

SPOTLIGHT

on readership survey

by R.W.O. KERSTEN* and J.D. AUSTIN*

A questionnaire was circulated in 1986 that had the objective of establishing the type of material that members would like to see featured in the *Journal* of The South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.

The questionnaire contained five main questions involving the following:

- (1) the level of interest in papers published over the previous six months;
- (2) whether existing features are useful or not, i.e. diaries, spotlights, book news, new Council members, and books in the Institute section of the Chamber of Mines Library;
- (3a) whether members would like more or fewer research papers, theoretical papers, descriptive papers;
- (3b) whether members would like new features such as policy statements, news from Council, reports from Branches, achievements of members, new technical developments, product news, appointments;
- (4) whether members had any additional comments; and
- (5) details of the respondent's membership.

A total of 203 returns were received from a membership of 2550 (a return of 8 per cent), which appears to be the average for this type of questionnaire.

Comments

The comments under the five main headings were as follows.

- (1) As expected, members in each individual group, i.e. mining, extractive metallurgy, and physical metallurgy, preferred papers in their own field. In addition, the metal reviews, spotlights, and papers of general interest enjoyed significant support from members representing all three disciplines.

* Members of the Journal Committee, The South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.

- (2) The questions on the existing features drew strong support, and the Journal Committee concludes from this that no changes are required.
- (3a) Respondents indicated that they would like more descriptive papers.
- (3b) Members would like the inclusion of the following information: new technical developments, product news, and achievements of members.
- (4) Additional comments by members were that papers on geology and exploration, economics and finance, and management would be welcome.
- (5) The percentages of members in each membership grade and the percentages of respondents in each grade were as follows:

	Membership, %	Respondents, %
Fellows	19	30
Members	35	40
Students	21	21
Associates	25	9

Decisions

After the Journal Committee had discussed the results of the questionnaire, the following decisions were taken.

- (1) No action is required.
- (2) The list of books in the Institute section of the Chamber of Mines Library received 60 per cent support. It was therefore decided that these lists will be circulated to members in the monthly mailing, rather than be published in the *Journal*. Nothing else will be changed.
- (3a) Authors will be solicited and encouraged to submit papers that concentrate on the practical aspects of the respective disciplines.
- (3b) New technical developments, members' achievements, and product news cannot be handled at present. The staff do not have the time to collect the extra information, and cost considerations make it difficult to motivate for extra staff. However, this decision will be reviewed.
- (4) Members will be encouraged to send in papers in the fields of geology and exploration, economics and finance, and management.