

Lilanga



Letfu

"Mpumalanga, a Province that works for all"

2026/27

MANDELA DAY
& EXCO OUTREACH
SPECIAL EDITION



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Editorial Comment. . . .

There are moments when the true meaning of public service is found not in a policy document or a speech, but in the smile of an elderly person receiving a warm blanket, the excitement of a child entering a better learning environment, or the relief of a family whose dignity has been restored. The stories carried in this edition of Lilanga Letfu bring this meaning to life. From Mandela Day Letsema activities in Dipaleseng and Thembisile Hani Local Municipalities, to outreach initiatives supporting older persons, children and vulnerable families, these stories demonstrate that service becomes meaningful when compassion is translated into action.

Across our Province, the articles remind us that dignity is found in the practical difference government and its partners make in people’s lives. The refurbishment of the Khoza family where home stands as a particularly powerful example. A commitment made during a previous community engagement was ultimately fulfilled, even after Mkhulu Khoza had passed away. It is a story about more than a house; it is about keeping a promise, restoring dignity and maintaining the trust between government and the people it serves.

The same spirit can be seen in the work featured across this edition, from the revitalised National Youth Service supporting young people in Govan Mbeki Local Municipality, to initiatives promoting food security and environmental sustainability, improvements at Ipopeng Old Age Centre, support for Isibani Esihle Stimulation Centre, and practical interventions at community facilities and ECD centres. These are not simply projects recorded in a newsletter; they represent efforts to improve everyday lives and demonstrate that development has a human face.

Our commitment to listening is equally reflected in the Provincial Government’s three-day EXCO Community Outreach Programme in Nkomazi. Through the Premier’s Imbizo, residents had an opportunity to raise concerns directly, particularly around water and other service delivery matters. Government’s presence in these communities is important because responsive governance begins with listening, understanding people’s lived experiences, acknowledging challenges and working together to identify practical solutions.

As we explore this edition, the message is clear: the spirit of service cannot belong to Mandela Month alone. It must live in our everyday conduct, in how we answer a citizen’s question, how we treat a person at a public service point, how we respond when communities raise concerns and how faithfully we honour the commitments we make. The stories of Letsema, community outreach, youth empowerment, support for vulnerable groups and the restoration of dignity remind us that meaningful change is built through countless acts of service, responsibility and compassion.

Let us therefore build on these stories, turning every promise into action, every challenge into an opportunity to serve, and every community engagement into a renewed commitment to dignity and progress. In doing so, we can build a Mpumalanga where people do not simply hear about government working for them, but experience its presence, care and service in their everyday lives.

Enjoy your happy reading.

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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.



RAISING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN COMMUNITIES

Illegal dumping has become one of South Africa's most pressing environmental challenges, threatening public health, degrading the environment and placing a significant financial burden on municipalities. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), South Africa generates approximately 12.7 million tonnes of household waste annually, with an estimated 3.67 million tonnes not entering formal waste collection systems, often ending up in illegal dumping sites.

The environmental and economic consequences are severe. More than 180,000 tonnes of waste are removed from illegal dumping hotspots each year at a cost of approximately R350 million to taxpayers. Beyond the direct cleanup costs, illegal dumping contributes to water pollution, blocked stormwater systems, poor air quality, increased greenhouse gas emissions and reduced economic opportunities in affected communities.

Recognising the urgent need to build cleaner, healthier and more sustainable communities, the Office of the Premier (OTP) led Mpumalanga's Provincial Mandela Day commemoration in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality. The programme was held under the theme, *"It's Still in Our Hands to Combat Poverty and Inequity."*

The initiative brought together the Executive Mayor of Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, Cllr Lesetja Jacob Dikgale, Director-General, Ms Maggie Skosana, senior government officials and community members in a series of activities aimed at improving the wellbeing of residents through acts of service.

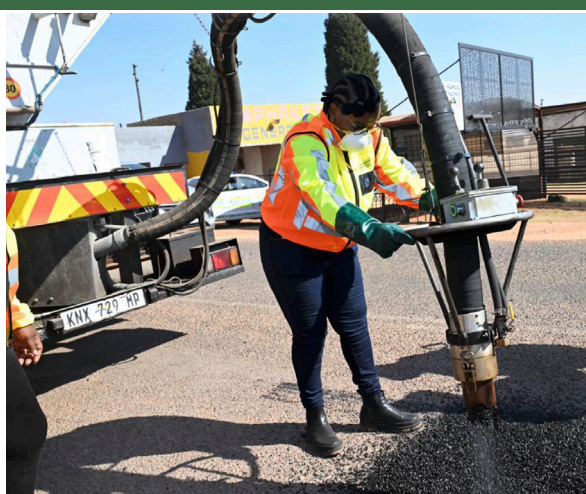
The day's programme commenced with a clean-up campaign at an illegal dumping site at Phola, led by the Ms Skosana and Cllr. Dikgale. "By clearing this dumping site, we are making a clarion call to the community here that this is not a dumping site. We urge them to approach the Municipality and ask for skip bins if they have no place to throw garbage away. The Municipality and the community have the responsibility to keep the environment clean, and this can be achieved through minimal waste going to landfill, improve waste services and enforce compliance in the fight against pollution and illegal dumping, emphasised Ms Skosana".

Participants also undertook pothole patching along a key route in the municipality to improve road infrastructure for the safety of road users. The programme concluded at Lindo Day Care Centre, an Early Childhood Development facility caring for more than 70 children.

Nine trees were planted at the centre, for the realisation of the Presidential One Million Trees Campaign, which started in 2024, aimed at fostering a greener and healthier learning environment for young children.

In emulating the noble gesture of Madiba, the centre received a donation of mattresses, aimed at supporting its daily operations and enhancing conditions for learning and development. Cllr. Dikgale and Ms Skosana committed to deliver two water tanks to ensure that the Lindo Day Care Centre has water storage facilities that keep water available for longer periods. "We will ensure that the Lindo Day Care Centre is assisted in accessing social development funding support, as well as local government support through the provision of two water storage water tanks to assist with the day-to-day operations of the centre. We are a government walking in the footsteps of Tata Madiba, who showed care for communities through acts of service in building a capable state," said Skosana.

The provincial commemoration formed part of a broader Mandela Day programme implemented across municipalities in Mpumalanga, demonstrating government's commitment to improving the lives of citizens through meaningful community service initiatives.





RESTORING HOPE AND DIGNITY DURING MANDELA DAY

Rebuilding desire and dignity during Nelson Mandela International Day goes far beyond simple charity. It is a global call to action that honours the legacy of Madiba by dedicating 67 minutes of service - one minute for every year he fought for social justice. When communities, government bodies, and organisations like Gift of the Givers unite, small acts of compassion transform lives by addressing the systemic issues of poverty and inequality. The Executive Mayor of Nkangala District Municipality, Cllr Thomas Ngwenya together with the District Troika and local leadership, joined the community of KwaGuqa in eMalahleni Local Municipality to commemorate International Nelson Mandela Day.

