


WISA 2010



With the countdown underway to WISA 2010, there are just over three months to this prestigious event that will take place at the ICC in Durban in April. Debbie Besseling chats to Dave Nozaic WISA 2010's conference chairman about what we can expect from the conference.

How many technical papers have been accepted for the WISA 2010 conference?

We have received well over 350 abstracts and have selected about 150 for the parallel sessions which will run concurrently in three venues. The scientific committee had a difficult task making a choice as most of the submissions were of a high standard. Many of the authors have been offered a choice to present as a poster where the subject matter is appropriate. There is still a chance that some authors will be offered a late opportunity to present their papers depending on the number of dropouts. I understand that for the first time ever all technical papers are to be peer reviewed.

What is the background to the peer review?

We had a number of requests for papers to be peer reviewed, from people in the academic institutions where this is a requirement for published papers, and necessary to securing research grants. Unfortunately, papers submitted late leave insufficient time for the review process, so not all of them will

be reviewed. We have selected a panel of prominent people in the water field to assist with the review process and have been pleasantly surprised at their willingness to assist. Initially we thought we might have to do a lot of arm twisting

Tell us about the pre-conference programme

The actual conference starts on Monday 20 April, but on Sunday the 19th there will be a pre-conference workshop in the ICC venue organised by Prof. Chris Buckley on water reclamation featuring local and international experts in the field. This will mainly be of interest to scientists and engineers as it will be technically orientated but anyone who is interested will be welcome. The meet and greet welcoming function will be held on the Sunday evening and is normally well attended.

How many parallel sessions are scheduled in the conference programme?

There will be three parallel sessions commencing after the morning tea break on Monday 19 April. It is not always possible



Dave Nozaic, WISA 2010 conference chairman

to avoid clashes of interest entirely as people have different spreads of expertise, but we will attempt to avoid similar topics being covered at the same time.

What workshops are going to be held?

There has been a big demand for workshops and we have expanded to two venues for these. From requests received to date it looks as if both of these will be fully committed. The topics include: Water services franchising, the new sludge guidelines; Sewer system masterplanning; Cleaner production technologies in mining; A water-use registration workshop, and pump specification. There are also a number of others, which haven't been finalised through the system. We don't want to dilute the conference too much by having too many parallel sessions, but at the same time there is a need to accommodate a wide range of interests.

What technical tours are being planned?

We are reaching a situation in South Africa where many of the places of interest have already been visited at least once, and therefore had some difficulty finding something different. We have four tours in planning which will cover the interest fields of technical people (scientist and engineers), environmentalists, and those involved in institutional affairs. Based on past experience at WISA conferences, we are limiting numbers to one bus per tour, unless there is a huge demand. We are also charging a nominal fee for the tours to cover the cost of the vehicle hire. We would like to avoid the situation where large numbers of people put their names down for a tour, and then don't come, leaving the organisers with several empty buses. We are planning all the tours to finish at about 13:00 so that delegates can make the late afternoon flights, for which we will be providing transport.

What sponsors have been secured to date?

So far we have sponsors for the meet and greet, gala dinner and closing function. We think the sponsorship for the bags has been taken up but this is not yet confirmed.

The book of abstracts and the CD of the proceedings also have a partial sponsorship. We are very grateful to our sponsors, as it

helps us to keep our registration fees down to what we think is a reasonable level. Among our supporters at this stage are Siemens, Zetachem, Umgeni Water, Rand Water Services, WEC Projects, 3S Media and the Water Research Commission.

How many exhibitors are you expecting? What has been booked to date?

We will have about 130 stands. Demand has been good and already over 90 have been taken up. With the large available area at the ICC, it is possible to have a spacious exhibition and to accommodate the refreshment stations in the exhibition hall, so we expect this to be one of the main focal points.

How many delegates have registered to date? How many delegates are you expecting to register for WISA 2010?

At the time of writing, we have had about 80 registrations, which is a good sign. We think that many people will get going on registration early in 2010 to beat the early-bird deadline. We would like to see well over 1 000 delegates and are hoping for about 1 200.

Tell us about the Blue Drop and Green Drop function that has been integrated into the conference

The Department of Water and Environmental Affairs (DWEA) is holding a ceremony on the evening of Monday, 19 April, which has been left clear for delegates and companies to make their own private arrangements. The function will be by invitation and DWEA will be focusing on the municipal delegates who will be involved in the Blue Drop and Green Drop processes. It is expected that the minister will attend this prestige function and a number of Blue Drop awards will be presented. The awards function will take place on the evening of the gala dinner.

What awards will be handed out?

WISA has a number of awards which are presented at the biennial conferences. Among these is the Wilson Award, which is for the best operated small wastewater plant, and there are awards for the best young author, the best posters, or the most outstanding projects, service awards, and awarding of senior fellowships.

What sets WISA 2010 apart from the previous WISA conferences?

The conference theme originally selected was 'A time for reflection'. This was considered appropriate because many predictions were made in our field over the past 10 to 15 years regarding the number of objectives which would be achieved by 2010, and maybe we need to look and see how well we have done. It is also the first WISA conference at the newly extended ICC, which has given us enough space to do things with minimal compromise. We can accommodate a record number of delegates if necessary without feeling cramped.

We encourage all interested potential delegates to join us at what we hope will be a memorable conference. **35**