

# Environment Quarterly

Kwartaalikse Omgewingsverslag • Tikologo ka Kotara • Mupo nga Kotara

**We need to  
protect our forests**  
**CSIR gets laboratory  
equipment from Japan**



forestry, fisheries  
& the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# 2022 environment CALENDAR



## JANUARY

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02 February  
03 March  
21 March  
23 March  
22 April

**World Wetlands Day**  
**World Wildlife Day**  
**International Day of Forests**  
**World Meteorological Day**  
**Earth Day**

## MAY

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14 May  
22 May  
05 June  
08 June

**World Migratory Bird Day**  
**International Day for Biological Diversity**  
**World Environment Day**  
**World Oceans Day**

17 June  
18 July  
31 July  
September

**Desertification and Drought Day**  
**Nelson Mandela Day**  
**World Ranger Day**  
**National Arbor Month**

## SEPTEMBER

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## DECEMBER

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16 September  
19 September  
07 -11 September  
21 November

**International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer**  
**International Coastal Clean-up Day**  
**South African National Parks Week**  
**World Fisheries Day**

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### About the back cover image:

#### Fossil Hominid Site

More commonly referred to as the Cradle of Humankind, the Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa were established as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999.

The sites include the Sterkfontein Caves, an important paleo-anthropological site in which many ancient fossils have been found. Amongst these are the skeletons of our early hominid ancestors, the oldest of which is thought to be almost four million years old.



To use this QR code conveniently you must have a smartphone equipped with a camera and a QR code reader/scanner application feature.





## Dear Valued Stakeholder,

It is an absolute honour to welcome you to yet another exciting and insightful edition of your favourite environment magazine, EQ. As usual, we deliver content on key environment issues including strides and efforts made in many areas of our work.

Spring has sprung, which means that winter is out our way and it's time to enjoy the warmer weather outside by visiting a botanical garden near you, a national park or a zoo for some outdoor family fun.

Top of the environmental calendar this new season is the Arbor Month campaign which takes place every year in September and runs from the 1 – 31. This year's National Arbor Month

campaign focussed on the president's call to plant 10 million indigenous trees in every home and community by 2024.

They say success is better when it is shared and so let me take this opportunity to congratulate the City of Johannesburg (COJ) for scooping the top prize award in the Metropolitan Municipality category of the 20th National Arbor City Awards hosted in Mpumalanga on 1 September. The COJ is well-known for its developed parks and abundant trees.

The department also celebrated the launch of National Parks Week from 12 – 17 September at Augrabies Falls National Park in the Northern Cape. Minister Creecy led the launch of Parks Week, which is championed by SA National Parks.

Also in the same week, we celebrated the launch of National Recycling Week with various clean-up activities set-up in parts of the country.

On 22 September, we joined nations of the world in celebrating Rhino Day as a day of awareness for all five rhino species and the work being done to save them. You can report information you may have about rhino crimes on our anonymous tip off-line: 0800 205 005. We can all play our part in conserving this iconic species.

As usual, we like hearing from you on all our social media platforms so do check in with us and update us on environmental projects or issues happening in your communities that we need to be aware of.

That's where we leave it for this edition.

If you are reading this as a hard copy, please pass it on, share it with a family member or friend, otherwise you can visit our website [www.dffe.gov.za](http://www.dffe.gov.za) and download our fantastic and always insightful material on various thematic areas like waste management, climate change, air quality, biodiversity and conservation, etc.

Until next time, keep South Africa clean!

## Head of Communications & Advocacy

*Albi Modise*

## Meet our team

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Albi Modise

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Find more information on: [www.environment.gov.za](http://www.environment.gov.za) or call 086 111 2468

# SA IS THE HOME OF THE RHINO

LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY



## 22 SEPTEMBER IS WORLD RHINO DAY



PLAY your part and be the voice of the Rhino



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forestry, fisheries  
& the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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South African  
NATIONAL PARKS

# Enviro Events in September

## National Arbor Month: 01-30 September 2022



South Africa, through the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) celebrates The National Arbor Month campaign annually from 1 – 30 September. The campaign is aimed at sensitising South Africans about the need to conserve, protect and plant trees for environmental and human related ideals.

The theme for this year is: **Forests and Sustainable Production and Consumption** and focuses on the sustainable development and management of forests in the country and outlines the interventions that will yield growth and investments through the Forestry Sector Master Plan.

This year's campaign heightened the restoration and rehabilitation work, which includes clean-up campaigns of dumpsites that are converted into green areas through tree planting. Furthermore, it amplified the Presidential Ten Million Trees Programme, which seeks to mitigate against climate change and to address household food security.

## National Arbor City Awards (NACA)

The National Arbor City Awards (NACA) recognises cities and towns that have embraced greening initiatives in their programmes. The awards are a quest to promote environmental conservation and development thereby securing a healthy living environment for residents in all settlement areas. The NACA are conducted in line with the DFFE greening strategy which defines greening as an integrated approach to the planting, care and management of all vegetation in urban and rural areas, to secure multiple benefits for communities and the citizens in general.

## Champion trees

South Africa is blessed with a rich heritage of trees. The Champion Tree Project is aimed at identifying and protecting individual trees of national conservation importance under the National Forests Act of 1998. Trees can be nominated on the basis of their size, age, aesthetic value, cultural-historic value or importance for tourism.

## World Rhino Day: 22 September 2022

World Rhino Day on 22 September celebrates all five species of rhino: Black, white, greater one-horned, Sumatran and Javan rhinos. World Rhino Day was first announced by World Wide Fund for Nature-South Africa in 2010. It brings together NGOs, zoos, rhino sanctuaries, and concerned citizens across the globe to raise awareness and funds for the five species of rhinoceros — all of which are under threat from the illegal rhino horn trade.



## Heritage Day: 24 September 2022

Heritage Day on 24 September recognises and celebrates the cultural wealth of our nation. South Africans celebrate the day by remembering the cultural heritage of the many cultures that make up the population of South Africa. Various events are staged throughout the country to commemorate this day.



## Clean-Up and Recycle SA Week: 14-19 September 2022

Clean-Up and Recycle SA Week is on the 14-19 of September 2022. South Africans are familiar with the need to recycle their waste. The benefits of recycling do not just focus on the fact that waste does not go to a landfill, it also creates jobs which is essential in South Africa as our unemployment rates continue to rise.

## International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer: 16 September 2022

The theme for the 2022 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, to be marked on 16 September, is: **Montreal Protocol@35: global cooperation protecting life on earth.** The theme recognises the wider impact the Montreal Protocol has on climate change and the need to act in collaboration, forge partnerships and develop global cooperation to address climate challenges and protect life on earth for future generations.



