



SERVICES SETA PULSE NEWSLETTER

TO THE POWERX² TAKES OFF IN NORTH WEST

Services SETA officially launched To The PowerX² in North West. The national programme will provide 20,000 unemployed university and TVET graduates with structured 24-month internships. Officiated by Minister Buti Manamela, the launch marked the start of the provincial rollout and the drive to move graduates from learners to earners.

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Minister praises the impact of administrators – p07

Portia Tau-Sekati: Making Space for Others Through Leadership – p12

Bongiwe drives her way into the automotive industry – p14

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THE WORK CONTINUES, ONE YEAR IN

Twelve months of stabilising Services SETA have laid the ground for the next phase of administration

BY LEHLOGONOLO MASOGA

August marks 12 months since Services SETA was placed under administration. It is a moment to reflect on the progress made, the lessons learned, and the responsibility still ahead.

When administration began, the organisation faced serious governance and operational problems: weak accountability, poor planning, irregular supply chain management, and historical project commitments that limited its ability to deliver.

Over the past year, we worked to stabilise the organisation while continuing to deliver on its mandate. We strengthened governance controls, introduced new accountability measures, and reviewed historical commitments in full. We also introduced lifestyle audits with the Special Investigating Unit to strengthen procurement oversight and deter misconduct.

The results are measurable. Irregular expenditure was reduced by 84%, and wasteful expenditure was eliminated. Learner enrolments rose from 23 000 to 32 000, and programme completions from 5 000 to 16 000. Of those who completed, 1 000 qualified as artisans. Services SETA also invested R5 billion in skills development, supporting student bursaries,

workplace-based learning, and programmes to strengthen TVET and community colleges.

Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela recently acknowledged this progress at the Distinction Dialogue, hosted by Unisa's Graduate School of Business Leadership, noting that administrative interventions had helped restore accountability and governance.

The administration period has now been extended. We see this as a responsibility to consolidate our gains and finish the work that remains, not a reason to slow down. Our priorities are clear: strengthen governance and supply chain controls, complete

"Irregular expenditure was reduced by 84%, while wasteful expenditure was eliminated."



Lehlogonolo Masoga, Services SETA Administrator.

the clean-up of historical commitments, improve programme oversight, and expand workplace opportunities through stronger partnerships with employers and industry.

This edition leads with the national launch of To The PowerX² in North West, which will place 20 000 unemployed graduates into structured 24-month workplace internships, addressing one of the biggest barriers young graduates face.

August is also TVET Month and Women's Month. We recognise the role TVET colleges play in preparing young people for work, and the contribution women continue to make across the services sector, from leading businesses to entering industries where they have historically been underrepresented. Our work must keep building inclusive opportunities for women to grow their careers.

Institutional recovery and delivery must happen together. Our task now is to sustain these gains and keep delivering for learners, employers, industries and communities.

The work continues, guided by accountability, partnership and delivery.



The launch of Internship To The Power of X² Programme.

20 000 GRADUATES, ONE MULTIPLIED OPPORTUNITY

Services SETA launches R2.9 billion internship programme to turn qualifications into real workplace experience

BY AMANDA SITHOLE

A new chapter in the fight against graduate unemployment unfolded at the Mahikeng Hotel School with the launch of the national To The Power of X² Internship Programme.

Led by Services SETA in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training and the North West Office of the Premier, the initiative aims to create 20,000 internship opportunities for unemployed university and TVET college graduates across South Africa. Participants will receive 24 months of structured workplace experience.

Launched under the theme “Experience Multiplied. Impact Magnified”, the programme brought together employers,

public entities, municipalities, industry leaders, and government departments, all called on to expand workplace opportunities for graduates and help address unemployment. A total of 1 000 unemployed graduates from across the North West have already been identified to participate, and will be placed with different employers to gain practical workplace experience.

“We want you to treat workplaces as places of learning and places of empowering experience.” — Minister Buti Manamela

Delivering the keynote address, Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela said To The Power of X² is designed to place qualified young people in real workplaces. The programme will provide opportunities to 20 000 graduates nationwide, and he urged employers to open their workplaces to young people. “We want you to treat workplaces as places of learning and places of empowering experience,” he said.

Services SETA Administrator Lehlogonolo Masoga said the programme was deliberately designed to bridge the gap between education and employment. “Services SETA is supporting the programme through an investment of R2.947 billion,” he said. “This is an investment not only in

graduates, but also in the future competitiveness of our economy.”

Masoga explained that the “X” symbolises workplace experience, exposure, excellence, expansion, and exchange, while the “X²” represents the multiplied impact achieved when government, employers, higher education institutions, and mentors work towards a common purpose.

Bokamoso Shame, a BA Communication graduate and one of the 1 000 North West beneficiaries, expressed gratitude for the opportunity, saying it reflects government’s commitment to empowering young people. “On behalf of all the beneficiaries in my province, we are truly grateful to Services SETA for this opportunity,” she said. “This programme is proof that Services SETA is driving the skills revolution and creating meaningful pathways into the world of work.”

Nonofo Baakeleng, who holds a Bachelor of Honours in Geography, said the programme has renewed her hope after years of unemployment.

