



## Seeing the value of the SAIMM



Being the President of a professional organization like the SAIMM can be quite demanding. However, it's not always stressful because there are quite a few pleasures and privileges that accompany the job. One of the significant pleasures is the interaction with members at all the numerous events that are organized by the Institute. Here you get to talk and listen to the views of the members on a number of issues facing the minerals industry. You get to hear all the good, the not so good, and the bad about the industry that we serve. You are always kept up to date, simply through that interaction with other professionals in the field. This is of significant value, especially considering how quickly technology is changing the minerals industry landscape.

During my interaction with both members and non-members of the Institute, I have had to appraise them of the value of maintaining their SAIMM membership or becoming a member. The SAIMM is a well-recognized and valued professional organization that serves the needs and interest of its members, and by extension the mining profession. The objectives of the Institute are to disseminate scientific and technical knowledge to the benefit of the minerals industry and to promote continuing professional education across Southern Africa through a number of activities. The SAIMM brand is well established, well trusted, and widely recognized for organizing first-class events. Events such as conferences, schools, workshops, and colloquia are the foundation through which independent knowledge-sharing platforms are facilitated by the Institute to discuss topical issues and other developments in the minerals industry. These events provide industry professionals with an opportunity to learn about technological and (sometimes) societal issues in the minerals sector and to further network with local and international professionals in the field. Such opportunities are priceless when it comes to career development, as well as maintaining and enriching your engineering knowledge.

As part of fulfilling its objective on technical and scientific dissemination, the SAIMM is also part of OneMine.org ([www.onemine.org](http://www.onemine.org)), where members have free access to over 100 000 papers from around the world *via* this database. OneMine.org is coordinated by SME ([www.smenet.org](http://www.smenet.org)) in the USA. Papers published through the monthly SAIMM journal are also hosted on the database, thereby providing a wider distribution for authors and thus a wider network of readership and citation. The SAIMM also provides its members with free access to some services of the technical library that combines the previous holdings of the Chamber of Mines (now Minerals Council South Africa) and the Anglo American libraries. The technical library offers free access to the catalogue and a monthly bulletin. Up to 10 free articles per month can be sent to a member via e-mail.

The Institute is also part of the Global Mineral Professional Alliance (GMPA). The GMPA is a collaboration between leading professional organizations for the minerals industry around the world. It comprises the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM), the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum (CIM), the Institute of Materials, Mining and Metallurgy (IOM<sup>3</sup>), the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (SAIMM), the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration Inc. (SME), and the Instituto de Ingenieros de Minas del Peru (IIMP). The participation of SAIMM in the GMPA ensures that members are able to enjoy reciprocal benefits from the other participating institutes and societies. The participation also enables SAIMM to obtain an understanding of how sister organizations in the minerals industry are operating, which helps benchmark the Institute's performance and activities for the benefit of its members.

## President's Corner *(continued)*

The SAIMM is 124 years old, and for the organization to see another century, young members should be central to its activities. These young professionals are the future of the minerals industry and the Institute. The Young Professionals Council (YPC) is an initiative that was established by the SAIMM to serve the interests of its young members (35 years and younger). I was fortunate enough to witness the initial establishment of the YPC in 2013. The growth and development of the YPC since its inception has continued to surpass expectations. Some of the successful initiatives run under the YPC banner include the establishment of an e-magazine, known as 'Youth in Mining and Metallurgy', the mentorship programme, and the graduate employment database. The mentorship programme helps to link young members who have an interest in being mentored with mentors that are drawn from the older members of the SAIMM. The employment database is a portal that aims to link unemployed young members with potential employers. All these activities are making an impact on the lives and careers of the students and young professional members of the Institute. Recently, one official from the DST asked me why our Institute is not blowing its trumpet loud when it comes to the successes of the YPC. This demonstrates the positive impact the YPC has had in the industry in such a short space of time.

Another value for young members that has been created by the SAIMM is the Scholarship Trust Fund. The fund was established to provide assistance to a greater number of needy students in the mining and metallurgical fields, who depend on personal or family funds for their educational needs. The SAIMM gives an annual donation to universities who then disperse the funds accordingly. This is a testament to the value that the SAIMM places on the future leaders of the industry.

In the presidential article in last month's SAIMM *Journal*, I wrote about one new SAIMM initiative, the committee for Diversity and Inclusion in the Minerals Industry (DIMI). Recently there has been an outcry over an opinion piece that was featured in the South African Institute of Civil Engineering (SAICE) magazine, written by the CEO of SAICE, Manglin Pillay. The article, ironically published during the month when women are celebrated, clearly diminishes the value of women in the engineering fields. The SAIMM does not share such views but looks to promote diversity (in all its forms) and inclusion in the minerals industry. This includes advancement and promotion of the needs and interests of women who are making their career in the industry. Through the DIMI committee, the SAIMM seeks to bring awareness to the industry on the importance of valuing the contributions brought to it by all diverse individuals.

As I write my last article as the President of the Institute, I wish to say that the value of the SAIMM as a home for professionals in the minerals industry cannot be underrated. It has been both an honor and a privilege to lead such a dynamic and vibrant organization this past year. I have grown as an individual and I have learned a lot from the members of the Institute. I want to sign off by saluting the members of the Institute who selflessly participate at all levels, and dedicate enormous effort and time to ensure that the values and missions of the Institute are kept alive. I have no doubt that we will leave a legacy to our children, who together with their descendants, will still see another century of the Institute. So, as your outgoing President, I say thank you, *dankie*, *ngiyabonga*, *enkosi*, *kea leboha*, *ndo livhuwa*.

**S. Ndlovu**  
*President, SAIMM*