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### **THE CONCRETE INSTITUTE HERALDS A NEW DISPENSATION FOR THE INDUSTRY**

A newly constituted industry body, The Concrete Institute, funded by AfriSam, Lafarge and new cement producer, Sephaku, will continue the valuable services provided by the Cement & Concrete Institute (C&CI), which closed down in April this year after 75 years of service to the industry, following the withdrawal of funding from some key funding members. It is hoped that this new body will also play a role in uniting other representative bodies in the built environment to present a more united front to government.

“The C&CI played an invaluable role in promoting the interests and general advancement of the cement and concrete industries as a whole in southern Africa and its closure prompted many industry voices to lament the loss of the important knowledge repository that would be lost,” Grant Nesor, AfriSam sales and marketing executive says. “Its value lay in the fact that the C&CI was an industry body that represented the entire industry and the information it disseminated and the position that it represented was completely independent and professional and in no way biased in favour of the cement producers or a particular supplier.

“The C&CI played a very important role in providing training, information, consultation and advisory services to the built environment industry. AfriSam always supports industry bodies that add value to our industry and we quickly realised that this body was too important to disappear from the business arena. We decided to take action and when we approached Lafarge and Sephaku with a proposal to jointly fund a new, more compact and cost effective body, they readily agreed — for the same reasons.”

Under the leadership of Bryan Perrie, the former MD of the C&CI, the Concrete Institute opened its doors in Waterfall Park, Midrand, in May and is offering most of the services previously provided by the C&CI, including the training centre and training laboratory, an information centre and library, consulting services and publications, as well as a free advisory service.

“The former C&CI’s concrete marketing activities will not continue under the new institute as we believe marketing is better accomplished by the respective industry players,” Nesor comments. “The exclusion of these activities will also reduce operational costs. As a non-profit company, in addition to income generated through training and consultation the institute could generate income through sponsorships and advertising”.

“In this new dispensation we intend to invite other built environment industry bodies to participate in guiding the direction of The Concrete Institute by sitting on its Board. One of the biggest challenges we face in the built environment is the slow delivery of government-backed projects. The private sector has not been effective in engaging government on ways to unlock delivery, mainly because the built environment private sector has been so fragmented in its approach. We therefore believe the participation of other industry bodies in the institute will help establish a more unified approach to the industry’s relationship with government and facilitate improved partnerships between the private sector and government. Ideally it could help to enable faster delivery of infrastructure projects at all levels – municipal, provincial and national.”

All the courses offered by the former C&CI’s School of Concrete Technology 2013 Training Programme are being offered by The Concrete Institute, which has also taken over the running of the Advanced Concrete Technology course, which was underway when the C&CI closed.

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FROM : CORALYNNE & ASSOCIATES  
TEL : +27 011 422 1949  
EMAIL : [communicate@coralynne.co.za](mailto:communicate@coralynne.co.za)  
WEBSITE: [www.coralynne.co.za](http://www.coralynne.co.za)

FOR : NTAGA MOJAPELO  
AFRISAM  
TEL : +27 011 670 5541  
EMAIL : [ntaga.mojapelo@za.afrisam.com](mailto:ntaga.mojapelo@za.afrisam.com)  
[www.afrisam.com](http://www.afrisam.com)