



merSETA

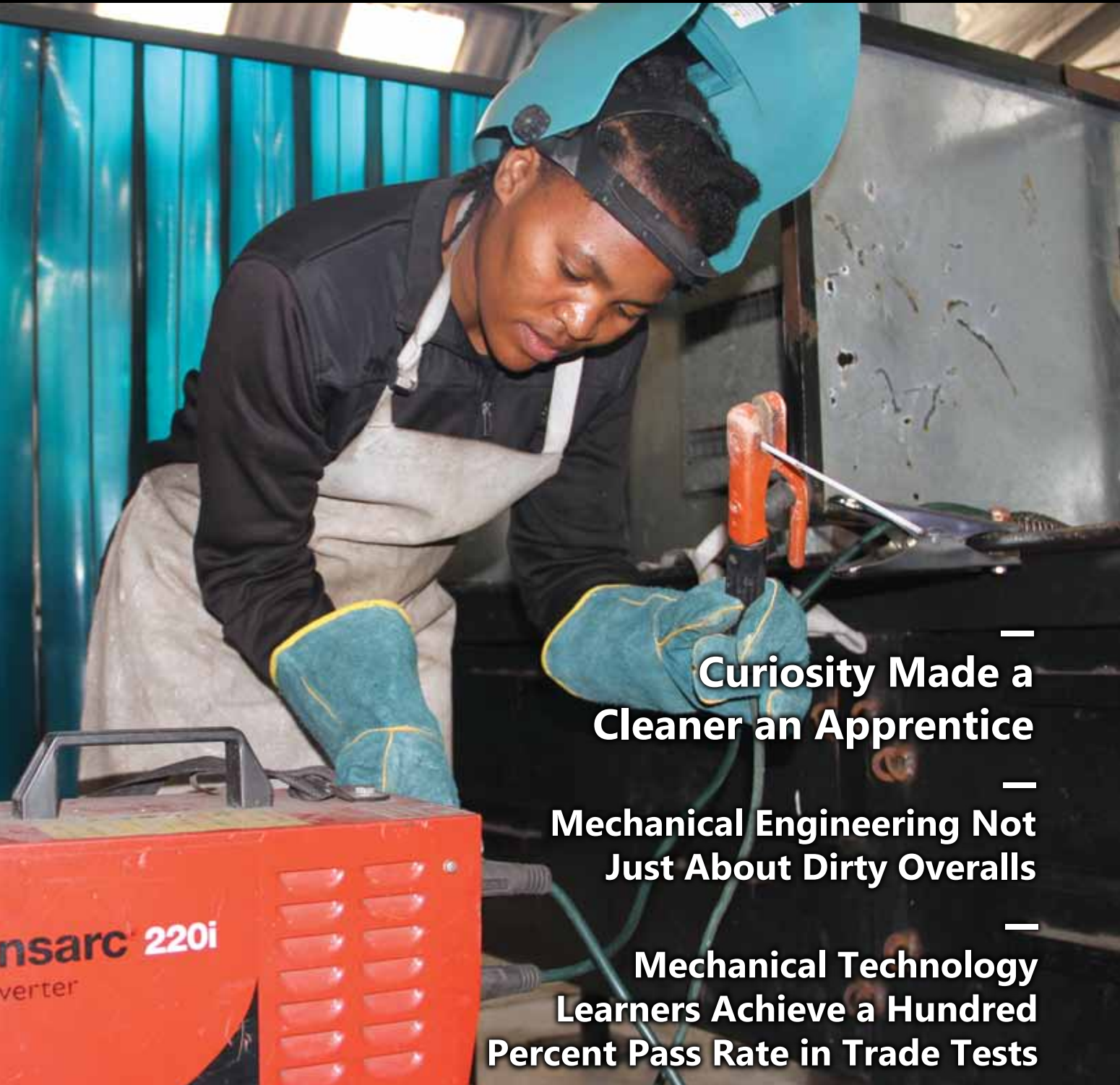
MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

ISO 9001:2015

Achieve

THOUGHT LEADER IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

DECEMBER 2019 - JANUARY 2020 | ISSUE 44



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**Curiosity Made a
Cleaner an Apprentice**
—

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**Mechanical Engineering Not
Just About Dirty Overalls**
—

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**Mechanical Technology
Learners Achieve a Hundred
Percent Pass Rate in Trade Tests**
—



**higher education
& training**

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SETA NEWS | VIEW FROM THE TOP
FEATURES | EVENTS OF THE QUARTER**



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

ISO 9001:2015

VALUES

WE CARE:

It's about caring for people we render services to.

WE BELONG:

It's about working together with colleagues.

WE SERVE:

It's about going beyond the call of duty.



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VISION

Leaders in closing the skills gap.

MISSION

To increase access to high quality and relevant skills development and training opportunities to support economic growth in order to reduce inequalities and unemployment and to promote employability and participation in the economy.

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TALKING NOTES



“

As the merSETA, we continue to take big strides in helping young people realise their potential and dreams. What gives us pride is seeing the difference we make in each of their lives, and those of their families.

”

The 50th World Economic Forum wrapped up in Davos, Switzerland, during late January this year. World leaders had an opportunity to debate, engage and interact but most importantly, to plant the seed for foreign direct investment. How did we do as a country?

Team South Africa spoke with one voice - the country has credibility, endless opportunities and an excellent labour force which has great potential.

Of paramount importance is that government and private sector organisations continuously engage in critical and crucial conversations that will ensure the country builds resilient, long-lasting and sustainable institutions.

As per the norm during this time of the year, it's 'all hands on deck' for higher education institutions as they process admissions for new and returning students. Although universities and colleges struggle with extremely high volumes of prospective students, seeing young people hungry for knowledge and success is an encouraging sight.

As the merSETA, we continue to take big strides in helping young people realise their potential and dreams. What gives us pride is seeing the difference we make in each of their lives, and those of their families.

The story of Bryden Smith is very inspiring. This is a young man who decided to explore all avenues in search of greener pastures, because

he did not want to be a security guard for the rest of his life.

Nomthandazo Petrus, a young woman from Cape Town, started work as a cleaner but fate had bigger plans for her.

