



## Hydrometallurgy Conference 2016 'Sustainable Hydrometallurgical Extraction of Metals'



This edition of the *Journal* features papers that were presented at the Hydrometallurgy Conference, which was held from 31 July to 3 August 2016. The theme of the conference was 'Sustainable Hydrometallurgical Extraction of Metals' and it was attended by 150 delegates from around the world. The conference was organized in collaboration with the Western Cape Branch of the SAIMM.

The conference was preceded by a workshop on 'Test work and its importance in metallurgical design'. Topics presented at the workshop included a review of existing models for process and project development, process test work, flow sheet selection, simulation models, and case studies. The workshop was very well attended by industry delegates, academics, and students.

There were five keynote addresses. Professor Kwado Osseo-Asare from Penn State University, USA gave a very interesting talk on the fundamentals of hydrometallurgy, linking solid solution and nanoscience. Dr Frank Crundwell from CM Solutions, South Africa, discussed the linkages between corrosion, hydrometallurgy, and flotation. Professor Mike Nicol from Murdoch University, Australia, discussed the ineffectiveness of oxygen as an oxidant in hydrometallurgical processes. Professor Markus Reuter from Helmholtz Institute Freiberg for Resource Technology, Germany, gave a very stimulating presentation on the role of hydrometallurgy in a circular economy. Professor Bhargava from RMIT University in Australia covered a topic that resonated with most researchers; innovative research during hard times in the minerals industry. The keynote addresses were all of high quality, were very stimulating, complemented all aspects of the conference, but above all, had take-home messages for industry delegates, students, and researchers alike.

The papers presented at the conference highlighted the fact that although hydrometallurgical extraction of metals is still largely based on primary resources there is also a large amount of metal-containing waste material being generated in the metal production and manufacturing industries that has potential to act as a secondary source of metals. It was clear that global academic and industrial research into metal recovery from such secondary metal resources has become a focal point. The hydrometallurgy of copper was a hot topic as usual; a large number of papers were dedicated to copper processing and these sessions had a high attendance rate. It was particularly heartening to see the enthusiastic participation of many young and emerging mining and minerals professionals; they are the key enablers for the future of our industry.

The overwhelming interest shown in uranium processing suggested that there was a need for a focused event on this topic, and this was subsequently validated by the decision of the Technical Programme Committee – Metallurgy to hold a uranium conference in Namibia in the second half of 2017.

The contributions from the eleven companies that sponsored the Conference and the funding provided by the DST/NRF are gratefully acknowledged.

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*Chairperson of the Organizing Committee*