

Minister Ndabeni- Abrahams officially opens a trendsetting **Spinach King Restaurant**

The Minister for the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams and Deputy Minister Dipuo Peters in partnership with the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (sefa) and Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) officiated in the opening of Lufefe Nomjana's second Spinach King Restaurant healthy food offering in Woodstock, Cape Town, 16 May 2023.

The official opening conceded with the Budget Vote, Budget vote debates provides an opportunity for Parliament to discuss, and then formally adopt, the budgets of government departments and entities that are funded through a parliamentary vote. The Department of Small Business Development is driven by the mandate to lead and coordinate an integrated approach to the promotion and development of Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) and Co-operatives, and to ensure an enabling legislative and policy environment to support their growth and sustainability. In this context, the budget vote is an indication of government's commitment to promote the development of small businesses and co-operatives that contribute to inclusive economic growth and job creation.

Local entrepreneurs were honoured during the official opening and reminded that more empowerment, investments, and mentorship of small businesses are still far off the mark, and a lot still needs to be done for them to thrive and to occupy their rightful spaces in the business world. The DSBD and sefa highlighted the need to encourage more entrepreneurs to work hard so they can retain positions of influence both in society and in business.

The official opening commenced at 18:30 pm at Spinach King, City of Cape Town overlooking the scenic Table mountains. Over 100 entrepreneurs honoured the evening to witness the official opening of Spinach King.

Sefa's Acting Board Chairperson renowned Wits academic Dr Mzukisi Qobo opened the proceedings by welcoming Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams to the podium to cut the opening ribbon, to the applause of hundreds of people in attendance.

"Minister for Small Business Development Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams is here with us to grace this very important occasion and we wish to invite her to come to the podium and cut the opening ribbon, to allow Lufefe Mjana to feed the nation some of his blood nurturing recipes which are good for everyone's health".

"We are here to witness the second offering from Nomjana's healthy and rich spinach recipes, that have changed the lives of many citizens of the Western Cape," said Dr Qobo.





Mr Nomjana opened his first Spinach King Restaurant in Khayelitsha Mall in 2017 and has outgrown the small shop in the township and has set his sights on conquering the highly competitive Cape Town gourmet cuisine industry led by big name franchisees.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams congratulated Mr Nomjana for his fearless demeanor, rising from an impoverished background in Eastern Cape to entering the cutthroat gastronomical sphere in the unforgiving Cape Town environment, better known for denying investment opportunities to black people.

“This is an example of a hard-working entrepreneur from the rural backwaters of Eastern Cape who came to Cape Town to seek a better life but ended up an entrepreneur by accident and has now created employment opportunities for over twenty people”.

“Nomjana overcame all odds and came to us for financial assistance when he wanted to fulfill his dream, we obliged and helped him source a suitable site and poured money into building this new eatery and equipping it with all the modern machinery to produce high quality Low GI delicacies” said Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams elaborated that “This business came from humble beginnings. I love that this business idea originated from a community garden in Khayelitsha where Lufefe was a youth volunteer, assisting his mother and grandmother in the spinach plantation to make bread and other products. The inspiration of a mother and a grandmother in conjuring this idea, is a part that especially pleases me. Everyone here who went to a rural or township school remembers mothers and grandmothers selling sweets, amagwinya, kota and other products to make an income and feed their families. The role of women in nurturing businesses cannot therefore not be underestimated. In Lufefe’s case, this important role has led to what we see here tonight. The entrepreneurial skills that he gleaned at a young age from the two most important women in

his life, has been instrumental in his development as a businessman.”

“Spinach King is already boasting corporate clients such as Pick n Pay, Shoprite, Spar as well as more than 80 other retail stores. This is something that we constantly preach. Small businesses must not rest on their laurels and be happy just trading in their own communities. It is important to identify gaps and opportunities in mainstream businesses,” she concluded.

Mr Nomjana narrated his entrepreneurial journey, starting from his first job in the Western Cape to how he got the inspiration behind establishing this now famous eatery.

“My work as an interpreter for a Dietician at Khayelitsha Hospital drove me to releasing this dream, as I discovered that many people were living an unhealthy life resulting in them suffering from chronic diseases that could be prevented by adding vegetables most particularly spinach to their dietary needs”.

Nomjana is a recipient of the famed Youth Challenge Fund (YCF) a brainchild of Small Business Development, to assist young and aspiring businesses that struggle to secure funding from banks and other funding houses across the board.

Deputy Minister Dipuo Peters closed off ceremony by urging local communities to lend support to the newly minted eatery as it provides employment to the youth in Cape Town as well as promotes healthy living.

Spinach based dishes such as the healthy spinach bread, spinach cookies and spinach smoothies were served to the delegation for sampling and Low GI green spinach mini loafs packed for the travelling ministerial entourage, local entrepreneurs to take home and spread the spinach gospel beyond the Cape Town borders.