We tell the story of Madlenkosi Mchunu, a deaf Aluminium Assembler at Alugro Aluminium in Pretoria, who has made a life for himself and supports his family despite being differently abled.

The merSETA continues to forge long-lasting partnerships with organisations which advocate youth empowerment. One such partnership is with Mpumalanga Stainless Initiative, which aims to empower young people by helping them open their own businesses.

The merSETA is proud of the learners of Tlhabane Technical High School who all passed their trade tests at their first attempt.

Read more on these stories in this issue of Achieve!

Temana Mabula

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Opportunities Abound for Companies Following the Successful '19 Matric Class.

With the highest pass rate in 25 years, companies in the mer-sector are spoilt for choice from a large pool of candidates for apprenticeships and learnerships.

The '19 Matric Class opens wonderful opportunities for manufacturing, engineering and related companies to gear up their training for greater demand, given the vast opportunities that are arising from the highly successful investment conferences held by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Our Return on Investment Tool, which we launched last year with the Retail Motor Industry Organisation, makes it clear that investment in training can have up to 200 percent return within the first two years.

This tool enables a company to quickly and simply estimate the potential contribution a single apprentice can make during the training period.

Companies interested in training in the Automotive Mechanic, Automotive Spray Painter and Automotive Body Repairer disciplines can easily calculate their financial returns on apprenticeships. This tool is available via the merSETA website.

Although domestic new vehicle sales declined again up to December 2019, there has been substantial growth in our vehicle exports.

According to Naamsa, vehicle exports registered another annual record with total exports at 386 863 units which is an improvement of 35 724 vehicle exports or a gain of 10, 2% compared to the 351 139 vehicles exported in 2018.

Exports of passenger cars, in particular, registered a substantial rise, in volume terms, of 17,7%.

The merSETA also congratulates Volkswagen SA for ending 2019 with an all-time production record of 161 954 vehicles - the highest production volume the Uitenhage plant has achieved since it opened in 1951.

Many don't realise that total automotive revenue in South Africa amounted to R503 billion in 2018. Figures for 2019 will certainly show an increase given the higher exports.

This alone should encourage you, company owners, to take on apprentices and increase training ventures at your premises.

Make use of the opportunity to engage new apprentices and launch learnerships as the '19 Matric Class enters the job market in the next few months.

'Till next month



Mr Wayne Adams
merSETA Acting CEO



“

With the highest pass rate in 25 years, companies in the mer-sector are spoilt for choice from a large pool of candidates for apprenticeships and learnerships.

”

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING NOT JUST ABOUT DIRTY OVERALLS

By Penelope Dlamini



» Moyake Sinxolo at his office in Port Elizabeth.

The wide-ranging nature of mechanical engineering compelled Moyake Sinxolo to pursue it as a career field.

"When I told people that I was going to study mechanical engineering, they thought I was going to fix cars," says Moyake, a 29-year-old Commissioning Technician at John Thompson in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape.

John Thompson designs, manufactures and sells boilers. As a Commissioning Technician, Moyake is responsible for ensuring the boilers are fully operational. He liaises with clients on technical support.

He explains that he found the field to be much deeper than what people see on the surface and this is what ignited his passion for it. "From a young age, I was interested in moving objects and wanted to



» Moyake explaining the complexities of his work.

learn how they operate. However, it was the versatility of mechanical engineering that fostered my curiosity."

Moyake completed a fitting and machining qualification at East Midlands Training College in 2011. Through the eagerness to excavate knowledge in the field, he studied a Mechanical Engineering diploma at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, which he completed in 2018.

"I understood that launching a successful career in engineering required that I empower myself academically, but I could not afford to study further due to lack of funds," says Moyake. His big break, he explains, came in 2015 when he was awarded a bursary by the merSETA to study the Mechanical Engineering diploma.

Moyake says the skills acquired in mechanical engineering dynamics, such as mechanics, fluid mechanics, strength of materials and thermodynamics, became instrumental in him becoming a good Commissioning Technician.

"I got fully acquainted with economic design, planning and production, which form a vital link in industry where designs are to be successfully implemented," he says.

“ I understood that launching a successful career in engineering required that I empower myself academically, but I could not afford to study further due to lack of funds. ”

While studying, Moyake received an internship training opportunity at John Thompson as a Trainee Technician. Hard-work and dedication saw him being permanently appointed by the company upon completion of his internship.

"My internship was one of the most enjoyable periods in my career because I got to put the theoretical knowledge I acquired during my studies into practice," explains Moyake.

He continues: "I earned the trust of my employer through the manner in which I carry myself at work,

particularly when I interact with clients. When given a task, I execute it to perfection. During early 2018, they gave me an opportunity to go to the Philippines, where I was tasked with commissioning a 200-ton boiler on my own."

He lauds the support and mentoring from his manager, Piet Lewis, whom he says encourages him to work hard and continuously improve his skills.

Moyake is currently studying for a B-Tech degree in Mechanical Engineering which will see him qualify as a Commissioning Engineer upon completion. He is a firm believer in the saying: "The world is your oyster."

"The funding I received from the merSETA was a stepping stone and I do not intend to ever look back. It provided a significant financial relief because I was able to pay tuition, accommodation and buy groceries," he says.

Moyake adds that his mother has been his greatest supporter. "Many parents prefer their children to become doctors or lawyers. My mother showed no disappointment when I discussed my career ambitions with her, but instead encouraged me to follow my dreams," he concludes.



SECURITY GUARD TURNED QUALIFIED ARTISAN

By Alice Mamabolo



»» Brayden Smith assessing the functionality of the Robot Tucker gun.

Brayden Smith declared war on a life of poverty when he decided to run a spaza shop to support his family while pursuing his dream of becoming a qualified artisan. This, he explains, was so as not to be confined to working as a Security Guard for the rest of his life.

“

When one has people who look up to them, settling for whatever is available should not be an option.

”

Smith is currently employed as an Electrician at Volkswagen Group SA in Uitenhage, responsible for fixing



»» Broken Robot Tucker gun.

and reporting electrical faults on newly-produced vehicles to ensure production is at its maximum.

