



## Preface

The characterisation and quantification of chemical species in a wide variety of challenging matrices is an essential service provided by forensic science laboratories around the world. In particular, the control of illicit drugs is of increasing social concern due to the significant increases in their availability and use in the last few years, and the associated crime and health problems. The determination of trace explosives has also become an issue of high priority as a result of the rise in the profile of international terrorism. Within law enforcement agencies there is an increasing demand for rapid, selective and sensitive methods for the determination of illicit substances. This special issue gathers together papers covering a broad range of techniques, with the common thread throughout being application to forensic analysis. To place this research in context, the issue begins with a case study of the Bali Bombings, which amply demonstrates the challenges facing the forensic chemist. It is hoped that this collection of papers will be useful in stimulating discussion and research, in order to place new analytical tools into the hands of forensic scientists.

I would like to thank Professor Gary Christian for inviting me to edit this issue of *Talanta*. It was a terrific opportunity, which while challenging, was highly educational and ultimately very satisfying. Thank you Gary! My thanks as well to the editorial staff at Elsevier, who guided me through assembling the papers and the editorial process. I would also like to extend my gratitude to colleagues from all corners of the globe, who not only reviewed the manuscripts in a very timely fashion, but also provided sage and useful advice on the content of this issue. A final word of appreciation goes to the contributors, who have provided a diverse and interesting collection of papers.

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