

# SAIOH update

## SAIOH PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

**Hennie van der Westhuizen:** SAIOH president  
e-mail: president@saioh.co.za

The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) Management Board's and the SAIOH National Council's activities continue to drive SAIOH's goals for 2021. In this newsletter, an overview is provided of completed and planned activities (including updates on the Annual Conference), Professional Certification Committee (PCC) matters, and other aspects of SAIOH. Another of our Council members is introduced, and we remember a great a stalwart in occupational hygiene, Johan Jacobs, who sadly passed away in April.

International Nurses Day was celebrated across the world on 12 May – the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birthday. SAIOH salutes all nurses for their dedication to the wellbeing and health of others, especially during these trying times of the pandemic.

## IN MEMORY OF JOHAN JACOBS

It was with deep regret and sadness that SAIOH learned of the passing of Johan Jacobs, from cancer, on 27 April 2021. Due to his high profile in the occupational hygiene profession and many years of loyal work on Council and the Certification Board, his death is a big loss to us all. Johan was a remarkable man and will be sorely missed as a leader in our profession and as a valued colleague. As president of the Occupational Hygiene Association of Southern Africa (OHASA), he was instrumental in the merger between OHASA and the Institute of Occupational Hygiene of Southern Africa (IOHSA), which led to the formation of the much stronger and unified professional body, SAIOH. On behalf of SAIOH Council, we would like to express our deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to his family, and friends. May his soul rest in eternal peace. A more comprehensive obituary will appear in the next issue of *Occupational Health Southern Africa*.

## INTRODUCING OUR COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Nico Potgieter:** SAIOH marketing and communication  
e-mail: n.potgieter@dundeeprecious.com

## Karen du Preez, PCC chairperson



Karen du Preez has been registered with SAIOH at the occupational hygienist level since 2009, has been a member of the PCC since 2014, and is currently serving as chairperson of the Committee. She obtained her BSc degree in Physiology at North-West University in 1994, a certificate in Occupational Hygiene at Tshwane University of Technology

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in 2006, and an intermediate certificate in Mine Environmental Control in 2012. She is currently studying towards a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree at the University of Pretoria.

Karen worked at occupational hygiene approved inspection authorities (AIAs) from 2004 to 2016, gaining extensive experience in the implementation and maintenance of occupational hygiene programmes at various industries and opencast mining operations. She has been employed as the occupational hygienist & technical signatory at the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH) since 2017. Karen has also been registered with the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) as a technical assessor for occupational hygiene inspection bodies (ISO/IEC 17020) since 2019. In her free time, she enjoys reading and the outdoors.

## COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

**Hennie van der Westhuizen:** SAIOH president  
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**Nico Potgieter:** SAIOH marketing and communication  
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**Deon Jansen van Vuuren:** SAIOH general manager  
e-mail: deon.jvvuuren@gmail.com

**Kate Smart:** SAIOH chief administrative officer  
e-mail: info@saioh.co.za

## 1. SAIOH Council and Management Board activities

### Memoranda of understanding

We are pleased to announce that the Management Board has done the groundwork and signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with both the Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA) and the Responsible Packaging Management Association of Southern Africa (RPMASA). An MoU with the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) is currently being finalised – watch this space!

### SAIOH Technical Committee

The launch of SAIOH's Technical Committee is imminent. The Committee will consist of members of all three registration levels, and will be responsible for researching and drafting all SAIOH position papers and technical papers. Thank you to all members who put their hands up – we appreciate your commitment!

### Make your mark

The SAIOH Council invites topics and the establishment of working groups for technical papers from its members. If you have any suggestions or contributions in this regard, please e-mail them to our president at [president@saioh.co.za](mailto:president@saioh.co.za) or to the chief administrative officer at [info@saioh.co.za](mailto:info@saioh.co.za).

## 2. SAIOH Annual Conference

As a result of unpredictable variables associated with COVID-19, the Conference Committee in the Western Cape decided to offer a number of high-quality focused webinars, rather than presenting a fully-fledged traditional conference. These webinars will be presented over a period of two weeks. Specialists are currently being contacted to present selected topics; formal communication will be released once the details have been finalised.

### BRANCH ACTIVITIES

**Moses Mokone:** SAIOH branches coordinator  
e-mail: [moses.mokone@nioh.ac.za](mailto:moses.mokone@nioh.ac.za)

A branch chair strategy meeting was held on 11 March 2021, where the branch chairpersons focused on members' needs, planning meetings and workshops for the year, and hosting of mini conferences as webinars. As a result of COVID-19, all branch meetings are currently held online.

Some SAIOH branches merged during this time:

- Gauteng South and Gauteng North merged into the Gauteng Branch
- North-West Potchefstroom and Rustenburg merged into the North-West Branch

Branch activities, year-to-date, are summarised in Table 1. We urge all our members to support their branches and to participate in branch activities. Members can submit topics for discussion to the various branch chairpersons for consideration in future webinars/meetings.

