

New labs celebrated



The learning of Maths and Science in Carnarvon in the Northern Cape is set to improve, with the opening of Computer and Science laboratories at a local school.

Established at Carnarvon High School, a few kilometres from the site of the proposed Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescope, the laboratories were made possible through the SKA South Africa school project, which provides resources in partnership with the private sector and the Department of Basic Education.

Equipped with 43 desktop computers, a laptop, an interactive board and a printer, the labs are set to assist in improving the levels of Maths and Science teaching and learning in Carnarvon and the neighbouring town of Williston.

Officially launching the labs at Carnarvon High School on 25 February, the Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, said that she hoped to see the Northern Cape becoming the “scientific



Francois Baartman, Lee-Ann Snyders and Deowin Hoorn. All are Grade 11 learners at Carnarvon High. Photograph: Kim de Boer

province” of South Africa and having its own university in the near future. She said that the labs were intended to encourage the learners of Carnarvon and Williston to

be the engineers, scientists, mathematicians and biotechnicians that South Africa needed.

Learners at Carnarvon High School have been struggling to pass Maths and Science, with very few learners taking the subjects to grade 12.

In addition to the labs, the SKA South Africa initiative has also facilitated the employment of three qualified teachers for the school to teach Maths, Science and Information Technology, and has provided more than 270 Science and Engineering bursaries from undergraduate to postdoctoral level.

Minister Pandor said, “Naturally, we would like to see the learners from Carnarvon receiving some of these bursaries”.

Learners and educators at Carnarvon High School have welcomed the initiative, saying the SKA project will certainly help improve their lives.

“History has been made today. The opening of our new laboratories is, in fact, particularly timely, as it is well known that the success of a country is hugely dependent on the education of its people,” said Johannes Hoff, a Maths and Physics educator.

Since the opening of the labs in January 2011, the number of Grade 10s doing



Students supported by SKA South Africa doing a “spiral galaxy activity” with children at a school in Carnarvon.tif