The commemoration was characterised by meaningful acts of service and compassion aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable community members. As part of the day's activities, the municipality distributed 160 blankets to elderly residents across eMalahleni, bringing much-needed warmth and comfort during the winter season.

The highlight of the day, however, was the official handover of the newly refurbished Khoza family home, a project that embodied the true spirit of Mandela Day and demonstrated the importance of honouring commitments made to communities.

The story of the Khoza family home began during a door-to-door campaign conducted ahead of the 2024 National and Provincial General Elections. During an engagement with residents in KwaGuqa, Executive Mayor, Cllr Thomas Ngwenya and members of the leadership delegation visited the home of Mkhulu Khoza and were deeply moved by the conditions under which the family was living.

At the time, the house was in a severely dilapidated state and did not provide a safe and dignified living environment. As they walked through the home and interacted with the elderly resident, the leadership team recognised the urgent need for intervention. Moved by Mkhulu Khoza's circumstances, they made a commitment to return and assist the family in restoring the house.

Two years later, that promise became a reality. Through the support and contribution of service providers working in partnership with Nkangala District Municipality, the house underwent significant renovations aimed at improving the living conditions of the family. The collaborative effort transformed the once deteriorating structure into a safe, comfortable, and dignified home, demonstrating what can be achieved when government and stakeholders work together in service of communities.

On 18 July 2026, as South Africans across the country dedicated their 67 minutes to acts of service, the renovated house was officially handed over to the Khoza family. The improvements were warmly welcomed by the surviving grandchildren, who expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the intervention and the positive impact it will have on their lives.

While the occasion was celebratory, it was also deeply emotional. Sadly, Mkhulu Khoza did not live long enough to witness the fulfilment of the promise made to him during the 2024 community engagement visit. Nevertheless, the handover served as a fitting tribute to his memory and a powerful reminder that promises made to communities should be honoured.

The Khoza family story stands as a testament to responsive leadership, community partnership, and the enduring values of compassion, dignity, and service championed by Nelson Mandela throughout his life. It is a story with a hopeful ending, a promise made and a promise fulfilled, bringing renewed hope to a family and demonstrating the impact of meaningful public service.

Continued page 5...

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Addressing residents during the commemoration, Executive Mayor, Cllr Thomas Ngwenya reflected on the significance of Mandela Day and the importance of dedicating 67 minutes of service to improving the lives of others. He also the origins of International Nelson Mandela Day, which was established in 2008 to honour Madiba’s lifelong commitment to humanity, social justice, and the upliftment of communities.

Quoting the words of renowned South African activist Charlotte Maxeke, “Kill the spirit of self,” the Executive Mayor called on

all South Africans to embrace selflessness, extend a helping hand to those in need, and continue working together to build caring, united, and inclusive communities.

“Mandela Day reminds us that each of us has the power to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. Through acts of kindness, compassion and service, we can continue the work of building a society rooted in dignity, equality and hope,” said Mayor Ngwenya.

The events in KwaGuqa served as a powerful reminder that Madiba’s legacy

lives on through actions that uplift the vulnerable, restore dignity, and strengthen communities. Beyond the distribution of blankets and the renovation of a family home, the day underscored the collective responsibility of all South Africans to confront poverty and inequality through practical acts of service.

Together, let us honour Madiba’s legacy, not only on Mandela Day, but every day through compassion, service, and a shared commitment to improving the lives of others. This is a call to everyone.

MOVING AHEAD WITH RAPID LAND RELEASE PROGRAMME

Government is steaming ahead to address challenges of bulk infrastructure development and land release in Thubelihle Township, Ga-Nala at eMalahleni Local Municipality, Mpumalanga. The Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) has so far allocated 4000 sites at Extensions 7 and 8 as part of the delivery of integrated human settlements in the area. Consolidating on the project, nearly 2000 sites are yet to be allocated to the community.

The prioritization of serviced stands will help to fight the housing backlog in the Province. At this afternoon's community engagement, issues of verifications, illegal occupation of land, poor coordination of allocation of stands and selling of stands were raised. CoGHSTA MEC, Mr Speed Mashilo and Executive Mayor, Cllr Vusi Nhlapho engaged with the Thubelihle community on the ongoing integrated human settlements project in the area. “Serviced sites are parcels of land that have been prepared and equipped with essential municipal infrastructure before

any housing is construction can commence”, stated MEC Mashilo.

The Department has an overall 2 250 sites to be serviced during the 2026/27 financial year. The community engagement session was part of the Nelson Mandela International Day at the locality. The day is globally observed in honour of the liberation icon, Dr Nelson Mandela, on his birthday, the 18th of July. Mandela Day is designed to act as a global movement where individuals take responsibility for making the world a better place.





HONOURING MADIBA’S DAY ACROSS THE PROVINCE

In Bushbuckridge, a focused intervention marked the beginning of a broader Mandela Day Legacy Journey by Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) one that extended beyond a single community and carried the message of dignity, service and inclusive development across Mpumalanga’s three regions.

Following the Bushbuckridge donation, MEGA continued its Mandela Day outreach on Friday, 24 July 2026, extending support to another deserving community as part of its commitment to ensuring that the spirit of Madiba reached communities beyond a single day of remembrance.

The journey continued to KaMagugu Inclusive School, where MEGA extended its support to a learning environment dedicated to ensuring that children with diverse educational needs receive opportunities to learn, grow and participate meaningfully in society.

The intervention at Kamagugu Inclusive School carried a profound message: that inclusive development must embrace every learner and every member of society. It reflected the belief that a nation’s progress is measured by how it creates opportunities for all citizens, particularly those who require additional support to unlock their potential.

The Mandela Day Legacy Journey then moved to Thuthukani Primary School in Kwaggafontein E, Nkangala Region, Mpumalanga, bringing the spirit of service to learners, educators and the broader school community. The donation reaffirmed MEGA’s understanding that education remains one of the strongest foundations

for economic empowerment. The entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders who will shape Mpumalanga’s future are nurtured in classrooms today. Supporting schools is therefore an investment in the province’s future economic landscape.

The final stop of MEGA’s Mandela Day Legacy Journey took place at Emdibini Combined School in Kinross, Gert Sibande Region, Mpumalanga, ensuring that the message of hope and community upliftment reached another corner of the province.

By extending its contribution across Bushbuckridge, KaMagugu, Kwaggafontein E and Kinross, MEGA demonstrated that its mandate belongs to the entire province not one municipality, one district or one community, but to all the people of Mpumalanga. Mandela Day became a reminder that economic development must have a human face. Mandela believed that freedom without opportunity remains incomplete. That conviction continues to inspire institutions whose work extends beyond administration into nation-building. In this regard, MEGA’s contribution across Mpumalanga stands as more than a Mandela Day gesture. It reflects an institution steadily redefining public development where investment is measured not only by financial returns, but by the confidence it restores, the dignity it protects, and the possibilities it unlocks.

