

TPSA votes to merge with SACIA

Over the past few months a task group made of representatives from the TPSA and SACIA have been crafting a proposal for the merger of the two organisations. The TPSA has been represented in this task group by Kagiso Moima, Duncan Riley and Jameson Hlongwane, while Gavin Olivier and Bruce Genricks have represented SACIA.



During October SACIA and the TPSA hosted their first joint-training programme aimed at AV professionals working in the staging and live-events industry. More than 20 students explored the science and technology behind today's modern AV systems.

The Technical Production Services Association (TPSA) and SACIA merger task group's proposal has been unanimously accepted by the SACIA and TPSA boards. The TPSA will be established as a special interest group within SACIA.

The strategic vision of TPSA will continue to be defined by an Advisory Board comprising Duncan Riley, Kagiso Moima, Mike Jones, Paul Newman and Guillaume Ducray. This five-person Board will be appointed to serve for an initial six-month period until April 2015, following which a new TPSA Advisory Board will be elected from amongst the membership.

All existing TPSA committees and task groups will continue operating within SACIA and operational management of the TPSA will transition to SACIA's executive director, Kevan Jones.

Both groups believe that by merging SACIA and the TPSA there is an opportunity to provide long-term value to members, and Jones asserts that the value of this merger is already manifesting itself in direct benefits to members. "Our GEN111 AV Essentials class delivered during October was our first training programme delivered jointly with the TPSA," he explains. "The class was aimed at AV professionals already working in industry and was hosted as part of a programme encouraging continuous professional development. About half the class were TPSA members and the feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive."

dbAudio, a long-time TPSA member sent two delegates from Namibia, while TCH Bonisa, an events company in Johannesburg, sent three delegates. "I started working as an AV technician in 2011," relates Jesaya Johannes from dbAudio, "but

our sources of information are limited in Namibia and we rely heavily on the manufacturers and distributors to help us resolve technical issues. The GEN111 'Essentials of AV technology' course has allowed me to learn more in a condensed amount of time, giving me a better understanding of the science behind the equipment I use on a daily basis.

"I can also reflect on the connections between audio, light, power, environment and vision – how all of these elements need to be factored into planning and implementing AV. I am better equipped to make informed decisions when planning an event. Thank you SACIA for this eye opening and informative course. I would highly recommend it to any AV technician."

Gavin Barron, partner at TCH Bonisa Events is equally enthusiastic about his learning experience.

"I must profess I was a bit hesitant to do this course when my business partner suggested it to me," he admits. "Being in the industry for a long time, you tend to think you know it all. But I was pleasantly surprised with the amount of content and quality of the course material. My colleagues and I found it very rewarding and informative. I must also compliment all the other companies that sent their staff on the course. It just shows how much people care about their staff to encourage further training. I think our group was a great bunch of people and I hope we'll meet up again at future SACIA events."

TPSA members also gain instant access to the wide range of online training programmes available to SACIA members, including specialist audio training from Syn-Aud-Con and video production training offered through Class On Demand.

"While access to professional development training is important, the real value to TPSA members lies in our capacity to engage with members and industry stakeholders in a meaningful way," explains Jones.

"We're already planning a series of member events that'll take place in January 2015. We're also ramping up our engagements with government and regulatory bodies. This is particularly important in terms of the new BB-BEE Transformation Charter approved by the Department of Trade & Industry. The live events industry has been identified as a sector that has been particularly slow in embracing transformation and black economic empowerment, and government is now implementing programmes to accelerate the pace of change in the marketplace. These programmes will have a dramatic impact on established players in our marketplace. While there have been many people who've resisted transformation up till this point, the new regulatory framework means that companies who fail to make a commitment to the process of transformation will be severely handicapped."

This expanded capacity is a critical feature for Duncan Riley, chair of the TPSA special interest group within SACIA. "Over the last year the TPSA board has explored various options that would allow us to provide meaningful value to our members," says Riley. "This merger with SACIA stands head and shoulders above all other options we considered. SACIA has a growing membership and, by forging this alliance, we believe we'll deliver real value to our own members in the live events industry." ▶