



Outgoing President's comment



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Organisational overview and external environment

SAESI is a success story of member advocacy, participation and collaboration that created value over time that must be embraced and shared by our youth and future leaders to ensure sustainability.

The institute was originally founded in 1959 by its members located within the municipal fire brigades with a

vision to promote the fire services for the people of Southern Africa by developing professional standards, policies and legislation.

The perseverance and passion of the members saw the Institute being formally recognised 28 years later in the Fire Brigade Services Act, Act 99 of 1987, as a member of the Fire Brigade Board.

The Institute in 1995 evaluated five levels of Fire Technology programmes with the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications that formed the basis for professional development and employment and still prevail in the industry today.

Much work has been done since then to respond to stakeholder aspirations to draw alignment of these occupational programs into the National Skills Development Strategy that translated to the registration of the Occupational Certificate Fire-fighter Practitioner in the NQF Sub-framework (NQF4).

The Institute further transformed itself to accommodate its expanded member base spanning over municipal, military, marine, aviation, petrochemical, wildland and

industrial sectors and became known as the Southern African Emergency Services Institute (SAESI).

SAESI also collaborated internationally and was admitted since 1995 as a certifying entity of the International Fire Services Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) to quality assure its proficiency-based National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) programmes in Southern Africa.

Current collaborations also include the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), NFPA and the Metro Fire Chiefs of USA (MFCA).

SAESI has also strengthened local partnerships with the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA), Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) and National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) as a community of expert practitioners (CEP).

Governance

SAESI is now a registered non-profit company having in place an adopted Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI).

The governance of SAESI is vested within the board of directors who are guided by a board charter, which is modelled in line with the principals of good governance and are regulated by a code of ethics and conduct. The board has appointed its first chief executive officer (CEO).

Business model

SAESI's objectives direct its business activities,

- a. To promote emergency services for the people in Southern Africa through advocacy, support and participation in the development of professional standards, policy and legislation within the field of emergency services;
- b. To facilitate training and development of its members, the community and other relevant structures in the field





- of emergency services by sharing and publishing relevant research and training materials and facilitating forums for discussion and dissemination of emergency services techniques, methodologies and information;
- c. To serve as an organisational aid to promote the interests of its members as a whole and the emergency services, in pursuance of the objects of the emergency services;
 - d. To act independently in so far as their actions do not affect the general policy of emergency services;
 - e. To do all such other things as are incidental to or conducive to the attainment of all or any of the above objectives.

Strategy and resource allocation

SAESI has adopted a developmental approach to learn as we advance and to advocate, collaborate and participate whilst maintaining independence to aspire to the stakeholder expectations that would improve our services to all people of South Africa.

SAESI has in place four work groups that are occupied by full time company officers from the head office that provides the secretariat and members elected into office for a four-year term to respond to its activities namely:

The Quality Assurance Work Group (QAWG) that focuses on key outputs of Assessment and Accreditation of training services providers and Moderation and Certification of training programs in line with the IFSAC standards. SAESI has also created value in extending these training opportunities to the existing services providers to advance the South African LG SETA standards.

The Events and Marketing Work Group (EMWG) that focuses on sharing and publishing relevant research and training materials and facilitating forums for discussion and dissemination of emergency services techniques, methodologies and

information. Its outputs are grandly displayed in its conference and involve merchandising and media relations to maintain contact with our stakeholders.

The Research and Development Work Group (RDWG) that focuses in the development of professional standards, policy and legislation within the field of emergency services. Its outputs involve participation, collaboration and advocacy within environments of the LG SETA, South African National Standards Authority on the National Building Regulations to develop new and upgrade existing standards.

The Administration Work Group (AWG) that focuses on the objective to act independently in so far as their actions do not affect the general policy of emergency services and focus on two key outputs of management of the companies' risks and conducting internal audits to ensure administrative and legal compliance.

Performance

The stakeholder's primary desire since inception was the professionalisation of the industry.

On 1 September 2017, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) published its intent to register a professional body and professional designation. This milestone gives just cause to celebrate.

The next phase requires the migration of all fire fighters of the professional body to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) against the new occupational qualification. The process for applications will be finalised soon.

The challenges ahead that require attention are firstly mandatory membership with the professional body to ensure continuous professional development (CPD). This may create some challenges as the membership and participation was historically on a voluntary basis.

The strict adherence to the Ethics and Conduct of Professionals is



another challenge in that members fall with environments regulated by organised labour and power play actions poses potential threats to professionals that participate in any activities that compromise the safety of our citizens and the integrity of the institution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, allow me to welcome the 31st President of SAESI, Mr Melvin Ramlall, who has 29 years of experience in the eThekweni Fire and Emergency Services in KwaZulu-Natal. He has served actively on many committees over the years and is a fellow Member of the Institute. He is also registered as one of the company's first directors in 2014. I am pleased and confident to say that Mr Ramlall is very well exposed to the environment and I have every confidence that he will lead the Institute effectively.

We also welcome our first female vice-president, Ms Arlene Wehr. We are of the strong belief that she will also assist in taking SAESI to the next level.

We wish our president and vice all the success over their term of office. 🇿