“After years of unemployment, I saw this programme as an opportunity to finally gain access to the workplace,” she said. “What excites me most about To The Power of X² is that it is not limited to specific qualifications. It creates opportunities for graduates across different disciplines and has the potential to unlock careers that have been on hold for years.”

Through To The Power of X², Services SETA is helping graduates turn their qualifications into workplace experience and stronger employment prospects.



Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Buti Manamela, officially launches the To The Power of X² Internship Programme.



Services SETA Administrator, Mr Lehlogonolo Masoga, outlines the purpose of the programme.

BREAKING THE “NO EXPERIENCE” TRAP

BY AMANDA SITHOLE

For many graduates, the real difficulty starts after the ceremony. Qualifications in hand, they run into the closed loop that keeps thousands out of the labour market every year: no experience, no opportunity.

A thousand unemployed TVET and university graduates in the North West are about to step out of it. Through a partnership between the Services SETA, the Department of Higher Education and Training and the North West Office of the Premier, the To The Power of X² Internship Programme will place them in workplaces for 24 months, each earning a monthly stipend.

Bokamoso Shame, who holds a BA in Communication, stood among the beneficiaries at the launch and called it a turning point for his generation in the province.

“This is the first programme of this scale that many of us have seen in our province. For a thousand graduates to be given this opportunity at once is something we never expected,” he said.

Young people have been told for years that skills development is the route to economic inclusion, he added. This is the promise arriving.

He is clear that a placement is not the point.

“We are not entering these spaces just to complete an internship. We want to learn, grow and challenge ourselves beyond what we studied for. We will walk into those workplaces as graduates, but we will leave as professionals with valuable experience and skills,” he said.



North West beneficiaries of To The Power of X² Internship Programme.

Nonofo Baakeleng, who has an Honours degree in Geography, knows the waiting well. What strikes her about the programme is its reach across disciplines.

“Many graduates feel limited because the reality is that opportunities often favour certain qualifications. Seeing a programme that reaches people from different fields of study across the province sends a powerful message that every qualification matters and that every young person deserves a chance,” she said.

She has watched peers apply for years without success. “Programmes like this remind us that our qualifications still have value and that our dreams remain valid. Sometimes all a graduate needs is one opportunity to unlock their potential,” she said.

The first cohort starts shortly, carrying more than the hope of a job: experience, professional networks, and a different sense of what is possible.



Nonofo Baakeleng, a beneficiary of the programme.



Bokamoso Shame, a beneficiary of the programme.

A thousand North West graduates begin 24 months of paid workplace experience through the To The Power of X² Internship Programme

MANAMELA HEAPS PRAISE ON ADMINISTRATORS

Services SETA, LGSETA and CETA emerge from administration with stronger governance and thousands more learners completing programmes

BY AMANDA SITHOLE

Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela has praised the administrators he deployed to ailing Sector Education and Training Authorities, saying their work has made a “huge impact” on the institutions.

Monday, 17 August marked the end of the administration period at the Services SETA, the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA), and the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA). Manamela placed the three SETAs under administration last year, citing severe governance failures, procurement irregularities and instability.

Speaking at the Distinction Dialogue, hosted by the University of South Africa’s Graduate School of Business Leadership in Midrand in partnership with the National Press Club, the Minister reflected on progress across the Post-School Education and Training sector, which also includes the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and the College of Cape Town.

“Administrative interventions at these institutions have helped restore accountability, improve governance and set them on a path towards recovery,” he said.

Manamela said the interventions addressed governance and leadership challenges affecting service delivery, noting that weak governance has a direct impact on students, particularly around funding, skills development and institutional stability. While acknowledging the progress made, he cautioned that admin-

istration alone would not resolve the sector’s challenges, calling instead for a “systemic reset” centred on stronger governance, effective leadership and improved coordination.

Administrators from the affected institutions built on his remarks during a panel discussion, outlining the interventions undertaken and reflecting on progress towards recovery.

Services SETA Administrator Lehlogonolo Masoga said the administration period focused on resolving organisational challenges and unlocking the institution’s potential to deliver on its mandate. Services SETA had invested R5 billion in skills development initiatives, including student bursaries, workplace-based learning, and programmes strengthening TVET and community colleges.

Masoga said the organisation’s challenges had included governance failures, poor planning, weak accountability, irregular supply chain management, and billions of rands in overcommitted projects. “The issue of governance lapses seems to cut across all the SETAs. Lack of accountability, non-compliance with statutes and problems in supply chain management cut across all the sectors,” he said.

Some skills development providers, he added, had exploited weaknesses in the system, claiming initial payments before abandoning projects and leaving the organisation burdened



Minister of Higher Education and Training, Buti Manamela giving his keynote address at the Distinction Dialogue hosted by the University of South Africa’s Graduate School of Business Leadership in partnership with the National Press Club.

with historical commitments. To address this, the administration undertook a clean-up of historical commitments, strengthened governance controls, and introduced new accountability measures. “Irregular expenditure has been reduced by 84%, while wasteful expenditure has been eliminated during the period under administration,” Masoga said.

One key intervention was a lifestyle audit policy, introduced with the Special Investigating Unit to strengthen procurement oversight and deter misconduct.

