

Issue 06 – April 2012



President's Column

Warm Greetings To All SPEA Chapters

- Our focus in the past twelve months was to achieve the SPEA Corporate Plan of which our Council has unanimously approved a draft in principle. It is intended that our next face-to face meeting in May 2012 will see progress as to the official approval of the Corporate Plan.
- Two additional Policy papers have been approved by Council for publication. In total, SPEA has five Policy papers since its formal establishment in 2010.
- In the past three months, the Samoa Qualification Authority (SQA) has conducted analysis training for assessors of the seven main trades currently taught at the Technical Institutions and the National University of Samoa (NUS). The training was presented by a consultant from the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) through the SQA in Samoa. I was selected by SQA as one of the seven assessors and drafter of the National Competency Standards (NCS) for Trades. Drafts of the NCS for trades have been completed ready for validation and SQA to put through Cabinet for tabling in Parliament as part of the SQA Regulations. This is indeed a milestone for Samoa as it sets the standards for trades. The good news is that these standards are based on the same standards framework used in New Zealand and Australia. It achieves the ultimate purpose of regional and international recognitions of the standards for trades improving mobility

National Chapters

The Fiji Institution of Engineers (FIE), Institution of Engineers Papua New Guinea (IPENG),
Institution of Professional Engineers Samoa (IPES), Tonga, Vanuatu, Cook Islands

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throughout the region and further abroad. This is in line with what SPEA's long term vision is for both the engineering and the technical trades.

- We are yet to see confirmed actions from the small Chapters (Tonga, Cook Islands & Vanuatu) regarding their milestone dates of achieving formal set up of their local institutions and at least their constitutions.
- Come May 2012, it marks the end of the official first term in office of your inaugural president. I like to think that we still have a lot of work to do in order to achieve our long term goals as stated in our draft Corporate Plan. It was not easy to kick start this new organisation although the general belief is that SPEA will provide a vehicle to help establish other island countries to become members and eventually will have access to benefits that could be available such as resources, funding, material references, continuing professional development, training, seminars for global environmental events, new technologies, etc. The new officer(s) who will be elected in the coming AGM in May shall continue to diligently follow up on outstanding actions from our Council. The Council must be seen to be working harder putting more efforts into achieving these actions. The very action that keeps flashing in my mind is the ability of SPEA to operate on its own. Inevitably, we will at some point in the very near future not depend any longer on the kind support of IPENZ and to some extent, Engineers Australia. Despite the general feeling of members that SPEA is not doing enough for its members and stakeholders, I am of the view that we are still embryonic and are pushing hard to convince our members of the positive assets that SPEA will inject into the region through its Chapters. Given the voluntary sacrifice of our Council members, we can only do so much with the available and limited resources. However, I believe that it is through our constant efforts to produce materialistic policies, newsletters, public awareness programs, co-operations with other regional and international organisations, self-initiative programs, working with our respective governments, and actively achieving our milestone visions in our Corporate Plan, that we will soon become potentially indispensable.
- I am saying we are already off the ground, and the ground work is done. We need to move on seriously. Our Chapters are looking up at SPEA and their respect are already with us. Rightly, that respect must be returned tangibly to our fellow members to allow long term mutual relations.
- Seeing the Fiji Chapter (FIE) initiating and continuing SPEA efforts to help established a relationship with AusAID and other donor agents for their continuing professional development, are good efforts. In fact it was the reason why our next face-to-face meeting was changed from Tonga to Fiji so that our SPEA members can benefit by attending FIE's AGM and CPD program. The IEPNG is also seen doing constant CPD's and assessor trainings and is truly encouraging.
- I am grateful to acknowledge my appreciation of Fletcher Construction's (FC) sponsorship of SPEA, enabling our Council to travel to Fiji in May 2012 for our first face-to-face meeting for 2012. Thank you so much to FC's timely assistance through such sponsorship. SPEA will in return acknowledge this sponsorship

through other SPEA avenues such as newsletters, functions, media gathering, local chapters AGM's, and even future funding requests.

- To conclude, I wish all SPEA Chapters and their members, intending chapters, our main foundation partner IPENZ, and also our supporter Engineers Australia and other organisations (SPIES, SPPEXX, EWB, AU, NZAID, NIWA, PCEE, ASCE, to name a few), and other interested colleagues, a blessed Easter.

With best wishes.



Leiatua Tom Tinai
President

Two New Policy Position Papers Released

In February 2012 SPEA has released two new policy position papers intended as advice to governments in the region on how to manage important technically-based policy issues. These are available on the SPEA website (www.spengineer.org) and are a resource from which any interested person or organization can draw.

“Development and Enforcement of Technical Standards” sets out how an appropriate technical standards development regime for the region would improve the quality of capital expenditure, safety and would reduce economic loss through substandard material use. The characteristics of well performing standards regimes in other countries are examined. A regional approach is recommended for consideration by governments. This includes collaboration, drawing on the resources in Australia and New Zealand, attention to measurement systems, and adoption of good practice collegial standards development processes. Ways for governments to manage the potential for conflict of interests when using or developing standards in their roles as procurer, provider and regulator of technical services are described.

“Principles for Planning and Approval Processes for Sustainable Development” considers good practices in managing development with an emphasis on the approval processes for accessing and using natural resources such as land, water and minerals. It sets out the principles underpinning successful regimes in other countries but also recognises that traditional approval processes in some nations are not compatible with the international practices. The paper then makes suggestions as to how nations in the region can set up systems that are likely to be effective, relatively low cost and fit within the existing decision-making culture of the nation. The paper sets out various ways governments can manage the perceptions of conflict of interest.

News from FIJI

The Chapter representative, Pratarp Singh, reported the following highlights for the region:

- The Fiji Institution of Engineers (FIE) officially launched its website at its annual Christmas Dinner function on 9th December, 2011. The website has been made possible with the kind assistance of the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) who constructed the website in conjunction with FIE.
- FIE's website has been tailored to provide easy access to anyone wishing to obtain relevant information about the FIE. The website provides information about the FIE and its membership. It also contains relevant news items and maintains a collection of FIE newsletters, resource material, photographs and contact for its secretariat.
- Please visit the FIE website at: <http://www.engineersfiji.org.fj/> for further information about FIE and its membership.



The FIE website being officially launched by UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Knut Ostby (centre) at FIE's Annual Christmas Dinner held in Suva on 9th December, 2011.



SPEA gratefully acknowledges the sponsorship of Fletcher Construction to enable the Council of SPEA to meet face-to-face during 2012.