He started work as a Security Guard in 2001 after completing matric in 1999 because he could not secure funds to further his studies. His career goal was to become an engineer, but he faced severe financial constraints after his father lost his job.

“This unfortunate turn of events diverted my plans because I had to step-in and assist my father in ensuring our family’s survival. However, I treated this as a temporary obstacle rather than a definite failure because a lot depended on my success,” he explains.

In addition to providing for his family, Smith says his motivation for launching a successful career was the need to afford medical aid so that his wheelchair-bound son could access better medical health care.

In 2004, he received a Mechatronics learnership at Volkswagen Group SA, funded by the merSETA. He has since made strides to make a success of his career through hard-work and resilience.

“

I became one of the top qualifying artisans because my circumstances kept me focused. I knew that settling for the salary I was receiving as a Security Guard would see me working from hand-to-mouth for the rest of my life.

”

“I completed the learnership in 2008 but because I wanted to be better positioned to access employment opportunities, I further enrolled for an advanced training programme in robotics and also did a multi-skilling programme provided by my employer. This ultimately saw

me qualify as an electrician,” Smith explains.

He continues: “I became one of the top qualifying artisans because my circumstances kept me focused. I knew that settling for the salary I was receiving as a Security Guard would see me working from hand-to-mouth for the rest of my life.”

He encourages young people to work hard to achieve their full potential. “One should strive to reach for one’s dreams even in the midst of difficulties. When I was doing my learnership, I would sell chips and cold-drinks during lunch, and even took up cleaning jobs to keep my family afloat,” he explains.

Smith lauds the merSETA and his employer for helping him launch his career. “I was able to succeed because the merSETA and Volkswagen Group SA stirred up my ambition and made me realise that I could achieve greater things in life,” he adds.

Smith recently completed an NQF-level 5 Operational Management qualification at the Project Management Institute. His academic aspiration is to become an electrical engineer.



» Smith replacing the collet of the Robot Tucker gun.



CURIOSITY MADE A CLEANER AN APPRENTICE

By Geozann Matthyssen

Mopping floors seemed to be her destiny until she sacrificed her lunch-hour to learn how mechanics worked on cars.

Nomthandazo Petros, a Motor Mechanics Apprentice at Taylor's

Automotive Services in Cape Town, was employed as a Cleaner but her thirst for knowledge presented her with an apprenticeship opportunity. "I got interested in knowing how mechanics stripped car parts, fixed

them and re-assembled them. So, I asked my manager, Mr William Taylor, if he could get someone to teach me," she explains.

Petros was given an opportunity to learn how to work on cars



» Nomthandazo Petros, Apprentice at Taylor's Automotive Services in Cape Town.



» Petros (right) with Mogotsi Mokotedi (left), Senior lecturer Automotive at College of Cape Town.

during her lunch hour and when a motor mechanics apprenticeship opportunity arose, she was the first to be considered. "This was a success-defining moment for me. I knew that the struggles I had endured over the years were about to become a thing of the past," she says.

Petros started her apprenticeship training in March 2019, which is being funded by the merSETA. She describes this as an exciting opportunity because, although she has been working on cars for four years now, having a formal qualification will boost her chances of launching a successful career.

Having completed matric in 2012, Petros could not study further due to financial problems. She found herself embracing every employment opportunity at her disposal, due to a lack of qualifications. "I lost count of the number of CVs I handed out. Eventually, I had to settle for odd jobs, such as being a baby-sitter," she explains.

Petros had a difficult upbringing, having been separated from her mother following the death of her father when she was only 11-years-

“ I had to share whatever was available with my cousins but despite the challenges, I continuously reminded myself that I had to better my life. ”

old. She was raised by her aunt, who also had five children, with her husband being the breadwinner.

"I had to share whatever was available with my cousins but despite the challenges, I continuously reminded myself that I had to better my life. This passion became even stronger after the birth of my son, who is now five-years-old. Realising my dreams means that I will be able to provide him with a foundation for him to also realise his dreams," she explains.

Petros believes that funded programmes provided by the

merSETA alleviate the pressure on learners and parents who cannot afford further education. She explains: "With this kind of support, learners are able to push themselves to succeed. Interventions of this nature are important as skills are rare in our country and are often outsourced from other countries.

"My journey in life is an indication of how important it is for one to gear one's mind towards success. I want my story to serve as a 'beacon of hope' for other young people who feel hopeless due to their circumstances, be it financial or otherwise. Our disadvantaged backgrounds should not define our future. What is important is not the challenges we have endured growing up but rather, what we choose to do with them going forward," she says.

After completing her apprenticeship, Petrus wishes to pursue an auto-electrical qualification. "Industry has various opportunities that are interlinked. I want to be in a better position to access these opportunities easily and one day own an engineering workshop," she concludes.



» Petros welding metals.

DEAF ALUMINIUM ASSEMBLER'S ACHIEVEMENTS SPEAK VOLUMES

By Temana Mabula



» Madlenkosi Mchunu assembling a frame that will fit onto stairs, closing it off from the space next to it.

"I was able to buy myself a house and support my family. This shows that I am ABLED."

These are the words of Madlenkosi Mchunu, a deaf Aluminium Assembler at Alugro Aluminium in Pretoria, Gauteng.

In 2012, Mchunu received a learnership from WISPECO Aluminium, funded by the merSETA. Upon completion in 2013, he was permanently employed by Alugro Aluminium and has since been putting shame to the stereotype surrounding other-abled people, through his hard work and dedication.

Mchunu attained his matric certificate from Kwa-thinkwa School for the Deaf in 2011. He attributes

“The human spirit is one of ability, perseverance and courage that no disability can steal away. Concentrate on things your disability does not prevent you doing well, and don't regret the things it interferes with. Don't be disabled in spirit as well as physically.”

his achievements to the learnership, which he labels a "lifeline". "Had it not been for this opportunity, I would not have realised by abilities," he says.

He adds that he continuously motivates himself by reading about the achievements of other-abled people. One such person, he explains, is the late Stephen Hawking, an English theoretical physicist, cosmologist and author who was director of research at the Centre for Theoretical Cosmology at the University of Cambridge.

