

## **GEORGE BUSINESS CHAMBER NPC**

### **Chairman's Report 2017**

Honourable Directors, Executive Committee, and affiliates

The year 2017 was once again very challenging on the political front; with the downgrading of South Africa's investment status, business confidence at record lows, unemployment growing to 27%, marches to government demanding that President Zuma resign, and so on. These and other factors made the climate for business growth, and in fact, even business survival very difficult.

The George Business Chamber understands these economic challenges and once again worked vigorously and enthusiastically during 2017 to continue building an inclusive economy in George. Initiatives included regular networking opportunities where businesses from all sectors could make contacts and exchange ideas towards stimulating the economy of George with the focus on growth as well as job creation, and participation in workshops like the "Eden Spatial development Plan" and "Investment workshops". Regular discussions were also held with Political and Community leaders to ensure business' participation in the greater economy.

Job creation by means of the development and growth of Small Business Entrepreneurs was during 2017, and continues to be, a great priority for the George Business Chamber. Contracts were concluded with TRIAS for the roll-out of the PEERS 2 program for 2017. Entrepreneurs from Thembalethu, Uniondale, and George were trained in Basic Small Business Entrepreneurship skills; the training also included a 6-months follow-on mentorship program. These 100 entrepreneurs benefited from the funding provided by Trias (Flemish Government). Several Small Businesses were established and also actively assimilated into the George Economy. Mr Godfrey van Rhyn of JFH Holdings participated in the training in 2016 and today has two businesses, one in George and one in Mossel Bay, and has created jobs for 77 people. He also received the award as the George Business Chamber Entrepreneur of the Year for 2017.

In November 2017 I had the privilege to visit Belgium and to gain firsthand experience of how a country successfully creates jobs through the development of Small Businesses. Their system has been redesigned for the South African market and will be established in 2018 by the AHi Western Cape for the Business Chambers in the Western Cape. Through the AHi the Western Cape will become the province for entrepreneurs.

I am also very thankful that the total income for the year amounted to R 1 127 168 whilst the expenses for the same period were R 1 058 555. The nett profit of R 68 613 for the year exceeds the previous year's profit of R 10 897. The amount of R 154 068 included in the income was received from the Peers 2 program for administrative costs and could be used to finance the new website. The cash flow of R 213 148 was also an improvement against the previous year's R 179 694.

I also would like to use this opportunity to thank my Co-directors, the Executive Officer, and the Executive Committee, as well as the office personnel, for their inputs over the last year which once again contributed to the great success of the George Business Chamber. I also extend my thanks to all our affiliates who so loyally supported us throughout the year.

During January 2018 I took the decision to resign from the George Business Chamber to take up my role as the Chairperson of the AHi Western Cape with the mandate to provide added value to the Business Chambers as well as Small Business Entrepreneurs in the province.

My involvement with the George Business Chamber since 2008, first with the finances, later as part of management, and then as the Chairperson from 2013 was indeed an exciting time and it was an honour to serve you as members of the greater Eden District community. The highlights of my association with the chamber were the nomination of the chamber as the AHi Business Chamber of the year for 2014 and 2016 as well as my visit to Belgium. I am looking forward to my new roll in the AHi Western Cape and also to making a big impact there.

I thank you and look forward to the new era of cooperation with the AHi Western Cape.