Masoga also reported improvements in organisational performance. Learner enrolments increased from 23 000 to 32 000, while programme completions rose from 5 000 to 16 000 within 12 months. “Of the 16 000 learners who completed programmes during the period under review, 1 000 qualified as artisans,” he said.

The Distinction Dialogue highlighted Services SETA’s transformation journey and its plans for the future.

SERVICES SETA SPARKS DIALOGUE ON COMMUNICATIONS' FUTURE

Industry leaders and government gather in Sandton to tackle skills, ethics and the professionalisation of public relations



Services SETA and PRISA Staff.

BY AMANDA SITHOLE

The Services SETA, in partnership with the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA), hosted a National Public Relations and Communication Symposium at the NH Hotel in Sandton, bringing together industry leaders, communication professionals, government representatives and students

to discuss skills development, ethical leadership and the professionalisation of the sector. Acting Chief Executive Officer Sibusiso Dhladhla highlighted the importance of industry-led interventions in advancing the sector. “The professionalisation and transformation of the public relations industry can only be achieved through deliberate,

sustained and industry-led skills development. This positions communication as a profession that contributes to governance, leadership and reputation management,” he said. Dhladhla stressed the importance of strengthening the skills pipeline through learnerships, internships, workplace-based learning

and graduate placement opportunities, noting that partnerships between industry, professional bodies and training institutions are essential in preparing practitioners for the evolving demands of the sector.

The symposium also highlighted the growing need for ethical and responsible communication in an increasingly digital environment. PRISA President Dr Caroline Azionya highlighted the impact of misinformation and disinformation, advocating for higher professional standards and greater accountability within the profession. She pointed to the African Declaration on Professionalisation and Responsible Communication as an important step towards protecting public trust and promoting ethical practice across the continent.

Dr Azionya acknowledged Services SETA’s role in supporting the development of future communication professionals through skills development and training, and emphasised the importance of collaboration in building a competent and ethical workforce.

The conversation continued during a panel discussion themed “Skills, CPD and the Pipeline: Aligning the Declaration with the Services SETA Sector Skills Plan.” Services SETA Manager for Chamber Operations Nomfezeko Vendle highlighted the importance of recognised qualifications in establishing professional standards and ensuring practitioners possess the competencies required by the workplace and broader economy.

“The professionalisation and transformation of the public relations industry can only be achieved through deliberate, sustained and industry-led skills development.” — Sibusiso Dhladhla, Acting CEO, Services SETA

Calling on employers and industry leaders to play a more active role, Vendle said: “We need the support of employers to provide professional training opportunities for graduates and to ensure that the public relations and communications pipeline is continuously nurtured in the workplace. We also need professional bodies to support the growth and development of the industry.”

Joe Segoba, from Orbit TVET College, stressed that professional development should not end with attaining a qualification, calling for greater access to masterclasses and industry-focused learning across all provinces to expose aspiring practitioners to both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Expanding access to industry knowledge and workplace learning, he added, would help build a stronger, more inclusive talent pipeline for the profession.

The symposium gave stakeholders a platform to reflect on the sector’s challenges and explore practical ways to prepare communication professionals for a rapidly evolving industry.



Services SETA ACEO, Sibusiso Dhladhla giving a message of support.



Services SETA Manager for Chamber Operations, Nomfezeko Vendle in a panel discussion.

COMMUNICATION BELONGS AT THE DECISION-MAKING TABLE

Services SETA’s Acting CEO says PR must move from spin to strategy



Services SETA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Sibusiso Dhladhla, addresses delegates at the National Public Relations and Communication Symposium in Sandton.

BY AMANDA SITHOLE

Services SETA Acting Chief Executive Officer Sibusiso Dhladhla believes communication deserves a bigger seat at the strategic table.

Public relations is often reduced to publicity, media relations or “spin”. That narrow view overlooks its contribution to leadership and organisational performance.

“Public relations is not just spin doctoring. It is an entire profession,” Dhladhla said at the National Public Relations and Communication Symposium, hosted by Services SETA in partnership with the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa.

Communication contributes to governance, risk management, reputation management and decision-making, he said, and should not be treated as merely an operational support function.

He pointed to Services SETA’s own experience as proof. After years of negative publicity, the institution recognised that rebuilding trust required clearer communication about its mandate, values and contribution to skills development.

“We have to own our message,” Dhladhla said. That means giving the public credible information about the institution’s work, and not allowing others to define what it represents.

For Dhladhla, owning the message isn’t about protecting image. Communication must be ethical, transparent and aligned with an organisation’s purpose, helping stakeholders understand

the work being done and the value it delivers.

Elevating communication as a discipline will require greater professionalisation: industry-informed qualifications, stronger continuous professional development, and clear pathways from entry-level programmes to advanced qualifications.

**“The professionalisation and transformation of the public relations industry can only be achieved through deliberate, sustained and industry-led skills development.”
— Sibusiso Dhladhla, Acting CEO, Services SETA**

Dhladhla called on industry to help research future skills needs, shape relevant qualifications and identify the tools practitioners will need as the profession evolves. Training institutions can build knowledge and skills, he said, but employers must provide the practical experience that completes the talent pipeline.

