



Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council Quarter 4

27 November 2025

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1. Introduction

The Nelson Mandela University community is mourning the unprecedented and tragic loss of six students in recent weeks, in separate circumstances. Recognising the emotional toll these tragedies have taken, ongoing psychosocial support is being provided to all affected students, and staff. Families of the deceased have also been supported in various ways. Investigations are also underway to evaluate existing internal systems and to inform evidence-based recommendations to strengthen preventive and responsive measures. (A brief report prepared by the Dean of Students is attached as an addendum to the VC's Q4 report)

The University was also saddened to learn of the passing of Professor Lis Lange, a former member of Council. Prof Lange will be remembered for her unwavering commitment to academic excellence, social justice and transformation in South African higher education. We furthermore express our condolences to the family, colleagues, and students of Professor Keo Motaung, a distinguished biomedical scientist, entrepreneur and visionary leader. Prof Motaung served as the holder of the Female Academic Leaders Fellowship/Financial Research and Entrepreneurship Foundation – Nelson Mandela University Research Chair in Entrepreneurship and Financial Inclusion, where she led transformative research that bridged innovation, commercialisation and entrepreneurship.

A key enabler of achieving the University's Vision 2030 is to promote long-term sustainability through strategy-aligned resource mobilisation and responsible stewardship. In alignment with our institutional reporting framework, sustainability is the central theme of this final quarterly report for 2025.

2. Vision 2030 and Strategic Trajectories

Sustainability is threaded throughout the University's transversal priorities, of which four are outlined below, namely Ocean Sciences, the Medical School, Revitalising the Humanities, and Transdisciplinarity and Sustainability.

2.1. Ocean Sciences

The South African International Maritime Institute (SAIMI) participated in the Global Maritime Forum Annual Summit in Antwerp, Belgium on 21-22 October 2025, contributing to discussions on the sector's next steps in respect of maritime decarbonisation, life at sea, and advancing effective maritime governance, finance and digitalisation. In addition, SAIMI responded to a critical gap in South Africa's readiness for the maritime energy transition by convening a seminar on maritime decarbonisation on 30 October. SAIMI was part of various G20 initiatives, culminating in the Ocean20SA Summit on 4-5 November with the theme "*Uniting for Ocean Sustainability: Advancing Cooperative Innovation and Partnerships*".

The Institute for Coastal and Marine Research (CMR) anchors its contribution to sustainability through scientific stewardship of coastal and marine ecosystems. The Institute hosted the 2025 CMR Research Symposium "*Science to Impact*" from 12 to 14 November. Guided by the visionary leadership of Prof Mandy Lombard, whose decade of research as the SARChI Chair of Marine Spatial Planning has expanded the reach and relevance of Ocean Sciences, the

symposium highlighted how science can serve as a bridge between policy, practice, and people. The symposium explored a wide range of themes, including ecosystem services, marine governance, sustainable fisheries, biodiversity conservation, and participatory ocean management.

The SARCHI Chair in Ocean Cultures and Heritage hosted a series of documentary films on 22 and 23 September at the Science Centre. This screening experience explored ocean and coastal cultural heritage from five southern African countries, including South Africa, Namibia, and the Seychelles. The series highlighted the rich and diverse cultural practices and histories connected to the ocean and coasts, and the importance of preserving this heritage for future generations.

2.2. Medical School

The Medical School has advanced collaboration in health sciences education and training through the improved functioning of the Joint Academic Governance Committee (AGC) with the Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDoH). Partnerships with the ECDoH and Walter Sisulu University continue to support sustainable clinical education platforms grounded in ethical governance and responsible resource stewardship. Stewardship in action is seen in Council's R25.6 million allocation in 2025 to stabilise staffing and clinical teaching, as well as a Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) earmarked grant of R37 million for 2024/25 and R23 million for 2025/26.

