

Renier Kotze

Senior DevOps / Cloud Platform Engineer — AWS · Amazon EKS · Terraform & Terragrunt

Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa | renier.kotze@hotmail.com | linkedin.com/in/renier-kotze-93274a40

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Senior DevOps and cloud platform engineer with twenty years in technology, of which six were spent inside Amazon Web Services — first as a second-line escalation engineer for enterprise customers, then as an operations manager running Premium Support teams — followed by four and a half years designing, building and owning cloud platforms for regulated South African financial services.

Since 2022 I have consulted through CyberPro Consulting on two concurrent engagements. For the Shoprite Group's Money Market division I own the Terraform/Terragrunt estate spanning eight AWS accounts and the Amazon EKS platform that runs its production microservices. For Old Mutual's Will division I designed the product's DevOps environment and CI/CD pipeline from a standing start and continue to support it.

My work sits at the intersection of infrastructure automation and production reliability. The AWS support years shaped how I approach failure — evidence before hypothesis, and a bias toward reading the actual configuration rather than assuming it. The platform years since have been about turning that into repeatable infrastructure: modular IaC, pipeline-gated change in environments where local cloud access is prohibited, EKS lifecycle and identity modernisation, and observability that catches problems before a release ships.

Afrikaans and English. Based in Cape Town (UTC+2), which aligns closely with Central European working hours.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Core — daily, production, end-to-end ownership

Cloud: AWS — EKS, EC2, ECS, IAM, VPC networking, API Gateway, NLB/ALB, RDS, S3, Secrets Manager, CloudWatch

Infrastructure as Code: Terraform, Terragrunt — modular multi-account, multi-environment codebases with dependency DAGs

CI/CD: Azure DevOps Pipelines (build, release, YAML, AWS and Python tasks, pipeline gating)

Containers: Amazon EKS, Kubernetes, Docker, Helm

Observability: Datadog, Prometheus, EFK/Elasticsearch, CloudWatch

Operating Systems & Scripting: Linux (CentOS, Ubuntu, SuSE), Bash, Python

Strong working experience

Cloud & Platform: CloudFormation, Lambda, Elastic Beanstalk, Docker Swarm, AWS Elastic Load Balancing

CI/CD & Config: GitLab CI, Jenkins, Ansible, Git, Bitbucket, Atlassian suite

Security & Identity: IRSA, EKS Pod Identity, EKS Access Entries, aws-auth ConfigMap migration, least-privilege IAM, API keys and usage plans

Alerting & Incident Tooling: OpsGenie, Mattermost, Microsoft Teams

Resilience: Multi-region DR automation, region switching, failover rehearsal and testing, backup and recovery

Scripting: PowerShell, YAML, HCL

Exposure / actively developing

GitOps: Argo CD — proof of concept in progress

CI/CD: GitHub Actions — self-directed study, not yet applied in production

AI platform tooling: Dify, Ollama, Qdrant — self-hosted LLM stack deployed across EKS, EC2 and RDS

AI-assisted engineering: Cursor and agentic coding tools applied to infrastructure-as-code work under review and audit controls

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior DevOps Engineer | CyberPro Consulting (Pty) Ltd — client: Shoprite Group, Money Market Division

Cape Town, South Africa · Apr 2022 – Present

Platform ownership for the Money Market division's cloud estate: infrastructure as code, the Amazon EKS platform, delivery pipelines and observability, in an environment where all AWS access is brokered through pipelines for security and audit reasons.

Infrastructure as code

- Designed and own a modular Terraform and Terragrunt codebase provisioning infrastructure across eight AWS accounts spanning the full software development lifecycle, structured as reusable modules within a dependency DAG so that environments remain consistent and new services onboard without bespoke configuration.

- Extended the DAG with an API Gateway module fronting private EKS services: REST API with proxy integration, API-key authentication, usage plans and throttling, and a VPC Link into an internal Network Load Balancer.
- Refactored NLB target selection after a production VPC Link creation failure, replacing ambiguous data-source lookups with deterministic selection.
- Maintain module conventions, variable validation and outputs so downstream modules consume infrastructure through contracts rather than hard-coded values.

Kubernetes / Amazon EKS platform

- Operate the EKS platform hosting production microservices — cluster access control, IAM role mapping, namespace lifecycle, workload identity, add-on management and platform upgrades.
- Leading an in-progress authentication modernisation: aws-auth ConfigMap to EKS Access Entries (cluster access) and IRSA to EKS Pod Identity (workload identity), run as a phased coexistence cutover using API_AND_CONFIG_MAP rather than a big-bang switch, in order to unblock cluster version upgrades while every running service stays up.
- Scoped the migration through a read-only audit that verified the actual blocking mechanism against AWS documentation rather than inheriting the assumption — confirming cluster access, not workload identity, as the constraint on the version upgrade.
- Package and deploy workloads with Helm.
- Automated cluster access provisioning and namespace lifecycle with idempotent, access-validating Bash and eksctl tooling.

CI/CD and delivery automation

- Built and maintain the Azure DevOps pipelines that are the only sanctioned route to AWS, producing a fully auditable, credential-free deployment trail appropriate to a regulated financial-services environment.
- Wrote a Python EKS health-check tool against the Kubernetes API, invoked from pipelines with exit-code gating (healthy / warning / critical) and DR-region awareness, so that cluster degradation blocks a release rather than being discovered after one.
- Standardised pipeline task patterns — Python interpreter selection, dependency installation and AWS credential handling — after diagnosing environment mismatches between hosted-agent Python versions.
- Reduced infrastructure setup time through automation of previously manual provisioning steps.

