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NGWATHE MUNICIPALITY

... POWERS UP SERVICE DELIVERY

**Unleashes R8.4m
Fleet in Service
Delivery Blitz**

**Strengthen
Community-
Based Disaster
Response**

**Advances
Municipal
Benchmarking**

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Ngwathe Local Municipality Municipal Manager, Dr Futhuli Mothamaha and Dr. Solly Motingoe Municipal Administrator.

NGWATHE LOCAL MUI

Ngwathe Unleashes New Fleet in Service



Ngwathe Local Municipality has unleashed a R8.4 million fleet of vehicles and heavy-duty equipment in a major service delivery push aimed at fixing potholes, tackling water and sewage problems, improving refuse collection and speeding up responses to residents' complaints across its towns.

The new fleet, which adds to equipment unveiled in July, is expected to reduce the municipality's costly reliance on hired machinery while strengthening its capacity to respond to service delivery challenges quickly and efficiently.

The fleet comprises a minibus, smooth drum roller, compactor truck and four bakkies, which will be deployed to support essential municipal operations.

Municipal officials said the investment was prompted by the rising costs of hiring yellow and white fleet equipment from external service providers.

Ngwathe Director of Technical Services Patricia Morokolo said the investment would reduce reliance on outsourced plant hire, lower operational costs and ensure better value for public funds.

She said the vehicles and equipment would be used as follows:

- Minibus: To support municipal operations, including transporting officials attending training and other programmes, as well as councillors.
- Four bakkies: To strengthen frontline service delivery by enabling teams to respond to sewage spillages, water outages, electricity challenges and waste-related problems.
- Compactor truck: To support the municipality's newly acquired waste truck and ensure efficient refuse collection across all towns.
- Smooth drum roller: To assist with the maintenance of both gravel and tarmac roads.

Speaking during the fleet deployment ceremony, Ngwathe Local Municipality Manager Dr. Mokoena said the new fleet would strengthen the municipality's service delivery support its ongoing programme to improve service to residents' needs.

"This new fleet, which is an addition to the existing fleet, will strengthen municipal service delivery to the ongoing municipal service delivery programme, including rapid response to service delivery challenges."





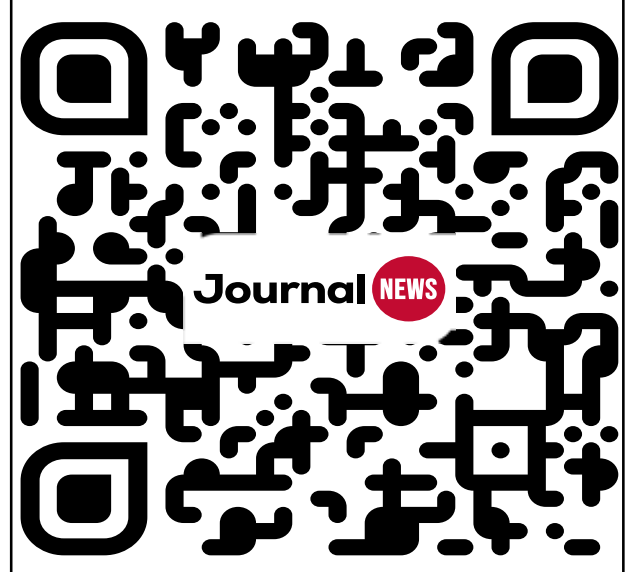
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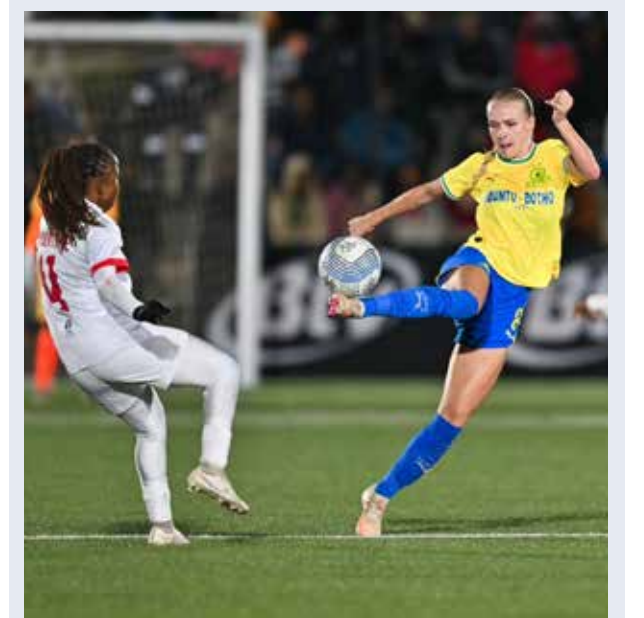


WOMEN RISING:

JournalNewsNetwork

*Celebrates Strength,
Progress and Purpose*

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**Sundowns Ladies Crush
Gaborone United** Page 10



**NACA 2026 Honours Mzansi's
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NCOP Slams Northern Cape Municipal Failures

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Persistent implementation failures, financial mismanagement and weak accountability have come under fire after the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) raised serious concerns over the state of municipalities in the Northern Cape.

During its annual Provincial Week oversight visit, the NCOP delegation, led by Provincial Whip Patrick Mabilo, assessed service delivery and progress on previous recommendations at Sol Plaatje, Siyan-

cuma and Siyathemba local municipalities.

While the delegation acknowledged progress on some infrastructure projects, it warned that recurring failures continue to undermine service delivery and public confidence.

Mabilo said the province's biggest challenge was not a shortage of plans, but the failure to implement them effectively.

"We have seen that the Northern Cape's principal challenge is not the absence of plans or commitments, but weak implementation and follow-through," Mabilo said.

The delegation identified municipal capacity, financial management and accountability as major weaknesses, alongside contractor failures, project delays, excessive reliance on consultants and poor financial controls.

According to the delegation, the Auditor-General raised concerns over municipalities' dependence on consultants, while R656 million in irregular expenditure was identified across municipalities. Nine municipalities remain distressed, with 30 of 144 senior management posts vacant.

The province is also losing billions of rands

through water inefficiencies. Non-revenue water is estimated at 45%, translating into an estimated annual revenue loss of R2.93 billion. None of the water systems assessed achieved Blue Drop certification in the 2023 assessment.

Housing projects stuck

At Siyancuma, the NCOP found major delays in a 150-unit low-cost housing programme serving Griekwastad, Schmidtsdrif, Campbell and Bongani.

The project, initially expected to take eight months, has dragged on for about two years, with only 20 houses completed. **Continues on Page 4**



**MEC Takes Farmers' Concerns
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Women Who Rise, Lead and Transform: Celebrating the Game Changers

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni, Gomolemo Winkel and Matshidiso Selebeleng

From boardrooms and construction sites to football fields, fashion runways, political chambers and digital platforms, women across South Africa continue to break barriers and redefine what leadership looks like. Their journeys are shaped by resilience, courage, sacrifice and an unwavering determination to create opportunities for themselves and others. As Women's Month draws to a close, Journal News celebrates women who are building businesses, transforming communities, inspiring young people and proving that no industry is beyond their reach.



Oratiwe Mesele Nameng: Turning Set-backs into Strength

For Oratiwe Mesele Nameng, success has been a journey of perseverance, set-backs and the courage to begin again.

The founder of Mesora Experiences in Phokeng, Rustenburg, Nameng has spent more than two decades navigating the challenges of entrepreneurship. As a member of North West Women in Tourism, she has transformed her experience into a wellness-focused enterprise offering spa experiences, accommodation, dining, conferencing, workplace and community wellness, coaching and holistic wellness services.

Her entrepreneurial journey has included several ventures that did not succeed. However, rather than allowing failure to define her, Nameng turned each setback into a lesson in discipline, leadership, resilience and perseverance.

For Nameng, entrepreneurship is about far more than making a profit. It is about creating opportunities, strengthening communities and making wellness accessible to ordinary people.

Her message during Women's Month is powerful: strength does not mean never struggling. It means having the courage to acknowledge challenges, seek support and rise again.

Nameng's vision is to make wellness accessible to ordinary people in extraordinary ways while using her experience to inspire others to build healthier and more sustainable futures.



Onezwa Mbola: From the Kitchen to a National Audience

At just 31, Eastern Cape-born Onezwa Mbola has turned her passion for food, creativity and self-sufficiency into a powerful digital platform.

Mbola rose to prominence by promoting organic food and the art of making products from scratch, including salt, fizzy drinks and cheese. She is also known for her online store, where she sells products made in her own kitchen, as well as her distinctive voice-over cooking videos, often filmed while preparing food over an open fire.

A home cook, content creator, former MasterChef South Africa Season 4 contestant and author of A Food Love Story, Mbola has built a brand around her passion for creating food from ingredients she has grown, raised and foraged.

Her story demonstrates how authenticity, creativity and embracing one's roots can become powerful tools for building a successful personal brand.



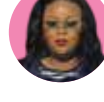
Candy Smith: Putting Free State Fashion on the Runway

Candy Smith is the driving force behind Free State Fashion Week, an annual platform that showcases emerging local designers while helping them strengthen their skills, brands and businesses.

The event brings together established personalities and emerging fashion talent, giving designers an opportunity to gain exposure and compete in an increasingly competitive industry.

The latest edition featured personalities such as Somizi Mhlongo and Lamiez Holworthy, while last year's event featured former Miss South Africa and Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi.

Held during Women's Month, Free State Fashion Week has grown beyond a fashion showcase to become a celebration of women, creativity and local talent.



Bonolo Maloka: Turning Influence into Impact

Award-winning content creator, businesswoman and momfluencer Bonolo Maloka has built a powerful digital presence from humble beginnings.

After starting her content creation journey about six years ago, Maloka has steadily grown her following despite facing online bullying and criticism.

Instead of allowing negativity to silence her, she has used her platform to assist people in need, including helping members of her fan base with everyday necessities such as electricity.

Maloka also travels across provinces to meet her supporters, strengthening the connection between her online community and the people who follow her journey.

Her recent content focuses largely on family and healthy living, reflecting her growth as both a creator and businesswoman.



Dikeledi Direko: Carrying the Torch of 1956

Seventy years ago, on 9 August 1956, more than 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest apartheid's pass laws.

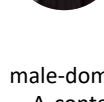
Seven decades later, South Africa continues to celebrate women whose courage, leadership and determination echo the spirit of those historic heroines.

Dikeledi Direko is among them.

A Member of Parliament and African National Congress (ANC) politician, Direko has built a career in public service while serving in various structures of the organisation.

Her political journey has included serving as an executive committee member of the ANC Youth League's Siphosiso Branch and as a Member of the National Assembly.

Her story reflects the continued role of women in shaping South Africa's political landscape.



