



The SAIMM convenes a platinum conference, around a theme, every two years. Previous themes have been "Platinum Adding Value" in 2004, "Platinum Surges Ahead" in 2006, "Platinum in Transformation" in 2008, and "Platinum in Transition – Boom or Bust" in 2010. With increasing industry maturity it was felt that an appropriate theme for 2012 was platinum as a "Catalyst for Change".

The conference was a high-quality event with an overwhelming vote of support and positive response from the many delegates that I engaged with. I was pleasantly surprised with the attendance, given the current disrupted state of the industry.

The event was well supported, with 295 attendees of whom 34 were from outside of South Africa. The programme was well balanced, covering both technical and socio-economic issues in the keynotes and the paper sessions, with the market perspective and the final day panel discussion nicely rounding off the programme. A total of 74 papers were presented across 35 sessions. The keynote topics covered challenges and opportunities in the platinum industry (C. Griffith, Anglo American); the role of leadership in making the difference between good and bad change (J. Koolen, Independent Strategy Consultant); the hiatus in South Africa's economic transformation and how to restart it (M. Rossouw, Xstrata Alloys, and Chairman–Energy Intensive Users' Group of South Africa); roles, responsibilities, and accountability for sustainability (S. Phiri, Royal Bafokeng Holdings); events at Mangaung and Marikana and the unforeseen impact of mining policy in South Africa (M. Solomon); and an overview of the performance of the health and safety sector (D. Msiza, Department of Mineral Resources). The papers selected for publication in this edition of the Journal reflect a cross-section of topics across sessions.

Despite the challenging times, the conference team managed to secure record sponsorship, with some forward "commitment" to the 6th International Platinum Conference in 2014. Sponsorship of the event was exceptional, with 25 companies choosing to take sponsorship packages and/or to exhibit. A sincere "thank you" is due to all sponsors, without whom events of this nature cannot be offered to our members at competitive prices.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to the volunteers who made up the Organising Committee and the conferencing team of the SAIMM; you did a stunning job.

Gordon L. Smith Pr Eng PhD
Chairman
Organising Committee