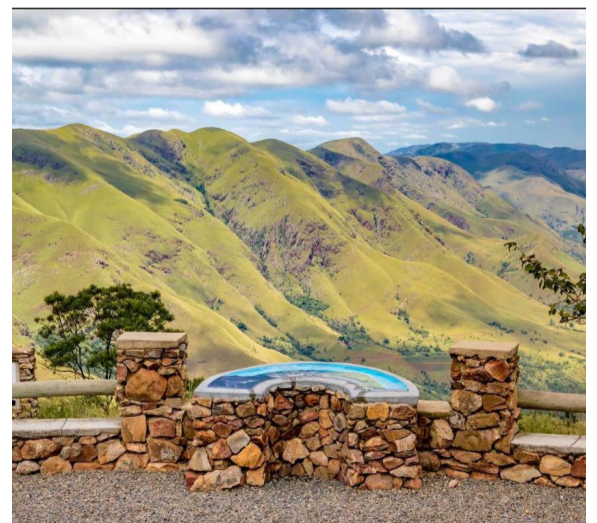


# Lilanga Letfu

"Mpumalanga, a Province that works for all"

2025/26

4<sup>TH</sup>  
EDITION



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## Editorial Comment . . .



In every edition of *Lilanga Letfu*, we are reminded that governance is not an abstract ideal but it is a lived experience, felt in the daily realities of our communities. This fourth quarter edition of 2025/26 brings into sharp focus the enduring responsibility of government to respond with urgency, compassion, and foresight to the needs of the people of Mpumalanga.

At the heart of this edition lies a powerful thread: a government at work, confronting challenges while steadily building pathways to opportunity. Whether it is the decisive interventions to address the province's water crisis, the upgrading of critical infrastructure, or the restoration of dignity through reliable service delivery, these stories reflect more than progress; they reflect commitment. Access to clean water, safe roads, and functional infrastructure is not merely about service provision it is about restoring trust and safeguarding the wellbeing of communities.

Equally compelling are the stories of economic renewal and inclusion. From investments in youth-owned tourism enterprises and support for spaza shops, to the revitalisation of industrial parks and small town regeneration, this edition highlights a province actively positioning itself for growth. These initiatives are not just economic programmes; they are instruments of hope. Creating opportunities for young people, entrepreneurs, and communities to participate meaningfully in the economy.

This edition also speaks to the human side of governance. The fight against diseases such as tuberculosis and foot-and-mouth disease, the strengthening of primary healthcare, and the provision of social relief during times of disaster all underscore a caring state, one that stands with its people in moments of vulnerability. The stories of outreach programmes and community engagements remind us that true leadership listens, responds, and walks alongside the people it serves.

There is also a strong and necessary focus on the future. Investments in education, digital learning, science development, and partnerships with institutions like the University of Mpumalanga signal a province preparing its people (especially its youth) for a rapidly changing world. At the same time, efforts to protect our environment and preserve biodiversity affirm that development must be sustainable, balancing growth with responsibility to future generations.

Importantly, this edition does not shy away from the realities we face. It acknowledges systemic challenges whether in water management, infrastructure maintenance, or social issues such as gender-based violence and community safety. Yet, within these challenges lies a clear message: progress is possible when there is accountability, collaboration, and a shared commitment to change. As we reflect on these stories, one truth becomes evident: the work of building a capable, developmental state is continuous. It requires partnerships between government, communities, business, and civil society. It calls for active citizenship, where each of us plays a role in shaping the future of our province.

Ultimately, this edition of *Lilanga Letfu* is a testament to resilience and collective effort. It tells a story of a province that is not standing still, but moving forward deliberately, thoughtfully, and with purpose. It is a reminder that while challenges remain, so too does the unwavering commitment to improve lives, restore dignity, and create a better Mpumalanga for all.

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### CODE OF CONDUCT

Our aim is to provide accurate, truthful and balanced reporting. As a publication that subscribes to The Press Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media, we are serious and remain committed to accurate and fair reporting.

## EFFORTS TO ADDRESS WATER CRISIS UNDERWAY



**A**ccess to water and sanitation are recognized by the United Nations (UN) as human rights – fundamental to everyone’s health, dignity and prosperity. However, billions of people are still living without safely managed water and sanitation. People depend on water for their daily needs, including drinking, sanitation, and agricultural activities, amongst others. With an estimated 34% of the South African population lacking access to clean and safe drinking water, the water crisis has dire consequences for public health and food security..

The water crisis is compounded by climate change, which influences weather patterns, intensifies drought conditions, and alters the distribution of water resources. South Africa is classified as a water-scarce country, with an average annual rainfall of approximately 490mm compared to the global average of 900mm. This disparity poses a significant challenge in meeting the needs of the growing population, projected to reach 65 million by 2030.

Mpumalanga is one of the most hard-hit areas in the country with very unskilled water administrators and old infrastructure exacerbating the problem. To mitigate this reality - as pronounced by Premier Mandla Ndlovu during the State of the Province Address (SOPA), the Mpumalanga Provincial Government has allocated a substantial R1.4 billion from infrastructural grants, specifically the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) and the Water

Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG). This investment aims to bolster bulk sewer and water infrastructure in the Nkomazi, Govan Mbeki, and Bushbuckridge local municipalities.

A particular focus has been placed on water supply systems, which play an essential role in public health and community well-being. “One of the critical initiatives currently underway in the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality aims to upgrade old and potentially hazardous infrastructure by replacing asbestos bulk water lines”, stressed Premier Ndlovu. Asbestos, a material once commonly used in construction due to its durability and resistance to heat, has since been recognized for its health risks. Exposure to asbestos fibres can lead to severe respiratory issues and other serious diseases.

The government’s proactive approach to removing asbestos from water supply pipelines not only protects the health of residents but also ensures the integrity of the water system, promoting safe and reliable water access for all. The project involves the replacement of outdated water supply pipelines extending from the water treatment plant to various locations. Premier Ndlovu added that the Delmas Wastewater Treatment Works upgrade, increasing capacity from 4 to 12 mega-litres per day, is 68% complete, while the Loskop Bulk Water Scheme is at 90% completion. “Once completed, residents of Thembisile Hani Local Municipality are expected to benefit from a reliable water supply of 20 mega-litres per day, while

the province continues working with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and Rand Water to optimise supply from existing infrastructure. The province plans to increase investment in water infrastructure and is working with national entities on major water projects, including upgrades linked to Loskop Dam”, he said.

This initiative reflects the government’s commitment to improving public health and safety in the province. By replacing these aging infrastructures, residents can expect fewer disruptions in their water supply and a significant decrease in the potential health risks associated with contaminated water systems. Amidst these positive developments, illegal water connections emerge as a significant impediment to the goal of reliable supply, leading to reduced water pressure and compromised service delivery.

MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), Mr. Speed Mashilo stresses the urgency of maintaining financial discipline regarding water provision. He warns that neglecting to prioritize payments to water service providers like Rand Water sets a dangerous precedent, potentially exacerbating infrastructure decay. The Department is keen on instituting rapid recovery plans from municipalities that experience service disruptions, emphasizing the necessity of structured payment arrangements and set timelines for repairs. “When funds are diverted, routine maintenance is neglected, leading to burst pipes and

prolonged outages, persistent debts threaten the ability of water boards to continue supply”, he noted.

On a broader context, President Ramaphosa’s recent State of the Nation Address (SONA) acknowledged the magnitude of the water crisis. He allocated R156 billion for water and sanitation projects over the next three years, underscoring major initiatives like the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase I and the Mzimvubu Dams. However, he aptly noted that the roots of the crisis lie in systemic weaknesses at the municipal level, caused by years of inadequate planning and maintenance of water systems. “Poor planning and inadequate

maintenance of water systems by many municipalities are the main cause of the problems we are going through now and are the reason that taps often run dry. “There is no silver bullet to address this challenge, which has its roots in systemic failures and many years of neglecting infrastructure,” the President said.

The government is taking a firm stance on accountability, with criminal charges filed against 56 municipalities failing to meet their water service obligations. Additionally, municipal managers could face personal accountability under the National Water Act, a clear signal that neglect of infrastructure is no longer tolerable.

While substantial investment has been made to develop and upgrade water infrastructure, the fight against the water crisis in South Africa demands collaborative efforts and rigorous governance. Sustainable water management has become essential, not only for public health and safety but also for accommodating growth and resilience in the face of climate change and economic struggles. The commitment to providing equitable and quality water for all remains a priority, however, crucial to address the systemic issues that have driven South Africa’s water woes for far too long.



## IMPROVED WATER QUALITY FOR DR JS MOROKA

South Africa is experiencing a severe, chronic water crisis driven by failing municipal infrastructure, mismanagement, and climate-induced drought. Major areas like Johannesburg face widespread, intermittent, or no-tap-water situations due to leaking pipes, thus losing 37% - 42% of water and poor maintenance, affecting sanitation and economic activity. To play its part in addressing this challenge, the Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipality has embarked on a refurbishment and upgrade project at Vaalbank Water Treatment Plant to improve water quality in the area.

The scope of work includes refurbishing the existing plant, constructing a Reverse Osmosis (RO) Plant, continuous backwash filters, Chlorine dosing and storage system, and a Reservoir with contact tank. Road construction for equipment access is also included. The treatment plant supplies water to Mhluzi, Newtown, Tokologo, Nasaret, Aerorand, Middelburg, Rockdale, Golfsig, Kanonkop, and Dennesig in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

The project is divided into three phases and is progressing well:

- Phase 1: Complete;
- Phase 2: 96%; and
- Phase 3: 43% (since commencement

on 5 November 2021).