Tshepisio Lebyana: Breaking Barriers in Property

Tshepisio Lebyana has carved out a name for herself in the traditionally male-dominated real estate industry.

A content creator and founder and CEO of Powerhouse Properties, Lebyana brings more than 30 years of experience as a realtor to the industry.

Based in Bloemfontein, she has built a reputation around property, style and class while using content creation to strengthen both her personal and business brand.

Her journey is a reminder that success is not simply about selling properties. It is about building a legacy, opening doors and showing others that they, too, can rise to the top.



Thato Mokgothu: Building a Legacy in Construction

The women of 1956 left behind a pow-

erful legacy of courage. Today, women such as Thato Mokgothu are continuing that legacy by breaking barriers in industries once dominated almost entirely by men.

Mokgothu is the owner of RTT Construction, which she founded in 2012, and the founder of the Phenomenal Women Initiative.

Through her work, she has demonstrated that women can thrive in construction and other traditionally male-dominated sectors.

Her mission extends beyond business. Mokgothu is committed to empowering other women and reminding them that their circumstances should never determine the size of their dreams.



Mamosina "Mamzo" Leshabane: Making Her Mark in Football

Mamosina Leshabane, popularly known as "Mamzo", has become a prominent figure in South African football administration through years of dedication to developing the sport.

Her contribution was recognised at the Free State Sports Awards on 15 August, where she received the MEC Lifetime Achievement Award.

Leshabane is the owner of Mangaung United Football Club, which competes in the Free State ABC Motsepe League, the third tier of South African football.

In a sporting environment still heavily dominated by men, she has established herself as one of the province's influential football administrators.

Her recognition is not only a celebration of personal achievement, but also an acknowledgement of women who continue to claim their rightful place in sports administration.



Nthabiseng Majiya: A Rising Star in Women's Football

At just 19, Nthabiseng Majiya is already making her mark in South African women's football.

Her journey from Richmond United to Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies is a story of talent, determination and perseverance. Majiya was named the Hollywoodbets Super League Young Player of the Season in 2021 and 2022, establishing herself as one of the country's

most promising young talents.

Her performances also earned her a Banyana Banyana call-up, where she became the youngest player in the squad at the time.

Her move to Sundowns marked another important milestone. She made an impressive start, scoring four goals in her first five Hollywoodbets Super League appearances.

Despite her early success, Majiya remains grounded and credits her family for supporting her football ambitions.

"My family inspired me to join Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies. They've always been my rock since day one, supporting me throughout my journey," she said.

Away from football, Majiya enjoys spending time alone and with her family, whom she considers an important part of her life beyond the pitch.

Her rise is a reminder to young women and girls that success is built through discipline, sacrifice, resilience and the support of those who believe in you.



Nontobeko Vilakazi: Leading with Purpose

Nontobeko Vilakazi has emerged as a prominent leader in the Northern Cape, with a career centred on public service and community development.

Vilakazi has served as a Member of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature since 2019 and has held several leadership responsibilities within the provincial government.

In January 2026, she was appointed MEC for Health, taking on the responsibility of strengthening health-care services across the province.

Her leadership journey has also included serving as MEC for Social Development, where she was involved in programmes aimed at supporting vulnerable communities.

Vilakazi's journey demonstrates the importance of women occupying positions of leadership and influence. Her work shows that leadership is not simply about holding office, but about listening to communities, responding to their needs and turning responsibility into meaningful action. **Continues on Page 6**

NCOP Slams Northern Cape Municipal Failures



During its annual Provincial Week oversight visit, the NCOP Northern Cape delegation, led by Provincial Whip Patrick Mabolo, assessed progress on previous recommendations and the state of service delivery in the Sol Plaatje, Siyacuma and Siyathemba local municipalities. Picture: Supplied

Continues from Page 1

Siyacuma has received qualified audit opinions for four consecutive years and accumulated R66 million in unauthorised expenditure and approximately R21.256 million in irregular expenditure.

The municipality also owes about R321 million to Eskom and water boards, while revenue collection stands at only around 49%, putting further pressure on its finances.

Residents raised additional concerns over severe water shortages and the poor condition of the gravel road between Schmidtsdrif and Douglas, which is used by learners.

The Schmidtsdrif Communal Property Association also reported inadequate post-restitution support, limited financial and institutional capacity and poor cooperation between government departments.

Siyathemba presents a similarly troubling picture, having received qualified audits for five consecutive years.

The municipality has an unfunded budget spend of R611 million dating back to 2011, while Eskom debt has reached about R350 million.

The stalled Prieska housing development remains a major concern. Phase 2, comprising 200 units, has 61 incomplete houses after the contractor defaulted in 2023.

The abandoned site has reportedly become vulnerable to vandalism and criminal activity, while 18 houses from an earlier development have developed severe cracks and require urgent repairs.

Sol Plaatje shows progress — but concerns remain

The delegation acknowledged progress on the R2.7 billion Sol Plaatje Bulk Water Infrastructure Project, a seven-year programme aimed at strengthening water security.

The emergency phase is reportedly 98% complete, with nightly water shutdowns eliminated and unplanned interruptions substantially reduced.

However, the NCOP raised concerns over R97 million in unspent funds, continuing water losses and shortcomings in water-quality testing and reporting.

Delays were also flagged at the Hull Street Social Housing Project, where only 106 of the planned 372 units are nearing completion.

The original contractor was terminated in March 2024, while the replacement contractor suspended work in November 2025 over an outstanding payment of R42.3 million. The matter is currently before the Northern Cape High Court.

The NCOP called for interim or emergency funding and site security to protect the near-complete units while funding and legal disputes are resolved.

Mining wealth, but little local benefit

The delegation also questioned the beneficiation of tiger's eye mined in the Siyathemba area.

The mineral is reportedly processed in Kimberley instead of within the municipality where it is extracted, raising concerns that local communities are not benefiting sufficiently from the province's mineral wealth.

The NCOP said the situation undermines the principles of inclusive economic development and local beneficiation.

NCOP demands action

The delegation has called on municipalities to fill critical vacancies, particularly chief financial officer posts, while reducing consultant expenditure by 30% in line with Auditor-General recommendations.

It also wants municipalities to strengthen internal financial functions and improve water-quality monitoring and public reporting.

The stalled Prieska housing project has been prioritised, with a detailed action plan expected to be submitted to the NCOP within two months. The delegation will also engage National Treasury on solutions for stalled housing developments.

Departments responsible for infrastructure projects have been given three months to submit detailed progress reports outlining funding, timelines, challenges and remedial measures.

Mabolo said the success of the NCOP's oversight would ultimately be measured by whether its recommendations translate into action within agreed timeframes.

The delegation said it would continue monitoring commitments after the local government elections. "Communities must see tangible change, not just repeated observations," the delegation said.

CRIME REPORTS

Man jailed for eight years for murdering brother

The Odendaalsrus Regional Court has sentenced Tshidiso Edison Tatire to eight years in prison for the murder of his older brother.

The sentence stems from an incident on the morning of Wednesday, 8 January 2025, when the two brothers became involved in a fight at their home in K10, Kutlwanong.

During the altercation, Tatire allegedly stabbed his 40-year-old brother in the chest with a knife before fleeing the scene.

The victim was found lying in a pool of blood on the kitchen floor with a stab wound to his chest.

Medics declared him dead at the scene.

Tatire was traced and arrested later that same day on a charge of murder.

The case was assigned to Sergeant Seleke Mahloko of the Odendaalsrus Detectives for further investigation. Working with National Prosecuting Authority prosecutor Montsho, Mahloko continued with the investigation while Tatire remained in custody until the trial.

On 18 August 2026, Magistrate Gusha found Tatire guilty of murder and sentenced him to eight years' imprisonment.

Foreign nationals arrested with R60 000 worth of drugs

Two foreign nationals, aged 26 and 48, have been arrested for allegedly dealing in illegal drugs following an intelligence-driven operation in the Bloemfontein CBD on Wednesday.

Members of the Free State Provincial Anti-Gang Unit conducted a targeted raid on a shop operated by foreign nationals after receiving information from a reliable source.

During the search, police discovered a significant

quantity of illegal drugs, including methcathinone, commonly known as CAT, with an estimated street value of R60 000.

The two men were arrested at the premises and face charges of dealing in illegal drugs.

A case has been registered at Park Road Police Station for further investigation. The suspects are expected to appear in the Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court.

22-year-old arrested for alleged rape of minor

A 22-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly raping a minor following a successful operation by the Free State Provincial Tracking Team (PTT).

Police said the suspect was arrested on Thursday after the tracking unit received a tip-off about his whereabouts.

The suspect is linked to an alleged rape that occurred on the morning of 12 December 2021 in Phase 4, Mangaung.

According to police, the nine-year-old victim reported to her uncle that the suspect had stripped her and sexually assaulted her.

Following the initial investigation, the suspect allegedly evaded police by changing his residential address without informing authorities.

A magistrate subsequently issued a warrant for his arrest after investigators established that he had relocated to a friend's residence while allegedly remaining in the Phase 4 area.

Acting on the intelligence, members of the PTT traced the suspect to his friend's premises in Phase 4, where he was arrested.

The suspect faces a charge of rape and is expected to make his first appearance in the Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court.

NW police seize firearms, ammunition in intelligence-driven raid

A 59-year-old man has been arrested after police seized several unlicensed firearms and live ammunition during an intelligence-driven operation in Mothotlung, North West, on Tuesday.

Members of Mothotlung police, supported by Brits Crime Intelligence and the Brits Tactical Response Team (TRT), launched the operation following information about individuals allegedly terrorising communities in and around the area and suspected of possessing illegal firearms.

The investigation led police to Extension 2, Mothotlung, where officers stopped and searched a suspect who was driving a bakkie.

During the search, police found a 9mm CZ pistol and 15 rounds of live ammunition. The suspect was

unable to produce a valid firearm licence and was arrested. Police then searched the suspect's home in Mothotlung, where they allegedly discovered two additional pistols, a rifle, a shotgun and various rounds of live ammunition, including rifle and handgun ammunition.

Investigations are continuing to establish ownership of the firearms and ammunition and determine whether they may be linked to other criminal activities. The suspect faces charges of possession of unlicensed firearms and ammunition in terms of the Firearms Control Act, 2000 (Act 60 of 2000).

He remained in police custody and was expected to appear before the Brits Magistrate's Court on Thursday, 27 August 2026.

Fingerprint Trail Lands Serial Burglar 20-Year Jail Term

A 60-year-old serial offender has been sentenced to an effective 20 years in prison after forensic evidence linked him to multiple housebreaking and theft cases across the Free State.

