



SERVICES SETA PULSE NEWSLETTER



R14,6 MILLION DAN NKOSI SKILLS CENTRE OPENS ITS DOORS IN EDUMBE

Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela has officially opened the Services SETA-funded Dan Nkosi Skills Centre in Paulpietersburg, bringing vocational training within reach of young people and unemployed residents in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Learners are already training in house-building, cellphone repairs and entrepreneurship. The Minister called for programmes that prepare the community for the local projects ahead, from the dam to new health and police facilities.

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BRINGING THE SKILLS REVOLUTION HOME

Opening the Dan Nkosi Skills Centre was a proud moment. Now we must keep building.

BY LEHLOGONOLO MASOGA

October brought a significant milestone. We handed over the Dan Nkosi Skills Centre to the rural community of eDumbe in KwaZulu-Natal.

Run by Mthashana TVET College, the centre is one of our boldest steps yet towards bringing training to rural areas. It shows that young people need not move to the cities to find opportunities to learn.

With an investment of more than R14 million, the centre is already offering training in construction, entrepreneurship and cellphone repairs, a critical skill in the digital economy.

In the coming months, we will open similar centres in more communities across the country. In doing so, we are answering the government's call to take the skills revolution to communities and equip young people for employment and entrepreneurship.

As we enter the last two months of 2026, it is a good time to reflect on the progress we have made and the work that lies ahead. This has been a period of significant change for Services SETA. We have focused on improving performance, strengthening our systems and restoring the confidence of the stakeholders and communities we serve. Challenges remain, but we are encouraged by what has been achieved. Our priority is a stable, accountable and responsive institution that delivers on its mandate.

Turning an organisation around takes consistent leadership, the courage to make difficult decisions and a willingness to do things differently. It also requires every member of the institution to take responsibility for how they work and the service they give.

The progress we make inside the organisation must be felt outside it. Stronger systems and better processes must translate into better service, meaningful partnerships and wider access to skills development.

This is central to our work. Services SETA has an important role in addressing skills short-ages, supporting workplace learning and opening pathways into the economy. Our success must be measured not only by what we plan or commit to, but by the impact we achieve and the difference we make in people's lives.

I wish to thank our employees, leadership, partners and stakeholders for their continued dedication. Building a stronger Services SETA is a shared responsibility. Every contribution matters, and lasting improvement depends on working together towards a common purpose.

As the year draws to a close, our focus must stay firmly on delivery. Important work lies ahead, and we will meet it with the determination our mandate demands.

**Lehlogonolo Masoga
Administrator, Services SETA**



Lehlogonolo Masoga, Services SETA Administrator.

“Our success must be measured not only by what we plan or commit to, but by the impact we achieve and the difference we make in people's lives.”

SKILLS BUILT FOR EDUMBE

Minister Buti Manamela opens the R14,6 million Dan Nkosi Skills Centre in Paulpietersburg and calls for training that feeds local development.

BY LEBOGANG KOTSI

Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela officially opened the Services SETA-funded Dan Nkosi Skills Centre in Paulpietersburg on 16 October 2026. He called on the centre to train residents for the development projects planned in the eDumbe Local Municipality.

The R14,6 million centre brings vocational training closer to young people and unemployed residents in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Mthashana TVET College delivers the training, while Services SETA retains an administrative interest in the facility.

Manamela pointed to plans for the local dam and the refurbishment of a police station and community health centre, all of which will need artisans. He challenged the college to align its programmes with these needs and highlighted Services SETA's commitment to expanding skills programmes at the centre.

The training is practical. Thirty learners have gone through a 12-month community house-building programme, another 30 have trained in cellphone repairs, and 20 are completing entrepreneurship training that ends on 30 October 2026.

Manamela said the centre should serve adults as well as the youth. "It must also



Learners in school uniform: Learners from eDumbe schools at the career expo held alongside the opening, where they heard how TVET training can lead to a trade.

introduce programmes which will help older people to be able to understand, for instance, technology," he said. "We need to go beyond the traditional skills programmes that are being provided. We need to expand into technology-intensive programmes."

The Minister also stressed the value of linking classroom learning, workshop training and workplace experience. He encouraged exposing learners to vocational programmes from Grade 9, so that they understand the study and career pathways TVET colleges offer.

A career expo held alongside the opening gave learners and community members information on study options, skills programmes and career opportunities.

Speaking on behalf of the Services SETA Administrator, Dr Bongani Ndamase urged partners and the community to protect the facility and keep it running.

"We need to go beyond the traditional skills programmes that are being provided."

Minister of Public Service and Administration Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi, who has roots in the area, backed the initiative. He said the centre could restore hope among young people and give them skills to support their families.

The opening formed part of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Service Delivery's outreach to eDumbe. The outreach brought different spheres of government together to assess local projects and coordinate responses to challenges in water, housing, health, education and other services.



Minister Buti Manamela calls for training at the centre that meets local needs, from the planned dam to new health and police facilities.

OPPORTUNITY, CLOSER TO HOME

Deputy Minister Yusuf Cassim launched Skills Connect in Gqeberha, bringing SETAs, colleges and employers together to link young people with training and jobs.

BY LEBOGANG KOTSI

Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training Yusuf Cassim launched Skills Connect at Port Elizabeth TVET College's Dower Campus in Gqeberha on 27 October 2026. The initiative brings Services SETA, other SETAs, education institutions and industry partners together to connect young people with training and employment opportunities.

Cassim told participants the day should help them take practical steps towards their futures: finding the right programme, starting an application and getting support. "Your background does not determine the value of your potential. You should not have to know the right person or come from the right neighbourhood to learn a skill, pursue a qualification or earn a chance to work," he said.

Launching Skills Connect in the area where he lives held special meaning for Cassim. Many young people have dreams, he said, but don't know where to find opportunities. The initiative aims to bring those opportunities into their communities.

