



MEDIA RELEASE

IWMSA President Suzan Oelofse discusses the future of women in the Waste Management Industry

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The waste industry has long been perceived as a rather dirty business with low ethical standards. But it appears things are shifting and surprisingly, women are increasingly active in driving the change towards a more innovative, ethical and properly legislated industry.

Newly-appointed President of the Institute of Waste Management Southern Africa (IWMSA), Dr Suzan Oelofse, says perceptions are changing with regard to the waste industry and in particular the role of women in waste management.

“Women are realising that working with waste does not mean you are wasting your talents, or that you need to lose your femininity”, says Oelofse.

“On the contrary, women are much-needed in the waste industry, due to their natural instincts to protect human health and potential to make a real difference. In South African households, it is most often the women taking responsibility for waste management.”

The Future of the South African Waste Industry

Oelofse joined the IWMSA in 2006, with a view to benefiting from the networking and knowledge-sharing events offered by the IWMSA at the time. Since joining Oelofse has been integral in the management of the IWMSA and took up the reins as IWMSA President on 01 July 2013.

Her main areas of focus will be strengthening relationships with Government; strengthening the role of the IWMSA in regulating the industry; and shifting the focus from waste disposal to the use of innovative technologies, to realise the resource potential of waste”.

“All new developments under the Waste Act have implications for both our members and the waste industry as a whole,” says Oelofse. “It is therefore imperative that the waste sector's voice is heard at the appropriate level to have the necessary influence and impact towards improved waste management standards and legislation.”

Given the increased need for a regulatory body to oversee the conduct of the waste industry, Oelofse says she will further endeavour to position the IWMSA favourably for taking up this role and working with the authorities towards establishing a mutually acceptable system.

About the future of the waste in South Africa, Oelofse predicts that we will soon see an increased focus on recycling and waste separation in most households.

“Women in particular are seeking out information around environmentally-

friendly practices they can perform at home and taking real steps towards improving their personal waste management. With more and more women entering the industry – on every level – I envisage a radical shift over the next few years towards a ethical, innovative and properly legislated industry.”

For more information about the IWMSA visit www.iwmsa.co.za

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Media contact:

Regine le Roux

Mobile: 083 302 1528

Landline: 011 317 3861

Email: regine@reputationmatters.co.za

About the IWMSA

The Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) is a multi-disciplinary non-profit association that is committed to supporting professional waste management practices.

Our organisation comprises of voluntary members who promote environmentally acceptable, cost effective and appropriate waste management practices. We strive towards the protection of the environment and people of Southern Africa from the adverse effects of poor waste management by supporting sustainable best practical environmental options.

We contribute to the improvement of waste management standards and legislation, support international, national and regional trends in best environmental practices; promote the science and technology of waste management and practice affordable cost effective management of waste. Education and training in the realm of effective and efficient waste management is also a key focus for us.

When the IWMSA was established over 30 years ago, it was the vision of the founders to provide South Africa with a clean and healthy environment. Today this is still the very core of the organisation.