



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Inspired to run – Elizabeth Smal’s story

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18 March 2016

The Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon is around the corner and Cape Town roads are packed with keen runners getting fit for race day on Easter Saturday, 26 March 2016. Amongst them is 49-year-old Elizabeth Smal, from Ravensmead, Cape Town whose interest in running began in a rather unusual way – at work.



Smal is a Forklift Operator and Health and Safety Representative at Peninsula Beverages (PenBev – the local bottler of the Coca-Cola products in the Western and Northern Cape). She is responsible for the safe loading of crates of Coca-Cola products onto trucks for distribution at stores across the province. This includes loading drinks destined for refreshment tables, donated by PenBev to over 700 public events around Cape Town, 80 percent being sporting events.

“One day I saw on the staff notice board that PenBev partners with the organisers of many running races. There was a notice about the Two Oceans and I was intrigued, I wanted to do it,” says Smal. She started training by running to and from work every day with incredible results for her health. “I lost a lot of weight and feel much more energetic now, with less headaches,” says Smal. As she became

more serious about running she even began to do weight training at home by lifting up two 1 litre Coca-Cola bottles that she had filled with sand.

In 2014 Smal ran the Old Mutual Two Oceans Half Marathon and the following year she ran the Ultra Marathon but did not manage to finish within the cut off time. She is now much more fit and determined to collect an Ultra Marathon finisher's medal on 26 March 2016. "I've received a really smart pair of running shoes from PenBev and feel extremely motivated with all the support from my colleagues," says Smal.

As one of the top runners at the Ravensmead Athletics Club, Smal has already collected quite a number of medals, including the Vredendal Orak 12 hour endurance race which is a staggering 87 kilometres. As if that isn't enough, she will also run the Comrades Marathon later this year. When she isn't at work, Smal can be found out on the road training or competing in road and cross country running races. In the past few months she has run three marathons, three half marathons and a number of other short distance races with her personal best time at the Gun Run Half Marathon last year where she finished in 01:47:00 at an average pace of about five minutes a kilometre. "There's a special feeling when you put your running shoes on and get out there. I love going to races, every time I meet new people," says Smal.

Crossing the finish line will be top of mind as Smal and her colleagues load 80 trucks with 44 000 litres of Coca-Cola, 200 000 sachets of Powerade, 840 000 sachets of water and 8 tonnes of ice at the PenBev depot. The trucks, destined for the 35 refreshment stations along the two routes will ensure all runners are well hydrated throughout the race.

Smal shares her advice to those running for the first time: "Don't get scared at the start when you hear people talking about how difficult the route is. If you never face a challenge you won't know if you can overcome it. Just focus, take on the road and go for it."



[High resolution images available on request. Photos by Craig Wilson]

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