The project provides employment to over 70 local people are employed. 36 sub-contractors are benefiting. The project was delayed by heavy rains, but Phase 3 is progressing well and expected to be completed later this year and it includes building, civil, mechanical, electrical, and instrumentation works. Building construction is complete, and this include offices, a boardroom, and a water testing laboratory.

# ENHANCING ROAD SAFETY

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death in children and adolescents aged 5-19 years worldwide. Tragically, many of these deaths were preventable. Here are some ways your family can stay safe while out and about.

Scholar transport have been a serious concern in the country. One major incident was the death of 13 learners in the Vaal in Gauteng and a July 2024 incident in Mpumalanga where a bus-train collision near Middelburg killed six learners and injured 20 others. The accident occurred at a level crossing on the R104 road, prompting investigations into safety and calls for improved infrastructure.

Not to be found wanting, Road Safety officials from the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison's

Bohlabela Region recently met with scholar transport operators in Sabie, Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, to address safety concerns. The session, held at Sabie Cost Centre, focused on key areas such as driver accountability, vehicle roadworthiness, safe loading practices, and defensive driving principles, identified by the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC).

Principal Road Safety Officer, Ms Sipiwe Mbungela, said the engagement allowed drivers to raise operational challenges and discuss practical interventions. "Operators raised concerns about road infrastructure and parents' non-compliance with pick-up times, leading to overloading. We encourage parents to work with operators to ensure their children's safety," she said.

The Department will continue these sessions, promoting collaboration among transport operators, law enforcement,

schools, and communities to improve road safety outcomes. "If we work together, we can reduce crashes and fatalities on our roads," Mbungela added.

Meanwhile, Acting Director for Road Safety Education, Mr Dumisane Magagula, indicated that while scholar transport operators are regularly engaged across the three districts, parents and guardians are also urged to report any safety concerns. "Parents and guardians must speak out if they suspect their children are not being transported safely, such as in unroadworthy vehicles or with drivers who are not sober. They should also encourage their children to report any bad driving so that action can be taken," he said. He also called on operators to comply with regulations and ensure their vehicles are roadworthy at all times.





# GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY UPGRADING OF SIYATHEMBA SPORT FACILITY DIPALESENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

**PROJECT NAME**  
SIYATHEMBA SPORT FACILITY

**START DATE:** YEAR 2025      **END DATE:** YEAR 2026

**LOCATION**  
SIYATHEMBA TOWNSHIP - WARD 1

**COMMUNITIES TO BENEFIT**  
6739 HOUSEHOLDS FROM SIYATHEMBA, BALFOUR AND SURROUNDING AREAS

**JOBS CREATED TO DATE :** 25      **SMME'S BENEFITTING :** 6

**PROJECT VALUE:**R28 600 000.00      **EXPENDITURE TO DATE:** R7 720 029.08

**CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS ON-SITE AS AT: 31/01/2026:**15%

**CURRENT WORK ACTIVITIES**  
BUILDING WORKS (RENOVATION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS): GUARD HOUSE, TICKET STATION, MANAGER'S RESIDENCE, INDOOR SPORT CENTER, ABLUTION BLOCKS, CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW BUILDING (CHANGE ROOMS), SOCCER PITCH: STORM WATER DRAINAGE AND SUBSOIL DRAINAGE.



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## FUNDING TO BOOST TOURISM YOUTH-OWNED ENTERPRISES



**A**s part of government's ongoing effort to place muscle behind its intention to give young entrepreneurs a shot in the arm, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) in collaboration with the National Youth Development Agency, through the Mpumalanga Tourism Youth Fund (MTYF) has awarded funding worth R4

million rands to 31 Tourism Youth-owned Enterprises in Mpumalanga.

"The Mpumalanga Tourism Youth Funds affirms our unwavering commitment to placing young people at the centre of economic reconstruction, particularly within the tourism sector, which remains a catalytic driver of Mpumalanga's socio-economic transformation. The

Mpumalanga Tourism Youth Fund is a direct response to the structural challenges confronting our provincial economy, especially the stubborn realities of inequality, poverty, and unemployment", explained DEDT MEC Jesta Sidell.

The Fund provides support in the form of asset-based finance, working capital, acquisition of property, support

for intangible assets, and intellectual property development. The partnership between the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and the National Youth Development Agency follows the signing of an agreement for three (03) years, from 2025-2027.

This initiative was underscored by the NYDA Executive Chairperson, Dr Sunshine Myende, who stated - "Our mandate as NYDA is to advance youth economic participation and empowerment. Partnerships such as this one in Mpumalanga, which establishes a dedicated provincial youth fund, are a powerful model for turning that mandate into a tangible opportunity. Mpumalanga is commended as one of the few provinces to have established such a dedicated

youth fund. It is our sincere wish that many other provinces will follow this exemplary lead", said Dr. Myende.

The fund is designed to effectively transition young people into the mainstream economy through business funding and entrepreneurship support, aimed at unlocking the potential of youth owned enterprises in the tourism sector to grow and contribute to the provincial economy and reduce the high rate of youth unemployment.

"In partnership with the private sector, we have a collective responsibility to provide economic stimulus packages geared towards propelling our youth-owned enterprises to participate meaningfully in the mainstream economy. Accordingly,

the MTYF is one catalytic intervention which will serve as a strategic weapon for government in its quest to uproot the stubborn triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality", concluded MEC Sidell.

Post-investment support for the funded businesses will be delivered through a collaborative approach involving SEFDA, Standard Bank, and other key stakeholders. This support will include but is not limited to financial literacy and compliance training, Business advisory services, mentorship and linkages. This integrated support model is designed to promote business sustainability, stimulate growth, and enhance job creation outcomes.



*Where Energy Meets Industry - Vision Becomes Yield...*

**T**he industrial landscape of Mpumalanga is undergoing a decisive transformation. At the forefront of this renewal is the Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA), which has repositioned its extensive property portfolio as a strategic platform for investment, enterprise growth and long-term economic expansion. This is not cosmetic refurbishment. It is a comprehensive modernisation programme anchored in infrastructure excellence, governance reform and financial sustainability. MEGA

has moved beyond maintenance; it is engineering performance.

For years, portions of the inherited property portfolio reflected the strain of deferred upgrades and operational neglect. Rather than managing decline, MEGA adopted a proactive and capital-intensive revitalisation strategy designed to restore assets to competitive, investment-ready standards. Today, those assets are being systematically upgraded to meet the expectations of modern industry.

Across 15 Small Industrial Parks situated in key municipalities throughout

Mpumalanga, facilities are being refurbished, utilities strengthened and operational systems modernised. Reliable electricity supply, stable water access and enhanced security frameworks form the backbone of this transformation. These are not optional enhancements; they are foundational requirements for serious investors.

MEGA's mandate is clear: provide ready-to-occupy industrial, commercial and retail facilities that allow entrepreneurs to focus on production, innovation and service delivery. Businesses operating within our parks are no longer burdened by infrastructure uncertainty. They

operate in environments designed for productivity, compliance and growth.

A defining feature of the revitalisation programme is the integration of advanced metering technologies. Smart electricity and water monitoring systems ensure accurate billing, reduce illegal connections and create transparent consumption management. The result is operational integrity, predictable cost structures and responsible utility governance, factors that sophisticated investors demand.

Simultaneously, MEGA is actively exploring partnerships to integrate renewable energy solutions within larger industrial facilities. This forward-looking approach mitigates exposure to energy volatility while aligning the portfolio with global sustainability standards. Investors increasingly assess environmental resilience alongside financial viability; our assets are being structured to satisfy both. The results of this disciplined, strategic intervention are measurable. Annual revenue has risen from approximately R67 million to more than R150 million. This growth is not incidental. It reflects improved compliance, strengthened lease governance, elimination of irregular practices and a culture of accountability.

Financial performance is the clearest validation of operational credibility.

Revenue expansion also signals renewed confidence in the portfolio. Tenants are meeting obligations, occupancy stability is improving and asset productivity is increasing. Where governance is firm and infrastructure reliable, markets respond. MEGA's properties are more than physical spaces. They are economic platforms designed to accelerate small and medium enterprise development while attracting larger-scale industrial investment. By lowering entry barriers and removing infrastructure constraints, the agency enables businesses to allocate capital to growth rather than risk mitigation.

The Mpumalanga Provincial government has consistently emphasised infrastructure as the cornerstone of economic expansion. MEGA translates that policy direction into tangible, bankable assets. Our industrial parks serve as spatial anchors of development, supporting supply chains, stimulating job creation and strengthening municipal economies.

What distinguishes MEGA is not simply ownership of industrial space. It is the

disciplined management of that space as a strategic asset class. Infrastructure is monitored, compliance is enforced, utilities are modernised and investor relationships are actively cultivated. The agency operates with authority, technical competence and an unwavering commitment to performance.

Mpumalanga stands at a pivotal moment. As global and domestic investors seek stable, well-managed regional hubs, MEGA offers a portfolio that is increasingly modern, financially sound and operationally reliable. The trajectory is upward. The governance framework is firm. The infrastructure is improving. The revenue base is expanding.