Transformation and inclusion must stay central to this work, with opportunities reaching young people, women and practitioners in rural areas, and fair access to learning and career development for all aspiring professionals.

Continued collaboration between Services SETA, PRISA, employers and training institutions, Dhladhla said, could unlock larger, future-focused skills development interventions for the sector.



Sibusiso Dhladhla calls for communication to play a greater strategic role in organisational leadership and decision making.



Services SETA Acting CEO, Mr Sibusiso Dhladhla, with the outstanding winners as he presents medals and certificates in recognition of their achievements.

GET AHEAD OF THE SOMATOLOGY BILL— MASOGA

Services SETA urges industry stakeholders to coordinate as the Department of Health weighs bringing skin care under the Allied Health Professions Act

BY LERATO LETSIPA

Services SETA Administrator Lehlogonolo Masoga has called on the skin care industry to participate actively in discussions over the inclusion of somatology and sports massage under the Allied Health Professions Act of 1982.

The Department of Health has given the public until 22 September to make submissions on its intention to declare the Act applicable to somatology and sports massage. The beauty

“We are here not to create conflict, but to create clarity. We are here not to reject regulation, but to ensure that the right regulation is created for the right profession.”
— Dr Thembani Mentor, SAAHSP board member

industry has warned the move could lead to widespread job losses and business closures.

Masoga urged stakeholders to come together on the proposed amendments. “The Department of Health, AHPCSA, the Department of Higher Education and Training, SAQA, QCTO, Services SETA, professional bodies, providers, employers and practitioners each hold part of the solution. Coordination is essential if regulation, qualifications,

professional recognition and implementation are to support one another,” he said.

He was speaking at the 6th annual SAAHSP Industry Indaba at the Thaba Eco Hotel, south of Johannesburg. The two-day event brought together practitioners, business owners, training providers, professional bodies and government stakeholders shaping the future of South Africa’s beauty, aesthetics, spa, wellness and somatology industry.

Masoga said the sector was too often dismissed as concerned only with appearance, when it is an industry of skill, care, confidence, wellbeing and entrepreneurship. Salons, spas, clinics, mobile services and home-based businesses generate income and employment across the country, particularly for women and young people, he said.

“Many of these businesses are small enterprises. For their owners, a qualification, workplace opportunity, professional recognition or a fair regulatory pathway is not an abstract policy matter. It determines whether a business grows, whether a practitioner remains employable, and whether a young person can enter a sustainable career,” he said.

Services SETA, he added, would continue supporting sector engagement, occupational qualification implementation, Recognition of Prior Learning, workplace-based learning, employer participation and skills planning within its mandate.

That commitment is already visible through Services SETA’s partnership with SAAHSP, which has seen over 500 learners benefit from an RPL intervention linked to the Occupational Certificate: Beauty Therapist, and



Menna Kleine and Abigail Bridgens unpacked the scope of practice outlined in the proposed Somatology Bill, setting the scene for discussions on the pending legislation.

150 participants receive SMME and cooperative development support. Masoga also highlighted a R100 million investment into a research and development facility at the University of Cape Town, aimed at supporting local product innovation and reducing reliance on externally sourced products.

Services SETA Executive Manager for Strategy and Insights Mamabele Motla said an inclusive framework is needed to help beauty therapists compete internationally, while recognising the

transformation already achieved in the industry. “We must consider the future of learners who have already been trained under the current arrangements and ensure that any new framework remains genuinely inclusive,” she said.

SAAHSP board member Dr Thembani Mentor said the proposed amendments could affect “how we practise, how we educate, how businesses operate, how professionals are recognised and, ultimately, the livelihoods of thousands of people” in the industry.



Services SETA Administrator, Mr Lehlogonolo Masoga, delivering his Message of Support at the 6th Annual SAAHSP Industry Indaba, highlighting the importance of collaboration, dialogue and a unified approach to shaping the future of the industry.

LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN BEHIND HER

Portia Tau-Sekati of the Real Estate and Related Services Chamber measures leadership by the opportunities it creates, not the seat it occupies

BY NONKULELO MDALANA

For Portia Tau-Sekati, leadership is not measured by a title, a diary full of meetings or the seat a person occupies. It is measured by progress, problems solved and doors opened for others.

“At the end of every meeting, you need to ask yourself what progress you made, what problem you solved and whose opportunities you helped create.”

Tau-Sekati serves on the Services SETA’s Real Estate and Related Services Chamber. Her career spans corporate business, governance, property policy, research, lecturing and skills development, shaped throughout by transformation, economic participation and education.

No two days look alike. Her work moves between strategic engagements with boards and industry leaders, discussions with government and regulators, and contributions to policy and programmes that open opportunities for young people. The variety has taught her to hold different perspectives and bring people around a shared objective. Engagements only count when they produce results.

“It is not just about one specific job,” she says. “I began to understand that I was not simply there to build a career. I had an opportunity to help build institutions, influence systems and create a legacy beyond my own position.”

Senior leadership in her sector

has long been dominated by men, and she has often had to establish her credibility before her ideas were heard. Her answer has been preparation: know the subject, do the work. “You do not have to become somebody else to become a leader,” she says.