George Maxwell Dundee was sentenced on 21 August 2026 following investigations by the Free State Forensic Investigative Lead Unit (FILU). His convictions include cases involving homes in Parkweg and Bayswater, where residents returned to find properties burgled and valuables stolen. Fingerprint evi-

dence processed by the Local Criminal Record Centre linked Dundee to one of the crimes, while further forensic investigations connected him to additional offences. In one case, a stolen Haval vehicle was recovered after Petrusburg police intercepted Dundee in possession of the vehicle and other stolen property. Detective Sergeant Mxolisi Tshona subsequently established DNA and fingerprint links to more than 20 additional open cases across Bloemfontein, Kimberley and Galeshewe.

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Public Works Steps Up FS Service Delivery Drive



Deputy Minister Sihle Zikalala and MEC Dibolelo Mance during a site visit at Groovlei Maximum Prison. Picture: Baagedi Sethhora

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure intensified its service delivery efforts in the Free State during a two-day integrated oversight programme led by Deputy Minister Sihle Zikalala and MEC Dibolelo Mance.

The programme, held in Parys and Bloemfontein, focused on assessing progress at key construction projects, engaging communities and identifying opportunities to improve service delivery.

On the first day in Parys, Zikalala and Mance visited the correctional facility currently under construction, as well as Father Balink Primary School, a provincial infrastructure project.

The second day focused on Mangaung, where the delegation visited a meat processing plant, officially opened a training hub in Bloemfontein and inspected the Grootvlei Mangaung Correctional Facility, formerly known as Group 4 Maximum Prison, which has recently been taken over by the Department of Correctional Services.

During the visit, the delegation toured the prison bakery and kitchen, now operated by the facility.

Zikalala said having inmates prepare meals and participate in productive activities should not be viewed as slavery, but as an opportunity to equip them with

practical skills while keeping them engaged.

“We have to take both sides as correct and navigate going forward, but the fact is that with human beings who are there daily, rather than feeding them alone, you should be engaging them in some productive activities. And I’m sure we will all agree that is not slavery,” said Zikalala.

He said the facility should also consider expanding its agricultural activities, including broiler and chicken production, to supply institutions across the Free State and Northern Cape.

On the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Zikalala said the department had conducted a thorough analysis and was applying lessons from other regions.

“People come in as EPWP, but they will be trained and eventually employed or placed in other areas, especially under facility management,” he said.

Zikalala also urged government departments to settle outstanding municipal accounts, particularly historical debts. He suggested that departments develop repayment plans to assist municipalities in meeting their service delivery obligations.

Mance said the department was making progress in settling its municipal debts and was working with municipalities across the province, with Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality being one of the biggest

beneficiaries.

She also raised concerns about vacant buildings owned by the national government, calling for these assets to be made available for provincial use.

“Give it to us so that we can use them effectively. One of the buildings is the old post office in town. It’s located strategically, which could serve as office accommodation. It’s empty and we need to use it,” said Mance.

She said the province was requesting that such buildings be transferred or made available for productive use.

“We are sincerely requesting, on behalf of Mangaung and us as a province, that we kindly bring those buildings into our space so that we can use them effectively,” she said.

Mance said the department wanted to maximise the use of government-owned assets, noting that over the past seven years it had moved away from leased premises towards state-owned buildings.

The programme also included activities in Ward 11, where officials participated in a cleaning campaign, pothole patching and tree planting.

The delegation also visited the site earmarked for the EPWP Information Hub as part of efforts to strengthen employment opportunities and community-based service delivery.

School Fires Rock North West



Two school fires in the North West province within three days have damaged critical infrastructure, putting further pressure on already limited resources. Picture: Supplied

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Two school fires in the North West within just three days have destroyed critical educational infrastructure, piling further pressure on a province already battling a backlog in school construction and renovations.

The North West Department of Education has condemned the incidents, warning that the destruction of school property comes at a significant cost to learners and communities.

The latest fire broke out on Sunday, 23 August, at Sewagodimo Technical School in Pella Village, where a block containing five workshops and a separate storeroom was destroyed.

The school had hosted a matric camp over the weekend. Classes ended at about 2pm on Sunday, followed by a parents’ meeting that concluded around 4pm. Educators left the premises at approximately 5pm.

At 5:53pm, school management was alerted to the fire and immediately contacted the South African Police Service (SAPS) and firefighters.

However, by the time emergency services arrived, the blaze was reportedly already in its final stages.

All five workshops, each comprising a storeroom and classroom, were allegedly destroyed, while a separate storeroom outside the main block was also gutted.

The cause of the fire remains unknown, with investigations expected to determine what sparked the blaze.

North West Education MEC Dr Desbo Mohono condemned the destruction and appealed to residents to assist police investigations.

“The burning of school properties is robbing our future generations of valuable educational resources. I call on community members to provide any information they may have to the South African Police Service so that those responsible can be brought to book,” Mohono said.

The incident came just two days after another school fire in the province.

On Friday, 21 August, a fire destroyed the school hall

at Matlhare Mokautu Secondary School in Monakato Township.

The blaze occurred after school hours, with the cause yet to be established. A case of arson has been opened with police.

The fire caused extensive damage to the hall and several facilities, including the ceiling and roof, kitchen shelves, eight toilet sets, a urinal basin, four basins, books, two fire extinguishers, a hydrant hosepipe, five window frames, eight wooden-glass doors and seven internal doors.

The Department estimates the damage at more than R5 million.

Mohono said the destruction was particularly concerning because the province was already struggling with limited resources and significant infrastructure backlogs.

“The burning of school properties is robbing our future generations of valuable educational resources,” she said.

The MEC warned that the Department was now being forced to redirect money towards repairing facilities that were previously in good condition, instead of using those funds to address existing infrastructure needs.

She urged community members to work with SAPS and provide any information that could help identify those responsible.

“I strongly condemn such incidents at our schools and call on the South African Police Service to get to the bottom of this matter and ensure that those responsible face the full might of the law,” Mohono said.

Department officials and Mohono visited both affected schools on Monday, 24 August, to assess the damage and explore measures to ensure teaching and learning continue.

The back-to-back fires have intensified concerns over the protection of educational infrastructure in the North West, with the Department now facing the dual challenge of addressing existing infrastructure shortages while rebuilding facilities destroyed by fire.



Ngwathe Local Municipality

at work!

EXTENAL ADVERT

Ngwathe Local Municipality in Partnership with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) hereby invites suitable qualified applicants to apply for the following EPWP YOUTH GRADUATE PROGRAMME positions under the DFFE-funded programme:

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PLACEMENT: Successful candidates will be placed at Ngwathe Local Municipality and will be required to comply with the applicable programme requirements and workplace policies.

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The entry-level requirements for Youth Graduate Projects are biased towards M+3 graduates, as follows:

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Forestry Monitors: Environmental Management /Science & relevant Qualification

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Waste Campaigners: M+3 Environmental Management/Science or relevant Qualification

FOCUS AREAS

1. Climate Change Ambassadors South Africa has the task of balancing the acceleration of economic growth and transformation with the sustainable use of environmental resources and responding to climate change. The primary mechanisms for coping with climate change focus on either mitigation to reduce emissions, or on long-term adaptation. It is being increasingly argued that climate change adaptation and disaster risk management need to be integrated in order to build the resilience of affected communities and to develop effective early warning systems.	2. Forestry Monitors The DFFE is the overarching custodian of natural resources, of which forestry forms an integral part. The forestry Sector forms integral part of the economy of South Africa. The purpose of Forestry branch is to provide strategic direction and leadership to the Department and industry regarding the promotion of the sustainable management, use and protection of forests and natural resources to achieve social and economic benefits as well as promoting development.	3. Waste Campaigners Littering and illegal dumping are some of the most common problems in South Africa affecting all provinces and all municipalities. Ineffective waste management practices can affect the well-being of the affected communities, and this can be further exacerbated by the increased illegal dumping and littering. Waste Campaigners will be involved in the environmental education and awareness campaigns raising awareness on the impact of waste on their health, well-being and the environment.	4. Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Officers The Department acknowledges the importance of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Environmental Management and are fully supportive of the prescripts of the International Labour Organization (ILO) convention 155 and 161, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993) and all applicable Laws and Regulations. DFFE is committed in achieving service excellence through the provision of a safe and healthy work environment to all employees within its EPWP programmes. DFFE ensures full compliance with Health and Safety Act Regulations across all its projects. The OHS Compliance Officers will be strategically linked to but not limited to the YGP proposed in this submission to ensure OHS compliance issues are in line with EPWP prescripts.
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Applicants must complete application forms. The completion of application forms is mandatory, must be accompanied by detailed and comprehensive curriculum vitae, and is to be accompanied by originally certified copies of ID and qualifications (Certified copies must not be older than 3 months). Applications should be forwarded to the following postal address: **THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER, NGWATHE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, P.O. BOX 359, PARYS 9585 or hand delivered to: LIEBENBERGSTREK AVENUE, PARYS**

Application forms are available from the municipal office and/or may be downloaded from the municipal website; www.ngwathe.fs.gov.za. Enquiries can be directed to Ms. Motha M, Learning and Development Manager, Tel: 060 527 1803/ Ms. Makibinyane M, Director Community Services, 078 443 9239. Note: Designated groups, including people living with disabilities, are particularly encouraged to apply.

FIXED OR EMAILED APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Successful candidates will be subjected to a compulsory reference and validation check. Should you not receive any response from us within 30 days of the closing date, please consider your application as unsuccessful. Ngwathe Local Municipality reserves the right to make no appointment.

PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO RESIDENTS OF NGWATHE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Closing date: 11 SEPTEMBER 2026

DR. FP MOTHAMAHA (MUNICIPAL MANAGER)

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PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO RESIDENTS OF NGWATHE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Diale-Tlabela Defends Department's Progress



Roads and transport MEC rebuffs 'unwarranted' political criticism as traffic signal repairs gather momentum

By Mpho Sekharume

Kedibone Diale-Tlabela has defended her department against political criticism while confirming that a comprehensive repair drive is underway to restore broken traffic lights across the province.

Despite acknowledging widespread driver frustration, the Gauteng Roads and Transport MEC condemned what she terms a "political publicity stunt" by the Democratic Alliance (DA) that ignores active restoration efforts on the ground.

"Every driver wants to get through an intersection safely and without unnecessary delays. We understand the frustration when a traffic signal is not working. It affects people's daily lives, from the commuter trying to get to work to the parent taking children to school.

"That is exactly what we are doing. We have appointed contractors and our traffic signal repair and restoration programme is now gathering momentum.

"Work has already started at priority intersections, and more sites will be attended to as the programme rolls out," Diale-Tlabela asserted in a strongly-worded

departmental statement.

She pointed out that the Gauteng government has launched a 36-month initiative designed to repair damaged signals, replace vandalised infrastructure and also install modern security measures.

