



As we find ourselves in a world dominated by COVID-19, it is clear that the mining industry is not exempted from the impact of the pandemic. The industry will change in ways we cannot yet quite appreciate. This comes on top of the other challenges that mining (and indeed the wider world) is faced with, such as climate change, uncertain trade relations, and the imperatives of sustainable development. The coal mining industry faces a further challenge in that the need to reduce carbon emissions will inevitably lead to a reduction in the use of coal, particularly for the generation of power. It is accepted that the transition to renewable energy will proceed, and that the use of coal will decline in the medium to long term. A transition is needed that will result in security and affordability of electricity supply, while at the same time allowing the industry and all its stakeholders to adjust to the disruptions that such a transition will cause. For this to happen, stakeholders need to find new and innovative ways to operate, and the input of the scientific community is a crucial part of this process. In this edition of the *Journal*, general papers are published. Some touch directly on the issues the coal industry faces; others more indirectly. All, in their own way, will assist in meeting the challenges the mining industry is faced with.

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