



## The Future of Coal



Coal has recently gone through a revival, with demand and prices internationally at levels not seen in years. It is obviously uncertain for how long this trend will persist, but it does illustrate the pitfalls of trying to forecast demand for fossil energy in times of uncertainty. It seems clear that coal as an energy source will be largely phased out in the medium to long term, but it is clearly in demand in the short term. In the meantime, a lot of work needs to be done to complete the transition to renewable energy, and this Journal issue addresses some of the impacts of coal mining that need to be addressed in the decarbonization journey. You will find several papers dealing with coal mine wastes. This is indeed a problem that has been building for years. Tens of millions of tons of coal discard and ultrafine coal are generated each year and stored in discard facilities that require long-term care. Re-purposing and recycling are potential solutions to this ever-growing problem and perhaps the investigations described in this Journal issue will lead to progress in this field. Some of these projects have been or are being funded by Coaltech in the realization by Coaltech members that a just transition requires innovative and sustainable solutions to mining impacts that have been generated over decades.

**H. Lodewijks**  
*Coaltech Research Association*