Mchunu shares in Hawking's sentiments: "The human spirit is one of ability, perseverance and courage that no disability can steal away. Concentrate on things your disability does not prevent you doing well,

and don't regret the things it interferes with. Don't be disabled in spirit as well as physically."

The enthusiasm he portrays in his work has won the hearts of his employers. His manager, Sakkie Nicholson, says: "If there ever came a time where the company had to retrench staff, Mchunu would definitely be one of the employees we would keep."

Nicholson describes Mchunu as the hardest working employee in the factory, willing to do everything expected of him. "He is always eager to learn and takes pride in his work. I initially thought that it would be difficult to communicate with him, but this was not the case. I actually find myself interacting with him more than other employees," explains Nicholson.

Born and bred in Mooi River, KwaZulu-Natal, Mchunu was raised by a single mother, with three siblings. "I come from humble beginnings and had a tough upbringing. However, I always imagined myself leading a fulfilling life because I looked beyond my disability when it came to self-empowerment," he says.

“
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”

Nicholson applauds partnerships such as that of the merSETA and WISPECO that empower other-abled people. "More organisations should forge such partnerships if the country is to become successful in bridging the inequality gap," he adds.

Mchunu concludes by saying: "My goal is to one day build my own business with the skills I have acquired. This, I realise, can only be achieved through studying further in order to continuously empower myself."



» Madlenkosi Mchunu cutting "beading" for a frame which works to put glasses in position.



» Sakkie Nicholson (3rd from left) and Madlenkosi Mchunu (4th from left) with the team at Alugro Aluminium.



INSTILLING A DIGITAL VISION FOR MARINE ENGINEERING STUDENTS

By Temana Mabula

Marine engineering students at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) have begun exploring emerging technologies through a Marine Engineering programme funded by the merSETA.

John Fernandes, a Marine Engineering lecturer at the university says that they have developed a centre through the programme, wherein they train marine engineering students to acquire the necessary skills to work effectively to meet the complex requirements of Industry 4.0.

“Ships are highly automated and this requires that we employ the latest technologies relevant to

marine engineering. To this end, we developed modules, such as marine electrical systems and marine automation systems, which are unique to the degree,” he explains.

Fernandes is studying towards a PhD in Marine Engineering, funded by the merSETA. He explains that the title of his research: “Navigation Modelling and Analysis for Semi-Autonomous Vehicles towards Industry 4.0”, is highly relevant in the field of marine engineering in that mobile robots and the navigation system that permit autonomous operation have a wide field of application, including, more recently, in the maritime sector with underwater robots.

“This is a diverse and ever-evolving field. As a lecturer, I found it important that I become well-versed in all its aspects so as to impart the knowledge to my students,” explains Fernandes.

He continues: “It is equally important that engagements between higher education institutions and industry are continuously cultivated in order for academic staff and students’ skills to be kept up to date with industry requirements,” This, according to Fernandes, will create sustainable jobs and boost economic growth.

He adds that there is a realm of possibilities that new technology in marine engineering will open

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The merSETA plays an important role in helping the university create platforms for learning. Our goal is to raise technological awareness in students and they have become an integral part of this journey.

”

for the country. “Education is a big investment, but one can only see returns if there is a shared vision. The world has become intelligent and we all have to adapt or get left behind,” says Fernandes.

He goes on to explain that the university is creating a setup that births a calibre of student who will be technologically savvy, so that they can become innovators of intellectual property and entrepreneurs, as opposed to just getting educated for employment.

These, he says, are the ideals that he implants in his students.

One of his students, Banele Mabuza, says: “The technology we use is very sophisticated and encouraging. I am able to draw designs, conceptualise and build machines using Computer Aided Drafting (CAD).” Mabuza is doing an internship at NMU, funded by the merSETA.

Fernandes says the marine engineering model they use exposes students to industry standards and norms so that when they go out to

industry, they are able to gel quickly with the system.

He concludes: “The merSETA plays an important role in helping the university create platforms for learning. Our goal is to raise technological awareness in students and they have become an integral part of this journey. The country has a massive coast which needs to be tapped into and we strongly believe we will be able to do that with the kind of technology we have at our disposal.”



John Fernandes, Marine Engineering Lecturer at Nelson Mandela University.



Banele Mabuza designing a heave control system.



CREATING A GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH SMME INCUBATION

By Temana Mabula

The Mpumalanga Stainless Initiative (MSI) is driving entrepreneurship development through their Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) incubation program. The programme is primarily funded by the Small Enterprise Development Agency through the Department of Small Business Development in the province.

“MSI is a brainchild of Columbus Stainless, South Africa’s and Africa’s only producer of stainless-steel flat products. We mentor, coach and assist aspiring entrepreneurs to launch their businesses in stainless steel, mild steel, carbon steel and aluminium fabrication. This journey includes the drafting of business plans, SARS registrations and all other regulations required in registering a business,” explains Victor Mashego, Chief Executive Officer of Mpumalanga Stainless Initiative.

“Training has proven to be very fruitful in this process because by the time they get into the incubation programme, the candidates would have gained theoretical knowledge and some are able to identify the exact focus of their future businesses.”

Most recently, the organisation partnered with the merSETA in order to extend their scope to include training young graduates from NQF level 2 in fabrication and thereafter placing them in the incubation programme.

“We welcome this exciting collaboration forged with the merSETA. With the ever-increasing rate of unemployment in the country, the most tangible solution for any individual or organisation is investing in entrepreneurship development,” Mashego says.

He continues: “Collaborations are an integral part of our operation. Therefore, forging new relations and strengthening existing ones with both public and private sector organisations has become our modus operandi.”

This, according to Mashego, is particularly crucial because not only do they train and incubate aspiring entrepreneurs, they also link them with other entrepreneurship development bodies such as the Black Industrialist Programme and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).

“

Their strategy going forward is to concentrate more on rural areas, where he believes there are plenty of ‘rough diamonds’ waiting to be refined.

”

Hazel Mamba, Business Development Officer at MSI explains: “Training has proven to be very fruitful in this process because by the time they get into the incubation programme, the candidates would have gained theoretical knowledge and some are able to identify the exact focus of their future businesses.”