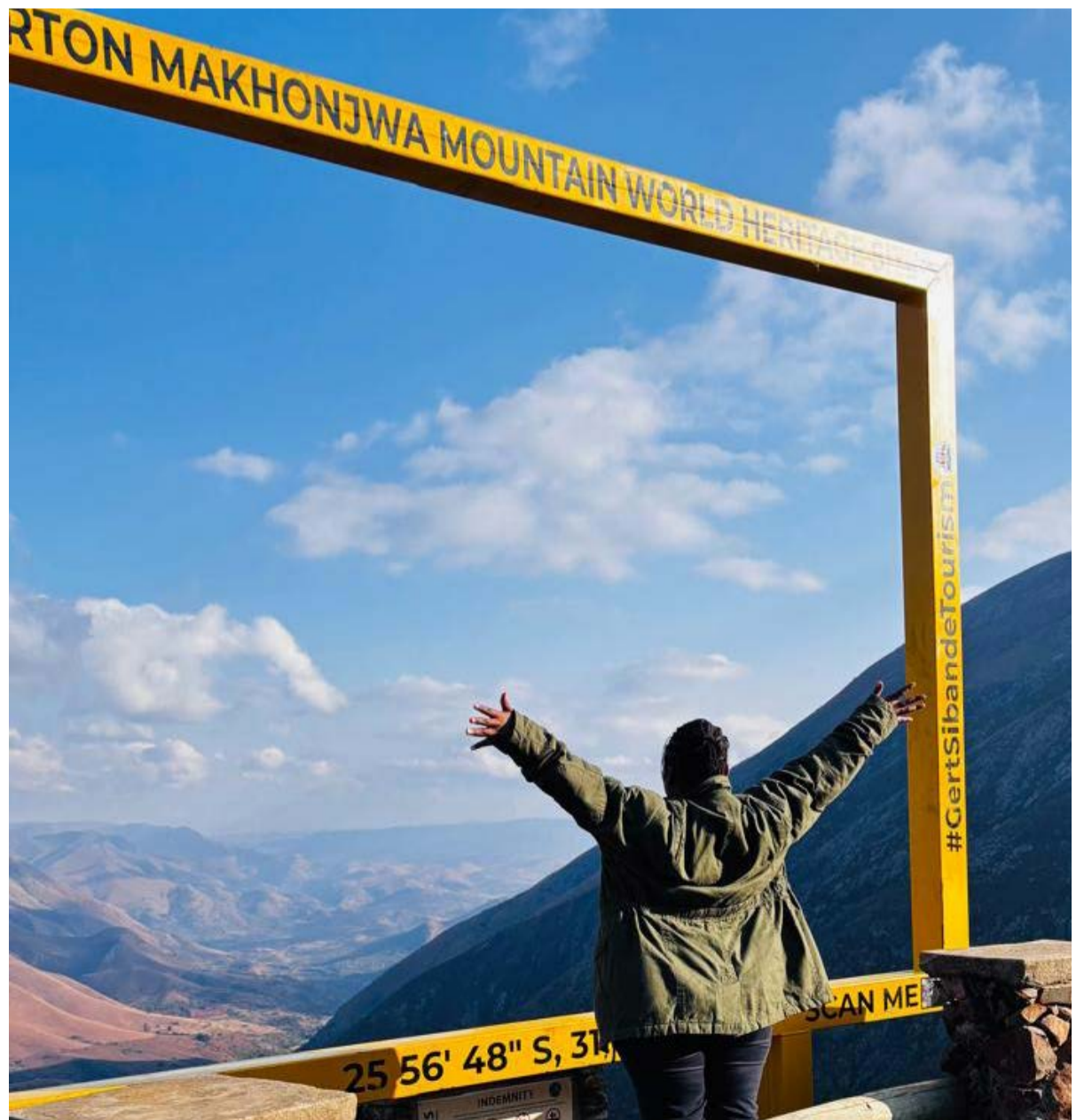
This is an investment environment defined by readiness and resilience. For investors seeking industrial, commercial or retail facilities within a province committed to growth, MEGA's revitalised property portfolio represents not only opportunity, but strategic advantage. Prime Infrastructure Built for Scale, Strategic Location Powered for Profit, Exponential Returns Positioned for Global Capital.

*MEGA is open for Business.....*

## TAKING CARE OF NATURE FOR HEALTHIER RETURNS

A balanced ecosystem is vital for human survival. Our basic needs such as clean water, breathable air, and food are all directly dependent on healthy natural systems. The availability of these essential resources relies entirely on the preservation of a balanced ecosystem. Mpumalanga stands at a pivotal moment in its developmental trajectory. Historically defined by its dual identity as South Africa's energy hub and a premier ecotourism destination, the province is now guided by Mpumalanga Vision 2030, a blueprint that envisions a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable society. Central to this vision is the understanding that economic growth cannot be separated from environmental stewardship.

Ms Nomcebo Kunene, Executive Manager for Biodiversity and Conservation at the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) emphasised that nature conservation is a critical pillar for sustaining the economy, ensuring food security, and preventing the extinction of wildlife species. The MTPA oversees nearly eighteen nature reserves as part of its constitutional mandate to conserve biodiversity. Beyond conservation, the agency is responsible for regulating and monitoring private individuals who handle wild animals. It also issues licences for wildlife handling, hunting, trading, and related activities.



Through the Mpumalanga Nature Conservation Act No. 10 of 1998, the MTPA encourages members of the public to obtain the necessary permits. No individual is permitted to keep wild animals or endangered plants within residential areas without authorisation, and permits are required to move, sell or handle wildlife. "It can be birds, impalas, rabbits or snakes, you need a permit to handle, sell or move them. You must obtain a permit," said Mr. April Lukhele, Manager Compliance.

According to Mr. Lukhele, licences can be obtained from MTPA offices across the province. The agency's head office is located in the City of Mbombela, with satellite offices in Bushbuckridge, eMalahleni, Tonga, Ermelo, Middelburg, Lydenburg, and KwaNdebele. Licence fees vary depending on the type of permit required, starting from as little as R150, 00. He further explained that individuals who wish to hunt wild animals must also possess valid permits. Anyone intending to hunt on privately owned land must obtain written consent from the landowner, in addition to a hunting permit issued by the MTPA.

The Mpumalanga Nature Conservation Act No. 10 of 1998 also prohibits the killing, hunting, or handling of snakes unless special provisions are made by the MTPA. The Act regulates wildlife, flora, and freshwater ecosystems, categorising fauna and flora

into schedules such as Specially Protected Game (including species like black rhino and pangolin), Protected Game (such as buffalo), and Ordinary Game that may be harvested under licence. It further prohibits destructive hunting methods, including the use of snares, poison, and automatic weapons, and protects indigenous plants such as cycads and aloes from unlicensed removal.

There have been frequent incidents in communities where snakes are killed or improperly handled. The MTPA urges the public to refrain from attacking or killing snakes. According to MTPA snake handler Mr. Chris Hobkirk, snakes become more aggressive when they feel threatened. While some individuals keep snakes as pets, this is only permissible if authorised in terms of the Act and supported by specialised training and valid permits. "If you want to keep or move exotic animals, you need a permit. There are invasive species that no one is allowed to keep because they are dangerous, such as the green iguana and the Burmese python," Hobkirk explained.

Species such as the Southern rock python require specialised handling, and ordinary members of the public are not permitted to keep them. Hobkirk further advised communities to contact trained local snake handlers or the nearest MTPA office when encountering snakes or other wild animals.

He added that the Reptile Recovery Group operates throughout Mpumalanga on a voluntary basis, providing 24-hour assistance to safely remove snakes from residential areas. Their contact details are publicly available online. The MTPA also has monitoring teams that conduct regular inspections to ensure permit compliance.

Scientific evidence shows that environmental degradation has far reaching consequences, including the loss of arable land, threats to food security, and reduced employment opportunities. This directly affects the tourism sector, as tourists are more likely to visit well maintained and environmentally protected destinations. Environmental degradation also poses serious health risks, including diseases linked to polluted water and air, which ultimately affect the quality of food consumed by communities.

Responding to these challenges, government has enacted legislation and established enforcement mechanisms. Agencies such as the MTPA and SANParks are mandated to conduct routine inspections, carry out criminal investigations where necessary, ensure compliance with conservation laws, and advocate for the prosecution of offenders. These efforts are essential to safeguarding nature for present and future generations.





## SUSTENANCE FUND FOR SPAZA SHOPS

The South African township economy is a vibrant R900 billion annual market comprising over 530 townships and 21 million consumers. While traditionally characterized by high informality, it is a crucial, resilient, and growing sector contributing approximately 6% to the nation's GDP through retail, manufacturing, and services. Key sectors encompasses more than 16 sectors, including spaza shops (backbone of informal retail), manufacturing, automotive, and tourism. Over 21 million consumers live in townships, representing a significant portion of South Africa's population.

Spaza shops play a crucial role in the township economies of South Africa, providing essential goods and services to local communities. These informal retail outlets not only aid in economic sustenance but also serve as a lifeline for many households. In a notable initiative to bolster this vital sector, the Spaza Shop Support Fund campaign, led by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) and the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), has recently made its way to Mpumalanga. Mpumalanga is no different from the rest of the country where this phenomenon is thriving. Economic Development and

Tourism MEC, Ms Jesta Sidell says the introduction of the Spaza Shop Support Fund reaffirms government's commitment to the township economy as a key driver of inclusive growth, job creation and spatial transformation in South Africa. MEC Sidell said this during Spaza Shop Support Fund (SSSF) Awareness Session, which took place in Kinross, in the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality.

The fund was announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in November 2025, and it aims to support formalisation and regulatory compliance, strengthen business sustainability and competitiveness, and enable spaza shops to transition beyond survivalist operations into viable and scalable enterprises. The SSSF Awareness is a countrywide initiative aimed at supporting Community Convenience Shops in townships, particularly spaza shops, which play a crucial role in South Africa's informal economy. The session also aimed at promoting and enhancing local control of spaza shops while improving compliance with food safety regulations.

