

# Healthy living style is for all including those in the 'Public Service'

Report and pictures by Vusi Shabalala

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Public Works Sports Tournament was held on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 at Arbour Park Grounds in Newcastle. The sports tournament brings about a bright light in the dark tunnel as employees witness a change in the workplace. This tournament resembles a mixture of the employer and employee initiatives that seek to enhance employee job satisfaction and enlargement. This has been achieved through a combination of improving the working environment and promoting the active participation of employees in the health programmes at work. The tournaments are therefore focussed on both business stability and individual employees' well-being.

A formal departmental sports committee (which constitutes of approximately 15 members) has been endorsed by the executive leadership to manage the effective running of sports for the department. Authorisation has also been granted by the department to have quarterly tournaments due to taking place in this financial year henceforth, which will rotate among all four regions to host. This engagement further assist Public Works' staff to be well and ready for their annual provincial inter-departmental games since they were introduced approximately seven years back by the Office of the Premier and coordinated by the Department of Sports and Recreation.



The sporting codes that were to be scheduled on the day are male and female soccer, netball, tug-of-war, volleyball, games for veterans (male and female soccer) and indigenous games (umlalalaba) with an approximate total of 127 employees at all levels.

The Employee Health and Wellness Programme is a key departmental component to this event. Furthermore, the benefits associated with sports tournaments are mainly healthier workforce, increased productivity, improved employee satisfaction and morale, reduced labour turnover, reduced health risks, reduced medical costs, increased potential employee attraction, and improved corporate brand for the department. All efforts that management has undertaken whereby employees are enabled to increase control over and improve the factors that affect their health are highly commendable. Although it is not a mandate to participate in any sporting activity, investing in workplace health promotion normally result in healthier and satisfied workforce which ultimately leads to productivity improvement and absenteeism.

In continuing with sports initiative, the department remains at an advantage in reaching greater heights of improving the work environment and conditions for all employees; continue raising awareness about health issues and encourage individual behavioural change; focus on health and well-being of participants; focus on health enhancing business culture, continuously review policies and procedures and use a balanced approach in addressing both work and environment and the individual employee.



In spite of all criticism, public service has employed people to render a service to the country's citizenry and public servants are people too. They too, deserve to be afforded that space for living healthy life styles both as an individual person and as an individual public servant. Healthy living style is therefore for all employees including those in 'public service'.

Are you ready to joining the caravan of employees working and living healthy?