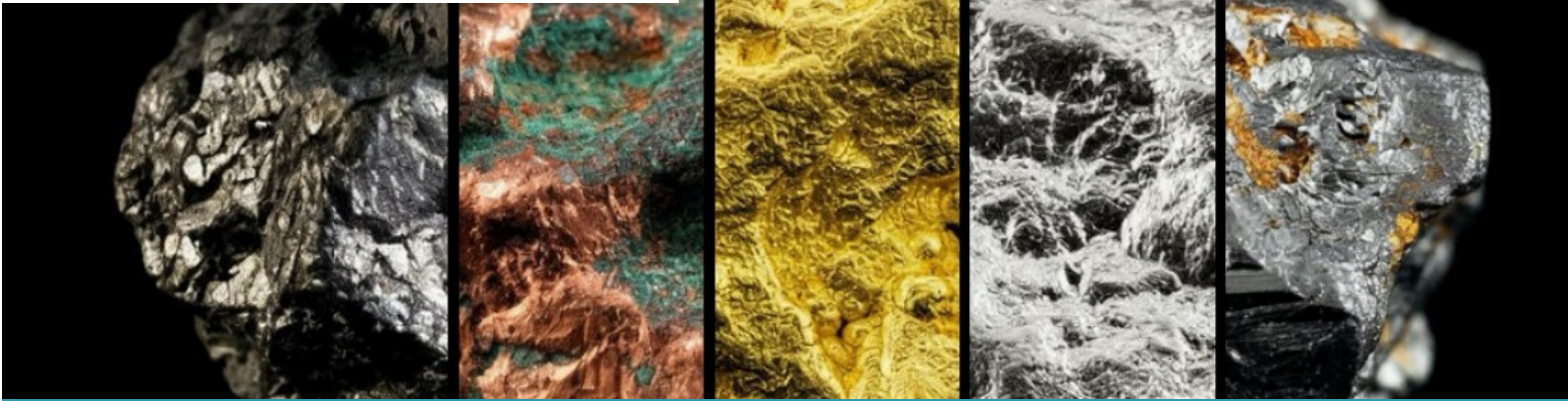




NEWSLETTER



South Africa: The beating heart of the Global Mining 'Super Region'

The global mining landscape has shifted, and South Africa is standing at the very center of it. In a landmark announcement at the recent Future Minerals Forum, South Africa was officially designated as the Talent Hub for the world's new mining "Super Region"—a territory stretching from Africa through the Middle East to Central Asia.

This isn't just a title; it is a global recognition that South African technical skills are now the global benchmark.

Why South Africa?

For decades, our local experts have mastered some of the most complex geological environments on Earth. Today, that deep-level expertise has evolved into a sophisticated blend of traditional engineering and 4IR innovation.

The world is now looking to us for:

- **Deep-Level Engineering Excellence:** Our ability to manage complex, high-pressure environments remains unmatched.
- **Digital Mining & AI Integration:** From drone-based surveying to AI-powered safety systems, South African specialists are leading the "smart mine" revolution.
- **Safety & ESG Leadership:** Our rigorous safety protocols and sustainability frameworks are being adopted as the standard for new projects across the Super Region.

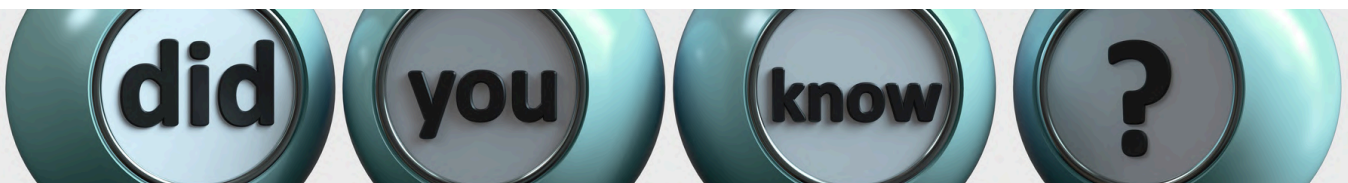
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South Africa: The beating heart of the Global Mining 'Super Region' (Cont.)

In collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the establishment of this Talent Hub ensures that South Africa isn't just exporting minerals—we are exporting the intellectual capital that will power the global green energy transition. The message to the world is clear: if you want to build the mines of the future, you need the talent forged in South Africa.

As the demand for critical minerals like platinum, manganese, and lithium surges, the expertise found within our borders has become our most valuable resource. We are no longer just participants in the global market; we are the architects of its future.



A Multi-Trillion Dollar Legacy: South Africa's mineral reserves are estimated to be worth over US\$2.5 trillion, with our country holding 88% of the world's Platinum Group Metals (PGMs) and 80% of global Manganese—the two most critical components for the global green energy transition.

Global Academic Excellence: The Wits School of Mining Engineering is consistently ranked in the Top 15 globally, ensuring that the "South African way" of mining is taught as the gold standard to international students.



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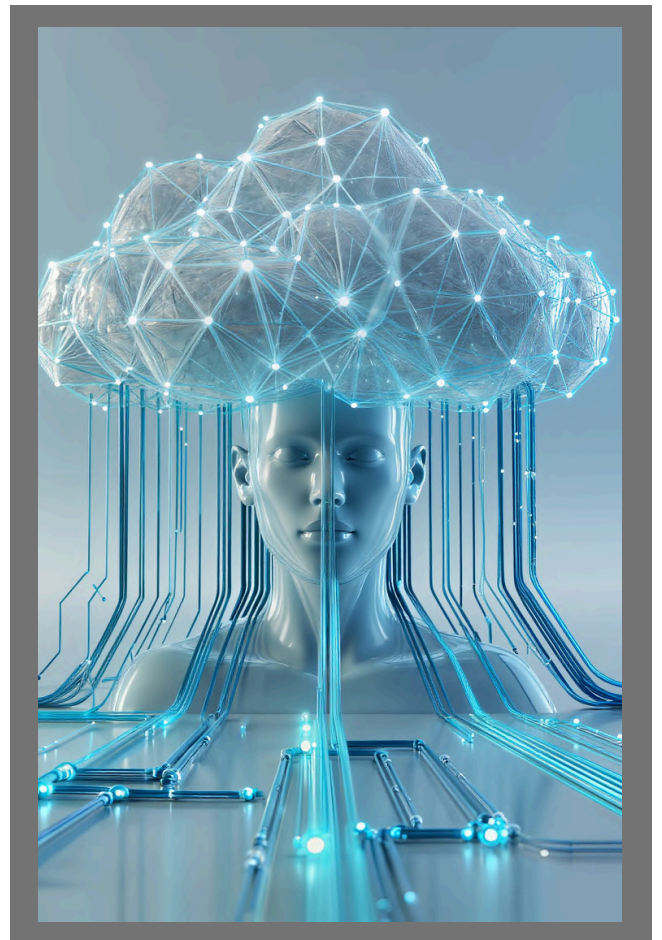


Copper - The Silent Engine of the AI Revolution

While the world focuses on software and chatbots, the global AI explosion is hitting a physical wall: a massive shortage of copper. As we have previously noted in our discussions on the structural supply crisis, this essential metal is the "connective artery" of modern technology.

A January 2026 report by S&P Global reveals that the infrastructure required to power Artificial Intelligence is now a primary driver of copper demand, which is projected to surge by 50% by 2040. The study, "Copper in the Age of AI," highlights a critical disconnect: as data centers and power grids expand to handle AI processing, the industry faces a projected 10 million metric ton deficit.

Current data shows it takes an average of 16 to 17 years to move a copper project from discovery to production. This "bottleneck" means that global supply is entirely dependent on the efficiency and technical precision of existing operations. South African technical teams, recently designated as the primary Talent Hub for the mineral-rich "Super Region," are now positioned as the essential workforce for this global digital nervous system. Without the copper mined today, the AI of tomorrow cannot function.



