



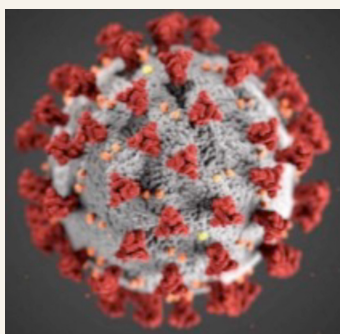
Diamonds: Source-to-Use, 2020



The *Diamonds: Source-to-Use 2020* conference was to have been held at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre during 9–11 June 2020. It was to have comprised 1½ days of presentations/exhibitions and two technical site visits, to Multotech and Epiroc, as well as a beer tasting event at Mad Giant Craft Beers. By early March, we had 21 confirmed papers, including two keynote addresses.

And then, just as elsewhere in the world, our plans were interrupted by the hard lockdown associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the SAIMM is well positioned to undertake virtual conferences, it was decided to rather wait until 2021 to hold a face-to-face meeting. Consequently, a new date of 8–10 June 2021 has been proposed. Given the difficulties of travel and the unknowns of how the pandemic will progress, we are looking at the possibility of holding a hybrid event, whereby delegates and presenters alike can either take advantage of a real conference or enjoy the benefits of virtual attendance.

The effects of the global pandemic have been seen across the entire diamond pipeline, disrupting production and sales as well as the entire downstream cutting and polishing industry. With no-one knowing how long these impacts will be with us, and not having certainly on what the post-COVID scene will look like, the theme of the conference – *Innovation and Technology* – is still appropriate, if not more so. We, as the global diamond community, will certainly have to apply our minds to the changed landscape and come up with new ways of doing business. We expect that the 2021 *Diamonds: Source to Use Conference* will attract many stimulating papers on the new 'normal' within the diamond industry, which may never look the same as it has in the past. We look forward to this new challenge with excitement and more than just a little trepidation.



In order to show our appreciation for the effort that many of the presenters had made to get their papers completed and peer-reviewed in time for the original conference, it was decided to give them the opportunity to publish in this edition of the SAIMM **Journal**. The papers in this volume highlight some of the advances made across the range of exploration, mineral processing evaluation, and reporting of diamond projects.

T.R. Marshall