The department further revealed that it manages 547 of the more than 4 500 signalised intersections across Gauteng and it faces ongoing challenges such as cable theft, vehicle collisions, and ageing equipment.

"We are not dealing with one problem. We are dealing with vandalism, theft, accidents, ageing infrastructure and the need to modernise our traffic signal network. That is why we have put a long-term programme in place rather than relying on temporary fixes," Diale-Tlabela highlighted.

According to the department, the restoration initiative will also operationalise a Provincial Transport Management Centre to improve real-time traffic monitoring and network management.

Diale-Tlabela urged residents to report suspicious activities and infrastructure vandalism directly to law enforcement authorities to protect public assets.

CBD Blaze Contained After Ealy-Morning Fire



By Katlego Mashwabi

A fire that broke out at a building on St Andrews Street in the Bloemfontein CBD early on Sunday, 23 August, has been contained by Mangaung Fire and Rescue Services.

The Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality said its call centre received an alert about the blaze at 03:49, prompting firefighters to respond to the scene.

"The Call Centre received an alert about the fire at 03:49. Firefighters were dispatched to the scene and successfully contained the blaze," the municipality said in a statement.

Firefighters then began damping-down operations to extinguish remaining hotspots and ensure the area was safe.

The cause of the fire remains unknown, while the full extent of the damage has yet to be determined.

Law-enforcement agencies are expected to begin investigations once the scene has been declared safe and handed over for examination.

The municipality urged members of the public and motorists to avoid the affected area where possible and allow emergency and law-enforcement teams to carry out their duties without obstruction.

Motorists travelling through the CBD have also been urged to exercise caution while emergency operations continue.

There were no confirmed reports of injuries at the time of publication.

MEC Takes Farmers' Concerns Directly to the Table in Xhariep



By Gomolemo Winkel

The MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs, Ms Elzabe Rockman, has taken government's engagement with farmers to the ground, meeting producers at Valhope Farm in Fauresmith, Kopanong Local Municipality, to confront the challenges hampering agricultural production and rural livelihoods.

The roundtable discussion, held on Saturday, brought together owners of PLAS farms, Fauresmith Commonage farmers, subsistence farmers, agricultural cooperatives and the Chairperson of YARD in Xhariep District. The engagement provided farmers with a direct platform to raise their concerns with the MEC and participate in identifying practical solutions.

Among the key issues raised were access to productive land and resources, inadequate infrastructure, particularly fencing, and unreliable access to water.

For farmers, these are not abstract challenges. They directly affect their ability to produce food, grow their enterprises, sustain livelihoods and contribute to local economies. Addressing these constraints is therefore critical to building a stronger and more sustainable agricultural sector.

Rather than simply receiving information from the Department, farmers were given an opportunity to actively shape the discussion and put forward solutions based on their experiences on the ground. This approach underscores the importance of meaningful farmer participation in the development and implementation of agricultural programmes.

The engagement also highlighted the value of

accessible and responsive leadership in the agricultural sector.

Direct interaction with producers gives the Department a clearer understanding of how policies, programmes and support interventions are experienced at farm level. It also enables Agricultural Advisors to identify challenges shared across farming communities and determine where coordinated interventions may be needed.

Regular engagement of this nature can strengthen agricultural planning and ensure that government support is better aligned with the realities and priorities of producers.

At the heart of the discussion was food security. Farmers are central to producing food for households and markets, but sustained production depends on access to land, water, infrastructure, knowledge and appropriate support. When these resources are inadequate, the effects can extend beyond individual farms to household incomes, food availability and local economic activity.

By working directly with farmers to identify practical solutions, the Department can help create an environment in which producers are better positioned to increase production and build viable, sustainable farming enterprises.

The issues raised in Fauresmith will assist the Department in identifying priority interventions and support mechanisms that can make a meaningful difference in Xhariep District and across the province.

The roundtable reaffirmed the Department's commitment to listening to farmers, understanding their realities and strengthening partnerships that drive agricultural production, sustainable rural livelihoods and food security.

Police Mental Health Crisis Demands Urgent Action -Jordaan



By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Police officers face a hidden battle long after the sirens stop — with repeated exposure to trauma, demanding working conditions and organisational pressures placing them at growing risk of mental health challenges.

According to Professor Jacques Jordaan, Associate Professor and Academic Head of the Department of Psychology at the University of the Free State, policing is among the most psychologically demanding careers because officers are repeatedly exposed to traumatic incidents with little opportunity to recover.

Unlike many first responders who may experience individual high-intensity incidents followed by periods of downtime, police officers can relive traumatic experiences through crime-scene investigations, mortuary visits, photographic evidence and court proceedings.

Jordaan said South African research over the past two decades has consistently shown that police officers experience overlapping psychological difficulties rather than a single condition.

"Repeated exposure to traumatic incidents, combined with organisational pressures, long hours and demanding working conditions, places officers at considerable psychological risk," said Jordaan.

He warned that the danger is not only operational but institutional, with the way officers are managed, supported and resourced potentially contributing to psychological strain.

There is no single reliable national figure for the number of South African police officers experiencing work-related mental health problems, Jordaan said, as prevalence varies according to the unit, level of trauma exposure, period studied and measurement methods.

However, studies involving different South African police samples have reported PTSD rates ranging from about 12% to almost 50%, with the highest figures generally recorded among officers exposed to severe and sustained trauma.

Warning signs often overlooked

Jordaan said mental health problems can go unnoticed because early warning signs are often mistaken for ordinary occupational stress.

Persistent fatigue, sleep difficulties, increased absenteeism, poor concentration and withdrawal from family and friends can build up long before an officer reaches crisis point.

He said policing culture can make matters worse by encouraging officers to normalise or conceal psychological distress.

"Withdrawal and emotional detachment can be interpreted simply as 'part of being a police officer', when in fact they are among the clearest signals of overload," he said.

The issue has gained renewed attention following the recent arrest of a 28-year-old constable after police received information about a hostage situation in Ratanang Township.

Authorities said the constable allegedly shot a 25-year-old person in the shoulder and held them hostage for several hours, prompting negotiators to intervene.

The situation was eventually resolved without loss of life, with the constable surrendering to authorities.

While the circumstances surrounding the incident remain subject to investigation, Jordaan stressed the importance of having systems that identify officers who may be struggling before situations escalate into crises.

Early intervention key

Jordaan called for an effective, proactive mental health programme that reaches officers following critical incidents and at regular intervals throughout their careers. "Core design features could include properly trained peer supporters, accessible psychological services and psychoeducation so officers recognise signs in themselves and each other, suicide-prevention components and clear referral pathways into professional clinical care," he said.

He argued that mental health support should become a routine, confidential and proactive part of policing, beginning at recruitment and continuing throughout an officer's career.

At present, officers often seek assistance only once they are already in crisis — a point Jordaan described as the most expensive and least effective stage for intervention.

He urged the South African Police Service (SAPS) to integrate regular mental health check-ins into occupational health programmes, similar to the way physical and medical fitness are monitored.

For officers routinely exposed to violence, death and distress, Jordaan said psychological care should no longer be treated as an optional support service, but as an essential component of keeping both officers and the communities they serve safe.

Women Who Rise, Lead and Transform: Celebrating the Game Changers

Continues from Page 4

During Women's Month, her story serves as a reminder that when women lead, they can inspire other women and girls to believe in their own potential.



Ntsetsao Viola Motsumi: Breaking New Ground in the Legislature

Ntsetsao Viola Motsumi, the newly elected Speaker of the North West Provincial Legislature, has risen through the ranks of public service to take on one of the province's key leadership positions. Motsumi became a Member of the North West Provincial Legislature in 2019 and served as Deputy Speaker before being appointed MEC for Education in 2022.

On 18 August, she was elected Speaker of the North West Provincial Legislature, becoming the eighth Speaker of the institution since the advent of democracy and the first former Deputy Speaker to subsequently rise to the position.

In her maiden address as Speaker, Motsumi committed herself to protecting the dignity and constitutional authority of the Legislature while presiding over the House fairly and impartially.

She also emphasised the importance of strong oversight, accountability and ensuring that the Legislature remains accessible to the people of North West. Her leadership comes at a significant time when women continue to play an increasingly important role in shaping South Africa's democratic institutions.

Motsumi's journey demonstrates that leadership is not simply about holding a position, but about using that position to serve others, strengthen institutions and create a better future for communities.

Women Who Refuse to Be Defined by Limits

From tourism and wellness to food, fashion, digital media, politics, property, construction, football and public service, these women are proving that leadership has no single shape.

Their journeys are different, but their message is the same: barriers can be broken, setbacks can be overcome and success becomes more meaningful when it creates opportunities for others.

As Women's Month comes to an end, their stories remind us that the legacy of the women of 1956 is not confined to history. It lives on in every woman who dares to lead, build, create, challenge the status quo and rise.

Trench Horror: Bloemfontein Children Nearly Drown in Open Construction Site



Two children fell into an open, water-filled trench in Khayelitsha, Bloemfontein, with one reportedly requiring medical attention after nearly drowning. Picture: Katlego Mashwabi

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

A routine pipe installation project in Khayelitsha, Bloemfontein, turned into a nightmare after two children fell into a water-filled trench, with one reportedly requiring medical treatment after nearly drowning.

The incident occurred in Ward 17 after a long section of excavation was left open by BBT Electrical & Plumbing Construction & Maintenance (BBT Group), the contractor responsible for installing new pipes. The trench subsequently filled with water, raising serious concerns among residents about the safety of children living and playing in the area.

According to Elrico Crowder's mother, Priscilla Crowder, and his older brother, Ivandro, Elrico fell into the deep water and struggled to stay afloat. Ivandro said he had no choice but to jump into the trench after seeing bystanders watching without intervening.

"I found him paddling in the water, trying to keep himself from drowning. The water was too much for him to swim in. The people were just watching, so I had to assist him," Ivandro said.

He managed to pull his younger brother to safety but sustained injuries during the rescue. Elrico was left with pain in his foot and was unable to attend school on Monday and Tuesday.

The family was particularly concerned that Elrico may have inhaled water while submerged. Following intervention by the company's safety officer, the child was taken to a doctor. His mother said the doctor confirmed that he had inhaled water, with fluid reportedly found in his lungs. She also said the nerves in both his feet were not responding and that he would require a follow-up examination.

Priscilla said she was devastated when she learned

what had happened but was grateful that her son survived. A second child, believed to be about eight years old, also fell into the trench. He landed in a shallower section and managed to get out without suffering major injuries.

The incidents have intensified community anger over the open excavation, with residents questioning why the trench remained accessible to children and whether adequate safety measures were in place.

One resident said the situation had become frightening for families.

"We hope they finish quickly with the project; we are scared for ourselves and our kids. My nine-year-old makes me nervous when he passes there. They need to close this trench; are they waiting for a corpse?"

