



SAIW and SAIW Certification

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SAIW Certification Governing Board

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G Buitenbos – Steinmüller

H Potgieter – SAIW Certification

J Tarboton – SAIW

SAIW and SAIW Certification representatives

Executive director

J Tarboton

Tel: (011) 298 2101

john.tarboton@saiw.co.za

Training services manager

Shelton Zichawo

Tel: (011) 298 2148

shelton.zichawo@saiw.co.za

SAIW Certification manager

Herman Potgieter

Tel: (011) 298 2149

herman.potgieter@saiw.co.za

NDT training manager

Mark Digby

Tel: (011) 298 2169

mark.digby@saiw.co.za

Southern African Institute of welding

Executive secretary

Dimitra Kreouzi

Tel: (011) 298 2102 (Direct)

Fax: (011) 836 6014

dimitra.kreouzi@saiw.co.za

Finance and administration manager

Michelle Warmback

Tel: (011) 298 2125

michelle.warmback@saiw.co.za

SAIW regional representatives

Cape Town branch manager

Liz Berry

Tel: (021) 555 2535

liz.berry@saiw.co.za



Throughout this year of uncertainty, the SAIW has been on a journey to redefine who we are, what we do and why. We have a new vision to become the preferred provider of welding, NDT and related services. We want industry and its employees to think of us first whenever they encounter a welding-related need or problem. This vision is delivered through our mission, which is to offer cost-effective excellence in training, technical and certification services for companies and personnel.

As a non-profit company, the SAIW does not exist to maximise shareholder value. We have a broader purpose dedicated to the implementation of standards and training in welding fabrication and related technologies and to improve our national welding capability (NWC): so that the welding industry as a whole can ensure the reliability and integrity of welded equipment for the safety of personnel and plant.

This we will strive to do through our members and for our members, whom we empower to improve productivity and quality, whilst reducing costs in all welding related manufacturing activities: through training and qualification; certification of companies and personnel; and technology transfer. This is our member-value proposition.

I have recently been talking to one of our sister associations, the Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB), which has taken the view that its members are its customers, and that their entire service offering should be of direct benefit to its members. Apart from growing its membership and service offering, this approach also enables them to better understand the needs and expectations of industry and to represent the Canadian welding industry when lobbying Government. The approach has had a substantial impact on both corporate and individual CWB membership.

As with any change, we need to identify realistic and achievable objectives. First, we have to continue to reduce our operating deficit – and we are very pleased that COVID has not affected us as badly as expected. We expect to end the financial year with a smaller deficit than 2019 and, by 2021, we hope to be close to breaking even.

Other short term objectives include: growing our membership by a third; improving student satisfaction from 75% to 85%; increasing services provision in Africa from two to four African countries; and to expand SAIW personnel certification services to include inspectors, which adds a career-path role for SAIW-qualified inspection personnel.

We have also developed a comprehensive 2021 recovery plan, which involves two key themes. First, we are striving to raise the SAIW's profile to become more visible to the broader welding and fabrication industries. This work has already been initiated, with Etienne Nell and Constance Lekoane getting out to people and putting SAIW front-of-mind as the preferred welding service provider.

Our second recovery theme is to work with others and build alliances, such as the CWB and the dtic and its TIA Outward Bound Trade Missions to foster African growth through industrialisation. We have also been talking to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) about becoming a private TVET college, which could unlock support funding for our QCTO-accredited welding apprenticeship programme. These types of alliances have become critical for raising our profile and solidifying the integral role we play.

I look forward to sharing the detail of our recovery and other plans in the new year. Until then, have a happy Christmas and New Year.

John Tarboton