

**President's  
Corner**

## Diversity and Inclusion in the Minerals Industry (DIMI)



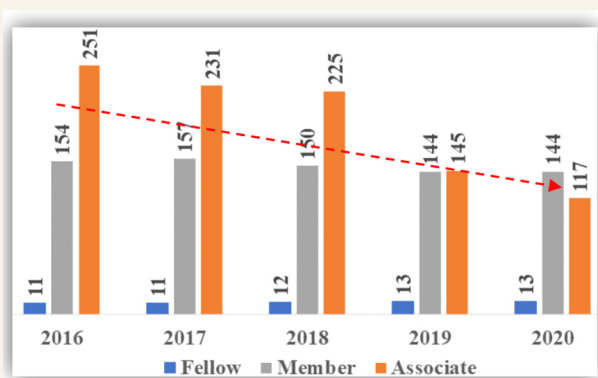
At the AGM, I spoke about why the SAIMM needs to adapt to a new and more modern mining industry. To this end, we have developed a strategy aimed at repositioning the SAIMM brand in the minds of our members, and indeed all of our stakeholders. There are six key components (or 'Pillars of Value') in our overall value proposition, and I intend briefly elaborating on each one of these over the coming months. One of these pillars is the importance of Diversity and Inclusion in the Minerals Industry (DIMI).

Let's 'take stock' by simply looking at our gender mix.

Our industry has a workforce that is made up of approximately 87% men and only 13% women. This is consistent with what we see in the SAIMM membership base, where about 11% of our 2 487 members are women.

The graph below reveals the makeup of the mix of female members in the SAIMM. It also shows that these numbers are dwindling, a trend which I believe can and should be reversed. Indeed, our Institute is well positioned to raise awareness on issues of diversity (*i.e.* around gender, ethnicity, religion, and other diversifying factors).

We all know that people are different, yet we are not always willing to embrace the rich diversity that this introduces into our industry. Our places of work should be free from any form of discrimination around, inter alia, race, culture, sexual orientation, age, gender, religion, and disability. Our leaders should be able to challenge conventional thinking by exploiting the mix of ideas (*i.e.* creativity) that usually materialises with the wider variety of skills, experience, and cultural approaches that comes with diversity.



We can all contribute by simply distancing ourselves from the levels of polarization that we currently encounter across our broader society. In fact, we should move beyond just workforce diversity and towards also embracing inclusion. This involves making it easier for people from different geographical regions, economic environments, and cultural groupings, to participate and build careers in our industry.

## President's Corner (continued)

It is for these reasons that your Institute has established a DIMI Committee to:

- Advance issues of diversity (gender, ethnicity, religion, and/or other diversifying factors) and inclusion
- Raise awareness regarding DIMI in the industry
- Create platforms for the development of strategies and decisions that will contribute to a more diverse and inclusive workforce
- Encourage and/or promote diversity on our committees and the SAIMM Council. This can materially complement the efforts of the mining industry as it seeks to establish a representative pipeline of senior leaders for the mining industry
- Establish collaborative linkages to support DIMI.

The DIMI Committee is currently chaired by Professor Selo Ndlovu. It is made up of passionate professionals from both industry and academia who are committed to making a real difference. They are particularly interested in the development of students and tomorrow's leaders. Online webinars, seminars, and workshops will be used to guide and assist students, who are usually unprepared for the range of cultures encountered in the working environment. This will lead to better understanding, better integration, and enhanced performance, which will in turn help us to retain their potential in the mineral industry and more particularly in the SAIMM.

The DIMI Committee is also collaborating with Women in Mining South Africa (WiMSA), and I was both privileged and pleased to have been invited to attend the Minerals Council South Africa's recently-held inaugural National Day of Women in Mining, which was a great success. A DIMI conference is being planned for August 2021 and papers have also already been published in the *Journal* of the SAIMM on the subject of diversity.

'The vision of SAIMM through the DIMI committee is to provide the industry with knowledge building platforms that will help empower the Southern African Minerals Industry through diversity, gender parity and inclusion.'

**V.G. Duke**  
*President, SAIMM*