# We need to protect our forests

By Veronica Mahlaba



**Above:** Sappi Nursery Manager, Mr Martin O'Donovan showing Deputy Minister of Sport, Art and Culture, Ms Nocawe Mafu; Mpumalanga MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs: Ms Busisiwe Shiba; Deputy Minister Makhotsu Sotyu; Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, Ms Pamela Tshwete and Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela the different trees and the seeds they produce in their nursery in Ngodwana, Mpumalanga during a site visit on Arbor Day.

South Africa does not have many forestry resources. We live in a country where both natural and plantation forests do not exceed 1.25 million ha of the of the total land surface of the country. Therefore, we need to protect our forests said the Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Makhotsu Sotyu at the launch of the national Arbor Month in Mbombela, Mpumalanga on 01 September 2022.

Arbor Month was celebrated under the theme: **Forests and Sustainable Production and Consumption** which aligns with the sustainable development and conservation ethos of the forestry resources outlined in the National Forest Act.

"It is interesting that we are celebrating the start of Arbor Month in Mpumalanga, a province that is key to forestry development in South Africa. As we celebrate in one of the most highly afforested areas of our country, we need to ensure that there is little impact in terms of reduction of the resource either by proposed land uses changes, fires or natural disasters," said Deputy Minister Sotyu.

Forests are a national resource that contributes about R36,34 billion to the economy, about 0.6% of gross domestic product (GDP). More than 147 400 people, or 1.3% of South Africa's workforce, works in the sector which is largely rural.

The Deputy Minister emphasized the importance of the Forestry Sector Master Plan, which focusses mainly on interventions that will improve investments and transformation in the sector. It includes the transfer of plantations to allow government to focus on policy and regulation of the sector in efforts to let it thrive. The plan was approved in 2020 to ensure transformation, growth and development in the sector.

"Through the Forestry Sector Master Plan, we hope to attract an investment of around R 24.9 billion in the sector and create 100 000 jobs in the five-year implementation period, while government facilitates and coordinates the recapitalisation of state-owned plantations and opportunities that exist for new afforestation in partnership with communities. To date about 6000 jobs have been created and R11.5 billion has been invested mainly in down-stream processing industries," Deputy Minister Sotyu explained.

On the same day, the Department in partnership with TOTAL Energies and the Institute for Environment and Recreation Management (IERM) hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> National Arbor City Awards. The purpose of the awards is to encourage municipalities to green their areas of jurisdiction. They are a quest to promote environmental conservation and development, securing a healthy living environment for residents in all settlement areas.

## Winners for the 2022 National Arbor City Awards:

Name of Municipality	Category	Prize
City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality	Metropolitan Municipality	R 400 000, Trophy and Certificate
Overstrand Local Municipality	Local Municipality	<b>First prize winner:</b> R 300 000, Trophy and Certificate
Sundays River Valley Local Municipality	Local Municipality	<b>Second prize winner:</b> R150 000, Trophy and Certificate
Steve Tshwete Local Municipality	Local Municipality	<b>Third prize winner:</b> R 250 000, Trophy and Certificate
Inxuba Yethemba Local Municipality	Rural Municipality	R300 000, Trophy and Certificate
Bushbuckridge Local Municipality	Youth Participation in Greening Award	R250 000, Trophy and Certificate



**Above:** Bushbuckridge Local Municipality won at the National Arbor City Awards for their youth involvement in greening settlement areas.



## About the contributor: Veronica Mahlaba

Ms Veronica Mahlaba is a Senior Communication Officer in the Chief Directorate: Communications and Advocacy at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

# Climate change poses transition risks for SADC

By Madimetja Mogotlane



**Above:** Minister Barbara Creecy delivering the keynote address at Nedbank-NBF Networking Forum in Sandton.

The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Ms Barbara Creecy joined various strategic partners, key stakeholders, academics, panelists and SADC members for a Nedbank-NBF Networking forum in a quest to develop a roadmap of how Africa can achieve net-zero emissions by providing industry and regional perspectives and propose a way forward with public and private-sector collaboration to accelerate the green transition. The networking forum took place at the Nedbank Campus, Sandton on 31 August 2022 under the theme: **Greening SADC towards Vision 2030: Coordinating public and private-sector collaboration to accelerate SADC's just transition strategy.**

The forum saw various stakeholders from different sectors sharing views on the green economy and the just transition of the SADC region to a low carbon economy and a climate resilient society.

Delivering her keynote address under the topic **Government perspective-what is the role of government in the green economy or net-zero roadmap**, Minister Creecy cautioned that since climate change is already part of our lived reality, the country is facing transition risk associated with it.

"In addition to the physical risk, Southern African economies also face a transition risk associated with climate change. As the major economies transition to new green technologies, they will seek to protect their investments by introducing trade barriers to goods and services produced in economies with a higher carbon footprint. Obviously, the South African economy, with its reliance on coal fired energy generation is most at risk", she said.

Minister Creecy further emphasized the need to develop partnerships that ensure that SADC region is not left on the sidelines in the shift to a green economy.

"Our region has abundant resources that we must employ in our transition to a low-carbon future. Events such as today's

are crucial in determining how we can harness this potential, and how we can develop partnerships that ensure that our region is not just a spectator in the shift to a green economy," she said.

Mr Mpho Makwana, Nedbank Chairperson lamented that the African continent still have a long way into transitioning to low-carbon economy.

"Africa is not yet fully industrialized and needs to guard against making the most vulnerable to people pay for the quantum leap to a green low carbon economic platform. As we embark on the Just Transition Journey great innovation is required ensuring that we are both development and pro-poor such that a critical mass the of people exit poverty into sustainable livelihoods and improved quality of life," he said.

The Nedbank Nedbank-NBF Networking Forum was organized with the main objective being to promote understanding of green economy and its adaptation in SADC context and facilitate its sustainable development.



**Above:** Ms Catherien Koffman, Group Executive: Project Preparation: Development Banks of Southern Africa shares views with other panelists on how to finance the green economy towards net-zero by 2050.



**Above:** Mr Mpho Makwana, Nedbank Chairperson says the African continent still have a long way into transitioning to low-carbon economy.



## About the contributor: Madimetja Mogotlane

Madimetja Mogotlane is a Senior Communications Officer, Internal Communications and Events in the Chief Directorate: Communication Services. Mr Mogotlane is a former intern in Media Liaison at the department and has journalistic experience.



