

## **IMA-CNMNC: a continuing role into the future**

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The IMA-CNMNC Commission is charged with vetting all proposals for the recognition of new minerals, together with the development of schemes associated with the classification and nomenclature of minerals and groups. Members of the Commission, elected by the constituted affiliates of IMA, carry out this work as a service to the mineralogical community in general.

The number of new mineral proposals is increasing. From a starting point in 2007 of some 5000 named and 1500 valid unnamed species, the last few years has seen notable growth. In 2008- 2011 the yearly number of new proposals was 72, 97, 90 and 117, respectively. This is expected to further increase as a result of technical advances. For example, “nanominerals” are becoming increasingly easier to study. Murchisite, Cr<sub>5</sub>S<sub>6</sub>, occurs so far as a single crystal 1.3 x 4 μm across. It thus seems inevitable that the work of the Commission will expand. This particular aspect of the Commission’s work is largely uncontroversial and concentrates strictly on the scientific merits of individual proposals.

Nevertheless, some of the recent work of the Commission on nomenclature and classification has drawn criticism from some quarters. I believe that much of it has been unfounded, but some expressed concerns are valid and the Commission has responded to them. It should be noted that development of classification schemes has been the result largely of the wishes of mineralogists outside the CNMNC and working groups from a broad cross-section of the discipline have cooperated to bring some order to a number of the more “difficult”, certainly complex, groups such as the apatites, amphiboles, tourmalines and pyrochlores. Because of the nature of the discipline, this is a continuously movable feast and not all of the past decisions have been met with universal acclamation. Some of the more contentious issues have had to be revisited, particularly with respect to the abandonment of certain long-standing mineral names. Recent CNMNC papers and publications have sought to address some of these matters.

The Commission does not work in a vacuum and welcomes any serious proposal from the mineralogical community concerning any aspect within the Commission’s ambit. Strangely enough, in the four years that I have acted as its Chair of CNMNC, I have received not a single letter or email expressing a view on any such matter.

The work of the CNMNC is as vital now as it ever was when it was first set up some fifty years ago, when it was recognised that mineralogy and notions of what exactly constituted a mineral had degenerated into a somewhat chaotic state. An oversight has to be maintained if the science of mineralogy is to remain just that – a science.

I welcome any considered approach from the mineralogical community concerning any aspect of the Commission’s work and encourage all to visit the CNMNC web site at <http://pubsites.uws.edu.au/ima-cnmnc/>.