Mashego says that their strategy going forward is to concentrate more on rural areas, where he believes there are plenty of ‘rough diamonds’ waiting to be refined.

“As organisations and businesses, we tend to invest more in urban areas to the detriment of our people in the villages. Affording people in rural areas the same opportunities offered to people in urban areas is one of the most important strategies the country can employ to relieve the population pressure off urban areas and to foster infrastructure development and economic growth,” he says.

Mashego believes that initiatives such as these are critical for the country to win the battle against unemployment and poverty. “We have great innovations lined-up to ensure the success of this initiative. MSI has been tasked by the Department of Small Business Development to create a trade market for light manufacturing in Middelburg in 2020. This is one of the platforms we plan to expose our aspiring entrepreneurs to,” he explains.

Mashego boasts valuable experience in small business development, having worked in organisations such as the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFCOC) and NYDA.



Victor Mashego, CEO of Mpumalanga Stainless Initiative.



Hazel Mamba, Business Development Officer at Mpumalanga Stainless Initiative.





MECHANICAL TECHNOLOGY LEARNERS ACHIEVE A HUNDRED PERCENT PASS RATE IN TRADE TESTS

By Mbofnolowo Maphidzhe



The greatest return on investment any investor gets is when inputs meet outputs at a maximum.



This is what 20 mechanical technology learners from Tlhabane Technical High School in Rustenburg gave the merSETA

when they all passed their trade tests at their first attempt.

The Principal of the school, Kwena Mahape, says the level of dedication and hard-work the learners put into their work is an indication that they were hungry for success.

“Many of the learners were from disadvantaged backgrounds. The transformation that takes place in their lives through the merSETA funding is indeed a certification of the fact that they are ‘leaders in closing the skills gap,’” he says.

Mahape speaks against the backdrop of the partnership the school entered into with the merSETA to train these learners in mechanical technology, which is a combination of automotive, welding and metal work as well as fitting and turning.

The learners started with school-based learning and were thereafter passed onto Four Tops Engineering Service for the practical component of their training.

According to Manaka Mosana, Training Manager at Four Tops Engineering Service, the company

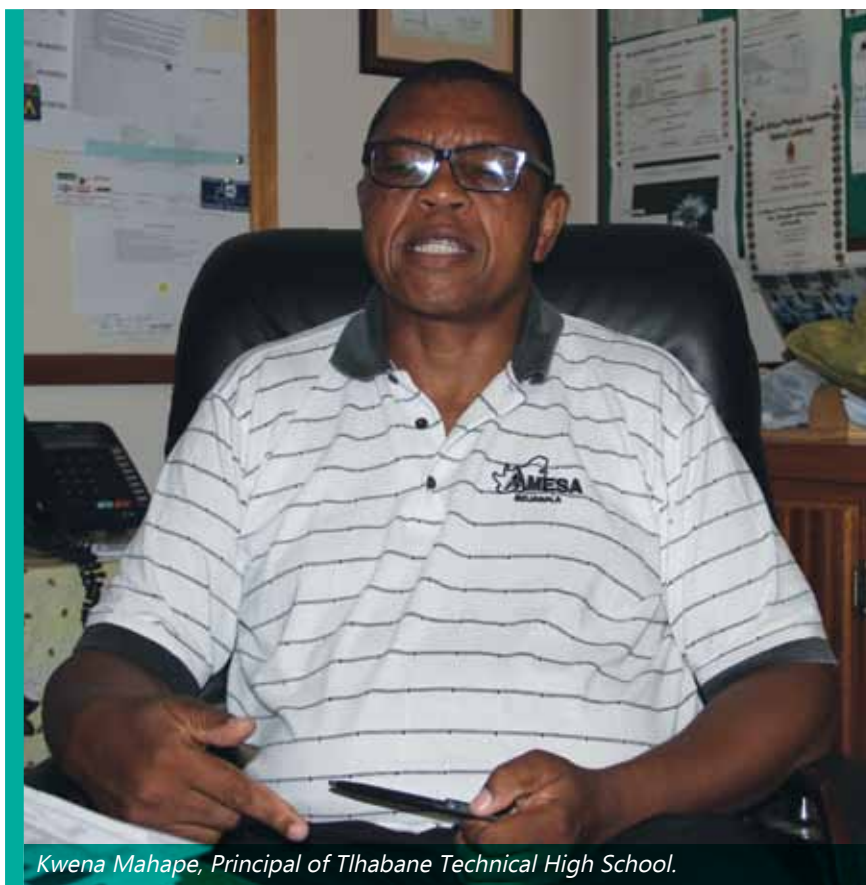
“

Many of the learners were from disadvantaged backgrounds. The transformation that takes place in their lives through the merSETA funding is indeed a certification of the fact that they are 'leaders in closing the skills gap.

”

primarily services mines around Rustenburg and the learners stand a greater chance of getting employed there once they qualify as artisans.

Mosana, who is also a qualified Fitter, always encourages the



Kwena Mahape, Principal of Tlhabane Technical High School.



From left to right: Dimakatso Tsamaise, Godfrey Rantito, Goitsewang Mpeli and Manaka Mosana.



The learners started with school-based learning and were thereafter passed onto Four Tops Engineering Service for the practical component of their training.



learners to work hard and demonstrate their employability to prospective employers when they take them for workplace learning.

Both Mosana and Mahape agree that achieving the 100% success rate was a collaborative effort between the school and the company. They say that they left no room for any students to fail because they supported them and responded swiftly to their academic needs in

every way possible, from start to finish.

They explain: “We went the extra-mile of ensuring that important things such as stipends, transport and accommodation for learners, who were not based locally, were taken care of, so that they could focus their attention on studies.”

Four Tops employed four of the qualified learners once they completed their training.

Dimakatso Tsamaise helps support her seven siblings since her parents passed on. Her record of hard work and dedication has led to the company training her to become a lecturer in their newly established training academy which is due to start operations in early 2020.

“I grabbed the training opportunity with both hands and had to work extra hard because of my circumstances. I now plan on helping my youngest brother, who is in high school, to also get a qualification,” she says.

