

Department shines at the 2012 Premier's Awards

It was a moment filled with joy and satisfaction when the Department of Community Safety and Liaison was announced as one of the **bronze** trophy winners during the Premier's Service Excellence Awards (PSEA) hosted by Office of the Premier at the Durban International Convention Centre in Durban on 05 July 2012.

Operation Hlasela, the vehicle through which the Department spearheads its flagship of *Building a United Against Crime*; is the project entered by the department in this year's awards, and apparently has not only been key to encouraging mass participation in the fight against crime. As we have now come to know, it's also the project that held the key to unlocking the doors to the department finally making a visible mark in the PSEA. Having stayed in the certificate arena of the awards, the move to trophies was a welcome breath of fresh air and motivation.

The Premier's Service Excellence Awards are a prestigious gala event which is an annual feature in the province's calendar and are a way to encourage innovation and reward excellence, as per the Batho Pele principles.

The entire awards process is aimed at serving as a monitoring and evaluation tool over Batho Pele implementation in the province and those awarded are selected on the basis of how well Batho Pele is implemented in their departmental projects and activities. An added new feature on this year's awards and scoring is the participation of departments in Operation Sukuma Sakhe.

During his opening remarks, Director General Mr Nhlanhla Ngidi emphasized that public service does not exist on its own, but is there for the people, hence the importance of these awards as they honor those who have made a special effort to improve their service delivery.

Speaking at the gala event premier Dr Zweli Mkhize mentioned attitude as sometimes one of the reasons why the ordinary citizens do not trust the public service and said, "A caring touch is much more important than technical expertise you might have."

The premier also spoke passionately about the image that public servants portray as they go about executing their duties. "We need to understand that public disapproval is a very serious matter," continued Mkhize.