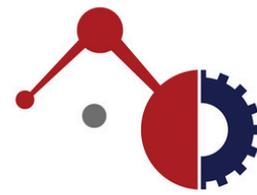


MKRI MONTHLY

October 2025 Issue



**Moses Kotane
Research Institute**

Research · Innovation · Excellence



The 1st Cohort of 'STCW Certificate' candidates training & mastering special fire-fighting techniques... See page 2.

Top News

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-
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"The knowledge hub for economic growth in KZN"

This newsletter highlights the key events and strategic engagements undertaken by the Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI) during October 2025. The activities align with the institute's mission of advancing research-driven solutions, skills development, digital innovation, and socio-economic empowerment in KwaZulu-Natal. Branded promotional materials and equipment were distributed to attendees as part of MKRI's visibility and stakeholder engagement efforts.



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Zululand District Economic Development Workshop

Dr Thandeka Ellenson, CEO of the Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI), delivered the Institute's latest findings at the Zululand District Economic Development Workshop.

The findings show that Zululand's growth over the next 24 months should be driven by targeted investment in: Culture and Heritage Tourism, Transport and Logistics

Dr Ellenson invited business and government to prioritise these sectors and outlined three catalytic projects as anchors for inclusive development: Emakhosini Spirit Valley Development, Ulundi Airport Development and the Royal Palaces Revitalisation.



KZN Convention on the Professionalisation of the Public Service

At the KZN Convention on the Professionalisation of the Public Service held in Durban on 31 October 2025, MKRI CEO Dr Thandeka Ellenson represented the institute as facilitator of the focus group on data collection, highlighting MKRI's continued role in advancing research that strengthens South Africa's public sector. Her insights underscored the importance of professionalising the state to improve service delivery, enhance accountability and ethics, attract skilled talent, ensure policy continuity, build public trust, and reinforce the country's developmental agenda. Through evidence-based research and strategic engagements, MKRI remains committed to supporting a capable, ethical, and effective public service that delivers.



STCW training



MKRI's Commercial Diver for Maritime & Economics, under the Development Unit, Mr. Swelihle Ndlovu, visited the first cohort of 12 trainees on Day 7 of the Development Unit's pilot STCW training. Focus: Mastering special fire-fighting techniques, a vital skill for safety at sea. 50 candidates from across KZN are set to embark on incredible maritime careers. Stay tuned as we continue to follow their journey!

2nd Annual Student Leadership Week



The MKRI Executive Manager for Development, Dr. Simphiwe Buthelezi, joined a panel at Durban University of Technology's 2nd Annual Student Leadership Week under the theme Innovation & Technology. Dr Buthelezi and her panel engaged student leaders on how technology can: Drive innovation and positive change on campus, keep peers informed of rapid digital advancements, build global networks and collaborations, and address critical issues such as mental health, student engagement, and campus safety. Her insights inspired future leaders to see technology not just as a tool, but as a powerful catalyst for transformation.

The Research Colloquium



MKRI's Research Specialist, Ms. Londeka Nxumalo, represented the Institute at the University of KwaZulu-Natal College of Law and Management Studies Research Colloquium held on 9-10 October 2025 at the Riversdale Hotel. The event explored themes of inclusive growth, sustainable development, and transformative governance. Ms Nxumalo presented her published article, "A Policy Review of Rural and Township Economies in Local Economic Development in KwaZulu-Natal." Her participation highlights MKRI's ongoing commitment to advancing evidence-based research that informs policy and drives socio-economic transformation.

The KZN Investment Conference



Dr Thandeka Ellenson, CEO of the Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI), presented and participated as a panellist at the KZN Investment Conference held at the ICC in Durban, where MKRI tabled its latest skills research findings. The presentation highlighted the skills required for employability, including digital literacy, entrepreneurial ability, and soft skills, while identifying scarce skills such as engineering, artisanship, green economy expertise, ICT, logistics, and financial professions. The research aims to guide youth, businesses, and investors toward targeted skills development, mentorship, digital innovation, and rural connectivity initiatives to strengthen KwaZulu-Natal's economic growth and employability landscape.

