

## **ECDC boosts award-winning innovative eco-friendly home wear décor brand**

***Ozzys Eco Décor was recently awarded the Best Eastern Cape Crafter 2014: Home Ware Category at the Lithuba Lakho Eastern Cape Craft Competition earning a presidential mention in the process.***

**March 2, 2015:** What was once a source of suspicion for East London's Yolanda Msutwana, has instead resulted in the creation of an exciting, award-winning and innovative line of modernised homeware under the Ozzys Eco Décor brand.

It was only in 2012 that Msutwana woke to find a dumped old tyre on her front lawn for two consecutive days which first aroused a bit of suspicion. While at first worried that this was someone's idea of marking or targeting her house and after trying to get rid of it - an idea which has earned a presidential mention came to mind - creatively re-use these tyres to produce household decorative and functional products. The idea subsequently gave birth to Ozzys Eco Décor which today specialises in the creation of storage and traditional ottomans, coffee tables and other furniture - all with the use of tyres.

This idea has turned into provincial recognition after Ozzys Eco Décor was recently awarded the Best Eastern Cape Crafter 2014: Home Ware Category at the Lithuba Lakho Eastern Cape Craft Competition. As winners, Ozzys Eco Décor received prizes to the value of R20 000 toward machinery and material. Last week they attended the Design Indaba Conference 2015. Now priding itself in creating innovative, modernised home wear through the use of old tyres, Ozzys Eco Décor has embedded its signature as one of the best crafters specialising in home wear in the Eastern Cape.

"The establishment of Ozzys Eco Décor was truly unplanned, it transpired from a series of events in which I found tyres dumped in front of my yard. It bothered me at first as I thought it was a result of someone trying to mark or target my house; but after trying to get rid of them, an idea to creatively re-use these tyres came to

mind.

“We are equally excited that just over two years later development financier, the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) has helped us access international markets for our products. Through ECDCs assistance, Ozzys Eco Décor has showcased some of its work at trade shows including Decorex JHB 2013, Indonesia International Furniture Expo (IFEX) 2014 (Indonesia), and EL Home Expo 2014,” says Msutwana.

In addition, the Ozzys Eco Décor team of six has also showcased at the international Americas Mart in Atlanta (USA) and has even received a special mention from President Jacob Zuma’s at the 2014 National Women’s Day celebrations in Umlazi, Durban.

President Zuma was quoted as saying, “The Department of Trade and Industry, has re-established a permanent showroom in Atlanta in the United States, showcasing Home Décor Lifestyle products from SMMEs and Co-operatives. The showroom will provide small businesses with a direct and fair entry into the United States market for businesses predominately owned by women.

“One of the products displayed at the showroom, Ottomans produced by Ozzys Eco Decors owned by Miss Yolanda Msutwana and partner, Mr. Sazi Mkunqwana, from East London, received two special awards from independent assessors during the 2014 July show. This is a prestigious award conferred to any crafter participating at this show. We congratulate Miss Msutwana for this achievement.”

The brainchild of the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) in conjunction with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum (NMMAM) and the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA), the competition was designed to showcase locally produced craft and in the process promote the production of export quality craft from a diverse range of disciplines.

ECDC creative industries business advisor Yandiswa Sodaba says

this was the inaugural edition of the competition, “but plans to make it an annual event are underway as we seek mainly to stimulate and improve the standard of craft and design within the province.

Ozzys Eco Decor has now its eyes set on penetrating and making an impact on an international scale; eventually expanding the business.

“We currently still work from home and we are looking to grow the business and one day own our own premises. This would ensure easy access to markets, where one would not have to place an order directly with us; but we would have shops or showrooms in all the major cities.

“Eventually, we would partner with other business owners in neighbouring countries. We aspire to make a global brand out of Ozzys Eco Décor,” Msutwana adds.

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