

Message

Message from the NACA President

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Since its establishment in 1969, the National Association for Clean Air (NACA) has actively promoted the cause for clean air in South Africa. In all its years of advocacy, NACA had never envisaged a year like 2020; where the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic triggered the South African government to temporarily shut the country down by closing workplaces, emptying roads and public spaces. This reduction in economic activity also resulted in reduced pollution in the country during that period. A number of studies have shown a reduction in SO_x, NO_x and particulate matter at ground level concentrations during the lockdown in early to mid-2020.

A difficult and challenging year for many and NACA was no exception. All plans envisaged for the year, including hosting of seminars, courses and the popular annual conference had to be reviewed; a new normal was upon us. The world of work as we knew it had changed. NACA successfully migrated to the new normal, hosted, and co-hosted a series of Seminars in 2020. A virtual seminar was co-hosted with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) in July of 2020 and was titled: *COVID-19 and Air Quality in South Africa*. The event was a success, attended by over 110 people, and highlighted a diverse set of tools available to evaluate air quality in South Africa including ambient monitoring, satellite retrievals and modelling.

The NACA regional branches also adapted to this new normal and Western Cape branch organised a seminar in August, which explored the implementation of policy at an industrial facility level as well as the application of portable and low costs sensors in managing air quality.

KwaZulu-Natal branch organised an outreach event at Sobantu Secondary School and Russell JP Primary School in Pietermaritzburg in October 2020.

From the 16th to the 20th of November, NACA hosted its first virtual conference with over 130 attendees, 21 manuscripts were accepted for presentation and publication in the 2020 proceedings. Special thanks goes out to the organising committee; who tirelessly put in the hours to make this event the success it was under new and challenging circumstances. Our sponsors; who bought into NACA's vision of adhering to COVID-19 restrictions and protocols and financially supported the conference. The scientific review panel; who started the review process early in the year with over 30 submissions, the

exhibitors; who adapted to the new way of virtual exhibition and most of all the attendees who in their numbers attended all the conference sessions and afternoon workshops.

As incoming president of NACA my biggest highlight for the year 2020 was the relaunch of our outreach programmes. Many thanks go out to the outgoing president, Professor Stuart Piketh and council members who successfully launched this schools outreach platform on the NACA website, aimed at bringing air quality science and education to both the teacher and the learner at primary and secondary school level.

The Clean Air Journal (CAJ) is NACA's premier platform for electronic dissemination of information on air quality science and management and will continually be supported as such. I look forward to the *special issue on Air Quality on the South African Highveld* planned for this year.

The year 2021 promises to be yet another successful year for NACA, with COVID restrictions being adjusted to more lenient levels, we will be hosting a joint hybrid conference with DFFE. Our outreach programme will grow bigger and go further and, COVID restrictions allowing, more engagements with schools and communities will be held. NACA's social media footprint has a dedicated council member who, through media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and the NACA webpage will seek to increase our visibility, connect with our members and the scientific community at large and give a platform for scientific debate and discussion.

From the NACA council and I, we wish you and your families a safe and healthy 2021.

Gabi Mkhathswa
NACA President 2021