Her peers, Godfrey Rantito and Goitsewang Mpele, were also absorbed by Four Tops Engineering Service when they completed their training. The pair aspire to start their own businesses in the future, citing Four Tops Engineering Service as motivation because it is black-owned and has become successful.

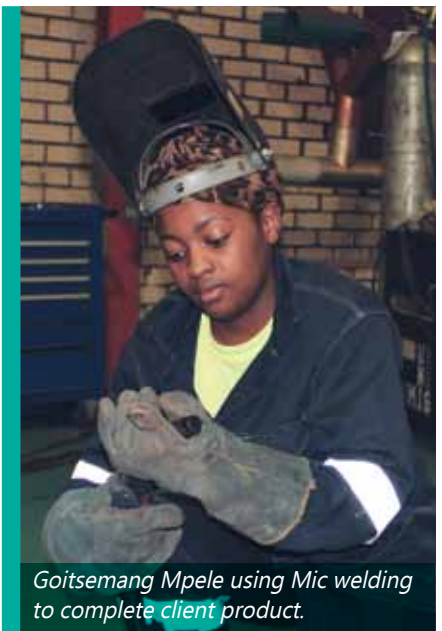
Mahape concludes: “I encourage learners to aim to become employers and transfer skills to those who did not have an opportunity to go to school but are able to work with their hands.”



Godfrey Rantito using CNC to cut Bends.



Dimakatso Tsamaise, qualified artisan currently being trained to become a lecturer.



Goitsewang Mpele using Mic welding to complete client product.

Dr Paul Laughton with Boris Ouidodjie from Aviat Networks, looking at innovative 5G communication hardware.

Multi-Band is The Future of 5G Transport

Combining the Advantages of Licensed and E-Band in one Solution

Aviat's WTM 4800 is the Only Single-Box Multi-Band Radio for Lowest TCO

Licensed Band
High Availability. Supports high availability for critical traffic - 99.999% or better. However, throughput capacity is often limited by small channel.

AFRICA IS RISING, AFRICACOM 2019

As the world prepares for change and the impact of technology becomes increasingly significant, thought-leaders and influencers are trying hard to understand future opportunities.

These opportunities were discussed at the AfricaCom 2019 conference held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) late last year. Under the theme: *"accelerating business transformation to strengthen African economies"*, the conference was abuzz with technology and the latest offerings and innovations for the future world. This theme is very relevant to the African continent as many organisations are looking to transform into digitally savvy world-class competitors.

The conference brought together the world's leading technology

“A popular theme dealt with the positive impact of disruption and how this sparks innovation.”

companies and technology thinkers to showcase their innovative offerings. The merSETA Knowledge Management Manager, Dr Paul Laughton attended the conference and says: "the conference gave a perspective on where technological solutions might be able to take us as a continent. In context to the merSETA, there are a range of wonderful solutions that can transform the organisation into a world-class institution, impacting on

the great work we already do."

He continues: "of most interest to me were the talks given by influential people in the tech world, as they shared their views on what future work and future society may become through innovation. A popular theme dealt with the positive impact of disruption and how this sparks innovation. The 15 000 delegates who attended got a fresh perspective on the new opportunities that lie ahead".

The impact that such technologies have already made in the private sector and how this could encourage the merSETA to be open-minded to the world of opportunities, according to Dr Laughton, is thought provoking.

"As a leading SETA, I think we need to look at technologies of tomorrow to strengthen our position and ultimately provide a better service to our clients. This was a great experience," he concludes.



EWPW HELPS TO PRODUCE CRITICAL SKILLS

Source: SAnews.gov.za

A partnership between the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) is doing its bit to help close the critical skills gap plaguing the economy.

Public Works and Infrastructure Deputy Minister Noxolo Kiviet said through the partnership, the country's youth is being trained to be competent in various artisan disciplines such as auto electricians, boilermakers, diesel mechanics, electricians, fitters and turners, and motor mechanics.

"As of the end of 2017/18, a total of 62 participants have successfully completed their trade tests and are now qualified artisans," said Kiviet.

She said the EPWP has been instrumental in creating employment at grassroots level, and equipping unemployed youth and people with disabilities with the necessary skills for the job market.

Kiviet was speaking at the two-day EPWP Colloquium on Youth and People with Disabilities, held in Tshwane.

The Deputy Minister cautioned that at times, there were unrealistic expectations on the EPWP, as many look to it as the panacea for the country's unemployment problem.

"Although the EPWP offers short-term employment, income support provided in terms of wages to participants contributes towards reducing poverty levels.

"When participants are working in EPWP, the daily wages they earn reduces the level of poverty for them and their households.

"EPWP has an important role to play but it cannot be the only instrument to address unemployment. These unrealistic expectations are likely to result in failure and pessimism about the value of the EPWP," Kiviet said.

Launched in 2004 to provide poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed, the EPWP has had four phases, which have created millions of job opportunities.

Under the current Phase IV (implemented from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024), the EPWP is expected to create five million work opportunities, with participation disaggregated into 60% women,

55% youth and 2% people with disabilities.

"Approximately 208 small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), which include cooperatives and NPOs, have been provided with enterprise development support. Support includes capacity building, assistance with regard to compliance matters and training on existing enterprise support," Kiviet said.

The Deputy Director General of Public Works and Infrastructure, Stanley Henderson, said more unemployed youth should benefit from the programme.

"It is not enough for people to say they [youth] can now put food on the table. The aim is to give people hope and the necessary skills. The programme should be used as a tool for social cohesion," Henderson said.

The EPWP Colloquium has brought together organisations representing youth and people with disabilities, senior government officials across all three spheres of government, as well as representatives from the International Labour Organisation to discuss ways to increase participation in the EPWP.

NAAMSA VEHICLE STATISTICS

Source: NAAMSA



Industry domestic sales ended 2019 on a high note with aggregate industry new vehicle sales for December 2019 at 41,698 units, recording a welcomed uptick of 1,678 vehicles or a rise of 4,2% compared to the total new vehicle sales of 40,020 units during the corresponding month of December 2018.

