



Reflections on 2016 and a look ahead to 2017

As we approach the end of the 2016 calendar year, it is time for us to take stock of the past 12 months and imagine what lies ahead. What does 2017 have in store for the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy? I can only imagine that the wheels will continue to turn positively for the mining industry from where we draw our membership and support, as this has a positive bearing on us as the SAIMM. Yes, 2016 has been a challenging year for our industry, but we all know that the commodities market is cyclical and our world requires us to continue extracting minerals in order to sustain human survival. So, the glimmer of hope cannot fade away, because as the common adage says, 'if it is not mined it must be grown!' It would be remiss of me not to share some optimism with you for our mining industry in the medium term. The 2016 calendar year has also been a challenging one for the SAIMM as we could not attract sufficient delegates to some of our conferences, resulting in a depressed financial performance for the Institute. However, as the SAIMM, we still stand firm due to our resilient pedigree. Let me share with you some reflections on 2016 to see why we remain firm.

We are what we are because of the excellent teamwork that goes into the SAIMM's activities, starting with our office staff, whose sterling efforts I deeply appreciate. We had one resignation from our conferencing team, but we re-arranged ourselves without having to recruit a replacement. A retiring staff member at the end of the year will also not be replaced, as some roles in the office will be re-defined. We will start 2017 with a new objective to specifically address our communication needs so that the SAIMM is more visible on the social media platforms. We have to remain relevant and adapt to the needs of our younger membership.

The SAIMM functions well because of the professional volunteerism from our members who serve on committees that underpin the Institute's key functions. I would like at this point to personally thank all our members who give of their time to provide such service. Their contribution ensures that the SAIMM can continue to deliver value to our membership. For example, the SAMREC/SAMVAL Committee (SSC) this year produced updated 2016 editions of our internationally recognized SAMCODES, which were launched at the SAMREC/SAMVAL Companion Volume Conference, held from 17 to 18 May 2016 at Emperors Palace in Johannesburg. I extend an open invitation to our broad membership to join committees so that, looking ahead to 2017, we can grow from strength to strength as an Institute.

This edition of the *Journal* is not a themed edition, but is comprised of papers of general and topical interest from different countries, including China, Sweden, Australia, Iran, Poland, and South Africa of course. This demonstrates that we continue to maintain the international character of our *Journal*. I am happy to tell you that the *Journal's* impact factor has increased in the past three years, from 0.17 in 2013 to 0.22 in 2014 and 0.24 in 2016, showing that readers across the globe find value in our published papers and indicate this by citing them. I am therefore inviting our readership to also consider submitting technical research papers to our premier journal as we look ahead to 2017.

It is with considerable sadness that we also note the passing away of several of our long-standing members during 2016. We owe it to them to continue upholding the values that the SAIMM stands for and contribute to making it the great organization that it is and should be. Let us enter 2017 with a refreshed sense that the SAIMM is our organization and every contribution we make individually, no matter how small it may seem, goes a long way in ensuring the vibrancy of our beloved Institute. I am proposing a 2017 New Year's resolution for the SAIMM membership – let us re-ignite our professional volunteerism within our ranks and serve the SAIMM!

I would like to now take this opportunity to wish you all and your families a safe and enjoyable 2016 festive season. I trust that we will all return safely to work in January 2017 and make it a productive and memorable year. I am looking forward to interacting with you again on the President's Corner during 2017!

C. Musingwini
President, SAIMM