



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG



# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2026

## WELCOME

by Prof Nicola Wagner (Director)

We extend a warm welcome for 2026 to all academic staff both new and returning, as well as to our continuing and incoming postgraduate students and postdoctoral research fellows. Welcome to the CIMERA family. **You are now part of one of the largest and most active academic geoscience research communities in Africa!**

CIMERA is an academic research centre that provides scholarships and research training through strong collaborative partnerships. Our mission is to create equitable opportunities for postgraduate students and academic staff across South African universities, enabling relevant geoscience research while broadening critical skills. Our outcomes-driven approach is grounded in partnerships and teamwork, all in pursuit of academic excellence, rigorous geoscientific inquiry, and impactful research.

Approximately 70% of the CIMERA budget is dedicated to student projects. In 2026, the Centre of Excellence aims to support around 52 postgraduate students and postdoctoral research fellows across its 12 collaborating universities.

The CoE continues to progress towards its vision of becoming a self-sustaining national geoscience centre, with a specialised focus on economic geology and geoscience for society. A key priority area remains critical minerals and elements, alongside addressing the growing demand for skilled geologists. We are actively expanding international collaborations and industry-linked projects and welcome input and suggestions to ensure CIMERA remains relevant and continues to grow.

It is imperative that we collectively demonstrate the impact of CoE funding through measurable research outputs and meaningful human capacity development. We encourage you to share your achievements with us for inclusion in our newsletters and broader communications. We also welcome photographs capturing your work, whether in the field, at conferences, within your institutions, or through outreach initiatives. Please forward these to Ms Itumeleng Modisha at [imodisha@uj.ac.za](mailto:imodisha@uj.ac.za) as they become available.

All social media content related to or supported by CIMERA should acknowledge the CoE by tagging and using the hashtag **#DSTINRFCIMERA #CIMERA**. We also invite updates from our alumni community, particularly as we plan for an alumni engagement event later this year. Kindly ensure your contact details remain up to date.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the CIMERA Newsletter as we reflect on 2025 and look ahead to an exciting 2026. Thank you for your continued support and valuable feedback. Please also diarise the upcoming CIMERA stakeholder engagement session scheduled for 20 April (online), as well as the Annual Research Colloquium taking place in November 2026.

Best wishes,  
**Nikki**



## 2026 Kicks Off with a BANG

The year 2026 commenced at a fast pace, with a strong focus on compiling the 2025 Annual Progress Report, facilitating student registrations, and preparing for the Mining Indaba 2026. Our strategic intent for 2026 is centred on fostering **inclusive, synergistic, and collaborative partnerships across the geosciences value chain**, advancing geoscience education and research for the benefit of academia, government, industry, and society.

### Director's highlights from 2025

As we reflect on 2025, another busy and highly productive year for CIMERA, the Annual Research Colloquium stands out as a personal highlight. Hosted by the **University of Limpopo Department of Geology and Mining** in their new Earth Science Building, and coordinated by CIMERA, the event brought together over 100 delegates.

The successful planning and execution of the Colloquium, from transport logistics and accommodation to the networking evening, complete with dancing under the Limpopo stars, and the technical programme, required close collaboration between the CIMERA and UL teams. The result was a truly world class event and a memorable experience for all involved. It was also a privilege to once again host **WiMSA** in delivering the Soft Skills Workshop, an increasingly valuable component of the programme. The 2025 Colloquium made a meaningful impact, and planning is already well underway to elevate

the event further in 2026. **Please diarise 16 to 17 November 2026 and look out for the official flyer.**

Other notable highlights of the year included being invited as a finalist in the Communications category at the **NSTF South32 "Science Oscars"**, as well as hosting the **International Continental Drilling Program annual Executive Committee and Assembly of Governors Meeting**. It was a pleasure to showcase South Africa to international delegates, and we received highly positive feedback on both our country and South Africa's continued contribution to **ICDP initiatives**.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to the CIMERA management team, Busi, Viwe, Sue, Itumeleng, and Zintle, for their dedication and continued excellence.

### What to Expect in 2026

As Walt Disney once said, "*The way to get started is to quit talking and start doing.*" CIMERA enters 2026 with a full and ambitious programme of activities, aligned to our mandate and strategic intent.

We will continue to deliver a range of workshops and training opportunities, alongside the Annual Research Colloquium, with a strong focus on enhancing the experience of postgraduate students, postdoctoral research fellows, and academic staff within the CoE. Building on the success of 2025, the **HIF-CIMERA International Research School X4P** will offer several workshops and symposia in 2026. We also aim to expand our soft skills development initiatives in collaboration with WiMSA and other partners.