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MQA at 30 - The Architects of the Global Talent Hub



The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) officially marks its **30th anniversary** this month, a milestone that coincides with South Africa's rising status as the world's leading source of mining expertise.

Established in 1996, the MQA has spent three decades regulating the standards that have turned South African artisans and engineers into the benchmark for international mining.

This global recognition is backed by the industry's sustained financial commitment.

As previously reported, the Minerals Council South Africa confirmed that annual investment in employee training has reached a record R5 billion. This massive, ongoing spend ensures that the "SA Gold Standard" remains intact as the industry shifts toward automation and sustainable extraction.

As the MQA enters its fourth decade, the focus is shifting toward exporting this technical leadership to major global projects, proving that South Africa's most valuable export isn't just ore, but the people who know how to extract it.

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Beyond Physical Safety: Mining Sector Mandates Mental Health Screening

The South African mining industry is undergoing a fundamental shift in its "Zero Harm" strategy, moving beyond physical protection to address the psychological toll of the trade. Under the newly launched **Khumbul'ekhaya 2.0** framework, the Minerals Council South Africa has established 2026 as a critical year for mental wellness integration.

The updated strategy mandates that mining operations work toward a 95% annual mental health screening rate for all employees. This initiative acknowledges that cognitive fatigue—driven by long shifts, underground depth, and isolation—is a leading indicator of physical accidents. By identifying psychological strain early, the industry aims to treat mental health with the same urgency as traditional occupational hazards like dust or noise exposure.

This policy shift follows the formalization of managing non-communicable diseases and mental disorders within the sector. For the South African Talent Hub, the message is clear: maintaining the "SA Gold Standard" requires a workforce that is not only technically skilled but psychologically resilient.

The focus is no longer just on whether an artisan has their hard hat on, but whether they are mentally fit to complete the shift safely.



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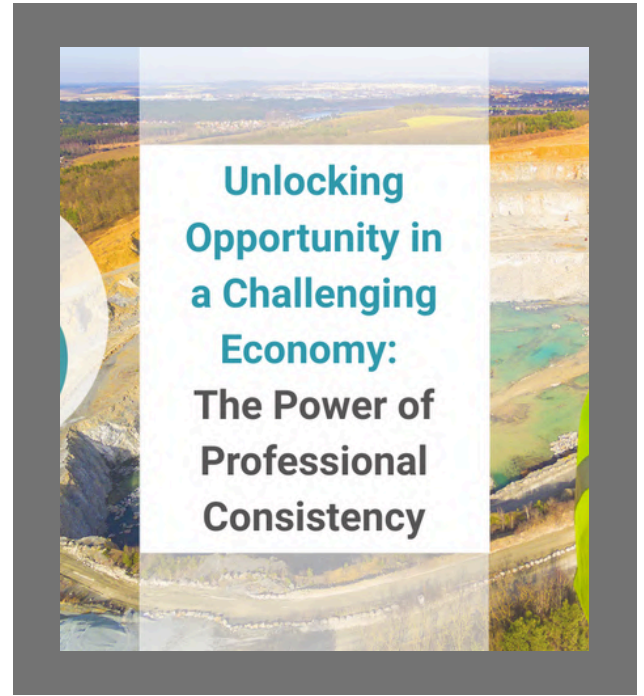
Bridging the Gap Between Skill and Success

In a fluctuating economy, technical expertise is only half of the equation. For professionals in the mining and engineering sectors, the true differentiator is often found in the "quiet" traits: consistency, character, and a disciplined work ethic.

This article explores how mastering the fundamentals of professional conduct can unlock new opportunities, even in the most challenging environments. From the importance of mentorship to the power of daily habits, we dive into how you can build a resilient career and a reputation that lasts a lifetime.