He thanked Services SETA for supporting the event and highlighted its To The Power of X² internship programme, which aims to reach 20 000 young people with opportunities over 24 months. He also spoke about the Services SETA–Takealot partnership, which offers opportunities in driver development, personal shopping and support for small businesses selling on Takealot. During the exhibition walkabout, he visited the Services SETA To the Power of X² stand.



Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Yusuf Cassim, engages with exhibitors during the Skills Connect launch in Gqeberha.

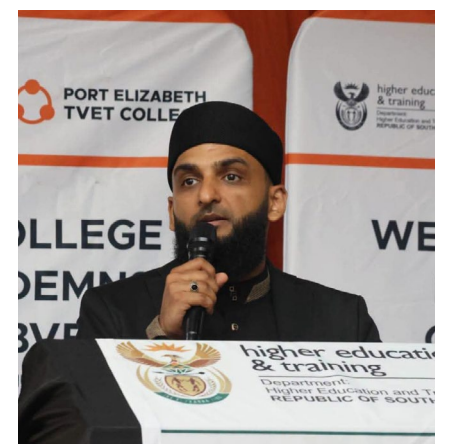
CATHSSETA, FASSET, W&RSETA, MQA, LGSETA, HWSETA and FP&M SETA also took part, offering information on bursaries, workplace learning, artisan development and hospitality skills. NSFAS was on site to help prospective students apply for funding for the 2027 academic year.

Cassim urged exhibitors to go beyond handing out brochures. He asked them to help young people understand programme requirements, start applications and connect with someone who could follow up.

"An opportunity only makes a difference when someone can actually access that opportunity," he said.

"An opportunity only makes a difference when someone can actually access that opportunity."

He encouraged every young person to ask questions and leave with at least one clear next step. Skills development, he added, is a shared responsibility that needs TVET colleges, community education and training colleges, SETAs and the private sector working together. Skills Connect will next be rolled out to other provinces.



Deputy Minister Yusuf Cassim addresses attendees during the official launch of Skills Connect at Port Elizabeth TVET College's Dower Campus in Gqeberha.

HONoured AT HOME

Tshwane University of Technology names Services SETA Administrator Lehlogonolo Masoga its Faculty of Humanities Alumnus of the Year.

BY LEBOGANG KOTSI

Services SETA Administrator Lehlogonolo Masoga has been named Alumnus of the Year by the Faculty of Humanities at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), in recognition of his contribution to public leadership in South Africa.

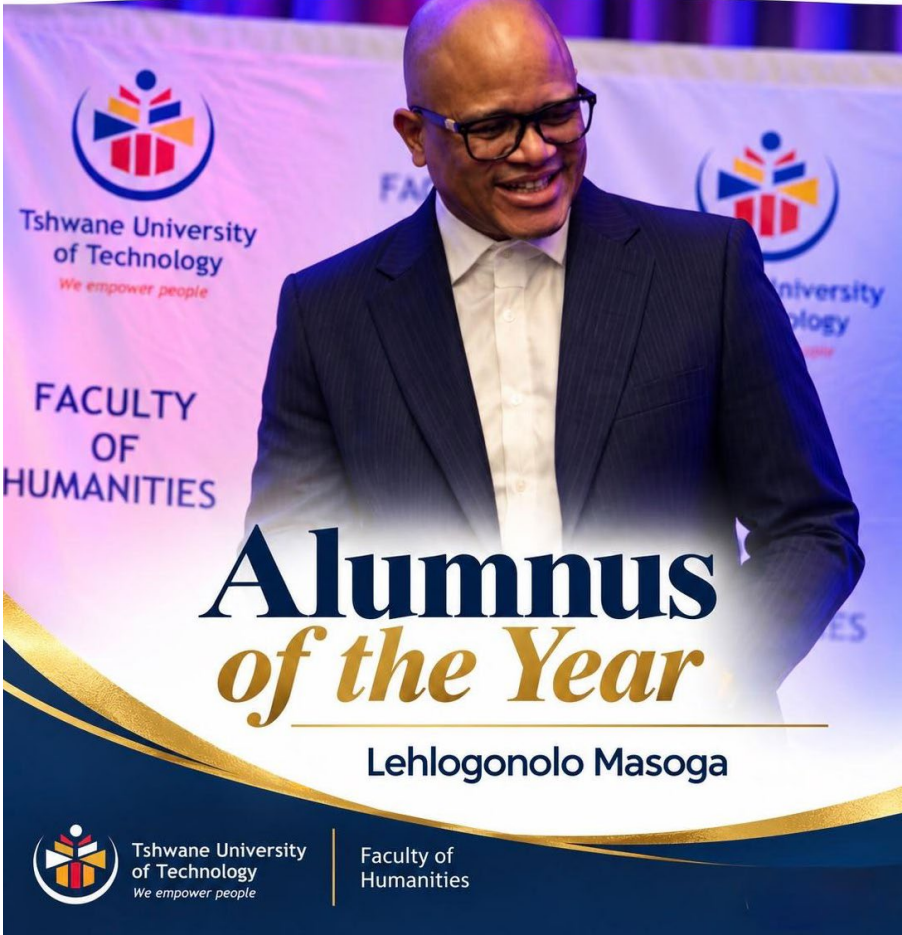
He received the award at the faculty's Academic Excellence Awards at the Protea Hotel Fire & Ice in Menlyn, Pretoria, on 16 October 2026. The ceremony celebrates staff and alumni whose work reflects the university's commitment to excellence and service.

TUT recognised Masoga's work across several sectors in helping to build a capable, developmental state, and the integrity and sense of purpose he has brought to public service.

Masoga holds a National Diploma in Human Resources Management from TUT. His career spans public administration, governance and economic development. He has served as Deputy Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature, Chief Executive Officer of the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone and Group Executive at the Limpopo Economic Development Agency.