CIMERA was proud to participate in **Mining Indaba 2026**, where, in collaboration with **Hyve**, we sponsored academic staff and students to attend the event in full.

*We welcome further opportunities to collaborate with partner institutions to enrich the postgraduate and PDRF experience.*

There will also be an important shift in the timing of the 2027 Call for Projects. Following discussions with the NRF, the call is expected to open earlier in

March 2026. While this represents a change for many academics, it offers a strategic advantage by allowing for earlier feedback and potential funding allocation ahead of student identification and NRF scholarship applications. This will enable supervisors to align strong candidates with approved projects from the outset.

Given the competitive nature of the CIMERA funding call, universities are encouraged to internally review proposals for completeness and quality prior to submission. Strong emphasis will be placed on collaboration and the clear demonstration of research impact, particularly within the domains of geoscience exploration and geoscience for society.

Finally, providing opportunities for students and academics to participate in local and international conferences, including Mining Indaba, remains deeply rewarding. **Mobility is a vital component of postgraduate development, offering exposure to diverse environments, cultures, and research platforms.** CIMERA is actively pursuing additional mobility linked funding to expand opportunities for international travel and extended access to specialised analytical facilities.

## 2025 RECAP

### DSTI-NRF CIMERA Annual Research Colloquium 2025

The 2025 DSTI-NRF CIMERA Annual Research Colloquium was successfully hosted at the University of Limpopo, with the generous support of the Department of Geology and Mining, in the university's New Earth Science Building in Polokwane. The event marked an important milestone for the Centre, as it was the first time the CIMERA Annual Research Colloquium was held outside of Johannesburg, reflecting the growing collaboration across partner institutions within the national geoscience research network.

DSTI-NRF CIMERA extends its sincere gratitude to the leadership, staff, and students of the Department of Geology and Mining at the University of Limpopo for their warm hospitality and for providing an exceptional environment in which to host this important academic gathering. Their

commitment to advancing geoscience research and postgraduate training contributed greatly to the success of the event.

Held over two days, the Colloquium brought together postgraduate students, researchers, academics, and industry stakeholders from across South Africa and beyond, creating a vibrant platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration within the fields of mineral and energy resource analysis.

A central highlight of the Colloquium was the student research presentations, where CIMERA-funded postgraduate students showcased the progress and findings of their research projects. These presentations demonstrated not only strong scientific rigor but also the passion and emerging leadership of the next generation of geoscientists. The event provided students with an

opportunity to engage with peers and senior researchers, receive constructive feedback, and strengthen their professional research communication skills.

The Colloquium concluded with the recognition of outstanding student contributions through the **Outstanding Presentation Awards**. Among the highlights was the award for **Best Oral Presentation**, presented to **Daniel Ferreira** for his research titled *"The Tantalite Valley Complex: Insights into its Genesis and Evolution."* The **Best Poster Presentation** award was presented to **Dr. Fritz Agbor** for his poster on *"Thermal Maturity History and Hydrocarbon Generation Modelling within the Southern Pletmos Sub-Basin,*

*Offshore South Africa."* These awards celebrated the quality of research and effective communication demonstrated by CIMERA's students.

Beyond the academic programme, the Colloquium also strengthened collaboration among CIMERA's partner universities, reinforcing the Centre's mandate to advance interdisciplinary geoscience research that is locally relevant while remaining internationally competitive. CIMERA currently supports a large network of postgraduate students across multiple South African universities, contributing to the development of a highly skilled geoscience workforce for the country and the broader African region.



## Soft Skills Workshop 2025

The DSTI-NRF CIMERA Annual Research Colloquium also featured a Soft Skills Development Workshop, delivered in partnership with Women in Mining South Africa (WiMSA).

The workshop, facilitated by Mogaleadi Seabela, Phathutshedzo Claudia Musalafu, and Unity Shiburi, focused on equipping postgraduate students and early-career researchers with essential professional competencies needed for the workplace. Topics explored during the session included leadership development, professional communication, financial awareness, confidence building, and navigating career pathways within the mining and geoscience sectors.

Participants engaged in insightful discussions and interactive activities that encouraged reflection on personal growth, professional identity, and the skills required to thrive within both academia and industry. The session highlighted the importance of soft skills as a complement to technical expertise, ensuring that graduates are not only capable researchers but also confident professionals ready to contribute meaningfully to the geoscience and mining sectors.

