

SAICE inaugurates Vishal Krishandutt as its 118th president

Vishal Krishandutt was recently inaugurated as the South African Institution of Civil Engineering's (SAICE) 118th president. He is a registered professional civil engineering technologist with over 26 years of collective experience in construction, academia, local government and consulting engineering, and is currently employed at Nyeleti Consulting as a technical director.



Newly inaugurated SAICE president Vishal Krishandutt

Prior to joining Nyeleti Consulting, Krishandutt was employed at the Coastal, Stormwater & Catchment Management Department in the Engineering Unit at eThekweni Municipality from August 2007 to July 2014. His position as chief technologist and area project engineer in the North Central region allowed him to be involved in stormwater infrastructure projects. The management of the contract and construction process was also among his duties to ensure completion of projects within time and budget.

Gender inclusivity and transformation

In his presidential address, Krishandutt said, "At the end of my presidency, I would like to have contributed to the development of best practice guidelines for gender inclusivity in the workplace, with the defining attributes being talent acquisition, organisational culture, and transformation."

He acknowledged that the latter would be a challenging but rewarding task and that this would help influence the lives of many female engineering professionals.

Krishandutt's address was delivered at an event which had in attendance various champions of the infrastructure industry, government officials, engineering clients from both the private and public sectors, as well as SAICE past presidents. The title of his address was: 'Pursuing inspirational and transformational leadership in civil engineering'.



Inspirational leadership

Addressing the issue of the advancement of gender inclusivity in the workplace and how inspirational and transformational leadership can influence this, Krishandutt stressed that inspirational and transformational leadership can be a driving force in achieving gender inclusivity.

“Inspirational leadership is one of the most important traits of any leader, it is driven by passion and commitment and has been a trait of many of the world’s greatest leaders and that is why for my presidential year I want to look at how inspirational leadership can also shape and transform our industry and profession. By our actions as leaders, we must be an inspiration to all our members so that they can achieve their goals,” he said.

Krishandutt emphasized the need for inspirational leaders to influence gender equality and inclusivity to ensure that more female engineering professionals reach the top and fewer leave the profession. “This can be achieved by growing the number of female leaders in our profession who in-turn can inspire the young as well as the experienced women engineers to overcome the barriers that prevent them from achieving top leadership positions,” he said.



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Bridging the digital gap

“The world is advancing at a very rapid rate in embracing 4IR and in South Africa, we need to bridge the gap with our international counterparts in this digital space as the economic and social impact can be substantial, given the fact that the construction industry accounts for 6% of global GDP. We need to capitalise on the infrastructure and development plans from government, as well as those from the private sector, and to look at how this can create an economic upturn in the value chain that will be beneficial to all stakeholders in the industry.”

Gender inclusivity will be high on his agenda during his year of tenure with more strategic engagement with individuals and organisations who advocate the need for a more gender-inclusive working environments.

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