

eThekwini –Universities research symposium praised



FOCUSED:
Municipal officials Khanyi Msweli and Martin Xaba were part of the symposium

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MORE than 500 people that included representatives from academia, students and municipal officials attended the historic inaugural eThekwini –Universities research symposium that took place at the University of KwaZulu Natal's Unite Building. More than forty research papers from

education institutions and government officials in various fields of local government were presented on the day. The research symposium was a joint initiative between the eThekwini Municipality, the Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology and the University of KwaZulu Natal. The objective of the

event was to provide a platform for research outputs relevant to local government where partnering universities have the opportunity to disseminate significant research finding.

MILE's Senior Manager Sogen Moodley said the event was very successful.

He said the event proved the expected outcome. "The

outcome was to facilitate dialogue between academics and city practitioners around research which is a key factor in the programme and was very well achieved."

The research papers focused on seven key themes: Development within the Built Environment, Localising Economic Development and Job Creation, Climate Protection and Energy efficiency, Fostering Governance and Local Government Responsiveness, Health, Enhancing Social Equity, Safety and Security.

Addressing delegates at the symposium Deputy Mayor Nomvuzo Shabalala said it was an honour and a privilege for the City to be in partnership with the tertiary education institutions. "The ground breaking partnership that has been formed through the Municipal Institute of Learning forms a significant component of the Municipality." "We live in the age of research, technology and information sharing, where knowledge perform

an important role in the organisational context. This creates an opportunity for metropolitan municipalities in South Africa to support knowledge- sharing programmes." Shabalala said the strong partnership with the academic community presents Municipality with an opportunity to make managing and sharing information effective.

She assured academia that the Municipality was behind the partnership. "I would like to re-iterate our commitment to forge a closer working relationship with our partnered institutions of higher learning, as they have the capacity to produce the much needed research information that will assist in guiding the eThekwini Municipality in its endeavor to be the best."

Municipal Manager, Sibusiso Sithole, said he was delighted that the Municipality and the three Universities had forged stronger relationships. "This programme is a symbolic

gesture that cements relations with eThekwini and the three Universities."

He said negotiations with Unisa to join the partnership have begun, to further strengthen the collaboration. "It is critical that the relationship responds to various issues such as inequality and poverty alleviation, increasing urbanisation, informal housing and unemployment. I look forward to meaningful lessons that could be translated into projects that would position Durban as a Learning City."

The three institutions that have partnered with the Municipality have reiterated their commitment to the partnership, and acknowledged the efforts of Mile. Prof Theo Andrews said "Mile is unique to eThekwini; therefore this collaboration is special in that it brings together, not only the universities, but also the City in setting the research agenda."

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