Across Mpumalanga, MEGA continues to facilitate investment, finance emerging enterprises, manage strategic industrial infrastructure, promote trade, and support businesses that create employment and stimulate local economies. Yet every

programme, every partnership, and every investment ultimately serve a single purpose: improving the quality of life for the people of the province.

That is the true measure of economic growth. Long after speeches fade and commemorations conclude, the JoJo tank will continue to collect water. The chairs will continue to support conversations, celebrations, meetings and decisions. The learners who benefited from MEGA’s interventions will continue their journeys of growth and possibility. Communities yet unborn will benefit from acts of service whose significance extends beyond the moment in which they were delivered. Perhaps that is the deepest lesson of Mandela Day.

Legacy is not built by monuments of stone, but built by institutions that choose people over publicity, service over symbolism, and impact over applause. As the people of Bushbuckridge, KaMagugu, Kwaggafontein E and Kinross continue building their futures, they carry forward a simple but enduring truth: the greatest tribute to Nelson Mandela is not found in remembrance alone, it is found in the courage to continue his unfinished work. For MEGA, Mandela Day was therefore not the conclusion of a campaign.

It was another chapter in a larger promise. A promise to invest where hope is needed most. A promise to transform opportunity into prosperity. A promise to ensure that the growth of Mpumalanga is measured not only by economic indicators, but by the dignity of every community it serves. Because when development reaches the people, the mandate becomes more than policy. It becomes legacy.

POWERING MKHONDO IN LINE WITH MADIBA IDEALS

There is hope in addressing electricity challenges in Mkhondo Local Municipality, Mpumalanga. As part of the International Mandela Day programme, Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) MEC, Mr Speed Mashilo visited town's electricity sub-station to assess its condition and state sequel to persistent strain.

Accompanied by Executive Mayor, Cllr Ngilosi Ndhlovu, political and administrative contingent, the two were briefed that the central part of the municipality currently operates on one functional transformer, as

opposed to three. MEC Mashilo committed to intervene by presenting the matter to the Executive Council. The day was concluded with the handover of blankets, food parcels, and household furniture to Khayelihle Centre for the Elderly in eMagadeni and housing beneficiaries at Saul Mkhizeville in Driefontein.

The celebration drew together government departments, municipalities, traditional leaders, business partners, community organizations and volunteers, all united by a common purpose - to make a lasting difference in the lives of vulnerable residents.

The initiative demonstrated that Mandela Day is not merely about commemorating a legacy, but about translating compassion into practical action that leaves a permanent impact. "A home is more than building itself, it is the foundation of dignity, security and hope. We are handing over this house, not merely giving shelter but we are restoring dreams, strengthening families, and building a future where every citizen can live with pride. This is the true spirit of Nelson Mandela's legacy", stated MEC Mashilo. The entourage continued its outreach in Mkhizeville Village, Driefontein, handing over homes to deserving local beneficiaries.

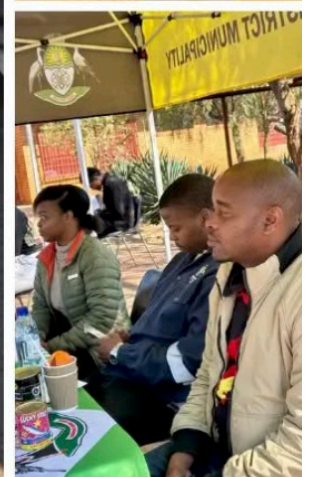
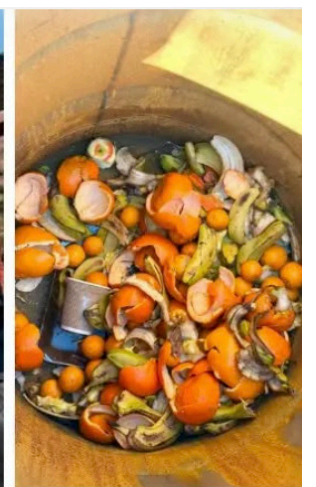
MPUMALANGA GOES GREEN

The global landscape of green energy is currently experiencing a historic, structural shift. For the first time in over a century, electricity generated from renewable sources has surpassed electricity from coal on a global scale. Driven by massive cost reductions and urgent climate targets, clean power has reached a tipping point, meeting the vast majority of the world's growing energy demand. To play its part, the Mpumalanga Greed Agency supported the launch of Eco-Green School Campaign during the Nelson Mandela International Day.

Mandela Day partnership with Alkabulan Foundation promotes environmental stewardship, food security and green economy awareness at Sofunda Secondary School. "It is in your hands to make a better world for all who live in it." Nelson Mandela's words set the tone at Sofunda Secondary School, where the Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency (MGCA), alongside Alkabulan Foundation (NPC) and other stakeholders, commemorated Mandela Day by supporting the launch of the Eco-Green School Campaign.

The Eco-Green School Campaign is an initiative of Alkabulan Foundation aimed at promoting environmental awareness, food security and sustainable practices in schools. As the Foundation prepared to launch the campaign on Mandela Day, it partnered with MGCA in support of the day's activities, recognising the shared commitment to environmental sustainability and community development.

The launch brought together representatives from the Nkangala District Municipality, school leadership, educators, learners, community leaders and volunteers for a day of environmental action centred on a school clean up and the revitalisation of the school's food garden. The activities reflected the spirit of Mandela Day by encouraging participants to dedicate their time and skills towards creating a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable learning environment.



Learners and guests participated in presentations on food security, waste management, environmental sustainability and the importance of greener schools. These engagements highlighted how practical actions such as recycling, composting and food gardening can contribute to healthier communities while fostering a culture of environmental responsibility among young people.

Speaking during the event, MGCA's Project Preparation Manager, Mr Karabo Mmako, shared insights into South Africa's growing green economy and introduced learners to opportunities within sectors such as renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, water conservation, recycling and environmental innovation. Learners were introduced to the principles of the Just Energy Transition (JET), with emphasis on ensuring that the transition to a low-carbon economy

creates opportunities, develops new skills and leaves no one behind.

The Mandela Day activation demonstrated the value of collaboration between government, civil society and local communities in advancing environmental sustainability. By working together on initiatives of mutual interest, organisations can strengthen community impact while exploring opportunities for future collaboration where appropriate.

The Eco-Green School Campaign represents Alkabulan Foundation's broader vision to promote environmental stewardship and food security within schools. The Foundation has expressed its intention to expand the initiative to additional schools as funding, partnerships and other resources become available.



REVITALISING THE NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE PROGRAMME

- As the NYDA launches Phase V -

Youth in South Africa, defined nationally as individuals aged 15 to 34 years, represent a massive and dynamic portion of the country’s population. According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), there are approximately 21 million young people, making up about 33,1% of the total population. This demographic weight positions them as both the country’s greatest potential asset for economic development and the group most impacted by its systemic challenges.