# CSIR gets laboratory equipment from Japan

By Veronica Mahlaba



**Above:** Ambassador Norio Maruyama, Minister Barbara Creecy, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation Mr Buti Manamela and CEO of CSIR, Dr Thulani Dlamini opening the biodegradation testing laboratory with the equipment donated by Japan.

Japan handed over biodegradation testing laboratory equipment valued at R5 million to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on 23 August 2022. This is part of the Japanese government's commitment to be part of a project to combat marine plastic litter in South Africa.

Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of South Africa, Mr Norio Maruyama explained that there was a bilateral meeting between the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Shinzo Abe and President Cyril Ramaphosa before the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, where Japan committed grant funding of USD 1.8 million for the project. The equipment donated to the CSIR is to establish much-needed local testing capacity to verify claims of biodegradability for alternative materials.

"The total grant funding invested by the Japanese government in South Africa through the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to date amounts to USD 1.049 million (over R16 million), of which the CSIR received USD 675,181 (R10.8 million) covering research and development, laboratory equipment and training for laboratory staff," the Ambassador explained.

The three-year project consisted of two components:

- The CSIR as the lead, supports development of an action plan through identification and pilot demonstration of opportunities for sustainable alternative materials, including biodegradable plastics.
- The CSIR partnered with the University of Witwatersrand, which has developed a Guideline on Waste Picker Integration for South Africa and has partnered with informal waste sector organisations including the African Reclaimer's Organization (ARO), South Africa Waste Pickers Association (SAWPA), WIEGO, and groundWork.

The focus of the second component is on the implementation of capacity building activities, including procurement of necessary equipment, training to enhance the capabilities and capacity of the waste sector to integrate informal collectors and to increase the capacity of informal collectors for waste separation and recycling.

Speaking at CSIR, the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy stated that the services that will be on offer through the donation will broaden transparency and ensure product claims can be tested in accordance with environmental labelling standards. At the same time, the South African Bureau of Standards is currently in the process of developing local standards for biodegradable packaging.

"I am excited that the CSIR plans to partner with waste reclaimer organisations to further integrate them into circular economy waste streams. The planned training and awareness programmes will make a great contribution to the formalisation of this often under recognised and undervalued sector," said Minister Creecy.

The Chief Executive Officer of CSIR, Dr Thulani Dlamini mentioned that UNIDO is a leading United Nations agency, promoting circular economy and resource efficiency in the industry and supports African countries' challenges to deal with plastic waste leaking to the environment. "As such, the Japanese Government and UNIDO signed the high-level funding agreement at the CSIR in 2019 to support South Africa's transition from conventional plastics to more

environmentally sustainable alternatives. The CSIR is the executing partner of UNIDO and coordinates the project activities in South Africa through a subcontract agreement," said Dr Dlamini.

The equipment donated to the CSIR includes a respirometer, CHNS (carbon/hydrogen/nitrogen/sulphur) analyser and an auto titration system. The two waste picker associations, ARO and SAWPA, each received two waste collection vehicles to assist with the collection of source separated waste as part of waste picker integration.

A contract extension with additional scope is being prepared between UNIDO and CSIR. The value of the contract extension is expected to be in the order of R2 million.



**Above:** Dignitaries viewing one of four waste collection vehicles donated to two waste picker associations, ARO and SAWPA represented by Mr Luyanda Hlatshwayo from ARO.



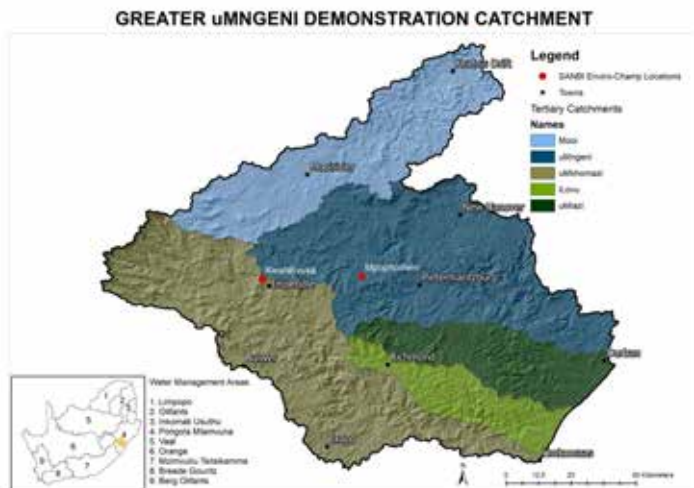
**Above:** Minister Creecy having discussions with members of waste picker associations, ARO and SAWPA at the CSIR.



**Above:** Minister Creecy, Deputy Minister Manamela, Ambassador Maruyama with UNIDO and CSIR executives viewing the biodegradation testing laboratory equipment.

# Champions of the uMngeni Catchment

By Alwande Nxumalo, Dalisu Hlatshwayo and Muzi Mkhohlwa



The motto for the Amanzi Ethu Nobuntu (AEN) Programme is **'Our water, our people'**. Water brings us life and without it, we would cease to exist. Thus, the protection, preservation and nurturing of the world that we live in is not just the responsibility of environmentalists, it is our collective responsibility. This is the bedrock on which the programme was established. At its core, the AEN Programme is a multi-partner, blended community-public-private-partnership that is working towards an ecologically healthy and biologically diverse uMngeni, Umkhomazi and Upper-Mooi Catchments, commonly referred to as the Greater uMngeni Catchment.

## The champs are here

The AEN Programme aims to improve the uMngeni's deteriorating water quality, while addressing the issue of youth unemployment through collecting data on the health of the Greater uMngeni Catchment by using citizen science tools. This responsibility has been given to the youth of the catchment along with some wise elders who are assisting them along the way. The youth will be the ones who will be grabbing the mantle of conserving this catchment into the future.

The programme, which receives most of its funding from the Department of Science and Innovation with 10% co-funding from participating organisations is currently in its second phase of implementation. In this phase, SANBI, through its Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security (EI4WS) Project coordinates and manages two teams of youth who are employed as enviro-champs within the Greater uMngeni Catchment.

One team is based in KwaNovuka, at the source of the uMngeni River, and the other team is based in Mpophomeni, near Midmar Dam in the central uMngeni region. The day-to-

day management, planning and coordination of the teams is the responsibility of three young professional from SANBI as part of their internship in the EI4WS Project.

Sindiswa Ndlovu, an enviro-champ, says that the work and learning she has been doing excites her as it connects her to what she loves the most— nature.

