

**REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, REV. MUSA ZONDI**

EDTEA LONG SERVICE AWARDS

2 SEPTEMBER 2025

KZN SHARKS BOARD

It is my privilege to stand before you today as we gather to honour a remarkable group of individuals: colleagues whose loyalty, discipline, and resilience have shaped this Department and strengthened the very fabric of our public service.

Today, we pause to reflect on what these long service awards truly represent. We are here to recognise the steady hands, the loyal hearts, and the committed spirits that have endured through different seasons.

Long service is more than an individual achievement; it is a pillar of stability in government. In a world that is constantly changing, where policies shift and circumstances evolve, it is the trusted hands and consistent presence of our long-serving public servants that ensure continuity, reliability, and trust in our institutions.

Today, under the fitting theme “*Celebrating our loyal public servants*,” we celebrate not only the years of service, but also the stability, integrity, and commitment that sustain progress and inspire confidence in the communities we serve.

Every milestone: 20, 30, and even 40 years — tells a story of perseverance, discipline, and devotion to duty.

These are the values that keep government steady even in times of change.

Your service reminds us that true transformation rests not on fleeting efforts, but on the stable foundation laid by committed public servants like you.

As we celebrate your long service, we know that throughout the years you have not only worked, but also taught, mentored, encouraged, and even comforted those around you.

Your knowledge has shaped colleagues, your guidance has inspired the young, and your compassion has strengthened this Department. That is the true legacy of public service — not only what you achieve, but also the lives you touch along the way.

This is a lesson to the younger generation among us.

Today is your lesson in what is possible when you serve with sincerity and diligence. Look to these honourees as role models. Their journey proves that consistency and loyalty are not outdated virtues — they are the very keys to professional excellence and personal fulfilment.

May you be inspired to walk the same journey of service, building stability for the next generation.

Government has, over the years, refined the long service recognition system, ensuring that milestones are acknowledged through certificates, awards, and symbolic tokens of appreciation. These are not mere formalities; they are a way of saying *we see you, we value you, and we honour you.*

As we celebrate retirees, and those marking 20, 30, and 40 years of service, let us carry forward the values of stability, integrity, and excellence.

Your loyalty has given this Department stability and strength, and for that we are deeply grateful. Thank you for your unwavering commitment.

To those who are now stepping into retirement, we say: you have served faithfully, and now it is time to rest meaningfully. May you find joy in the quiet moments, in spending time with your families and grandchildren, and in enjoying the fruits of the sacrifice you have made for our province and our people. Retirement is not the end of the journey, but it is a well-earned chapter of peace and fulfilment.

To our younger colleagues: be encouraged, your journey is just beginning. Let us all continue to serve with pride, knowing that together we are building a stable, effective, and people-centred public service.

And so, as we continue “Celebrating our loyal public servants,” let us remember the words of R. Tagore: “I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”

May your service continue to bring joy to you, to this Department, and to the people of KwaZulu-Natal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us all remain united in our purpose, so that together we may continue “*Celebrating our loyal public servants*” not only in word, but in the quality of service we deliver every day to the people of this province.

I thank you!