HEAVY MINERALS CONFERENCE
‘What next?’

20–23 September 2009

Champagne Sports Resort, Drakensberg
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FOREWORD

This conference is the seventh in a series of conferences that focus on the heavy minerals industry, and your host is the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. The conferences have been held in such diverse places as Cape Town, Jacksonville, Fremantle and several locations in KwaZulu Natal. The last conference was held in Zululand in South Africa where this conference was born. Each year we have chosen a venue that we hope will appeal to the delegates. This year it is time for something different so the conference venue we have selected is in the majestic Drakensberg mountains. It is appropriate that the very minerals that form the basis of our industry originate in a large part from this mountain range. The venue is the Champagne Sports Resort, which is found amid the rugged peaks and lush green valleys of the central Drakenberg and gives the opportunity for both work and play. So we recommend that in planning your itinerary you allow some spare time to enjoy the surroundings.

Our conference as usual is strictly technical in nature and efforts by the organising committee are aimed at preserving this focus. The benefit of this focus is that it allows the operators of businesses within this sector to discuss topics not normally covered in such forums. Our previous conference theme was ‘back to basics’ but this time we ask the question ‘What next?’ The future has some new hurdles for the industry such as energy costs, greenhouse gas emissions, and the recent economic crisis. Such factors will force a rethink of the way we do business. The continued increase in capital costs of new plants and the shortage of skilled staff to operate them threaten to restrict the ability to expand production capacity. However, the interest in the heavy minerals industry has over the years been very dynamic and the industry a profitable one.

We hope this volume will join the other six, which this series of conferences has produced, and give a lasting record of the development of our industry.

J.H. Selby
Chairman
Organising Committee
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