

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF TOWN AND REGIONAL PLANNERS
REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: OCTOBER 1992**

Dr Peter Robinson

Introduction

The year has been characterised by changes in the environment within which we, as Town and Regional Planners, operate. Although professionally we are in the business of change, at least as far as land use is concerned, the uncertainty that accompanies this transitional period in South Africa, has made it a tough year for Planners in all sectors. We are being called upon to work in unfamiliar fields, to assist in creating a climate that is conducive to development, which will, in turn require the more traditional town and regional planning skills.

We have experienced changes at the Institute as well. Our Hon. Secretary, Barbara Quilliam resigned to be able to devote more time to her young children; and Franca Guidici, our Secretary and "pillar of strength" was appointed as Registrar of the Statutory Council. Our thanks and best wishes to both of them. We welcome Amanda Louw as our Hon. Secretary and Edy van Straaten as the Institute's secretary.

Meetings and membership

The Council and Executive Council have each met on three occasions; Council held a one-day workshop on issues facing the Institute and the profession; and there has again been a lot of activity at Branch level. Membership increased in most categories.

	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>
Corporate	611	649
Graduate	276	323
Associate	30	37
Retired/Hon/Life	45	32
	945	1041

Finance and budget

The Institute's finances are in a sound condition, which reflects capable management by our Hon. Treasurer, Tiaan Ehlers, who took office two years ago. The budget for 1992/93 is about R145 000. Last year approximately 43 per cent of expenditure was on creative activities that promote and enhance the profession as a whole and benefit Institute members. A still high 57 per cent of the budget is needed to maintain the Institute as a professional organisation. This represents an improvement on the previous year's \pm 35 per cent on creative/promotional activities, but it is still far off our target of 60 per cent. Council has been, and will continue to look for ways of achieving our objective and the financial strategy, outlined in the Hon. Treasurer's report, is a step in that direction.

Branches

A review of Branch reports, which have been tabled, draws attention to what I believe is a healthy relationship between Branch and Council level activities. The main locus and volume of Institute activity occurs at Branch level. This is where most members have an opportunity to participate in and contribute to their professional body. Council's role is to provide a network of linkages between Branches, to co-ordinate and to undertake functions that cannot be done effectively by the Branches and to represent the profession at national/international levels.

The Branches have all had busy years and this has been made possible by the efforts of the Branch committees. The Institute recognises and appreciates your efforts. In particular I would like to commend the contributions of the Branch chairpersons:

Cape	: Tommy Brümmer
Eastern Cape	: Bibian Brown
Far North	: Hannes Lerm

Natal	: Liz Hicks
Transvaal	: Irma Muller
OFS	: Koos Duvenage

In regard to new Branches, the Institute has confirmed the status of the Far North which successfully completed its 2 year probationary period. Another new Branch, the Border, under the leadership of Christo Theart, has also been established.

Handbooks

Following the support for changes to the Institute's rules, approved by a ballot of members, an updated version of the Handbook II: Constitution and Rules was produced. The main changes are the revised goals and objectives, the inclusion of a Code of Ethics and procedures for establishment of new branches and providing a measure of flexibility in regard to membership applications. Our thanks go to Paul Waanders, in particular, for his work on the Institute's rules.

Consolidated Funds

The Institute's Consolidated Fund has again been competently managed by Piet van Zyl. This year, the usual student prizes were awarded at the Universities. A new award has been introduced aimed at encouraging members of the Institute to publish their work. This will be made to the best paper presented at the biennial national Conference and, in non-conference years, to the best paper published by an Institute member. The first of these awards is to be made tomorrow.

Merit Award and Nola Green Memorial Lecture

The Institute's biennial merit award will take place again in 1993 and members are encouraged to submit entries. The Transvaal branch is to host the next Nola Green Memorial lecture.

Public relations

Public relations is an activity that is handled mainly at branch level, with

co-ordination at Council being ably guided by Christo Kannenberg.

Conference

The biennial Conference is always a high point on the Institute's calendar of events. This year's Conference has certainly lived up to expectations. The Institute's appreciation and thanks go to John Horenz, Amelia Büchner, and their committees in the Eastern Cape for the substantial amount of work that has gone into the arrangement of a Conference of this magnitude. The Organising Committee comprised: John Horenz (Chairman), Amelia Büchner, Jonathan Mercer, Rob Bates, Anthony Williams, André Beukes and Bibian Brown.

