

New jobs for 700 brought to Bay

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16 Mar 2017

With the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality focused on tackling youth unemployment in the city, it recently bagged two new investments which are set to create more than 700 jobs over the next five years.



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The two investments will see the expansion of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and Dimension Data's call centres in the Bay.

The PwC expansion should create 390 jobs over five years, while Dimension Data plans to create 375 jobs over three years.

The metro's economic development, tourism and agriculture head, Anele Qaba, who has been working on the two deals for months, said about 147 young people had already been employed at the two Port Elizabeth offices.

He said the Bay had competed with the Mangaung municipality for the PwC expansion deal, worth about R20-million.

Both companies would be eligible for the city's investment incentives - which are discounted rates and services.

Qaba said the investments were proof that the city was able to increase its economic participation without being too reliant on the automotive sector.

BPO deals

The metro has over the past few years signed a number of deals with investors in the Business Process Outsourcing sector (BPO), also known as the call centre industry.

"What is critical is that BPOs are part of the service sector and bringing in more opportunities," Qaba said.

"The sector is new and is growing quite well in the city. Most importantly, is that there is diversification.

"We are no longer totally dependent on the auto sector - we are much safer economically. There is a wide space for other people to play," he said.

The two deals would make a dent in the high youth unemployment figures in the city - sitting at above 47%.

"The jobs issue " as much as we have managed to decrease unemployment - we need to push and ensure the numbers go down," Qaba said.

"We cannot remain one of the top cities with a high unemployment rate, especially among the youth."

He said the call centre industry was a great stepping stone for young people starting out their careers.

"If you look at the BPO sector in general, it targets young people - especially those with a matric [qualification].

"You don't necessarily need a higher qualification to get a job there," Qaba said.

Youth skills training

Through their partnership with other BPOs in the city, they had managed to give skills training to the youth.

PwC Southern Africa chief executive Dion Shango said they preferred the Bay as a location due to the accessibility of graduate resources from various universities and tertiary institutions.

He said another reason was the favourable cost structures and the attractiveness of the city to new investments.

"This is a very exciting development for us at PwC and indeed for Nelson Mandela Bay as it will create significant job opportunities, mainly for new graduates.

"This growth has already started, with the division now employing in the region of 100 employees, but will continue to grow significantly on a staggered basis over the coming four years," Shango said.

Source: Herald