



UKZN CELEBRATES NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK



UKZN celebrated National Science Week with a series of public and school-based events.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) celebrated National Science Week in style this year.

Firstly, local school pupils enjoyed access to a fun-filled week of scientific activities run by the [Science and Technology Education Centre](#) (STEC@UKZN) at the Westville campus. Staff went the extra mile to keep the bevy of eager Grade 10 and Grade 11 pupils wowed by the whole spectrum of scientific wonders available at UKZN.

Accommodating up to 60 learners a day, the programme offered an array of hands-on fun that covered scientific disciplines such as electrical engineering, mathematics, statistics, biodiversity, microscopy, astronomy, microbiology, chemistry, physics, biology and geology.

For phase two of the week's campaign, the College organised two highly successful Great UKZN Science Show-Offs, aimed at the whole family. These science shows, held at the Pietermaritzburg and Westville campuses, saw the famous "Dr T" – aka Tanja Reinhardt, Dr Vincent Couling and Mr Ajay Bissessur battle it out on the scientific stage. Their scientific tricks, treats, whooshes and bangs kept their audiences amused and amazed.

Ever wanted to make a fire tornado? Or a rocket? Or make a pole sing? Or see a wave dance? Or find out just how smelly chemicals can be? The three scientists made sure that they offered something for everyone as they brought the magic of science to life.

On a more serious note, the final leg of UKZN's National Science Week celebrations saw renowned Terrestrial Vertebrate Ecologist, Professor Colleen Downs, present a public talk on the persistence of wildlife in urban areas, from a KwaZulu-Natal perspective. Downs holds the DST/NRF South African Research Chair (SARChI) in Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape and is the winner of numerous scientific accolades and awards, including most

recently the 2017 National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)-South32 Award for Research Capacity Development.

National Science Week is celebrated every year during the first week of August. A [Department of Science and Technology](#) initiative, run in partnership with public and private institutions, it aims to further the public's understanding of science and to advance science and technology within South Africa.

Words by: [Sally Frost](#)