While South Africa’s youth are highly resilient, politically conscious, and driven by technology, they navigate a complex socio-economic landscape marked by a severe unemployment crisis, structural inequalities, and evolving aspirations. The Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki Municipality, Cllr Nhlakanipho Zuma, joined the Executive Chairperson of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Dr Sunshine Myende, to officially launch Phase V of the Revitalised National Youth Service (NYS) Programme in eMbalenhle on Friday, 17 July 2026.

The launch fulfilled a commitment made during the Phanda Thursdays programme in May 2026, when Dr Myende promised to return with opportunities for young people who had submitted their CVs. A total of 280 unemployed youth was officially registered and signed their contracts to participate in the six-month programme, where they will receive a monthly stipend while gaining valuable work experience and practical skills.

The programme was launched under the theme “From Service to Sustainable Livelihoods,”

reinforcing the NYDA’s commitment to ensuring that community service becomes a pathway to active citizenship, youth development and sustainable employment opportunities.

In honour of Nelson Mandela Day, the Executive Mayor and Dr Myende began the day at the Embalenhle Aged Group Service Centre, where they joined 48 NYS volunteers in meaningful acts of service. The volunteers undertook cleaning of the facility, expanded the gardening area and refurbished the storage facility through painting and repairs.

The Executive Mayor participated in planting seedlings in the garden and assisted with painting the storage facility during his 67 minutes of service. “As we celebrate Mandela Day, we want to contribute through our labour. We are here with the NYDA to assist with painting and expanding the gardening area so that our elderly residents do not go hungry. We have also provided small hygiene gifts and sweets for the elderly to help them regain their energy,” said the Executive Mayor.

The NYDA and its partners provided paint, seedlings, gardening tools and cleaning equipment to support the volunteers in continuing their work at the centre. The second stop of the day was the eMbalenhle Sasol Club, where the official contract signing ceremony for the unemployed youth took place.

In his welcoming address, Executive Mayor Cllr Zuma expressed gratitude to the NYDA for recognising the socio-economic challenges faced by young people in South Africa. He also thanked Dr Myende, Youth Life, the National

Youth Service, councillors and government officials for their collective efforts in bringing opportunities to the youth.

“When we were here the last time, I indicated that I was one of those who assisted in the formulation and foundation of the NYDA. We created an institution that would recognise and advocate for young people. I am overjoyed that Govan Mbeki Municipality has become the first municipality to host the launch of Phanda Thursdays, which will yield positive results for our youth,” said the Executive Mayor.

Dr Myende revealed that while the target was to recruit more than 600 unemployed youth in Mpumalanga, only 280 applications were received and processed. She expressed concern that many young people were not sufficiently aware of the opportunities available through government programmes. She further explained that NYS participants would be deployed to public institutions located close to where they live, to minimise transportation costs during the six-month programme.

Dr Myende called on young people to actively seek out opportunities, participate in development programmes and contribute positively to their communities. The launch of the Revitalised National Youth Service Phase V marks a significant milestone in empowering unemployed youth of Mpumalanga, providing them with a platform to gain skills, earn a stipend and make a meaningful contribution to society. The municipality congratulates all 280 participants as they embark on this journey of service, growth, and empowerment.



A LIVING EXPRESSION OF SERVICE, DIGNITY, AND DEVELOPMENT

There are moments in the life of an institution when its mandate escapes the confines of policy documents, annual reports and boardroom deliberations to find expression in the lives of ordinary people. Such moments become more than events, they become history.

On Nelson Mandela International Day 2026, against the backdrop of the rolling landscapes of Bushbuckridge, the Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA), led by Chief Executive Officer Mr. Isaac Mahlangu, joined the Member of the Executive Council for Economic Development and Tourism, MEC Jesta Sidell to donate a JoJo water tank and fifty community chairs to a local community. To the casual observer, these were acts of generosity. To those who understand development, they were investments in dignity. A water tank is more than a container. It is security in seasons of uncertainty. It is health for families, resilience for communities, and the quiet assurance that tomorrow can be faced with confidence.

Fifty chairs are more than furniture, but they become places where elders deliberate, young entrepreneurs learn, women organise, community leaders govern, children celebrate

achievement, and neighbours gather to shape their collective future. That is the language of development. That is the language Nelson Mandela spoke throughout his life.

This year's Mandela Day theme, "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity," found practical expression not through ceremony alone, but through meaningful intervention. It affirmed that public institutions fulfil their highest purpose when they transform public trust into public value.

For MEGA, whose mandate is to stimulate economic growth, unlock investment, finance enterprise, develop infrastructure and create sustainable opportunities, Mandela Day was never intended to be a symbolic exercise. It was a reaffirmation that economic development begins with human dignity. Communities that have access to basic infrastructure are communities better positioned to participate in economic activity. Development is strongest when it reaches the places where opportunity has yet to arrive.

Reflecting on the significance of the day, MEGA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Isaac Mahlangu reminded those gathered that economic transformation is ultimately measured by the lives it changes. "Every investment that

creates opportunity, every entrepreneur empowered, every enterprise sustained, and every community uplifted is a continuation of Madiba's 67-year journey towards dignity and shared prosperity. Economic inclusion is one of the greatest acts of service we can render." His words captured the philosophy that increasingly defines MEGA's institutional character: development is not simply about funding projects or facilitating investment; it is about expanding human possibility.

Addressing members of the community, MEC Sidell situated the day's activities within the broader vision of the provincial government. "Government earns its legitimacy not only through policy, but through presence. Every community we strengthen becomes a stronger pillar of our provincial economy. When we invest in people where they live, we build a Mpumalanga where opportunity is not reserved for a few centres of growth, but reaches every village, every township and every citizen prepared to shape their own future."

Her remarks underscored the province's commitment to inclusive development, one that recognises that economic growth and social justice are not competing objectives, but complementary responsibilities.

CONFRONTING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY THROUGH SERVICE

Honouring Madiba's Legacy in Ermelo



Basic services and the broader service sector play a vital role in reducing poverty and inequality, though gaps in access and cost can still deepen disparities. Addressing poverty and inequality through service is one of the most powerful levers for transforming developing economies, particularly in highly unequal nations like South Africa. When we look at “service,” it applies to two critical areas: the economic services sector (such as tourism, finance, and trade) and public service delivery (such as water, healthcare, and education).

In celebration of International Nelson Mandela Day under the theme, “It’s Still in Our Hands to Combat Poverty and Inequality,” the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, led by MEC Thulasizwe Thomo, together with the Executive Mayor of Msukaligwa Local Municipality, Cllr Mapulane Nkosi, united with government departments, public entities and transport stakeholders to make a meaningful difference in the lives of communities across Ermelo.

The programme commenced at Isibani Esihle Stimulation Centre in Wesselton, a facility that cares for more than 54 children living with disabilities. As part of its Mandela Day contribution, the Department undertook extensive refurbishment work, including electrical rewiring, the replacement of plugs and light fittings, plumbing repairs, plastering, carpentry and painting to improve the safety, functionality and dignity of the centre.

