



The all-important

# FIRST STEP

Attaining a post-matric qualification is the first step towards economic liberation. It does not matter what the qualification is; in the end everything you do will have a connection to what you first studied.” These were the words of the late Dr Ben Ngubane to the MUT Class of 2014, spoken during the Faculty of Natural Sciences graduation ceremony dedicated to him.

Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director, Marketing & Communications

Some of our readers may have heard those very words in 2014. They capture the enduring value of a post-matric qualification and I am sure we can all testify to their truth in one way or another. Whether you studied matric under a tree or in a posh high school or private college, you all converged at MUT to receive your first post-matric qualification. Our discussions with alumni have shown that the qualifications for which they enrolled may not have been their original preference, but they embraced them as a means to an end – and this strengthened their determination to succeed.

What became evident as we dug deeper in interviews with alumni is that to reach one’s goals, sometimes one has to let go of the past and look into the future. This positive thinking has propelled MUT graduates to use their first qualifications to jumpstart their careers. The stories covered in this publication show the journeys of some of our alumni gems, and the bigger picture they create is a pattern of creativity, innovation, adaptability and futuristic thinking.

A common thread between many stories is how problem-solving gives rise to entrepreneurship. It is encouraging to see these entrepreneurs’ passion for solving the problems of the lower-income group and the contribution they are making. These activities are not necessarily linked to the qualifications for which these go-getters studied. However, the training that comes with the qualification makes everything come together.

The sterling work which our alumni are doing will captivate prospective students, inspire other alumni and encourage academics and employers who played a role in shaping their stories. We can no longer afford to stand by and say we are unemployed. The time is now to develop a can-do mindset and look at how we become relevant, using our qualifications as a starting point.

We salute all alumni and acknowledge how they have delved into the unknown, taking MUT with them even onto the global stage. MUT has recently introduced its first Master’s qualification in Nature Conservation, and is heartened that many of its alumni have gone on to pursue further degrees up to PhD level, still proudly waving the MUT flag.

Congratulations go to our 2021 Master’s degree recipients, whose research topics are all featured in this publication. Your efforts to sustain the environment do not go unnoticed.

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