Snethemba Mveli, a 23-year-old enviro-champ from KwaNovuka, expressed her enjoyment at what she does and hopes that the AEN programme will continue so that she too, can pass on her knowledge to younger children who may want to be enviro-kids one day.

Hlatshwayo is an 'alumnus' of AEN and worked in the first phase as a River Rover before joining the SANBI team. AEN has allowed him to work with the environment and people. Hlatshwayo says, "This means that we should all be enviro-champions."

A famous quote by Evo Morales says 'What mankind must know is that human beings cannot live without Mother Earth, but the planet can live without humans'. Water is the very essence of Mother Earth. Together we can save the planet. Together we are all enviro-champs doing our part to **save amanzi ethu**.

## More about the UEIP

The uMngeni Ecological Infrastructure Partnership (UEIP) is a group of organisations within the Greater uMngeni Catchment with the primary focus of understanding the role that ecological infrastructure can play in supplementing and/or substituting for built infrastructure to improve water security in the catchment.

## About the contributors: Alwande Nxumalo, Dalisu Hlatshwayo and Muzi Mkhohlwa

Alwande Nxumalo, Dalisu Hlatshwayo and Muzi Mkhohlwa are Ecological Infrastructure interns supporting the Greater uMngeni Demonstration Catchment under the Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security Project (EI4WS) at the South African National Biodiversity Institute.

# Youth uprooting illegal plant trade

By Katlego Makgopo, Nomathamsanqa Mkhize and Tembela Vimbi

**S**outh African succulents, and particularly those from the succulent rich Karoo region, are in high demand globally for the ornamental plant trade. Numerous species are continually being harvested illegally from the wild to supply this demand. This poaching crisis has highlighted the importance of ensuring that people are at the centre of conservation plans regarding the areas they live in and has accentuated the need for including them in decision making and policy implementation. This 'people-centred' approach can be the missing link leading to the loss of many South African species that are affected by poaching.

Through engagements with various stakeholders around the Namaqualand region of South Africa, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) has been able to gain some insight into the socio-economic statuses of communities involved in or affected by poaching. The main source of income in these communities is generated by its tourism activities during the Namaqualand Daisies flowering season and the employment programmes that are offered by different stakeholders, including government. For the locals and particularly the youth in this part of the country, these employment opportunities are short-term and don't offer sustainable skills that increase their chances of being permanently employed.

Many people living in these areas do not understand the need or benefit of conservation. Due to multiple challenging circumstances, most face impoverished quality of life conditions, and as a result, conservation does not seem to be economically beneficial. Those that are not involved in poaching activities empathize with the poachers because they understand the financial constraints most people in their communities are experiencing.

Through these discussions with locals, many ideas to alleviate the poaching crisis have been raised including the development of secondary economies centred on the legal growing and selling of in-demand succulents. Furthermore, the involvement and education of children on the topic of plant diversity, biology and conservation was deemed to be an important aspect towards instilling in them the love for their heritage including the unique biodiversity of their landscape.

In addition to understanding the socio-economic aspect of this problem and investigating options for sustainable use or trade, SANBI is focused on ensuring that any confiscated succulents being brought to the national botanical gardens for safekeeping have a good chance of survival. They are currently working together with a horticulturist at SANBI to count all the confiscated plants and care for them in the nurseries. The aim is to make sure these plants survive whilst outside of their natural habitats and, to prevent the extinction of rare species.

## Did you know?

The Succulent Karoo biome is home to thousands of rare and endangered plant species, a large variety of which are endemic to the area, found nowhere else on Earth! As a result, this biome is one of 36 internationally recognised biodiversity hotspots and is the world's only arid hotspot. Thus, the impacts from illegal and unsustainable plant harvesting, together with habitat loss and degradation from mining, farming and climate change, has negative consequences not only on South Africa's biodiversity, but on global plant biodiversity as well.



Above: The programme has employed 2700 people in the affected communities.



Above: The programme has employed 2700 people in the affected communities.



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# DFFE brings relief to flood-affected communities



**Above:** The programme has employed 2700 people in the affected communities.

The impacts of climate change hit home earlier this year in April when the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape experienced what can only be described as one of the deadliest natural disasters to have ever hit South Africa since the 1987 floods in KwaZulu-Natal. This disaster came in the form of heavy rainfall that caused catastrophic floods and landslides in parts of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape leading to people's homes being washed away and infrastructure such as roads, communication towers and transport being damaged with over 400 people losing their lives.

Following the floods, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment saw the need to lend a helping hand by working together with affected municipalities in implementing an in-house emergency intervention which aims to contribute towards disaster recovery activities in the areas that are affected by pollution and environmental degradation from the natural disaster. The initiative will be completed under the department's Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes, a unit within the Environmental Programmes branch that contributes to the government's Expanded Public Works Programme whose goal is to alleviate poverty through interventions implemented in communities to uplift households.

This initiative will see the deployment of 2700 participants from both the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces who will aid in the flood mopping and cleaning up of two metros, nine district municipalities and 40 local municipalities. These participants will be sourced from the unemployment database of their respective municipalities and will contribute towards disaster recovery in a manner that addresses litter picking, cleaning, clearing illegal dumps, street sweeping,



**Above:** Selected participants of the programme hard at work clearing up the waste that has been washed up onto the beaches after the floods.

general waste management in affected central business districts and coastal areas for the period of six months which began in July 2022.

Project Manager for the iLembe, Ugu and King Cetshwayo district municipalities, Mr Sbonelo Mazibuko says that the programme has brought much relief to the communities. "These areas that we are cleaning up were badly affected by pollution from the floods. Our beaches were filled with litter, watercourses were heavily swamped and polluted with plastics and debris. The situation caused devastation around our communities as our municipalities were battling with the great amount of waste that was out there so this programme not only brought relief to community members but to the municipality as well because it has ensured the cleaning up of a lot of areas that the municipality could not reach," Mr Mazibuko said.

Project Manager for the Amatole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape, Mr Oscar Ntombini says the project not only brought their surrounding environment back to health, but also helped in bringing hope to the selected participants.

"I speak on behalf of all the people that are currently employed in this project by saying that they are appreciative of the opportunity to work as they were sitting in their homes unemployed filled with frustrations and depression. This project has become a life saver for most of them as they are not only able to put food on the table for their families, but they are able to pay school fees for their children and do things they could only wish to do when were still unemployed," said Mr Oscar Ntombini. Mr Ntombini went on to say that this programme has brought much relief to the community at large as it has benefited not only the tourism sector but also the marine life in the area.



