

# New university to advance tech innovation in SA

Higher Education, Science and Technology Minister, Blade Nzimande, has welcomed President Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement on the establishment of a new University of Science and Innovation.



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During his State of the Nation Address (Sona) on 13 February, President Ramaphosa announced that a new University of Science and Innovation will be established in the City of Ekurhuleni, a major economic hub and seat of a growing aerotropolis, which provides vital services to the economy of the entire continent.

Nzimande said the university will be closely linked to driving high impact and cutting edge technological innovation with current and future industries, sectors and firms to drive the frontiers of a future economy.

In a statement, Nzimande said Ekurhuleni is the only metro without a university, and government wants to address this through the new institution, which will have to develop a dynamic relationship with the “industrial and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) heartland of the country.”

“We believe that this location -- together with fresh new challenges arising from the revolution in science and technology in the third decade of the 21st century -- offers an opportunity for a new initiative to provide cutting-edge science and technology innovations across crucial areas such as data science, machine-learning, artificial intelligence, block chain,

robotics, hydrogen-powered technologies, including smart transportation and logistics systems,” Nzimande said.

In leading this project, Nzimande will work with relevant government and industry partners, the City of Ekurhuleni and the Gauteng Provincial Government, while drawing on South Africa’s extensive international network in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries, Japan, Europe and elsewhere for innovative partnerships.

The Minister is expected to provide details on the establishment of the new university during the departmental budget vote later this year.



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Devan Moonsamy 18 Feb 2020



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## Student accommodation

Turning to the issue of student accommodation, Nzimande said it is critical for adequate provision to be made.

“Through the Student Housing Infrastructure Programme (SHIP), we aim to develop large-scale student housing projects at universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

“Government’s goal is to provide 300,000 new beds at the 26 public universities and 50 public TVET colleges over 10 years,” the Minister said.

President Ramaphosa had announced during SONA that a further R64 billion will be set aside for student accommodation, with the prospects of leveraging the same amount from the private sector over the next decade.

Nzimande on Thursday said the department is currently developing large projects comprising 7,273 new beds at various universities, where there is gross shortage of student accommodation.

“For the two new universities of Sol Plaatje and Mpumalanga, 2,331 beds have been funded from the New Universities Infrastructure Grant to the tune of R772.950 million.

“We have made strides by commencing the building of nine new TVET college campus sites, scheduled for completion in 2020. Construction will commence with a new campus site for Mitchells Plain in 2020,” Nzimande said.

Contracts will be awarded for a further four new campus sites in 2019/20. The sites include Balfour, Giyani, Nkandla B and Vryheid.

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