

WELCOME MESSAGE: NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY VICE-CHANCELLOR



Sport and recreation are and have always been an important part of the North-West University. The achievements of our athletes at international, national and university levels are indicative of the high standard we set for our athletes, academics and students. But we never forget the importance of sport and recreation for our community at large.

Physical **in**activity is currently the 4th leading cause of death world-wide. The aim of the WHO is to reduce the level of physical inactivity globally by 10% by the year 2030. South Africans are currently among the most inactive populations in the world. Physical inactivity is associated with disease of lifestyle, but also with a lack of fine motor and gross motor abilities. The lack of these abilities contribute to the smaller portion of children participating in school sports resulting in a reduced pool of potential high performance athletes in the future. Research also indicates that academic achievements are influenced by regular physical activity.

I hope that during this conference academics and coaches will focus on understanding the barriers to sport performance and the lack of physical inactivity. We also need to better understand the economic effect of sport and recreation within the South African context. This will help us plan the way forward. I am sure this conference will allow for network opportunities and inter-disciplinary collaborations for colleagues in the field. This university hosts more than 1 500 international athletes that prepare for international competition at our High Performance Institute. NWU often serves as host to a variety of national tournaments in cricket, hockey, soccer and netball.

In addition to serving the sport fraternity, the research entity of PhASRec is also regarded as one of the top research entities within SA, understanding the health and recreational needs of South Africans, as well as the factors needed to become high performers in sport. Thanks to the colleagues for the work you put in to help organise this event.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the NWU. Thank you for participating in this event. I wish you a pleasant personal and professional experience during your stay at the conference and university.

Prof Dan Kgwadi,

Vice Chancellor, North West University