# CHAMPION TREES OF SOUTH AFRICA

**S**outh Africa is blessed with a rich heritage of trees. The Champion Tree Project is aimed at identifying and protecting individual trees of national conservation importance under the National Forests Act of 1998. Trees can be nominated on the basis of their size, age, aesthetic value, cultural-historic value or importance for tourism.

## NOMINATION FORM AND PROCESS

Once a year an expert panel will evaluate all nominations and compile a shortlist of proposed Champion Trees. Nominated trees may be indigenous or exotic. The list is first published for comment. After consideration of public comments, a final list is published by notice in the Government Gazette and newspapers.

Once listed as protected by notice, Champion trees gain special protected status in terms of the National Forests Act of 1998. No such trees may be cut, disturbed or damaged without a licence.

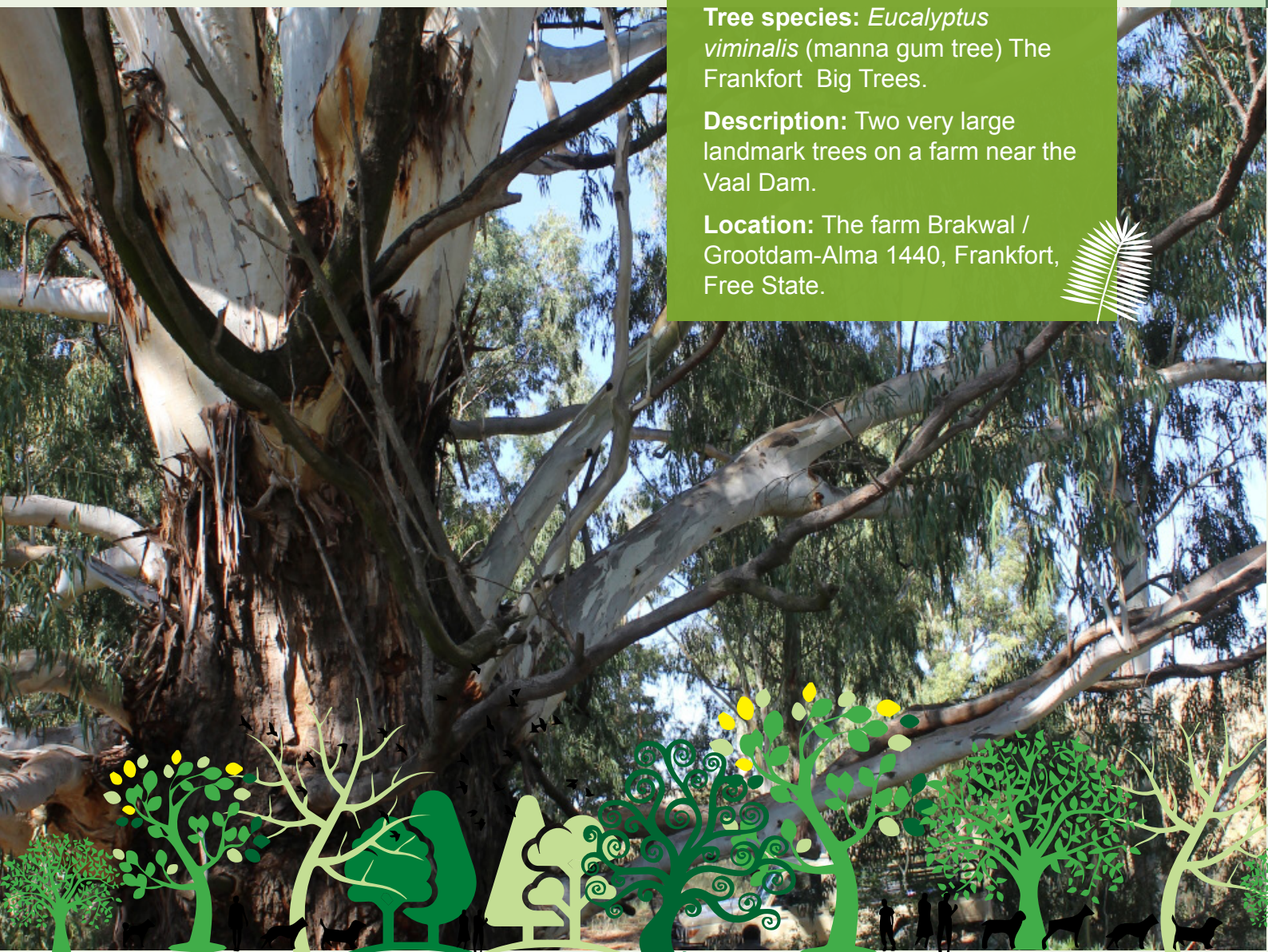
## TALLEST AND LARGEST TREES

Tree measurements and rankings may change over time as trees are re-measured and new candidates are added to the list. A single diameter is also calculated for multiple stems according to a formula. Overall size index is calculated according to a formula including height, trunk and crown diameter. In the case of tree groups, measurements are shown of the tallest or biggest trees. For groups of trees, the measurements of the tallest or largest trees are indicated.

## HERITAGE:

Many trees are linked to our country's cultural diversity and history. These trees are potential candidates for Champion status. Yet, the heritage aspects for some of these trees are formally unrecorded, and often, are known only to individuals or local communities.


# OUR CHAMPION TREES 2022



**Tree species:** *Eucalyptus viminalis* (manna gum tree) The Frankfort Big Trees.

**Description:** Two very large landmark trees on a farm near the Vaal Dam.

**Location:** The farm Brakwal / Grootdam-Alma 1440, Frankfort, Free State.





**Tree species:**  
*Eucalyptus grandis*  
 (rose gum) The  
 Satico Giants  
**Description:** Stand  
 of third tallest trees  
 in the country,  
 planted in 1938.  
**Location:** Satico  
 Plantation, near  
 Louw's Creek,  
 Mpumalanga.



**Tree species:** *Pinus radiata*  
 (Monterey pine) The Eastern  
 Cape Pine.

**Description:** Tallest pine  
 tree in the Eastern Cape,  
 planted in the late 1880s

**Location:** Isidenge State  
 Forest, near Stutterheim,  
 Eastern Cape.



# How to plant an indigenous tree

By Dimpho Matlanato

For a good reason, trees have been referred to as the earth's lungs. There would be no life if they did not exist. Indigenous trees are trees that are native to an area and provide a wide variety of benefits for humans, animals and the environment. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment urges South African households to plant an indigenous tree during national Arbor Month.

