



**BRIGHT FUTURE:** Some of the many Grade 12s from around the Eastern Cape who attended a career guidance extravaganza held at Hudson Park High School.

Picture: THEO JEPHTA

# EC matrics spoil for career choices

## Top institutions offer options to school-leavers

By **ASA SOKOPO**  
Education Reporter

A CAREERS exhibition at an East London high school last week left thousands of the province's matric pupils spoil for career choices.

The Working World Extravaganza – one of the biggest career guidance exhibitions in the country – saw leading companies, government entities and universities display their wares at Hudson Park High School.

Extravaganza director Alastair Stead said the lack of understanding among school-leavers of their options after school was concerning.

“Our research shows that up to 85 percent of Grade 12s do not know what career to pursue or how to plan effectively to enter the field of study and work,” said Stead.

Hudson Park deputy headgirl Trystan-Jade Nicholas said many of her peers who had made their career choices would study next towards degrees in engineering, accounting, medicine and teaching.

She said jobs would always be in abundance in the medical and engineering fields, while some matrics were interested in going into teaching because of the bursaries available.

Local universities say industries most lacking in skills include science, engineering and technology.

“There are many options for people, but a matric certificate is not sufficient,” said economist Chris Hart.

He said teaching and nursing was a great platform as there was already support – in the form of government bursaries – to enter these fields.

Despite the pressure to go into lucrative fields, Hart said school leavers should beware of going into careers with the goal of just making money. “The money side of it is often just an illusion,” he said.

Bonnie Currin, PAG general manager of the coastal region, said there wasn't a lack of work for qualified graduates, especially in key sectors such as finance, engineering, project management and telecommunications.

She cautioned that the number of matrics who qualified for university would not meet the demand of the growing economy.

“In this environment, the major corporations are willing to develop the necessary skills themselves through learnerships, internships and study assistance programmes,” she said.

“Companies who offer these programmes with a view to employing suitable candidates later tend to look more at the candidate's perceived ability and the value they can add to the business rather than at academic results alone.”

Walter Sisulu University spokesperson Tania Smith said pupils should try to obtain good matric passes in mathematics and science to ensure they were not disadvantaged when it came to choosing a programme of study. “There are so many new occupations opening up and if they follow their talents and interests they will find a niche,” she said. — [asas@dispatch.co.za](mailto:asas@dispatch.co.za)