The award brings him back to the institution where he studied and first took on leadership as

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE



Administrator Lehlogonolo Masoga returns to Tshwane University of Technology, where he once studied and led as a student, to receive the Faculty of Humanities Alumnus of the Year Award.

“Education carries a responsibility to use what we learn in service of others.”

a student. “To be recognised by my alma mater is a deeply meaningful honour. My journey has reinforced my belief that education carries a responsibility to use what we learn in service of others. Public leadership requires us to build capable institutions, act with integrity and remain focused on the people we serve. This recognition encourages me to continue contributing to that work,” Masoga said.

His story shows how far education can take a graduate, from the lecture hall into leadership in communities and public institutions.

NUMBERS WITH A PURPOSE

Chartered accountant Fanisa Lamola joins Services SETA as Chief Financial Officer, bringing three decades of experience across business, government and the accounting profession.

BY AMANDA SITHOLE

Good financial leadership is measured not only by how well resources are managed, but by what that management makes possible. At an institution responsible for skills development across the services sector, the job reaches well beyond the balance sheet.

That is the role Fanisa Lamola has taken on as Services SETA's new Chief Financial Officer (CFO). She brings experience from the private sector, public service and professional leadership.

Lamola is a chartered accountant, CA (SA), and a chartered director, CD (SA), with qualifications in corporate finance, investments and accounting. Her career began at Anglo American in 1995, followed by roles at JP Morgan Securities and KPMG. She later served as Provincial Accountant-General at the Limpopo Provincial Treasury and as City Manager of Polokwane Municipality.

In 2012, she joined the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA), where she held senior executive positions, including Chief Operating Officer, and served as Acting CEO in 2018 and 2019. She also knows the skills development sector well, having served on the board of the FP&M SETA, where she chaired the Finance and IT Governance committees.

Lamola describes herself as a strategic thinker who looks beyond immediate challenges to long-term, sustainable

solutions. She values integrity, accountability, collaboration and continuous learning.

She sees her role as linking sound finances with institutional performance and strategic goals. “A strong finance function should not only safeguard resources and uphold sound governance, but also provide the strategic insight and leadership needed to support informed decisions and sustainable performance,” she says.

Being a woman in executive leadership at an organisation whose work touches thousands of lives is both a privilege and a responsibility, she says. Yet she believes leadership is not defined by gender. Titles may open doors, she says, but it is the quality of one's leadership and the value one brings that earn respect.

Lamola joins Services SETA at an important stage of its administration period. “I recognise that such a period calls for purposeful leadership, a clear sense of institutional

“Titles may open doors, but it is the quality of one's leadership and the value one brings that earn respect.”



Fanisa Lamola, Services SETA's new Chief Financial Officer, brings three decades of experience across business, government and the accounting profession.

priorities and a collective commitment to strengthening governance, accountability and organisational effectiveness,” she says. Her approach is to listen, understand the institution and work with others towards lasting improvement.

Her first priority is to make finance a strategic partner in achieving Services SETA's goals, while upholding sound financial management and the responsible stewardship of public money. “Institutions must be ambitious in pursuing their objectives while ensuring that decisions are ethical, risks are understood and resources are managed responsibly,” she says.

Away from work, Lamola is devoted to her family and loves travelling with them, exploring new places and making lasting memories. In addition, she remains a keen lifelong learner. As she looks ahead, she is ready to help build an institution that is trusted, effective and making a real difference.

WHERE COMPASSION MEETS COMPETENCE

For the second year running, Services SETA backed the National Funeral Business Awards in Durban, and called for skills to drive the sector's professionalisation.

BY NONKULULEKO MDALANA

Services SETA partnered with the National Funeral Business Awards (NFBA) for the second consecutive year, backing a platform that recognises excellence, professionalism and innovation in South Africa's funeral services sector.

The 2nd Annual National Funeral Business Awards, held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Durban, brought together funeral businesses, industry associations and practitioners from across the country.

Services SETA Senior Manager Nomfuzeko Vendle told guests that the industry's professionalisation must be built on skills. "We firmly believe that professionalisation begins with skills development. An industry equipped with recognised qualifications, competent practitioners and ethical leaders is better positioned to deliver quality services and inspire public confidence," she said.

Vendle outlined how Services SETA supports the sector: through skills programmes, workplace-based learning, occupational qualifications, recognition of prior learning and help for employers developing their staff. She also paid tribute to practitioners who have served their communities for many years, saying their experience deserves recognition. Investing in people, developing young professionals and strengthening entrepreneurs, she added, remain essential to the industry's future.

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Thulasizwe Buthelezi spoke of the industry's social and economic role, and the support practitioners give families in mourning. "Your work is not simply a service; it is a calling and a commitment," he said.

Buthelezi called on government and industry to work together to strengthen compliance, improve training and help smaller funeral businesses become fully accredited. He also urged operators to make use of government funding to grow their businesses.

Awards were presented in categories including Funeral Service Excellence, Customer Service, Leadership, Training, Community Development, Emerging Businesses and Lifetime Achievement.

Dr Nomfundo Mcoyi brought the evening back to the families the industry serves. Behind every funeral, she reminded guests, is someone grieving a person they love. "No matter how big our businesses become, we must never become too busy to care. Technology can improve our systems, and profit can sustain our businesses, but compassion is what keeps the whole work meaningful."

The evening honoured individual and business achievements, and an industry that stands with South African families at their hardest moments.



MEC Thulasizwe Buthelezi: KwaZulu-Natal MEC Thulasizwe Buthelezi tells funeral practitioners that their work "is not simply a service; it is a calling and a commitment".

"No matter how big our businesses become, we must never become too busy to care." – Dr Nomfundo Mcoyi



Dr Nomfundo Mcoyi of Icebolethu Funerals reminds guests at the 2nd National Funeral Business Awards that behind every funeral is a family grieving someone they love.