CIMERA extends its sincere appreciation to WiMSA and the workshop facilitators for their valuable contributions and for sharing their experience and guidance with our students. The enthusiastic participation from attendees further contributed to a dynamic and impactful learning environment.



## DSTI-NRF CIMERA Science Writing Competition: Translate Your Research 2025

DSTI-NRF CIMERA continues to encourage students to communicate their research beyond academic audiences through the **Translate Your Research Science Writing Competition**. The initiative challenges postgraduate researchers to transform complex scientific concepts into engaging and accessible stories that can be understood by the broader public.

Science communication plays a vital role in bridging the gap between academic research and society. Through this competition, students develop the ability to explain the significance of their work in clear, compelling language while highlighting how geoscience research contributes to addressing real-world challenges.

The 2025 competition attracted strong entries from CIMERA-supported students, demonstrating creativity and an impressive ability to translate technical research into engaging narratives. The theme for the 2025 CIMERA Science Writing Competition was *“Explain why your research matters in the real world”*. Congratulations to the 2025 winners:

- **Thabo Stephen Kgarabjang** for his winning piece titled *“The Perfect Gold Heist: Starring Ullmannite and Gersdorffite.”*
- **Phumudzo Munyai-Matshotshi** for the piece *“Green Gold: How Natural Plants Transform Mine Waste into Valuable Treasure.”*

These contributions showcased not only scientific insight but also the power of storytelling in making research accessible and meaningful to a wider audience, specifically a non-scientific audience.

DSTI-NRF CIMERA congratulates the winners and all participants for their creativity and dedication to science communication. Initiatives such as the **DSTI-NRF CIMERA Science Writing Competition: Translate Your Research Competition** play an important role in developing well-rounded researchers who are able to effectively share their work with industry, policymakers, and the public.



Find full version of the winning entries on our website: <https://cimeracoza/students/science-writing-competition/>

## Critical Raw Materials Short Course

As part of its commitment to strengthening expertise in emerging areas of economic geology, DSTI-NRF CIMERA supported the **Critical Raw Materials Short Course**, delivered in collaboration with the **University of the Witwatersrand School of Geosciences**. The course was presented by Profs Kinnaird and Nex, and provided participants with a focused overview of the global critical minerals landscape and its relevance to Africa's mineral resource potential.

The course explored the **geological characteristics, mineralisation styles, and exploration models** associated with critical raw materials, while also examining the economic and strategic factors shaping global supply and demand. Participants engaged with topics such as deposit formation, exploration methodologies, and the broader geopolitical and

market dynamics influencing critical mineral supply chains.

Critical raw materials, including rare earth elements and other strategic metals play a central role in enabling modern technologies and supporting the **global transition toward renewable energy systems and advanced manufacturing**. Through this training initiative, students and early-career researchers were introduced to the scientific and economic considerations required to evaluate and develop these resources responsibly.

By equipping participants with both theoretical understanding and applied perspectives, the short course contributes to CIMERA's broader mandate of building capacity in the geosciences and preparing the next generation of researchers to address the challenges associated with critical mineral supply.



## GSSA African Exploration Showcase 2025

DSTI-NRF CIMERA proudly participated in the **African Exploration Showcase**, hosted by the **Geological Society of South Africa (GSSA)**. This event continues to bring together geoscientists, researchers, and industry partners committed to strengthening Africa's mineral and energy future. Being part of these conversations and seeing the innovation and collaboration happening across the sector was truly energising for the CIMERA team.

We are also honoured to have received the **Annual Sponsorship Certificate** from the GSSA. Thank you to the organisers for this meaningful recognition and for consistently creating a platform that drives knowledge-sharing and professional growth in our field.

A highlight for us was the presentation delivered by our **Director, Prof. Nikki Wagner**, titled: *“Coal as a Critical ‘Mineral’: Petrographic Approaches*

*to Sustainable Utilisation.”* Her talk provided an insightful look at coal's evolving role, demonstrating how petrographic methods can support more responsible and sustainable utilisation of this complex resource.

The CIMERA team also engaged with delegates at the exhibition component of the event, where **Busisiwe Maphalala and Itumeleng Modisha** represented the CoE, connecting with researchers, industry partners, and students interested in economic geology and mineral exploration.

Participation in platforms such as the GSSA African Exploration Showcase reflects CIMERA's continued commitment to strengthening collaboration between academia, industry, and the broader geoscience community, while showcasing the impactful research being conducted by its scientists and postgraduate students.



