



## The first one hundred days and beyond



As I write this December President's Corner, it has been 114 days since my inauguration on 14 August 2025. This is a good moment to reflect on an exceptional period of progress, and what we have achieved, thanks to the dedication of the SAIMM Secretariat, Council, office bearers, and all our committee volunteers.

It has been a time of focused leadership, deep engagement with external partners, and the early steps in shaping a clear and compelling SAIMM value proposition.

### Strengthening our foundation

At my inauguration, I committed to strengthening the SAIMM Operating Model and that remains central to everything we are doing. Our aim is simple: to deliver value consistently and reliably to our members, corporate partners, collaborators, universities, and the broader industry.

A strong operating model is the foundation that allows us to honour this responsibility, grow the Institute, and expand our impact in the minerals sector.

### Governance in action

A key part of this journey has been to reinforce the role of Council. As the governing board of the SAIMM, Council is responsible for strategic direction and effective oversight. For many newly elected members, this is their first experience serving in a formal governance role and it mirrors the responsibility of company directors. It is a powerful developmental opportunity for individuals and for the industry.

The day after the AGM, we held a comprehensive Council induction, designed to clarify the responsibilities of council members under the constitution and align these roles with the King IV principles. Each council member has committed to fulfilling these duties with care, clarity, and professionalism.

The office bearers form the executive team of the Institute. They are responsible for executing strategy and managing daily operations. This group includes the immediate past president, current president, president-elect, senior and junior vice-presidents, honorary treasurer, finance manager, and general manager.

### Building the SAIMM Operating Model

Together with the leadership team, we have developed a functional framework for the operating model, which continues to be refined through ongoing feedback and beyond my presidency. A visual representation is now available and serves as a central reference across the Institute. It connects our constitution, by-laws, and terms of reference and allows every volunteer to quickly find the terms of reference and objectives of every one of our committees through a single point of access.

Every meeting, whether council, office bearers, the 22 committees, or weekly management meetings, now operate with a planned agenda. Each one sets out its purpose, expected outcomes, required results, and the approach to achieving the result. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The change has been immediate, meetings are more focused, and outcomes are being achieved. We now also close each meeting with plus-delta feedback to ensure continuous improvement of every meeting. The days of long meetings without impact are behind us.

We have also begun to use data to support operating model priorities and guide decision-making in the appropriate meetings.

### Growing our membership and reach

Our membership data clearly showed the need for deeper student engagement. Together with YPC Chairperson Connie Chijara, I visited several universities and presented to over 500 students. This effort has already led to a 45% increase in student membership over the past 10 weeks.

We have also learned that student chapters need to be re-established at each university to strengthen ongoing engagement. February, with no exams, is ideal for this. In 2026, we will visit Wits, UJ, UP, NWU, UL, and UNIVEN, supported by a SAIMM activation table to assist with registration. This process is now formally embedded into our operating model, with a clear procedure, timeline and accountability. The Young Professionals Council has set a bold target of 1 000 student members by the end of 2026.

## President's Corner (continued)

In parallel, the Membership Committee has set a strategic goal to double overall membership by 2026. This has put a spotlight on the registration process, where many new applicants are delayed by missing documents or proposer/seconded issues. The Head of Membership is streamlining the process and addressing gaps in our membership software with the vendor.

### Journal, events, marketing and professional registration

The SAIMM Journal continues to be a respected, international publication. It is led by a professional and committed committee. However, a significant backlog of papers has emerged, driven by a manual and inconsistent review process. This is now being fully mapped to identify and resolve the bottlenecks.

Standard operating procedures are also being developed across all functions, from membership to events and finance, to ensure consistency and reliability in how we deliver. This is being supported by a digital strategy and roadmap, which will integrate membership, event, and financial data to enable more targeted event marketing and member engagement.

On the communications side, we have sharpened our content and improved visibility. Our LinkedIn following grew by 6 000 this year, and Facebook by 500. This reflects stronger outreach, better messaging and a renewed energy around the SAIMM brand.

We are also aligning our efforts with the new ECSA Identification of Engineering Work (IDoEW) requirements. The SAIMM is well positioned to support engineers through this transition, from structured mentoring across the 11 defined competencies, to professional registration support and continuing professional development (CPD). As a recognised voluntary association, our technical programme and membership contribute directly to the 25 CPD points required over a five-year cycle.

### Industry engagement and conferences

I have had the privilege of engaging with many stakeholders this quarter, giving presidential openings and addresses at events including AfriRock 2025, the 13th International Heavy Minerals Conference, the International Mineral Asset Valuation Conference, the Geometallurgy Conference, the Student Colloquium, the 9th International PGM Conference, AI for Leaders, 2025 Mine Safe and Industry Awards Day, and the SAIMM Limpopo Branch Technical Conference.

It has been encouraging to see increased attendance at all these events. The PGM Conference, which I have been attending for the past 16 years, reached its highest-ever turnout, with over 300 delegates. These events are a vital part of the SAIMM's value proposition and continue to play a central role in knowledge sharing and professional growth.

Meeting young engineers at the Limpopo Branch Conference, professionals who work underground every day, left me feeling inspired and confident in the future of our industry. Their commitment, optimism and drive were truly energising.

### A word of thanks

A heartfelt thank you to our corporate partners, Ukwazi, Valterra Platinum, Sibanye Stillwater, SRK Consulting, Impala Platinum, and Sound Mining Solutions, for their continued support of the SAIMM.

Although I have served the SAIMM for more than 20 years across committees and Council, I never fully appreciated the full extent of the Institute's activities. The Secretariat, a team of 18 full-time employees, and 4 interns, go above and beyond, often working weekends to support university events. And our Council, office bearers and 22 committees are made up of more than 200 committed volunteers who also occupy full-time roles across the mining sector.

A special mention to our branch chairpersons and their respective committees that are ensuring we reach all our members and stakeholders across Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Limpopo, Zululand, Western Cape, North West, Northern Cape, Johannesburg, and Pretoria.

To all of you and to every member of the SAIMM community, thank you for your support over the past 114 days. I am excited about what we will accomplish together in 2026.

Wishing you a peaceful festive season. Please travel safely and return refreshed for the year ahead.

Warm regards

G.R. Lane  
President, SAIMM