

Metallurgical Test Work - The Beginning of the End or the End of the Beginning?

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ABSTRACT

This is the last paper in a planned series of three papers reviewing metallurgical test work practice. The first paper focussed on the “before phase” while the second paper dealt with the ‘during phase’. This paper provides observations and guidelines about ‘closing out’ a test work program and how the unexpected issues encountered during the program can be satisfactorily dealt with.

The primary deliverable is the test work report prepared by the test work facility. Ensuring that the report has met the requested requirements is essential. An important evaluation of the test work program is whether the test work and the associated report is ‘fit for purpose’ and has successfully navigated the clash of the drivers (budget, schedule, quality and outcomes).

The basis for the interpretation of results and how they may be used is presented, including design criteria, scale-up, flowsheet development, materials handling and equipment selection and sizing.

Managing potential post-test work ‘blues’ are discussed including the likely increasing requirements for the resolution of tailings and environmental issues, satisfying specialist consultants, equipment vendor testing requirements, marketing samples as well as the testing of production composites to satisfy project financiers and potential of-takers of the final product.