The December 2019 new passenger car market reflected a year-on-year volume increase of 9,1% but a decrease in the case of light commercial vehicles of 6,7%. Sales of medium and heavy commercial vehicles had also improved, increasing by 19,0% and 18,8% respectively, year-on-year. On the other hand, sales of extra-heavy commercial vehicles had declined by 19,1% year-on-year.

Export sales had recorded a huge decline in December 2019 and at 13,298 units reflected a fall of 18 124 vehicles or a decline of 57,7% compared to the high base of 31,422 vehicles exported during December 2018. However, the industry

surpassed the 2018 record figure after 11 months in 2019 already and for the full year 2019 achieved a record annual export sales figure of 386,863 units.

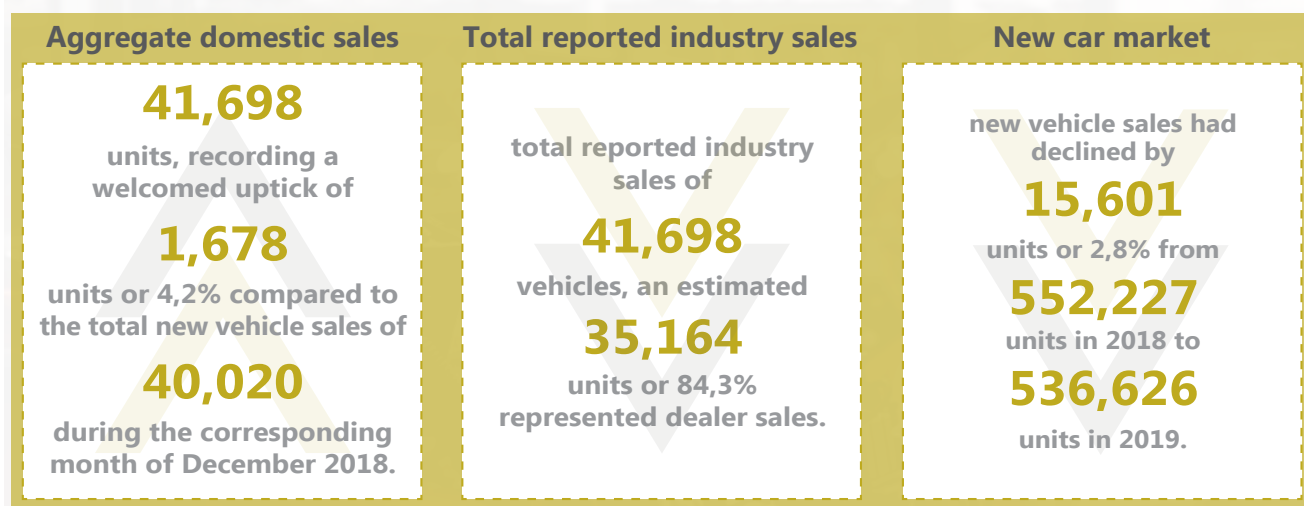
Overall, out of the total reported industry sales of 41,698 vehicles, an estimated 35,164 units or 84,3% represented dealer sales, an estimated 9,3% represented sales to the vehicle rental industry, 3,8% to government and 2,6% to industry corporate fleets.

Vehicle sales are linked to the strength of the economy and the new vehicle market in South Africa in 2019 continued the downward trajectory experienced since 2013, with the exception of 2017, when a marginal year-on-year increase was registered.

Following the decline in new vehicle sales of 1,0%, in volume terms, in 2018 compared to 2017 - new vehicle sales had declined by 15,601 units, or 2,8%, from 552,227 units in 2018 to 536,626 units in 2019. Domestic new vehicle

sales in 2019 again had been affected by the subdued macro-economic environment, pressure on consumers' disposable income and fragile business and consumer confidence. The lowering of the interest rate by 25 basis points during July 2019 has also not lent any significant support to the new vehicle market.

The decline in new passenger car and light commercial vehicle sales occurred despite the strong contribution by the car rental sector during the year and an improvement in new vehicle affordability in real terms. In an affordability-driven marketplace, market conditions continued to be characterised by a buying down trend with sales of entry-level vehicles, small utility vehicles and crossovers performing well in relative terms. Growth in the medium commercial vehicle segment could be an indication that customers are buying down into smaller vehicles due to the prevailing challenging economic conditions in the country.



The following table summarizes annual aggregate industry sales by sector since 2014:

Sector	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 / 2018 % Change
Cars	438,938	412,397	361,265	368,114	365,247	355,384	-2,7%
Light Commercials	173,492	174,812	159,316	163,317	159,525	153,189	-4,0%
Medium Commercials	10,780	10,522	8,436	7,890	7,885	8,719	+10,5%
Heavy Trucks, Buses	20,534	19,919	18,535	18,382	19,570	19,334	-1,2%
Total Vehicles	643,744	617,650	547,552	557,703	552,227	536,626	-2,8%

Source: Lightstone Auto, NAAMSA

Although the domestic new vehicle market was progressively declining in 2019, vehicle exports once again was on the rise showing substantial growth year-on-year. Vehicle exports had registered another annual record and total vehicle exports at 386 863 units reflected an improvement of 35 724 vehicle exports or a gain of 10,2% compared to the 351 139 vehicles exported in 2018. Exports of passenger cars, in particular, had registered a substantial gain, in volume terms, of 17,7%.

The following table reflects the industry's export sales performance over the past few years:

Sector	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 / 2018 % Change
Cars	229,723	238,547	230,957	221,681	260,847	+17,7%
Light Commercials	103,000	105,219	106,148	128,322	125,189	-2,4%
Trucks & Buses	1,124	1,054	991	1,136	827	-27,2%
Total Exports	333,847	344,820	338,096	351,139	386,863	+10,2%

Source: Lightstone Auto, NAAMSA

The momentum of export sales had continued in 2019 and, based on relatively strong order books reported by most vehicle exporters, exports were expected to reflect further growth in 2020 and subsequent years. The projection for industry export sales for 2020 was currently at 400 000 export units.