The Crowder family said they contacted the construction company after the incident but initially received no response. Journal News Network also contacted the company on Tuesday for comment.

Reatile Lepota, Contracts Manager and Head of Civil Projects at BBT Construction Group, said the incident had been reported through the wrong channels, noting that the company has designated emergency numbers and procedures for such situations.

"The report came in the wrong manner. There are emergency numbers that can be contacted for such incidents. It was supposed to be reported to the people on site and the site manager. However, we took the liberty and responsibility of taking the child to the doctor," Lepota said.

Meanwhile, the family has decided to open a case with the police.

The incident has renewed calls for contractors to strengthen safety measures around open excavations, particularly in residential areas where children can easily gain access to construction sites.



DOWN TOUCH INVESTMENTS (PTY) LTD

TENDER NOTICE AND INVITATION TO

TENDER (SBD1)

SUBCONTRACT SANRAL X.004-146-2025/1



FOR THE EMERGENCY ROUTINE ROAD MAINTENANCE ON NATIONAL ROUTE R59 SECTIONS 2 TO 3, AND NATIONAL ROUTE R30 SECTIONS 4 TO 6 IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

TENDER NOTICE AND INVITATION TO TENDER (SBD1)

Down Touch Investments (Pty) Ltd invites tenders from experienced EME/QSE subcontractors/suppliers for Contract

SUBCONTRACT SANRAL X.004-146-2025/1 FOR THE EMERGENCY ROUTINE ROAD MAINTENANCE ON NATIONAL ROUTE R59 SECTIONS 2 TO 3, AND NATIONAL ROUTE R30 SECTIONS 4 TO 6 IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

endorsed by The South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL).

This project is in the province of the Free-State and in the **Lejweleputswa District Municipalty** and consist of the **Matjhabeng, Nala, Tokologo,Tswelopele and Moqhaka Local Municipalities**.

Subcontractors are required for the following subcontractors:

Sub-Contractor Packages	Description	Route Section	Proposed CIDB Grading	Target Area
SC34	Fencing	R30 Sec 6 km 23.3 to 46.69	2CE - 3CE	Moqhaka Local Municipality
SC35	Fencing	R30 Sec 6 km 0.0 to 23.3	2CE - 3CE	Nala local Municipality
SC36	Fencing	R30 Sec 5 km 0.0 to 30.025	2CE - 3CE	Matjhabeng Local Municipality
SC37	Fencing	R59/2 and R59/3	2CE - 3CE	Tswelopele Local Municipality
SC38	Shoulder Repairs	R30 Sec 6	4CPE -5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality/ Moqhaka Local Municipality
SC39	Shoulder Repairs	R30 Sec 5	4CPE -5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality/ Moqhaka Local Municipality
SC40	Shoulder Repairs	R59 Sec 3	4CPE -5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality/ Moqhaka Local MunicipalitSC42
SC41	Pavement Layer Construction/Surface Treatment -Texture Correction	R30/5 and R30/6	4CPE -5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality/ Moqhaka Local Municipality
SC42	Pavement Layer Construction/Surface Treatment -Texture Correction	R59/2 and R59/3	4CPE -5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality/ Moqhaka Local Municipality
SC43	Pavement Layer Construction/Surface Treatment -Texture Correction	R59/2 and R59/3	4CPE -5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality/ Moqhaka Local Municipality

- The approximate duration of the Fencing package from SC34 to SC37 is 2 months.
- The approximate duration of the Shoulder Repairs package from SC38 to SC40 is 2 months.
- The approximate duration of the Pavement Layer Construction package from SC41 to SC43 is 2 months.

Only tenderers who are registered on the National Treasury Central Supplier Database at the closing date for tender submissions and who comply with the definition of a Target-ed Enterprise under clause C.2.1.1 and are at least 51% Black owned and who is an EME or QSE or cooperative, are eligible to tender.

Only tenderers that meet all the eligibility criteria under clause C.2.1.1 of the Tender Data will be considered.

Only tenderers who meet the minimum functionality score as stated in clause C.3.11 will be evaluated further on price and preference.

The tenderers attention is drawn to clause C.3.11 of the Tender Data for each work package when submitting their tender.

Only locally produced or locally manufactured products and components for construction will be considered.

Preferences are offered to tenderers who comply with the criteria stated in the Tender Data.

SUBCONTRACT TENDER DOCUMENTS

Tender documents are available:

TENDERERS’ BRIEFING AND TRAINING

A compulsory tender clarification briefing and training session(s) with representatives of the Contractor and Engineer will take place on the Following dates and Venues

Local Municipality	Date	Venue	Time	CIDB Grades
Nala local Municipality	2nd of September 2026	Bothaville Council Chamber	10:00am	2CE – 3CE
Nala local Municipality	2nd of September 2026	Bothaville Council Chamber	10:00am	4CPE – 5CE

PROSPECTIVE TENDERERS MUST PRE-BOOK FOR A SPECIFIC PACKAGE CLARIFICATION BRIEFING AND TRAINING SESSIONS, DUE TO VENUE SIZE LIMITATIONS AND ADMIN.

A request or pre-booking for a clarification briefing and training session date and time is to be sent to the following email address te2@cgoc.co.za

TENDERS FROM TENDERERS WHO ARRIVED LATE AT THE CLARIFICATION BRIEFING SESSION **WILL NOT BE ALLOWED, AND THEIR SUBMISSIONS SHALL BE DECLARED NON-RESPONSIVE.**

A tenderer’s representative cannot represent more than one tenderer at the clarification briefing session.

Only one representative per tenderer will be allowed at the clarification briefing session venue.

COMPLETION AND DELIVERY OF TENDERS

The closing time for receipt of tenders is **11:00** on the **16th of September 2026**

Only tender offers submitted in **Hardcopy** and **Delivered** to the address specified in the Tender Data will be accepted.

Requirements for sealing, addressing, delivery, opening and assessment of tenders are stated in the Tender Data.

Tenders may only be submitted in the format as stated in the Tender Data.

Queries relating to issues arising from the tenderer’s clarification briefing presentation/these documents may be addressed to the following:

Enquiries	
Contact Person:	Rethabile Masotsa
E-mail:	te2@cgoc.co.za

Salif Keita Pulls Out of MACUFE Over Xenophobia Fears



By Katlego Mashwabi

Legendary Malian singer-songwriter Salif Keita has withdrawn as the headline international act for the upcoming Mangaung African Cultural Festival (MACUFE) Main Festival, citing concerns over reports of xenophobic violence against migrants in South Africa.

The 76-year-old Afro-pop icon was scheduled to headline the festival in Bloemfontein on 12 September, following the high-profile launch of the 2026 festival programme on 31 July at the War Museum of the Boer Republics.

In an emotional statement posted on Facebook, Keita said his decision was driven by conscience rather than a rejection of South Africa or its people.

“To my beloved brothers and sisters in South Africa, and across the continent,” Keita wrote. “For over fifty years, Africa has not just been a place I visit — it is who I am. South Africa, in particular, has always welcomed me as a brother, not just an artist.”

Keita said reports of attacks on migrants had deeply troubled him.

“I cannot ignore the reports of xenophobic violence against our African brothers and sisters. When I see migrants attacked, I do not see ‘politics,’” he said.

A longtime advocate for Pan-African unity and human rights, Keita also reflected on his historic ties with South Africa. He recalled performing at Wembley Stadium in 1988 during the celebrations for Nelson Mandela’s 70th birthday, highlighting the solidarity between South Africa and Mali during the apartheid era.

He stressed that his decision should not be interpreted as a permanent rejection of the country. “To be clear — I am not closing the door on South Africa. I am closing the door on violence,” Keita said.

Despite withdrawing from commercial performances, the music veteran said he remained willing to participate in grassroots initiatives aimed at promoting healing, dialogue and unity.

“If there is a stage in a township, I will sing there... When the time is right, I will return — not for applause but for healing, dignity and ubuntu,” he said.

The Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation (SACR) expressed regret over Keita’s withdrawal but confirmed that MACUFE 2026 would continue as planned.

“The Department accepts it and will follow any requisite steps for redress in line with the contract terms entered into with the artist,” said the department Spokesperson Tankiso Zola.

“We share in the disappointment of all MACUFE patrons who were eagerly anticipating the performance of this preeminent artist.”

The department, however, assured festivalgoers that the withdrawal would not derail the event.

“The 2026 MACUFE programme will proceed uninterrupted. A dynamic artistic line-up has been put in place and will continue to entertain the attendees,” he said.

Keita’s withdrawal is set to cast a spotlight on the broader challenges of xenophobia and African solidarity, while MACUFE organisers face the task of maintaining the festival’s momentum without one of its biggest international attractions.

NACA 2026 Raises The Glamour, Honours Mzansi’s Creative stars

By Katlego Mashwabi



The Sun City Superbowl was transformed into a dazzling showcase of fashion, entertainment and creative excellence last Friday as South Africa’s biggest names gathered for the third annual National Arts and Culture Awards (NACA) 2026.

Hosted by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), the North West Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation (ACSR) and SABC 1, the star-studded ceremony was held under the theme, “Celebrating Our Nation’s Creative Excellence.”

The evening celebrated leading figures and institutions across visual arts, music, heritage, literature and fashion, turning the Superbowl into a cultural spectacle.

Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture Gayton McKenzie joined North West MEC for Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation Wessels Morweng in welcoming guests and signalling a new approach to supporting South Africa’s creative sector.

“We are changing how artists get treated,” McKenzie declared to loud applause, announcing that each NACA 2026 winner would receive a trophy and a R50,000 cash prize.

The red carpet delivered its own spectacle, attracting some of the country’s biggest entertainment and fashion personalities.

Among those who graced the occasion were the Queen of African Gospel, Dr Rebecca Malope, pop star Tamara Dey, actress Kgomo Christopher, reigning Miss South Africa Qhawekazi, the Miss Teen entourage and celebrated fashion designer David Tlale. Inside the venue, the celebrations continued with a star-studded entertainment lineup.

Hosts Pamela Mtanga and Vafa Naraghi kept the crowd entertained between

performances, with Jerusalema hitmaker Nomceba and traditional music star Maausi among the headline performers.

The audience was also treated to performances by Zee Nxumalo, Holly Rey, Yanga Chief, Tu Nokwe, Brenden Praise and Jimmy Nevis, creating an evening that showcased the diversity and depth of South African music.

The awards themselves produced several memorable moments. Fashion icon David Tlale took home the Outstanding Fashion/Textile Designer award, while maestro Kutlwano Masote was recognised with the Outstanding Book: Non-Fiction award.

The heritage category also made history when the 122-year-old KwaZulu-Natal Museum won the Outstanding Museum award.