To further support the facility, the Department donated non-perishable groceries and a refrigerator, while Msukaligwa Local Municipality contributed 54 blankets and a new kitchen unit. The Centre Manager was overwhelmed with emotion, expressing heartfelt gratitude for the transformation and the generosity demonstrated by all partners. Additional commitments were also made by stakeholders to donate toys and complete outstanding repairs at the centre. While these donations may not solve every challenge, they will surely make a meaningful difference in the lives of the recipients.

The event was attended by senior management from both the Department and Msukaligwa Local Municipality, together with stakeholders including SANTACO, the Ermelo Taxi Association Executive, the Road Accident Fund (RAF), the Department’s Road Safety Directorate, and the Department of Health, which provided health screenings and other wellness services to community members.

The programme later moved to the Ermelo Long-Distance Taxi Rank, where the delegation cleaned the facility, repainted parking demarcation lines, patched potholes and handed over operating licences to qualifying public transport operators, promoting compliance and improving public transport services.

Chairperson of the Ermelo Taxi Association, Mr Peter Vilakazi, commended MEC Thomo and all stakeholders for investing in the taxi rank and strengthening compliance within the public transport sector.

DEDICATING 67 MINUTES OF SERVICE

Supporting the less fortunate is one of the most impactful ways to give back to your community. Whether you have hours to spare or just a few minutes, every action counts. An act of service is a helpful or thoughtful action that you do for someone else to make their daily life easier. It is famously known as one of the five “love languages” where people feel most cared for when practical things are done to help them, rather than just hearing words or getting gifts.

MEC for Health, Ms Sasekani Manzini and the Mkhondo Local Municipality, Executive Mayor, Cllr Ngelosi Ndlovu

celebrated Mandela Day, in Mkhondo Local Municipality in honour of the legacy of former president, Nelson Mandela. The day is annually celebrated on July 18th by the global community honouring Nelson Mandela’s legacy by encouraging individuals to dedicate 67 minutes of their time to service, reflecting the 67 years Mandela spent fighting for social justice and equality. It’s a day to reflect on Mandela’s values of determination, justice, human rights, and reconciliation, and to translate those values into action.

MEC Manzini and her encourage started the day by visiting Khayelihle Old Age Centre

in Thandukukhanya, where she donated blankets and BP Machines, fortunately the Home has a retired professional nurse who volunteer to monitor the BP of the members in the Centre.

MEC Manzini also gave health talks to learners, touching issues such Teenage Pregnancy, mental health and general healthy lifestyle, and donated school shoes and sanitary towels at the career exhibition organised for learners of Mkhondo circuit in Ezakheni Combined Boarding School-Driefontein, Manzini last stop was at Piet Retief Hospital, where she served patients food. This was indeed a day well spent.



DEMONSTRATING COMPASSION THROUGH SUPPORT

In the true spirit of Nelson Mandela's legacy of selfless service, compassion, and social justice, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Mpumalanga commemorated Mandela Day on 17 July 2026 through a community outreach programme at the Vusithemba Victims Support Centre in Delmas, Victor Khanye Local Municipality. The initiative brought together support for vulnerable members of society and reaffirmed the importance of collective action in building caring communities. Representatives from SALGA, Victor Khanye Local Municipality, the Department of Social Development, Mpumalanga Mental Health, and Vusithemba Victims Support Centre attended the commemorative programme.

The event sought to honour the enduring values championed by former President Nelson Mandela by extending support to an organisation that provides critical services to victims of abuse and vulnerable community members.

The programme commenced with an opening prayer led by SALGA Advisor, Ms. Tebogo Moya, followed by a welcoming address delivered by the Executive Mayor of Victor Khanye Local Municipality, Cllr Vusi Buda. Participants were officially

welcomed, and the purpose of the event was outlined by SALGA Senior Advisor, Adv. Selby. Ratshiedana, who emphasized the importance of giving back to communities and supporting institutions that provide hope and protection to those in need.

A background overview of the Vusithemba Victims Support Centre was presented by Mr. John Potsane, highlighting the centre's important role in providing care, counselling, and support services to victims of crime, violence, and abuse within the community. Messages of support were subsequently delivered by representatives from the Department of Social Development, represented by Ms. Promise Lekalakala, and Mpumalanga Mental Health, represented by Mr. Thabo Madupela. Both speakers underscored the importance of partnerships in addressing social challenges and supporting vulnerable groups.

As part of the Mandela Day initiative, SALGA handed over gifts and essential items to the centre as a gesture of solidarity and support. The donation was officially presented by SALGA PEC Member, Cllr Mapulane Nkosi, following a briefing by Adv. Ratshiedana on the contribution and its intended impact. The gifts were

received on behalf of Vusithemba Victims Support Centre by Mr. John Potsane, who expressed gratitude for the support and commitment demonstrated by SALGA and its partners.

Speaking at the event, representatives reiterated that Mandela Day serves as a reminder that every individual and institution has a responsibility to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Through initiatives such as these, local government continues to contribute to building resilient, caring, and inclusive communities where the dignity of every person is respected and protected.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by the Speaker of Victor Khanye Local Municipality, Cllr Hendrey Ngoma, who expressed appreciation to all stakeholders for their contributions towards making the event a success and for continuing to uphold Nelson Mandela's legacy through meaningful community service.

SALGA Mpumalanga remains committed to promoting social cohesion, supporting vulnerable communities, and advancing Mandela's vision of a society founded on compassion, dignity, and collective responsibility.





CELEBRATING MANDELA DAY THROUGH DONATIONS

The Mandela Day activities formed part of a province-wide programme that mobilized government, municipalities, community organisations, and local stakeholders to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. The Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation remains committed to using sport, recreation, culture, and social outreach as vehicles for social cohesion and positive change. Helping the needy is one of the most impactful ways to build a stronger, more empathetic society.

Supporting vulnerable individuals can take many forms, ranging from direct financial relief to volunteering time or providing professional training. Whether you want to make a local impact or support global initiatives, clear strategies ensure your efforts are sustainable and empowering. The act of donation is a voluntary, altruistic gesture where a person or organization

transfers property, money, services, or biological assets to another party without receiving any compensation in return. Legally and socially, it is defined by “pure liberality” - the intent to enrich someone else at your own expense. In the spirit of Nelson Mandela International Day, the Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, led by MEC Leah Mabuza, commemorated Mandela Day on the 17th of July 2026, by giving back to the community through acts of compassion and service in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

As part of the provincial Mandela Day programme, MEC Mabuza visited Thandanani Mhluzi Old Age Home and Sizabaswele Care for the Aged in Mhluzi, Middelburg, where food supplies and sports equipment were donated to support the well-being of elderly residents. The MEC also planted trees at both centres, symbolising hope, growth, and a lasting

commitment to caring for communities. “Nelson Mandela taught us that true leadership is measured by how we serve others. As the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, we are honoured to celebrate his legacy by supporting our senior citizens and reaffirming our commitment to building caring, united and resilient communities. Through these acts of service, we are reminded that it is still in our hands to combat poverty, inequality and restore hope where it is needed most.” – MEC Leah Mabuza,

The 2026 Mandela Day theme, “It’s still in our hands to combat poverty and inequality,” served as a reminder that everyone has a role to play in building a society founded on dignity, equality, and social justice. Through these initiatives, the Department reaffirmed its commitment to preserving Madiba’s legacy by promoting community development, compassion, and active citizenship.