However, funding uncertainties regarding (predictable) contributions from the ECDoH and the DHET pose a risk to the Medical School's long-term sustainability. The University has stepped in financially to address staffing shortfalls, but this is a temporary solution. Persistent reliance on temporary and joint staff funded by the University presents long-term sustainability and talent continuity risks for the academic clinical platform. Delays in "core joint staff" appointments by the ECDOH further strain University finances, challenging financial sustainability. Focused attention, external engagement, and strategic resourcing are required to safeguard accreditation and support the successful graduation of the first cohort of Mandela medical doctors in 2027.

2.3. Revitalising the Humanities

Nelson Mandela University hosted its 2025 TEDx event under the theme "*Redefining Creative Arts*" in October, highlighting the integration of arts and sciences through a STEAM approach. Organised under the official TEDx licence, the independently curated event featured speakers whose work exemplifies the evolution of the creative arts.

The Faculty of Humanities promotes transdisciplinary scholarship and engagement with Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as part of its research and innovation agenda. On 10 September 2025, the Faculty hosted Day 3 of the University's Institutional Research Week, themed "*Knowledge Entanglements and Convergences: The Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences in Dialogue*", showcasing interdisciplinary scholarship. In addition, the SARCHI Chair in Identities and Social Cohesion in Africa (ISCIA) hosted "*Horizon 2055 Seminars, City (E)Scapes*", which was the culmination of a year of connecting research and creative activities to respond to concerns regarding current and future sustainability.

The 2025 Vice-Chancellor's Cultural Evening, held on 19 September 2025, themed "*Echoes and Imprints*", celebrated heritage through diverse musical performances and showcased the immense talent of staff, students, community performers and our headline artists. The annual cultural evening is growing in importance and not only provides a window into humanities at Nelson Mandela University but also creates a networking platform with a range of stakeholders and supporters in the Metro and beyond.

2.4. Transdisciplinary Sustainability Sciences

The Mandela Institute for Sustainable Futures (MISF) launched the "*Framing Sustainability in Africa*" platform, which convened continental and local experts to interrogate sustainability from Afrocentric perspectives. Student achievements include participation in the Advance Initiative for Innovation and Development (AIIDEV) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Campus Ambassador Programme. This is a ten-week programme aimed at educating and empowering students in Africa to become changemakers with the skills to implement community-based projects related to the SDGs.

3. Distinctive Educational Purpose and Philosophy that Contributes to Student Access for Success

3.1. Africa International Teaching Week

Nelson Mandela University officially opened its Africa International Teaching Week (AITW) on 20 October, hosted at the Business School, to celebrate the spirit of global collaboration and academic excellence. With participants from Germany, Malawi, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, the week-long event featured interactive sessions designed to encourage knowledge exchange and leadership development in curriculum innovation. The growing significance of integrating ethical leadership, sustainability, and social responsibility into every discipline was explored as a precondition of nurturing graduates who are socially responsible, ethically grounded, and environmentally conscious. Speaking at the Breakfast Club during AITW, Dr Brian Chicksen argued that universities need to move from integrated thinking to integrated doing. This is characterised by the stewardship of people, infrastructure, and resources under our care.

3.2. Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards

As a celebration of excellence, the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards ceremony recognised its top academic, professional, administrative and service staff in the categories of research, teaching, engagement, innovation, creative outputs, and institutional support. The event was held together with the student academic achievers' awards, and a total of 77 awards were made for contributions to excellence. Among these, the following are worth noting:

- Nelson Mandela University Researcher of the Year - Professor Andrew Phiri.
- Nelson Mandela University Distinguished Teacher - Professor Gerrit Crafford.
- Nelson Mandela University Excellent Teacher - Associate Professor Cina Mosito.

3.3. Readiness Plans for the 2026 Academic Year

The latest application statistics and trends indicate that the admissions for 2026 are proceeding well. The University has acquired the services of a global company, SIS Global Education, to provide an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered chatbot that will assist in intelligently and conversationally answering student queries. This should significantly relieve the pressure on the Contact Centre.