## X4P HIF Earth Observation Short Course 2025

In November 2025, DSTI-NRF CIMERA, in collaboration with the **Helmholtz Institute Freiberg for Resource Technology (HIF)** and the **School of Geosciences at the University of the Witwatersrand**, hosted the **2nd Earth Observation Short Course Symposium** titled *“The Importance of Remote Sensing in Exploration: Earth Observation (EO) Tools.”* The two-day event took place on 3 - 4 November 2025 at the University of the Witwatersrand and drew enthusiastic participation from postgraduate students, researchers, and geoscience professionals.

The short course explored cutting-edge applications of Earth observation and remote sensing in geological and mineral exploration. Participants engaged with expert-led presentations and practical discussions on topics including **multi- and hyperspectral imaging, photogrammetry and 3D surface modelling, machine learning workflows for remote sensing, magnetics for EO applications, and real-world examples of EO supporting geological mapping and resource evaluation.** Leading presenters included **Dr Sam Thiele, Dr Richard Gloaguen,**

**Dr René Booysen, and Prof Susan Webb**, whose contributions enriched the learning experience and showcased how modern EO tools can transform exploration strategies.

The short course provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange, bringing participants together to deepen their technical understanding,

explore the latest geospatial technologies, and connect with experts in the field. Activities emphasised both theoretical foundations and practical insights, demonstrating CIMERA's commitment to empowering the next generation of geoscientists with skills that bridge traditional geology and advanced remote-sensing applications.



## MMP Podcast session

The Mandela Mining Precinct, through the Advanced Orebody Knowledge (AOK) Programme Manager, Michelle Pienaar, collaborated with CIMERA on a podcast initiative.

As part of this collaboration, two podcast sessions were recorded under the Advanced Orebody Knowledge Programme. The first session, titled **“What the Schist”**, focused on educational content explaining geological terminology and concepts. Busisiwe Maphalala participated in this segment.

The second session, titled **“Bridging Earth and Innovation,”** took a more in-depth approach, exploring the diverse ways geology contributes to development, sustainability, and innovation across multiple sectors, and

highlighting why it remains a relevant and future-oriented career path. This segment featured contributions from Busisiwe Maphalala and Prof. Nicola Wagner.

Both sessions were facilitated by Michelle Pienaar. This collaboration is important because it enhances the public’s understanding of geology while also raising awareness about the advancement of geology as a career path. The intention is to continue and further strengthen this collaboration with the Mandela Mining Precinct.

[Link to the podcast segment: Bridging Earth and Innovation Ep 1](#)

## Celebrating CIMERA Graduate Success: Peace Zowa & 'Mabatho Mapiiloko

DSTI-NRF CIMERA is delighted to celebrate the achievements of two students from the CIMERA community whose hard work, research excellence, and leadership have made a lasting impact: **Dr Peace Zowa and Dr Mabatho Mapiiloko**.

Peace Zowa (Cand.Sci.Nat), a PhD candidate in Economic Geology and Geochemistry at the University of the Witwatersrand, has successfully completed his doctoral degree. Throughout his research journey, Peace contributed to expanding understanding in economic geology while also representing CIMERA at major industry events, including **speaking on talent development and**

**the future of mining at the Investing in African Mining Indaba 2025**. His leadership in both academic and professional spaces exemplifies the next generation of geoscientists shaping the future of South Africa's resource sector.

Mabatho Mapiiloko (PhD), now an alumnus of the CIMERA programme, has also achieved significant success. Her doctoral work in economic geology opened doors for international recognition. **She presented her research at the SEG 2025 Conference in Brisbane, Australia**, where she delivered both a poster and a speed talk and received accolades for her contributions.

Following graduation, Mabatho has continued to translate her research into impact as a **Platinum Group Metals Research Analyst**, leveraging her academic background to contribute to the global commodities industry.

DSTI-NRF CIMERA congratulates Peace and Mabatho for their exceptional accomplishments and leadership. Their success reflects CIMERA's commitment to developing highly skilled scientists who excel in research, communication, and professional engagement across academia and industry.

