Over the past year since being honoured with the Presidency of IMESA I was faced with an organisation that was maturing as well as having an established leadership team that was now in transition.

My main goal was therefore to ensure continuity as far as possible, to continue the growth in membership as well as to forge stronger strategic partnerships with national government departments.

Duncan Daries

IMESA PRESIDENT
IMESA’s primary reason for its existence is towards its membership. Here I refer to our vision and mission statement as well as the overview of IMESA:

VISION/MISSION

To promote excellence in the engineering profession for the benefit of municipalities and their communities.

OVERVIEW

The Institute of Municipal Engineering of Southern Africa (IMESA) promotes the interests of municipal engineers and their profession, and creates a platform for the exchange of ideas and viewpoints on all aspects of municipal engineering with the aim of expanding the knowledge and best practices in all Local Government municipalities.

Since 1961 IMESA has played a significant role in municipal engineering, sharing knowledge and acting as a catalyst in developing new initiatives. Municipalities are key role-players in identifying needs, prioritising funding and implementing integrated development planning for community-based programmes.

The Institute also advises Councils on municipal engineering matters and serves the broader community through representation on a number of National bodies, where it provides input from the municipal engineer’s perspective.”
It is therefore imperative that we ensure value added benefits to our membership to continuously improve their knowledge and professionalism and be a voice that represents them at all levels of government where their input is of such importance.

The municipal engineering profession has since the advent of the new democracy taken a knock in relation to its previous position of trust and influence in decision making. This was mainly fuelled by the perception that the profession was dominated by white males. The fact that the profession was deeply rooted in service to the community with a strong ethical code of conduct seemed to take a back seat to its lack of transformation.

IMESA therefore has to constantly work at re-establishing this once sought after profession to its rightful place within the municipal environment.

IMESA membership has continued to grow. The membership body is also reflecting a more diverse section of the population. This diversity in membership needs to be reflected through into the leadership of the Institute. Cognisance must however be taken that the institute is made of volunteers and as such members need to make themselves available for taking on roles at regional branch level, which would then translate through to Regional Council membership.

It has therefore been a particular milestone of the organisation that the current leadership reflects gender diversity as well.

I however appeal to SALGA to encourage municipalities to continue supporting their municipal engineering practitioners to participate in IMESA activities. We are aware that budgets for travelling have been curtailed but believe that priorities are not always applied properly.
The establishment of IMESA Head Office in Westville has changed over the last year in that King Singh has been appointed to take on the role of Office Manager which was previously undertaken by Jannie Pietersen in his voluntary capacity.

Adele Grabe is a newly appointed contract staff member dealing with our web page. IMESA will shortly reap the benefits as the latest technology and trends in web page design are implemented.

As a result of a dispute with our previous conference organiser we have arranged to run the Cape Town conference with internal Head Office staff component with the addition of another contracted staff member Melanie Matroos as conference assistant. This is an interim arrangement with a view to making it a permanent if proved to be a successful formula. I therefore wish Debbie Anderson (who has taken on additional responsibilities) and her team the very best in their endeavours to make this conference a success.

IMESA Pty is similarly affected by a changing of the guard. Nick Pretorius and Pieter Myburgh have been appointed as new Directors in place of Frank Stevens and Johan De Beer. Jannie Pietersen is still at the helm and has successfully been pursuing new initiatives and strengthening the relationships with COGTA and National Treasury as well as with the MISA.
As a volunteer organisation the Institute depends largely on the smooth running of its structures at its branches, EXCO and Council committees. To this end it requires enthusiastic volunteers to organise and provide leadership at the branch and committee level.

It is acknowledge that the majority of activities take place at branch level and we therefore thank the branch chairman, secretaries and members who support branch activities for their continued efforts in providing this very necessary service to our membership.

IMESA’s existence goes hand in hand with the success of its 9 branches.
I extend a great vote of thanks to our current EXCO for their hard work in providing input and direction on their various portfolios. These members have also been a great support to me in my first year of office.

The current EXCO members are:

DUNCAN DARIES  President
FRANK STEVENS  Deputy President
RANDEER KASSERCHUN  Vice President - Technical Divisions
JEANINE DU PREEZ  Vice President - Operations Portfolios

TECHNICAL DIRECTORS

BARRY MARTIN  Water, Sanitation and Environment
WERNER BRUHNS  Computer Application and Knowledge Base
KOBUS DU PLESSIS  Training and Skills Development
GERHARD FRITZ  Project and Business Management
NICK PRETORIUS  Building (Structure) and Town Planning
PIETER MYBURGH  Roads, Transportation and Stormwater
LEON NAUDE  Infrastructure Asset Management
MARK WESTERBERG  Job Creation

OPERATIONS DIRECTORS

FRANCIOS BOTMA  Constitution, By-Laws and Ethics
REGGIE WESSO  Membership and Branches
JOHAN BASSON  Strategic Liaisons
GAvin CLUNNIE  Marketing & Communication
GEOFF TOOLEY  CPD and Bursaries
BHAVNA SONI  Conferences
In addition to the EXCO members mentioned above, the rest of IMESA leadership is made up of the following Regional Council members:

MR WILLEM HOFMEYR  
MR BARRY DE KLERK  
MR ANTON NAUDE  
MR JOE BURATH  
MR BALAN GOVENDER  
MR JOGIE NAIDOO  
MR DAVE TURNER  
MR VISHAL KRISHANDUTT  
MR DAVE WILSON  
MR SIBUSISO MJWARA  
MR THABO HLABELA  
MR MOSES MALIBA  
MR BEN MOLLEMAN  
MR JOHANN MARX  
MR MARIUS VERMEULEN

MR NORMAN SWART  
MR CHRIS ETSEBETH  
MR B JONNSON  
MR JOHAN DE BEER  
MR EDDIE DELPORT  
MR SAM HERMAN  
MR DINGAAN MAHLANGU  
MR H NDLOVU  
MRS LINDSAY MOOIMAN  
MR OBED KGOSIEMANG  
MR CEDRIC MPHAGI  
MR REGGIE WESSO  
MR J F KOEGELENBERG  
MR D McQUIRK  
MR NELL  
MS EMMERENTIA STIPP
Council and EXCO held a joint policy planning meeting in April of this year. Internally the organisation was bogged down in decision making as a result of the lack of operational policies in place. Coming out of these sessions concerns were raised with respect to the following:

- The size of EXCO and council which has grown over the past couple of years as a result of the increased membership. This has a direct effect on focused discussion and decision making.

- Financial and HR policies need to be in place to facilitate smooth operations at Head Office.

- By-Laws need ongoing review to reflect the policy changes that need to be effected.

- Focus of meetings need to shift to strategic issues and less operational.

- Succession planning and ongoing attraction of a more diverse leadership.
Training Courses in asset management remains the focus. New asset management courses have been developed and others updated. The popularity of the asset management courses offered seems to go hand in hand with the quality of presenters that do this on behalf of IMESA. Amongst them are Dr Kevin Wall, Dr Tjaart Van der Walt, Prof. Johannes Haaroff, Graham Whitehead and Moses Maliba.

The IIMS Web –based data base is gaining a huge clientele especially in the Free State where the provincial COGTA Department has encouraged all municipalities to join the IMESA initiative. The Department has also seen the benefits in all asset management data housed on a central data-base with IMESA able to do reporting on these assets to suit the department’s requirements.

COGTA’s back to basics campaign has the full backing of IMESA and we have extended our hand to further partnerships with COGTA in initiatives around this campaign. You will recall that the Deputy Minister, Andries Nel, delivered a key note address on this issue at our last conference in Durban.

IMESA remains committed to fostering relationships with fellow voluntary institutes and bodies active in the built environment. To this end the Deputy President (Frank Stevens) and I have continued to have interactions and been invited to present IMESA views at gatherings or conferences.

To this end I was invited to CESA’s 2014 conference where I took part in a panel discussion regarding the training of young engineers and presented the view from a municipal engineering context.

The Deputy President is still active in the Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (MBI). He is also active in the development of training initiatives for engineering interns.

Our on-going outreach to National departments and bodies such as COGTA and SALGA, whether it is to influence or assist, is very much a focus of the Institute.
My first experience of interaction with the International Federation of Municipal Engineers (IFME) during the IPWEA (Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia) conference in New Zealand was a memorable one. The interaction of like-minded salt of the earth municipal engineering practitioners was refreshing and inspirational at the same time.

The IFME board meeting that I attended as a representative of IMESA, in Rotorua, New Zealand coincided with the IFME World Congress (which is held every 3 years) and the IPWEA conference. The theme around Sustainable Communities was of world-wide relevance and pulled through each of the 8 streams of presentations. I followed the asset management stream as the Australasians are renowned for their expertise and practices in this field.

Over 20 countries were in attendance at this conference with the strongest representivity from the Scandinavian block. This also reflects on the make-up of the IFME board.

I was very impressed with the sessions dedicated to the Young Engineers and the need to react to the changing expectations of this particular sector of our professional body.

Here I must also give credit to our Swedish counterparts who sponsored a group of young engineers to attend this international conference. I do not think that South Africa can follow this lead as yet. Our Rand is just too weak and members pay their own fees. Some of the Scandinavian countries member fees are paid by their municipalities.
Our annual conference continues to be a flagship event on the municipal engineering calendar. For this we need to thank the LOC’s who each and every year set the bar higher to make the event a memorable one.

Thanks also to our sponsors who have been loyal partners in our successful conferences in the past and continue to support IMESA even when the economy is not performing at its best.

IMESA conferences are wonderful knowledge sharing and networking opportunities. It continues to add value to members, elected government officials, organs of state, municipalities and national and provincial departments within the built environment.
CONCLUSION

IMESA has a great legacy to build on. This solid foundation has been cemented in the recent past with some extraordinary efforts by previous IMESA EXCO members and Presidents.

We however should not take anything for granted. It is therefore important that the organisation does some introspection with respect to its activities as well as put in place succession plans to ensure that the organisation is both sustainable and performs a relevant role in the future society that we are building in South Africa.

With this I thank all who have attended this evening and listened to this address.

Enjoy the conference as well as the evening events. Hopefully you will all experience the best of hospitality that the Cape can offer.

God bless and enjoy a great 2015 IMESA Conference in Cape Town.
2 Derby Place, Westville
P.O. Box 2190
Westville,
3630

Tel: 031 266 3263
Fax: 031 266 5094
Web: www.imesa.org.za
Email: info@imesa.org.za