Merit-based admission procedures for first-time entering students, implemented for the first time for the 2025 enrolment, will again be used for 2026. This permits a wider number of applicants to be considered for a place and enables the University to select and admit applicants with the highest Applicant Scores for each programme. In January 2026, when processing firm offers, the enrolment caps will be strictly applied to ensure that the University remains within its target of 8 500 first-time entering students. Communication to applicants will emphasise the importance of confirming their intention to register regardless of their funding status. The Enrolment Management Committee will meet weekly during the registration period to provide oversight of the various processes.

3.4. Learning and Teaching Development and Support

The Learning and Teaching Collab is leading the implementation of the institutional audit improvement plan with funding extended via the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) and other funding sources.

Teaching Development (TD)

Within the LT Collab, TD promotes sustainability and stewardship through transformative teaching, inclusive curricula, and collaboration. In 2025, this included 91 new academics completing the Beginning Your Journey induction programme; and 12 curriculum workshops, which reached 162 academics, focusing on the re-registration and transformation of academic programmes.

TD also supported the development and management of 25 teaching innovation projects funded via the Teaching Development Innovation Fund, which focuses on interdisciplinary, sustainable learning environments.

Learning Development (LD)

LD empowers students through coaching and support programmes such as Supplemental Instruction, First Year Success, and the Academic Literacies Writing Programme. Over 750 senior students were trained in transferable skills that enhance employability and personal growth. Student support included career outreach, counselling, mentoring, and success coaching to enhance employability and responsible citizenship.

3.5. Technology-Rich Learning and Teaching and the Virtual Academy

The University's Digital Transformation (Dx) strategy is geared towards advancing sustainability, including expanding the online and hybrid modes of learning and teaching. To this end, the University launched an upgraded Funda Learning Management System (LMS) for hybrid learning. We congratulate the Digital Learning Experience Design and Innovation

Studio (LXD Studio) for receiving the Professional, Administrative and Support (PASS) Team Excellence Award for leveraging AI tools and innovative approaches to meet diverse academic needs.

The establishment of the Virtual Academy (VA) took a step forward with the approval of a financial plan and sustainability case by executive management. The VA is developing four online qualifications and six online short learning programmes as part of a transversal, multidimensional project to enhance access and study opportunities.

A central element of the VA is the i-Human institutional culture signature programme, which seeks to foster human-centred digital transformation. Its purpose is to strengthen the awareness, confidence, and readiness of staff and students to ensure their well-being remains at the heart of digital transformation.

4. Engaged, Innovative Scholarship Culture that Generates Knowledge Recognised for its Contribution to Sustainability

4.1. Research Support Management

The University continues to integrate sustainability principles into its research ecosystem by establishing transdisciplinary research themes that align with global sustainability goals, supporting research chairs and entities that produce high-impact, contextually relevant research outputs, and leveraging honorary title holders, associates, and international collaborations to enhance postgraduate supervision, publications, and external funding.

Research productivity continues to demonstrate resilience and growth. Nelson Mandela University's 2024 research output reached 515.22 units, valued at R65.7 million, reflecting steady engagement and scholarly activity across faculties. Furthermore, in 2024, our research chairs and entities collectively secured approximately R85 million in external research income, demonstrating the successful acquisition of national and international research grants. However, the University must ensure that high-performing chairs and entities are supported through succession planning, institutional commitment, and strategic renewal.

4.2. Postgraduate Support and Enhancing Research Capacity

Targeted recruitment of postgraduate students has increased by 35.3%, from 6 964 in 2024 to 9 419 in the same period in 2025. Improved enrolment at this level will have a positive influence on institutional income through increased subsidy.

A total of 277 Honours, 686 Masters, and 336 Doctoral scholarships were awarded as of 27 October 2025 through funding from Council, the National Research Foundation (NRF), and other external partners. This represents 1 299 postgraduate awards. Uptake remains high at 89% (1 151 scholarships), of which 78% were Black students, 60% were women, and 83% were South African citizens or permanent residents.

Council approved an investment of R49.7 million for postgraduate scholarships in 2025, and R34 million was pledged from external funders. With R46.4 million (93%) already disbursed, the new postgraduate funding policy continues to drive equity and enhance throughput.