The institution was represented by Director Luthando Maphasa, Dr Ghiraen Laue and Ntobeko Gumede after overcoming strong competition from other nominees.

The Soweto Gospel Choir also celebrated Masote’s achievement on social media, highlighting the presence of their friend, Bongani Nkosi-nathi Ncube, at the ceremony to witness the milestone.

With substantial cash prizes, high-energy performances and a renewed spotlight on the country’s creative talent, NACA 2026 delivered a powerful celebration of South African arts and culture while raising the bar for the nation’s awards ceremonies.



FS Doctor Storms Into Miss SA Top 19

By Katlego Mashwabi

The glamour, heartbreak and triumph of pageantry took centre stage as Free State medical doctor Palesa Van Rooyen secured her place in the coveted Miss South Africa 2026 Top 19.

The Top 19 cohort was unveiled on the Miss South Africa YouTube channel by international television personality Minnie Dlamini, who dazzled in a classic black beaded gown by pageant sponsor Nala Privé.

While Van Rooyen celebrated her breakthrough, the latest cut brought disappointment for several hopefuls, including Top 24 finalist Gift Ntimini.

“Thank you so much, I would like to thank everyone who has supported me through my journey of Miss South Africa 2026. Unfortunately, I did not make it to Top 19, but I’ll forever be proud and grateful for making it to the Top 24,” Ntimini said in a farewell message to her supporters.

The difficult selection was overseen by an elite judging panel comprising businesswoman Dr Aisha Pandor, former Miss South Africa Shudufhadzo Musida and Colleen Larsen, with global auditing firm PwC independently auditing the process.

The remaining 19 contestants now turn their attention to developing social impact initiatives under the Empower Youth Africa (EVA) framework.

Van Rooyen is quickly emerging as a strong contender, combining her pageant ambitions with her medical profession and passion for community development. Splitting her time between Hobhouse, Ladybrand and Bethlehem, she is focusing on child

safety and malnutrition, drawing on her medical expertise to address challenges facing vulnerable communities. Her approach has impressed the judges.

“Our communities are richer for having an empathetic, caring doctor like you. You will ensure major impact through the work you do,” Larsen said.

Musida added: “Palesa is very thoughtful in her approach to her EVA. There is a genuine care in her ‘why.’” Van Rooyen’s advocacy also extends to Bloemfontein, where her Beauty with a Purpose project focuses on paediatric healthcare gaps in underserved communities.

Her initiative recently reached an important milestone when her first group of “Nutrition Champions” completed their initial assessment.

“These young people have committed themselves to attending teaching sessions, studying, asking questions and applying themselves—all because they want to see THEIR community uplifted,” Van Rooyen said. “I have been deeply moved by their commitment, their excitement and their eagerness to get into the field and start serving their community.” With the competition now entering Bootcamp Week, the pressure is intensifying. Van Rooyen said she intends to embrace every opportunity to learn and grow.

“I hope to achieve with my time here to remain wide open to the process, to learn as much as I can and to take all the good gems away,” she said.

Bootcamp training has already included public speaking sessions with conversation strategist Nozipho Tshabalala, followed by media training with

reporter Heidi Giokos.

An upcoming workshop will be led by Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe.

With her medical expertise, community-focused advocacy and growing pageant momentum, Van Rooyen now has her sights firmly set on going all the way.



By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Ten-year-old Warona Setsome, a Grade 5 learner at R.B. Dithupe Primary School in Welbedacht Township near Zeerust, has been crowned First Princess at the Little Miss Universe pageant held in the Philippines last week.

Setsome’s international achievement marks another milestone in a remarkable modelling journey that began in 2025. In just over a year, she has participated in international fashion shows, worked with designers, appeared at various events and developed her skills as a motivational speaker for children. She has also established herself as a young host and public figure.

Her mother and manager, Kedijang Setsome, said she recognised her daughter’s passion for modelling and decided to nurture her talent.

“What started as a young girl’s interest in modelling has grown into something much bigger. I saw her potential and decided to nurture it, support her and give her every opportunity to grow,” Setsome said.

She said Warona had grown not only as a model but also into a confident young girl who understands the importance of using her voice and platform positively.

Warona’s journey to the international pageant was not without challenges. She became unwell during the competition but remained determined and continued participating despite not feeling her best.

“She showed incredible determination. She continued to participate and represented herself, her family, the North West and South Africa with grace, discipline and commitment,” her mother said.

“She gave every activity her absolute best and carried herself with such strength and professionalism. Watching her push through those difficult moments and still perform at her best is something that made me even more proud of her,” she added.

Speaking at a welcome-home celebration held at her school, Warona said she was overwhelmed with excitement and gratitude to return home after representing the North West and South Africa at the Little Miss Universe pageant.

“I want to thank my mom, my family, my teachers and everyone who believed in me. To all the learners here, I want to say: believe in yourself, work hard and don’t be afraid to dream big.

“I am proud to be a learner here, proud to be from Zeerust, and, most of all, I am proud to be South African,” she said.

Her achievement has been welcomed by the North West Department of Education, with MEC Desbo Mohono congratulating the young star on her international success.

“Warona’s achievement is a testament to the talent, determination and potential of young people in our province. We are extremely proud of her for representing the North West and South Africa with distinction on an international stage,” Mohono said.

Mohono also congratulated Warona’s parents, teachers and everyone who supported her journey, saying their encouragement and commitment had played an important role in helping her reach the significant milestone.

Zeerust’s Young Star Shines on Global Stage



WEEKEND

Gig Guide

ALL OVER BLOEMFONTEIN & BOTSWANA FROM

29 - 30 AUGUST 2026

IZA SATURDAY
SATURDAY - 29 AUGUST 2026
IZA - BLOEMFONTEIN

OMKHAYA TOUR
SATURDAY - 29 AUGUST 2026
THE DAWN LOUNGE

PITN - PICNIC IN THE NORTH
SATURDAY - 29 AUGUST 2026
CENTERNARY LODGE

SINGLES BRAAI - SPRING EXPLOSION
ACTIVATION
SATURDAY - 29 AUGUST 2026
MANCHU INN

SUNDAY BLACKDOOR
SUNDAY - 30 AUGUST 2026
EKHAYENI - BFN

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Bloem Star Angela Lands Major Soul City Role

By Katlego Mashwabi

Bloemfontein-born rising star, model, radio broadcaster and media personality Angela Linda has added another major milestone to her growing career after joining the cast of the much-anticipated return of South Africa’s iconic television drama, Soul City.

After a 12-year hiatus, the historic edutainment series returns to television as Soul City: Let’s Rise, directed by Pheello Mofokeng and set to premiere on SABC 1 on Sunday, 30 August 2026.

Linda, who had been teasing fans throughout the week with behind-the-scenes glimpses from the set and camera setups, took to social media to announce the exciting development.

“I want to remind you guys that Bloem Child, your dreams are valid,” she told her followers, while encouraging them to tune in for the comeback.

In the new series, Linda will play a character who shares her first name, Linda.

The official daytime media launch was held this week at Urban Tree in Johannesburg, bringing together members of the cast, industry stakeholders and partners who shared the vision for the new season.

The revamped drama promises a bold, intergenerational storyline tackling some of South Africa’s most pressing social challenges, including gender-based violence, HIV, youth challenges, parent-



ing and community resilience, while also celebrating sisterhood, love and collective action.

Linda also made a statement with her fashion choice at the cinema-style launch, arriving in green cargo pants paired with a floral, Chinese-inspired shirt.

Explaining her look, she said she was making a conscious effort to embrace colour.

“I almost wore black. The closest colour was white, but I ended up embracing colour. The vibe is giving Asia, somewhere in Japan,” Linda said.

The star-studded launch attracted several prominent figures, including veteran actress Salamina Mosese, Deputy Minister Hendrietta Ipelegeng Bogopane-Zulu, Gauteng Social Development HOD Shoki Tshabalala, as well as several former Soul

City cast members.

Founded in 1992 by two doctors at the Alexandra Clinic, the Soul City Institute for Social Justice grew into a household name from 1994, using multimedia storytelling to tackle major public health and social issues affecting South Africans.

For Linda, the return of Soul City comes at an important moment, particularly as the country continues to grapple with complex social challenges.

“It’s so, so, so important that the show is back because I believe in the power of edutainment, the power of reaching out to all audiences and informing them on all the social issues that we are facing,” she said.

She added that the programme could go beyond raising awareness by helping audiences understand how to navigate and address the challenges confronting their communities.

Linda said she was particularly proud to be part of a production that seeks to educate and inspire a new generation.

“That is why Soul City is so important to educate. I am so proud of the entire production, the entire cast and Soul City as an institute itself for the important work that you are doing. We really hope that the audience receives us well,” she said.

As Soul City: Let’s Rise prepares to return to screens, Linda’s latest achievement marks another promising step for the Bloemfontein-born media personality, whose career continues to expand across broadcasting, modelling and television.



HEALTH

Selosesha Men Take Stand Against GBV and Health Challenges

By Katlego Mashwabi

The Selosesha Methodist Church was packed on Saturday, 15 August 2026, as men from the community and surrounding areas gathered for a Men's Health Workshop aimed at tackling critical health concerns and the scourge of gender-based violence (GBV).

Hosted by the local Selosesha Circuit Young Men's Guild, the workshop provided a platform for men to openly discuss issues affecting their health, families and communities.

The event was held under the theme "Man In Us... Monna ka ho nna", with the church hall decorated in red, black and white – colours strongly associated with the fight against GBV.

The initiative was introduced to the local brotherhood by Kagisho Mokupi, the circuit Department of Development and Social Responsibilities (DDSR) Desk Chairperson. Organisers said the workshop also sought to confront the reluctance among men to seek professional help when facing physical or mental health challenges.

Discussions highlighted how many men tend to internalise their struggles, particularly those related to mental health, while also avoiding routine medical check-ups and preventative screenings at local clinics.

Mr Tshediso Moliwa facilitated the discussions, guiding an open dialogue between attendees and guest speakers.

Dr M Sothoane, the main female speaker, addressed the devastating impact of GBV and femicide on families and communities. A

dvocate Kgwadi unpacked the legal and social implications of GBV-related crimes, stressing that ending violence requires collective action from communities.



Men's physical health was also placed firmly on the agenda. Mr Rasiile, a Charge Nurse, delivered an educational presentation covering issues often regarded as taboo, including prostate cancer awareness, the importance of circumcision and the impact of diet on testosterone levels.

The workshop attracted representatives from various regional men's fraternal societies, creating a broad platform for dialogue, awareness and collaboration.

The event ended with a strong call to action, urging participants to return to their neighbourhoods as ambassadors for healthier families, responsible manhood and communities free from violence.

