First, allow me to thank my predecessor, Johann Beukes, for the unselfish manner in which he has served SAIOH and its members, and the strong foundation he has helped to establish for SAIOH. It is a platform upon which it is easy for me to continue building.

SAIOH is a truly remarkable institute, striving to serve its members in many ways, some of which include:

• Hosting annual conferences.
• Hosting regular branch meetings in various regions throughout southern Africa.
• Contributing, in the form of scientific articles, to the Occupational Health Southern Africa journal.
• Professional registration of members.
• Securing international recognition for professional designations, making it easier for our members to practice internationally.

The recent AGM saw the election of new SAIOH councillors with the following persons elected by you to serve you:

Elize Lourens
Dept of Labour
Cas Badenhorst
Anglo American
Johan Du Plessis
University of the North West (Potchefstroom)
Kenneth Harvey
Gijima
Jaco Pieterse
Gijima

Further to this, the newly elected SAIOH council elected Cas Badenhorst to the position of SAIOH Vice President. Congratulations are in order, together with a warm word of welcome and many thanks for accepting the huge responsibility to serve SAIOH and its members. The new councillors and their profiles will be posted on our website shortly.

I would like to encourage each and every one of you to help build our wonderful profession so that we can continually improve Occupational Hygiene and workplace health. Let us endeavour together to keep raising the bar. Get involved in SAIOH activities and volunteer your time. Start with your local SAIOH branch and participate as often as possible. If you are uncertain as to who to contact, check out the SAIOH website or contact the SAIOH administrators (admin@saioh.co.za) and let us know that you are willing to offer your time. Your name will be placed into a database and you will be contacted as the need arises.

The year ahead also has a number of exciting events in store. SAIOH is looking to launch the long-awaited template guide to assist members in aligning themselves to the new SANS 17020 standard; a revamp of the website is due shortly, which will allow members to pay fees and enter CPD points online; and, of course, our 2014 annual conference – Occupational Hygiene: Beyond dust and noise, which will be held at the North-West University’s Potchefstroom campus from 30 October to 1 November.

The Conference will be hosted by SAIOH’s North-West branch. Diarise and book now as this promises to be a super conference!

As far as the SANAS accreditation of Occupational Hygiene AIAs is concerned, the process is steadily underway and on track. The SANAS Specialist Technical Committee (STC) met on 29 August, and the Department of Labour deadline for submission of applications to SANAS for accreditation was once again confirmed to be 1 February 2014. AIAs that do not submit applications by this date face suspension by the Department. In addition, currently approved AIAs that are not accredited by 30 September 2014 will also lose their approval status. The Department of Labour confirmed at the meeting that no further extensions will be granted. All SAIOH members managing AIAs need to take note of these dates and ensure applications are submitted by the due date.

Further to this, I would like to congratulate the first occupational hygiene AIA to be accredited in line with these new requirements. VDH Industrial Hygiene CC, under the leadership of Dawie van den Heever, a long standing SAIOH member, applied for accreditation and, after due process, was accredited in line with the requirements of SANS 17020 and additional Department of Labour requirements by SANAS. Well done!

Accreditation aims to set the standard to which we all need to be practising and I encourage all of you to support the process. You can contact Linda Grundlingh at SANAS at lindag@sanas.co.za should you require more detail about the process.

Report by PJ (Jakes) Jacobs, SAIOH President, e-mail: Peter.Jacobs2@riotinto.com
The Annual Conference was held at the Elangeni Hotel in Durban from 19 to 21 August with the theme "Occupational Hygiene… Into The Future – A local and International Perspective". Delegates enjoyed the lovely warm Durban winter weather, and were able to attend many interesting presentations by local and international guest speakers.

The Conference was a truly international affair as the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) Board chose to hold their biannual board meeting in Durban in conjunction with the Conference. Fourteen IOHA representatives attended and our local occupational hygienists were able to take advantage of the plethora of expertise available.

Several firsts occurred, including the running of two full day Professional Development Courses (PDCs). Dr John Mulhausen of 3M (USA) presented an enlightening session on Modern Statistical Tools for Improving Data Interpretation and Professional Judgment, including decision analysis calculations using Bayesian statistics. This session served to raise awareness of the importance of confidence in results where important control decisions are made. John is an amazing speaker and made a complex subject enjoyable and easily understood. The second PDC was presented by one of our other international guests, Henri Heussen of Arbo Unie (The Netherlands) who presented an overview and interactive session on Stoffenmanager – A Validated Internet Tool for Assessing Chemical Exposures and Identifying Controls. He explained the use of Stoffenmanager, a public and freely available web-based tool for chemical exposure assessment and control.

Another first was the running of parallel sessions on both conference days. A total of 34 presentations by 31 speakers (both local and international) were given, covering a wide range of occupational hygiene topics, including mining, research, standards, statistics and general practice.

Four keynote addresses were presented, by the President or a representative from the IOHA, USA, UK and Australia. The key message from each speaker reminded us of the importance of our roles as occupational hygienists in southern Africa, and of the perception of occupational hygiene practice in southern Africa from our international peers. To add further confirmation to the value of our voice, John Mulhausen (Director of Corporate Safety and Industrial Hygiene, 3M, USA) and David O’Malley (President of BOHS) ran an interactive session on Occupational Exposure Standards – our opinions were required for an international initiative and research project on OEL development and implementation.

While the presentations and development sessions were the main reason for attendance, a highlight of the conference this year was the annual award dinner where people voted as the top representatives practicing occupational hygiene in southern Africa during the past year were presented with awards.

The awards were as follows:

- Occupational Hygienist of the Year was Oscar Rikhotso.
- Personality of the Year went to Johan Cornelius.
- Student of the Year was Liandi Viljoen.
- Article of the Year was awarded to Phanuel Tau.
- Top Achiever – Assistant was Ms L Hugo for achieving 72% overall.
- Top Achiever – Technologist was Ms A Cilliers for an overall mark of 79%.
- Top Achiever – Occupational Hygienist was Ms A Marshall, also with a mark of 79%.

Guests were thrilled by a special performance by South Africa’s World Champion and gold medal winning Choir at the 2012 World Choir Games in the USA, Kearsney College Choir, that entertained us with a wonderful repertoire of multi-cultural music and pop classics. Our chance to show our international guests another of South Africa’s amazing talents, and they were very impressed – as were we all!

The Conference, organised by Julie Hills and her core team of seven people from the KZN branch, was furthermore attended by about 30 representatives from 14 exhibitors and a total of about 120 delegates. It was a great success and the delegates left with lots of new knowledge and information, having spent time with their peers and international guests and being warmed by the Durban winter sunshine and hospitality. We look forward to seeing you all at the 2014 Conference at North West University next November.

Report by: Julie Hills, Vice-chair, SAIOH PCB, e-mail: julie.hills@telkomsa.net