## Alumni Reflections



### Mabatho Mapiiloko shares:

*"I wish to express my deepest and most sincere gratitude to DSTI-NRF CIMERA for sponsoring my PhD and for their generous investment in my growth as an economic geologist. Through their support, I was afforded the invaluable opportunity to conduct research in world class laboratories at Wits University, the University of Johannesburg, Rice University in Houston, the University of California Riverside, and IGEM in Russia.*

*I have been equally privileged to learn under the mentorship of my esteemed supervisors, Professors Yudovskaya, Nex, and Kinnaird, whose pioneering contributions and strong industry ties have left an indelible mark on my development as a scientist and industry professional.*

*CIMERA's industry led model thoughtfully connects academic research with the private sector through collaborative initiatives. This*

*enabled research that provided renewed understanding of sulphide and chromite mineralisation within the Platreef and Lower Zone offshoots, advancing foundational work in the field.*

*CIMERA also supported my attendance at conferences locally and internationally, allowing me to build a global professional network. Most recently, at the SEG Conference in Brisbane, I was honoured with an award following my speed talk and poster presentation.*

*I remain profoundly grateful for the role CIMERA and Wits University played in my journey. Today, I am proud to be working at Metals Focus as a Platinum Group Metals Research Analyst. As an alumnus, I hope to one day pay this generosity forward."*



### Peace Zowa reflects:

*"I am deeply grateful to the DSTI-NRF Centre of Excellence for Integrated Mineral and*

*Energy Resource Analysis for the critical role it has played in supporting my PhD journey. The financial, academic, and professional support provided has been instrumental in enabling me to pursue high quality, independent research in geochemistry and economic geology.*

*Beyond funding, CIMERA has provided an intellectually stimulating environment that promotes interdisciplinary thinking, scientific rigour, and relevance to South Africa's mineral challenges. Through its seminars, workshops, and collaborative platforms, I have been exposed to diverse perspectives that have significantly strengthened my research approach and analytical skills.*

*CIMERA's emphasis on capacity building and transformation has been particularly meaningful. The Centre has supported not only my technical development, but also encouraged leadership, mentorship, and engagement within the broader geoscience community.*

*As a PhD candidate working on fundamental questions related to the origin and sources of metal bearing magmas, the support from CIMERA allowed me to produce research of international standard while remaining grounded in locally relevant geological problems. I am proud to be associated with a Centre of Excellence.*

*I sincerely acknowledge and thank CIMERA for their continued investment in my development and in the next generation of geoscientists. The impact of this support will extend well beyond my PhD and will remain a defining part of my academic and professional journey."*

## International Conference Participation

DSTI-NRF CIMERA proudly supports the global engagement of its postgraduate students, ensuring they gain exposure to international research communities and cutting-edge developments in geoscience.

### Glenance Ngomane — MSc, University of Pretoria

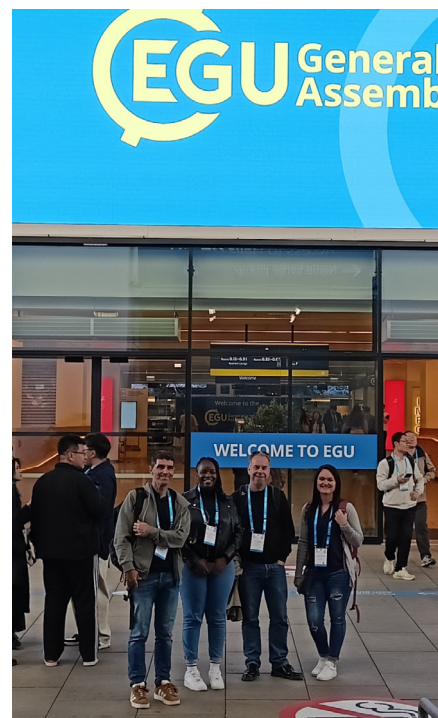
From 27 April to 2 May 2025, Glenance attended the **EGU General Assembly 2025** at the Congress Center in Vienna, Austria, accompanied by her supervisor **Prof. Lorenzo Milani**. The EGU General Assembly is a premier forum where geoscientists from around the world gather to present research spanning all disciplines of Earth, planetary, and space sciences. The event particularly encourages early-career researchers to present their work and engage in discussions with leading experts.

Glenance, who had just submitted her MSc thesis, presented her research titled: **“Prolonged (>100 Myr) Magmatic and Thermal Evolution in the World’s Largest Massif-Type Anorthosite Complex (Kunene Complex, Angola and Namibia).”**

This project forms part of a collaborative effort on the **Kunene Anorthosite Complex**, involving postgraduate students and academics from the University of Pretoria, University of the Witwatersrand, and University of Johannesburg. Her presentation introduced **new U-Pb ages for zircon, apatite, and titanite, alongside trace element chemistry**, refining the emplacement



timeline and revealing new insights into the magma dynamics of massif-type anorthosites. Participation in EGU allowed Glenance to



engage with the international geoscience community, gain expert feedback, and expand her professional network.