JOINING HANDS ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

In commemorating the 2026 Nelson Mandela International Day, the team led by the MEC of Finance, Mr Bonakele Majuba visited the Mokopane Early Childhood Development Centre in Phake Rankaila (Ward 30), Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality to improve the lives of the children while promoting community development by painting and cleaning the centre, planting vegetable seeds, minor renovations, gardening services and to hand over items.

The Acting Executive Mayor of the session, MMC for Admin and Corporate Services, Cllr Sophy Legong in her welcoming remarks, emphasised the importance of celebrating Mandela Day as a reminder of the country's history and the values of compassion, unity and selfless service championed by Nelson Mandela. The Centre Manager, Ms Nthabiseng Magwai, welcomed the support received for the pre-school and thanked all partners for investing in the well-being of the children.

Addressing the gathering, the MEC Majuba, said the purpose of the day was to honour Nelson Mandela through meaningful community service. He encouraged all stakeholders to work together to improve the condition of the pre-school, creating a healthy, safe and welcoming environment where children can learn and develop. The MEC also highlighted the importance of strengthening the management of the facility to ensure the continued safety and well-being of the children and thanked the local community and the Bakgatla Ba Maloka Traditional Authority for their support and partnership.

The donations handed over to the centre included: computers, 5250 litre JoJo water tank, mattresses, heaters, carpets, spades, seeds, a knapsack sprayer, paints, spades and rakes, waterpipe, chairs, a seesaw, toys, a trampoline, lockers and a wheelbarrow and other goods. These donations will contribute towards creating a safe, healthy and stimulating environment where children can learn, play and thrive.

Mr Prince Maloka, who expressed appreciation to all stakeholders for their contributions in making the Mandela Day celebration a success and encouraged everyone to continue embracing the values of compassion, service and active citizenship beyond Mandela Day. Nelson Mandela International Day was formally declared by the United Nations in 2009, in recognition of Nelson Mandela's contribution to the culture of peace and freedom.

The 2026 Mandela Day is celebrated under the theme: "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity". This theme reinforces that despite our many strides made; many challenges remain. As a society we are still faced with issues such as poverty, inequality, and social division.



Mandela Day and the broader Mandela Month presents an opportunity to realign our collective energies to build the communities we envisioned which includes taking care of the most vulnerable in our midst and providing hope for a better tomorrow.

As part of the 2026 Mandela Day initiatives, the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality has partnered with Vergenoeg Mine and Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment to plant fruit trees and donate blankets to our senior citizens at Itumeleng Old Age Centre in Mmametlhake (Ward 29) and Marapyane Ipopeng Older Persons Centre (Ward 24).

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) donated plants to the two centres to promote environmental sustainability and create greener, healthier spaces for the elderly. The Executive Mayor, Cllr Nomsa Mtsweni highlighted that the donation of winter blankets to our older persons is a meaningful way of honouring the legacy of Tata Mandela and encouraged everyone to embrace the spirit of compassion, service and caring for the most vulnerable members of society, values that Madiba dedicated his life to promoting.

MMC for Admin and Corporate Services Cllr Sophy Legong, also expressed appreciation to Vergenoeg Mine and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment on behalf of the Municipality for their generous support and commitment to improving the lives of senior citizens. Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality extends its sincere appreciation to Vergenoeg Mine and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment for partnering with the Municipality to improve the well-being of older persons, green the environment, and alleviate poverty.

The other upcoming community upliftment Mandela day activities are scheduled for Phake's Mokopane Early Childhood Development Centre, with minor renovations, painting and handing out some donated goods and painting the centre. Another initiative is of painting and cleaning activities at Phumelela day care centre in Siyabuswa. Together, let us honour Madiba's legacy through selfless service and community action. It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequality. Acts of service make people feel most valued, secure, and appreciated, especially when support is extended in times of need.

GETTING DIRTY, TO KEEP IT CLEAN

In the spirit of Nelson Mandela’s legacy of service, employees from the Witbank Water Treatment Plant proudly took part in a Mandela Day clean-up campaign at Klipfontein Dam. The initiative demonstrated the team’s commitment not only to providing safe drinking water to the community but also to protecting the environment that supports this vital resource.

Fully fitted with gloves, refuse bags, and a shared sense of purpose, employees

worked together to remove litter and waste from the area surrounding the dam. The campaign aimed to promote environmental awareness, improve the cleanliness of the site, and encourage everyone to take responsibility for keeping public spaces clean.

Mandela Day reminds us that every individual has the power to make a positive difference. By dedicating their time and effort to this clean-up campaign, the Witbank Water Treatment Plant team

embodied the values of service, teamwork, and community upliftment that Nelson Mandela championed throughout his life. A clean environment plays an important role in protecting our water resources, preserving biodiversity, and creating healthier communities. The employees’ participation reflects eMalahleni Local Municipality’s ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable water management. *“It is in your hands to make a better world for all who live in it.” – Nelson Mandela.*





MAYOR LEADS MANDELA DAY LETSEMA

The Executive Mayor of Dipaleseng Local Municipality, Cllr Nomacala Khanye, led councillors, municipal officials and community members in a service-driven Letsema programme at Tokoloho Primary School in Grootvlei, Ward 5, as part of the municipality's commemoration of International Nelson Mandela Day.

The initiative brought together the municipality and the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) in a joint effort to honour the legacy of the late former President Nelson Mandela through practical acts of service to the community. The municipality was joined by DARDLEA District Director and Chief Director, Dr

Maanda Dagada, as well as officials from various government departments who participated in the day's activities. Rather than focusing solely on commemorative speeches, the programme centred on tangible interventions aimed at improving the school environment and supporting food security and environmental sustainability.

Activities included a clean-up campaign, school refurbishment, tree planting and the donation of gardening materials and equipment to support the school's food garden.

"Today is not about speeches. It is about action. For 67 minutes and beyond, we dedicate ourselves to service. This Letsema reflects Madiba's call that it is in your hands

to make a difference," said Mayor Khanye. The partnership with DARDLEA also highlighted the importance of collaboration between local government and provincial departments in addressing community needs, particularly in the areas of food security, rural development and environmental care.

Mayor Khanye expressed her appreciation to DARDLEA and all stakeholders who contributed to the initiative, while encouraging residents, businesses and civil society organisations to embrace volunteerism beyond Mandela Day.

"Madiba taught us that what counts is the difference we make in the lives of others. Let us build a caring, united and selfless Dipaleseng together," concluded Mayor Khanye.

