

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER FOR DURBAN TOURISM BUSINESS AWARDS

BUSINESSES in the tourism and hospitality sector are reminded to enter the 3rd annual Durban Tourism Business Awards before the deadline on Friday, 23 February. The awards aim to recognise excellence and innovation in the tourism sector.

The prizegiving ceremony is anticipated to be held in June. To start the entry process, follow this link: <https://durbantourismawards.com>

The awards have been hailed by previous winners as a wonderful platform to expose their businesses. The platform provides extensive marketing opportunities such as free advertising and other support. Sbu Silokazi, of the hidden gem Silokazis @ Inanda Dam, won under the Township and Rural Development Category last year. He encouraged businesses in tourism to not miss this opportunity.

“Winning an award brings much recognition and prestige to one’s business as it signifies acknowledgement of excellence. This provides more marketing and attracts new customers. In a competitive industry like tourism, winning an award further assist your product to stand out through increased visibility. This in turn boosts employees moral which has a range of benefits.”

He said the awards ceremony allows excellent networking opportunities where you can connect with industry professionals and government and private agencies which can open doors for future collaborations and new opportunities.



EThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda and Chairperson of the Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli handed over awards to winners last year during the 2nd annual Durban Tourism Business Awards.

Silokazis is a venue hire and lodge that overlooks the Inanda Dam. The establishment won in the Durban Tourism Business Awards last year under the Township and Rural Development Category.



CATEGORIES FOR THE AWARDS INCLUDE:

1. Service Excellence Category which includes the following sub-categories:

- The Accommodations Awards: Hotels and non-hotels
- MESE Awards will include meetings, exhibitions, and special events venues.
- Visitor Experiences Awards will include scenic beauty, roots and culture, adventure and activities, wildlife, lifestyle, beach experience, and lap of luxury.
- Tourist Guides Awards will include nature guides, adventure guides, and culture guides.
- Tour Operators Awards

includes both emerging and established tour guides.

- Rickshaw Pullers

- Crafters

- Event organisers and promoters.

2. The Sustainable Development Category

3. The Entrepreneurship Category

4. The Upcoming Filmmakers Category

- #### 5. The Exceptional Achievement Category
- honours globally acclaimed companies that influence visitor flow to the city, contribute to job creation and remains competitive in offering and putting Durban

as a destination on the map. **The Exceptional Achievement Awards includes five subcategories which are as follows:**

- Investment
- Hospitality
- Rural and township investment development
- Creative industry
- Persons with disabilities excelling in the sector.

Entrants stand the chance to win development prizes to elevate their business to the next level. All category winners will take home up to R50 000 in cash while exceptional achievement winners will be awarded R100 000 to attend an international tourism exhibition or study tour.

DURBAN ICC CELEBRATES ITS MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2023



This past year, the Durban ICC also achieved a perfect score of 100 percent on its performance scorecard with its shareholder, eThekweni Municipality. The entity continued to deliver on its mandate to generate positive economic impact, job creation and raise brand awareness for the destination by meeting and exceeding its key performance indicators.

The centre made a significant contribution to the economy, with a contribution of R5.7 billion to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the 2022/23 financial year. Additionally, the centre created and/or sustained over 11 000 jobs, further boosting the country's economic recovery and development.

Durban ICC's Chief Operations Officer John Aritho highlighted the prestigious accolades they have received at the World Travel Awards and World MICE Awards, reaffirming its position as a leader in the global meetings and events industry. The centre was recognised for its excellence as "Africa's Leading Meetings and Conference Centre" and "South Africa's Best Convention Centre."

Chief Executive Officer at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (Durban ICC) Lindiwe Rakharebe, City Manager Musa Mbhele, and Durban ICC Board Chairperson Dr Mduduzi Bophela celebrate the awards won by the Durban ICC making it the best in Africa.

THE accomplishments of the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (Durban ICC) were highlighted as the Municipal entity released its annual report. Lindiwe Rakharebe, Chief Executive Officer of the Durban ICC said they celebrate the centre's major achievements during the 2022/23 financial year.

"The accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, as well as our commitment to driving economic growth and community development."