CHAMBERS SPEAK UP

BY AMANDA SITHOLE

Services SETA chamber committee members called for better communication and more responsive skills development at the Inter-Chamber Committee Meeting, held at the Southern Sun Hotel in Johannesburg on 15 and 16 October 2026. The theme was "Connecting Chambers. Aligning Sector Intelligence. Driving Transformation".

The meeting gave members a platform to raise industry concerns, discuss strategic priorities and identify ways to improve service delivery. It also underlined the need to keep Services SETA programmes aligned with the changing needs of employers and the wider services sector.

Members raised the need for timely, consistent communication with stakeholders. They also voiced concern about the effect of cancelled discretionary grant funding windows on the delivery of skills interventions.

A proposed customer engagement platform was put forward as a practical way to improve communication. The review of the Discretionary Grant Policy was identified as an important step towards addressing implementation challenges and applying lessons learnt.

Mamabele Motla, Executive Manager for Strategy and Insights, emphasised the importance of engaging employers and industry bodies so that Services SETA stays responsive to the sector and the public.

Marilyn Morris, President of the International Professional Image Association (IPIA) and Chairperson of the Personal Care

Chamber committee members called for better communication and more responsive skills interventions at the Services SETA Inter-Chamber Committee Meeting in Johannesburg.



Mamabele Motla, Executive Manager for Strategy and Insights, opens the Inter-Chamber Committee Meeting with a call to stay close to employers and industry.

Services Chamber Committee, called for a fixed calendar of meetings. This, she said, would let industry representatives regularly assess their work, measure impact and find practical solutions to gaps.

She also urged action on youth unemployment as 2030 approaches and work on the new Sector Skills Plan gets under way. "Youth unemployment is absolutely critical at this stage; practical solutions must be implemented and be effective," she said.

Dane Frost of the Employers Organisation for Hairdressing, Cosmetology and Beauty (EOHCB), also a Personal Care Services Chamber representative, spoke about the value of constructive criticism.

"Youth unemployment is absolutely critical at this stage; practical solutions must be implemented and be effective."

"Rather than dwelling on negatives, all industry drivers should focus on the lessons and suggestions, and use them as a catalyst for growth, improvement, and innovation," Frost said.

He added that the two days had brought greater clarity on the way forward and renewed confidence in collaboration between industry and Services SETA.

With industry concerns now on the table, the focus shifts to how Services SETA responds, so that skills development reaches the people and sectors that need it most.



Marilyn Morris of the Personal Care Services Chamber Committee urges practical, effective action on youth unemployment.

FLYING THE FLAG IN SHANGHAI

Pretoria aircraft maintenance apprentice Matthew Bowen won silver at the WorldSkills Competition, proving that South Africa's young artisans can compete with the world's best.

BY NONKULULEKO MDALANA

Matthew Bowen has always wanted to know how things work.

That curiosity took him from a childhood in Pretoria to the WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai, where he won a silver medal in Aircraft Maintenance in September 2026.

Bowen grew up in a family with strong ties to aviation. His early interest in mechanics grew into a passion for engineering, and after exploring mechanical engineering in his studies, he chose aircraft maintenance. He loves the field for its complexity and precision, and for the research and design behind every aircraft part.

The road to Shanghai

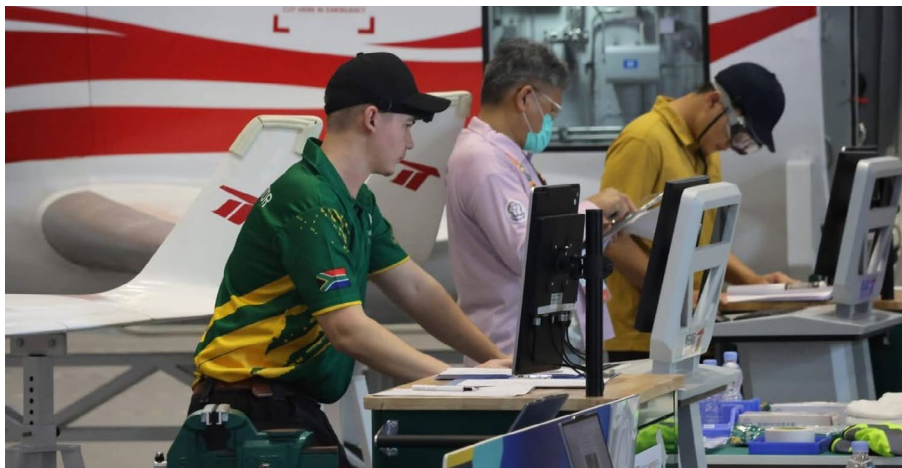
His WorldSkills journey began in 2024, when an instructor told him about the competition. He set his sights on the finals straight away. After an initial assessment and regional and national rounds, he earned his place on Team South Africa.

Bowen says the journey demanded mental preparation, self-discipline and sacrifice, driven by a personal need to test himself. "I am very hard on myself," he said.

He trained while working, with support from his employer, Celenza Aviation, which gave him time to prepare. Access to training facilities and guidance from experienced instructors also helped.

Under pressure

The biggest test in Shanghai was the clock. Used to working carefully, Bowen had to keep the



Matthew Bowen works against the clock at WorldSkills Shanghai, where he had to keep the precision aircraft maintenance demands under intense time pressure.

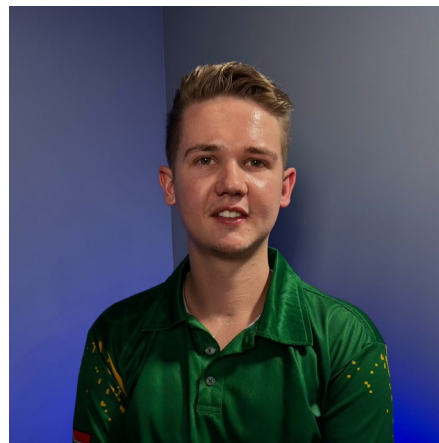
precision aircraft maintenance demands while working faster than ever, often on unfamiliar tasks. He learnt to trust his preparation, stay calm and keep going through difficult moments. His family, friends, coaches and instructors helped him handle the pressure.