Leadership, in her view, can be firm without being harsh, collaborative without being indecisive, empathetic without lowering standards.

That belief shapes her mentorship. She works with a group of people and asks each of them to support two others, so that what one person learns becomes the ground someone else stands on. Some of her most rewarding moments have come from watching young people she met early in their education rise into management in the property industry. She is candid about the difficult seasons. She treats them as places to pause and learn. “Do not allow disappointment to become your destination,” she says. “You do not always

“Real influence is not about occupying a seat at the table. It is about using that seat to create more spaces for others to come in.”

– Portia Tau-Sekati



Mrs Portia Tau-Sekati, who serves on the Services SETA’s Real Estate and Related Services Chamber.



Mrs Portia Tau-Sekati addresses guests during an industry engagement.

need to have every answer before you take the next step.” Young people should count their progress rather than measure themselves against the next achievement. A qualification, an internship, a small breakthrough: each deserves to be marked. Her message to women is direct. “Occupy your space with confidence, but make sure you leave the door open behind you for many other women to come through, long after you have left.”



APPRENTICESHIP SPARKS HOPE FOR KABELO MAGOAI

Services SETA funding is helping a young electrician-in-training build a career, and eventually a business, in Brits

BY NTALO MANGANYI

For Kabelo Magoai, an apprenticeship is more than a qualification. It is the start of a journey towards a better future.

Born in Brits, North West, Kabelo is pursuing an Occupational Electrician qualification through the Centre of Specialisation programme at Orbit TVET College’s Brits Campus. Services SETA funds his training, covering tuition, a monthly stipend, learning materials, tools, protective equipment and his trade test.

Kabelo began the three-year programme in March 2026 and is currently in his first year. He is expected to complete it in 2029.

He chose electrical work because it interests him, and because he believes South Africa needs more skilled electricians.

“I chose electricity because it is a field that interests me, and I believe there is a need for more skilled electricians. I want to gain the right skills and use them to build a career for myself,” he says.

Kabelo is still completing the theoretical component of his studies. He has not yet started his practical training or been placed with an employer, but he is keen to get into the workshop and start applying what he has learnt.

The monthly stipend helps him cover transport, lunch and toiletries, easing the financial pressure of studying.

Kabelo sees Technical and Vocational Education and Training

(TVET) as a vital pathway for young people who want practical skills and specialised careers.

“TVET gives you more than just knowledge from the classroom. You get the opportunity to learn practical skills and prepare yourself for the workplace. For me, it is helping me turn my interest in electricity into something I can build a career from,” he says.

At the end of the programme, Kabelo will sit a trade test. Passing it will make him a qualified artisan electrician, with a trade certificate known as a Red Seal.

But his ambitions do not stop there. Kabelo hopes to one day start his own electrical warehouse and maintenance company. He would welcome full-time employment after his apprenticeship, but entrepreneurship remains part of his long-term plan.

His story shows how occupational training gives young people specialised skills and real workplace experience, while opening a path to meaningful participation in the economy. Kabelo is only in his first year, but he is already building towards a career, and eventually a business, of his own.

“I want to gain the right skills and use them to build a career for myself.”



Kabelo Magoai in his protective workwear at the Electrician Centre of Specialisation at Orbit TVET College’s Brits Campus.



Kabelo Magoai familiarises himself with an electrical control system at Orbit TVET College’s Brits Campus.

BONGIWE MOLABA IS POWERING HER OWN FUTURE

Services SETA funding is backing a young Free State woman training as an automotive mechanic

BY NONKULULEKO MDALANA

Bongiwe Molaba, from Qwaqwa in the Free State, is studying towards an Automotive NQF Level 4 qualification at Maluti TVET College's Kwetlisong Campus. She is completing her apprenticeship at Mahlola Motor Repair.

Her passion for cars started young. What began as curiosity about how engines work grew into what she calls an "obsession," and eventually into a career choice.

Bongiwe started studying Motor Mechanics in 2023 and began her apprenticeship in 2024. She admits she had reservations about entering an industry traditionally dominated by men, especially given the physical demands of the work. Experience has since changed her mind.

Modern workshops rely on specialised equipment and power tools, she explains, so physical strength is not the only requirement. Problem-solving and critical thinking matter just as much.

"The brain is what functions the most because you have to analyse the situation at hand and think of ways to best resolve the problem," she says.

Services SETA funds her apprenticeship, covering her tuition and providing a stipend that helps with transport, overalls and tools. Bongiwe lives with her single mother and two younger siblings, and the support has eased financial pressure at home, allowing her to focus on her studies.

"I was happy to learn that Services SETA would be funding my apprenticeship. I really appreciate the support because it makes life a bit easier for me," she says.

Her training has sharpened more than technical skills. It has strengthened her communication and teamwork, and built her confidence in using tools and applying what she has learnt on the job. She credits her lecturer, Ms Lefifi Patricia, with encouraging her to recognise her own potential.

Bongiwe has trained across motor mechanics, welding and vehicle electrical systems, and is keen to keep learning. "Being a young woman in my field is my biggest flex because I don't need any man to do this job for me. I can do it myself. I am also powerful. I can fix cars and I can do welding," she says.

