



## Building the future professional pipeline for the minerals industry



As we enter 2026, I would like to extend my sincere best wishes to every SAIMM member, our corporate partners, council, secretariat, committee volunteers, conference organisers, and the many professionals who contribute their time and expertise to sustain the Institute. SAIMM exists because of this collective commitment, and I thank each of you for the role you play in strengthening our community and advancing our industry.

The year ahead will be both important and defining. SAIMM will be formulating and executing a focused strategy aimed at delivering measurable value to our members, corporate stakeholders, and the broader minerals sector. Central to this strategy is one overarching priority: securing the future skills and professional capability pipeline required for a modern, sustainable and globally competitive mining and metallurgy industry.

The future of mining depends not only on technical excellence but on the strength and continuity of professional development across the entire lifecycle of a professional career. This begins at undergraduate and postgraduate level, progresses through structured professional development and registration, and continues throughout our professional working life via meaningful continuing professional development (CPD). If any link in this chain weakens, the industry ultimately pays the price in the form of reduced capability, slower innovation, increased operational risk, and declining competitiveness.

Importantly, the future skills requirement is far broader than traditional mining, metallurgical engineering, and geology. Modern mining operations are complex socio-technical systems requiring integrated capability across multiple engineering disciplines including mechatronics, digital and data sciences, environmental stewardship, finance, human capital, governance, and leadership. The minerals industry will increasingly compete for talent against other sectors, and we must ensure that mining remains an attractive, credible, and high-impact professional career choice.

SAIMM has a critical and unique role in safeguarding the professional interests, standards, and development of those working across the minerals value chain. However, SAIMM cannot achieve this in isolation. Building a sustainable pipeline requires deliberate collaboration across all stakeholders in the professional ecosystem — universities, the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), ECSA, corporate partners, training and adult learning providers, regulators, and industry leaders.

Our collective challenge is clear:

- Attract the right calibre of students into minerals-related disciplines.
- Provide structured pathways from graduate to professionally registered status.
- Ensure ongoing CPD that is relevant to the rapidly evolving industry.
- Integrate technical, digital, managerial, and leadership capability.
- Align industry demand with academic and training supply.

Throughout 2026, SAIMM will actively engage these stakeholder groups to strengthen alignment across this system and position the Institute as a central integrator and enabler of professional development in the minerals industry.

SAIMM will also have a strong presence at this year's Investing in African Mining Indaba. During the conference, I will be based in a dedicated lounge area in the reception of the Cullinan Hotel where members and stakeholders may schedule time in my diary to meet and discuss how SAIMM can support their professional, organisational, and industry needs. If you have not yet scheduled a time and would like to engage, please reach out directly to me or through the SAIMM Secretariat to arrange a meeting.

In addition, SAIMM will host a breakfast event on Tuesday morning at the Royal Cape Yacht Club where Dr Jeannette McGill will share her inspiring leadership journey titled: *From 4km Underground to 8km Above: A Leadership Journey*, following her successful summit of Mount Everest last year. I encourage you to register and join us for what promises to be a memorable and motivating session.

If we invest deliberately in people, skills, and professional capability today, we secure the long-term resilience, credibility, and performance of our industry tomorrow. This will be SAIMM's primary focus for the year ahead.

I look forward to working with all members and partners as we shape and deliver this important agenda together.

G.R. Lane  
President, SAIMM