



Institute of  
Waste Management  
of Southern Africa

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Women in Waste – how they are changing the field

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Immediate Release

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*Caption: Generally dubbed a 'man's world', the remarkable women who serve on the council for the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) are showing how influential and much needed women in waste are. Prof Suzan Oelofse (left picture) is the President of the IWMSA and serving alongside her are Margot Ladouce (middle picture), Chairperson at the IWMSA Western Cape Branch and Nomakhwezi Nota (right picture), Chairperson at the IWMSA Eastern Cape Branch. With a vision to better the country as a whole in the way waste is dealt with, these incredible women are laying the foundation.*

These three noteworthy women have over 44 years' combined experience in the waste management field. Prof Suzan Oelofse, Research Group Leader for Waste for Development at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research's (CSIR) Natural Resources and Environment Operating Unit, joined the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) in early 2006 and has been the non-profit's President since 2013. Margot Ladouce, Head of Research and Development – Solid Waste Disposal at the City of Cape Town has been a long-standing member of the IWMSA since 2005. Nomakhwezi Nota, Managing Director at AMN Environmental Pty (Ltd) realised her passion for the waste industry in 2008 when she joined the CSIR, hitting its full potential in 2013 when she started environmental consulting in East London.

“Women are much needed in the waste industry and with more and more women pursuing careers in waste management – on every level – I envisage a radical shift over the next few years towards an ethical, innovative and compliant industry,” says Oelofse.

Since joining the IWMSA in 2014, Nota took the initiative to spread the IWMSA’s involvement in more Eastern Cape towns, other than East London and Port Elizabeth. She and her team achieved great success with an approximate 10% increase in membership from organisations and individuals with a hunger to learn more about waste management.

In the Western Cape, Ladouce took on the challenge of organising the IWMSA’s flagship conference, WasteCon. WasteCon2014 proved to be a huge success with over 450 delegates in attendance. The conference attracted key players in the waste management industry, ultimately facilitating dialogue and participation between government and industry players.

### **Value in Waste**

Frequenting industrial sites early on in her career, Oelofse describes how she could not understand why the heaps of waste could not be used for something else. “The thought that all waste generated is in essence the result of consumer demand and consumption, made me realise how unsustainable human activities are and thus my passion for waste management was born”, says Oelofse.

Ladouce adds by explaining where South Africa’s waste industry is heading towards, “Waste should be seen as a resource. Through proper management and processing, waste can add value and can be used to beneficiate and make a noticeable difference to the GDP of South Africa. This can be done through implementation of waste to energy, anaerobic digestion and composting technologies. It is also a vehicle to create opportunities for entrepreneurs.”

Nota mentions that although waste management was not explicitly mentioned in the initial presentation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the targets and indicators identified for the MDGs clearly show important links between waste management and the MDGs. “These links are indicative of how better management of waste can lead to improvements and poverty reduction aimed at achieving the set MDGs. Significant proportions of populations depend on waste management for their livelihood, and there are opportunities for more employment generation as services extend to cover the rapidly-growing populations globally. Proper waste management has a significant impact on the lives, health and surroundings of humans and the environment,” explains Nota.

### **Promotion of dialogue with all industry stakeholders**

The IWMSA continues to strive to be at the forefront of waste management practices, as well as to support entrepreneurs and encourage young professionals to embark on a career in waste management.

“I love encouraging young professionals to ensure that we are able to sustain what we have initiated through proper engagement with our up and coming young scientists and engineers,” mentions Ladouce.

Nota adds that as a developing country, the increasing population demographics require more innovative thinkers in the waste industry as more waste will be generated in future – a fantastic opportunity for young waste enthusiasts.

Commenting on her role as President, Oelofse says, “Being the President of the IWMSA provides me with the opportunity to influence the strategic direction of the IWMSA to ensure that we remain relevant and that we continue to make a difference in the waste management community.” Establishing a working relationship with the Department of Environmental Affairs has been an achievement that Oelofse is most proud of since having joined the IWMSA team.

The IWMSA encourages the public to help with its plight in preserving the country by getting involved in recycling initiatives. The IWMSA is hosting two thought-provoking conferences this year namely Landfill2015 in the Western Cape and The Road to Zero Waste conference in the Eastern Cape.

For more information on the IWMSA, Landfill2015 and The Road to Zero Waste, visit [www.iwmsa.co.za](http://www.iwmsa.co.za) or contact 011-675-3462. The IWMSA is also on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/iwmsa>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/IWMSA>).

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