"The introduction of the fund is both timely and strategic. It happens at a time when government, at all levels, is decisively repositioning the township and rural economy as a central pillar of

inclusive economic growth, employment creation, and spatial redress. The SSSF is therefore a deliberate corrective measure. It seeks to reclaim, rebuild, and revitalise the township and rural economy by placing South African-owned spaza shops at the centre of economic participation" MEC Sidell eagerly said.

Eligible spaza shops will benefit from the SSSF Awareness programme, which offers extensive assistance of up to R100,000 covering stock purchases and operating capital, upgrades to equipment and infrastructure, point-of-sale systems, fundamental digitalisation, business development help, financial management training, and support with compliance costs when relevant.

"Government recognises that when spaza shops grow, local economies grow. When spaza shops are sustainable, communities are stabilised. And when township enterprises thrive, the broader challenge of unemployment is directly confronted. This intervention is not merely about disbursing funds. It is about building compliant, resilient, and growth-oriented businesses that can withstand market pressures and contribute meaningfully to local economic development", concluded MEC Sidell.

## REGENERATING SMALL TOWNS, BUILDING STRONG FUTURES

The Amsterdam Small Town Regeneration (STR) Investment Summit 2026, hosted by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) at the Amsterdam Community Hall in Mkhondo Local Municipality on the 24th of February 2026, brought together leaders, investors, and development partners to showcase Amsterdam in Mpumalanga as a hub for investment opportunities.

The summit forms part of SALGA's ongoing Small Town Regeneration Programme, launched in 2014, which seeks to reposition small towns as competitive, sustainable, and inclusive drivers of local economic development. Purpose of the Summit: Unlocking opportunities for growth, jobs, and infrastructure.

In his address, Provincial Director of Operations at SALGA Mpumalanga, Dr Derrick Ndlovu, emphasized that the gathering is a strategic intervention to unlock opportunities that stimulate local economic growth, create jobs, and strengthen infrastructure. He noted that regeneration is not a one-day event but a long-term developmental process requiring sustained partnerships, strategic patience, and focused implementation. "Over the past decade, we have witnessed a remarkable shift from stagnation and underinvestment to renewed economic activity, strengthened local enterprise, improved infrastructure,

and restored civic pride," added Dr Ndlovu. Dr Ndlovu also said that through this initiative, they aim to highlight investment prospects across sectors such as tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, and infrastructure. "We want to ensure that local communities benefit directly from these opportunities, and that regeneration translates into improved livelihoods, stronger service delivery, and long-term prosperity."

On small towns as the heartbeat of communities, regeneration is about dignity and opportunity. Councillor Makola, Member of the SALGA Economic Development & Job Creation working group, delivered a word of encouragement, citing that, "We meet here at a time when our municipalities face both challenges and opportunities.

Unemployment, service delivery pressures, and limited resources are realities we cannot ignore. Yet, within these challenges lies the potential for innovation, resilience, and growth." Cllr. Makola also said that small towns are the heartbeat of communities - and went on to urge stakeholders to think boldly, act collaboratively, and commit to building towns that are vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable.

### KEY THEMES & INSIGHTS •

**Investment Attraction:** Positioning Amsterdam and the wider Mkhondo region as competitive destinations for investors.

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Unlocking opportunities to commercialize municipal properties and strengthen infrastructure.
- **Local Enterprise Development:** Supporting entrepreneurs, small businesses, and youth-led initiatives.
- **Tourism & Agriculture:** Leveraging natural assets and agricultural potential to drive growth.
- **Sustainability:** Ensuring regeneration translates into long-term prosperity and improved livelihoods.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Regeneration is not a one-day event—it is a sustained journey of transformation.
- Collaboration between government, business, and civil society is essential for success.
- Focused, patient implementation yields durable results that communities can feel.

The summit concluded with a strong call to action: to move beyond dialogue into concrete partnerships that will transform Amsterdam and the Mkhondo region into vibrant, resilient, and inclusive communities. Delegates left with renewed determination to make small towns' strong towns' places where opportunity thrives and every citizen feels the impact of development.





## PROVINCE AND UMP ON A GROUND-BREAKING TREATY

*“A move to reform agriculture and technological advancement”*

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government and the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) are to collaborate on major projects geared towards the revolution of the agricultural sector and the economy in general. UMP Vice-Chancellor, Professor Thenjiwe Meyiwa and Council Chairperson, Mr Sabelo Mahlalela presented a hybrid rice project and Artificial Intelligence (AI) mastery training programme to the Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu at the EXCO board room.

The presentation signifies the collaboration of the two institutions as a catalyst of economic

growth through agriculture and technology. According to Prof. Meyiwa the rice project is anchored in the objectives of promoting sustainable agriculture, innovation and applied research, and the much-needed job creation. “200 000 agricultural specialists will be trained to create a new generation of experts that are skilled in modern techniques. 388 800 employment opportunities will be created, thus making the project, a job massification programme in the province,” Prof. Meyiwa asserted.

It is envisaged that R40.32 billion will be invested in the rice project. Mpumalanga

Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu welcomed the University’s plan as a game-changer. He says the project will boost Mpumalanga’s aspiration to make the three priorities of the 7th administration a reality. A memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed to guide departments on areas of collaboration. An AI programme aimed at strengthening education through teacher training, curriculum support, research and innovation in Mpumalanga was also announced.

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# MASS VACCINATIONS AMID FMD OUTBREAK



**A**griculture is the foundation of human civilization, essential for providing the global food supply, driving economic stability, and supplying raw materials for industries. It acts as a primary employer and poverty reduction tool, while sustainable practices preserve ecosystems and biodiversity. Agriculture is vital for maintaining food security and sustaining life.

Recently, 21 Compulsory Community Service (CCS) veterinarians were officially welcomed by MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Ms Khethiwe Moeketsi on 10 February 2026, who are on a 12-month long service period, deployed to strengthen animal health and supporting the agricultural sector with their professional experience. The young professionals, who immediately hit the ground running at State Vet facilities across the province, came at a time when their services were

desperately needed in the wake of the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak.

The CCS programme, started by the national Department of Agriculture 11 years ago, aims at benefitting far flung rural communities with the scarce veterinary services, ensuring animal health services, supporting both farmers and pet owners alike. "These Vets are in the forefront during our massive FMD vaccination campaign. They came at the right time and we expect them to play a key role in the fight against the disease", said MEC Moeketsi.

The official start of the inoculations coincided with President Cyril Ramaphosa's 2026 State of the Nation Address on 12 February 2026, when he declared Foot and Mouth Disease a national disaster. At the time, the President said FMD has already decimated the cattle industry across a number of provinces. This prompted government to procure FMD

vaccine doses that were made available to affected province, allowing for the vaccination campaign to start in earnest.

Meanwhile, MEC Moeketsi has called on cattle farmers to play their part in assisting government in its efforts to curb the spread of FMD. This, at Siyathemba location in Balfour on 13 February 2026, where she kickstarted the provincial mass vaccination of cattle against the disease. At the time, Dipaleseng had been declared an epicentre in the province with 35 confirmed FMD outbreaks, while 149 outbreaks had already been confirmed throughout the Gert Sibande District Municipality.

As at 24 February 2026, the province was sitting with all local municipalities in Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts infected, with the hotspot being the Victor Khanye and Dipaleseng Local Municipalities. There were 136 confirmed cases, and 97 suspected cases that were still awaiting

confirmation. Over 107 farms and 122 farmers were already affected in Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts. Within two weeks of the start of the vaccination campaign, the Department managed to vaccinate just over 110 000 cattle.

MEC Moeketsi is adamant that a lot of ground will be covered to salvage the herds of cattle that are still free from FMD infection. She maintains that farmers will continue receiving the necessary assistance during this time, including:

#### *Veterinary and Technical Support*

- Deployment of state veterinary teams for diagnosis, surveillance, and monitoring.

- Implementation of quarantine and movement control measures.
- Guidance on biosecurity protocols to prevent further spread.
- Ring and/or targeted vaccination campaigns where applicable.

#### *Vaccination Support*

- Provision of FMD vaccines at NO COST with logistical support for vaccination campaigns.

#### *Biosecurity Assistance*

- Advisory services on farm-level biosecurity improvements.
- In some cases, provision of disinfectants or other biosecurity materials.

#### *Movement Permits and Trade Support*

- Controlled movement permits for animals/products where risk assessments allow.
- Support in meeting regulatory requirements to resume trade once restrictions are lifted.

#### *Awareness and Compliance Support*

- Continued farmer education and updates through radio, print media, social media, workshops and one-on-one engagements.
- Ongoing compliance monitoring to ensure control measures are adhered to.



## GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY CONSTRUCTION OF GABOSCH DAM AMSTERDAM, MPUMALANGA.

#### PROJECT NAME

AMSTERDAM/ SHEEPMOOR BULK WATER SUPPLY SCHEME: PHASE 4

START DATE: YEAR 2023

END DATE: YEAR 2026

#### LOCATION

MKHONDO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY - WARD 5 AND WARD 19

#### COMMUNITIES TO BENEFIT

19837 HOUSEHOLDS FROM AMSTERDAM/MVELO/KWATHANDEKA AND SURROUNDING AREAS

JOBS CREATED TO DATE : 103

SMME'S BENEFITTING : 14

PROJECT VALUE: R416, 746, 816.97 EXPENDITURE TO DATE: R265,488,244.25

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS ON-SITE AS AT: 31/01/2026: 62%

#### CURRENT WORK ACTIVITIES

LEFT WING DAM WALL CONSTRUCTION: BLOCKS 3 - 14 (CONCRETE SECTION), RIGHT WING RETAINING WALL - BULK EXCAVATION IN PROGRESS: - BLOCKS 1 - 2, DAM WALL RIGHT WING: BULK EXCAVATION FOR FOUNDATION (ROCKFILL & ASPHALT SECTION), CONSTRUCTION OF RIVER CROSSING NO. 2, CONSTRUCTION OF DAM ACCESS ROAD, AND CONSTRUCTION OF ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.



