



World-class excellence with members at the forefront

African Fusion talks to SAIW executive director John Tarboton and business development manager Etienne Nell about their vision for a renewed SAIW where members are at its centre and their needs drive SAIW's evolving service offering.

“In revitalising the SAIW, the starting point, I believe, has got to be our Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI). First off, we are an NPC, a non-profit company, not a traditional business. In terms of ‘gain’, NPCs are incorporated to deliver particular services for the benefit of a specific group of people: in our case, SAIW company/corporate members and welding industry professionals who join the Institute as personal members,” begins Tarboton.

“Simply put, everything we do must benefit our membership,” he says.

From this starting point, Tarboton reveals that the SAIW has developed a new value proposition: “The SAIW empowers members to improve productivity and quality while reducing rework and costs for all welding related manufacturing activity – and we do that through training and qualifications; certification of companies and personnel; and technology transfer,” he says.

Tarboton believes that engaged members are more likely to utilise the multiple service offerings of the SAIW: the training courses; the laboratory; technical and consultancy; and qualification and

certification services; and many more. “But it is important to make sure we are delivering the services our members want us to, rather than just promoting what we have. We have therefore started a process of engaging with existing and previous members, as well as our ISO 3834 certified company members, to find out how we can better meet their current and future needs,” he continues.

“We have identified four service areas of direct benefit to our membership, services that we believe all contribute towards our vision: to promote world-class excellence in welding, NDT and allied technologies; and our broader Mission: the development and upliftment of the national welding capability,” Tarboton tells *African Fusion*: These four areas are: training; technology; certification; and member marketing.

Etienne Nell, SAIW's welder training stalwart, has been appointed to lead the member engagement initiative by taking the Institute's new approach to members. “Etienne's role has now been refocused onto servicing and recruiting members, identifying new and future services that might meet their needs,

and making sure that members know how we can help them,” Tarboton explains.

“In recent weeks, I have been visiting our ISO 3834 clients, finding out what they are doing and which additional SAIW services they may like to take advantage of,” continues Nell. With training as the starting point – skills development training and personnel qualification courses – Nell says that the Institute offers welding, inspection and NDT training courses to internationally approved standards, much of which is required to remain certified to ISO 3834. “We are now guaranteeing a 7.5% discount for SAIW company or personal members wishing to take advantages of any of the Institute's training offerings. This discount can make a big difference in training costs to a company, particularly if sending several of its people on courses to fulfil different contract requirement,” he adds.

On the technology side, the SAIW strives to give members access to high level advice: through seminars by world leading specialists, for example, “and we are going to be delivering monthly webinars, too, which we see as contributing to the accumulation of professional development points (CPD) for those who need them. These will be free to members, who will simply log in at the appropriate time to access the session,” adds Tarboton.

Nell continues: “There is also a long list of the technology services we can offer to support the welding and inspection needs of our members: Discounts on laboratory, technical and consultancy services; free telephonic consulting and code interpretations; free independent third party NDT report reviews; free access to the SAIW library and its collection of read-only standards; and much more.”

Certification forms the third leg of the renewed member offering and the SAIW is offering company members a 5% discount on certifications and recertifications such as ISO 3834, and all personal members will be entitled to a 5% discount on professional certifications and recertifications, for example.

In addition, members needing to

maintain their professional status, such as SAQCC CP and IPE personnel, can benefit from free remote CPD points, Authorised Training Bodies (ATBs) will be offered free initial marketing audits on application, while initial ISO 3834 marketing audits will also be free.

“Then we have the fourth leg, which is on the marketing side, where we aim to promote the capabilities of our members to the broader industry, nationally and internationally,” Nell informs *African Fusion*. “Being a member of the Institute means something with regard to credibility and we are encouraging members to take advantage: by using our ‘Member of SAIW’ logo for example, or by taking advantage of MSAIW branding for personal professional recognition.”

“All SAIW members are eligible for AGM voting rights and board membership as well as discounts on advertising rates in our journal, *African Fusion*. We are also encouraging members to use our state-of-the-art facilities for customer open days and technical seminars at significantly discounted rates, and we want to share and publish far more member success stories and welding case studies,” adds Tarboton.

The member databases are also being strengthened and SAIW will keep a register of SAIW certified welders to allow free to access for corporate members for recruitment purposes. Free job advertisements are also available on the SAIW website.

“We want to encourage all welding professionals to register and join so that an employer can quickly and reliably vet their SAIW qualification status. And vice versa: we want welding personnel to prefer to work for SAIW member companies.”

In the first two weeks of his member engagement task, Etienne Nell has seen 21 ISO 3834-companies that are on the SAIW Welding Fabricator Certification Scheme. “Many who are not members are now interested because of the additional benefits and discounts we offer. We are now much better able to define and even calculate the value of SAIW membership, in terms of savings for services that usually have to be costed into a project, anyway. Members not only benefit from a competitive advantage, they can also advance their status and credibility,” Nell says.

“I am also talking to steel suppliers, who are part and parcel of our industry and can help their customers if they



The SAIW's state-of-the-art IIW-accredited welding training school in City West Johannesburg, where welders are trained according to internationally approved standards.

know how SAIW can help on the fabrication side. We are offering our facilities to these companies for sales meetings and/or client open days, for example, and we will add on a tour of our capabilities so sales teams are better informed when they visit fabrication sites.

Tarboton adds: “This is about fostering wider collaboration across the industry. We are also talking to other industry associations, such as AFSA, SASSDA and SAISC, to see how we can help each other to deliver better support for all of our members. We aim to build strong alliances, which we believe is at the heart of making our Institutes and Associations, as well as the businesses of our members, more robust and sustainable.”

“We are on a strong and determined drive for greater member involvement. For fabricators looking to reduce rework and improve productivity, we see partnering with the Institute and, together, seeking to improve our processes and performance, as the simplest path to long-term success.



Confidence Lekoane in the SAIW Materials Testing Laboratory: SAIW is offering member discounts on laboratory, technical and consultancy services; free telephonic consulting and code interpretations; free independent third party NDT report reviews; free access to the SAIW library and its collection of read-only standards; and much more.

“In addition, the success of our welding industry is highly dependent on the qualifications, skills, knowledge and dedication of its personnel. For any individual wishing to succeed in the industry, SAIW membership offers multiple pathways for networking, continuous professional development and career success,” Tarboton concludes. ■



The SAIW is encouraging members to use its state-of-the-art facilities for customer open days and technical seminars, at significantly discounted rates.



Hundreds of young South Africans have graduated from SAIW Inspection courses over the years with qualifications developed in conjunction with industry to ensure that industry's needs are being achieved.

