higher education & training
Department: Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ST&I
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION BUSINESS FORUM

NEW HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

BUSINESS DIALOGUE

In partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training and the ST&I Business Forum

EVENT PROGRAMME

INNOVATION TODAY. A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.



5 NOVEMBER 2026
08:00 – 12:30

EMPERORS PALACE CONVENTION CENTRE
Kempton Park

CORE KNOWLEDGE AREAS

- Smart Manufacturing
- Aerospace & Aeronautics
- Information & Communication Technology
- Green-Energy Technologies
- Smart Transport & Logistics
- Agro-Processing
- Digital Health

BUSINESS DIALOGUE PROGRAMME

EKURHULENI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND INNOVATION

THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2026

CONVENTION CENTRE, EMPERORS PALACE, KEMPTON PARK

TIME	PROGRAMME ITEM	PRESENTER / FACILITATOR
08:00 – 08:30	**Arrival & Registration**	
Programme Director: Dr Nomhle Ngwenya, CEO, ST&I Business Forum		
08:30 – 08:45	**Welcome and Purpose of the Dialogue**	**Mr Tilson Manyoni** *Chair, ST&I Business Forum*
08:45 – 09:15	**Keynote Address**	**Mr Buti Manamela, MP** *Minister of Higher Education and Training*
09:15 – 09:35	**Presentation on Ekurhuleni HEI**	**Dr Tembile Kulati** *Project Manager, NHEI*
09:35 – 10:00	**Plenary Q&A**	**Dr Nomhle Ngwenya** *CEO, ST&I Business Forum*
10:00 – 10:45	**Panel Presentations** Facilitated by **Ms Zamanzima Mazibuko-Makena** *Senior Researcher, Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA)*	**Prof Arnold van Zyl** *Board Member, CSIR; Former President: Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University, Germany* **Dr Lindokuhle Mpanza** *Head of Engineering, Denel Aerospace* **Ms Khangi Khoza** *Executive Chair, Swissport South Africa* **Mr Marc Van Pelt** *Strategic Advisor, Pepperl+Fuchs South Africa* **Mr Phathizwe Malinga** *Chief Information Officer, PG Group*
10:45 – 11:00	**COFFEE BREAK**	
11:00 – 11:45	**Plenary Discussion**	**Ms Zamanzima Mazibuko-Makena** *Facilitator*
11:45 – 12:00	**Industry Message of Support**	**Ms Laurie Less** *Group Executive: Corporate Services, Airports Company South Africa (ACSA)*
12:00 – 12:15	**Action Planning and Critical Next Steps**	**Mr Tilson Manyoni** *Chair, ST&I Business Forum*
12:15 – 12:30	**Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks**	**Prof Ihron Rensburg** *Chair: Project Steering Committee*
FINGER LUNCH & DEPARTURE		

REASON FOR THE DIALOGUE

The Dialogue's purpose is to shape a new model of higher education that responds directly to the needs of business, industry and South Africa's innovation economy.

01

SHAPE FUTURE-READY PROGRAMMES

Influence the development of future-ready academic programmes aligned with industry needs.

02

UNLOCK PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Identify practical partnership opportunities with the proposed institution.

03

CO-CREATE CURRICULUM AND WORKPLACE LEARNING

Support collaborative curriculum development and workplace-based learning pathways.

04

CONNECT WITH DECISION-MAKERS

Connect with decision-makers across business, industry, government and higher education.

05

BUILD A SKILLS PIPELINE

Help build a skills pipeline for priority sectors in Ekurhuleni and Gauteng.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



MINISTER

BUTI MANAMELA, MP

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mr Buti Manamela has been the Minister of Higher Education and Training since July 2025. Before then, he was the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. He is a former Deputy Minister in the Presidency. He serves as a member of the South African Communist Party Central Committee and in the African National Congress National Executive Committee.

He holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Development Management from Wits University, and studied Digital Electronics at the Tshwane North TVET College (former Mamelodi College).

He served as Deputy President of the South African Students Congress (SASCO), President of the South African College Student Association (now SAVETSA), Local Organiser for SACCAWU and was elected National Secretary of the Young Communist League of South Africa in 2003 until 2014.

> *Investing in knowledge, skills and innovation is investing in a better South Africa for all.*

SPEAKER PROFILES

FROM VISION TO IMPLEMENTATION



PRESENTATION ON EKURHULENI HEI

Dr Tembile Kulati

Project Manager, NHEI

Dr Tembile Kulati is currently the Project Manager of the feasibility study on the establishment of the new higher education institution on science and innovation in Ekurhuleni. Tembile's academic and professional background is in higher education research and policy analysis, particularly in higher education policy and planning, strategic management and governance. He has been a consultant in the higher education sector at the institutional and national levels.