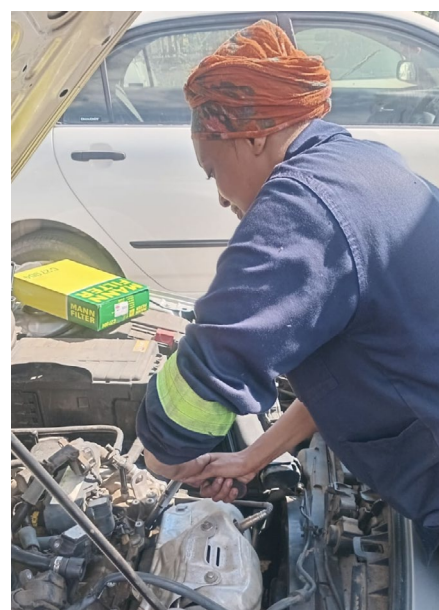
Some perceptions about women in motor mechanics still discourage newcomers, but Bongiwe refuses to let them define her path. She is currently specialising in petrol mechanics and hopes to move into diesel mechanics next. Bongiwe wants to start her own business one day, become an employer, and inspire more young women to consider careers in the automotive industry.

She is set to complete her apprenticeship in March 2027 and is focused on gaining experience for the next chapter of her career. "I'm more than ready to face new challenges head-on."



Bongiwe applies the technical knowledge gained through her studies while working on an engine during a practical session.

"I don't need any man to do this job for me. I can do it myself."



Bongiwe Molaba puts her automotive skills into practice while working on a vehicle engine.

CASSIM TAKES OVERSIGHT TO THE STUDENTS

The Deputy Minister heard directly from Lovedale TVET students about bursaries, delayed results and workplace placements

BY LEBOGANG KOTSI

Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training Yusuf Cassim brought national oversight directly to students when he visited Lovedale TVET College's Zwelitsha Campus in the Eastern Cape on 14 August 2026.

The visit gave students a platform to speak openly about the challenges affecting their studies and their ability to complete their qualifications. Cassim met with college management, student representatives and stakeholders from the post-school education and training sector. Services SETA joined the Department of Higher Education and Training, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, other SETAs and college leadership at the engagement.

Students raised concerns about bursaries, academic progression, outstanding results and certificates, and access to Work-Integrated Learning and workplace placements.

These may look like administrative matters, but their impact on students is personal. A delayed result can prevent a student from progressing to the next level. An outstanding certificate can stand between a graduate and a job. Without workplace experience, many students complete the academic side of their qualifications but still struggle to enter the labour market.

The engagement let students raise these concerns directly



Deputy Minister Yusuf Cassim delivers remarks during the oversight visit at Lovedale TVET College.

with the Deputy Minister and the institutions responsible for supporting the TVET sector. It also gave stakeholders a chance to hear how unresolved matters affect students beyond the classroom.

Cassim's visit put student voices at the centre of the oversight process. Rather than relying only on reports and formal submissions, it brought decision-makers closer to what students experience on the ground.

He acknowledged the concerns raised and stressed the need for accountability, communication and cooperation among the institutions that support students. The discussion highlighted the need for students to receive clear information and regular

"A delayed result can prevent a student from progressing to the next level."

feedback on matters affecting their studies.

The visit also underscored the role TVET colleges play in preparing young people for the world of work. That role depends on more than classroom learning. Students also need practical training, workplace exposure, and the documents that prove they have completed their studies.

For students at Zwelitsha Campus, the engagement was a chance to be heard at a national level, giving them a direct line to the office responsible for overseeing the post-school education and training system.

Cassim said the visit should not be the end of the process. His office and student leadership will continue receiving updates on progress on outstanding matters.

The visit formed part of his ongoing oversight engagements at institutions across the country since taking office.

BURSARY CAMPAIGN TAKES INFORMATION TO TVET STUDENTS

Services SETA and SAPCO bring bursary and skills information directly to campuses at 25 colleges nationwide

BY NONKULULEKO MDALANA

Services SETA, in partnership with the South African Public Colleges Organisation (SAPCO), has taken bursary information directly to students through a nationwide activation campaign at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

The initiative gives students information on bursary opportunities, application requirements and skills development programmes. It also creates a platform for students to engage directly with representatives from their colleges, Services SETA and SAPCO, ask questions and get guidance.

The campaign has reached 25 selected TVET colleges across the country. Beyond raising awareness of bursary applications, it shows students how financial support can help them pursue their qualifications, and exposes them to broader skills development opportunities that support their move into the world of work.

Through these engagements, students are encouraged to make the most of available opportunities and make informed decisions about their education and career paths. By working with SAPCO and taking the conversation directly to campuses, Services SETA is helping more TVET students understand the support available to them, and how to access it.

During the activations, students from participating colleges shared how Services SETA

bursaries have helped with tuition and living expenses.

Bandile Maduse (Elangeni TVET College)

“You would never know someone’s background. The funding makes a real difference because it helps students meet their financial needs while pursuing their education.”

Asiphe Qunta (Coastal KZN TVET College)

“Thank you Services SETA for the opportunity, because I was sitting at home without a plan to study further and pursue my dream.”