Observability and operations

- Integrated Datadog for production monitoring, with credentials held in AWS Secrets Manager and surfaced to workloads rather than embedded in configuration.
- Run Prometheus and an EFK stack across non-production environments for metrics and log aggregation.
- Implemented monitoring and alerting routing through OpsGenie, Mattermost and Microsoft Teams.

Resilience and disaster recovery

- Built DR-aware deployment and health-check automation with primary and secondary region switching driven by pipeline configuration.
- Validated the DR posture through extensive testing and a regional failover rehearsal.

AI platform work

- Deployed and operate a self-hosted LLM platform used to review documentation and improve deployment processes: Dify interface on EKS, Ollama inference and Qdrant vector storage on EC2, PostgreSQL on RDS.
- Apply agentic coding tools to infrastructure work under explicit review, read-only-audit and phase-gating controls, so generated changes are verified against real configuration before they reach a pipeline.

Team

- Provide day-to-day technical guidance and act as troubleshooting escalation for engineers on the engagement.

DevOps Engineer | CyberPro Consulting (Pty) Ltd — client: Old Mutual, Will Division

Cape Town, South Africa • Feb 2022 – Present (concurrent with the Shoprite engagement)

Sole DevOps engineer for the Old Mutual Will product, responsible for the environment end to end from initial design through platform migration and ongoing support.

- Designed and built the complete DevOps environment and CI/CD pipeline for the product from a standing start, delivering a turnkey deployment capability rather than a collection of scripts.
- Built the initial platform on Docker Swarm, Jenkins and EC2-based load balancing, including the automation and deployment tooling around it.
- Migrated the environment to GitLab CI and Amazon ECS as the product matured and requirements changed, integrating with the EC2 services that remained in place.
- Streamlined release cycles through the delivered deployment solution and continue to provide DevOps ownership and support for the environment.

DevOps Engineer | Rank Interactive

Cape Town, South Africa · Sep 2021 – Apr 2022

- Implemented and administered the automation toolchain — Terraform, Ansible, Jenkins, Bitbucket and Git — within the DevOps team.
- Led adoption of DevOps practice across the organisation, working with delivery teams on how change reached production.
- Planned and tracked infrastructure work through the Atlassian suite.
- Authored the technical documentation and guides the team worked from.

Operations Manager, Premium Support | Amazon Web Services

Cape Town, South Africa · May 2019 – Jun 2021

- Managed day-to-day Premium Support operations for the Graduate and Security Cloud Support Engineer teams.
- Delivered training and continuous technical coaching, and managed individual performance and development.
- Established quality management systems including standard operating procedures and lean programmes, and rolled out new operational procedures affecting quality and throughput.
- Defined quality metrics and KPIs jointly with department heads and global teams.
- Implemented process improvements addressing productivity and quality issues across the teams.

Cloud Support Engineer II | Amazon Web Services

Cape Town, South Africa · Aug 2015 – Apr 2019

- Second-line escalation engineer for enterprise AWS customers, resolving production failures across EC2, VPC, Linux, AWS CloudFormation, Elastic Beanstalk, Docker, Amazon ECS, AWS CodePipeline, AWS Lambda and Python — the cases that had already defeated first-line support.
- Managed customer escalations during major service events and critical incidents.
- Advised enterprise customers on streamlining deployment and automation through targeted use of AWS services.
- Built internal projects and tooling to improve Premium Support processes.
- Recruited, coached and trained support engineers in technical troubleshooting, customer handling and performance practice, and ran training sessions and workshops.

Linux Systems Administrator | One Digital Media

South Africa · Oct 2013 – Jul 2015

- Installed, configured and maintained the Linux server estate supporting network operations, and introduced proactive administration processes — including a PXE boot server that cut system build time.
- Diagnosed and resolved issues across Linux, Microsoft Server and network systems, and managed backup and recovery operations.
- Automated routine administration with Bash and PowerShell, and produced user training guides and documentation.

Support Engineer | Technology Systems Integration (Pty) Ltd

Randburg, Gauteng, South Africa · Apr 2011 – Sep 2013

- Supported CentOS-based edge servers acting as firewalls, routers and mail gateways for small and medium enterprise networks.
- Delivered Linux, networking and infrastructure support including Cisco-related issues, prioritising work by operational urgency.

Director, Technical Support | ComputAssist Group

Centurion, Gauteng, South Africa · Oct 2008 – Apr 2011

- Led the ICT support desk and field support operations, coordinating daily technical support and installation activity.
- Built a technical training system and supporting documentation, and owned escalated customer queries and disputes.
- Reviewed weekly performance reporting and drove improvement strategies; oversaw new customer onboarding, installation and training.

Call Centre Operations Manager | ComputAssist Group

Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa · Feb 2007 – Sep 2008

- Recruited, trained and developed 11 technical support technicians, and supervised a call centre of 4 support technicians.
- Built staff schedules covering both field and call centre support, and introduced customer feedback and training programmes that improved service reviews.

Field Support Engineer | ComputAssist Group

Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa · Oct 2003 – Jan 2007

- Provided on-site and remote support for pharmacy and point-of-sale systems, diagnosing hardware, software and networking faults.
- Installed, configured and maintained SuSE Linux servers, and managed customer backup and recovery processes.

- Delivered customer training and after-sales support, and worked with sales and development teams on system updates.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

A+ Certification, Information Technology — Audem (2000)

Matric — Hoërskool Jeugland (2000)

LANGUAGES

Afrikaans — native / bilingual

English — full professional

REFERENCES

Available on request.