### FROM THE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE (PCC)

**Deon Jansen van Vuuren:** SAIOH chief examiner

e-mail: [deon.jvuvuren@gmail.com](mailto:deon.jvuvuren@gmail.com)

**Karen du Preez:** PCC chairperson

e-mail: [KarenD@nioh.ac.za](mailto:KarenD@nioh.ac.za)

**Lee Doolan:** SAIOH PCC administrator

e-mail: [lee@saioh.co.za](mailto:lee@saioh.co.za)

### Certification assessments

The Professional Certification Committee (PCC) written assessments took place in March 2021, with 64 candidates participating. Some 29 oral assessments were conducted from 23 April to 11 May 2021. The results were moderated, and the PCC administration sent the outcome letters to all candidates. A summary of the results is provided in Table 2.

During the PCC meeting on 23 April 2021, a refresher course was presented to the oral assessors (PCC members), prepared by the chief examiner.

**Table 1. Branch activities, 2021**

Branch	No. activities	Topic
Western Cape	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to cut hearing damage risk by 75–90% at negligible or no cost</li> <li>• The revised occupational exposure limits (OELs) and biological exposure indices (BEIs) for the draft regulations on hazardous chemical agents: 'Balancing science and law' (Dr Greg Kew, occupational medicine specialist)</li> <li>• Continuous remote exposure monitoring for the occupational hygiene professional (Justin Chicken, Envirocon Instrumentation)</li> <li>• Preparing for SAIOH assessments (Karen du Preez, SAIOH PCC)</li> </ul>
North-West	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ventilation and air changes (Izak Visagie)</li> <li>• Members to discuss methods/correctness of ventilation scenarios</li> <li>• Branch planning – way forward for 2021</li> <li>• Potchefstroom and Rustenburg collaborative online meetings</li> <li>• Industry approach for the North-West Branch collective</li> </ul>
KwaZulu-Natal	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air monitoring – interpreting analytical detection limits</li> <li>• COVID-19 infections in a workplace – learning from incidents (LFIs): case studies</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Summary of SAIOH PCC certification assessment results for 2021 (as at 17 May 2021)**

Certification category	Written assessment results					Final and oral assessment results			
	2021			2020		2021		2020	
	Assessed	Passed	Pass rate	Assessed	Pass rate	Assessed	Passed	Pass rate	Pass rate
	n	n	%	n	%	n	n	%	%
Occupational hygiene assistant	35	30	85.7	150	74	35	30	85.7	74
Occupational hygiene technologist	22	12	54.5	49	63	20	10	50.0	66
Occupational hygienist	14	6	42.9	45	33	10	5	50.0	75
Total	71	48	67.6	244	64	64	45	70.3	73

The PCC's Examination Committee is currently in discussions with the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygiene (AIOH), and Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB) to develop and share in one multiple-choice question database for the Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA)'s Foundation module (W 201). Watch this space!

The PCC prepared a list of shortcomings identified through the written and oral assessments from 2019 to date. These topics will be used for branch workshops, mini-conferences, and the Annual Conference in 2021.

### Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum

The SAIOH Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) was introduced to coordinate all aspects related to the recognition of occupational hygiene training materials, training providers and institutions, and the development and management of assessment and examination systems, where required.

The OHSF recently approved a new recognised training provider (RTP) for the Asbestos Fibre Counting module (AP 101) – congratulations to Celia Keet and her Occupational Hygiene Management Services (OHMS). Prospective training providers can apply to be accredited as RTPs for the AP 101 module, as well as the AP 102 – Analysis of Bulk Materials for Asbestos Content module. Other modules currently in development include the AP 103 module – Management of Asbestos in Buildings, including Asbestos Risk Assessment.

Another function of the OHSF is to evaluate applications from tertiary institutions for recognition of their occupational hygiene-related qualifications. The OHSF is progressing well with the accreditation of the tertiary institution qualifications. A matrix was recently developed to evaluate the occupational hygiene (OH) qualifications offered (in line with the 50% OH content requirement). All tertiary institutions that offer OH qualifications are encouraged to contact the PCC administrator for information regarding application for recognition (Lee@saioh.co.za).

**Hot off the press:** the four-year Bachelor's degree in Occupational Hygiene presented by the North-West University received recognition as an OH qualification at the registered occupational hygienist level.

The details of recognised training providers, as well as recognised qualifications, will be available on the SAIOH website ([www.saioh.co.za](http://www.saioh.co.za)). This will make it easier for students and certification candidates to select suitable qualifications that meet SAIOH and international requirements.

### Have your say

The SAIOH Council invites and welcomes your feedback on how this communication is helping you as a SAIOH member, and how we can improve it. If you have any suggestions, inputs, or contributions, please e-mail them to our president at [president@saioh.co.za](mailto:president@saioh.co.za), or to the chief administrative officer at [info@saioh.co.za](mailto:info@saioh.co.za).