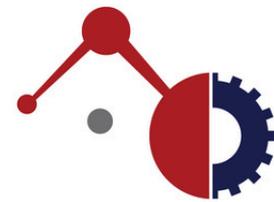


MKRI MONTHLY

June 2025 edition



**Moses Kotane
Research Institute**

Research · Innovation · Excellence



Top News

- Smart lab & Robotics Launch
- Draft KZN Culture, Heritage, Investment and Tourism (CHIT) Strategy
- Youth Day 2025 Celebration
- World Environment Day

The MKRI's newsletter is a showcase of the Institute's latest research insights, impactful community engagement initiatives, policy dialogues, and strategic partnerships. It highlights key events, expert opinions, and thought leadership that drive socioeconomic development in KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

The month of June marked a dynamic period for the Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI), characterised by high-impact engagements, strategic programmes, and a strong focus on youth-centred development programmes and innovation. Inside this newsletter is a summary of key activities carried out by the Institute.



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Smartlab & Robotics Launch

In collaboration with DUT and MERSETA, MKRI launched the Smart Robotics Lab at DUT Ritson Campus. Dr. Ellenson highlighted innovation as central to youth opportunity creation, while MEC Rev. Musa Zondi commended MKRI for bridging the gap between academia and industry.

Draft KZN Culture, Heritage, Investment and Tourism (CHIT) Strategy



Dr Thandeka Ellenson, the CEO of the MKIR presented the draft KZN strategy on Culture, Heritage, Investment and Tourism (CHIT) to stakeholders at the Provincial Tourism and Audivisual Committee (PTAC) in Dundee on Friday 27 June 2025. The major point that sparked controversy was that the citizens of the province did not have a unified view of their identity, and this sparked a good debate amongst the attendees on what to use as a symbol of the ZULU identity. A single perspective is important in hosting international communities on cultural and heritage platforms.

What was agreed upon was that the ZULU brand needed to be strengthened and used in all platforms in promoting KZN.

DDM Cabinet Day Imbizo

MKRI exhibited at the District Development Model (DDM) Cabinet Day Imbizo in Ndwedwe, led by Premier Thamsanqa Ntuli. The event reinforced provincial priorities on integrated service delivery. MKRI highlighted its role in evidence-based policy support and community-driven development.

Youth Day 2025 Celebration

MKRI joined provincial leadership at the Youth Day commemoration hosted at the University of Zululand. The event, themed "Skills for the Changing World," encouraged continuous learning and adaptability to ensure youth are future-ready.

Digital skills for jobs KZN induction



The EBL Institute of Business and Technology, in partnership with MTN and the Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI), hosted the “Ignite 2025 – Engineer Your Digital Future” induction programme at the Durban ICC. Addressing stakeholders and media, KZN Premier Hon. Thami Ntuli commended the initiative for advancing youth skills development. In her message of support, MKRI CEO Dr. Thandeka Ellenson emphasized that securing employment in the digital era requires more than qualifications—it demands adaptability, a positive mindset, and a commitment to continuous learning. She encouraged participants to embrace digital skills as a pathway to self-employment and innovation, concluding with the powerful message: “Do not enter the future—create the future.”

International Day of the Seafarer

MKRI representatives participated in the International Day of the Seafarer celebration, held under the theme “My Harassment-Free Ship.” The event advocated for inclusive, safe maritime workspaces and highlighted the importance of protecting the rights and dignity of all seafarers.