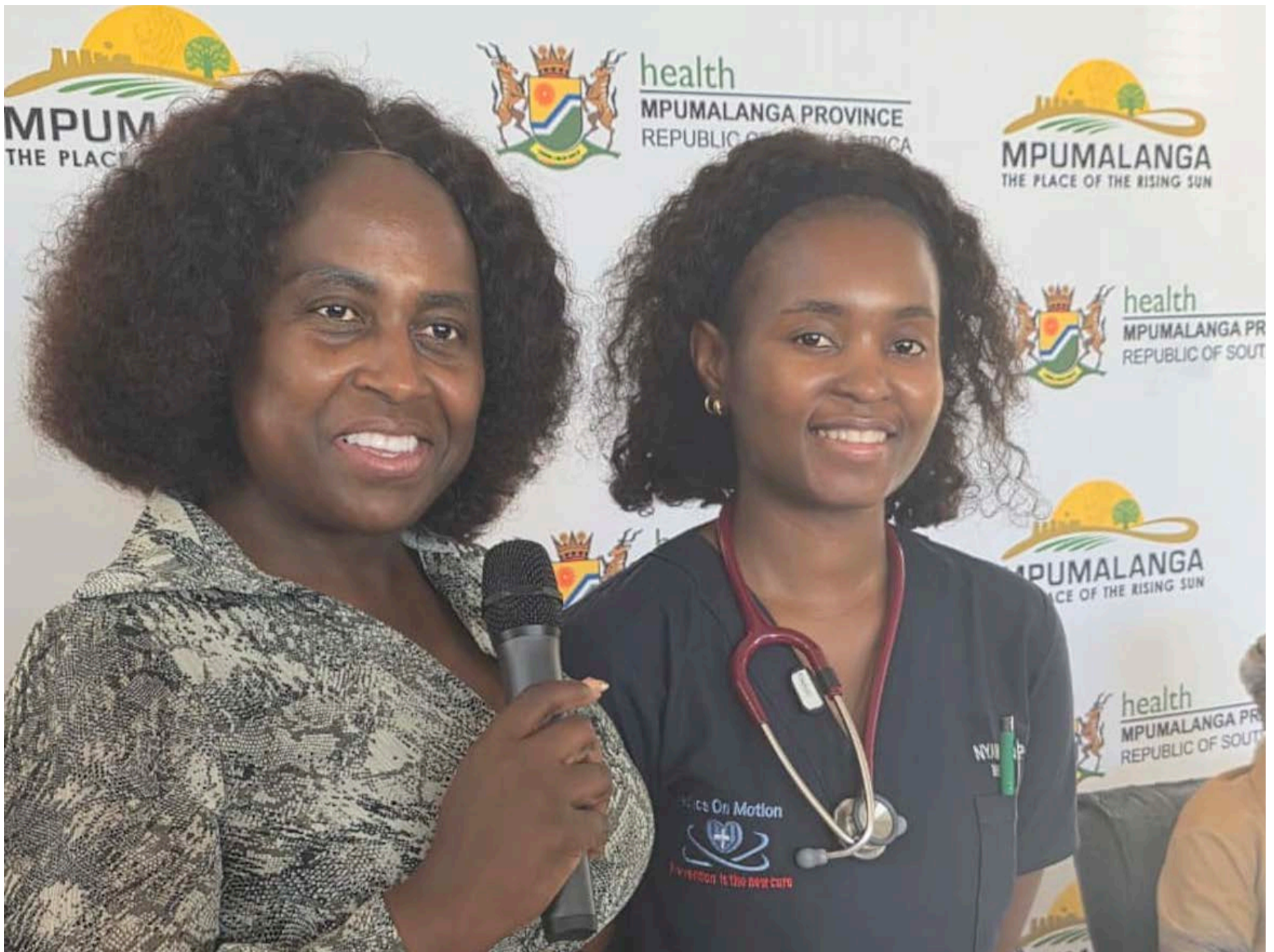
[www.gsibande.gov.za](http://www.gsibande.gov.za)



"A community driven district of excellence & development"



## UMEHLUKO WEZEMPILO EBANTWINI TRAIN MOVES ON



The Mpumalanga Department of Health has embarked on a deliberate and strategic placement of medical doctors within Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities as part of health system strengthening and service re-engineering. This intervention aligns with the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill, the Primary Health Care Re-Engineering Strategy, and South Africa's commitment to Universal Health Coverage, ensuring that all citizens have access to quality, affordable, and comprehensive health services closer to where they live. This clearly is an indication that the "Umehluke weZempilo Ebantwini" train continued to move in full swing as the department of health is introducing fulltime doctors at primary health care level.

Historically, PHC facilities have been nurse-led, resulting in avoidable referrals, congestion at district hospitals, and bypassing of PHC facilities by communities seeking higher-level care.

The appointment of doctors at PHC level addresses these systemic challenges. The placement of doctors in PHC facilities is driven by the following considerations:

- To strengthen clinical governance and quality of care at the first point of contact;
- To support NHI readiness, where PHC facilities serve as the foundation of the health system;
- To reduce unnecessary referrals and self-referrals (bypassing) to hospitals;
- To improve early diagnosis, treatment, and continuity of care;
- To manage chronic diseases, maternal and child health, and non-communicable diseases more effectively at community level;
- To decongest district and regional hospitals, allowing them to focus on specialized and emergency care; and
- This intervention ensures that PHC facilities function as comprehensive service delivery points, rather than referral-only centres.

The MEC for Health in Mpumalanga, Ms Sasekani Manzini, has started to introduce the twenty-five permanently appointed full-time doctors at primary health care facilities to communities. "As the country gears itself for the full roll-out of the National Health Insurance, as the department, we are already positioning ourselves to ensure that the initiative finds us ready and as a result, becomes a success, in line with our mandate of creating a platform for a Healthy Developed Society, and this we do, with the understanding that we cannot leave anyone behind", said MEC Manzini

We wish our medical doctors well, as they embark on their journey to serve the communities with professionalism, dignity, and diligence, and we also urge the communities to be cooperative and use these services optimally. Manzini emphasises the point that nurses will continue to serve patients, working together with the doctors to improve the healthcare services.



## AN APPEAL TO PROTECT THE ELDERERS

**T**he holy book - bible - places high value on respecting elders, viewing it as a reflection of reverence for God and a recognition of accumulated wisdom. The book of Leviticus 19:32 commands individuals to “rise up before the grey-headed’ and honour the aged. It emphasises honour, humility, and a caring for older generations within the community. The very same scripture dictates that one should stand in the presence of the elderly and honour them, linking this action directly to fearing God.

Before we get carried away and enveloped by the power of the word, let us bring it closer to our backyard. South Africa recognises that older persons are vital members of our society, and protects them in law through the Older Persons Act. Section 27 of the Constitution provides that everyone has the right

to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care. The Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison recently conducted an awareness campaign at Mathla Moriri Mosweu, a centre for elderly people in Madubaduba (Kameelrivier), Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality. The campaign aimed to educate elders on protecting themselves from crime and actively participating in the fight against crime.

The centre, established in 2010 by Mr Richard Mukansi, provides daily exercises and activities for older people. “We teach them how to read and write to prevent vulnerability to scams,” Mukansi said. Crimes affecting older people include scams, theft of pension monies, and abuse by families or strangers.

Ms Busi Ngoma from the Department emphasised raising awareness about

health conditions like Alzheimer’s and encouraging elders to be vigilant. Sergeant Rosinah Makena of Vaalbank SAPS shared services available for abuse victims, including the Victim Friendly Facility. She urged elders to report abuse and seek protection orders. “If you don’t get help from a police officer, ask for the station commander,” Makena said. “Our doors are always open to assist you. Know your rights and report any police officer who doesn’t help.”

Protecting the elderly involves safeguarding them from physical, emotional, and financial abuse through legal frameworks like the Older Persons Act and community vigilance. Key measures include recognizing signs of abuse (isolation, fear, and financial changes), securing legal protection via powers of attorney, and fostering supportive environments

## IGNITING PASSION FOR READING



In a vibrant celebration of literacy and storytelling, learners from communities across Matsamo in the Nkomazi Local Municipality participated in the 2026 World Read Aloud Day programme hosted by the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, an uplifting initiative aimed at promoting a lifelong love of reading among young people. The day's activities began at Lugebhuta High School, where teachers, pupils and community members gathered for the official kick-off. The atmosphere was filled with excitement as internationally acclaimed South African storyteller and poet, Dr. Gcina Mhlophe captivated learners with the recitation of heartfelt poetry and excerpts that highlighted the magic of words and the joy of stories.

Following this inspiring opening, the BookHive team, part of the broader literacy and culture programme supported by organisations such as the National Library of South Africa (NLSA) and Nal'ibali led a series of read-aloud sessions. Pupils were invited to listen to and engage with a range of stories, fostering both language development and imagination. Through

interactive readings and group activities, learners were encouraged not just to hear stories but to feel connected to them and to one another.

