



The five papers in this edition cover a wide range of topics from computationally effective stope layouts to the bulk chemistry of critical elements in a waste product. The papers have been submitted by authors from South Africa (2), Canada, Kenya and Germany and I have tried to summarize them here.

The paper by Lohmeier, which examines the potential of copper slag from historic smelting operations at Tsumeb as a source of critical elements, describes the project and case study which was supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

'Mineral resources and mineral reserves report readability and textual choice' by Du Toit and Delpont recommends the consideration of adding a plain language requirement to improve the informational value of these reports. An awareness that certain textual choices can affect the interpretation of these reports is highlighted.

The research paper by Kiamba *et al.* on the prediction of rock fragmentation, presents data collected in a case study from two limestone quarries in Kenya. A particular empirical model was selected and shown to be a valuable instrument for pre surveying the impact of varying certain parameters of a blast plan.

The paper on stope layout optimisation by Sari and Kumral from McGill University, Canada, showed that a cluster based iterative approach generates near optimal stope layouts in a computationally effective manner.

Of particular interest to me was the paper on the evaluation of polymer binders for the briquetting of coal fines by a group from the Centre of Excellence in carbon-based fuels. Northwest University. Potchefstroom. A solution as to how to deal with coal fines has dogged and evaded the coal industry worldwide. This topic has been researched extensively over the past 15 years or so and briquettes of an acceptable physical standard can be produced, albeit at a cost. What has yet to be demonstrated is the economic uses for the briquettes and particularly the combustion products and characteristics.

This selection of papers again highlights the diverse nature of the subject matter that the *Journal* is pleased to publish. Enjoy the read.

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