"You need to balance having fun with being competitive," he said.

At first the silver medal felt unreal. He went straight back to work on his return, and only later did the size of the achievement sink in.

Bowen hopes his result will encourage greater investment in skills development. With proper training, resources and preparation, he believes, future South African competitors can do even better.

"Don't doubt yourself; just do it."



Matthew Bowen, WorldSkills silver medalist in Aircraft Maintenance, hopes his result will encourage more young South Africans to choose a trade.

What comes next

For now, he is focused on completing his apprenticeship and qualifying as an aircraft maintenance professional. He hopes more young South Africans will see the value of vocational training and choose careers that match their interests. His advice is simple: do what you enjoy, stay committed and do not let self-doubt stop you. "If you really want something, you will look at everything you can do to make it work. Don't doubt yourself; just do it."

HERITAGE TAKES THE RUNWAY

Services SETA's fashion and make-up showcase showed more than 2 000 Limpopo learners that creative skills can become careers.

Models wear heritage-inspired designs at the 4th Heritage Career Expo in Seshego, showing more than 2 000 learners that fashion and culture can lead to careers.

BY AMANDA SITHOLE

From heritage-inspired fashion to the artistry of make-up, Services SETA brought the Personal Care sector to life at the closing ceremony of the 4th Heritage Career Expo in Seshego, Polokwane. More than 2 000 learners from Seshego and surrounding communities attended.

The live make-up and fashion showcase showed learners how heritage shapes creativity, and how a flair for make-up can grow into a profession. Every look on stage was the work of someone who had turned a skill into a living.

Delivering the keynote address, Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela urged learners to look beyond conventional professions. "I hope that today, we saw that passion can be a driver of skill, which can drive employment," he said.

He encouraged them to consider careers in music, fashion and the arts. "Do not limit yourselves to specific careers, but rather learn to broaden your horizons and pursue what you believe could be your passion and talent."

The Minister also warned against steering young people into programmes that do not match their interests, saying this can lead students to drop out.

Services SETA Acting CEO Sibusiso Dhladhla said the showcase, presented by the Personal Care Chamber, was designed to teach through hands-on experience. "We are transforming cultural knowledge into professional skills and economic opportunities for young people," he said. He stressed the value of reaching learners at grassroots level. "Today, we opened doors to career opportunities that the learners might never have considered."

For Dhladhla, cultural practices are more than expressions of identity. They can become the foundation of a working life. "African heritage is more than our identity. Our heritage is a source of skills, entrepreneurship and sustainable careers," he said.

"African heritage is more than our identity. Our heritage is a source of skills, entrepreneurship and sustainable careers." – Sibusiso Dhladhla, Services SETA Acting CEO

Beauty expert Bongi Mlontshwa led the demonstration, joined by Kayla Serekela, a contestant in the Unmasking the Pain campaign. Their masterclass showed just how versatile make-up tools can be.

For many in the audience, it was a first glimpse of a career they had never considered. The showcase challenged them to look past the usual choices and take seriously the skills rooted in creativity and culture.



Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela visits the exhibition stands at the Heritage Career Expo in Seshego, where beadwork, make-up and other creative skills were shown as paths to a living.

YOUNG VOICES, FUTURE SKILLS

BY LERATO LETSIPA

How do we prepare South Africa's communicators for a world changed by technology, and open the door for the next generation? That question shaped the PRISA PRISMS Summit and Awards 2026, held at the Indaba Hotel in Johannesburg from 22 to 24 October.

Under the theme "Kaleidoscope: Patterns of Impact Across Past, Present and Future", industry professionals and stakeholders explored the future of public relations, from artificial intelligence and digital transformation to ethics and public trust.

Addressing delegates, Services SETA Acting CEO Sibusiso Dhladhla called for communication skills development to keep pace with industry demands and new technologies. He also hoped that public relations qualifications could one day be offered at TVET and community colleges, widening access to professional training.

Mamabele Motla, Services SETA Executive Manager for Strategy and Insight, urged employers, universities and skills bodies to work together to identify the skills the industry needed and to create pathways into work. Employers, she stressed, must play an active role in spelling out the skills their businesses require. Developing young talent was another key theme. PRISA President Dr Caroline Azionya called for greater investment in young people. "Africa's future will not shape itself. The communications industry must lead," she said.

At the PRISMS Awards, Azionya thanked Services SETA for

As headline sponsor of the PRISA PRISMS Summit and Awards 2026, Services SETA helped put emerging communications talent and future-ready skills centre stage.



Communications leaders debate artificial intelligence, ethics and public trust at the PRISA PRISMS Summit in Johannesburg.

creating opportunities for emerging practitioners. "I would like to thank the Services SETA as our headline sponsor. Without you, we would not have been able to have a programme called The Young Voices," she said.

Nancy Dusani of Decode Media won Gold for Best PR Intern, a category in The Young Voices programme. She spoke about the value of hands-on experience. "To truly prepare new talent, initiatives like The Young Voices programme are vital because they bridge the gap between classroom theory and real-world execution," she said.

"Africa's future will not shape itself. The communications industry must lead."



Services SETA Acting CEO Sibusiso Dhladhla calls for public relations qualifications to be offered at TVET and community colleges.

Credible communication was also on the agenda. Lebogang Kotsi, Services SETA Senior Officer for Content Development, spoke about how well-informed employees help fight misinformation and make sure stakeholders get accurate information about skills development opportunities.

Services SETA's backing of the summit and The Young Voices programme reaffirmed its commitment to developing the next generation of communications professionals.