Dokodweni Beach Cleaning Campaign



The Moses Kotane Research Institute participated in the Dokodweni Beach Coastal Cleaning Campaign hosted by the KZN EDTEA at Mandeni LM Ward 1, Dokodweni Beach. The programme focused on educating the community about caring for the environment, keeping beaches clean and safe, and understanding the risks associated with pollution.

MKRI also engaged community members on the opportunities available within the Institute and the Maritime sector, highlighting ways individuals can learn, benefit, and contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future.

Maritime Teachers Workshop

The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI) hosted the Maritime Teachers Workshop, an initiative aimed at enhancing and enlightening maritime educators about the dynamic and evolving maritime industry.

The purpose of the workshop is to provide maritime teachers with deeper insights into the maritime sector, including its economic potential, career opportunities, and teaching strategies. A range of industry leaders and stakeholders were participating in the event to share their knowledge and experiences.



Land, Life and Society International Conference



MKRI's Research and Publications Unit attended the Land, Life & Society International Conference hosted by the University of Western Cape. A global gathering of researchers, policymakers, and academics exploring critical issues shaping rural livelihoods, land governance, and environmental sustainability.

Through its participation, MKRI contributed insights from its ongoing research on land use, rural development, climate, and the informal economy, reinforcing its mandate to drive evidence-based policy and inclusive socio-economic growth in KwaZulu-Natal.

Key themes included the impact of climate change, just transition, and the inequalities in land ownership and governance, issues central to both local and global development.

Youth-Focused Engagement



The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI), represented by Dr Simphiwe Buthelezi, Executive Manager of the Development Unit, took centre stage at a youth-focused engagement hosted by the Zenzele Kanye Nathi Group. Dr Buthelezi presented MKRI's key initiatives aimed at empowering young and academically driven individuals in the rural area of Obuka in Empangeni, highlighting opportunities such as research collaborations, skills development programmes, bursaries, and internships. The MKRI Communications Team supported the engagement through an exhibition that showcased the institute's broader work and commitment to youth empowerment.

Black Lawyers Association Women's Desk Event



The Moses Kotane Research Institute hosted the BLA Women's Desk Event themed "Identity and intersectional challenges experienced by black women legal professionals in the current economic climate." The dialogue brought together legal experts, academics, and aspiring lawyers to explore issues of identity, Africology, technology, marketing, and disability inclusion, highlighting pathways for transformation and leadership growth within the legal profession.

The programme featured keynote speaker Judge Mogkgere Masipa, Dr T. Ellenson, and an influential panel who shared impactful insights and experiences. The event concluded with the presentation of certificates of recognition and the prestigious Trailblazer Award to Judge Thina Siwendu, celebrating excellence and visionary leadership in the legal sector.

NYDA-NSFAS Career Guidance and Opportunities Exhibition



The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI) participated in the NYDA-NSFAS Career Guidance and Opportunities Exhibition at Esibhudeni Sports Ground in Nkandla, under the theme "Bridging the Gap Between Education and Employment for Youth." Dr. Simphiwe Buthelezi, Executive Manager of the Development Unit, attended the event and engaged with learners and stakeholders at the MKRI exhibition stand.

MKRI was acknowledged by Nkandla Municipality and NYDA officials for its continued contribution to youth empowerment and community development through its two fully functional Digital Centres in Nkandla. The Institute showcased its services, programmes, and opportunities designed to support young people in accessing skills and employment pathways.