Simply planting a tree and walking away is not enough to ensure its survival. However, knowing how to plant a tree correctly will guarantee its survival. **Below is a guide on how to successfully plant an indigenous tree:**

- Dig a wide, shallow saucer-shaped hole that is as deep as the height of the tree's root ball. It is especially necessary to dig the hole wide if the soil is compressed.
- Identify the trunk flare. This space needs to be open to the air and should not be covered. Put the tree in the hole at the proper height, with its flare sticking out of the ground.

- Straighten the tree in the hole, fill it to a third, and press it down. To assist the fine roots to develop into the new soil, gently scratch the root ball to remove them. After, finish backfilling the hole and digging it down.
- If your tree is not standing straight, avoid tying anything to it that could harm its bark. Suggestively use a wire-threaded section of hosepipe, then wrap the tree with it, creating a figure-eight shape around the stake.
- Immediately after planting, cover the sizable area around the tree with fertiliser or leaf mould.
- Keep the ground damp but not drenched, until the tree is settled in its new location.

Whether this is your first time planting a tree or not, learning is never harmful. Knowing how to plant a tree correctly will ensure that your efforts are not in vain.

**Source:** <https://www.randomharvest.co.za>



*Celtis Africana* is commonly known as White Stinkwood because of the unpleasant smell of the freshly cut wood and its pale colour.



*Syzygium guineense* commonly known as the Woodland Waterberry usually occurs in lowland forests, in areas close to swamps and sometimes along river banks. It usually grows in moist conditions and sometimes even in water.



*Syzygium cordatum* is commonly known as the Water Berry occurs along streambanks from the Eastern Cape through KwaZulu-Natal and northwards to Mozambique.



*Trichilia emetica* is a tree in the family Meliaceae, commonly known as the Natal mahogany.



## About the contributor: Dimpho Matlanato

Dimpho Matlanato is an intern in the Chief Directorate: Communications. She holds a BA Degree in Journalism from the University of Johannesburg.



# The little Chomper

By Michael Ross

Sub-Antarctic fur seal pups (*Arctocephalus tropicalis*, for those interested) are just about the sweetest things you can imagine. As I write this, the pups are around 180 days old and extremely plump. They weigh around 18 kg, though we have encountered a couple of whoppers weighing over 30 kg! The pups are essentially little balls of cuteness, finding their feet, or more correctly their flippers, in the wonderful paradise that is Marion Island. The beaches are packed with furry, rotund balls, which haven't a care in the world. They spend all day playing in the rivers, jumping out of the water as if performing in a circus, or napping peacefully tucked away from the wind. Walking near a squad of pups, one is occasionally startled by distinctly human-sounding scream emanating from one of the pups, or by an adorable growl which gently rumbles at you from underneath a pile of rocks. I am determined to make friends with fur seal pups, and while so far, I have received mainly growls and the pup turning tail and bounding away, I have had a couple of instances of a curious pup approaching and sniffing my outstretched hand. These little moments of magic spur me on.

Elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*) are distinctly less sweet. This may be in part a product of their size – young elephant seals weigh around 120 kg, while full grown females approach 800 kg, and an adult male can reach a massive 4000 kg. Cuteness somewhat inversely scales with size, so I can't necessarily blame the elephant seals. I also must confess that my views of elephant seals are perhaps a touch unfair, given I must approach them while they're hauled out on land, completely out of their element, and potentially scared of humans. In general, when approaching an elephant seal, it has this look of wanting to give you a nasty bite should you get too near, which doesn't seem a good footing on which to start a friendship. But I have seen some slightly more relaxed ones and I did see a baby elephant seal trying to make friends with one of the resident bird species known as a Paddy (Lesser Sheathbill, *Chionis minor*), so maybe there is hope for me.

Fur seals and elephant seals cohabit many of the same beaches on Marion. While they're in close proximity to one another, they generally seem to mind their own business, and so I haven't seen many interactions between the two species. However, if I had to hazard a guess of the outcome between a fur seal pup and a medium-sized elephant seal, it wouldn't take a genius to bet on the elephant seal.

Marion is 2000 km south of South Africa, and pretty much in the middle of nowhere. Monica (a fellow seal researcher) and I were busy conducting our routine elephant seal census, which involves reading tags on elephant seals. In order to read the tags, one has to get quite close to the seals, which they don't always appreciate. As I attempted to read a tagged elephant seal, it decided enough was enough and it needed to make a break for its safe space – the ocean. As it was running away (Blubber rolling? It is quite hard to explain how an elephant seal moves on land), I saw that it was about to flatten a fur seal



Above: Trying to make friends with the elephant seals.

pup which was wedged between two rocks and in the way. I quickly decided to abandon my efforts to read the tag, in the hope that the elephant seal would calm down and somehow the pup would be spared. Monica and I continued working with the other elephant seals but felt slightly queasy having potentially caused the flattening of the pup.

After finishing up with the other elephant seals, I was pleasantly surprised to notice that the runner (the elephant seal whose tag I was initially trying to read) had changed course and had missed the pup. For some reason, the elephant seal had been halted in his tracks and hadn't ploughed over the little pup. The pup, having been spared a squashing, was now eager to return to his mother, perhaps to relay details of his traumatic experience. However, both the elephant seal and the pup were in a cave, and in order to get to the rest of his friends, the little fur seal would have to get past the elephant seal. He confidently approached the elephant seal and stopped right next to the elephant seal's flipper.

Fortunately, the little pup didn't need my help at all. After inspecting the obstacle in the way (i.e., the elephant seal flipper), the little pup improvised. Completely unexpectedly, he bit down sharply on the elephant seal flipper! The elephant seal, who was clearly also surprised by the turn of events, lifted up his flipper, and the little *chomper* trotted underneath, very pleased with himself and happy to join the other fur seals. Monica and I were floored. We burst out laughing and then turned to each other to confirm we had both seen what we thought we saw - 18 kg fur seal: 1 versus 1000 kg elephant seal: 0. As a final confirmation that this had actually happened, we spotted a neat bite mark and some droplets of blood on the elephant seal's tail. Who would have thought...?

Marion Island is an incredibly special place, and I feel so lucky to have the privilege of being here for a year to experience it all. There will undoubtedly be many stories of the trials and tribulations, and also the highs and lows of life on the island. We hope you can live vicariously through us and experience some of her magic for yourself.



## About the contributor: Michael Ross

I am a sealer on Marion Island working for the Marion Island Marine Mammal Programme (MIMMIP). The MIMMIP has monitored the Marion Island elephant seal population for the last 40 years, and I am one of the three sealers responsible for continuing this monitoring on the island for 2022/2023. In addition, I collect data on the resident fur seal and killer whale populations.

