

SANCOT and the International Tunnelling Association (ITA)

On the resignation of Andrew Wilson as the outgoing Chairman of SANCOT, Ron Tluczek was elected as the new SANCOT Chairman on 9 April 2014.

Ron is a Professional (Geotechnical) Engineer with more than 36 years' experience, primarily in consulting engineering. He has experience in all aspects of project management and administration of civil and geotechnical related projects, including investigation, field and laboratory testing, analysis, risk assessment, reporting, contract documentation, monitoring, quality assurance, supervision, and budget control. He has acted as an expert witness, as review consultant, and is involved with claims evaluation. He is currently an executive with AECOM SA (Pty) Ltd and is responsible for all tunnelling and geotechnical work in Africa.



Ron is a member of the Association of Arbitrators and the Institute of Waste Management. He is also a member of Working Group 2 (Research) with the International Tunnelling Association (ITA). He represented South Africa at the ITA General Assembly which was recently held in Iguassu, Brazil.

Ron was born in Broken Hill (now called Kabwe) in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), where he attended junior school. His family later relocated to Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where he attended Gifford Technical High. At high school he accumulated seven 'A' Level subjects, a record which he still holds today. On leaving high school, Ron studied civil engineering at the University of Cape Town where he graduated in 1975, after which he did his military training in what was then the Rhodesian army.

Ron's first job was on the Du Toitskloof Pilot Bore Tunnel where he found his passion for rock mechanics, and specifically tunnelling. He has since worked on some 16 tunnelling projects, some of the major underground projects including the following:

- The Richards Bay Coal Line, where Ron was responsible for the site investigation, rock support design, and writing relevant specifications for two single-track and one double-track railway tunnel and approach works
- The Palmiet Pumped Storage Scheme for ESKOM near Grabouw in the Western Cape. Ron was instrumental in the site investigation, design, tender documentation, and site supervision for the underground works, including tunnels and shafts
- The Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme, where he was initially involved with the site investigation, design, and contract documentation for the delivery tunnels. Later, Ron was involved on-site with the rock support assessment for the galleries, footprint, and appurtenant works for Katse Dam
- The Gautrain Rapid Rail Link in Gauteng, which comprised the construction of 80 km of new rail link, 10 stations (four of which are underground), 15 km of tunnelling (3 km of which were excavated by means of tunnel boring machine), and 20 km of viaducts (the majority over dolomite / karst geology). Ron was a member of the Technical Advisory Team from inception and was responsible for all geotechnical and tunnelling aspects. He still acts in an advisory capacity to the Gautrain Management Agency.

Ron is the author and co-author on numerous locally and internationally published papers on tunnel design, pumped storage schemes, and rock support in general.

Ron is married to Merryn and they have two daughters, Heather and Meryl.

H.J. Tluczek