The programme was part of a larger day of events hosted in Matsamo, including community reading sessions held at the Matsamo Community Hall. These sessions brought together children and adults alike to explore the power of storytelling and to recognise how reading aloud can strengthen comprehension, build confidence, and deepen cultural ties. Organisers emphasised that World Read Aloud Day is more than just an annual event - it's a reminder of how shared reading experiences can transform education and open doors to new worlds for young learners. By placing books and voices at the centre of the celebration, the programme reaffirmed the belief that literacy thrives when stories are not only written but shared out loud in classrooms, homes and communities.

As part of the celebration, the Department handed over a collection of books to various schools in the Matsamo area. The

donation aims to enrich school libraries, improve access to reading materials, and encourage learners to develop consistent reading habits both inside and outside the classroom. Officials from the Department highlighted that access to quality reading material is essential in improving literacy levels and academic performance. By donating books during the Read Aloud event, the Department not only celebrated the joy of storytelling but also ensured that the impact of the programme would extend beyond the day's activities.

Teachers and learners welcomed the donation with enthusiasm, expressing gratitude for the additional resources that will support teaching and learning. The initiative reaffirmed the Department's dedication to empowering young people through education, culture, and the transformative power of reading. The Read Aloud Celebration in Matsamo stands as a testament to the importance of partnerships between government, schools, and the community in building a strong and sustainable reading culture across Mpumalanga.



# WORLD TB DAY 2026

## Yes! We can End TB!

### Led by Countries! Powered by People!

#### INTENSIFYING THE FIGHT AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

**T**uberculosis (TB) remains one of the most infectious diseases affecting humanity. Despite advances in prevention and treatment, TB continues to claim lives across the globe. An estimated 10.7 million people were infected in 2024 worldwide, while 1.23 million people succumbed to death. In South Africa, the burden remains substantial, notwithstanding recorded progress to reduce TB infections. Approximately 249 000 people were infected in 2024, while 54 000 deaths were recorded (World Health Organization).

Mpumalanga is not immune from the impact of the disease, with 7.8 percent infections. The Ehlanzeni District carries the heaviest burden of MDR-TB, signalling a serious public health threat that could undermine efforts to eliminate TB. It is against this backdrop that World TB Day is commemorated each year to raise awareness about the devastating impact of TB.

In Mpumalanga the Provincial World TB Day Commemoration was held on 14 March 2026 at Sy Mthimunye Stadium in eMalahleni Local Municipality, with government leaders, healthcare workers, TB survivors, and community members attending, under the theme: “Yes! We can End TB! Led by Countries! Powered by People!”

MEC for Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (coGHSTA), Mr Speed Mashilo addressed on behalf of Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu. “TB can lead to stigma and discrimination, further isolating individuals and making it harder for them to access healthcare and support. Let us not discriminate against or stigmatize people living with TB and those with HIV, because you never know what the future holds for you. Let us accept them as full members of the community,” he enthused.

Mpumalanga is hard at work to end TB by 2030, in line with national targets, and as such the province is intensifying testing of people for TB. The “End TB Campaign”, targeting 5 million people nationally, is underway. This has resulted in 390 329 TB tests and 18 227 people on treatment. A significant portion of the population is still missing. Research studies have established that more women are testing compared to men, yet the latter shows higher positivity rates, thus proving that men are accessing services late, and increasing the risk of transmission.

To achieve set targets the province is utilising mobile clinics with TB testing capabilities and conducting community-based screening in high-burden areas. In addition community-based screening are undertaken in high-risk areas, while conducting digital chest X-rays for early detection. The Mpumalanga Department of Health urges all residents to take simple but vital steps in the fight against TB.

Exposure	Tuberculosis infection	Tuberculosis disease				
<p>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</p> <p>Lung</p> <p>Heart</p>			<p>Blood cough</p>	<p>Fever</p>	<p>Chest pain</p>	<p>Chills</p>
<p>Risks: local prevalence, indoor crowding, and poor ventilation and light</p> <p>Symptoms: none</p> <p>Contagious: no</p> <p>Pathology: no</p> <p>Microbiological tests: negative</p> <p>Tuberculosis infection tests: negative</p>	<p>Risk modifiers: genetic resistance and earlier BCG vaccination</p> <p>Symptoms: none</p> <p>Contagious: no</p> <p>Macroscopic pathology: no</p> <p>Microbiological tests: negative</p> <p>Tuberculosis infection tests: usually positive</p>	<p>Risk: time since infection (&lt;2 years)</p> <p>Host factors: HIV, silicosis, dialysis, immunosuppression, diabetes, alcohol misuse, smoking, and undernourishment</p> <p>Symptoms: yes or no</p> <p>Contagious: yes or no</p> <p>Pathology: yes, lungs or elsewhere</p> <p>Microbiological tests: positive or negative</p> <p>Tuberculosis infection tests: positive or negative</p>	<p>Long term cough</p>	<p>Fatigue</p>	<p>Night sweats</p>	<p>Weight loss</p>



## ACCESSING SOCIAL RELIEF OF DISTRESS DURING DISASTER AND BEYOND

**T**he recent floods and heavy rains in parts of the country in which affected parts of the province badly did not just damaged homes only, twenty people lost their lives, individuals and families lost their valuable belongings. As a result, more families and individuals needed (SRD) and other services rendered by the department of Social Development and its entities in the province.

During the period of disaster which affected mostly the Ehlanzeni District in particular the Bushbuckridge and Nkomazi Municipalities, The Department provided a humanitarian relief in the form of social relief of distress and psychosocial support to the affected families. According to the Ms Cecilia Maibuko Senior Manager for Social Welfare Programme said, "Majority of the families affected by the floods were profiled and provided with psychosocial support, post disaster counselling, and other services rendered by social workers and essential workers during disaster"

"During the catastrophe the department partnered with the private sector entities such as Vodacom Foundation, Old Mutual, Standard Bank and Non-Profit Organisations such as the Gift of the Givers by donating food parcels of which more than 100 families benefited from the partnership of the department and the private sector in the province," said Ms Mazibuko.

The Department and the South African Social Security Agency regards (SRD) interventions as temporal provision of assistance by government to individuals or families in need of (SRD) and the qualification criteria includes amongst the following:

- You need help while you are waiting for your children grants to be processed;
- A crisis or disaster has occurred e.g. house has burned down;
- You don't qualify for the grant, and you are in desperate situation;
- You are unable to work for a period of less than six months because you are medical unfit;
- You are unable to get maintenance

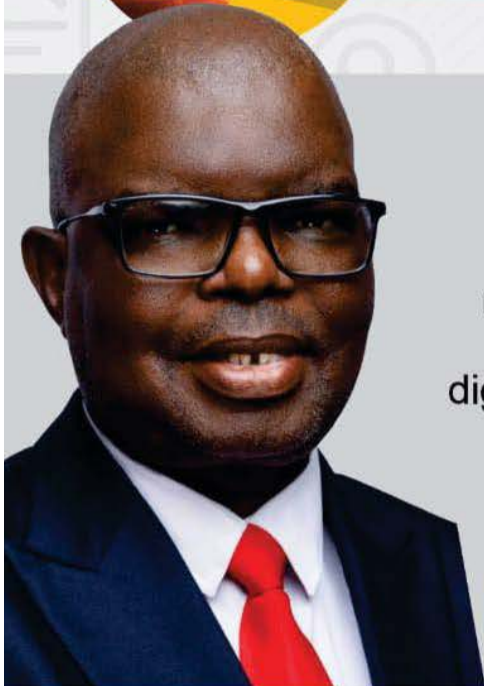
from the other parent of your child or children;

- The breadwinner has been sent to prison for a short period of time (less than six months);
- The breadwinner has died; and
- You have been affected by a disaster, but the area or community in which you live has not been declared as a disaster area.

The (SRD) may be in the form of a food parcel, or a food voucher which usually is for the duration of three months. In the last financial year, a total of 13 424 individuals, benefited from the Social Relief of Distress Programme and this financial year the department is planning to provide for 10, 200 people with Social Relief of Distress interventions.

The Department of Social Development is appealing to the communities who need the Social Relief of Distress to visit its nearest offices or make use of the toll-free number 0800 204 098 or apply at the nearest South African Social Security office or visit <https://srd.sassa.gov.za>

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

**E-RECRUITMENT**  
PORTAL

The new provincial e-recruitment portal marks another milestone in our business automation journey. Building on recent digitalisation of leave management, financial statements, e-submissions and supplier invoice payments

MEC for Finance: Mr Bonakele Majuba



<https://erecruitment.mpg.gov.za>

**E-RECRUITMENT PLATFORM TO BOOST TRANSPARENCY**

In today's ever changing environment, doing business requires institutions and individuals to keep up with technological advancements. Technology can help reshape economies to be more competitive, resilient and sustainable. The advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has ushered in an era of rapid technological advancements, fundamentally transforming the landscape of economies across the globe.

Not to be left behind, the Mpumalanga Provincial Treasury is about to launch an innovative electronic recruitment portal, designed to modernise and streamline human resource management practices across the province. Developed on the Centre for Public Sector Innovation (CPSI) infrastructure, the

e-recruitment platform aims to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility in public sector recruitment.