# Young enquiring mind finds his way to ancient, therapeutic plant

By Dane McDonald



Sometimes a question can determine the course of a life. Kaylan Reddy is a Stellenbosch University PhD student who has already garnered five awards for his work in academia and is respected among his peers. However, he recounts a long journey that seemingly started with a question.

"I was always the kid who asked 'But why?'," he said when he recalls how he hounded his parents for answers while growing up. Fortunately, Reddy's parents took him to the library to help find the answers to his questions. "They are a big inspiration to me," he said. In high school, he wanted to know what made us (humans) the way we are – from a biochemical perspective. Reddy was inquisitive and wanted to learn about the chemicals involved when he was feeling happy or sad or angry; what was creating those impulses. The question drove him to pursue biochemistry in an attempt to unravel the answers.

Reddy admits he is still trying to answer similar questions that interest him, more specifically he ponders about: 'How we can manipulate the systems in our body that control anxiety and depression? His questions have brought him to the foot of an ancient plant – *Scelletium*, commonly known as Kanna or *Kougoed*.

## Conjoined

Reddy's study straddles the fields of phytochemistry and ethnobotany. He and *Scelletium* have been conjoined for the last three years and speaking about his work on the plant comes easy to him. "A big focus of my research is finding chemicals in *Scelletium* that can aid with anxiety and depression in a sustainable way," he said.

He explains that it will not likely be a once-off dose but rather a therapy to be integrated into your lifestyle. In addition, it will be intended for use in the (ethnobotanical) way in which it was utilised by the Bushmen and Khoikhoi hundreds if not thousands of years ago.

"They did not isolate a compound and use it, they used the whole plant. And in the plant, there are probably chemicals that are acting on multiple parts of your brain, spine and central nervous system. Using a holistic approach like that has a greater effect I think. Our systems are working with thousands or hundreds of thousands of systems at the same time using an isolated chemical...that is the power of natural products and using the entire suite of chemicals," Reddy said.

## Passionate about benefit sharing

Like many in South Africa, Reddy is the first generation in his family to study at a university and more than that, the first to be enrolled in a PhD programme – only a tiny percentage of youth in South Africa reach this pinnacle in academia.

He is almost reluctant to share how he came to choose a career in science and said that it sounds basic and is 'not something inspirational.'

'There was a book that we had called *First Words for South African Boys and Girls*, and there was a picture in there of a little brown boy in a lab coat. So, having no representation—the book inspired me," Reddy said.

His humble beginnings inform the socio-economic aspects of his work on *Scelletium*. He is passionate about benefit sharing in favour of the indigenous communities who have used and continue to use *Kougoed*. He is also not afraid to speak out about how local communities are extorted and get taken advantage of.

According to Reddy, the best scenario would be to include communities and have them create their own plantations. In his section of the department's greenhouse are dozens of *Scelletium* plants, with some in flower. Dressed in a white lab coat he explains why *Scelletium* is unique.

"If I take a cutting from the Karoo and I try to grow it here, its chemistry changes and it does not have the unique therapeutic chemistry...it almost goes to zero. So we need the knowledge and collaboration with local communities actually," he explained. A major highlight of his studies has been seeing *Scelletium* in its natural habitat. The plant does not look the same; the pictures that are in the textbooks do not capture how it grows out in the veld.

After his PhD, Reddy would love to lecture and be a great one too. He is ready to meet the next generation of students who are asking 'But why?, But why?, But why?'

Kaylan's MSc studies were funded by the Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP). The FBIP is funded by the Department of Science and Innovation under the Global Change Programme and is jointly managed by the National Research Foundation and the South African National Biodiversity Institute.



## About the contributor: Dane McDonald

Dane McDonald is a science communicator for SANBI's Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP).

# clean-up & recycle week 2022



## ACTIONS IN SEPTEMBER

**12-17** Monday to Saturday

**Clean-up and Recycle SA Week**

**14** Wednesday

**National River Clean-up Day**

**16** Friday

**Recycling Day SA**

**17** Saturday

**International Coastal Clean-up Day**

**17** Saturday

**World Clean-up Day**



To learn more about recycling visit [www.dffe.gov.za](http://www.dffe.gov.za)



**forestry, fisheries & the environment**

Department: Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# SA citizens enter national parks for free

By Veronica Mahlaba



**Above:** Northern Cape Premier, Dr Zamani Saul and Minister Barbara Creecy with provincial leadership and SANParks, TOTAL Energies Marketing South Africa and FNB Management at Augrabies Falls National Park.

South African National Parks (SANParks) with partners TOTAL Energies Marketing South Africa and First National Bank (FNB) officially launched the South African National Parks Week, which encouraged citizens to visit a national park nearby. The launch was held at Augrabies Falls National Park in Northern Cape on 11 September 2022, under the theme: **Know Your National Parks.**

The free access week ran from 12 to 18 September 2022. South African National Parks Week is aimed at linking the South African national parks system to the communities and to showcase the best of the country's national parks. During that week all South African citizens are allowed to enter most national parks for free for a day visit.

Chairperson of SANParks, Ms Pamela Yako expressed that the free access to the parks will not include accommodation and commercial activities in the park such as guided safaris in vehicles or guided walks, etc. Kruger, Addo Elephant, Augrabies, Agulhas, Table Mountain and |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park will only have free access until Friday 16 September 2022. Namaqua National Park, Boulders Penguin Colony and the Cableway in Table Mountain National Park are not included in the free access.

"The week in partnership with Total Energies Marketing South Africa and FNB is meant to cultivate a sense of pride in South Africa's natural, cultural and historical heritage, protected by the national parks system," said Ms Yako.

Present at the launch, Minister Barbara Creecy mentioned that South Africa's approach to managing conservation and biodiversity has always been characterized by the principle of sustainable use. In national parks, tourism has been the central pillar of our approach.

"I am happy to report today that in the 2021/22 financial year, the number of visitors to the country's national parks increased by 74% from 1 996 667 during the Covid lockdowns of the 2020/21 financial year to 3 482 514. This recovery, primarily at this stage in the domestic tourism market reflects that the South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan in the tourism sector is well on track," announced Minister Creecy.

Since the programme began in 2006, 619 252 South Africans, who may not otherwise have afforded to visit a national park, have participated.

# Clean up! Pick it up!



NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE '**FOUR R'S**' OF RECYCLING, YOU'RE ONE STEP CLOSER TO BECOMING A **RECYCLING SUPERHERO!** SORT EACH ITEM INTO THE CORRECT BIN - THE FEWER ITEMS IN THE LANDFILL BIN, THE BETTER!