Tembile has held various senior positions in government, the NGO sector, and at higher education institutions. These have included being the Special Advisor for Higher Education Policy to the Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal, and holding senior management and executive positions at various universities, most notably as the Executive Director for Strategy Execution at the Central University of Technology, Bloemfontein, and as the Director of Strategic Research Projects in the Research Office at the University of the Witwatersrand. Tembile was also a Senior Programme Manager at the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET).

Tembile has published several articles in refereed journals and book chapters on higher education governance and leadership, the management of institutional change, and on strategic research management in higher education. Tembile's academic qualifications include an M.Phil. (Science and Technology Studies) from Stellenbosch University, and a PhD (Higher Education Studies) from the University of the Western Cape.



INDUSTRY MESSAGE OF SUPPORT

Ms Laurie Less

Group Executive: Corporate Services, ACSA

Ms Laurie Less is employed as the Group Executive: Corporate Services at Airports Company South Africa (ACSA). She was previously the Shared Services Executive at the Film and Publication Board (FPB), the content regulator and agency of the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies.

Prior to that, she was employed as the Executive Manager at Wits University Clear-AA, a specialist M&E centre and in various government regulatory bodies and other agencies. She has over 15 years of experience as an Executive and has held strategic leadership roles over the past 20 years across highly complex organisations. In the international development sector, she worked as a Senior Programme Manager for both Swedish SIDA and the Open Society Foundation of South Africa. Her skills are in end-to-end operations services, such as Strategy, Human Resources, ICT, Communications and Marketing, CSI, Stakeholder Relations, and Research.

SPEAKER PROFILES

FROM VISION TO IMPLEMENTATION



CLOSING REMARKS & VOTE OF THANKS

Prof Ihron Rensburg

Chair: Project Steering Committee
Special Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education and Training

Professor Ihron Rensburg is a globally renowned transformational strategist, state builder, and policy expert. He currently serves as Special Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education and Training, alongside high-level international academic appointments at King's College London, Arizona State University, and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology.

As the founding Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, he successfully led its historic institutional merger, transforming it into Africa's leading research-productive university, ranking globally among the Top 300, and among the Top 40 for social impact.

A key architect of South Africa's post-apartheid educational policy and a veteran leader of its anti-apartheid movement, Professor Rensburg has served on the inaugural National Planning Commission and also chairs South Africa's National UNESCO Commission.

PANELIST PROFILES

SKILLS, RESEARCH AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION



PANEL & PLENARY FACILITATOR

Ms Zamanzima Mazibuko-Makena

Senior Researcher, MISTRA

Zamanzima Mazibuko-Makena is a Senior Researcher in the Knowledge Economy and Scientific Advancement Faculty at The Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA). She specialises in innovation studies centring inclusive and contextually relevant research. Her work focuses on how technological trends, systems of innovation, public policy (Science, Technology and Innovation), and environmental challenges intersect with inclusive socioeconomic development in Africa.

Mazibuko-Makena is the editor of and contributing author to key MISTRA volumes including *Leap 4.0: African Perspectives of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*; *Why Innovations Live or Die: South Africa's Innovation System*; and most recently *South Africa in an Age of Disasters: Managing risk and building competence*. She also works on research areas such as the hydrogen economy and the beneficiation of strategic minerals in South Africa (particularly platinum group metals), the low-carbon economy and the Just Energy Transition, and was part of the research team that worked on South Africa's critical minerals strategy.

She holds an MSc (Med) cum laude in pharmaceutical sciences and is currently a PhD candidate at the Wits Business School (WBS) focusing on inclusive and endogenous pharmaceutical innovation in South Africa.



Ms Khangi Khoza

Executive Chair, Swissport South Africa

Seasoned executive and strategic leader with a Master's Degree in Economics from Stellenbosch University and deep experience across aviation, logistics, technology, financial services, and international economic relations. Currently serving as Executive Chair of Swissport South Africa, with a track record of leading complex businesses through growth, transformation, operational optimisation, and stakeholder engagement.

PANELIST PROFILES

ACCELERATING INNOVATION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH



Prof Arnold van Zyl

Board Member, CSIR · Former President, DHBW, Germany

Prof Arnold van Zyl is a strategic leader whose career spans three distinct phases: beginning as an industry research executive, transitioning into an international public affairs specialist, and culminating in senior academic management.

Industry Research Executive. Following his PhD in Engineering from the University of Cape Town and a post-doctoral fellowship at the Max-Planck-Institute for Solid State Physics in Germany, Prof van Zyl began his career driving applied industrial innovation. Spending a decade in executive R&D positions at Daimler-Benz and the DaimlerChrysler group, he spearheaded research into advanced materials for energy storage and electric vehicle technology. His leadership in these technical roles directly underpinned early zero-emission mobility strategies and resulted in the successful filing of more than 50 international patents.

