

Annual Green Youth Indaba: City invests in youth skills development to positively influence green economy

28 June 2017

Note to editors: The following is an extract of the speech delivered by MMC for Environment and Infrastructure Services, Councillor Nico de Jager, at the 4th Annual Green Youth Indaba, held at the Sci-bono Discovery Centre in Newtown today.

I welcome all participants in the Green Youth Indaba to our vibrant city. May your deliberations over the course of the next two days be productive in broadening the skills base of youth in the green economy.

As the Department of Environment and Infrastructure Services, we are working hard to convince our youth that there are a lot of opportunities for them in the green economy.

We need engineers, educators, environmental lawyers, policy developers, innovators, funders and journalists to positively influence the different sectors of society to legislate, innovate and implement sustainable environmental initiatives.

Therefore, we must have a youth green economy strategy that is inclusive in its approach.

Based hereon, the Department offers the following programmes and initiatives to broaden youth skills in the green economy.

Through City Power:

- The Eldo's Women's Imbokodo: We provide a two-year experiential training programme to 20 apprentice electricians who are part of the Eldo's Womens Imbokodo (EWI), a non-profit community-based organisation in Eldorado Park. Our training allows candidates the opportunity to be in a position to apply for their trade tests. Through qualifying trade tests they will be certified electricians.
- DoE Experiential Learners Partnership: Sound intergovernmental relations also contribute to skills development. Four learners were brought to us from the Department of Energy for experiential training for them to obtain National Diplomas in Electrical Engineering. This is a two year programme and we look forward to all of them finishing their training and graduating as Electrical Engineering Technicians.
- Infrastructure Skills Development Grant (ISDG) Programme: This programme is funded by the Department of National Treasury and hosted by City Power. Currently we have 26 graduates on a programme to register as professionals with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). Four of these graduates are in their last year of the programme, which comes to an end in December 2017. 24 graduates started in this three year programme in January this year and will complete their programme in January 2020. All the graduates are currently on a rotational programme and mentored by members of the The South African Institute of Electrical Engineers.

We are also in the planning stages of formulating a skills development programme for electrician apprentices in Orange Farm. The application for funding through the Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA) is in progress.

Through Johannesburg Water, service level agreements have been signed with various SETA's and Rand Water for the implementation of initiatives which focus on development of unemployed youth in the City of Johannesburg.

There are currently 145 unemployed youth participating in these Johannesburg Water programmes:

- With the support of the Services SETA, 30 unemployed youth were recruited at General Worker Level. Learners are then mentored by qualified resident engineers and project managers to obtain an NQF Level 4 in Project Management.
- The EWSETA's financial contribution has made apprenticeships possible for 15 unemployed residents, of which seven are youth. They are trained in plumbing, engineering and other related disciplines.
- Through our association with the Local Government SETA, 60 unemployed youth are trained in New Venture Creation Skills and assisted by Johannesburg Water to establish cooperatives and incubated until they are self-sustainable.
- Our relationship with Rand Water has made it possible for 33 unemployed youth to receive 18 months of experiential learning until they qualify in various trades, as part of the War on Leaks Programme.

I am proud that the Department of Environment and Infrastructure Services can contribute to broadening the skills of our youth in the green economy.

Our youth hold the future of our city in their hands, and we must do all we can to invest in the development of skills which will ensure they are equipped to take our city to new heights.