EMAKHAZENI CLOSING MANDELA MONTH WITH OUTREACH INITIATIVES



Emakhazeni Local Municipality brought Mandela Month to a close on 31 July 2026 with two community outreach programmes in Wonderfontein and Belfast, turning the commemoration into practical acts of service aimed at supporting elderly residents, disadvantaged learners and children living with disabilities.

Led by Executive Mayor Cllr Nomhle Mashele, the municipality partnered with private-sector stakeholders to deliver assistance to communities and institutions as part of the month-long observance of Nelson Mandela's legacy.

Supporting learners and the elderly in Wonderfontein. The first programme was held at the Thusong Centre in Wonderfontein, with support from Ndalamo Resources and its subcontractor, POMS. The programme was led by MMC Jackie Mabila, with MMC Nonhlanhla Nkosi also in attendance. As part of the outreach, blankets were handed over to elderly residents of Wonderfontein, while 100 pairs of school shoes were donated for disadvantaged learners across Emakhazeni.

Five laptops and five chess boards were also donated to support five underperforming schools in the municipality. The educational resources, together with the school shoes, were received by Mr Nyathi on behalf of the Emakhazeni Department of Education Circuit Office for distribution to deserving learners and identified schools, following the Circuit's assessment.

Learners from Moreleg School attended the handover to represent some of the schools that were unable to be present.

Speaking on behalf of Ndalamo Resources, Mr Thanyani said the company viewed Mandela Month as an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the communities in which it operates. He noted that the company's commitment to the host community was also aligned with its Social and Labour Plan obligations.

Ms Ntabiseng reaffirmed the company's commitment to working with the municipality to support underperforming schools and improve the lives of elderly residents in the community.

In her keynote address, Mayor Mashele emphasised that Mandela Day, commemorated annually on 18 July, extends into Mandela Month throughout July. She said the initiative should not be viewed simply as a programme of handing out items, but as an opportunity to restore dignity and recognise the contribution of elderly residents while investing in the future of young people.

The Mayor described the chess boards as an investment in learners' mental development, saying chess could encourage strategic thinking, discipline and the ability to consider the consequences of decisions before acting.

She further called on mining companies operating in Emakhazeni to go beyond compliance and strengthen their contribution to local communities. She also appealed for unity among stakeholders and commended traditional leaders for promoting dignified AmaNdebele initiation ceremonies.

The Wonderfontein programme concluded on a celebratory note, with Mayor Mashele sharing cake with community members and reflecting on the resilience of the elderly and learners. Extending support to children with disabilities in Belfast

The municipality's Mandela Month activities continued in Belfast at the Vera Stimulation Centre, a school serving children living with disabilities.

The programme was supported by Exxaro Belfast Coal, with Mayor Mashele joining members of the Exxaro Belfast Block Crew in hands-on activities at the centre. The team painted parts of the school and established a food garden aimed at contributing to the centre's ongoing food needs.

Exxaro Belfast Coal also donated groceries to support the centre's daily feeding programme. The donation was received by Centre Manager Mr Thamsanqa Charlie "Mambhura" Ngomane and Board Member Pastor Treasure Lucky Zimu on behalf of the centre.

Through the two programmes, Emakhazeni Local Municipality and its partners demonstrated the practical meaning of Mandela Month by combining community service, educational support, food security and assistance to vulnerable groups.

The initiatives reinforced the municipality's call for continued volunteerism and partnerships beyond Mandela Month, ensuring that the spirit of service associated with Nelson Mandela's legacy continues throughout the year.



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TOUCHING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EXCO OUTREACH PROGRAMME, NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government recently concluded its three-day Executive Council (EXCO) Community Outreach Programme in Nkomazi Local Municipality, culminating in a Premier's Imbizo at Magogeni Village, where residents engaged directly with government leadership on challenges affecting their communities and the interventions being implemented to improve service delivery.

Held from 05 to 07 August 2026, the programme brought together Members of the Executive Council, Nkomazi Local Municipality leadership, councillors, traditional leaders, senior government officials and community stakeholders to assess progress, identify service delivery challenges and strengthen cooperation between the provincial and local spheres of government.

The programme began with an extended EXCO meeting chaired by Premier Mr Mandla Ndlovu, providing government with an opportunity to assess the development priorities of Nkomazi and the challenges confronting its growing population. Located in the eastern part of Ehlanzeni District, Nkomazi is strategically positioned between Eswatini and Mozambique and is connected to these neighbouring countries through important road, rail and trade routes, including the R570, R571 and N4 Maputo Corridor.

The municipality has experienced significant population growth, increasing from 393 030 people in 2011 to 591 928 in 2022. It is now the third-largest municipality in Mpumalanga and accounts for 26.1% of Ehlanzeni District's population. This growth has increased pressure on water, roads, housing and other basic services, making coordinated planning and infrastructure investment increasingly important.

Speaking during his keynote address, MEC Speed Mashilo, who represented the Premier at the Imbizo, reaffirmed government's respect for Nkomazi's traditional leadership and cultural heritage, describing the municipality as a "sacred place entrenched with royal cultural values. Therefore, as government, we respect and acknowledge all the traditional leaders representing the wards of this rich and diverse local municipality," said Mashilo.

Addressing one of the municipality's most pressing challenges, water, Mashilo confirmed that the first phase of the Driekoppies Water Scheme is expected to be completed by the end of August 2026. The project will supply water to 14 wards, while the Naas Water Scheme, currently providing five megalitres of water, is expected to increase its capacity to 13 megalitres, benefiting a further five wards. Mashilo also appealed to residents to refrain from illegal water connections and the illegal sale of water, warning that those found engaging in such activities would face

legal action. He urged community members to report illegal activities to the relevant authorities.

On electricity challenges, he said government had engaged Eskom to intervene in areas experiencing inadequate electricity supply, while residents were similarly urged to report illegal electricity connections. Turning to roads, Mashilo confirmed that road rehabilitation and construction projects are underway in the municipality. He said government would also explore the use of paving as part of road rehabilitation, which could contribute to the creation of local employment opportunities. "We should keep this community clean and safeguard public infrastructure," Mashilo urged, calling on residents to work with government to protect infrastructure and ensure that public facilities and services are preserved for the benefit of the entire community.

Water was among the most pressing issues raised during the Premier's Imbizo at Magogeni Village. Residents expressed concerns about reliable access to water, prompting government to outline ongoing interventions aimed at strengthening water infrastructure. Executive Mayor, Ms Phindile Magagula highlighted the Driekoppies Dam project as one of the interventions being undertaken to address the municipality's water challenges.

The importance of the project was further demonstrated when leader of government



business and also CoGHSTAMEC, Mr Speed Mashilo conducted a site visit to the water treatment plant at Driekoppies Dam during the outreach programme. The visit provided an opportunity to assess the infrastructure and engage with officials

on measures required to improve water provision to affected communities.

Infrastructure remains a major component of government's response to the municipality's growing needs. The Provincial Government has spent a total of R1.55 billion on infrastructure projects in Nkomazi, including roads, water and bulk infrastructure, sport facilities and bridges. Of this investment, R324.7 million relates to road, water and bulk infrastructure, sport facilities and bridges.