Book Review:

We Inherit the Fire, a novel by Kagiso Lesego Malope

By Katlego Mashwabi

Kagiso Lesego Malope's *We Inherit the Fire* is a deeply moving interrogation of the unexamined psychological costs paid by Black South African women during the liberation struggle. Set during the volatile, twilight years of late-1980s apartheid, this character-driven novel masterfully explores intergenerational trauma through the friction-filled relationship between a legendary mother and a daughter trying to find her own identity, questioning the role played by absent fathers in challenges faced by both.

The narrative interweaves two distinct perspectives. Kelelo Malaka is a teenager navigating the daily institutional racism of a newly desegregated, predominantly white school. Her mother, Kewame "Dolly" Malaka, is a celebrated anti-apartheid freedom fighter and former political prisoner. While the community worships the public myth of Dolly, the private reality at home is devastating. Having survived solitary confinement and physical torture,



Dolly is severely traumatized and emotionally detached. When Kelelo turns to her mother for comfort, she is met with a harsh, survivalist response. Dolly lacks the emotional tools to validate psychological wounds that do not leave physical scars, minimizing her daughter's daily struggles through the lens of her own extreme past suffering.

At the heart of the novel lies the central metaphor of "the fire," which Malope frames as a double-edged inheritance. Rather than representing only the glorious flame of political liberation, the fire signifies the simmering, unhealed fury passed down through generations. For Dolly, it is the internal rage she suppresses to maintain a domestic façade. For Kelelo, inheriting the fire means carrying the exhausting, community-wide expectation to be a political disciple, leaving very little room to simply be an ordinary teenager.

The backdrop of the late 1980s—a pressure cooker of brutal state crackdowns and township resistance—mirrors the permanent survival mode within the Malaka household. Drawing directly from her own youth in the Pretoria townships of Mabopane and Atteridgeville, Malope brilliantly captures the unique psychological state of a transitional generation forced to carry adult weights. *We Inherit the Fire* is a stunning triumph that tracks a daughter's essential evolution from seeking her mother's approval to transforming inherited pain into personal agency, forging her own freedom outside of a massive shadow.

FOOD Recipes

Mushroom Beef Stew

By lancewood kitchen

Ingredients:

- 30 ml sunflower oil
- 2 onions, peeled and quartered
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 800 g cubed beef
- 4 celery stalks, roughly chopped
- 200 g baby carrots, or 3 carrots peeled and thickly sliced
- 250 ml beef stock
- 250 ml water
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 250 g button mushrooms
- 200 g butternut, diced
- 125 g green beans, sliced
- 250 ml LANCEWOOD Sauce Delight® Mushroom Sauce
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste



Looking for easy supper ideas? This hearty Mushroom Beef Stew combines tender slow-cooked beef, wholesome vegetables and a rich mushroom gravy for the ultimate comfort meal. Perfect for winter suppers, family dinners and those evenings when you're wondering what to make for supper.

Method:

- Heat the sunflower oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic and cubed beef, cooking until the meat is browned and the onions begin to soften.
- Stir in the celery and carrots. Pour in the beef stock and water, then add the fresh thyme. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer.
- Cover and cook over low heat for 45–60 minutes, or until the beef is tender. Add a little extra water during cooking if needed.
- Add the button mushrooms and diced butternut. Continue cooking for a further 15 minutes.
- Stir in the sliced green beans during the final 10 minutes of cooking.
- Pour in the LANCEWOOD Sauce Delight® Mushroom Sauce and stir until well combined. Heat through gently.
- Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- Serve hot with fluffy rice or creamy mashed potatoes.





SPORT



Chasing National Glory ... Navalsig High and Ntsu Secondary will represent the Free State at the Kay Motsepe National tournament next month. Picture: Supplied

Navalsig, Ntsu Off to Nationals

By Gomolemo Winkel

Navalsig High School and Ntsu Secondary School under-19 teams will represent the Free State at the Kay Motsepe National School tournament which will take place from 24 to 28 September 2026 in Soshanguve, Pretoria.

Navalsig were crowned provincial champions after defeating Ntsu in the final over the weekend at the University of the Free State (UFS) sports fields in Bloemfontein.

Despite their defeat, Ntsu will also progress to the national tournament as runners-up.

The two Bloemfontein sides will now look to make a strong statement on the national stage.

Navalsig coach, Mzwakhe James, described their triumph as a reward for months of hard work and dedication.

He said the victory reflected the commitment shown by his players since the beginning of their preparations.

"I dedicate this win to the boys and their efforts. Since the fifth of January until this point, we have been preparing for this moment. This is the reward for the boys," James said.

He believes his team maintained consistency and continued improving throughout their campaign despite facing challenges.

"It has been a good journey for us. We had good preparation.

"We have not had any losses so far. The boys have been doing well.

"We took a couple of notes on where we need to improve because not every game is perfect," he continued.

James noted that preparatory matches against ABC Motsepe League teams played a crucial role in preparing the squad mentally and physically.

"We played against ABC teams - the more experienced guys - just to take some notes and prepare for this. We also play in the Hollywoodbets regional league, so we take that experience and bring it

Bloemfontein schools seal Kay Motsepe nationals berths as the Free State's top two

here," he stated.

The Navalsig coach further expressed appreciation to the Navalsig community, including parents, the governing body, and school staff for their support.

"To the Navalsig community, parents, SGB, principal, teachers, and groundsmen, I want to thank them for their efforts. Especially the parents for trusting us with their boys.

"This victory belongs to everyone in the Navalsig community," he added.

Meanwhile, Ntsu mentor, Kolotsa Mthimkhulu, said their objectives remain unchanged despite finishing as runners-up.

"Nothing much has changed. The only thing we are working extra hard on is scoring goals," Mthimkhulu said.

The Kay Motsepe National School Tournament will feature 18 teams across the country, with two representatives from each province competing for national honours.

Dobsonville Poised for NW Derby Duel

By Gomolemo Winkel

North-West University (NWU) aim to secure their first away victory in the Motsepe Foundation Championship on Saturday, as they prepare to lock horns with Lerumo Lions at Dobsonville Stadium at 15:00.

The varsity side began their second-tier campaign with a point after playing to a 1-1 draw against Hungry Lions.

Assistant coach, Lindane Nkabinde, believes collecting maximum points this weekend is crucial to building confidence within the squad.

"It's of paramount importance that we build from a tough game where we played to a draw.

"So it's important that we push a bit further to get three points, so that we can bring back the belief that we are known for," he said.

Nkabinde admitted that competing in the Motsepe Foundation Championship presents a different challenge compared to the ABC Motsepe League.

He noted that his players are still adapting to the demands of professional football.

"It was our first game in the NFD. How things are done in the NFD is different from how the game is played in the ABC Motsepe League. "There is so much detail that we have to pay attention to, with a lot of set pieces and speedy wingers.

"So it is just a lesson that we take to the top-level game," said the optimistic coach.

Nkabinde pointed out that his technical team has analysed the Lions and is burning the midnight oil to prepare players for the challenge.

"We noticed that they have an experienced team, with players who have been around the block. We made an effort to check their approach before their game against Venda.

"They use a lot of long throws, and they have a very pacey number 10 who arrives in the box.

"We are preparing and working on those areas to make sure we are ready," he added.

Despite both teams being based in the North

West, Nkabinde expects a competitive encounter. He noted that both sides are eager to prove themselves in the second tier.

"We are both from the North West, so both teams are actually playing away since Dobsonville is a neutral venue," he said.

"It is going to come down to who wants it more. It will be an interesting game." "There is no pressure on the boys because we are still young, but they must know that we play to win and compete," Nkabinde stated.

Meanwhile, Lions coach, Tshepo Maphari, countered with observations that his side has shown encouraging signs following their opening match against Venda FC.

He remains confident they can turn their chances into goals.

"I was happy with the mindset of the players.

"Against a very experienced team like Venda, we were able to put in a good showing.

"We created a lot of chances, and it gave me a good idea of how far we have come and how prepared we are for the future," Maphari said.

The Lions mentor identified finishing as an area requiring improvement after missing several clear opportunities previously. He added: "We obviously have to convert our chances because we should have killed that game four or five nil. Missing those kinds of opportunities shows that our main area of improvement is converting the chances we create."

As the home outfit, Maphari believes it is crucial to pocket maximum points at home to build a strong foundation.

"Travelling and getting points away is very big, but winning your home games puts you in a strong position for promotion," Maphari concluded.



FS Steers Women In Sports Empowerment

By Gomolemo Winkel

"As women in sport, we are often affected by gender bias." These words were spoken by Free State Sports Confederation Gender Commission head, Deirdre Schroeder.

She called for greater attempts to empower women and girls to take up leadership positions in sports while breaking down the barriers limiting their participations.

Schroeder was speaking at the Women in Football Indaba that took place on Saturday at the Bon Hotel in Bloemfontein.

The theme of her presentation was Breaking Barriers: The Journey Of Women in Sports.

In her speech, Schroeder indicated that the three biggest obstacles preventing women from reaching their full potential in sports are poverty, gender roles, and gender bias.

She said that poverty should not discourage young girls from pursuing their sporting dreams.

Schroeder cited a top South African athlete as an example of someone who rose from humble beginnings to achieve international success.

"If you are sitting at home poor, you might as well be playing sport while you are poor. Play sports while you are doing nothing. And then sports might actually help you get out of that poverty," she said.

"The example that I used, my favourite example of that, is Caster Semenya. She came from the poorest village in South Africa. She went up to the top, and she did it twice," Schroeder added.

To help mothers continue participating in sport, Schroeder believes sporting organisations should



introduce practical support systems, including childcare at sporting events.

"The example that I used was a French judo player. She was born in Tonga, and she was adopted by French parents. She took her baby to the world championships," she said.

"They allowed her. She got gold at that world championships while breastfeeding in between tournaments (sic). So this is breaking through the barriers that have restricted women for too many years. And that is amazing," added Schroeder.

Furthermore, reflecting on her own experiences in judo, Schroeder said that she encountered gender discrimination despite representing South Africa and later becoming a team mentor.

"I myself was the victim of that for a very long time. I have to go to the kitchen and organise the food. But I am a national player. I am a national coach. I am not allowed to play the game because I was told I was a woman.

"And this is something that we have to break through as well. I just persisted and carried on," she stated.

According to Schroeder, many leadership oppor-

tunities for women are still created to satisfy reserved slots, rather than recognising competence.

"They just need to be able to do the job. So the barrier then is that women are getting the positions. They're getting the quota position, but they are not stepping up and claiming the position.

"Do the job. Use your voice. Speak up," added Schroeder.

To increase women's representation, Schroeder encouraged schools, clubs, and sporting federations to create safe environments for girls, particularly during puberty.

