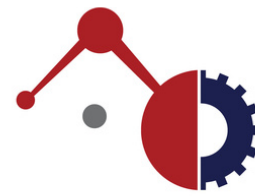


MKRI MONTHLY

May 2026 Issue



**Moses Kotane
Research Institute**

Research · Innovation · Excellence



MKRI LED BY CEO DR THANDEKA ELLENSON at the AFRICA TRAVEL INDABA... See Page 2.

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- SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR LIQUOR TRADERS

"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 May 2026.

The activities align with the institute's mission of advancing research-driven solutions, skills development, digital innovation, and socio-economic empowerment in KwaZulu-Natal.



031 2661 777

info@moseskotane.com

www.moseskotaneinstitute.com

190 K.E Masinga Road, Durban, 4001

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SKILL TO SHINE MASTERCLASS

The Moses Kotane Research Institute hosted the Skills to Shine Masterclass that was held at the MKRI Conference Centre. The event brought together aspiring professionals and experts for a day of learning focused on CV optimisation, job-seeking strategies, and the role of AI in today's job market. The programme offered practical support in personal branding, interview skills, and professional readiness. Through role-play sessions and insights from industry specialists, participants gained the tools needed to fix common mistakes and stand out in a competitive working world.

THE AFRICA TRAVEL INDABA



The Moses Kotane Research Institute attended the Africa Travel Indaba held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre on 12 May 2026, as part of its ongoing work in tourism research and development in KZN. The Institute is currently leading the development of the KZN Tourism Masterplan in collaboration with key stakeholders across the sector. Pictured is the MKRI team led by CEO, Dr Thandeka Ellenson.

NDWEDWE DIGITAL CENTRE OVERSIGHT VISIT



Members of the Moses Kotane Research Institute Board conducted an oversight visit to the Ndwedwe Digital Centre.

From right to left is Ms Zama Dlamini, Acting Executive for Development and Innovation, Dr Usha Roopnarain, Board member and Dr Vusumuzi Mthembu, the Chairperson of the Board,

KZN TOURISM MASTERPLAN REVIEW WORKSHOPS

The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI), on behalf of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), is reviewing the 2012 KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Master Plan to assess its implementation and align it with current tourism trends and opportunities. As part of this process, MKRI conducted the final phase of stakeholder consultation workshops across the province in Durban, Richards Bay and Dundee during May 2026. The workshops brought together public and private sector stakeholders from all districts to provide input and recommendations on the draft revised Tourism Master Plan. Their contributions will help shape a strategic framework to guide the growth, development and marketing of KwaZulu-Natal's tourism sector over the next five to ten years..



CANVA COMMUNITY LABS



The Moses Kotane Research Institute, Canva Africa, and KZN Tech-Mbokodo hosted the Canva Community Labs Skills Initiative at the MKRI Conference Centre in Durban on the 19th of May. The event gathered local entrepreneurs, creatives, and innovators for a dynamic day of learning focused on entrepreneurship development, business legal compliance, and modern digital design trends. Through interactive demonstrations and expert insights, participants received hands-on guidance on using Canva's new AI-powered features to enhance productivity, strengthen visual branding, and improve professional readiness in a competitive digital economy.

THE KZN LIQUOR INDABA & BUSINESS EXPO



The Moses Kotane Research Institute continues to play a key role in advancing evidence-based research within the liquor industry. The CEO, Dr Thandeka Ellenson, together with several researchers from the Institute, attended the KZN Liquor Indaba and Business Expo held at Sibaya Casino & Entertainment Kingdom on 8 May 2026. During the engagement, some of MKRI's research findings and recommendations relating to the liquor industry were highlighted as part of ongoing discussions around sustainable growth, policy development, compliance, responsible trading, and economic opportunities within the sector.

Pictured from left: Mr Bonga Mngoma - Executive for Transformation & Economic Development at KZNERA, Dr Thandeka Ellenson - MKRI CEO, and Mr Archie Khumalo, the Head of Ministry for EDTEA.

UMKHANYAKUDE CAREER EXPO SUMMIT INSPIRES FUTURE CAREER CHOICES

The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI), in partnership with the BRICS Student Commission, Thumumlilo Foundation, and Sizowakha kaZulu Foundation, hosted the two-day uMkhanyakude Career Expo Summit at Sisizakele Special School on 19–20 May 2026.

The summit provided Grade 9, 10, and 12 learners with career guidance, skills development insights, and exposure to opportunities in scarce and critical skills sectors. Learners engaged with industry professionals and SETAs, while also gaining valuable information on subject choices, entrepreneurship, innovation, and future career pathways. The initiative aimed to empower young people to make informed decisions and prepare for the evolving world of work.



CEO INSPIRES NEW GENERATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND GRADUATION CEREMONY



Dr Thandeka Ellenson, CEO of the Moses Kotane Research Institute, delivered a powerful keynote address at the graduation ceremony for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the on 13 May 2026. She delivered an inspiring message encouraging graduates to embrace purpose, resilience, creativity, and self-empowerment beyond graduation. Her address urged graduates to create opportunities for themselves beyond traditional career paths as they navigate an evolving world. Dr Ellenson reminded graduates that every journey begins with small steps and challenged them to use their education as a toolkit to build communities, preserve culture, drive innovation, and shape a better future for themselves and others.

MKRI RECOGNISED AT THE DUT EMPLOYER AWARDS CEREMONY



The Moses Kotane Research Institute was honoured with a Certificate of Recognition at the DUT Employer Awards in acknowledgement of our contribution as a stakeholder in the Historical Debt Clearance initiative, as well as our role as a Host Employer in the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Programme for DUT graduates.

This recognition reflects MKRI's continued commitment to empowering young people through skills development, experiential learning, and creating pathways to sustainable employment opportunities

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR LIQUOR TRADERS

The Moses Kotane Research Institute, in partnership with Wear Your Brand, hosted a Skills Development and Digital Transformation programme for liquor traders to equip them with tools and knowledge for business growth in a changing digital economy. The programme covered industry transformation, licensing and compliance, innovation, business growth strategies, and digital literacy, with Zamokuhle Mthethwa from MKRI speaking on the importance of digital literacy and digital tools for SMMEs. The event also highlighted how online marketplaces can help traders increase visibility, expand market reach, and improve competitiveness. In support of the initiative, printers were handed over to the participants by the stakeholders.



SAFPA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2026



The Moses Kotane Research Institute successfully hosted an impactful Computer Literacy for Businesses Masterclass at the SAFPA International Convention 2026 held at the Durban ICC. Facilitated by Mr. Zamokuhle Mthethwa, the session focused on equipping attendees with practical digital skills to enhance business operations, communication, and efficiency in a technology-driven world. The masterclass also highlighted the importance of digital transformation and innovation in empowering businesses for sustainable growth, while attendees gained valuable insights into Microsoft-accredited certification opportunities.

KZN TECH HORIZONS HACKATHON PROGRAMME



Moses Kotane Research Institute partnered with several organisations to host the KZN Tech Horizons Hackathon programme in Umhlanga, Durban. An engaging platform that brought together thought leaders, cybersecurity professionals, innovators, and technology stakeholders to explore solutions shaping the future of secure digital transformation. The programme featured impactful sessions on secure-by-design principles for smart city and civic technology solutions, accessible fintech innovations for small businesses, and the evolving global cybersecurity landscape. Discussions also highlighted workforce readiness, secure innovation, merchant education, and the importance of strengthening civic technology capabilities within communities.