Draft legislation

A Council delegation comprising Christo Kannenberg, Paul Waanders, Piet Claassen, Tiaan Ehlers and myself met Dr C J van Tonder in April to discuss the draft act on spatial ordering. It embodies several interesting concepts which may be expected to change aspects of current planning practice. Other items of draft legislation received comment during the year under the Committee headed by Tiaan Ehlers.

Environmental issues

Environmental issues remain high on the agenda for town and regional planning. The Institute monitors this closely and, during the year, Robert Lamont-Smith and Piet Claassen have made valuable contributions on our behalf.

Newsletter and Journal

A further 3 issues of our Newsletter appeared this year. Dr Piet Claassen is to be congratulated on the quality, contents and regularity of this publication. Three issues of Institute journal were also published during the year thanks to the efforts of Prof Colin Tod Welch and his editorial team.

Education

This year Council re-established an Education Committee recognising that there are a number of educational issues that affect the Institute but are not being addressed by the Statutory Council. Prof Sakkie Badenhorst heads this new Committee.

Professional Fee

This year has seen revisions in the

Institute's recommended scale of fees in regard to the general tariff and hourly rates to keep in line with inflation and with other built environment professional bodies. Another category of change was the introduction of additional categories to the layout fees to take account of particularly steep land. Nico Kriek, as convenor, together with Christo Kannenberg and Bruce McCormack have been instrumental in making these changes effective. A great deal of attention will need to be given to the question of professional fees in the near future in response to changes in the traditional client base and with far more attention being devoted to consultation

Planning issues

The Institute established a Planning Issues committee in 1990 to examine and report on issues that the Institute and the profession should be addressing in these changing times. The committee is headed by Bruce McCormack, assisted by Liz Hicks, Robert Lamont-Smith, Piet Claassen and myself. The committee submitted a significant report to the February Council meeting that drew attention to the following issues:

- * Membership and role of the Institute
- * Consensus on development issues
- * Promoting development in conflict situations
- * Position Papers on key planning issues
- * Involvement with planners in Africa and internationally

Council debated the report at some length and took two decisions: (i) to refer the report to Branches for discussion and comment; and (ii) to hold a one-day Council Workshop immediately before the June Council meeting to discuss the matters raised in the report.

The outcome of this Workshop was an important resolution about the Institute's role. It reads:

"The Institute needs to widen the focus of its activities in order for the profession to become more relevant in the changing environment".

This provides a benchmark for the debate on membership. Several alternative models are identified in the report. Council did not take a decision on one

or other of these, believing that wider debate was necessary. Other aspects of the report were accepted with minor modifications. Draft Position Papers had been prepared on the following topics:

- * Planners role in changing political environment
- * Public participation in planning
- * City form
- * Rural development

These were not discussed fully at the Workshop due to time constraints, but Council agreed, firstly to invite wider comment on these before finalising them and, secondly, to start work on additional papers on a) upgrading informal settlements, b) metropolitan planning, c) race and gender issues, d) professional fees and e) environmental issues. Papers on other topics would follow and members of the Institute are invited to submit proposals on these.

A revised report from the Planning Issues Workshop has recently been prepared and sent to the Branches with a request that each arrange appropriate ways of discussing the whole range of issues and the draft Position Papers with members in order to feed responses back to the Committee by the end of November.

This report, and its associated papers, is an important watershed for the Institute and the profession in South Africa. My thanks go to the committee, as well as to those members who have already contributed to the debate in Branch meetings and individual submissions, and to the entire Council who devoted a great deal of thought and time at the Workshop. It is a difficult task but one with which we need to persevere in the interests of town and regional planning in South Africa.

Conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Hon. Secretary, Amanda Louw; Hon. Treasurer, Tiaan Ehlers; and Secretaries Franca Guidici and Edy van Straaten; as well as all members of the Council and Branch committees for their hard work and support during the year. I also extend my best wishes to incoming President, Robert Lamont-Smith, Vice-President, Piet Claassen and to the new Council.