

# SPOTLIGHT

## PASTE2012

### 15th International Seminar on Paste and Thickened Tailings

16–19 April 2012, Sun City, Pilansberg, South Africa



**T**he fifteenth seminar on paste and thickened tailings technology, Paste 2012, was held at Sun City from 17 to 19 April 2012. This event is the premier international forum for the development of technologies associated with the disposal of high-density waste tailings, and deals with developments in dewatering technologies, such as thickening and flocculation, advances in pump and pipeline technology, and surface and mine backfill.



This seminar series began in 1999 and is run under the auspices of the Australian Centre for Geomechanics. The event is held every four years in southern Africa, and 2012 was the first time that the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy organized the event locally. A one-day workshop on the use of polymers for solid-liquid separation preceded the seminar, and a post-seminar site visit to Assmang Khumani Mine's high-density disposal site ensured that the delegates had the opportunity to experience the practical application of the technology.

The 29 papers presented at the seminar highlighted the current innovative thinking in the industry. The advances in polymer technology are providing unique ways to dewater materials at the discharge, and this is likely to play a major role in the future as mines strive to minimize water consumption. Several papers dealt with the issue of the slope of the beach on the deposition site. This is an important issue as it has a significant impact on the overall footprint of the disposal facility. It is clear that this is a contentious area, as the topic resulted in healthy debate from the more than 290 delegates.

Several case studies showed that more and more practitioners are adopting, or considering, the placement of highly dewatered tailings. As this technology matures, new technical challenges arise, and the boundaries continue to be explored to find cost-effective engineering solutions, as evidenced by the papers presented at Sun City.

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