



**RAILWAY & HARBOUR DIVISION**

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2011

### 1. Introduction

In general, the Division had a reasonably active year in which the usual two-monthly general committee meetings were held, and the usual events took place, with the addition of the inaugural R & H Division Annual Golf Day. The biennial two-day symposium was held in October 2010, and therefore was not held in 2011 – it will feature again in 2012.

The office bearers for 2011 were as follows:

Chair and Best Paper Award	Mr Dave Budler
Vice-Chair, CPD and Career Guidance, and SA Transport Conference Representative	Prof Hannes Gräbe
Secretary	Mrs Esmé Steffen
Treasurer	Mr Deepak Budhram
Council Representative and Fellowship	Mr Johan de Koker
Under 36 member and Events Chair	Mr Dewald Potgieter
Communication	Mrs Esmé Steffen
CPD and Career Guidance	Dr Francois Heyns
Website	Mr Francisco Elyseu
Membership Drive and Community Awareness	Mr Mervyn Panzera
Articles for SAICE Magazine	Mrs Tamara Mark

General committee meetings were held on 17 January (AGM and first general committee meeting), 28 March, 30 May, 18 July, 19 September and 21 November.

### 2. Portfolios

#### 2.1. Website

The website has been greatly improved, updated, and made functional in that it is used for members to register for courses and other events, and it

provides access to a host of documents, symposium and lecture papers and other information. Francisco has overseen its development with the assistance of a service provider, who had to transfer the domain to a new hosting company, and who is on a retainer to maintain the system in excellent working order.

## 2.2. Events

- The cocktail function, for members to network and be apprised of the new committee and the events for the year, was held on 19 May, on the evening of day one of our two-day short course. It was well attended.
- The Presidential Visit and Breakfast Lecture was held on 13 September. Mr Leon Zaayman gave an excellent lecture on the topic “Track Condition Monitoring and Analysis”. The SAICE President, Mr Seetella Makhetha, presented a synopsis of his Presidential Address. Thereafter, the President was taken on a trip on the Gautrain, accompanied by some committee members, from Midrand to Pretoria Station and back to Midrand. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience, by all accounts.
- The R & H Division inaugural golf day was held on 1 November. Dewald appointed a service provider, GolfGuys, to event-manage the golf day at the Gardener Ross Golf Course, and it was a great success, with a field of around 80 players. It will now be held annually, and promises to be a major feature in drawing attention to SAICE and more particularly, our Division with which it will be identified. All credit to Dewald for the time, effort and dedication in pulling this off so successfully.
- The John Brown Dinner is the premier event of the year, where various awards are made, and new SAICE Fellows are announced and receive their ties. It was held on 4 November at the Bytes Conference Centre. The guest speaker was Mr Quinton Coetzee, who entertained the guests with the topic “Back to Basics – San Solutions”. Mr Neil Perry was elevated to Fellow, Mr Gerrit du Plessis won the Best Paper Award, and Mr Francisco Elyseu received the Chairman’s Award for outstanding service to the Division.

## 2.3. Lectures/CPD

A very successful 2-day short course was presented by Francois Heyns and Hannes Gräbe , titled “Track Substructure Design and Management”. It was a very valuable intervention for the many delegates who attended.

Much credit must go to the presenters who unselfishly gave of their time and expertise to prepare for, and jointly present the course.

#### 2.4. Membership Drive/Community Awareness

We have managed to refine our membership list on the email system, and testament to the small successes we are achieving is the number of delegates we get to our courses and symposiums. It appears that members are very keen to attend events where CPD points are on offer – so we know that we are reaching them. They do not seem so keen to attend meetings and non-CPD points events, which is resonating with the committee as it strategizes around its role and the value proposition of the Division in the ensuing years.

#### 2.5. Fellowship

We appear to be running out of candidates who qualify to be elevated to the grade of Fellows. We are finding that, based on the current criteria, most of the SAICE members who satisfy the criteria are already Fellows, and there don't appear to be many new candidates emerging in this particular branch of Civil Engineering. This is a bit of a worrying phenomenon. We did manage to agree on one new Fellow this year, Mr Neil Perry, a very respected engineer in Transnet Freight Rail.

#### 2.6. Articles for SAICE Magazine

The R & H Division always enjoys a special featuring in May of each year. It was a bit of a close shave this year, but finally a sufficient number of articles was sourced, to ensure that we remain proud of our contribution to the magazine in the month in which we can place our Division and its expertise in the limelight.

#### 2.7. South African Transport Conference

Hannes Gräbe represented our interests here, and by all accounts it was a successful conference with minimal input from our Division.

#### 2.8. Best Paper Award

In all, 11 papers were in contention for this annual award. It went to Gerrit du Plessis, from the TNPA, for his paper titled "Port of Ngqura. Port Construction and Development of Container Terminal". The award was presented at the John Brown function.

### 3. Finances

The financial position of the Division is sound. We ended the year with total financial assets of R 333 245, with R 54 879 in a current account and R 278 366 in a Market Linked Investment. A tremendous vote of thanks goes to Mr Deepak Budhram for his diligent management of this portfolio during the year. The procedures and governance are of necessity onerous, and Deepak has managed to keep the Division honest and in the black.

#### 4. Conclusion

Whilst the Division is operating in a business as usual mode, there appears to be a decline in interest in events other than those offering CPD points. And it's obviously problematic for engineers based outside Gauteng to attend meetings and events, other than reasonably intense courses and symposiums. A concern is that Harbors are not represented at all, probably due to the fact that most harbor engineers are at the coast, with very few engineers based in head office in Johannesburg.

The committee is deliberating on a number of initiatives to improve matters. These include offering snacks at meetings, exploring the introduction of some form of benefits for those on the committee, making more use of technology such as tele-conferencing, using more modern communication mediums such as Facebook, re-designing the way we go about our business – eg running the portfolios more on a project basis with a project manager who just gets on with it, with a small team, and reports back to a smaller committee every so often. The events then become the rallying points and not the two-monthly meetings.

A new Chairman and Committee will be elected in January 2012, and they will hopefully succeed in finding a new direction for the Division.

DAVE BUDLER  
Chairman  
(R&H Division)