

NMMU to host Institute for Coastal, Marine Research symposium

REPORTER

A RESEARCH symposium, hosted by the Institute for Coastal and Marine Research (CMR), will take place tomorrow, April 20, at in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's (NMMU) South Campus Council Chamber.

CMR is a research institute of NMMU that conducts cutting edge research, builds capacity and advances their understanding of the coastal and marine environment.

The objective of the symposium is to showcase the impact of research across disciplines and faculties and identify opportunities for collaboration within three research themes: Living Resources and Food Security, Biodiversity and Conservation, and Global Change.

The programme is divided into three sessions and is packed with presentations by 25 of the CMR's top academics, researchers and post-graduate students.

Experts from various NMMU Departments, such as Zoology, Botany, Development Studies, Political and Conflict Studies,

Law and Sociology and Anthropology will give insights on scientific and socio-economic marine issues from different perspectives.

Professor Andrew Leitch, NMMU DVC: Research and Engagement, will open the symposium with an elaboration on Ocean Science Initiatives of NMMU.

This is particularly fitting, as NMMU prepares its new Ocean Sciences Campus that is scheduled to be completed and fully operational by the end of this year.

The first of the three sessions will focus on the CMR's Research Themes, as well as presentations by top recently graduated PhD students, Gavin Rishworth and Jackie Raw.

Some of the topics include the discovery of living stromatolites along the Eastern Cape coastline and the ability to effectively manage interaction with coastal ecosystems in the quest to achieve sustainability.

Session two will kick off with a presentation by Professor Mike Roberts, the incumbent of the DST/NRF Research Chair in Oceanography and Food Security.

He will present a new research programme called SOLSTICE, a project about climate change, a changing Indian Ocean

and the impacts on people and communities along the coasts of southern and eastern Africa.

SOLSTICE is a brand new, large-scaled, ocean physics-to-fish-to-people project that tackles challenges by growing people-based marine research capability in these countries.

Other topics will include the decolonisation of the law of the sea, insight into how South Africa seems set to expand its aquaculture as can be observed from government initiatives and a research project that aims to pilot a sustainable localised economy in the "old" township of KwaZakhele in Nelson Mandela Bay.

The last session will focus on Biodiversity and Conservation. Students from Law, Botany and Zoology will showcase research on ecosystem services, the legal aspects of Marine Spatial Planning in South Africa and the extent of jurisdiction of state at sea, as well as the occurrence of marine estuarine-dependent fish in South African estuaries.

The research symposium will take place tomorrow in NMMU's South Campus Council Chamber from 8:30am to 4pm.