The Smart Economic Experience



The Moses Kotane Research Institute, in partnership with Shabzinto Multimedia Podcasts Technologies and the Alpvest Institute for FutureTech, hosted the Smart Economic Experience at the KwaMashu G Community Hall. The event aimed to empower and guide students from the KwaMashu community, promoting leadership by connecting technology, economic opportunity, and global leadership development. Keynote speaker, Ms. Zama Dlamini, ICT Manager, highlighted the institute's efforts to support youth through bursaries, funding for innovation, and the creation of Digital Centres for digital skills training. She encouraged students to use mobile technology constructively and consider careers in areas like cybersecurity, stressing its rising importance.

KZN Human Settlements Dialogue

Dr Thandeka Ellenson, CEO of the MKRI, presented findings on the status of informal settlements in eThekweni Metro at a Webinar in Durban on 24 October 2025. The study, commissioned by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements, highlights that 58.8% of residents are youth, mostly Black African (98%), with 94% South African and 6% foreign nationals, mainly from Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Most residents live in informal settlements for work (60%) or shelter (28%), with 67% economically active and 37% unemployed. Key concerns include poor service delivery, overcrowding, inadequate housing, floods, fires, and xenophobic attacks.



University of Zululand Career Expo



The MKRI Research Services Unit (RSU) continues to participate in various stakeholder engagements to keep abreast with latest developments and trends that affect the KZN economy to inform its future research agenda. The RSU team recently joined stakeholders from government, business, academia and civil society for the eThekweni Local Economic Development (LED) Summit held on 28 - 29 October 2025 at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli ICC in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The Summit sought to position LED as a key driver for both economic growth and social inclusion through harnessing local resources, attracting investment, and creating sustainable economic growth. For the MKRI, its role in LED, especially in the eThekweni Metropolitan and the province at large, is to analyse local economic issues, identify new growth drivers, and inform strategic decision-making through research and evaluation. Through the dissemination of such knowledge, the institute will help local governments and businesses create more effective and sustainable economic initiatives.

Eastern Cape Oceans Economy Symposium



Dr. Elton Chinyanga (Acting Executive Manager: RSU) attended the Eastern Cape Oceans Economy Symposium in East London. Through this engagement, MKRI continues to strengthen its evidence-based approach to research and policy support for inclusive economic growth, and assert itself as the "Knowledge hub for economic growth in KwaZulu-Natal"

The 2025 DUT Urban Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition



During the opening of the 2025 DUT Urban Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition at the Elangeni Hotel in Durban, Dr Simphiwe Buthelezi, Executive Manager of the Development Unit at MKRI, expressed her appreciation for the collaborative efforts between MKRI and DUT. She highlighted several key achievements, including the establishment of Africa's first AI and Smart Robotics Lab, funding for students to compete in Russia, and the organization of inclusive entrepreneurial hackathons.

Dr. Buthelezi also emphasized MKRI's commitment to research and development that bridges the gap between academia and industry. She stressed the importance of aligning higher education curricula with real-world needs to create sustainable pathways for youth participation in tech, innovation, and economic growth.



Honorable Mention to Ms Zama Dlamini from MKRI, who was awarded the 'Connected Communities Award' by the KZN Premier Hon. Thami Ntuli at the KZN Digital Transformation Summit held in Durban on the 16th of October 2025.

UPCOMING

- 19 Nov: Global Entrepreneurship Week
- 24 Nov: Fight against GBV & Sustainable Development SDG16 Workshop 2025 launch
- 25 Nov - 10 Dec: 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence
- 26 Nov: EtheKwini DDM/OSS Cabinet day
- 26 Nov: MKRI Annual Stakeholder Awards Dinner
- 27 Nov: KZN MTN DS4DJ 2025 Graduation

Uthukela DDM/OSS Cabinet Day



The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI) participated in the Uthukela DDM/OSS Cabinet Day hosted by the Office of the Premier under the iNkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality on, 29 October 2025.

As part of the exhibition, MKRI is showcasing its programmes and offerings, highlighting how the public can access and benefit from the institute's initiatives. The team is also sharing information on the availability of the MKRI Digital Centre located in Estcourt, which provides various opportunities and support services to the community.