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Grocery bags

Plastic

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Vegetable Scraps

Household cleaners

Glass bottle

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Bread

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Pie tins

Shoes

Pasta

Cheese

Clothing items

Frozen dinner trays

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Leftover rice

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Deodorant cans

Magazines

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YOU CAN HELP CLEAN UP YOUR COMMUNITY TO MAKE MONEY BY BECOMING A WASTE PICKER!

FISTOZ NOTYAWA IS A WASTE PICKER. HE LIVES ON A LANDFILL IN MAKHANDA IN THE EASTERN CAPE. FISTOZ COLLECTS RECYCLABLE MATERIAL AND RESELLS IT TO BUYBACK CENTRES AND SCRAP YARDS. HE WORKS EIGHT TO TEN HOURS A DAY, MAKING BETWEEN R60 AND R140 DAILY!



Section 24 of the South African Constitution states:  
"Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being."

ANSWERS: • Recycle: Aluminium Cans, Plastic, Glass bottles, Household cleaners, Disposable nappies, Meats, Cheeses, Batteries, Deodorant cans, Pie tins, Frozen dinner trays, Newspaper, Magazines, Paper, Cardboard • Compost: Vegetable scraps, Egg shells, Paper towels, Leftover rice, Pasta, Bread • Landfill: Grocery bags, Shoe, Clothing, Leftover rice, Paper, Paper towels, Paper scraps, Meats, Cheeses, Batteries, Deodorant cans, Pie tins, Frozen dinner trays, Newspaper, Magazines, Paper, Cardboard

# Young entrepreneurs make strides in green economy

By Tshegofatso Nahlovu



**Above:** The 16 beneficiaries of the Driving Force for Change II Youth Challenge were filled with joy as they were the lucky few to be selected out of the many applications received.

The impacts of climate change hit home earlier this year (Young green entrepreneurs who are excelling in the green economy sector took centre stage as The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy together with various partners announced the 16 beneficiaries of the Driving Force for Change II Youth Challenge in an award ceremony held at The Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre in Johannesburg on 02 August 2022.

Launched by Minister Creecy in 2021 in partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), through the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) Programme, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and in collaboration with the Departments of Employment and Labour (DEL) and of Small Business Development (DSBD) and with support from the National Business Initiative (NBI), The Driving Force for Change initiative aims to create opportunities for young green entrepreneurs to access the much needed business acumen support and while further developing their business plans.

In congratulating the 16 beneficiaries, Minister Creecy said that it remains in the governments responsibilities to ensure that the youth receive support when it comes to turning into reality ideas that could not only shape our economy but also assist us in fighting climate change and protecting our environment.

"Today we recognise that young people are the future custodians of our planet and are in a unique position to lead the search for sustainable solutions in preserving our precious environment. Central to the approach guiding the Driving Force for Change initiative is an understanding that climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution are putting the future of our planet in jeopardy and so it remains our responsibility not just as a department but as government to provide the young people sitting here with as much support to turn their ideas into reality especially when it comes to driving our economy forward and fighting climate change," said Minister Creecy.

Awards were given out to Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) run by young people in the thematic areas of:

## Climate Change Mitigation

- Best Greening of Manufacturing Sector SMME (Resource Efficiency: water and energy)
- Best Circular Economy- symbiosis/ integrated waste management- recycling SMME.

## Climate Change Adaptation

- Most innovative Ecosystem Service SMME
- Most innovative Agriculture or agro processing SMME

## Crosscutting

- **Eco-Tourism**

Addressing the audience on GIZ's involvement in the DFC initiative, Climate Change Policy Advisor, Ms Navina Sanchez says that she realised through this initiative that South Africa does not suffer from a lack of ideas.

"The one special thing about the Driving Force for Change initiative is that it allows for all partners to work together in building and creating opportunities for the youth of South Africa to access sustainable livelihoods while creating employment within the green economy because this country does not suffer from a lack of ideas, it does however have a lack of ways to translate these ideas into tangible opportunities," said Ms Sanchez.



**Above:** Ms Lerato Mvubelo is one of two ladies who received the award for best woman entrepreneur.



**Above:** Ms Navina Sanchez of GIZ was one of the speakers during the prestigious award ceremony.

# Zoo scientists praised for a job well done

By Tshegofatso Ndlovu



**Above:** Dr Terrence Thovhakale took minister on a tour of the animal hospital and veterinary unit.



**Above:** Minister Creecy got the opportunity to experience first hand the work that happens behind the scenes at the zoo.

"In a world where people are losing the appetite to see animals in captivity, Edutainment facilities such as the National Zoological Gardens still remain to be of higher importance in society because many of our children may never get the opportunity to see animals in the wild and so it remains our responsibility as a department to explain to these children, the importance of conservation," These were the words by Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy during her visit to the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria on 4 August 2022.

Joined by various board members of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), Minister Creecy saw the visit to the Zoo as an opportunity to review the facility's contribution to biodiversity, research, scientific services, animal welfare, conservation, tourism and public awareness while also allowing her to gain greater insights into SANBI's cutting edge foundational research and scientific services, particularly those activities that contribute positively on policy action, wildlife regulatory services and associate enforcement and compliance.

Welcoming the minister's visit to the National Zoological Gardens, Chairperson of the SANBI board, Professor Edward Nesamvuni said that Minister Creecy's visit was of importance not just to the board but to the management of the zoo and everyone else that works at the facilities.

"We are thrilled today to take the minister on a tour of not the front of the zoo but also a tour of the amazing work that our scientists and workers do daily in an effort to conserve our biodiversity. Our work on research and scientific services contributes significantly to biodiversity information, species conservation, biodiversity and health, and the wildlife

economy, as well as combating wildlife crimes," said Professor Nesamvuni.

In her interview with Journalists at the end of the visit, Minister Creecy explained that the tour around the zoo was aimed at showcasing the zoo as more than a facility meant for education and entertainment around animals.

"Today's visit here has been very informative not just for me but for everyone present today as it has allowed us to showcase the zoo as not only a place for edutainment but as an important facility that is producing excellent work that will ensure the future of our animals. The work that we saw behind the scenes today remains important in combating syndicated crimes, in the conservation of wild species in the face of climate change, in the reproduction of species and in all our interventions to prevent the extinction of our species," said Minister Creecy.



**Above:** During the visit to the Zoo Minister Creecy had the opportunity to meet some of the young scientists and researchers doing excellent work at the zoo.

The Cradle of Humankind is a paleoanthropological site and is located about 50 km northwest of Johannesburg. (Image by Getty Images)

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