



SAIW and SAIW Certification

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SAIW Certification Governing Board

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Now that the municipal elections are behind us, we can all look forward and renew our collective efforts to better support industry and small businesses. Most importantly, we hope that industry projects will be released that might help our economy to recover. South Africa is in need of new base-load power plants – coal, nuclear or both – to increase capacity and replace aging and inefficient plants. We hope that government sees the need to move urgently towards creating clarity on the direction we are going to be taking to meet these needs.

If we are going down the nuclear route, it will change the face of industry, with many people requiring training to nuclear standards and protocols. We see a long path to upskilling our people to this level, but South African's have always managed to make the most of challenges in the past. These things cannot be rushed, though, and the sooner we start the better.

Industry is the backbone of our economy and SAIW, along with our sister institutes and organisations, sees its role as supporting and advancing the interests of industry. Much work is being done to promote fair competition and the introduction of tariffs to protect local industry, most notably the local steel manufacturing industry. We are currently engaged in an initiative around mandatory standards and are working with a broad spectrum of stakeholders on the required standards for welding consumables. We all agree on the need to ensure that products entering the country are on a par with respect to quality and safety to those locally manufactured. Such regulations are necessary to ensure that competition is fair and that our own fabricators are not being disadvantaged by poor quality and/or heavily subsidised imports.

The railway rejuvenation programme remains encouraging and the second visit by our Duisburg-based partners, GSI-SLV, to certify South African railway component fabricators to EN 15085 is imminent. Transnet Engineering's Durban facility has already been certified to EN 15085-2 level CL1 and we look forward to the Koedoespoort facilities also being certified following the upcoming audit. A number of other component manufacturers are also being visited during this visit.

During a recent trip to Europe I visited the Alstom bogey manufacturing facility that was busy building the initial bogeys for the PRASA project. It is a world-class facility with all the necessary process and certifications in place. What they do was eye opening, but I am sure that South African manufacturers can emulate these standards. Manufacturers that wish to benefit from the Transnet and PRASA locomotive and passenger train-building programmes need to adopt EN 15085 railway welding standards in order to participate. We look forward to hearing from interested companies.

Congratulations are again due to Jaco van Deventer, SAIW's Young Welder of the Year, who performed excellently in the Chinese Welding Society's Arc Cup. SAIW is working closely with WorldSkills and other organisations to promote the development of our youth and improve the quality of welding education in our colleges to support the development of our industry. We are pleased that a world-class welding curriculum is being adopted as the national standard for training welding personnel. These initiatives will raise standards and the status of welding as a career – and Jaco is a great role model in this regard.

Our annual opportunity to network and celebrate success, the SAIW Annual Dinner and Awards is taking place on September 23. I hope to see you all there.

Sean Blake