

# 2019 President's Address

I am halfway through my presidency and it seems like the list of things I planned to do as IMESA President has become longer and longer. The top two items that I set out to achieve are the acceleration of IMESA training, with the introduction of free CPD-accredited training for municipalities, and the enhancement of engagement with other voluntary associations and government authorities.

With reference to training, I am happy to report that the first set of technical courses, free of charge for municipal employees, has been rolled out and well received. The 'Capacity Building in Urban and Regional Planning' course was presented in Kimberley, Mbombela and Newcastle. These were well attended and it has been good to see that technical staff from outlying municipalities, who are often not reached, were able to attend. A further four courses are scheduled to be rolled out over the coming year.

## Additional municipal engineering courses being prepared for roll-out this year include:

- **Small Coastal Stormwater Outlets:** After finding that the existing guidelines were inadequate, a project was initiated by Stellenbosch University and sponsored by IMESA to collate all available information and develop comprehensive design guidelines and construction recommendations specifically for small coastal stormwater outlets. These are now ready for dissemination.
- **Water Reclamation and Reuse:** Guidance regarding the reuse and reclamation of water for local authorities was, among other gaps, identified as a priority. IMESA has been called on to support the development of guidelines for local municipalities. The project is sponsored equally by the WRC and IMESA, and we look forward to being able to offer this training soon.
- **Water Conservation and Water Demand Management:** After

parts of South Africa recently experienced a state of drought, with water restrictions implemented in many municipalities and dams at drastically low levels, water conservation and water demand management by water services authorities has been identified as a critical activity going forward. IMESA has sponsored and supported the development of a pre-feasibility tool, which is being refined for roll-out and training in the coming year.

Further projects to develop guidelines and training materials for specific municipal requirements have been included in the budget for our 2019/20 financial year.

In terms of engagements with external bodies, meetings have been held with ECSA, SALGA, CESA, SAICE, WRC and other organisations as well as COGTA and National Treasury. These meetings will continue and IMESA expects positive outcomes from these interactions.

## EXCO and Council

I am blessed to be supported by a most forward thinking and dedicated management team, which is composed of 14 Executive Committee members and 28 Regional Council representatives, with a Secretariat/Head Office Manager.

IMESA is currently proposing to streamline EXCO and Council, and to establish work groups consisting of Council members to assist EXCO directors in dealing with real service delivery issues. We have been working on this proposal for the last two years and are really excited that this is going to be implemented, as we are confident that it will add value to our members.

Our Head Office team of dedicated staff members continues to support IMESA management and branches, adding tremendous value by ensuring that the organisation works like a well-oiled machine.

## Membership and Branches

IMESA's membership has grown steadily over the last year. It is encouraging to see that younger, vibrant members are joining. For members that have just joined us, we assure you that you will reap positive results and it is money well spent.

Our branches continue to provide excellent networking and learning opportunities that are ECSA CPD accredited. I encourage you all to attend branch meetings and contribute to branch activities. We welcome ideas on how we can assist members to conquer common engineering challenges and provide technical development opportunities.

### IMESA branches operate in the following regions:

- Northern Provinces
- Free State/Northern Cape
- KwaZulu-Natal
- Border
- Eastern Cape
- Southern Cape/Karoo
- Western Cape
- SADC countries.

## Finances and Investments

The 2018/19 annual financial statements show that the Institute's financial status continues to be stable, under the excellent management of our Treasurer and EXCO/Council. Growth on investments is enabling IMESA to commit to more projects for the development of municipal engineering guidelines and free training for municipal technical staff.

The collection of membership fees is a priority and overall operational expenditure is being carefully monitored. Issues with registering on the central supplier database have been resolved and all compliance requirements have been met.

## Professional Bodies

### • Civil Engineers South Africa (CESA)

A meeting was held earlier this year to find common ground and establish a memorandum of understanding. CESA and IMESA jointly present the Excellence Awards every second year and there are several other avenues for reciprocal support.

### • Water Research Commission (WRC)

IMESA has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Water Research Commission in a joint venture to develop a Water Reclamation and Reuse Guide for South African Municipal Engineers. This project has been initiated and we look forward to presenting the outcomes.

### • South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

Our communications with SALGA continue at both a national and provincial level. A partnership agreement that has been in place since 2011 is in the process of being updated and extended. We look forward to further interaction between our organisations for endorsement and mutual support on projects that will benefit all local municipalities.

### • Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA)

Meetings were held with various divisions of ECSA throughout the year. Topics discussed were around professional registration and the current legal issues. These meetings have been fruitful and IMESA will continue with this liaison.

### • South African Forum for Engineering (SAFE)

IMESA has been actively involved in these meetings and has been representing the interests of our members. This body has been set up to ensure that the engineering profession in South Africa is represented as a unified front in liaising with the private and public sector on matters affecting the profession.

### • International Federation of Municipal Engineers (IFME)

The IFME board meetings were held in conjunction with the AITF (Association of Territorial Engineers of France) conference held in Dunkerque, France, in June 2019. It was an honour for me to represent IMESA at this event, where I was able to experience and engage with delegates from around the globe including New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, China and Canada. It was interesting



IFME members and engineers on technical tour to Zeebrugge's port and shipyards in Belgium



to note that we as South African engineers face similar challenges to other countries. IFME is currently identifying the top challenges around the globe and IMESA has been active in contributing to this debate.

As the South African representatives, IMESA will host the second IFME board meeting of the year in October 2020, in conjunction with our 84th IMESA Conference, in Cape Town. We are looking forward to the opportunity to include international input on municipal issues and solutions.

## Obituary

Sadly, we said farewell to two IMESA stalwarts this year. Both were Past Presidents and Honorary Members who contributed a great deal to IMESA's achievements and strategic objectives. Our condolences have been extended to both families.

Mr Wesley Fourie passed away on 17 August 2018 in Randburg. He joined IMESA in 1964 and served IMESA well as Secretary/Treasurer for many years, before being elected IMESA President in 1986.

Dr Tjaart van der Walt passed away unexpectedly on 3 April 2019. He held a Doctorate in Civil Engineering Management. He joined IMESA in 1998 and was IMESA President from 2004 to 2006. More recently, he assisted with IMESA's strategic planning and performance management.

## In Summary

I would like to thank all our members and staff who have made such enormous contributions to the success of IMESA. IMESA has grown and will continue to grow in the years to come. I am confident that issues affecting our members in service delivery roll-out are being addressed and responded to by IMESA. This Institute is the platform for municipal engineers to share ideas on how to respond effectively to common challenges and it is heart warming to see that it is being used more and more each day.

Let's conquer as many as challenges as we can, together. Thank you.



IMESA training on Capacity Building in Urban and Regional Planning