

DEAR DELEGATE, WELCOME TO THE 74TH IMESA CONFERENCE 2010

As 2010 draws to a close, in the next few weeks many will look back on the year that was with fond memories. With the FIFA 2010 World Cup over, South Africans are now enjoying the multitude of completed and upgraded infrastructure projects that is South Africa's legacy from the tournament.

The Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project is nearly complete, the King Shaka Airport is fully functional, the Gautrain is operational and recently celebrated carrying its one millionth passenger, and the IRT bus system in Cape Town is underway, as are a few freeway projects. The investment made by government in terms of infrastructure development in the last year will provide a platform for unprecedented economic growth.

In July this year, IMIESA attended a dinner for members of the construction industry hosted by President Jacob Zuma. At the event, he thanked all involved in the numerous projects completed leading up to the World Cup. More importantly, despite a gloomy 12-month forecast by economists, Zuma told those present that the demand for engineering expertise in the SADC region is at a critical level and that government has been approached by a number of African countries to see how South African companies could possibly assist in road, bridge and amenity services.

On the local front, legislation regarding the Municipal Systems Amendment Bill has been approved by cabinet. The bill serves to address the delivery of service infrastructure through the depoliticising of municipalities with the reinstatement of appropriately qualified and skilled people in key positions, rather than political appointments. Ultimately, this will see South Africa moving back to a more professionalised and politically independent civil service. The bill also lays a sturdy foundation for the establishment of concise and consistent systems and procedures for municipalities to adhere to, instead of the somewhat fragmented independent systems currently in place. This paradigm shift in municipal governance will, however, raise a few challenges. With the reinstatement of town and city engineers, as well as technically sound staff, capacity at a municipal level will need to be augmented substantially. One of the significant questions surrounding this is how, exactly, will the public sector make the move from the private sector attractive for those already employed in private industry in consulting and contracting capacities?

It is hoped that this 'professionalisation' of the municipal sector will also help assist the issues surrounding asset management and maintenance.

Looking ahead, in the wake of the mega-infrastructure boom of the last two years, it is envisaged that a large amount of work on smaller infrastructure projects – such as peri-urban and rural road upgrades, water reticulation, sanitation and housing – will drive the engineering sector for the next year or two. As regards the official magazine of the Institute of Municipal Engineering of Southern Africa, IMIESA has a new editor, Richard Jansen van Vuuren, who took over from the previous editor earlier this year. The magazine has continued to dominate its market through content that is targeted at engineers and municipal managers, as well as consulting and civil engineers. In the last week of September, we sent out the first IMIESA newsletter, which was warmly received. At present, the newsletter will be distributed monthly. Over the next few months we will be expanding the content and size, and looking to increase the frequency of distribution to the point where the digital-format newsletter is distributed on a weekly basis, providing up-to-date



Elizabeth Shorten, publisher

news. Another recent development is the digital version of the magazine published on the 3S Media website, making it accessible to an even wider audience. This year, we also celebrated another successful edition of Local Government Supplier. Both this publication and the IMIESA magazine have continued to thrive through 2009/2010, despite a tough economic climate. This is testament to 3S Media providing high-quality print and electronic information for business communities, enabling them to grow their markets through access to up-to-date developments and technologies, and to showcase their products and services. We would like to thank all of our clients and readers for the loyal and unwavering support, which has ultimately enabled us to enhance our service offering. ■

We wish IMESA and all delegates an informative and very successful conference.

Kind regards,
Elizabeth Shorten
Publisher
3S Media