

President's
Corner



I would like to welcome you all to the new 2017/2018 term of the SAIMM. I hope you are all as excited as I am about what lies ahead. I am greatly looking forward to spending the next twelve months with you as we discuss and delve into different topics that interest us as members of this marvellous Institute.

As you are all aware, the SAIMM was established in 1894 and will be turning 125 years of age in 2019. The Institute has been built on a strong foundation of selfless commitment and diligence from its members; mostly on the basis of volunteerism. I would therefore, like to start off the year by acknowledging and thanking all the members of the SAIMM who have selflessly given of themselves and their time in the past, and will hopefully continue to do so in the future to keep the mission and goals of the Institute alive and active. It is indeed not easy, especially as we try to balance our demanding careers and personal lives. However, it does add value to our worth as we contribute to a bigger goal than our individual selves.

The SAIMM is built on the foundations of the mining and minerals industry. The Institute serves the interests of the professionals that work in the industry and has grown from strength and strength due to the support of the mining industry and related companies from which most of our members are drawn. It is interesting to note that although the mining and minerals landscape has changed from what it was 120 years ago, we still continue to receive a lot of support from the mining industry. We should not take this support lightly, but be more cognizant of it and the value that it embodies. It also interesting to note that the focus of the SAIMM, which has always been to keep the interests of its members at the forefront, has not changed since the inception of the institute in 1894. However, this does not mean that the SAIMM has remained stagnant. If this was the case, it would not have survived to the present day this age. In my Presidential Address, I alluded to the fact that standing still is the same as going backwards and that companies that do not innovate get left behind and subsequently perish. Since we have made it to this age, it is evident that this cannot be said of our Institute. We have never stood still; we have continued to change while keeping our key mission and goals in focus. This has not always been easy. I am sure that if we delve into the history of the SAIMM and chat to those who have been part of the Institute over a long period, we would find that the Institute has faced numerous challenges in the past. Since the Institute is built on the foundations of the mining and minerals industry, such challenges should be expected. Just as the mining industry goes through cyclic downturns, it is natural for the SAIMM to go through challenges as well. And just as companies have had to reassess and re-evaluate their processes, structures, and operating procedures in order to remain competitive in the market, so the SAIMM has also had to make sure it had a clear and comprehensive grasp of external challenges as well as solutions in order to survive. Not only that, the SAIMM has also developed the capacity to see what others cannot see and thus turned such insight into opportunities. The Institute has had a comprehensive assessment of its strengths and limitations and has been committed to change where it has been relevant and appropriate. Where has all this come from you might ask? The source of the Institute's strength has always been its members. Members who have shown an interest in the Institute's activities have thus forced the Institute to always reassess and re-evaluate its offerings to its members as well as its standing as a professional organization.

What is my key message in all this? It is that we should never sit back, but always strive for more. We don't want to become extinct, and we should never be afraid of change; change should be seen as a chance for new opportunities. Lastly, we should always remember that we are an amazing organization; not many organizations make it to 123 years of age, and we have defied the ravages of time. More significantly, the only reason we are this old is because of actively participating members. So, as your President, I say thank you, dankie, ngiyabonga, enkosi, kea leboha, ndo livhuwa!

S. Ndlovu
President, SAIMM