The outlook for 2020 in terms of Industry domestic vehicle sales by sector is summarised in the table hereunder:

Sector	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 Estimates
Cars	412,478	361,264	368,114	365,247	355,384	360,000
Light Commercials	174,701	159,283	163,317	159,525	153,189	160,000
Medium Commercials	10,394	8,315	7,890	7,885	8,719	9,000
Heavy, Extra Heavy, Commercials, Buses	20,075	18,685	18,382	19,570	19,334	20,000
Total Vehicles	617,648	547,547	557,703	552,227	536,626	549,000

South Africa's GDP rate too often found itself in negative territory during 2019. An improved economic growth rate of 1% and above for 2020 should translate into improved customer and business confidence as well as support new vehicle trading conditions. At this stage an improvement of around 2% in aggregate sales volumes year-on-year is projected for 2020. However, most automotive companies are planning their operations on the basis of a flat market in 2020.

Factoring in the expected improvement in exports, domestic production of motor vehicles in South Africa increased from 610 854 vehicles produced in 2018 to about 640 000 vehicles in 2019 and is projected for 2020 to reach about 660 000 units.

Risks and opportunities for South Africa remain in 2020. Downside risks for 2020 include the continuing load shedding crisis by Eskom with ripple effects on the economy, Moody's pending decision on South Africa's investment rating as well as a continuing weak domestic economic growth outlook. On the positive side, however, the country's inflation has declined to well within the target range of between 3% and 6% and the industry's exceptional export performance is set to continue.



National Artisan Development Conference

The National Artisan Development Conference 2019 took place in December at the Durban International Convention Centre. Held under the theme “Implementing the National Artisan Apprenticeship Development Strategy”, the conference aimed to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the progress in implementing the National Artisan Apprenticeship Development Strategy, the challenges and successes experienced thus far and what lies ahead.



Some of the items on display at the conference.

National Artisan Development Conference *contd*



Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande Addressing delegates.



Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Buti Manamela.



From left to right: Mr TF Mboweni (Director: Artisan Development), Dr Blade Nzimande (Minister of Higher Education and Training), Mr Ravi Pillay (Acting Premier of KwaZulu-Natal) and Mr Christoph Buser (Basseland Economic Chamber - Switzerland).



Mr TF Mboweni, Director: Artisan Development.



Ashwani Aggarwal, Senior Skills and Employability Specialist.



College Students at the merSETA Virtual reality stand.



College students experiencing virtual reality at the merSETA stand.



Mr Ravi Pillay (Acting Premier of KwaZulu-Natal).

National Artisan Development Conference *contd*



From left to right: Mr Ashwani Aggarwal (Senior Skills and Employability Specialist), Mr Wayne Adams (the merSETA Acting CEO) and Mr Christoph Buser (Basseland Economic Chamber - Switzerland).



Ms Vonani Ngobeni, South African Artisan Council: Rep at the NADCCF 2019 speaking about the importance of training skills relevant to industry.



The merSETA Acting CEO, Mr Wayne Adams.



The merSETA official briefing visitors at the merSETA virtual reality stand.



Delegates.

Plastic Institute of South Africa

The Plastic Institute of South Africa held a Wine Annual Conference late last year. The conference was aimed at highlighting the latest developments in the plastics industry, and closely aligned to polymer activities at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and Stellenbosch University (SU).



Delegates.



Anton Hanekom, Executive Director, Plastics SA.



Penelope Dlamini, the merSETA official.



Hanekom giving feedback on a research PISA and the merSETA conducted on: "the shortfall or lack of plastics technicians and plastics engineers in South Africa".



Hanekom responding to questions from delegates.



Delegates.

Plastic Institute of South Africa *contd*



Bob Bond, Faculty Communication and Liaison Officer, Special Projects and Work Integrated Learning Engineering and Built Environment Faculty, TUT.



Delegates.



The merSETA officials and other delegates.

The merSETA Annual General Meetings 2019

The merSETA Annual General Meetings took place across the country late last year.

Free State



Delegates.



Delegates.



Ms Jeanne Esterhuizen, the merSETA Deputy Chairperson.



Dr Engela Van Staden, Vice-Rector: Academic at the University of the Free State, with a thought-provoking topic on 'improving our school institutions to align with the emerging 4th Industrial Revolution'.



Hannes Meades, Regional Committee Chairperson.



Ms Disa Mjikeliso, the merSETA CFO.



The merSETA Free State team.

KwaZulu-Natal



Delegates.



Strategy & Research Executive, Ms Sebolelo Nomvete, welcoming delegates.



The merSETA board member, Mr Neil Rademan.



Delegates.



Ms Disa Mjikeliso, the merSETA CFO.



Mr Tebogo Moepi, the merSETA CIO.



Dr Surenda Thankur talking Industry 4.0.



The merSETA KwaZulu-Natal team.

Gauteng



Delegates.



The merSETA CFO, Disa Mjikeliso announces an unqualified audit for the 2018/19 Financial Year.



The merSETA official.



The merSETA officials.



Guest speaker, Dr James Keevy, talking big data and technological progression.



The merSETA Head Office team during registrations.



The merSETA Head Office team.

Eastern Cape



Ms Sebolelo Nomvete, the merSETA Strategy and Research Executive.



Delegates during Q&A.



Mr Xolani Tshayana, the merSETA Deputy Chairperson.



Ms Disa Mjikeliso, the merSETA CFO.



Prof. Cheryl Foxcroft from Nelson Mandela University.



Delegates.



From left to right: Mr Xolani Tshayana (the merSETA Deputy Chairperson), Ms Ester van der Linde (the merSETA Executive: Corporate Services), Ms Sheryl Pretorius, the merSETA Acting COO), Ms Sebolelo Nonvete (the merSETA Executive: Strategy & Research) and Mr Tebogo Moepi (the merSETA CIO).

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MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

ISO 9001:2015

LEADERS IN CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP.

The merSETA is one of the 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998 (as amended). The 21 SETAs broadly reflect different sectors of the South African economy. The merSETA encompasses Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services. The various industry sectors are covered by five chambers within the merSETA: Metal and Engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Components Manufacturing, New Tyre Manufacturing and Plastic industries.

