

DEA launches coastal awareness programme

Focus on coastal clean-up

By **Tshego Letshwiti**

The department of environmental affairs (DEA) launched its coastal awareness programme in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

The programme was aimed at raising awareness and educating South Africans about their right to coastal access, a clean environment in coastal public properties, and their responsibility to keep such properties in a usable condition.

SA enjoys a coastline of just under 3,000km. Everyone has a right to access these beaches and public amenities, as contained in the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 24 of 2008) (ICM Act).

The ICM Act seeks to achieve the realisation of the right of access to our natural heritage and

recreational benefits to all, and in so doing, support growing tourism, recreational fishing and fair access to amenities.

In addition, under the act, no one may charge a fee (directly or indirectly) to access coastal public property without the permission of the minister responsible for environmental affairs. DEA minister Nomvula Mokonyane urged all South Africans to “enjoy our coastline responsibly”.

“It is our duty to ensure that we do not litter, do not drive on the beach and accord everyone their right to access public coastal property,” said Mokonyane.

Several coastal awareness programmes across the country were conducted to remind communities that everyone is a custodian of our valuable coastal resources. These campaigns focused on, among others, coastal and marine pollution, public ac-

cess to the beach and illegal driving on the beach.

The department also deals with pollution along the coast from marine litter, including plastic, which has increased global and national concern as a source of marine pollution. Plastics are the cause of increasing ocean pollution, which in turn affects marine life, and consequently human beings. Globally, plastic production has reached new highs, with over 320m tons now being produced annually. The DEA undertakes an annual coastal clean-up campaign with the intention to highlight the importance of building an under-

standing and knowledge of the coastal environment to the community and other marine users.

Given the difficulties experienced with marine litter, the department has embarked on a Source-to-Sea initiative that addresses waste management and marine litter from land-based sources. Various stakeholders involved include academia, government departments, plastic industries and non-governmental organisations. The initiative will scale up litter collection, promote community involvement in waste sorting at source and recycling in co-operation with the private sector.



DEA officials Tshepiso Tsotetsi, Sisibuswe Matiya and Thandeka Mbambo participating in the march aimed at raising awareness about litter.

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Community members and DEA officials at a presentation about coastal awareness.



A shark dissection to highlight the impact of plastic pollution on marine life.

Deputy minister steps in to lead clean-up campaign around Durban



DEA deputy minister Barbara Thomson led the clean-up in Durban's Mangroves Nature Reserve ahead of the GMC Awards. / VERONICA MAHLABA

Thomson visits buy-back centres

By **Veronica Mahlaba**

Deputy minister of the department of environmental affairs (DEA) Barbara Thomson led a clean-up campaign around the streets and beaches of eThekweni ahead of the 8th Greenest Municipality Competition (GMC) Awards in Durban.

Thomson said: “SA is surrounded by vast oceans, which have the potential to contribute

up to R177bn to the gross domestic product and create just over 1-million jobs by 2033. A clean coastal environment is at the heart of the Operation Phakisa Oceans Economy. We cannot build an oceans economy in a dirty environment. We should continuously engage in activities that will keep our environment clean and attract investors into the oceans economy space.”

Following the clean-up, the deputy minister visited the Clermont and Westmead buy-back centres, where individual waste collectors and street waste pickers sell their recyclable waste.

The buy-back centres in turn

sell these waste products to other recycling companies.

Sthembile Ngcobo, an employee at Silver Jupiter Investments, a buy-back centre in Clermont, said: “I have been taught about recycling and how you can make money from waste. Now I am able to teach my family and friends about the benefits of recycling and that they shouldn't throw away all types of waste but to separate it and send it to buy-back centres.”

Greenest Municipality Competition Awards

To wrap up the day, the GMC Awards were held to celebrate the contribution that local government is making to climate change and ensuring cities are cleaner and greener. The GMC Awards are an annual event that facilitates the participation of municipalities, provincial counterparts and relevant stakeholders in waste and greening and open-space management.

The overall prize winner under the metropolitan category, executive mayor of eThekweni municipality Zandile Gumede said: “Winning the overall prize will encourage the councillors to work even harder. Most of the time us black people don't understand climate change matters. My wish is to see people of Durban separate waste in their households to ensure that we minimise waste in landfills.”

Greenest Municipality Competition Winners



The executive mayor of eThekweni metropolitan municipality, Zandile Gumede, receives the cheque from DEA deputy minister Barbara Thomson and Mpumalanga MEC for agriculture, rural development, land and environmental affairs Vusumuzi Shongwe as the overall winner in the metropolitan category at the GMC Awards.



Swartland local municipality was the overall winner in the local municipality category.

Metropolitan Municipality Category	
eThekweni Municipality	Overall winner
City of Cape Town Municipality	1st runner-up
Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality	2nd runner-up
Local Municipality Category	
Swartland Local Municipality	Overall winner
Tzaneen Local Municipality	1st runner-up
Umlalazi Local Municipality	2nd runner-up



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