

# Chairperson’s Report

The WESSA Board sees its fundamental role as guiding and overseeing the organisation’s strategic direction, strengthening governance, and ensuring accountability in performance, risk, compliance, and stakeholder engagement.

We have made significant progress in deepening governance and strengthening oversight, with enhanced financial reporting, improved fiscal discipline, and cycles of quarterly Board and Committee meetings. The Board remains well-balanced in diversity, skills, and experience, ensuring robust deliberation and collective wisdom in decision-making.

A key milestone was the January 2025 strategy workshop, where the Board and Executive together shaped a refocused strategy that will guide WESSA over the next five years. This strategy reaffirms WESSA’s commitment to environmental stewardship through education, advocacy, and citizen action, while focusing on being lean, patient, and impactful – with our mission to educate, advocate, and act for environmental and social justice, climate action, biodiversity protection, and pollution reduction in Southern Africa.

To ensure alignment with WESSA’s mission, the Board Committees have sharpened their focus:

- **Membership and Volunteers Committee:** Newly established during this year, this committee is working to align membership engagement with WESSA’s strategy, ensuring that participation in WESSA is accessible, meaningful, and empowers citizens to be active environmental stewards.
- **Revenue Generation and Investment Committee:** This committee has refocused on diversifying revenue streams and has laid the foundation for the WESSA Legacy Fund – a longterm vehicle to ensure financial sustainability for WESSA’s second century and investing into One-WESSA initiatives strongly aligned to our strategy.



- **Environmental Governance Committee:** This committee drafted and published WESSA’s positions on Mining and Energy, and is now finalising a Water Policy, with a special focus on sewage pollution – an issue that will define WESSA’s advocacy work in the years ahead.
- **Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee:** This committee has been instrumental in building WESSA’s financial position and compliance. With a strong focus on ensuring streamlining of WESSA’s structures and audit readiness, this committee is driving force in the background that ensures WESSA is a trusted, accountable and transparent organisation.
- **Social and Ethics Committee:** This committee has been instrumental in oversight of social and ethical matters and in ensuring that WESSA is and remains a committed socially responsible corporate citizen as per the Companies Act and King IV Guidelines.
- **Remuneration Committee and Nominations Committee** respectively have contributed to WESSA journey to become an employer of choice and have ensured that our board is well balanced and appropriately equipped to drive the organisation’s strategy.

Operationally, the Board has supported the move towards a “One-WESSA” approach that has strengthened collaboration between our staff and WESSA’s five regional membership structures. This integrated model will ensure that skills, resources, and capacity are optimised across the organisation, leading to greater coordination, sharper focus on strategic imperatives, and ultimately, greater environmental impact!

Looking ahead, as we approach our centenary, the Board recognises that WESSA’s longevity lies not only in reflecting on past achievements but also in galvanising support for the journey ahead. The performance of Directors has been regularly assessed through a self-evaluation system, and I extend my gratitude to my fellow Board members for their commitment, wisdom, and the significant time they contribute on a pro bono basis. I also want to acknowledge the remarkable efforts of our CEO, Cindy-Lee Cloete, and her Executive team, who have navigated the organisation with agility and purpose in a resource-constrained environment. Our staff, members, volunteers, donors, and supporters have all contributed to WESSA’s achievements, and I thank each of you sincerely.

As we stand at the threshold of WESSA’s 100th year, I call on all our stakeholders: our members, our staff, partners, and our funders, to strengthen your support and engagement. Together, let us ensure that WESSA not only celebrates a proud centenary but also steps confidently into its next century as a trusted and enduring force for environmental and social justice.

*J. Davies*

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WESSA Board Chair

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