STUDYING TO GROW YOUNG BUSINESSES

With a Services SETA bursary behind her, Tlalane Mokoena is studying for a master's degree in entrepreneurial management so that she can help youth-owned businesses grow.

BY NTALO MANGANYI

Tlalane Mokoena wants to help young South Africans build businesses that last. To get there, she is studying for a Master of Management Sciences in Entrepreneurial Management at the Central University of Technology (CUT) in Bloemfontein, funded by a Services SETA bursary.

Mokoena, who grew up in Reitz in the Free State, heard about the bursary through her university's Work-Integrated Learning Unit and applied straight away. The funding has taken away much of the financial pressure of postgraduate study, giving her valuable time to concentrate on her work.

The support came at an important time. Beyond the money, the backing gave her the confidence and motivation to keep going. "The bursary has eased my financial burden, strengthened my confidence, and empowered me to pursue my academic goals and build a better future while contributing meaningfully to entrepreneurship and economic development in South Africa," she says.

Her ambition speaks to one of South Africa's most urgent challenges. In the second quarter of 2026, the official unemployment rate rose to 33,6%, and 47,4% of young people aged 15 to 34 who wanted work could not find it. The formal job market cannot

absorb them all, so more young people need to create work as well as look for it. Small businesses can make that difference, because every enterprise that survives and grows can employ others. Building entrepreneurship and business management skills among young people is part of the answer to youth unemployment.

Mokoena's choice of field grew from an interest in small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and the role they play in creating jobs and driving economic growth. Through her studies, she is developing skills in strategic management, innovation and leadership, which she will need to help businesses solve problems, spot opportunities for growth and run sustainably.

After graduating, she plans to work with SMMEs, especially those owned by young people,

"The bursary has eased my financial burden, strengthened my confidence, and empowered me to pursue my academic goals."



Tlalane Mokoena at an earlier graduation. With a Services SETA bursary, she is now working towards a master's degree to help young entrepreneurs build businesses that last.

helping their owners sharpen their strategies, manage their businesses better and build companies that create jobs in their communities.

"I am committed to using the knowledge and skills gained to contribute to entrepreneurship development and promote sustainable economic growth in South Africa," Mokoena says.

She has a message for young people who believe further study is out of reach. Stay hopeful, she says, and go looking for opportunities. Research bursaries, scholarships and learnerships, ask for help when you need it, and don't let money problems make you give up.

Her story shows what bursary funding makes possible. With Services SETA's support, a young woman from Reitz is gaining skills that could help many more young South Africans build businesses of their own.

CLEANING IS HEALTH

At a PBEH conference backed by Services SETA, industry leaders called for clearer career paths and proper recognition for healthcare cleaners.

BY NONKULULEKO MDALANA

The Professional Body for Environmental Hygiene (PBEH), in partnership with Services SETA, hosted a conference in Midrand on 8 October 2026. Industry leaders and skills development stakeholders met to discuss professionalisation, occupational qualifications and innovation in environmental hygiene.

Discussions focused on improving training and assessment, strengthening collaboration across the industry and opening accessible pathways for workers to build their skills. The programme also spotlighted the Elementary Occupational Certificate: Healthcare Cleaner, and the part healthcare cleaners play in patient safety and infection prevention.

Thembinkosi Mosia, representing Services SETA's Cleaning and Hiring Chamber, said closer engagement with industry and professional bodies had helped the SETA address concerns, improve support for skills development providers and clear bottlenecks in qualification development. "We have transformed our relationship," he said, pointing to Services SETA's commitment to open communication and practical solutions. Mosia stressed the need for clear career paths that let workers progress, including those who join the industry without matric. "We are working on creating a career pathway from ABET to NQF Level 6 in Cleaning," he said. He also called for contin-



Industry leaders and skills experts at the PBEH and Services SETA conference in Midrand, where healthcare cleaners were recognised as frontline workers in infection control.

ued industry engagement, wider promotion of healthcare-related qualifications and more investment in upskilling and reskilling.

Professor Wynand Goosen looked at how microlearning, microcredentials and technology could help training keep pace with industry. He pointed to the gap between the skills employers need now and the time it takes to develop formal qualifications.

His answer was to link microcredentials to existing qualifications and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), so that workers can build specific skills, have them recognised and keep learning. Artificial intelligence can help with skills assessment and planning, he said, but human judgement remains essential.

"Cleaning is now health. Cleaning is infection control."
– Marietjie Swanepoel

He urged stakeholders to ask whether training gives workers skills that employers actually recognise, not only whether it is accredited, and to keep learning within reach of rural and under-resourced communities.

Marietjie Swanepoel presented the Elementary Occupational Certificate: Healthcare Cleaner, registered at NQF Level 2 with 120 credits. The qualification gives healthcare cleaners a structured path to the knowledge and practical skills their work demands.

Drawing on a time-and-motion study, she described the pressure cleaners work under, with heavy workloads, tight schedules and constant infection risk. "Cleaning is now health. Cleaning is infection control," she said. She stressed correct cleaning techniques, hand hygiene and safe handling of equipment to prevent cross-contamination, noting that heavy workloads and limited time often make it hard to follow procedures consistently.

The conference put the spotlight on the people who keep healthcare spaces safe, and on the training they need to do it well.

FROM INTERNS TO EXPERTS

Services SETA and the QCTO celebrated 28 funded interns who completed a two-year programme. Most have since been employed by the QCTO.

BY NONKULULEKO MDALANA

After 24 months of workplace experience, 28 Services SETA-funded interns have completed their internship at the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

On Friday, 2 October 2026, Services SETA and the QCTO gathered in Hatfield, Pretoria, to mark the end of the QCTO Workplace-Based Learning Internship Programme, which began in August 2024.