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Bushveld Frontier: Natural Hydrogen Exploration Approved

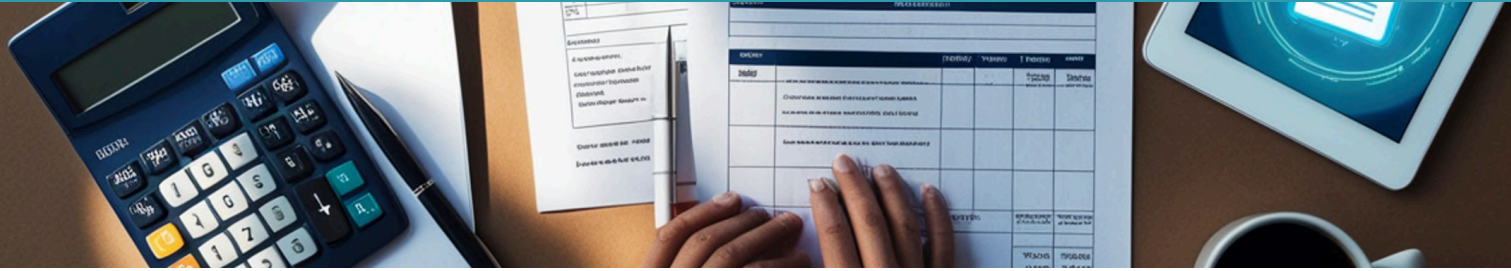
South Africa's energy landscape entered a new era this week as the Petroleum Agency SA (PASA) formally accepted exclusive exploration applications for "**White Hydrogen**" (natural hydrogen) in the Bushveld region. On January 15, 2026, developers confirmed that bids to explore 3.4 million acres have reached the final approval stage with the Minister of Mines and Energy.

Unlike "Green Hydrogen," which is manufactured, White Hydrogen is a naturally occurring gas. Recent sampling in South African mine workings has shown hydrogen concentrations of up to 80%, suggesting the Bushveld Complex sits atop a massive, low-cost clean energy reserve.

The transition to active three-year exploration licenses marks a major milestone for the South African **Talent Hub**. This discovery offers a dual benefit: a potential source of clean, on-site power for existing mines and a significant new field of work for the country's engineers and artisans.

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The Resource Centre: Practical Tools for Work and Life



The Resource Centre is a growing toolkit of practical documents designed to help you stay organised and prepared – beyond just finding your next job.

What's Inside?



Personal planning tools like wills, powers of attorney, budgets, and emergency contact templates. Workplace essentials covering UIF, SDL, employment readiness, and career planning. Everything is downloadable, simple to use, and free.

Why it works:



These templates give you **structure and clarity** so you can take action without building everything from scratch. Most people know what they need to do – they just don't know where to start.

Who it's for:



Job seekers, professionals managing compliance and career growth, families organising important information, and anyone who values being prepared.

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FREE
Resource Centre



At Bilnor, we support people in finding work – but we also know life doesn't stop there. The Resource Centre helps you manage the practical details that matter.

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Random Acts of Kindness Day February 17th



Random Acts of Kindness Day falls on February 17 this year, right in the middle of Random Acts of Kindness Week (February 14–20). The idea is simple: **do something nice for someone without expecting anything back.**

Kindness doesn't have to be complicated. It's a senior engineer spending ten minutes to help a junior colleague troubleshoot a problem. It's bringing an extra coffee for your teammate during a long shift. It's checking in on someone who looks like they're having a rough day. **Small gestures, big impact.**

Here's the thing – workplaces built on kindness aren't just nicer places to be, they're more productive and safer too. When people feel valued and supported, they're more engaged, more alert, and more likely to watch out for each other. In our line of work, that matters.

This February 17, find one small way to make someone's day a bit easier. Share your knowledge. Acknowledge good work. Actually listen when someone needs to talk. These moments cost nothing but make all the difference.

#StrongerTogether means looking out for each other – not just on the tough days, but every day.



And, dont forget: **Valentine's Day - February 14th!**



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