The University continues to leverage national funding instruments to strengthen supervisory capacity and empower early-career academics, including Thuthuka grants, the Black Academic Advancement Programme, and Internal Research Grants. The Next Generation of Academics Programme cohort includes 13 academics, with recruitment underway to expand this cohort to 21.

4.3. Internationalisation and Expansion of African Footprint

Nelson Mandela University experienced a 19% rise in international postgraduate applications, offsetting a decline in undergraduate applications, between 2025 and 2026, with a 14% overall decrease in applications. In response to the downward trend in international student numbers, the International Office is developing innovative academic and revenue-generating initiatives such as hybrid and online Short LPs targeting local and international markets. The German Language Short Learning Programme, piloted in 2025, represents one such initiative designed to extend the University's reach, attract new learner cohorts, and provide sustainable income streams.

Currently, the University has 52 active institutional agreements with partners across 25 countries, mostly in Europe (26 agreements), rest of Africa (16), and Asia (7). In this quarter, online marketing boosts were implemented across African markets. Print and media advertising in Uganda, coordinated with the University's local recruitment agent, further supported the visibility of this University's academic brand, as did the Uganda leg of African Engagements in October 2025.

Nelson Mandela University staff attended the 2025 European Association of International Education Exhibition and Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden. Key objectives were to strengthen and expand collaborations by meeting with over 30 international partners, secure funding through existing frameworks to support staff and student mobility, and recruit fee-paying international students beyond formal partnerships.

4.4. Innovation

The Innovation Office enhanced global collaboration and African-centred leadership by participating in the BIO Africa Convention, focusing on biotechnology innovations. At the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards event, Professor Farouk Smith received the Innovation Excellence Award. His team designs and tests durable circuits, translating them into practical solutions that strengthen Africa's contribution to global space and advanced technology sectors. Chemistry lecturer, Dr Zikhona Tywabi-Ngeva, was the recipient of the Emerging Innovation Excellence Award. She created biodegradable sheets from pineapple leaf waste, promoting sustainable, healthier agricultural practices. The eNtsa Automation Team received the Innovation Excellence Project Award for developing and implementing an automated seam-tracking system for a friction stir welding machine. We are also delighted that five out of the ten teams that made it to the Final Pitch Day of the SDSN Innovations Challenge were

from Nelson Mandela University. One of these teams, Rhythmic Syndicates, was placed among the top three finalists.

4.5. Library and Information Services

Alma, the Integrated Library Management System, launches in January 2026. Over 14 000 obsolete records were cleaned from the legacy SIERRA system during the transition. Alma reduces local infrastructure reliance and promotes sustainable task chains across the University. Automated digital workflows enhance efficiency and reduce manual processes, enabling staff to prioritise high-value services. The use of data analytics enhances decision-making in collection development, space utilisation, and resource allocation, contributing to financial and environmental sustainability.

5. Transformative Institutional Culture that Promotes Diversity and Social Cohesion

5.1 National Dialogue

The University participated in the National Dialogue by hosting an event on 1 November, themed *“Reimagining and Co-creating the Eastern Cape Province We Want – A Higher Education Sectoral Contribution for a New Vision for South Africa”*. This gathering included participants from Eastern Cape universities, TVET colleges, government, business, and civil society, with a keynote address by the former President Thabo Mbeki.

5.2 Engagement Office

The Career Services Unit held its inaugural Employer Engagement Day at the George Campus in October, along with complementary work-readiness workshops for students. Over the past quarter, the University’s signature Hubs of Convergence, have advanced projects related to environmental science, indigenous knowledge, and sustainable livelihoods through the NRF-funded Water Quality and Food Security Project.

5.3 Science Centre

The Science Centre reinforced its role as a catalyst for sustainability and stewardship through diverse activities, engaging with more than 2 000 visitors during this reporting cycle. A key highlight was the celebration of women’s leadership in the maritime sector, which affirmed the vital role of gender equity in building sustainable industries and communities.

The Centre also created opportunities for learners to explore environmental science by introducing young people to the interconnectedness of ecological systems through immersive technologies. Research exhibitions highlighted transdisciplinary projects addressing innovation, climate resilience, and social justice.