The project is currently being piloted in three departments: Provincial Treasury, Office of the Premier, and Public Works, Roads and Transport. The system has shown promising results and strong institutional support. Under the leadership of Head Official, Ms Gugu Mashiteng, a dedicated multi-disciplinary technical team was assembled to drive the project. The team includes experts from Interlinked Finance Systems, Information Technology, Risk Management, Corporate Services, and Communication, ensuring the system's technical and governance aspects are robust and aligned with regulatory requirements.

Mr Matthew Mkasi, convenor of the technical team, commended the team's collaboration and dedication. "The level of commitment demonstrated by the team has been exceptional. We're determined to complete the remaining critical components of the portal and ensure it is fully optimised for long-term sustainability," he said.

The portal is expected to enhance fairness and transparency in recruitment, standardise application processes, improve record management, and provide a user-friendly platform for applicants. It will also reduce reliance on paper-based systems, supporting sustainability and cost-containment objectives.

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
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## TOUCHING LIVES DURING EXCO OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality is situated in the North-Western part of Nkangala District, Mpumalanga. It is predominantly rural, comprising of 36 villages. With a notable population growth from 249 705 in 2011 to 324 855 in 2022, the municipality is ranked the sixth largest in Mpumalanga. The youth accounts for the 61.2 percent of the population. Low economic growth and limited diversification in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and small enterprises continue to constrain development.

These socio-economic challenges were discussed extensively during the three-day Executive Council Outreach programme, led by the Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu. He was accompanied by MECs and Executive Mayors, who conducted direct engagements with residents, while sharing with them information that drive change. During the engagements, Premier Ndlovu reiterated the commitment of the Provincial Government to serve the residents of Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality through the delivery of services. This brought renewed hope to the residents.

During an engagement with residents at the Nokaneng Sports Ground, Premier Ndlovu and MECs outlined key interventions aimed at improving service delivery. These include ongoing water infrastructure projects, from the Water Treatment Works to the Kuilen Reservoir, aimed at enhancing water supply to affected communities. A commitment to implement more than ten projects, valued over R162 million in the 2026/27 financial year by various departments, was also made.

The Premier also acknowledged the high unemployment rate in the municipality and outlined initiatives to address it. "A major hybrid rice project and agro-processing initiatives, established through a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Mpumalanga, are expected to create up to 388 000 job opportunities across the province. The anticipated Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market is also set to support approximately 150 000 small-scale farmers," the Premier emphasised.

Further economic interventions include the Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA), which facilitated 135 job opportunities through the funding of SMMEs

during the 2024/25 financial year. Through the Premier's Youth Development Fund (PYDF), R10 million has been invested in five youth-owned enterprises.

For service delivery and infrastructure development, the government committed to electrify 438 households, build two new clinics to improve healthcare access, and road infrastructure upgrades at Katjibane, Nokaneng, and Senotlelo. The outreach programme also delivered immediate benefits to residents, with the Premier handing over wheelchairs, sports equipment, and school shoes to learners, and title deeds to beneficiaries.

Residents expressed appreciation for the government's hands-on approach. "I would like to thank the Premier and his cabinet. As a young woman in grain farming, I stand proud today to have benefitted from the agriculture programme through land support. I am now able to farm commercially in efforts to end poverty and create employment. I urge all young people to seize the opportunities offered by our caring Provincial government," asserted Mmina Libeya from Marapyane.



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**SALGA**  
Inspiring service delivery



# GSDM INVESTS IN GIRLS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE

## *“Building Tomorrow’s Innovators”*

**T**his Pop-Up Lab left me with a new interest in science, before this experience I wanted to be a Gynaecologist but after engaging with the exhibitors, I want to be a Microbiologist.

These were the heartfelt words of one of the learners who attended a Pop-Up Science Lab hosted by Gert Sibande District Municipality (GSDM) at Mayflower Community Hall in Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality (CALLM) on 11 February.

The hall was filled with curiosity, excitement and discovery as young learners moved from station to station, engaging with exhibitors, asking bold questions and seeing science come alive before their eyes. The Pop-Up Laboratory was held in celebration of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

The event brought together learners from four local schools in Empuluzi to explore the exciting world of science, technology, engineering and innovation. The initiative was aimed at inspiring young minds, particularly young girls, to pursue careers in science-related fields, while breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes that continue to limit women and girls participating in science. In doing so, the programme directly

advances national priorities of promoting gender equality, building human capital and strengthening participation in STEM fields as outlined in government’s Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP).

Cllr Snana Dlamini, MMC for Community Safety Services at CALLM, emphasised the importance of empowering women and girls through education, innovation and equal access to opportunities. Both municipalities reaffirmed government’s commitment to creating platforms that nurture talent, encourage academic excellence and promote gender equality in science and technology. This commitment speaks directly to the National Development Plan Vision 2030 and the MTDP priorities of improving education outcomes, advancing skills development and preparing young people to participate meaningfully in a modern, innovation-driven economy.

The programme featured a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Design Challenge to spark creativity, problem solving and innovation, with an atmosphere of teamwork, determination and celebration evident throughout the day. Learners confidently presented their projects to judges, demonstrating not only scientific understanding but growing self-belief. Prizes were awarded to participating schools and

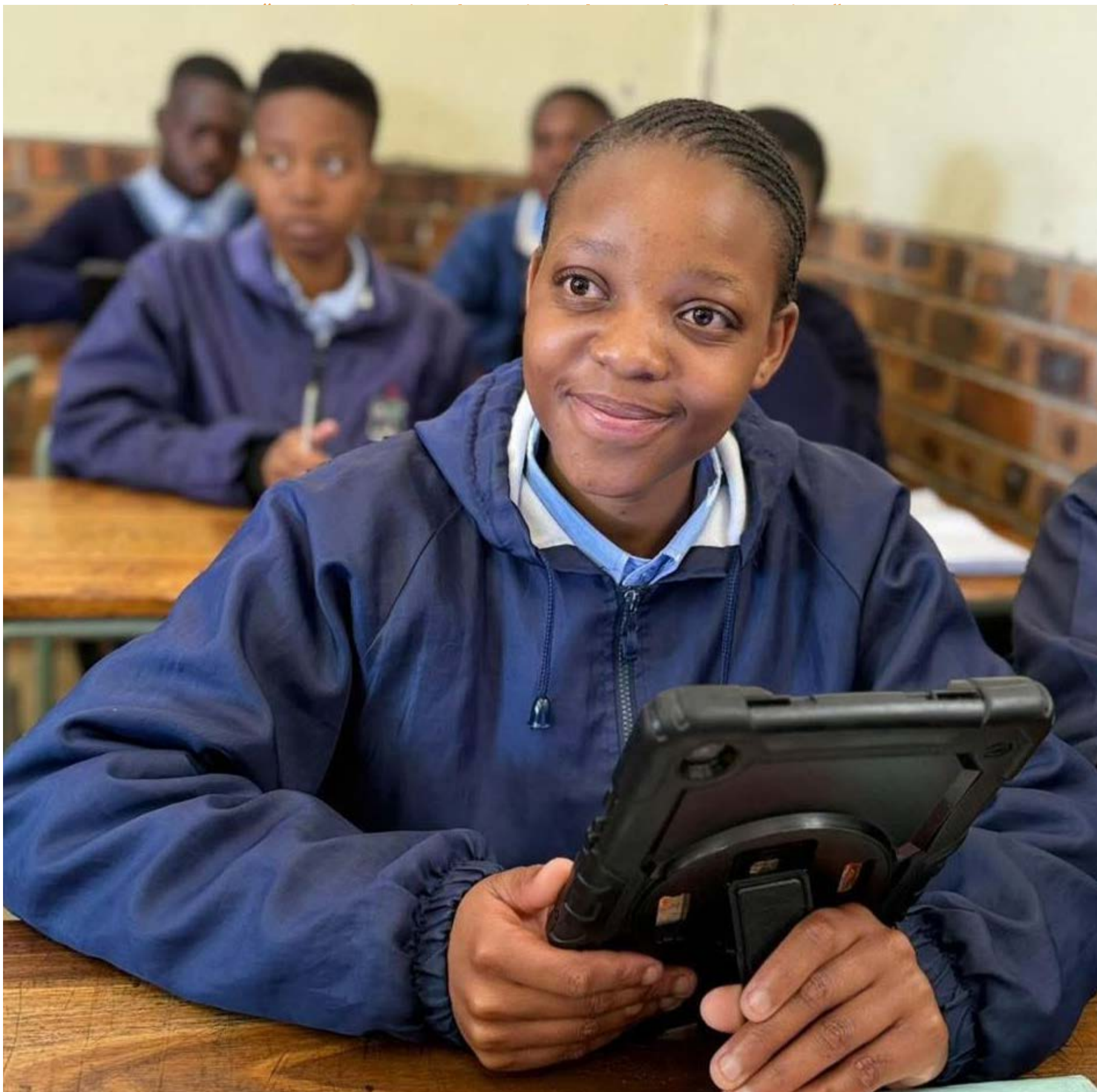
learners, with the number one spot going to Tisiteni Combined School. Prizes included a certificate of participation, a cash prize of R5000 for the school and Volcano Headphones for the girls who worked on the project. The cheers and applause that followed reflected a powerful moment of achievement and collective pride.

The Pop-Up Science Lab forms part of the district’s broader efforts to invest in youth development and skills advancement, ensuring that the next generation is equipped to contribute meaningfully to economic growth, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing. By exposing learners to practical science, research and innovation at an early stage, the Municipality is strengthening the district’s future skills pipeline, supporting transformation in critical sectors and contributing to national objectives of inclusive growth, sustainable development and gender equity.