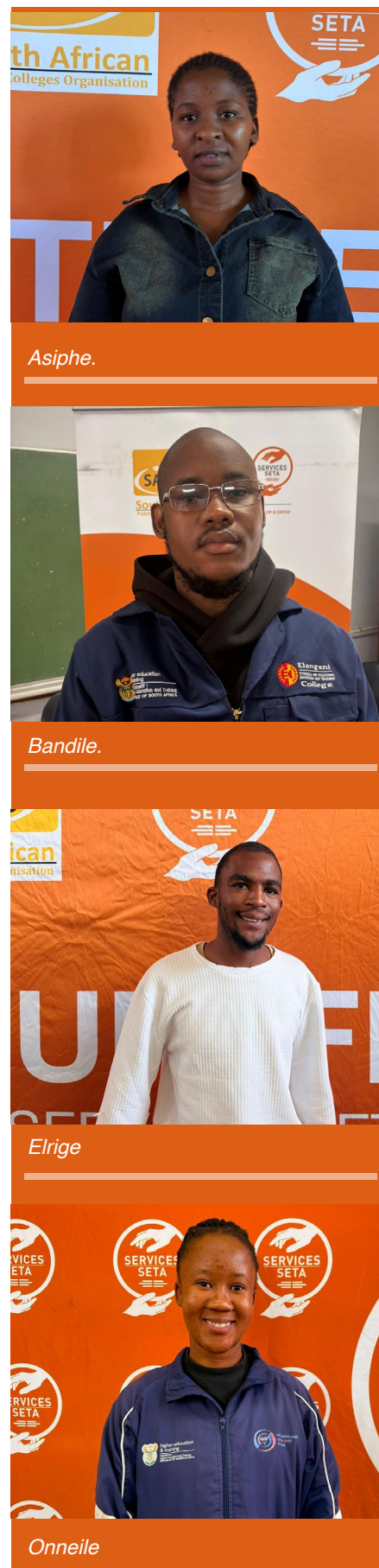
Onneile Sethlabi (Northern Cape Urban TVET College)

“The activation broadened my understanding of skills development and the role of other SETAs.”

Elrige May (Northern Cape Rural TVET College)

“This bursary covers my tuition and transport, and I have learnt about more employment opportunities.”

“Thank you Services SETA for the opportunity, because I was sitting at home without a plan to study further and pursue my dream.”



SERVICES SETA BRINGS CAREER OPTIONS TO IKHUTSENG

BY NTALO MANGANYI

The Services SETA joined post-school education and training institutions at the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education Career Expo in Ikhutseng, Northern Cape, on 13 August 2026, putting learners, job seekers and community members face to face with the organisations that shape what happens after school.

The Services SETA's participation forms part of its broader commitment to career guidance and awareness of education, training and employment pathways for young people. Career expos like this reach communities directly, particularly young people who may not otherwise have access to information about opportunities beyond the classroom.

This matters in a province where youth unemployment remains a serious challenge. By exposing young people to in-demand skills, occupational qualifications and different career paths, the Services SETA helps communities make informed decisions about their futures and improve their chances of accessing further education, training and employment.

Visitors to the Services SETA stand received guidance on learnerships, apprenticeships, internships, bursaries and occupational qualifications. The engagement also highlighted careers linked to skills the economy needs, giving young people a clearer sense of where their interests and abilities could lead.



Learners from Tlhatlogang Intermediate School at the Services SETA stand, with Kamogelo Mashamaite and Ntalo Manganyi from Services SETA's staff.

For many, it was a first encounter with opportunities they hadn't known existed. Khumo Batsi, a Grade 9 learner at Tlhatlogang Intermediate School, said the day was worth the trip.

“I was glad to learn that there are many bursary opportunities offered by the SETAs, including the Services SETA. I did not regret coming to the Career Expo because I gained valuable information about opportunities that could help me plan for my future,” she said.

Tshegofatso Mokopelwa, also in Grade 9 at Tlhatlogang, had never heard of a SETA before. “It was my first time learning about SETAs and the opportunities they offer. I also learned about skills that are in demand. I am interested in real estate, so learning about the opportunities and careers in this field was really helpful. It gave me an idea of what I might want to do in the future and how I can work towards getting a job,” she said.

A career expo in the Northern Cape put learners face to face with the organisations shaping their future beyond school



Khumo Batsi, a Grade 9 learner from Tlhatlogang Intermediate School.



Tshegofatso Mokopelwa, a Grade 9 student from Tlhatlogang Intermediate School.





UNMASKING THE PAIN

- CAMPAIGN -

WINNERS

WILL BE ANNOUNCED SOON

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A Services SETA Campaign
Skills That Change Lives

www.servicesseta.org.za

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CELEBRATING TVET MONTH 2026

Celebrating skills that build our Nation

DID YOU KNOW ?

01 Significant investment is being made in student support. The Services SETA has invested more than R2.8 billion in bursaries for TVET college and university students.

02 Training is designed for the real world. From plumbing and hairdressing to chef training and electrical engineering, the qualifications offered are practical and directly applicable to the workplace.

