

## **CBE hosts Safety Health and Environment (S.H.E) Forum**

Safety provides a configurable Work Management interface, allowing a fully synchronised safety and workflow environment. The Council for Built Environment (CBE) hosted a forum on Safety, Health and Environment within the built environment on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2008 at the CBE's board room. The forum was attended by members and stakeholders of various health safety and environmental organisations.

In her opening statement to the CBE's Workshop in November 2004, the Minister of Public Works said "It is a known fact that the quality of work by some of our built environment professionals is deteriorating. I urge every single built environment professional in South Africa to start giving health and safety in the construction sector the priority it deserves."

Mr. Ehrhard Visser, Researcher at the CBE said that "It is clear that South Africa is experiencing a vast amount of difficulties in relation to safety, health and environment within the BEPs. The unfortunate consequences thereof seem to be the unintended loss of lives, capital, and reputation, not to mention the impact it has on the country's economy".

Speaking during his presentation, Head of Department at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) School of Construction Management, and Councilor of SACPCMP, Professor John Smallwood, said that the Built Environment sector needs to make a paradigm shift in terms of matters relating to Health and Safety in the built environment. Professor Smallwood also made specific mention of the need for improved safety on construction sites where implementation of safety and health precautions are essential.

The acting Chief Inspector at the Department of Labour, Mr. Tibor Szana, said that "As construction is a major employer in South Africa, health and safety should not be our priority but something that we value to address as a collective built environment profession".

The objectives of the forum were:

1. Identification of specific issues of S.H.E that affect the Built Environment professions.
2. Identification of roles of the six professions, pertaining to S.H.E.

3. To understand the levels of compliance and non compliance in the built environment.
4. To identify areas of research for the CBE and the role that can be played by the CBE.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Council for the Built Environment, Mr. Bheki Zulu, said programmes must be initiated, especially at universities that offer courses in the built environment, to deal with challenges regarding S.H.E. issues that seem to persist in the built environment professions.

The Manager of Governance Support at the South African Council for Property Valuers profession (SACPVP) Mr. Avhatakali Khorommbi said that a review of admission criteria of built environment councils should be considered.

Representing the Department of Public Works, the Deputy Director General, Mrs. Lydia Bici suggested that a charter for health and safety should be developed in the built environment profession.

In conclusion Mr. Visser had the following to say, "A major skill shortage, discrepancies between educational outcomes and industry needs, a lack of awareness of even basic health and safety requirements, an attitude of non-compliance to policy and legislation, not taking the environment into consideration during planning and implementation phases, and an indifference over policy and legislation, are the major contributors to the problems being experienced".

**By: Moses Mohlopi**