



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**  
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **KZN CANNABIS - HEMP CONFERENCE AND EXPO**

OKHAHLAMBA - Business leaders, academics, farmers and Rastafarian communities showed “One Love, One Heart” at the inaugural KZN Cannabis Expo held at Okhahlamba Sports Complex between Friday and Saturday.

The most grateful for the expo were the 664 recipients of hemp permits which grant authorization to cultivate, store and transport content with a Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) of not more than 0.2%.

Local businesses who will be providing services to permit recipients received R300 000 each. Services include processing, erecting tunnels and providing lab equipment, packaging, irrigation, testing, the issuing of certificates after testing, branding as well as finding a market for farmers.

With about R107 billion of value in the local industry, Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube together with the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), Siboniso Duma and the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Super Zuma, are leading radical interventions to unlock the province’s potential.

In line with the province’s vision of growing the local economy, the two-day expo was to provide a platform for local cannabis and hemp farmers and for those with an interest in the sector to engage with business and academia.

Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube said the ground-breaking KZN Cannabis Expo and Conference will forever be etched in the minds of the people as the starting point of a new era for the cannabis sector in the province.

Dube-Ncube shared that many milestones had been achieved through the KZN Cannabis Masterplan.

“Through DARD, we have set aside an amount of R47 million for cannabis research. We have allocated R10 million to assist farmers in cannabis production and hemp permit application. We have facilitated an investment commitment of R120 million and we have participated in the Cannabis and Hemp Phakisa Action Lab in order to secure much-needed policy coherence and to ensure closer collaboration amongst government entities.”

Dube-Ncube said there were ongoing pilot projects targeting commercial growers and that the province had supported several investment leads which were in the process of rolling out district-based capacity building programmes under the umbrella of the proposed KZN Cannabis Association.

EDTEA MEC, Siboniso Duma, said the expo had been a huge success and that the work by both EDTEA and DARD was just beginning.

“We want our farmers to be the champions of the cannabis sector and we want them to be able to speak for themselves. We are giving them an assignment to come closer to us because what we have started together will change people’s lives, phambili ngensangu” said Duma.

DARD MEC, Super Zuma, said the province had worked steadfastly and the time to unlock the province’s prosperity through the hemp and cannabis sector had come.

“We have ensured a smooth process for our hemp permit holders and we’ve covered all their costs. We are winning the fight to alleviate poverty and unemployment and we are extremely proud of the ongoing collaborative work that continues behind the scenes, and I must say, all our collaborative efforts have yielded fruit,” said Zuma.

Sphelele Shezi, a permit recipient from Umzinyathi District Municipality, said this was the beginning of great things for her small business of hair products. The success of the hair products relies on the hemp seed oil.

“I applied for my permit in July because I want to start extracting oil to use in our hairspray. We also manufacture shear butter which will soon be hemp infused. This permit will allow my business to grow and I have a vision of owning a manufacturing plant which will open up job opportunities,” said Shezi.

An exhibitor from Johannesburg, Derek Collard, the owner of Old Grey Distillery which manufactures cannabis infused beverages, said his business had received great exposure at the expo.

“The expo has been superb. We started our business when Cannabis became legal and we started experimenting with different cannabis infused gin flavours. We have met incredible contacts that we will be supplying. There are business opportunities as well as local growers that we could potentially partner with,” said Collard.

Nonhlanhla Qhoboshiyane from Durban, a hemp and cannabis farmer who was introduced to the plants after falling ill, said she was grateful for the opportunity to be part of the informative expo.

“My interest started in 2016 when my husband and I were diagnosed with cancer. We used hemp oil and we would make cannabis leaf tea to help with the pain. These plants are from the Lord, created to bring about economic recovery in South Africa, there should be no stigma attached to them. The rural economy will grow because of hemp and Cannabis,” said Qhoboshiyane.

