### Puleng Nthebe — MSc, University of the Witwatersrand



In January 2026, Puleng attended the **International Diamond School 2026** in Brixen



(Bressanone), Italy, organised in collaboration with the **University of Padova**. The workshop brought

together students, researchers, and leading experts in diamond research and gemology for an intensive, highly specialised academic programme.

The Diamond School combined seminar-style lectures with practical laboratory sessions, giving participants hands-on experience in diamond identification and characterisation techniques. Puleng presented her ongoing MSc research on **lithospheric mantle evolution and tectonic deformation beneath north-eastern Lesotho**, exploring implications for **diamond formation, preservation, and destruction**. Feedback and discussions from experts provided constructive insights and new perspectives to enhance her work.

Puleng expressed gratitude to DSTI-NRF CIMERA for funding the trip, noting that the experience **strengthened her technical expertise, expanded her professional network, and reaffirmed her commitment to diamond research**.

## Student Spotlight — Celebrating Our Rising Stars

At DSTI-NRF CIMERA, we are proud to showcase the exceptional achievements of our students and early-career researchers. These individuals exemplify excellence, innovation, and dedication, making their mark in geoscience research, education, and exploration.

### Dr. Charl D. Cilliers – University of the Western Cape



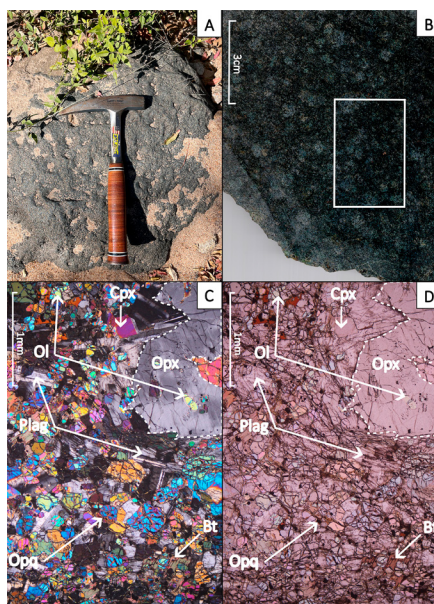
Since early 2024, Dr. Charl Cilliers has transformed geoscience education with **interactive Virtual Geological Field Trips (VFTs)** across the Western Cape. From the **Cape Granite Suite** to **Bloubergstrand**, Charl's tours have improved student learning outcomes by **42% on average**

and introduced cutting-edge **3D and drone-mapped geospatial models**.

His work has been showcased internationally at **EGU 2025**, **GeoCongress 2025**, and the **DSTI-NRF CIMERA Annual Research Colloquium**,

and he continues to innovate with **mining-focused VFTs**, integrating laboratory workflows and advanced digital measurement techniques. Charl is shaping the future of geoscience education and inspiring the next generation of geologists.

### Ms. Rowan L. Walker – Stellenbosch University



Rowan completed her MSc thesis, **"Intrusion Mechanism and Magma Differentiation of the Timbavati Gabbro,"** in just one year, a remarkable feat! She combined **fieldwork in Kruger National Park**, advanced **petrology and geochemistry analyses**, **remote sensing remapping**, and **U-Pb zircon + apatite dating** to refine the 240 km Timbavati intrusion into a sophisticated model of sill and dyke systems.

Her work earned her **Best Student Oral Presentation at IMSG 2026**, and she is now starting her career at **TECT**, with her thesis nominated for a **GSSA award**. Rowan exemplifies research excellence, innovation, and speed, a true rising star in economic geology.

### Amahle Ngcobo – University of KwaZulu-Natal



Amahle conducted detailed **core logging at the Valterra Platinum Core Yard**, uncovering critical stratigraphic and lithological insights within the **Bethal Limb of the Bushveld Igneous Complex**. She presented her research at **IMSG 2026** in Barberton, sharing findings on platinum-

group minerals and stratigraphy while engaging in **lively discussions with peers and experts**.

Amahle's curiosity and dedication demonstrate the impact of CIMERA's support in shaping future leaders of the mining and exploration sectors.

**Chanelle Du Plessis – University of Pretoria**



Chanelle Du Plessis has **completed her Master of Science in Geology**. Her journey has been one of **growth, resilience, and discovery**, spanning mantle processes, kimberlites, and diamond research. Guided by **Prof. Nils Lenhardt** and **Prof. Lorenzo Milani**, and supported by **DSTI-NRF CIMERA, the University of**

**Pretoria, and Petra Diamonds**, she has gained international exposure, fieldwork experience, and professional expertise.