The Durban ICC demonstrated a remarkable recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic in its financial performance during the 2022/23 financial year. The entity reported a substantial increase in revenue, reflecting a positive trajectory and a return to pre-pandemic trading conditions. The centre posted a top-line revenue figure of R180 million, representing a 65 percent improvement from the previous year's revenue of R109 million.

Additionally, the Durban ICC proudly announced its

achievement of receiving a clean, unqualified audit opinion for the ninth year from the Auditor General of South Africa. Commenting on this accomplishment, the entity's Chief Financial Officer Melanie Rambally said: "This achievement is testament to our unwavering commitment to sound financial management, transparency, and accountability, and underscores our steadfast dedication to upholding the highest standards of governance and integrity in all our operations."

Unlocking creativity through Youth Innovation Challenge

THE eThekweni Maritime Cluster (EMC) calls on applicants to tackle the industry's challenges head-on through their Youth Innovation Challenge. This exciting initiative calls on students to unleash their creativity and problem-solving skills in the marine and maritime sectors, empowering the youth to shape the future of our oceans economy. The EMC Youth Innovation Challenge aims to provide a platform for innovation to flourish by

empowering young minds to think outside the box and pioneer ground-breaking solutions. Spearheaded by EMC in collaboration with eThekweni Municipality and other various institutions, this initiative is set to ignite a spark of innovation within the youth demographic. Prizes await those who dare to be innovative and showcase their ingenuity. The Youth Innovation Challenge aims to chart a course towards a brighter ocean economy and harness

the power of innovation to drive positive change and propel the maritime industry into a sustainable and prosperous future. To register for the EMC Youth Innovation Challenge, simply click on the link provided below: <https://lnkd.in/dtxDRs75> For further information and registration inquiries, contact Zibuyile Mzobe at zibuyile@maritimecluster.co.za or call 031 301 0950. Entries close 29 February 2024.



FURNITURE PROGRAMME BUILDS FUTURE FOR YOUTH

THE 25 young people who are part of the Furniture Manufacturing Skills Development Programme are thankful for the life-changing opportunity. The NQF level two programme, which is now in its sixth year, has been hailed by participants. The programme is a partnership between eThekweni Municipality, Fibre Processing and Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority as well as My Space Academy. The three-month skills development programme commenced in November last year for the Class of 2023/24. They are nearing the completion of the programme and have learnt how to make furniture and received guidance on how to be successful business owners and to create employment. Facilitator Busi Mkhize from



Some members of the 2023/24 Furniture Making Skills Development Programme. The innovative programme empowers young people to earn a living and helps reduce unemployment.

My Space Academy said the training has gone well. She complimented the group for their dedication and hard work,

with some trainees already starting to receive orders. Mkhize said they started with theory covering topics such

as health and safety, furniture designs, as well as care and maintenance of furniture. The class then focused on practical upholstery lessons where they learned to make headboards, space saving furniture, and couches. They are currently learning how to re-upholster furniture. Mbalenhle Ngcobo, 30, founder of Ifutho Investments trading said: "This training has opened doors for me. I have started marketing my work and have already received orders." Chairperson of the Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli said the training has already started yielding positive gains for participants. Over the past five years the programme has transferred skills to approximately 145 trainees.

BENCHMARKING SESSION WITH INKOSI LANGALIBALELE MUNICIPALITY



eThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda with a delegation from the Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality on a benchmarking visit to the City.

TO enhance strategic partnerships and stakeholder engagement, the City participated in a benchmarking session with the Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality. These discussions formed part of a broader initiative aimed at comparing strategies and

programmes between the two municipalities. Facilitated by the City's International Governance Relations Unit, the session focused on exchanging insights and learning from each other's approaches. Located within the uThukela District in KwaZulu-Natal, the Inkosi

Langalibalele Local Municipality is known for well-established industrial, commercial, residential areas, and fertile agricultural lands. Musa Nkala, Chairperson of the Planning and Development Portfolio in the Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality expressed gratitude for the opportunity to engage with the City. "We are honored to participate in such a crucial dialogue with eThekweni. There is so much we can learn from their strategies in addressing crime, fostering economic development, and improving service delivery. Our interest extends to their infrastructure such as hubs and container storage facilities," said Nkala.

eThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda highlighted the City's commitment to ensuring the safety of residents and visitors. He also emphasised the significance of benchmarking initiatives as a way for mutual learning. "We are keen to understand how Inkosi Langalibalele has achieved its notable ranking in housing delivery projects within the province," said Mayor Kaunda. The session featured presentations from the City covering topics such as sustainable informal economic development, the acquisition process for trading permits, associated time frames, and the reporting structures within the Municipality.



CITIES UNITE TO DEVELOP NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE

eThekweni Municipality and the C40 Cities Finance Facility welcomed representatives from eight cities from across Africa, Asia, and Latin America for a four-day peer-to-peer exchange and planning session. The sessions discussed how to implement nature-based solutions that build resilience to climate impacts, create good, green jobs, boost people's wellbeing and improve biodiversity. The event brought together City officials to exchange ideas about how to finance sustainable and inclusive nature-based solutions in cities and help secure a greener future for all.

It connected cities with an ambition to implement inclusive and equitable climate action. eThekweni Deputy Mayor

Councillor Zandile Myeni said: "The challenges for the African region in the adaptation sector are significant. However, in this challenge lies opportunities to facilitate partnerships to scale nature-based solutions and investigate ways to unlock investments for climate resilient infrastructure."

eThekweni Municipality has recognised the need to lead by example in city climate mitigation and adaptation. Officials shared the City's Transformative Riverine Management Programme to showcase an innovative approach to riverine management which works in partnership with all affected stakeholders to rehabilitate and sustainably manage all riverine corridors in the City.



Dirk Schaefer, Project Director of Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Water and Waste Water Management GIZ South Africa; eThekweni Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni; Jessica Kavonic, Head of Implementation Africa C40 Cities; and Eric Apelgren, Head of International Governance and Relations at a workshop to discuss development of nature based solutions to mitigate climate impacts.

APPLY FOR INNOVATE DURBAN'S START-UP SUPPORT PROGRAMME

INNOVATE Durban is excited to announce the launch of its Start-up Support Programme which invites aspiring innovators to apply for this transformative opportunity. The Start-up Support programme is a 12-month accelerated mentorship journey designed to equip entrepreneurs with essential business and technical skills crucial for early-stage innovation. The programme is specifically crafted to empower innovators and start-ups focused on local economic development, propelling them forward towards success.

TO APPLY, APPLICANTS:

- Must be a South African citizen.

- Must be 18 years or older.
- Must reside in KwaZulu-Natal.
- Innovations in the early or pre-prototype stage are encouraged to apply.
- Innovations addressing local economic challenges are particularly sought after.
- Applicants must be willing to fully commit to the programme.
- Individuals with disabilities and female innovators are encouraged to apply, as diversity is valued in the programme.

Click the link below to access more information and the application form: <https://start-up-support-programme-application-form>. Application deadline is midnight on 26 February 2024.

DURBAN EDGE TO UNPACK BUDGET SPEECH

IN THE wake of the annual South African budget speech, scheduled for 21 February 2024, the Durban EDGE Seminar is set to convene on 26 February 2024 at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre. This gathering serves as a crucial platform for stakeholders within the Economic Development Growth in eThekweni (EDGE) community to dissect the implications of the budget on local economic dynamics.

THE DURBAN EDGE SEMINAR ENDEAVOURS TO ACHIEVE SEVERAL KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Analyse the impact of the national budget:

Delve into the budget's implications on Durban's economic landscape.

- Identify opportunities for growth: Spotlight sectors and initiatives in Durban poised to benefit from the budget.
- Foster collaborations: Encourage synergistic partnerships among businesses, government entities, and civil society to catalyse economic growth.

The seminar is tailored to a diverse audience including local business leaders, government officials, investors, community leaders, academia and non-governmental organisations.

To register click on the link <https://shorturl.at/hmpV1>

If you would like to submit feedback or contribute to eThekweni Weekly Bulletin

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