

Prof to give helping hand

NMMU dean to launch science programme at schools

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ONE of the country's foremost physics experts has developed an outreach programme aimed at improving maths and science marks in the province, which he describes as extremely concerning.

NMMU Dean of Science Professor Azwinndini Muronga plans to launch the Science Education, Outreach and Communication Programme in March.

Muronga is also president of the SA Institute of Physics.

The programme will focus on science education from Grade R pupils to undergraduate university students, with outreach programmes for pupils, teachers and communities across the province.

Muronga said the programme would be rolled out in phases.

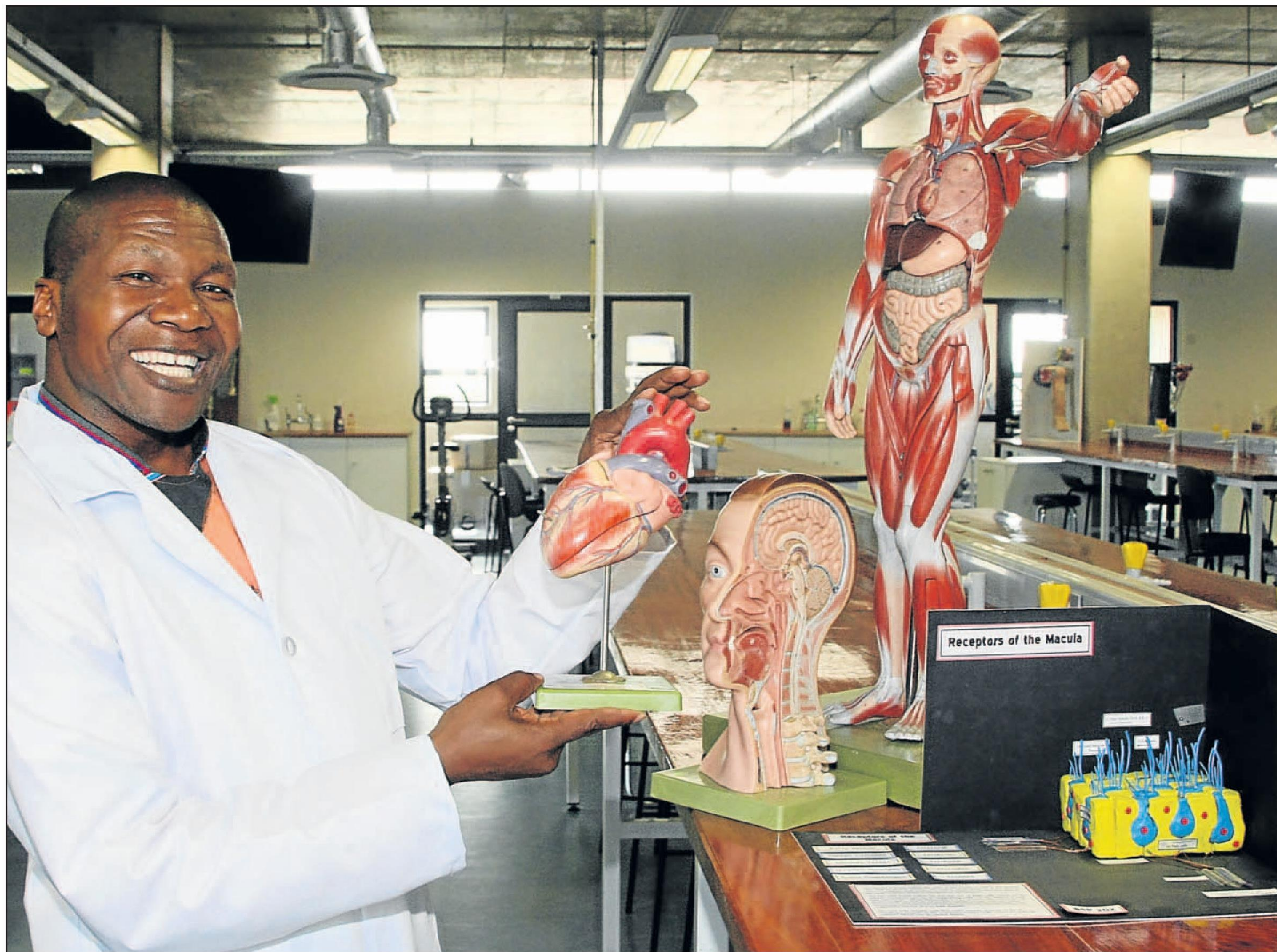
When launched it is expected to benefit at least 700 pupils from Grade 10 to matric.

"The first phase will be targeted at Grade 10s because they have already chosen to take science, so it just a matter of us growing that passion," he said.

The 700 or so pupils will attend a science week at the university.

The idea of the programme is to make science fun through practical application in laboratories.

"We will be able to teach them the



TEACHING TOOLS: NMMU Dean of Science Professor Azwinndini Muronga aims to make science fun

Picture: FREDLIN ADRIAAN

theory and ... language of science because one of the biggest problems is that pupils can't make sense of the questions."

The programme will be managed by 35 NMMU staff members.

"We are hoping to create a cohesive project across all the de-

partments. We will also be roping in retired lecturers and other science fraternities," Muronga said.

Teachers from selected schools will also be taught a variety of teaching tools to ensure the programme is sustainable in these schools.

"We are not interested in a 100% pass rate [but] we want quality passes. Strong work ethics are the foundation of performance," Muronga said.

He said he was extremely concerned about the state of maths and science in South Africa, par-

ticularly in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

But Muronga's concerns did not outweigh his enthusiasm.

"I am motivated by the potential in the Eastern Cape," he said.

Muronga ran the same project in Limpopo last year.