

## SSEE AGM

### Chair's Report – October 24, 2011



In early 2010 I outlined a series of points that encapsulated our vision for SSEE. Whilst many of these have been realized, SSEE members face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. In many respects this is symptomatic of the increased awareness by both the profession and civil society of the demand for the skills of SSEE members and related disciplines. Whilst not solely holding the batten for sustainability we are integrators.

Political, business and societal pressures continue to underscore the need and desire for more sustainable outcomes across all dimensions of civil society. From an engineering perspective this translates into tremendous opportunity. Be it input to policy, the design and delivery of more sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy technologies, transport, building, communications and supply of essential services, the potential is enormous. We do not need more and new technologies, albeit their contribution will be valuable. Rather the opportunity exists to better integrate existing solutions and harness our imaginative, creative and innovative talents.

Engineers Australia's *Infrastructure Report Card 2010* is an excellent example of how an integrated approach to delivering infrastructure can harness the capability of engineers and related disciplines to better meet the needs of the community. The objective of the report Card is to rate the quality of economic infrastructure at a State level, with ratings based on as assessment of asset condition, asset availability and reliability, asset management sustainability (including economic, environmental and social issues) and resilience. These is entirely consistent with *2011 – the Year of Humanitarian Engineering*, and we look forward to the engineering discipline playing a significant and integral role in future 'sustainable' developments. Indeed feedback from EA members is telling us that the most significant area of interest is around sustainability, both as a risk and an opportunity for the profession.

Over the last 12 months SSEE has achieved the following goals:

- Hosting this 2011 International SSEE Conference (Brisbane October 24-25)
- Today's launch of an exciting and new look for our national Magazine "Sustainability and Infrastructure" through the engagement of Great Southern Press
- Developing and launching our Strategic Plan (aligned with Engineers Australia's strategic plan)
- Completing our web portal and have this used as an active communication bridge to and for members
- Updating and streamlining our internal processes so that the efforts of committee and board members could be more efficiently directed to positive outcomes, and hence better service the needs of members



## The Society for Sustainability and Environmental Engineering



*...engineering in harmony with ecology*

- Fostering stronger links with and collaborate with other synergistic organisations such as EIANZ and WMAA, where we now have formal arrangements in place on a national level; we are also collaborating with the EcoForum conference (NSW, March 2012)
- Continuing to provide CPD support and technical sessions in all states and jurisdictions

The level of interest amongst the profession and broader community on how the engineer more sustainable solutions has never been greater and it is most pleasing that we are able to respond through a range of initiatives, not least being the production of this high quality magazine. This first edition of the new look SSEE magazine “Sustainability and Infrastructure” signifies a milestone for SSEE.

Challenges and tasks that lie before us are to:

- Provide input to Engineers Australia in reviewing and updating its 2007 policy statements for Energy and Climate Change Policy (an opportunity for SSEE members to contribute to their redrafting, especially in light of recent developments, the proposed carbon tax, focus on energy efficiency and clean energy)
- Contribute to Engineers Australia’s moves to seek a formal process for the registration of qualified engineers (similar to Queensland); there appears to be a growing consensus amongst the profession that this is an important step for the recognition and role of engineers by Government and the community - much like it occurs for other professions such as accounting
- Develop more formal arrangements (e.g. Advisory Committee) for providing subject matter expertise to Government around Sustainable and Environmental Engineering practices and policies
- Finalise plans for a national Sustainability Survey of EA members

Finally I’d like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous contribution made by SSEE chapter committee and national board members who spend countless and often unheralded hours as volunteers in service to SSEE members. This includes organizing technical sessions/seminars at the chapter level, hosting our bi-annual national conference, contributing to the policy debate within EA and beyond, supporting the provision of CPD, assessing and awarding the national student prize, streamlining the administration function behind SSEE and working closely with the Environmental Engineering College and EA to help ensure that the current sustainability related curriculum of our tertiary engineering institutions is current. The saying “you get out what you put in” exemplifies the experience of SSEE officer bearers; I would commend involvement at this level by any SSEE member who is willing to do what it takes to help shape the broader sustainability agenda in such exciting and fast moving times.

SSEE looks forward to an engaging ‘Escaping Silos’ conference over the next two days. It promises to be an outstanding event with a range of excellent speakers addressing the core themes.

**National Chair, SSEE**  
**Deane Belfield, FIEAust. CPEng**