

# Foreword

*Well done Tukkies!*

This year marks the 50th year that the Department of Mining Engineering of the University of Pretoria has been providing skilled mining engineers not only to South Africa, but also to several other mining countries of the world.

Much has been said about the skills shortage in South Africa, and in the case of mining, it is known that the shortage is worldwide. The universities play a vital role in creating skills capacity for the future. South African mining engineers are known to be well educated and highly skilled, and are therefore in demand the world over.

It is known that mining engineers occasionally migrate to other disciplines. Many find satisfying careers in the financial world. While it is sad that their talents are lost to the mining industry, they still contribute to the growth of South Africa, applying their knowledge and analytical skills to other fields.

It is not necessary to emphasize the role of the mining industry in the South African economy; it is well known. Suffice it to say that without the mining industry, there would have been very little difference between South Africa and the underdeveloped countries of the world.

The mining industry in South Africa has a bright future. We have the minerals that the rest of the world needs. We have the world's largest resources of platinum, manganese, and gold and we are among the top 10 resource holders of at least another 13 minerals.

This is a mining country. We have the experience, the skills, and the knowledge to create wealth out of the bounty underneath the surface.

Yet, that is not enough to guarantee a future. The world is forever changing. Each generation mines whatever is the easiest and most economical to mine at any point in time. This implies that as time passes, mining becomes ever more challenging. We have to continually mine less economical deposits under increasingly difficult conditions.

The universities have to provide the skills to mine in the future under new conditions that are difficult to predict. New mining engineers have to be taught to think on their feet, and to solve new problems against a mining background.

The University of Pretoria has been doing this for 50 years. Their graduates proudly take their place in the top positions in the South African mining industry, well equipped to strategize for the future.

The SAIMM is proud of its association with UP. We are proud to have co-hosted a number of important conferences, to see a strong and active Pretoria branch of the SAIMM at the University, and to assist needy students. Moreover, we are proud to offer a vocational home to the Tukkie graduates.

*We wish you the best of luck for the next 50 years!* ◆



**J.N. van der Merwe**  
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