Chanelle’s accomplishment reflects her dedication, curiosity, and perseverance, shining examples of the values CIMERA nurtures in all its students.

**These students are not just learning — they are leading, innovating, and inspiring.** DSTI-NRF CIMERA celebrates their achievements and looks forward to the next generation of discoveries, breakthroughs, and trailblazers in geoscience.

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Impactful Collaborative Opportunity | Call for funding for the Prestigious CIMERA Scholarship Drive**

DSTI-NRF CIMERA is **expanding its research impact** through collaborative academia-industry projects and postgraduate scholarships. As part of this initiative, CIMERA is launching a **dedicated fund for Prestigious Scholarships** to support **high-performing students in economic geology, exploration, and geoscience for society**.

The scholarships are designed to support research that:

- Delivers **real-world solutions**.
- Drives **innovation in geoscience**.
- Informs **policy and sustainable resource management**.

With a strong track record of translating geoscience funding into meaningful outcomes, CIMERA invites **industry partners and stakeholders** to help **shape the next generation of geoscience excellence**.

**Interested in collaborating?**

Reach out to the Directors **Nikki Wagner** ([nwagner@uj.ac.za](mailto:nwagner@uj.ac.za)) and **Susan Webb** ([susan.webb@wits.ac.za](mailto:susan.webb@wits.ac.za)), or our CoE Manager **Busisiwe Maphalala** at: [bmaphalala@uj.ac.za](mailto:bmaphalala@uj.ac.za).

Be part of an opportunity that not only supports research but also builds a **future-ready geoscience workforce**.

**DSTI-NRF CIMERA 2027 Project Funding Call**

DSTI-NRF CIMERA is excited to announce the **2027 Project Funding Call**, opened **16 March 2026** and closing **4 May 2026**, issued **two months earlier** than in previous years to help academics secure funding ahead of NRF scholarship deadlines. Funding opportunities include **PhD, MSc, Honours, Postdoctoral Research Fellowships, non-scholarship running-cost projects, and outreach initiatives**. Academics are encouraged to submit **innovative, multi-university or industry-linked projects** in the broad fields of **economic geology, energy, and geoscience for society**, clearly demonstrating alignment with CIMERA’s vision and mission. **All scholarship-linked projects must also be submitted via the NRF website**, and DSTI-NRF CIMERA will only consider scholarship applications for **South African Black students**. Initial feedback will be provided by **5 June 2026**, and approved projects should be linked with suitable students by **June 2026**.

**Submission & Enquiries:**

**Submit:** [bmaphalala@uj.ac.za](mailto:bmaphalala@uj.ac.za) | **Subject:** 2027 Project Funding Call  
**Enquiries:** [cimera@uj.ac.za](mailto:cimera@uj.ac.za) | **Subject:** 2027 Project Funding Call

**DSTI-NRF CIMERA**  
Centre of Excellence for Integrated Mineral and Energy Resource Analysis

**DSTI-NRF CIMERA CALL FOR PROJECT FUNDING 2027**

CIMERA is issuing the 2027 funding call two months earlier than previous years. This is to enable academics to receive confirmation of 2027 funding prior to the close of the NRF scholarship application process or other scholarship application deadlines. Supervisors may therefore advertise and source the most appropriate student for the approved project.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:**

- PhD Projects
- MSc Projects
- Honours Projects
- Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Projects
- Non-scholarship Projects (Running Costs Only)
- Outreach Projects

**CALL OPENS ON MARCH 16, 2026 | CALL CLOSE MAY 4, 2026**

**IMPORTANT NOTES**

- All scholarship-linked applications must also be submitted via the NRF website once the call opens.
- Refer to the NRF website for Honours, MSc and PhD scholarship application deadlines.
- CIMERA will provide initial feedback to academics by **5 June 2026**.
- Academics must link approved projects with suitable students.
- DSTI-NRF CIMERA will only consider scholarship applications for **South African Black students**.

All academics are encouraged to submit new project proposals related to the broad fields of economic geology, energy, and geology for society. We strongly encourage the development of multi-university and/or industry linked projects, clearly demonstrating the benefit of the research in terms of the CIMERA vision and mission and guiding documents.

**SUBMISSION AND ENQUIRIES**

Submission email: [bmaphalala@uj.ac.za](mailto:bmaphalala@uj.ac.za) / Subject line: 2027 Project Funding Call  
Enquiries email: [cimera@uj.ac.za](mailto:cimera@uj.ac.za) / Subject line: 2027 Project Funding Call.

