housing announced that South Africa was importing a number of Cuban architects and engineers to assist the department with the delivery of housing. The fact is that the Cuban professionals had developed an award-winning model for participation by communities in creating their surroundings. The alleviation of poverty, and the provision of housing in an urban context, is a social problem and a global concern of immense proportion. The Cubans proved to us that Architects can play an important role, if they had the required expertise.

I believe the expertise exists amongst our members, and it will fall to the habitat committee to gather the information and to develop suitable courses and practice notes so that SAIA members will become part of the solution to meet the housing demands in a socially responsive way. In addition the committee will focus on our role in protecting the environment, our role in sustainable building and design, and in environments without barriers.

## CONCLUSION

After two years I now know that it is impossible to do everything you want to do, but I believe the realigned structure will allow more members to be part of the Institute's vision of excellence. We also have to find ways to bring architecture to ALL in South Africa. Perhaps, the SAIA must never stop dreaming of the future : a future with a dedicated manager for each committee to make all our dreams come true. Perhaps the only way to find more time, is to pay for it. Architecture is alive with possibilities.

## PERSONAL THANKS

Lastly, I must thank each and everyone, not only the members of SAIA, for their support over the last two years. Thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity that has enriched me and will fill my memories for years to come. These 727 days were a pleasure and a privilege I will never forget.

My best wishes to the new President, Management Committee and Board of Representatives.

