

SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY WEEK (SALW) 2016

LIASA PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

#Libraries 4lifelonglearning

Programme Director: Mr Bongani Mavuso

Deputy Mayor Mandeni Local Municipality: Ms Phindile Sishi

Director: Community Service and Public Safety: Mr Mcineka

Head of Education Library Information and Training Services in KZN: Ms Khanyi Dubazane

Senior Manager KZN Public Libraries and Information Services: Ms Nokuthula Ndlovu

Chief Director Archives and Libraries: Ms Nomaza Dingayo

Motivational Speaker - Mr Sibusiso Mbhele

LIASA President-Elect: Mr Mandla Ntombela

LIASA National Executive Committee

LIASA KZN Branch Executive Committee

National Library Board Members

National Council for Library and Information Services Members

Heads of Libraries

LIASA members

Publishers and Sponsors

Members of the media

Educators and learners

Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocol observed

In absentia, due to unforeseen circumstances already explained by the MC, I acknowledge:

the Honourable Deputy Minister: Arts & Culture Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi

the Mandeni Municipality Mayor, Honourable Councillor Siphesihle Zulu

the KZN MEC for Department of Basic Education Ms Peggy Nkonyeni

the KZN MEC for Department of Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation, Ms Ntombikayise

Sibhidla-Saphetha

Since its inception 14 years ago, the SALW celebration has raised awareness of the importance of reading and use of various types of libraries so that the level of literacy acquired can assist South Africans with enjoying a better life in a democratic country.

Various stakeholders have shared the LIASA vision and made this event a great success since 2002. This timing of the library week has been strategically identified to remind us the history of Libraries in South Africa: the 20th of March marks the launch of the first public library in 1818 and, the 21st of March is the commemoration of Human Rights Day; our Bill of Rights recognizes the freedom of access to information as a basic human right.

LIASA has consistently provided dynamic and relevant themes and posters that successfully underpinned the initiative of all library sectors to market their services during the SA Library Week.

The theme for 2016 #Libraries4LifeLongLearning has been selected to support the vision of an educated and informed nation, a nation that rises above the limitations of poverty and inequality through learning and self-empowerment. Lifelong learning is pursued throughout one's life as one engages with various forms of education and training: formal, non-formal and informal. Our whole life is an Education — we are 'ever-learning,' every moment of time, everywhere, under all circumstances something is being added to the stock of our knowledge attainments.

Lifelong learning ensures competitiveness as there is no luxury of guarantees in today's job market. Skills that were cutting edge five years ago are likely to be out of date, and the jobs that we will perform in the next decade or two probably don't even exist yet. The improved knowledge assists in day-to-day and long term decision making, a useful and vital skill given the economic, social and political challenges of today. How will all these areas of our lives flourish if complacency is the order of the day, and no new knowledge is generated? Furthermore, lifelong learning helps us find meaning in our lives and to adapt to change. The former president of Harvard University Derek Bok, once said "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance". Today I am saying "if you think lifelong learning is tedious, try ignorance".

Let me challenge all of us to embrace and champion an active reading culture. Libraries are responding to society's information needs for various purposes by providing a broad scope of information resources in formats of our preferences (print, audio visual or digital) while taking into account that different various levels of literacy abound among users. Audio books are a support aid for the visually impaired and at the same time are useful for people travelling.

To the learners who spend long hours in front of the television: start managing your time differently and spare at least 30 for minutes for reading. Reading is proven to boost the imagination, foster creativity, improve communication skills and give exposure to new knowledge and the experiences of others. Start to read for pleasure if you never did - you will never regret this.

I acknowledge the challenges in the School Libraries' sector where most schools have no libraries. The lack of libraries in most schools is a matter that is drawing urgent attention of various relevant stakeholders and action is in progress. Nevertheless, lest we lose the time to learn, go and use the available public libraries so that our leaders of tomorrow are well-informed from the school-going stage.

The passionate Librarians are there to render professional service that assist users to find and optimally use the information resources. Let us incorporate lifelong learning in our daily lives and see the quality of our lives improving. If we all become reading activists and inculcate the culture of reading in others, South Africa will be a better place to live in.

The former President Nelson Mandela once said "Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do." Yes we can!

Let's go and make a difference during the Library Week 2016, embracing the culture of reading and using the library to ensure life long learning.

I thank you all!