



Themba Mkhwanazi, Kumba Iron Ore chief executive, at the opening of a park in the new Siyathemba, Kathu. Photo: Supplied

New suburb shows growth

Kumba Iron Ore chief executive officer Themba Mkhwanazi has recently officially handed over 17 recreational parks and a new youth centre to the community of Siyathemba in Kathu.

The handover marks an important milestone in Kumba’s relocation of the Dingleton community to the new purpose-built suburb of Siyathemba in Kathu.

The 12 year, approximately R3 billion relocation project, is now nearing completion with over 98% of the community living in their new homes.

Moving the old town allows for further mining in the area, thus extending the 66-year-old Sishen mine’s operational life and in turn enabling Kumba to continue providing jobs and development as the largest private employer in the region.

Mkwanzazi said they know building communities is about more than houses, services and roads.

“We are delighted to be able to hand over this youth centre and the recreational parks to the people of Siyathemba and the Gamagara Municipality. By giving children and young people access to sporting, cultural and learning facilities, we will give them the opportunities they deserve.

“By planting thousands of trees and building recreational parks we are playing our part to help build a flourishing community. We have also employed many local contractors to do the work and helped create hundreds of small businesses in the region”.

The size and scale of the relocation is unprecedented in South Africa and involves relocating 517 households, over 3 400 people and various entities that make up the community.

To recreate a thriving new community, in addition to building over 500 new houses, Kumba also expanded and built new schools, constructed seven new churches, along with brand-new community recreational facilities, a police station, office block and rental accommodation, municipal buildings and offices, libraries and community centres, the design of a new clinic and extensive landscaping.

The relocation was conducted according to the practice codes of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and involved extensive consultations and negotiations with individual homeowners and a Resettlement Working Group (RWG) comprising elected community representatives and local ward councillors.

According to Mkhwanazi they did not just want to build houses, churches and schools, they wanted to partner with the

people of Siyathemba and the Gamagara Municipality to help change people’s lives and create a new thriving community.

“That is why over the last four years, Kumba invested over R300 million towards sustainable development in Siyathemba.

“This was done by supporting community development projects and entrepreneurs by providing business development training, procuring goods and services from Small Medium and Micro Enterprises based within Siyathemba, and youth training and development. Most of these have gone through Kumba’s Enterprise Development programme,” he said.

Youth centre

The youth centre can comfortably accommodate up to 55 youths at a time and provides free access to sporting, cultural and learning activities.

Its external facilities include a multipurpose astro turf field with floodlights and fencing that can be used for soccer, hockey and mini-cricket and includes spectator seating.

The facilities were designed to meet multiple community needs and include a multifunction room which can host theatre, training and indoor sports.

The centre boasts a fully equipped kitchen, changing rooms with lockers and showers, and even a counselling room for youth counselling. Siyathemba youth will now also have free access to learning and job opportunities through the training room and the computer centre’s six computers.

Recreational parks and trees

To improve the new community’s quality of life by making the new suburb green, Kumba created 17 recreational parks and planted over 2 700 trees in public areas in addition to those planted at the homes.

The maintenance of these trees is done by a local company. To further assist the community with preserving the trees, Kumba also initiated a Rainwater Harvesting for Gardening Programme which will minimise the use of borehole water for gardening.

“I believe there is a special relationship between Kumba Iron Ore and the Siyathemba community that has been built over the years. We will continue this strategy of supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs, especially the youth, with training and business opportunities.

“Our view is that for the community to thrive, the mine must thrive so we can reinvest in our people and region,” Mkhwanazi said.

By planting thousands of trees and building recreational parks we are playing our part to help build a flourishing community.

– Themba Mkhwanazi