

Issue 05 – May 2011



President's Column

Warm Greetings to All SPEA Chapters, we are now one year old. The South Pacific Engineers Association (SPEA) was formally established on 3rd March 2010. I had the privilege to prepare the first annual report of the Association for presentation at the first Annual General Meeting held in Port Moresby on 7 April 2011. Highlights from that report include:

- SPEA has established relationship with other engineering related bodies such as IPENZ, Engineers Australia, Engineers Without Borders, South Pacific Professional Engineering Excellence (SPPEEx) and the American Society of Civil Engineers.
- Our target of meeting twice a year face-to-face was achieved. There were face to face meetings on 4th March and 27th July 2010.
- Three teleconference meetings were held on 22 April 2010, 21 October 2010 and 27 January 2011.
- SPEA has completed issuing three Policy Papers which are available on our website on the topics of sustainable economic development, resilient infrastructure and engineering education.

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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- SPEA and its chapters have been successful in obtaining some Aid funding, but more effort is needed to build profiles with the funding agents.
- A need for developing a strong regional stance on ethical matters has been recognised. A regional Code of Ethic for SPEA must be developed soon.
- Forms of membership certificates and wording acceptable by all chapters have been developed. And a SPEA seal has been designed.
- The SPEA Council approved protocols for working with SPPEEx and EWB when the latter two organisations wish to undertake activities in the nations which have SPEA chapters.
- SPEA has been accepted by PIF to be part of its regional arm to help address engineering issues in the Pacific. To this date, we have not been invited to attend any of its meetings. We will need to keep on trying for an opportunity to attend and perhaps make a presentation.

April 2011 Council Meeting

Highlights of the 2011 face to face Council meeting included:

- The presence of Merv Lindsay, National President of Engineers Australia who had a special trip to be present was greeted with enthusiasm from the Council. Strong engagement with both Engineers Australia and IPENZ is still viewed as critical to success of SPEA.
- Each chapter was presented with the WFEO Committee on Engineering Capacity Building's guidebook for technical capacity building in developing nations. This uses the formation of SPEA as a case study of good practice.
- The UNESCO World Engineering report was circulated. There is a small section on engineering in the South Pacific and on SPEA.
- Approval in principle was given to plan towards the development of a permanent secretariat for SPEA based with IEPNG in Papua New Guinea. If a suitable arrangement can be found then eventually the Council would incorporate SPEA in PNG. IEPNG is to provide a proposal for the secretariat and an accompanying business plan setting out how resources would be obtained.
- Development of the basics of a Strategic Plan was undertaken with the goal of providing a refined draft to a teleconference meeting in late May/early June.
- It was agreed to develop two further policy papers for peer review and eventual promulgation to governments:
 - Development and enforcement of technical standards e.g. material testing, design methods, measurement at border, managing conflicts of interest for governments as procurers.

- Planning and approval processes for development projects including conflicts of interest for Government as the regulator but also the beneficiary of Aid projects.
- It was noted there will be a South Pacific Earthquake Resilience Workshop to be held in Wellington on 22-24 August 2010. The possibility of holding a SPEA Council meeting on 20-21 August 2011 will be examined.

News from PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The Institution of Professional Engineers Papua New Guinea presented a report to the SPEA Council meeting through its Chief Executive, Benedict Mick. He highlighted activities including:

- There has been considerable upgrading of the registration system and the way in which competence assessments are conducted under the Engineers Registration Act.
- There has been progress to develop engineering education at Unitech in Lae. The Government is supporting the upgrade of engineering laboratories through a considerable amount of new funding.
- The need for good technical standards has been highlighted in the light of major projects involving sophisticated engineering solutions.
- IEPNG is now active with Government on a regular ongoing basis e.g. workforce issues, technical expertise. IEPNG is actively assisting immigration issues in the Department of Labour office.
- SPEA has been actively promoted around the country.
- Some engineers are asking what SPEA is doing for them.
- Industry is paying the fees for SPEA – the justification being used by IEPNG is that the SPEA is a gateway to mutual recognition.

News from SAMOA

The immediate past President of the Institution of Professional Engineers Samoa, Perelini Perelini presented his chapter's report to the Council meeting. He presented greetings from new IPES Council. The new President is Tainau Moefaauro T. Titimaea.

Highlights included:

- The Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure has renewed interest in improving engineering and other technical standards in Samoa.
- The revised rules of the IPES and the Registration Board are going to Cabinet for approval. These update many procedures.

- The IPES is working on inwards immigration issues – assessing candidates for the relevant government agency.
- IPES is working with Asia Development Bank on ways to recognise expertise, so national people have the same opportunity as international engineers to compete for work.
- The subscription to SPEA is 15% of the annual budget of IPES which means it is important to continue to show benefit to the individual members.
- IPES now has a seat on the Council of the National University of Samoa.