The Science Centre also hosted two symposia centred around leadership development. The first event encouraged male students from multiple universities to converse on purpose, identity, and responsibility. The second symposium focused on themes of educators as

custodians of knowledge and values, equipping future generations with the skills to engage responsibly with their environments and societies.

5.4 Institutional Public Lectures

This quarter saw the delivery of the final two Institutional Public Lectures (IPLs) for 2025, with the annual Raymond Mhlaba IPL held on 14 October 2025 with a keynote address by Professor Wiseman Nkuhlu. The address focused on ethical leadership and incorporating qualities of integrity and ubuntu in governance. The first Health Sciences IPL was held on 18 November 2025 with the theme “*Revolutionising Global Health: Change for an Equitable Future*”, delivered by Professor Jimmy Volmink.

5.5 Mandela University Press

The Mandela University Press has published ten books to date. The first science-themed book, “*Chasing Challenges: Scholarly Learning and Teaching for Chemical Process Technicians*”, by Dr Shawn Gouws, was launched on 24 October 2025.

5.6 Transformation Office

The launch of the University’s Anti-Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Charter, unveiled during the Inaugural Student Indaba on Masculinities in October, was a significant step in the ongoing national fight against GBV. The Inaugural Dialogue on the State of Gender Affirming Health Care in the Eastern Cape was another notable event hosted on 16 October 2025 as part of the Pride Month celebrations.

The Transformation Office continues to monitor the trends in complaint cases, with an increase of 14.3% in the number reported in 2025, compared to 2024. Of concern is the number of reported cases involving discrimination, harassment, bullying, and physical assault, which increased from 36% in 2024 to 49% in 2025. There is a review underway of the policy framework around GBV, sexual offences, harassment, and equality-related complaints to align processes with best practices in the sector.

5.7 Centre for Women and Gender Studies

This quarter, the Research Chair in African Feminist Imaginations (AFEMI) contributed to the MPhil programme on Violent Histories and Repair at Stellenbosch University and participated in AVReQ’s colloquium on “*Post’-Violence Subjectivities in the Global South*”. She also served as a discussant on Sexual Violence in Eastern Cape Schools at the Faculty of Education’s Symposium. In November 2025, the Centre, in collaboration with CriSHET, will host a seminar by Professor Hugo Canham titled “*Rage and Death*” to explore the politics of grief, rage, and the afterlives of violence in postcolonial societies.

5.8 Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET) and

The Critical Sustainability Literacies (CSL) Theory Workshop was held in October, with a presentation on using Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse policy. The final event CriSHET has planned for 2025 is the “*Critical Sustainability Literacies and the Civic University*”

workshop. Professor Hugo Canham will be presenting on Black Planetary Studies and what it might contribute towards CSL.

5.9 Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS)

Following the success of the Mandela Indaba, this quarter has primarily focused on reflection, planning, and consolidation. Progress has been made on consolidating feedback on the “*Embedding Mandela*” institutional resource document presented at the Indaba, which will serve as a living resource. A formal report of the event is being developed, which will detail the session discussions and also include submissions from the commissioned artist, Zama Spellman, and external guest and memory scholar, Dr Katrin Antweiler.

5.10 Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET)

A key achievement for CIPSET this quarter was the emerging collaboration with the provincial Department of Agriculture to advance community food production. The Centre is co-developing a Climate Change Adaptation mapping methodology with coastal communities, further linking research, activism, and community partnership.

5.11 Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD)

This quarter, CANRAD partnered with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung to host a successful Youth Colloquium. The Centre also hosted a dialogue on the 2026 Local Government Election (LGE) on 28 October, in partnership with the Electoral Commission of South Africa and The Herald. A highlight from this quarter was the publication of the book “*Electoral Observation*”, co-edited by Professor Bheki Mngomezulu (CANRAD), Dr Paul Kariuki (DDP), and Dr Stanley Ehiane (University of Botswana), in time for the anticipated 2026 LGE.