The GSDM extended its gratitude to all stakeholders, educators, exhibitors and learners who participated in making the event a successful and impactful one, reinforcing that when government, communities and partners collaborate, meaningful change begins at grassroots level and resonates far beyond the district.



## THE RISE OF TECHNOLOGY IN MPUMALANGA SCHOOLS



**T**echnology is rapidly reshaping education across the world, and Mpumalanga province has taken bold steps to modernize its schooling system. Over the past few years, the provincial government has introduced a range of digital initiatives designed to enhance teaching and learning, reduce educational inequalities, and align the province with 21st century global standards.

The cornerstone of Mpumalanga's digital education strategy is the Ubhlebusile E Learning Programme, officially launched on 05 April 2022 at Ubhlebusile Secondary School in Mkhondo Local Municipality.

The launch coincided with the rollout of a massive distribution of devices, 55,000 learner tablets, and 6,700 laptops for teachers, all pre loaded with offline ready educational software and e content.

This initiative is designed to improve digital access for learners in quintile 1-3 schools, ensure Grade 12 learners receive free monthly data for accessing e learning material and bring schools up to the standards of the Fourth Industrial Revolution by integrating digital tools into classroom practice. This digital connectivity allows teachers and learners to study from anywhere; school, home, or while traveling with an advantage of enabling a continuous and flexible learning environment.

### *Technology as a Catalyst for Educational Equality*

The province's commitment to digital transformation extends beyond device distribution. The programme aims to address long standing inequalities by providing under resourced schools with the same digital tools available to wealthier communities.

"The Ubhlebusile initiative seeks to revolutionize education in alignment with national and international standards, as well as the goals of the Strategic Framework for Schooling 2030, Mpumalanga Vision 2030, and the African Union Agenda 2063. We attribute the improved Grade 12 performance

partly to the effective utilisation of e-learning and teaching devices. The significant improvement from 79% in 2023 to 86.55% in 2025 is also linked to the maturing of the e-learning programme introduced in 2022," said the MEC for Education Ms. Lindi Masina. The observation is that teachers have reported substantial improvements in curriculum delivery because of the digital e learning platforms and in addition to that schools aligned with the Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy have particularly benefited from the digital resources accessible around the clock.

#### **Connectivity Partnerships: Expanding Access to Digital Content**

The e learning programme is supported through a collaboration with major ICT partners such as Telkom, Vodacom, Cell C and MTN to provide data solutions to teachers and learners ensuring that online learning tools could be accessed consistently. These efforts are helping bridge the digital divide, especially in rural and previously marginalized communities.

The 2025 NTA overall best teacher, Mr. Thulane Sibiyi said, "The introduction of technology signifies more than a digital upgrade as it is a change in the culture of teaching and learning. Teachers are now empowered with tools that make it simpler and easier for lesson planning

and delivery moving from chalk and paper to digital platform while saving time."

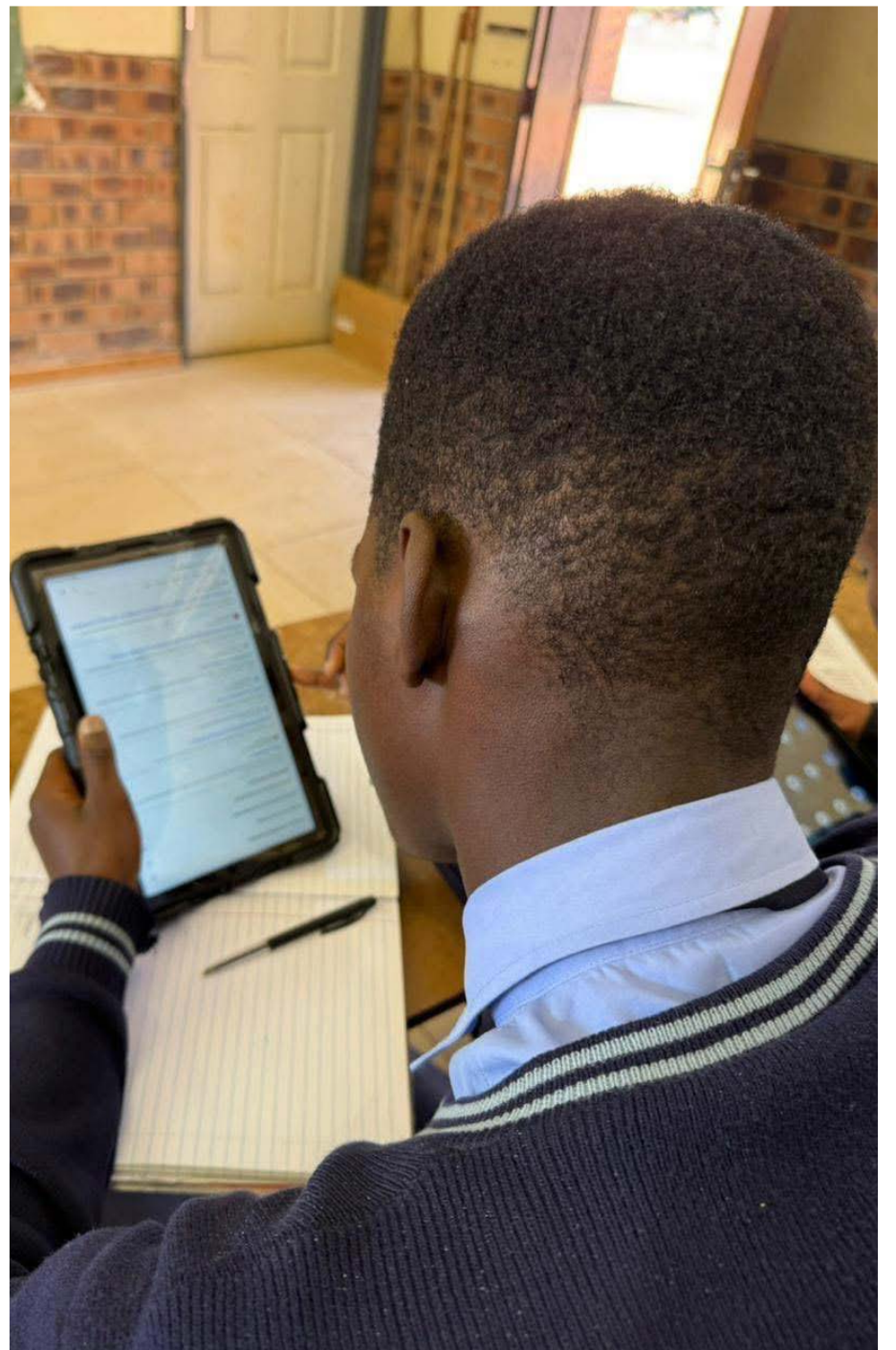
Mpumalanga's digital e learning programme is a shift to the future and is driven by the motto; One learner, One Tablet bridging the digital divide, improving quality, and setting a strong foundation for 21st century education. The province has pioneered the utilisation of tablets for all grades (grades 8 to 12) in eight secondary schools in the province, two from each of the four education districts. The schools are Khumbula secondary school and Driekoppies combined school in Ehlanzeni District, KwaNdebele Science School and Ramoshidi Technical School in Nkangala District, Izimbali boarding school and Ubuhlebusile secondary school in Gert Sibande District as well as Acorns to Oaks and Makhosana Manzini in Bohlabela District.

This digital dispensation has received high praises from teachers, parents and learners to that effect the principal of Driekoppies combined school, Mr. Musawenkosi Victor Mthembu said, "The learners are making good use of the tablets to support their learning. With the Edukite application, the learners can follow lessons and complete tasks more effectively because they can learn through watching videos, while Snappify allows easy access to textbooks and other reading

materials. This has helped the learner to participate more actively in class and improve their understanding of the work."

In admiration of the e-learning programme, Mkhathshwa Ziyanda, a grade 10 learner at Driekoppies Combined said, "The Gadgets really help us learners a lot when it comes to viewing pictures, diagrams and videos of lessons on the tablets. At some point when the teachers print copies of notes the pictures would come out blur. Now teachers would direct you to the picture or send a link to view the picture. The tablets give us access to lots of information. We don't rely on one source of information as a result. We no longer suffer backpains caused by the loads of books and textbooks we used to carry in the past. Now we are more energised, and we don't get back home tired because of the heavy books.

At some point it is easy for us now to research and access to information using the gadgets which also enhance effective teaching and learning in the exact allocated time. Before teachers were supposed to write on the board of which consumed learning time. I would really like to appreciate the Department of Education for giving up the gadgets of which helps to us to boost our performance and grades."



# 7<sup>th</sup> PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN ACTION



**Ms. Maggie Skosana**  
Director-General,  
Office of the Premier

## KNOW YOUR ACCOUNTING OFFICERS IN MPUMALANGA



**Mr. Mxolisi Mahlangu**  
HOD: Culture, Sport  
& Recreation



**Ms. Immy Serakalala**  
HOD: Economic Development  
& Tourism



**Mr. Cain Chunda**  
HOD: Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Land &  
Environmental Affairs



**Ms. Lucy Moyane**  
HOD: Education



**Mr. Samkelo Ngubane**  
(A) HOD: Co-Operative  
Governance, Human Settlements  
& Traditional Affairs



**Ms. Gugu Mashiteng**  
HO: Provincial Treasury



**Dr. Lucas Ndhlovu**  
HOD: Health



**Ms. Gloria Mazibuko**  
HOD: Community Safety,  
Security & Liaison



**Mr. Charles Morolo**  
HOD: Public Works, Roads  
& Transport



**Ms. Makhazasi Radebe**  
HOD: Social Development