

Welding Institute Tackles Challenges Facing The SA Industrial Sector Head On

Johannesburg, 10 March 2020 - The South African industrial and manufacturing sector is grappling with one of the toughest economic eras in living memory, made even more challenging by the tension between a rampant unemployment figure of 29% (*Stats SA*) and a shortage of relevant world-class technical skills.

In light of this, the Southern African Institute of Welding (SAIW) is tackling the education and training challenges facing the country with a brand new approach that also offers its members an ongoing return on their investment.

SAIW Executive Director **John Tarboton** says; "Welding and weld related technologies are key enablers in the manufacturing space, particularly in metals fabrication and skilled and competent people are vital for the promotion of these key drivers of economic growth and employment.

"AS SAIW we have therefore identified four service areas namely training; technology; certification; and member marketing that we believe all contribute towards our vision: to promote world-class excellence in welding, NDT and allied technologies; and our broader mission of championing the development and upliftment of the national welding capability," he explains.

Technology for training

With skills development training and personnel qualification courses as the starting point – the Institute offers welding, inspection and NDT training courses to internationally approved standards, much of which is required to remain certified to ISO 3834.

The SAIW is also revamping its approach to the use of technology in its training programmes, to improve accessibility and reduce costs. "For example, we have recently conducted trials by providing live online lectures in the form of webinars. This allows the possibility of interaction with the lecturers whilst not having to physically attend the courses," reports Tarboton.

In addition, the Institute is launching a monthly webinars series that will contribute towards the accumulation of professional development points (CPD) for those who need them. These will be free to members, who log in at the appropriate time to access the session.

Certification forms the third leg of the renewed offering and the SAIW is offering company members discounts on certifications and recertifications such as ISO 3834.

Meaningful marketing

On the marketing side, the SAIW aims to promote the capabilities of our members to the broader industry, nationally and internationally. Tarboton stresses; "Being a member of the Institute means something with regard to credibility and we are encouraging members to take advantage: for companies by using our 'Member of SAIW' logo for example, or by individuals taking advantage of MSAIW branding for recognition.

The member databases are also being strengthened and SAIW will keep a register of certified welders as well company and individual members – and these will be free to access for corporate members. 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."

Strong alliances

There is also a drive to foster wider collaboration across the industry and the SAIW is talking to other industry associations, such as AFSA, SASSDA and SAISC. "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,” says Tarboton

He adds; “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.

“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,” he concludes.