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UCT academics promote women in science at international event

[Soapbox Science](#) – a novel public outreach platform for promoting women scientists and the science they do – will come to South Africa for the first time this month. The Pierhead at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town will be transformed into an arena for learning and debate, engaging people from all walks of life with some of the South Africa’s most ground-breaking scientific research on 28 September 2019.

The inaugural event will feature 12 speakers from various South African institutions, covering everything from nuclear physics to vaccine research.

Led by University of Cape Town (UCT) and University of the Western Cape (UWC) astronomer Dr Lucia Marchetti – a 2015 London Soapbox Science speaker – this first South African episode has been organised by a [group of enthusiastic woman scientists](#) based at UCT, UWC, iThemba LABS and the South African Astronomical Observatory.

Dr Marchetti shares that “Soapbox Science champions the vital role of women in science, whilst providing an exciting opportunity for the public to meet, engage and be inspired by game-changing female scientists. I am thrilled that this year we can show how South Africa and in particular South African female scientists are contributing to the advance of science worldwide!”

[Soapbox Science](#) is an initiative that aims to promote the visibility and boost career prospects of female scientists through the establishment of grass-roots, annual public engagement of science events; in addition to making an active contribution to changing academic cultures, social norms and public perception of science careers.

“I am absolutely thrilled that this first South African Soapbox event will finally happen. I got even more excited after hearing first snippets from these talented scientists and was

overwhelmed by the excitement, passion and clarity of their brief adhoc presentations. It was impossible to decide which topic is the most fascinating. I can't wait to see more of that - and the undoubtedly lively discussions that will follow", said Professor Renee Kraan-Korteweg, South African Radio Astronomy Observatory SARCHI Chair for Multiwavelength Astronomy at the Department of Astronomy at UCT and co-organiser of the Soapbox Science Cape Town edition.

Co-founded by scientist Dr Nathalie Pettoelli (Zoological Society of London) and Dr Seirian Sumner (University College London) Soapbox Science launched in London in 2011 and is taking place this year in 20 cities across the United Kingdom and a further 20 cities in 13 countries across the globe – with South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Argentina and Brazil as first-time hosts - making it the biggest event to date.

For more information on the Cape Town Soapbox Science event and the full list of speakers visit the [website](#).

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The Soapbox Science Cape Town speakers during the preparatory training with Jive Media and the Local Organising Team.

Note to editors

The South Africa Soapbox Science event will take place on Saturday 28 September at the V&A Waterfront, Pierhead, 12:00 – 15:00. The event is sponsored by the [National Research Foundation](#), the [Department of Science and Innovation](#), [iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator Based Sciences \(iThemba LABS\)](#), [The Centre for Radio Cosmology](#) and receives in kind support by the [University of Cape Town](#), the [University of the Western Cape](#), the [South African Astronomical Observatory](#) and the [V&A Waterfront](#).

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Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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