03 TVET colleges are deeply embedded in communities nationwide. There are more than 50 public TVET colleges operating across over 300 campuses.



DEVELOP & GROW

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20 000 INTERSHIPS

EXPERIENCE MULTIPLIED

OPPORTUNITY Structured work, learning that builds

MENTORSHIP Int, business n working together

IMPACT Strengthening comm and the South Africa

Lehlogonolo Masoga, Services SETA administrator, whose 12-month tenure delivered R2.8 billion in recovered funding and nine major skills development programmes.

THE MAN WITH TWO MICROPHONES

We catch up with Huli Michael Mbambale, Limpopo Provincial Senior Officer at Services SETA, to talk about the many hats he wears, from skills development champion to award-winning Master of Ceremonies and gospel artist. Between sips, he opened up about what really makes him tick.

BY NTALO MANGANYI

You have been with the Services SETA since 2010. What has that journey taught you?
Working in Limpopo has deepened my understanding of skills development and taught me how to collaborate with employers, training providers, government institutions and communities. Services SETA has shaped me into a more resilient and accountable professional.

Which part of the work gives you most satisfaction?
Seeing beneficiaries use their learnerships and internships to improve their lives and support their families. The hope these opportunities create gives me a deep sense of fulfilment.

How did the MCing begin?
At university, through debates, presentations, talent shows and open-day programmes. My first formal opportunity came at a friend's wedding. The positive response showed me I could connect with diverse audiences and manage an event with confidence.

And the award?
It is more than a trophy. It represents commitment, sacrifice, learning and the courage to believe in my own ability. The recognition also belongs to my family, friends, clients and everyone who has trusted me with their events.

Do the two worlds feed each other?
Definitely. Services SETA has strengthened my professionalism, planning and stakeholder engagement. MCing has built my confidence and public speaking. Music has added creativity, discipline and a deeper ability to connect with people.

How do you keep the balance?
It takes discipline, planning and clear priorities. My Services SETA responsibilities come first, while I treat music and MCing as professional commitments in their own right. I have learned that saying no sometimes protects the quality of the commitments I have already made.

What would you say to someone hesitant to pursue a talent alongside a career?
Do not bury your talent simply because you have a job. Start where you are and use what you have, but never neglect your professional responsibilities. Talent is only the starting point: develop your skills, accept criticism, and keep improving.

And ahead?
I want to build a legacy that goes beyond titles and awards, open doors for others, and inspire young people. I want to die empty, having poured everything God placed inside me into the world.



Michael Mbambale

“Do not bury your talent simply because you have a job.”



Michael Mbambale with award.

AARTO 2026: DON'T IGNORE THAT TRAFFIC NOTICE!

BY ASANDA MGANDELA

What motorists need to know about infringement notices, deadlines, demerit points and someone else driving your car.

For many South African motorists, receiving a traffic fine has traditionally been an irritation that could easily be pushed to the bottom of the to-do list.

Under AARTO, ignoring it could be a costly mistake.

The Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO) system has entered a new phase of implementation. From 1 July 2026, AARTO is being rolled out nationally in phases, with Phase 2 covering 62 municipalities. In areas where AARTO has commenced, traffic authorities issue AARTO infringement notices instead of the traditional Section 56 or Section 341 notices for offences falling under the AARTO system.

The AARTO Regulations, 2026, published on 30 June 2026, also repealed the 2008 Regulations.

What it means for an everyday motorist?

Since the implementation of AARTO, traffic infringements are increasingly being managed through a centralised administrative process with defined stages, prescribed timeframes and specific consequences. The rollout is taking place in phases across municipalities, with motorists in participating areas now

required to respond to AARTO infringement notices within the prescribed period.

Motorists generally have 32 days to take action, which may include paying the penalty and benefiting from the applicable 50% discount, nominating the actual driver where someone else was driving, making a representation, applying for instalments or using the applicable appeal process.

Importantly, motorists should not ignore an infringement notice, as failure to respond can result in the matter escalating from an infringement notice to a courtesy letter and ultimately an enforcement order, with additional costs and restrictions on certain licensing and registration transactions.

The introduction of the demerit-point system, scheduled for 1 September 2026, further strengthens the consequences of traffic infringements, as accumulated demerit points may ultimately result in the suspension and, in certain circumstances, cancellation of a driver's license.

The key message for motorists is therefore simple: **an AARTO notice should not be ignored, check it, determine the appropriate response and act within the prescribed timeframe.**

Compliance Top 5 Tips for Motorists:

1. Check your notices regularly - Don't rely on finding out about a traffic infringement months later.

2. Know your 32-day deadline - The first 32 days are critical. Acting early can preserve options and, where applicable, the 50% discount.

3. Only pay your own infringements - If another person was driving your vehicle, consider whether you should nominate that driver.

4. Keep records - If other people regularly drive your vehicle, keep accurate records of who had control of the vehicle.

5. Don't ignore a courtesy letter - Once the matter progresses, additional costs and enforcement consequences can follow.

Stay informed. Stay compliant. Drive responsibly.



“Wathint’ abafazi, wathint’ imbokodo.”

“You strike a woman, you strike a rock.”

— Rallying cry of the 1956 Women’s March

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