Strategic Industry Advocate. In his middle career phase, Prof van Zyl leveraged his technical expertise to act as an advocate for the automotive and transportation sectors. He represented DaimlerChrysler's interests before European Union institutions and national ministries to shape corporate research policy. He later moved to California to serve as the General Secretary of the Fuel Cell Alliance, representing major automakers like Ford and DaimlerChrysler before regulatory bodies to accelerate the development of hydrogen infrastructure. Returning to Brussels, he served as the CEO of ERTICO – ITS Europe, representing the interests of over 100 industry stakeholders to European institutions to advance smart mobility and intelligent transport systems.

Executive Academic Management. In the last phase of his career, Prof van Zyl translated his extensive corporate experience into university leadership. He served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation, and Postgraduate Studies at the University of Stellenbosch, followed by a tenure as the Rector (Vice-Chancellor) of Technische Universität Chemnitz, where he significantly elevated the institution's core research profile and infrastructure. He subsequently served as the President of the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW) in Germany, managing a pioneering "dual-study" model that deeply integrated academic coursework with practical training across 9,000 corporate partners.

Today, he remains active in institutional governance as a Board Member for South Africa's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and as an international expert on dual education and digital competencies.



Mr Phathizwe Malinga

Group Chief Information Officer, PG Group

Phathizwe Malinga is the Group Chief Information Officer of PG Group, a South African glass manufacturing and distribution group whose businesses include PG Glass, PFG, ARG and Shatterprufe. He leads the Group's technology agenda, including a major IT transformation that consolidates the Group's enterprise systems onto a single platform, moves IT to a federated operating model and uses data and AI to strengthen operational performance and customer service.

PANELIST PROFILES

ACCELERATING INNOVATION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH



Mr Marc Van Pelt

Strategic Advisor, Pepperl+Fuchs South Africa

Marc Van Pelt has been a driving force at Pepperl+Fuchs since 1989, when he co-founded Pepperl+Fuchs Belgium. He went on to join the company's global headquarters in Mannheim, Germany, as Director of Global Account Management. In 2005, Marc became Sales Director for Process Automation, leading sales and marketing across Western Europe and Africa. In 2014, motivated by his commitment to engaging with "the last economic giant to wake up, Africa," he relocated to South Africa. There, he served as Pepperl+Fuchs Managing Director and Sales Director for Africa. Today, Marc serves in a Strategic Advisory role, shaping strategy and direction to unlock business opportunities across Sub-Saharan Africa.

His leadership has also extended to industry collaboration. For several years, he served as Vice Chairman of the European Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Southern Africa. He led Industry 4.0 working groups for the Society for Automation, Instrumentation, Measurement and Computer Engineering (SAIMC) and the German Chamber of Commerce & Industry (AHK) in Southern Africa. He currently leads an SAIMC working group defining the organisation's direction in Smart Manufacturing through the use of AI technology, aligning it with the economic and educational needs of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Founded in Germany in 1945, Pepperl+Fuchs is a leading global manufacturer of sensor technology and explosion protection for the factory and process industries. The company is committed to advancing the digital transformation of processes and applications throughout the automation industry.

The SAIMC advances the disciplines of automation, instrumentation, mechatronics, and computer engineering across Southern Africa. Through education, training, skills development, and accredited development programs, it promotes professional excellence and ethical conduct. It also fosters collaboration among industry, academia, professionals, and government through events and strategic partnerships.

PANELIST PROFILES

SKILLS, RESEARCH AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION



Dr Lindokuhle Mpanza

Head of Engineering, Denel Aerospace

Passionate about the skies and driven by innovation, Dr Lindokuhle Mpanza is the Head of Engineering at Denel Aerospace and an accomplished Engineering Executive and Academic with over 18 years of experience across the aviation, defense, and academic sectors.

He holds a PhD in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of the Witwatersrand, specializing in mechatronics and control systems with a focus on artificial intelligence and fault-tolerant control of helicopter systems. Dedicated to advancing avionics systems through rigorous research and practical application, his career has encompassed steering complex aerospace projects and ensuring aircraft airworthiness certification, and a list of publications in respected engineering journals.

He thrives on leading teams to build cutting-edge solutions that push the boundaries of aerospace technology, notably serving as the key driver behind the Skyler project, which is a recognized national flagship initiative.

His passion for teaching and learning was further stimulated while serving as a sessional lecturer for Mechatronics at the University of the Witwatersrand's School of MIA. Drawing from his extensive industry background, he bridged real-world engineering applications with academic rigour to make course material engaging and accessible. He remains deeply committed to pedagogy and refining university curricula to align with the evolving demands of the industry.

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THANK YOU

FOR ATTENDING

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Ekurhuleni University of Applied Sciences and Innovation

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Thursday, 5 November 2026 · Convention Centre, Emperors Palace, Kempton Park