The programme was designed to bridge the gap between the lecture hall and the workplace. Interns worked across key QCTO functions, including qualifications development, assessment, quality assurance and accreditation. Along the way they gained confidence as well as technical skills.

Many have already moved into jobs. Most were absorbed into the QCTO, and others found work elsewhere, which shows what real workplace experience can do for young graduates.

Services SETA Acting CEO Sibusiso Dhladhla reminded the group how competitive graduate internships are, and urged them to build on what they had gained. "You really need to be very grateful that you've had this opportunity and use it as a platform to take you further. We acknowledge you for your perseverance and the progression in your careers," he said.



The 28 Services SETA-funded interns celebrate completing their two-year programme at the QCTO, with most already employed.

He also thanked the QCTO's management, mentors and staff for guiding the interns throughout the programme.

QCTO executive Emmanuel Mbuwe called the cohort one of the strongest in the organisation's internship programme, and said their work had contributed to the QCTO's achievements. "We saw you when you arrived here, with very little knowledge, but now you are experts in your own right," he said. He encouraged the graduates to keep learning, invest in themselves, share what they know and protect their reputation and integrity.

"We saw you when you arrived here, with very little knowledge, but now you are experts in your own right." – Emmanuel Mbuwe, QCTO

For the interns, the day was a chance to look back. Tshepo Mofokeng, who worked in the QCTO's Accreditation domain, said the programme had shaped him personally and professionally. "It has contributed towards my personal growth as an individual, and it has also given me insight into what is important in the work we do within skills development."

Mofokeng thanked Services SETA for the chance to gain experience in a field that matches his interests. Other interns spoke of growing in problem-solving, adaptability, accountability, public speaking and professional conduct, and thanked their managers, supervisors and mentors.

The internship has ended, but the 28 graduates leave with skills, workplace experience and professional networks to build their careers on.



Interns receive their certificates at the farewell in Hatfield, Pretoria, marking the end of 24 months of workplace learning.

EVERYTHING IS A PROJECT

Staff masterclasses run by Project Management South Africa are helping Services SETA build a shared way of planning and delivering its work.

BY LEBOGANG KOTSI

Services SETA is building a shared approach to project management across the organisation. Staff masterclasses facilitated by Project Management South Africa (PMSA) are helping employees link project management principles to their everyday work.

The sessions brought together colleagues from different business units to explore planning, coordination, risk management and monitoring. Through practical activities, participants looked at how their work connects with other departments, and why good project delivery depends on cooperation across the organisation.

Addressing employees, Acting CEO Sibusiso Dhladhla said project management should not be confined to one unit. "It has to be embedded within everything that we do because everything is a project," he said.

He described the Project Management Unit (PMU) as an enabling function that supports every part of the organisation.

PMU Executive Manager Tsheola Matsebe encouraged employees to put the lessons into practice. "We expect the colleagues to start implementing the frameworks that were presented here gradually into their day-to-day activities," Matsebe said.

Alongside the masterclasses, Services SETA has appointed four senior project management experts, through PMSA, to its Project Management Reference Group. Phelisa Ncokazi, Xolelwa



Industry leaders and skills experts at the PBEH and Services SETA conference in Midrand, where healthcare cleaners were recognised as frontline workers in infection control.

Ntlango, Nkateko Mabaso and Dr Colin Prince will provide professional guidance and oversight to strengthen project management across the organisation.

Sinaye Mgolombane of PMSA said the masterclasses "seek to close the gaps between knowledge and experience". He welcomed employees' willingness to find ways to improve service delivery, and stressed the value of ongoing coaching and mentorship.

For participants, the exercises offered a fresh look at familiar work. Sive Rozani said the group case study helped connect each stage of a project to everyday tasks. "The group case study was particularly valuable as it allowed us to engage meaningfully with the different stages of project management and relate them to our day-to-day work. I also realised that project management is not limited to discretionary projects but can be applied to various activities across the organisation," Rozani said.

"It has to be embedded within everything that we do because everything is a project."

For Michael Mbambale, the key lessons were collaboration and better systems for tracking work across business units.

"The masterclass highlighted the importance of collaboration across business units when managing complex projects. Relying heavily on spreadsheets can increase the risk of human error and limit efficiency. In my day-to-day work, I will advocate for tools that improve accountability, collaboration and real-time project monitoring," Mbambale said.



Services SETA Acting CEO Sibusiso Dhladhla addresses employees on the importance of embedding project management into everyday operations.



Teachers at Sidingimfundo Secondary School take part in a wellbeing session on stress, burnout and supporting learners through trauma.

BOTH SIDES OF THE CLASSROOM

Learners at Sidingimfundo Secondary School in Mkuze got career guidance and NSFAS help, while their teachers got support for their own wellbeing.

BY NTALO MANGANYI

Services SETA brought career guidance, NSFAS application support and educator wellbeing sessions to Sidingimfundo Secondary School in Mkuze, northern KwaZulu-Natal, on 10 October 2026.

The programme helped learners make informed study and career decisions and apply for NSFAS funding for the 2027 academic year. It also recognised the emotional demands placed on teachers.

Grade 9 learners received guidance on choosing subjects that match their goals, while Grade 12 learners got hands-on help with their NSFAS applications. A digital support truck provided connectivity and practical assistance with online applications, bringing essential services to learners in a rural area.

Representing Services SETA, Abram Tseka outlined the organisation's learnerships, skills programmes, bursaries, apprenticeships and workplace-based learning. He explained how these programmes prepare young people for employment and en-

trepreneurship, and encouraged learners to explore careers in the services sector.

Principal Halalisani Fakude welcomed the initiative. "Our learners often lack access to the information and digital resources needed to apply for funding. Having Services SETA here, on-site, has been a game-changer. We are also deeply grateful for the focus on our teachers' emotional wellbeing, which is too often overlooked."

Teachers took part in a capacity session on emotional wellbeing and psychosocial support. It addressed stress, burnout and exposure to learners' trauma, and offered practical tools and peer support approaches.