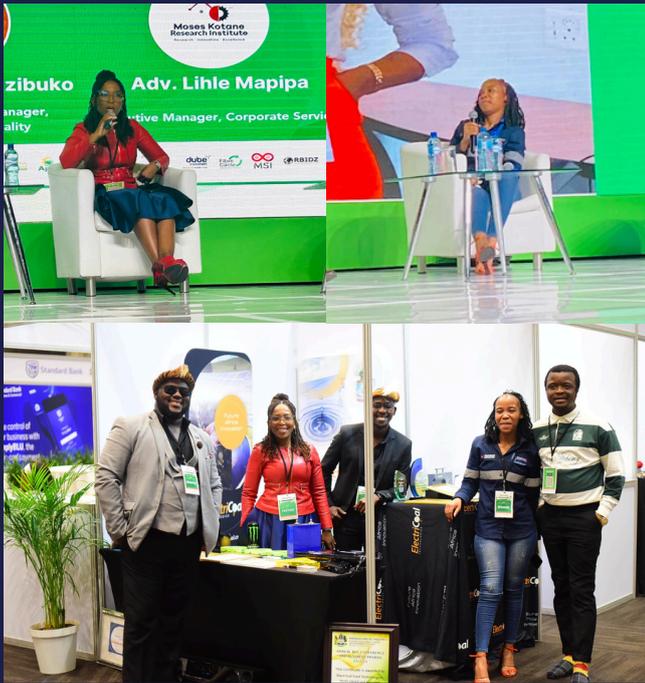
Youth Entrepreneurship and Compliance Expo

MKRI participated in the Youth Entrepreneurship and Compliance Expo in King Cetshwayo District, under the theme “Skills for the Changing World – Empowering Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation.” The event equipped young entrepreneurs with business development tools. Hon. Cllr. G.Z. Malembe highlighted the potential of agriculture in youth employment.

JCI Youth Networking Picnic



Adv. Lihle Mapipa represented MKRI at the JCI Youth Networking Picnic, where she promoted MKRI’s youth-centred economic initiatives and welcomed collaborative opportunities aligned with the Institute’s mandate.



Green Youth Indaba

MKRI was proud to participate in the 10th Annual Green Youth Indaba at the Durban ICC – a national platform focused on empowering young people through self-employment, innovation, and active participation in the green economy.

MKRI’s Executive Manager for Corporate Services, Adv. Lihle Mapipa joined a dynamic panel discussion under the theme “Innovation & Incubation Support for Youth.” She shared how MKRI champions research, training, and innovation across KZN – from youth hackathons to digital hubs and funding for young entrepreneurs.

One of MKRI’s success stories, Ms. Senamile Nkosi (Founder of Inkanyezi Flushing Systems), also shared how MKRI’s CIR Fund helped grow her green-tech business, proving how targeted support and mentorship can turn ideas into impact.

Youth in Business Information Session



MKRI joined the Youth in Business Info Session at eDumbe Town Hall, Zululand District, to share support opportunities for youth and entrepreneurs. Dr. X. Ngema presented MKRI’s research funding, skills programmes, and the Grassroots Innovation Programme, which includes upcoming Hackathons to support innovative local ideas with funding, mentorship, and legal guidance.

Umvoti Youth Skills Development Summit

The Moses Kotane Research Institute engaged young people at the Greytown Town Hall as part of the Umvoti Youth Skills Development Summit. The event brought together key stakeholders to address youth unemployment and promote skills development.

Through exhibitions and presentations, MKRI showcased how its work supports innovation, research, and youth empowerment across KwaZulu-Natal.

World Environment Day

MKRI took part in a clean-up campaign in Mazakhele Township, Harding, supporting World Environment Day under the theme of combating plastic pollution. The initiative also marked the launch of the Green Jobs Programme. MEC Rev. Musa Zondi emphasized the link between environmental sustainability and job creation.



Stakeholder Engagement on Liquor Licensing Fee Model

MKRI's Research and Publications Sub-Unit, in partnership with the KZN Economic Regulatory Authority (KZNERA) and the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), facilitated policy consultation workshops in KwaDukuza and Jozini. These sessions provided a platform for liquor traders, SAPS representatives, and other stakeholders to engage on the proposed liquor licensing fee model. All inputs will inform the final policy recommendations.

UPCOMING

Mandela Day - 18 July 25

Nkandla Digital Centre launch - 29 July 25

Women's Day - 9 August 25

Moses Kotane Birthday - 9 August 25

Zulu Identity Hackathon & Logo Presentations



MKRI hosted the inaugural Zulu ID Hackathon, where creatives developed a new provincial identity logo celebrating KwaZulu-Natal's heritage and diversity. Final concepts were presented as part of the CHIT Strategic Session, with key stakeholders, including Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and KZN Amafa, providing feedback and aligning the initiative with tourism and cultural investment priorities.