6. Enhancing Student Living and Learning Experiences

6.1. Student Governance and Development

The 2025/26 Student Representative Council (SRC) elections were held online with a voter turnout of 12 085 students (35%). An independent audit confirmed the final process was secure, accessible, and transparent. DASO secured four of the nine central SRC seats, with EFFSC taking three, and SASCO and MKSM one seat each.

6.2. Student Entrepreneurship and Graduate Employability

Over the past two months, the Mandela University Africa Hub has played a crucial role in funding and supporting entrepreneurs. The Hub has provided direct support to more than 200 clients, incubating 42 businesses, and 49 Accelerator Programme trainees. In collaboration with Communication and Marketing, the Hub produced the first student entrepreneurship publication, BizYouth, which was launched on 7 November.

Two student entrepreneurs, Ayabulela Binase and Jazmyn Du Preez, are among the Top 20 finalists in the prestigious Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Absa

Innovation Challenge 2025. The national finals are on 25 November 2025 in Gauteng, where finalists will present solutions addressing real-world challenges.

At the second International Conference on Business Innovation and Incubation (ICBII) 2025, the Minister of Small Business Development, Stella Ndabeni, highlighted the importance of collaborative models in driving economic and social change. The conference, organised by the Business Incubation Web Association, focused on incubation and acceleration, sustainability and green innovation, entrepreneurship in developing economies, and policy frameworks for enabling future business innovation.

6.3. Student Housing

The University's accommodation shortfall, combined with delays in NSFAS payments to private landlords and the resultant student evictions, has exacerbated student vulnerabilities, forcing the University to intervene in various ways. Indications by NSFAS to reassign off-campus student accommodation back to universities is therefore most welcome.

6.4. Student Wellness

Student Health Services (SHS) launched a pap smear and breast screening campaign in September. The Nutrition Project remains a critical support, providing food parcels to approximately 500 students monthly, though demand indicates a need for further expansion. To this end, a partnership has been established with Food Forward South Africa and the Professional Provident Society. These initiatives are expected to start early next year. Emthonjeni Student Wellness provided over 4 000 counselling sessions to 1 409 students over this period, with crisis support, social work interventions, and group outreach sessions to address mental health and GBV-related challenges.

7. Enabling Systems and Infrastructure that Promote an Exceptional Experience for Students, Employees and Key Stakeholders

7.1. Human Resources

Given the constrained national fiscus, the University needs to embed sustainability into the institutional fabric. This is the key focus of the Sustainability and Institutional Viability Task Team (SIVTT) and the Masonge Siphuhlise campaign, which is one of our six institutional culture signature programmes. As part of this campaign, all faculties and divisions were invited to make innovative suggestions to promote income generation and cost effectiveness. These inputs will be shared with SIVTT for processing and implementation.

In this quarter, both Gqeberha and George campuses held "*Wellness in Motion*" days. These were dynamic outdoor initiatives promoting physical activity, team spirit, and holistic wellness, with more than 1 000 participants in Gqeberha and over 100 at George.

7.2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Services

The University's Dx strategy includes expanding digital access, narrowing the digital divide, and expanding student access to online resources. Efficient investments in ICT infrastructure include phased migration to cloud offerings and a data-driven culture through business intelligence and analytics. In tandem, there is a strong focus on fortifying cybersecurity. In alignment with Vision 2030, several targeted business process improvement initiatives aim to improve operational efficiency, optimise workflows, and strengthen service delivery.

ICT infrastructure continues to be a major consumer of energy, with data centres requiring consistent cooling and stable power conditions. In response, ICT Services has initiated a range of projects to reduce environmental impact while maintaining reliable service delivery. These include advanced data centre cooling, server virtualisation, energy-efficient hardware, cloud adoption, and hybrid cloud architecture.

7.3. Infrastructure Services and Space Optimisation

The University's deliberate approach to environmental sustainability encompasses investments in smart infrastructure, renewable energy, water management, waste reduction, and green building design.

Energy Management

The consultants appointed for an energy audit are finalising their reports. Consultants have also been appointed for the University's loadshedding mitigation solution, integrating centralised generators with the photovoltaic (PV) installations across all campuses, and procurement processes are underway.

