



MEDIA RELEASE

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Thungela supported entrepreneurs graduate, fuelling Mpumalanga's growing local business pipeline

Thungela celebrated the graduation of its fourth cohort of entrepreneurs from Thuthukani, its Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme, at the Zibulo Colliery in Mpumalanga. This milestone marks another step in the growth of a local business pipeline designed to strengthen economic resilience in Mpumalanga's mining communities.

This year, 49 entrepreneurs from Thungela's host communities completed the programme, bringing the total number of Thuthukani graduates to 185 since its inception in 2023. The programme continues to focus on both developing business acumen and technical enablement which aims to improve access to income generating opportunities and reduce reliance on mines by strengthening local SMMEs.

Mpumi Sithole, Executive head of corporate Affairs at Thungela, said: "Our goal is to grow businesses that can operate successfully and compete beyond a single opportunity. This year's cohort reflects a dual focus on commercial capability and technical readiness. Of the 49 entrepreneurs, 27 completed business development support interventions, while 22 advanced through technical enablement, including licensing and accreditation support required to participate in formal value chains."

Among the graduates is Sinegugu Perseverance Jiyane, Director of Theza Logistics and Projects, a 100% youth-owned, women-led logistics company based in Secunda. Operating in a traditionally male-dominated sector, she has grown her business through consistency, discipline and a strong focus on delivery. Following her participation in Thuthukani, Jiyane strengthened her commercial approach and at the time secured a coal hauling contract at one of our mines, supported by funding for a truck and trailer.

"Before joining the programme, I did not fully understand how to position my business for larger opportunities. The programme has strengthened how we operate and how we pursue growth. We are now able to take on larger contracts with confidence," Jiyane said.

Thuthukani gives entrepreneurs exposure beyond Thungela's own supply chain. In 2025, Thuthukani entrepreneurs participated in platforms including the Black Business Council Summit, and the G20 Young Entrepreneurs Alliance South Africa Summit, creating opportunities to engage with business leaders, policymakers and potential markets.

Jeanne Renou, Strategic relations and projects manager at Raizcorp, said: "Programmes like Thuthukani have effectively worked because they combine practical business support with consistent business mentorship and guidance. As Raizcorp, we have seen the entrepreneurs grow in confidence and capability, and importantly, begin to translate that into real market opportunities."

The graduation reflects Thungela's ongoing commitment to developing small businesses within host communities. As more entrepreneurs strengthen their operations and access new opportunities, the programme continues to contribute to broader economic activity at a local level.

"Every entrepreneur who strengthens their enterprise adds to the resilience of the communities around our operations. This graduation underscores the SMMEs progress and capability while celebrating local businesses that are taking up more space in the economy, beyond the mine gates. This aligns with our purpose to responsibly create value together for a shared future," says Sithole.

ENDS

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Editor's note:

Thungela, which means 'to ignite' in isiZulu, is one of the largest pure-play producers and exporters of high-quality thermal coal, with operations in South Africa and Australia. Our quality coal reserves and marketable production position 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 five mining operations located in Mpumalanga, South Africa, which consist of both underground and opencast mines, namely Greenside, Khwezela, Zibulo, Mafube and Annea. Thungela owns 100% of the Ensham Mine in Queensland, Australia, reinforcing its geographic diversification strategic pillar.

The establishment of Thungela Marketing International in Dubai underscores the company's commitment to capturing the full margin on our products and engaging 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.