



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Networking and healthy debate to tackle The Road to Zero Waste

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*Caption: Eastern Cape organisations tackled the vision of zero waste at the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA's) Eastern Cape branch conference themed The Road to Zero Waste. The conference took place from 14 to 15 October 2015 at the East London Industrial Development Zone (ELIDZ) and saw 97 delegates in attendance. Mervin Olivier (right image), Vice-Chair of the IWMSA Eastern Cape Branch took attendees through solid waste facilities in Buffalo City Municipality.*

Networking, debate and lessons learnt were the order of the day at the IWMSA Eastern Cape Branch's waste management conference. With the theme of The Road to Zero Waste, attendees were treated to a wealth of knowledge to ultimately achieve minimal negative impacts on the environment.

Nomakhwezi Nota, the IWMSA's Eastern Cape Branch Chairperson, says, "The conference was a huge success with 97 eager minds in attendance. The presentations were of exceptional quality where best practices were shared."

Among some of the esteemed speakers were Agripa Munyai from PETCO, the national industry body responsible for managing the polyethylene terephthalate (PET) industry's extended user responsibility (EPR). Munyai emphasized that PET, or most commonly known as plastic bottles, is too valuable to send to landfill sites and that in the past ten years the recycling tonnage grew from 16% to 49% of post-consumer

PET bottles. In 2014 alone, PET recycling efforts saved 96 771 tonnes of carbon sent into the atmosphere. Economically, the PET recycling has in ten years resulted in an investment of R235 million in support of contracted recyclers.

Mervin Oliver, Vice-Chair of the IWMSA Eastern Cape Branch and Technical Executive at GIBB Engineering and Architecture and Richard Patten, Owner of Waste Management Systems presented two papers. The first paper dealt with solid waste facilities in Buffalo City Municipality (BCM) and the current types and location of waste infrastructure in the municipal area. The second paper covered whether zero waste was possible in our lifetime.

Siphokazi Simandla, Managing Director at Bolunga E-Waste presented on e-waste and the toxic legacy of the digital revolution. She indicated that the digital revolution from the 1950's brought along digital devices which becomes e-waste when obsolete or non-working and have reached the end of their product life. E-waste contains hazardous elements which pose a danger to the environment and humans if not disposed of responsibly. Simandla mentioned that e-waste should be reduced, reused and recycled with landfill being the last resort.

Other speakers included Larry Eichstadt, Director at RMS, who spoke about organic waste processing options in the Western Cape and Carin Burgess, a scholar in the Eastern Cape who addressed future of scholar's involvement in an environmental career. Theuns Duvenhage, Technical Director for Environmental Services at Aurecon SA spoke about waste license applications and Patricia Schröder from Reclite focused on lighting lamps and the waste management and recycling thereof.

"It is very important that those operating in the waste management industry are knowledgeable about the advances in the field. The conference did just that and we are excited to continue leading the way to zero waste in Eastern Cape," concludes Nota.

For more information on the IWMSA, please visit [www.iwmsa.co.za](http://www.iwmsa.co.za). For more information on the IWMSA, please visit [www.iwmsa.co.za](http://www.iwmsa.co.za) or call 011-675-3462. The IWMSA is also on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/iwmsa](https://www.facebook.com/iwmsa)) and Twitter ([twitter.com/iwmsa](https://twitter.com/iwmsa)).

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Winet Fourie  
Email: [winet@reputationmatters.co.za](mailto:winet@reputationmatters.co.za)  
Mobile: 081 412 5680