Work has commenced on the installation of solar panels on the roofs of some buildings. There has also been progress in areas such as increased installation of LED lamps across campuses, occupancy sensors, automation and remote switching via the Building Management System to reduce energy demand, increased installation of heat pumps, and awareness campaigns on energy saving.

Through a strategic partnership via the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber, the University aims to source up to 55% of its electricity from renewable energy provider Etana. Wheeling agreements with Eskom and the municipality allow access to clean energy without on-site generation. The proposed Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) offers immediate cost savings, reducing exposure to rising energy costs.

Water Security

The University has allocated R15 million as part of the five-year capital maintenance plan towards water security management. The University was recognised as a leader in this field when it won the Sustainable Water Management Initiative Award at the Higher Education Facility Management Association 2025 Annual Conference, held in October at North-West University.

Waste Management

Environmental waste management presents opportunities for recycling and student entrepreneurship. Commendable work in recycling at the George Campus will serve as a pilot to be scaled up across the institution. Green printing remains a key focus area.

7.4. Safety and Security

In response to escalating safety and security challenges on all our campuses, the University has reviewed the affordability of the Closed Campus Project and is prioritising interventions. Several of these have been completed, with more to be undertaken in 2026. The enhanced safety and security programme seeks to enhance the institution's security technology infrastructure, establishing the foundation for a multi-year rollout supporting safety management and regulatory compliance. This will achieve a substantial improvement in surveillance coverage and access control efficacy across all campuses. In addition, a transition to online, biometric-enabled systems will enhance access integrity, facilitate real-time credential management, and improve the vetting processes for visitors and contractors. The installation of integrated alarm and panic systems in critical areas will support expedited emergency response times.

7.5. Support Services Sustainability Interventions

The University has identified key opportunities for cost reduction, such as overtime and secondary contracts, telephone costs, travel and accommodation, and catering. Through its commercialisation strategy, the University will consolidate specific entities to streamline operations, eliminate duplication, and enhance revenue generation. The initiative will commence with a pilot consolidating specific ICT and Support Services units.

8. Enhance Long-term Financial Sustainability Through Effective Resource Mobilisation and Responsible Resource Stewardship

8.1. Strategic Resource Mobilisation and Advancement (SRMA)

With regards to the Nelson Mandela University Trust portion of the work of the SRMA, the target for the mobilisation of bursaries and scholarships to support undergraduate missing middle and postgraduate students was R95 million in 2025. By the end of October 2025, the funds received totalled more than R88 million (or 92.8% of the target). Funding was mainly from public sector donors, especially SETAs. About 11.7% of the mobilised funds support postgraduate students, mainly in Advanced Diplomas and Honours programmes.

The target for engagement projects in 2025 is R20m. As of the end of October 2025, R15.8 million had been received for projects, constituting about 75% of the target. An additional R3 million has been secured, but payment is still to be made.

8.2. Financial planning

In 2025, Nelson Mandela University allocated 3% of its total budget (R73.5 million) towards Council-endorsed transversal strategic priorities. Plans are underway to embed the

Engagement and Transformation Portfolio (ETP) budget within the central University budget to formalise it as a core strategic imperative of the University.

A detailed financial statement will be tabled separately for Council consideration, along with a balanced operational budget. The 2026 Budget will be recommended to Council for approval via the Finance and Facilities Committee. This Budget is informed by the following assumptions: 2.6% increase in subsidy; 4.5% increase in tuition fees; 6.5% increase in student accommodation fees (subject to the NSFAS cap for undergraduate students); and a 4.5% Consumer Price Index (CPI).

9. Conclusion

The University is mindful that sustainability and stewardship are foundational to its longevity and the fulfilment of its societal mandate to promote the public good. Council's continued oversight and commitment to responsible stewardship remain critical. In closing, we thank Council for its guidance and leadership, especially as we continue to navigate a complex and volatile macro-environment. We look forward to building on this foundation as we near the end of 2025 and ensure readiness for the 2026 academic year.