Last month, we lost an extraordinary character, an exceptional teacher, a champion in the Inspection and NDT fields, and, to many of his students, an excellent mentor. On behalf of the SAIW, I would like to convey our sorrow and heartfelt condolences to Mark Digby's family and all his friends and colleagues. He will be missed, and at SAIW, we will strive to keep his legacy alive.

After stabilisation of the SAIW in 2025, we look forward to completing the third and final stage of our transformation process in 2026. Unfortunately, we have to revisit the executive director's position. Still, Confidence Lekoane has again stepped up as Acting Executive Director, with the support of the chairman and the board, and we have every confidence in her abilities.

We are also operating without a Certifications Manager to handle SAIW personnel certification and company certification schemes. Our General Manager, Shelton Zichawo, is successfully handling the ISO 3834 Certification workload, but we would like to give him more time to dedicate to general management.

We have added to our NDT offering for 2026 with several new Level 3 courses. Following the tragic loss of Mark Digby, therefore, we now also need to strengthen the NDT department, particularly at the higher levels. We would welcome applications or suggestions of suitable people to take on this role.

The key roles at the Institute have now been filled or are being covered by contractors, so there are no longer any risks to the delivery of SAIW training services, support for the welding community or to the Institute's sustainability.

The welding, NDT, inspection, and Certification services SAIW offers will be particularly important for meeting South Africa's immediate preparation and future needs in its infrastructure redevelopment programmes, most notably the IRP 2025 plans for our energy transition.

IRP 2025 favours renewables, gas, and nuclear energy to achieve our net-zero targets. On the nuclear side, 5 200 MW of new nuclear capacity is a central pillar of the new strategy to replace coal and provide reliable baseload power. As our population grows, we will require more infrastructure and energy, in particular. So the Government has made the right decision to expand energy capacity using clean nuclear power at this stage.

At SAIW, we have been discussing future training needs in the nuclear field for some time, and with our transformation near complete, these plans are beginning to take shape. We intend to convene a stakeholders' meeting early in the year to develop a set of training modules that align with nuclear standards.

We hope to attract young professionals and recently qualified students from our universities and the SAIW. South Africa needs to upskill a new generation of professionals in preparation for the nuclear new build: nuclear engineers, welding engineers, welding inspectors, NDT professionals and safety personnel. These programmes will be impossible to achieve without considering the core execution teams, such as welders, who are critical for joining the materials. SAIW will look to coordinate and form ATBs across the country to deliver training for welders, boilermakers, and pipe fitters. In the nuclear industry, professionals need to be equipped with a niche set of high-level skills, along with a specific ethical culture regarding risk and safety.

Nuclear energy technology has proved exceptionally reliable and safe when all internationally required safeguards are implemented. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) oversees these safeguards and verifies whether due diligence is being applied. This includes stipulating the regulations to be applied and the qualifications and competencies required of nuclear personnel.

SAIW has been an IAEA Regional Designated Centre (RDC) for many years, providing Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) training and certification. This has led to our collaboration to establish a Nuclear School of Excellence for NDT in South Africa, which is progressing well. We are therefore ideally placed to take our collaboration further, helping the broader industry in training a new generation of nuclear professionals.

We need to do it very soon, though. The first 1 200 MW unit is expected to be delivered by 2036, with a phased rollout of subsequent units planned for 2037, 2038 and 2039. This is an enormous task, but an exciting opportunity for the SAIW.

In addition, in the recent State of the Nation address, our President, Cyril Ramaphosa, announced a committee to review the delivery of new water infrastructure. This will require mechanical, welding and inspection skills. In addition to metallic welding, there is increasing use of high-density polyethene (HDPE) for water pipelines. As part of SAIW's strategic approach to developing skills in materials suitable for specific environments, we have begun exploring plastic welding as a potential new offering.

I am pleased with the progress we have made and are continuing to make in preparing the SAIW for our future. And this future is looking like it will need the SAIW's services more and more.

Joseph Zinyana