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### Investing In Mining Indaba 2026

DSTI-NRF CIMERA had a strong presence at the 2026 Investing in African Mining Indaba, engaging with global stakeholders across industry, academia, and policy. The event provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange, networking, and showcasing Africa's critical role in the future of mining and energy.

We are especially proud of our **Co-Director, Prof. Susan Webb, and CoE Manager, Busisiwe Maphalala**, who **contributed to key panel discussions on innovation and the circular economy**. Their participation

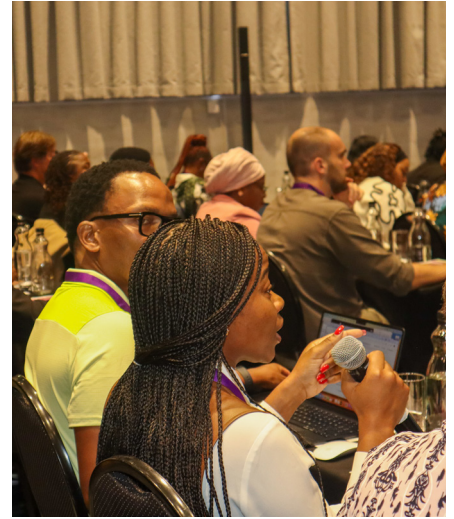
highlighted CIMERA's commitment to advancing research, sustainability, and inclusive development within the sector.

Thanks to the generous support of **Hyve Group**, a cohort of CIMERA delegates was also able to attend, gaining exposure to industry insights, emerging trends, and meaningful networking opportunities. As we reflect on MI26, we look forward to building on these engagements and continuing to drive impactful collaboration across the mining and energy landscape.



## University - Industry Collaboration Colloquium: Season V held in Cape Town December 2025

Our CoE Manager Busisiwe Maphalala attended the **University–Industry Collaboration Colloquium: Season V held in Cape Town** on 4 - 5 December 2025. The purpose of the conference was to strengthen partnerships between higher education institutions and industry by promoting knowledge exchange, collaborative research, innovation, and skills development. The colloquium was particularly beneficial as it focused on bridging the gap between universities and industry, an objective that is also paramount to the DSTI-NRF CIMERA. It also provided valuable opportunities for engagement and interaction, including a hands-on workshop facilitated by one of the presenters, which encouraged active participation and practical knowledge exchange among attendees.



## CALL FOR CIMERA ALUMNI

DSTI-NRF CIMERA is reconnecting with its growing alumni community and updating its alumni database. We want to hear where your academic and professional journey has taken you since your time with CIMERA! **Staying connected** allows alumni to receive invitations to CIMERA events and networking opportunities, access research, collaboration, and industry opportunities, have their achievements highlighted within the community, and help strengthen the network across academia and industry. If you are a CIMERA alumnus or alumna, please send a quick email with your current role or area of work, current institution or company, and updated contact details to **Itumeleng Modisha** at [imodisha@uj.ac.za](mailto:imodisha@uj.ac.za). We look forward to celebrating your achievements and keeping you connected to CIMERA's growing global network.

**CALLING ALL DSTI-NRF CIMERA ALUMNI**  
**LET'S RECONNECT!**

**WHY STAY CONNECTED?**

- Stay up to date with CIMERA news, research highlights, events, and opportunities through our website and regular communications.
- Engage with the CIMERA community by following us on LinkedIn, where we share updates, achievements, and collaboration opportunities.
- Continue to be part of the CIMERA network by receiving event invitations, alumni highlights, and important updates directly from us.

[www.cimera.co.za](http://www.cimera.co.za)  
[cimera@uj.ac.za](mailto:cimera@uj.ac.za)  
[imodisha@uj.ac.za](mailto:imodisha@uj.ac.za)

**CONTACT**

## CLOSING REMARKS

As we begin 2026, the DSTI-NRF CIMERA community continues to grow in strength, collaboration, and impact. While this first edition of the newsletter provides a snapshot of our activities, it also reflects the vibrant network of researchers, students, industry partners, and stakeholders who contribute to the Centre's mission.

We look forward to another exciting year filled with new research projects, student achievements, collaborative initiatives, and opportunities to further

advance mineral and energy resource research in South Africa and beyond. We encourage our community to stay engaged, share their achievements, and continue contributing to the growing CIMERA story.

Thank you to everyone who supports and participates in the Centre's activities. We wish you a productive and successful year ahead.

## Our Impact Since 2015