She also called for educating coaches about the unique physical and emotional challenges female athletes face.

"I think that we must stop the gender bias (sic). We must stop assuming that girls don't want to play because they are growing older. Children want to play regardless of gender. Let us keep them in the sport," Schroeder continued.

Schroeder advises young women facing discrimination to simply "love the game".

"If you love the game, stay in the game, and it will love you back," she stated.

She revealed that the organisation has already introduced women's tournaments and leadership programmes to provide sufficient resources and opportunities for women during her ongoing tenure as the Gender Commission head.

"This year, we are offering a woman's leadership programme, where we say, here's some inspiration. This is the role that you should be achieving as a woman. This is where you can go as a woman in sport," said Schroeder.

Sundowns Ladies Crush Gaborone United to Set Up CAF Final Showdown

By Gomolemo Winkel

Amelodi Sundowns Ladies have stormed into the CAF Women's Champions League final after dismantling defending champions Gaborone United 5-0 on Thursday evening, setting up a highly anticipated showdown against last year's runners-up, Zesco Ndola Girls, on Saturday at 18:00 CAT.

The emphatic victory at the Gaborone United Stadium sees the two-time African champions take another step towards continental glory, but they will face a familiar opponent in the final.

Zesco Ndola Girls defeated Silver Strikers of Malawi 2-1 in the first semi-final to book their place in the decider.

The previous meeting between Sundowns and Zesco in the CAF Women's Champions League ended in victory for the Zambian side in the semi-finals. It remains the only defeat suffered by the South African champions in the competition since their debut in 2021.

Sundowns started Thursday's semi-final with intent, taking the lead in the 21st minute when Botswana international Refloee Tholakele headed home a well-delivered cross at the back post.

Nonhlanhla Mthandi doubled the advantage on the stroke of half-time with a well-placed shot that beat the Gaborone United goalkeeper and found the back of the net.

The South African side continued to dominate after the break, with Tholakele capitalising on a defensive error in the 67th minute to score her second of the night



and make it 3-0.

The brace took Tholakele's tournament tally to five goals, strengthening her position in the Golden Boot race and bringing up the 50th goal of the tournament in Gaborone.

Sundowns showed no signs of slowing down as Isabella Ludwig added a fourth in the 77th minute, registering her third goal of the competition.

Substitute Wendy Shongwe completed the rout in stoppage time, sealing a commanding 5-0 victory and sending Sundowns into the final in emphatic fashion.

The stage is now set for a heavyweight continental battle against Zesco Ndola Girls on Saturday, with Sundowns aiming to add another CAF Women's Champions League crown to their growing continental legacy.

MUNICIPALITY AT WORK!

Releases R8.4m e Delivery Blitz



ms.
plement the municipality's recent
e refuse collection runs smoothly
ssist with pothole repairs and the
ed roads.
ment, Free State MEC for Coopera-
ents Saki Mokoena said equipping
resources was critical to effective
s with the right tools and resources
, proactive maintenance, and con-
that municipal workers are better
very needs promptly and effectively
Futhuli Mothamaha said the new
ality's service delivery capacity and
improve roads and respond rapidly
on to what we unveiled in July, will
ry capacity and contribute further
elivery programme of fixing munic-
e to service delivery needs," said

Mothamaha.
He said the investment would also reduce reliance on outsourced
plant hire, lower operational costs and ensure better value for public
funds.
"We have been successfully rolling out this fleet in all towns making
up Ngwathe Local Municipality. We are also grateful for the support we
receive from the MEC and the administrator, but most importantly, we
are able to achieve this because of our residents who continue to pay
for municipal services," Mothamaha said.
The municipality said the fleet was being rolled out across all towns
under its jurisdiction.
Ngwathe Local Municipality covers Parys, Tumahole, Vredefort,
Mokwallo, Heilbron, Phiritona, Koppies, Kwakwatsi and Edenville and
has faced longstanding challenges relating to infrastructure, water supply,
sanitation and municipal finances.
Mokoena also expressed appreciation to the municipal administra-
tor, Mothamaha and municipal workers for their efforts to improve
service delivery across Ngwathe.
The municipality said revenue generated from residents who pay for
municipal services remains crucial to its ability to invest in equipment
and improve service delivery.
The latest fleet investment is expected to give Ngwathe greater capacity
to tackle service delivery challenges while reducing its dependence
on costly outsourced machinery and equipment.



Ngwathe and Metsimaholo Strengthen Community-Based Disaster Response



Ngwathe Local Municipality is strengthening community-based disaster preparedness through skills development, volunteer mobilisation and strategic collaboration with other municipalities.
The municipality recently hosted a Metsimaholo Local Municipality delegation for a benchmarking engagement focused on the recruitment, training and development of Disaster Management Volunteers.
As part of its commitment to building a responsive community-based disaster management system, Ngwathe recruited and trained volunteers through the South African Red Cross Society.
The training covered Baseline Disaster Assessment and First Aid Level 1, equipping volunteers with practical skills to assist communities during emergencies and disasters.
A total of 51 Disaster Management Volunteers were officially launched on 19 June 2026, marking an important

milestone in Ngwathe's efforts to strengthen disaster preparedness and response at community level.
The benchmarking engagement also provided an opportunity for Ngwathe to share progress on its disaster management planning framework.
The municipality confirmed that its Municipal Disaster Management Plan has been drafted and subsequently approved. The plan incorporates the Climate Change and Adaptation Plan and the Crisis Communication Plan, ensuring that climate-related risks, preparedness measures and effective communication during emergencies are integrated into the municipality's broader disaster management framework and aligned with the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).
The engagement between the two municipalities provided a platform for officials to exchange practical knowledge, experiences and best practices on volunteer

programmes, training, disaster preparedness, emergency response and planning.
According to Mojabeng Makibinyane, Director responsible for Community Services and Public Safety at Ngwathe Local Municipality, the benchmarking session demonstrated the value of cooperation between municipalities. "The visit provided an opportunity for both municipalities to exchange knowledge, experiences and best practices relating to disaster management volunteer programmes, training, preparedness, response and planning."
Through initiatives such as the Disaster Management Volunteer Programme and continued inter-municipal benchmarking, Ngwathe Local Municipality is investing in a better-prepared, better-equipped and more resilient community, while strengthening its capacity to respond effectively when disasters and emergencies occur.

From Metsimaholo to Mafube: Ngwathe Advances Municipal Benchmarking



Ngwathe Local Municipality continues to strengthen inter-municipal cooperation and knowledge-sharing as part of its commitment to improving service delivery and operational efficiency.
On 20 August 2026, Mafube Local Municipality visited Ngwathe Local Municipality for a benchmarking session focused on preparations for the upcoming Blue Drop Audit for the 2024/25 financial year, conducted by the Department of Water and Sanitation.
The Mafube delegation was led by its Acting Technical Director and Manager for Water and Sanitation.
The visit provided an opportunity for the municipality to gain practical insights into the various Key Performance Areas (KPA's) associated with the Blue Drop assessment.
Ngwathe officials guided the Mafube delegation through the required information and documentation that must be readily available on the Integrated Regulatory Information System (IRIS), including practical guidance

on uploading information for audit purposes.
The engagement also placed emphasis on the importance of maintaining effective water management systems and ensuring the continuous supply of safe, quality water to communities.
The constructive interaction between the two municipalities created an opportunity for officials to share knowledge, experiences and best practices.
Both municipalities benefited from the exchange, with Mafube gaining insight into Ngwathe's preparations while Ngwathe officials also identified lessons and practices that could strengthen their own operations.
According to Ngwathe Municipal Manager Dr Futhuli Mothamaha, benchmarking between municipalities offers practical benefits by allowing local government institutions to learn from proven strategies, identify service-delivery gaps and adopt innovations without costly trial and error. "Benchmarking visits between municipal-

ities provide direct, practical benefits such as learning proven strategies, identifying gaps in service delivery and adopting innovations without costly trial and error."
Dr Mothamaha said such engagements also promote collaboration and enable municipalities to compare performance and identify opportunities to improve operational efficiency and service delivery.
"We appreciate the Mafube Local Municipality team for visiting us. On Monday, we hosted Metsimaholo Local Municipality on transitional matters, and we will continue hosting and visiting other municipalities as part of various government benchmarking exercises," said Dr Mothamaha. Through these ongoing engagements, Ngwathe Local Municipality is positioning itself as an active participant in inter-municipal learning and collaboration, using shared knowledge and experience to strengthen local government performance and ultimately improve services to communities.



SPORT



NGWATHE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AT WORK!



SEVERE COLD FRONT & BAD WEATHER WARNING!



A SEVERE COLD FRONT IS AFFECTING NGWATHE.

Expect heavy rain, strong winds, icy conditions, snow on high ground and extremely cold temperatures.



NGWATHE

KEEP YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY SAFE



KEEP WARM
Dress warmly in layers. Wear a hat, scarf and gloves.



STAY INDOORS
Avoid unnecessary travel. Stay indoors and keep warm.



DRIVE SAFELY
Reduce speed and drive to conditions. Be alert on icy or wet roads.



BE PREPARED
Keep an emergency kit with blankets, warm clothes, water, food and torch.



Issued by
NGWATHE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY COMMUNICATIONS UNIT



NgwatheLM



EMERGENCY SERVICES:
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Women In Business Thrive With Tenacity



The Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDA), in collaboration with Ngwathe Local Municipality, celebrated Women's Month by hosting an empowering Women in Business event under the theme, "Thrive with Tenacity."

The event brought together women entrepreneurs, business leaders and aspiring business owners for meaningful discussions aimed at strengthening and supporting women in the business sector.

Key topics included financial literacy, business compliance, funding opportunities, mental wellness and the challenges confronting women entrepreneurs.

Participants also heard inspiring success stories from women within the local business community, offering practical insights and motivation to those building and growing their enterprises.

The gathering provided an important platform for women to connect, share experiences

and explore opportunities for growth and sustainability.

It also highlighted the importance of equipping women with the knowledge, resources and resilience needed to navigate the demanding business environment.

Through collaboration and empowerment, the initiative celebrated women who continue to break barriers, create opportunities and drive economic growth in their communities.

FIRE, TRAFFIC + DISASTER: EMERGENCY LINE

SAPS

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PARKS

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KOPPIES CSC
057 910 7100

SAPS

HEILBRON CSC
058 852 2659

WATER & SEWER

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Water: 083 271 5507

DISASTER

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Cell: 082 909 3464 (After Hours)

SAPS

VREDEFORT CSC
056 216 5702

EMERGENCY LINE : 082 909 3464

LET'S WORK TOGETHER FOR A SAFETY AND PROSPEROUS NGWATHE

South African Police Service

Contact numbers

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076 523 5466

Email: PARYS-SAPS@saps.gov.za