Educators were encouraged to acknowledge their emotions, support one another and speak

"Having Services SETA here, on-site, has been a game-changer."

openly about asking for help. Looking after their own wellbeing, the session showed, strengthens their ability to support learners and build positive relationships in difficult school environments.

The initiative reflects Services SETA's commitment to widening access to post-school education and training, and to supporting the teachers who prepare learners for their futures.



Services SETA's Abram Tseka tells learners in Mkuze about learnerships, bursaries and apprenticeships that can open doors to work.

GROWTH HAS NO EXPIRY DATE

Candy Radebe joined Services SETA in 2004 as one of its first learners. Twenty-two years, two qualifications and a beauty business later, she is still growing.

BY NTALO MANGANYI

Candy Radebe joined Services SETA in 2004 as part of its first group of learners. Today she works in the Management and Business Services Chamber, runs her own beauty business and has just graduated cum laude.

How would you describe yourself beyond your job title?

I am a woman driven by passion, purpose and a love of growth. I believe in reinventing myself and becoming a better version of who I was yesterday. As a Black woman, I am proud of the opportunities I have worked hard to create, and I want my story to encourage others to believe in their own potential, wherever they begin.

How did your journey with Services SETA begin?

In 2004 I was one of the first learners on a new model that combined classroom theory with a training provider and practical workplace experience. We were told we were the guinea pigs. Being absorbed into the organisation afterwards changed my life and gave my family a foundation for a better future.

Since then I have worked in several departments. I enjoyed serving as Executive Assistant to the Corporate Services Manager, which taught me how coordination and professionalism keep an organisation moving. My time in the Personal Care Chamber gave me a real love

for the beauty, hairdressing and funeral industries, and inspired me to qualify in beauty and start my own business in makeup, nails and lashes.

What does your current role involve?

In the Management and Business Services Chamber I work with stakeholders across a diverse range of industries, supporting chamber processes and skills initiatives in entrepreneurship, quality assurance and project management. I am lucky to have a manager who believes in me and pushes me to raise my standards.

What has your working life taught you?

That I am more resilient than I sometimes realise, and that I should never stop investing in myself. In 2018 I completed a BTech in Business Administration at CUT. In 2025 I enrolled again, and this year I graduated cum laude in Digital Marketing.

Who has shaped you most?

My son. When Services SETA opened its doors to me in 2004, I was expecting him. Coming from Soweto, I knew I wanted to build a better life for him, and

“People may open doors for you, but you must be willing to walk through them.”



Miss Candy Radebe.

he became my reason to keep pushing. I have also learnt that people may open doors for you, but you must be willing to walk through them.

What might surprise your colleagues?

I give one-on-one beauty tutorials to women, because helping them feel confident means a lot to me. I also love crafting, turning ordinary items into something beautiful, and travelling to new places.

What dream would you still love to fulfil?

I would love to grow into a leadership role where I can mentor others and help create skills opportunities for the industries we serve. I also want to grow my beauty business using what I have learnt in digital marketing. I started here as a learner in 2004. My journey shows that growth has no expiry date.



SAFE ROADS ARE EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Transport Month is a reminder that road safety and compliance matter all year round, for employers, employees and transport providers alike.

BY FRANK MASIBI

October is Transport Month, a reminder that safe travel, responsible vehicle use and accountability matter every day of the year. Whether we travel for work, deliver services or commute, the decisions we make on the road affect our own safety and that of others.

For Services SETA and its stakeholders, responsible travel protects lives, safeguards resources and supports reliable service delivery. These principles apply equally to employers, employees and transport service providers across the services sector.

What the law requires

The National Road Traffic Act 93 of 1996 and the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences Act 46 of 1998 (AARTO) form part of South Africa's road traffic laws. AARTO provides an administrative process for dealing with traffic infringements.

Compliance means obeying traffic laws and speed limits, holding a valid driving licence and keeping vehicles roadworthy. Traffic fines and notices should be dealt with promptly.

Beyond avoiding penalties, these responsibilities reduce the risk of crashes, injuries, financial loss and disruption.

Road safety in practice

Safe journeys begin before the engine starts. Service vehicles regularly, check tyres and brakes, and fix defects promptly. Plan enough travel time and allow for rest breaks to avoid fatigue and the pressure to rush.

On the road, drivers and passengers should wear seatbelts. Drivers should avoid distractions, never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and adjust their speed to traffic, road and weather conditions.

Employers have a role too. Realistic travel schedules, well-maintained vehicles and

“Compliance is about protecting lives, safeguarding resources and helping everyone arrive safely.”

clear expectations about responsible driving all make work safer. When appointing transport service providers, organisations should weigh legal and safety compliance alongside cost and reliability.

Anyone can raise a safety concern. Reporting an unsafe vehicle or challenging an unsafe practice can prevent harm.

Beyond October

At Services SETA, the Legal, Risk and Compliance (LRC) Unit promotes awareness, identifies risks and recommends improvements. Road safety, however, depends on everyone taking responsibility for their own actions.

Transport Month ends, but responsible travel continues. Every well-maintained vehicle, carefully planned journey and considerate decision helps make our roads safer.

Compliance is about protecting lives, safeguarding resources and helping everyone arrive safely.




FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NOW OPEN

Services SETA invites applications and project proposals under three funding windows:

- **DISCRETIONARY GRANTS**
Skills development interventions addressing services-sector priorities.
- **STRATEGIC PROJECTS**
Projects delivering measurable social and economic impact.
- **PUBLIC ENTITIES**
High-impact projects aligned with Services SETA's mandate and strategic priorities.

Closing: 6 November 2026

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Services SETA

15 Sherborne Road, Parktown,
Gauteng, 2193

PO Box 3322, Houghton; 2041

customercare@serviceseta.org.za

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