



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Thungela celebrates third cohort of entrepreneurs graduating from ESD programme, Thuthukani.**

Thuthukani, Thungela's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme, hosted a graduation ceremony for sixty-one (61) local entrepreneurs from communities surrounding its operations. This marks the third cohort of entrepreneurs to successfully complete the programme since its launch in 2022.

Thuthukani is designed to build resilient businesses by offering tailored business skills training, technical enablement, and one-on-one mentorship to entrepreneurs from host communities. The programme is grounded in a detailed gap analysis and enables support in areas such as finance management, marketing, sales, project strategy, leadership, ISO certification, and personal development. The programme is delivered in partnership with business development service provider Raizcorp.

Of the 61 entrepreneurs graduating this year, 29 are supplier development beneficiaries – Small Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) that currently provide goods or services to Thungela, while 32 are enterprise development beneficiaries, comprising SMMEs that are not vendors but have potential for future integration into the mining value chain or in other industries. Notably, 50 of the 61 graduates also achieved technical enablement qualifications with the following accreditations ISO or whichever one, lets share a couple of them, boosting their compliance and competitiveness for procurement opportunities.

"Thuthukani is more than a business development initiative. It is a catalyst for local economic resilience. Each graduate represents a point of impact that causes a ripple effect, creating jobs and opportunities that uplift families and communities. We are proud to support the growth of these entrepreneurs and help them realise their potential - as they contribute to the growth of local economies, says Mpumi Sithole, executive head, corporate affairs at Thungela."

The graduation highlights Thungela's commitment to inclusive socio-economic development and transforming small businesses in in host communities. As the programme grows, its impact continues to spread, with entrepreneurs not only formalising their businesses, but also entering new markets, gaining critical certifications, and becoming active contributors to the regional economy.

Among the graduates is a growing group of women-led businesses gaining real traction in their industries. *Julliet Mahlangu, owner of Mpangela Industrial Holdings and a beneficiary of the programme says, "Before Thuthukani, I lacked the systems and structure to manage and scale my business. The mentorship and technical training helped me implement better financial controls, and I now feel more confident approaching new clients and bidding for contracts."*

“Watching this third cohort grow in confidence, capability, and market reach is a clear sign of the value this partnership delivers. Thuthukani’s focus on both enterprise and supplier development ensures that more entrepreneurs in Mpumalanga are equipped for long-term success, says Jeanne Renou, Strategic Relations & Projects Manager at Raizcorp.

*Beneficiary, Giji John Motau, owner of Gemad Pty Ltd, says, “my journey with Thuthukani has been transformative. I’ve gained a clearer understanding of what it takes to build a sustainable business”.*

Thuthukani reflects Thungela’s ongoing commitment to economic transformation and community empowerment.

## ENDS

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### Editor’s note:

Thungela, which means ‘to ignite’ in isiZulu, is a global pure-play producer and exporter of high-quality, low-cost thermal coal, with operations in South Africa and Australia. Our quality coal reserves and marketable production, positions us as a key player in the global energy market as we deliver coal through world-class ports, powering nations.

The Group owns interests in and produces its thermal coal from six mining operations located in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa, which consist of both underground and opencast mines, namely Goedehoop, Greenside, Isibonelo, Khwezela, Zibulo and Mafube.

Thungela acquired 100% of the Ensham Coal Mine in Queensland, Australia, reinforcing its strategic geographic diversification objective.

The establishment of Thungela Marketing International in Dubai underscores the company’s commitment to capturing the full margin on our products and engagement with the international commodities market as a global coal producer.

In other parts of the value chain, Thungela holds a 50% interest in Phola Coal Processing Plant, and a 23.56% direct interest in Richard’s Bay Coal Terminal. The terminal is one of the world’s leading coal export terminals, with an advanced 24-hour operation and a design capacity of 91Mtpa.

Thungela is committed to operating in a responsible way to ignite value for a shared future. We want to ensure that our mining activities positively impact our employees, shareholders and the communities where we operate.