The outreach programme also demonstrated the importance of investing in education as part of building a stronger future for Nkomazi's young people. Education MEC Ms Lindi Masina officially opened Silulu Secondary School in Kamaqhekeza and handed over the Chief Mandinda Early Childhood Development Centre.

These investments come against a mixed education picture. Nkomazi's Grade 12 pass rate improved from 87.1% in 2019 to 87.8% in 2025, while its admission rate to bachelor degree studies stood at 43.2% in 2025. The proportion of residents aged 20 years and older with no education declined from 25.6% in 2011 to 20.2% in 2022, while those with tertiary education increased from 6.5% to 6.8%. However, the proportion of young people aged five to 24 attending educational institutions declined from 76.9% in 2011 to 74.3% in 2022, highlighting the need for continued investment in education and youth development.

Creating opportunities for young people is particularly important given Nkomazi's unemployment rate of approximately 36.7%. Through the Premier's Youth Development Fund, R25.3 million has been approved for 21 youth-owned enterprises in the municipality. The businesses operate in agriculture, manufacturing, ICT, creative arts, waste management and services and have collectively created 98 jobs, including 48 permanent jobs.

Government is also using the Nkomazi Special Economic Zone to broaden economic participation and create opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups. Persons with disabilities remain a priority for funding and access to space within the SEZ, enabling them to participate meaningfully in economic activity through products processed within the park.

The Mpumalanga Economic Regulator is similarly promoting inclusion through its Employment Equity Plans, which provide

for the recruitment and employment of persons with disabilities. The regulator has engaged Disabled People South Africa to source applications from suitably qualified persons with disabilities registered on its database and is encouraging its licence holders to prioritise people with disabilities.

Nkomazi's economic indicators demonstrate that, alongside its challenges, the municipality has considerable potential for growth. In 2025, it contributed 4.6% to Mpumalanga's economy and 13.3% to the Ehlanzeni District economy, making it the fifth-largest municipal economy in the province. Between 1996 and 2025, Nkomazi recorded average annual economic growth of 2.1%, the second-highest growth rate in the district, while the estimated average annual growth between 2025 and 2030 is 2.2%.

The municipality's economy is supported primarily by community services, finance, manufacturing and trade, which together contributed 71% of its economy in 2025. Tourism also remains an important economic driver, with total tourism expenditure accounting for 19.3% of the municipality's GDP.

Economic growth must, however, be accompanied by efforts to reduce poverty and inequality. Nkomazi has made progress in this regard, with the proportion of its population living below the lower-bound poverty line declining from 54.5% in 2020 to 42.1% in 2025. Despite this improvement, income inequality remains a concern, with the poorest 40% of households sharing 11.6% of total income in 2025.

Community safety was another important focus of the outreach programme, particularly given concerns around crime in some areas. Tonga is among the 30 priority police stations in the province in relation to murder trends, ranking sixth in Mpumalanga and 151st nationally. Other prevalent crimes include rape, attempted murder, house robbery and business robbery.

To address these challenges, the South African Police Service continues to implement the National Crime Prevention Overarching Strategy, Operation Shanela, weekly high-density operations and Operation Basadi. Intensified operations include roadblocks, stop-and-search operations and the tracking and tracing of wanted suspects.

Joint operations involving specialised police units, POLSEC, Community in Blue members and Community Policing Forum structures are also conducted to increase police visibility. Awareness campaigns are held regularly to educate communities on crime prevention and the protection of people and property, while operations are planned according to local crime patterns.

Given Nkomazi's proximity to Eswatini, cross-border operations are also conducted along identified routes, including roadblocks and stop-and-search operations aimed at preventing criminal activity and the smuggling of dagga. Sports Against Crime initiatives have also been used to keep young people away from drugs and criminal activities, while liquor trader inspections are planned for December 2026.

These interventions are contributing to positive safety outcomes. Between 2025 and 2026, Nkomazi recorded 7.3 serious crimes per 1 000 population, the best performance in the province, improving from 7.9 in 2020/21.

The three-day programme concluded with the Premier's Imbizo at Magogeni Village, bringing the focus back to the people of Nkomazi. Residents were given an opportunity to raise concerns directly with the Provincial Government, with water and service delivery featuring prominently in the engagement.

The Imbizo provided government with an opportunity not only to listen to communities, but also to explain interventions already underway and identify areas requiring further attention. Acting Premier and CoGHSTA MEC, Mr Speed Mashilo reaffirmed the Provincial Government's commitment to working with communities and the municipality to address the challenges raised.

The conclusion of the EXCO Outreach Programme marks another step in strengthening accountable and responsive government in Nkomazi. With its growing population, strategic location, economic potential and proximity to major regional trade routes, the municipality remains an important contributor to the development of Mpumalanga. Continued collaboration between government and communities will be essential to ensure that investments in infrastructure, education, economic development, safety and basic services translate into meaningful improvements in the lives of residents.

The programme brought together the Mpumalanga Provincial Executive Council led by CoGHSTA MEC Mr Speed Mashilo; Members of the Executive Council; Nkomazi Local Municipality Executive Mayor Ms Phindile Magagula, councillors and municipal officials; traditional leaders; senior provincial government officials; the South African Police Service; Community Policing Forums; Community in Blue structures; education stakeholders; the Mpumalanga Economic Regulator; Disabled People South Africa; youth organisations; PYDF beneficiaries; and communities across Nkomazi Local Municipality.



EMAVOTI LAKHETSEKILE
TICELO TEKUVOTA LETIKHETSEKILE

VULA

21 Inyoni 2026

VALA

12 Imphala 2026 nga 17h00



KUVAKASHELA
EKHAYA

Kubavoti labavunyiwe labangakhoni kutiveta ngekwemtimba esiteshini sekuvota ngenca yesimo sabo semtimba.

Indzawo yekuvalelwa kumele ibe ngaphakathi kwesigodzi sekuvota lapho umvoti abhaliswe khona.



SITESHI SEKUVOTA

Kubavoti labavunyelwe labangakhona kuya ngekwenyama esiteshini sabo sekuvota kepha bangakhoni kuvota lapho ngelilanga lelukhetfo.

Kuphindze kusebente kubavoti labafanelekako labangaba ngaphandle kwesigodzi sabo sekuvota ngelilanga lelukhetfo, kufaka ekhatsi labo labasetinsita letibalulekile kanye netindzaba.

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Gcwalisa lonkhe lwati lwakho

Niketa imali lengenako emakhaya imininingwane bese uniketa imvume lapho kudzingeka khona.



Layisha emadokhumenti akho

Layisha umazisi wakho, bufakazi be imali lengenako kanye nekukhubateka imibhalo (uma kukhona).



Buyeketa sicelo sakho

Hloa kutsi lonkhe lwati futsi imibhalo ilungile ngaphambi kwekutsi ungenise.



Hambisa ngaphambi kwemncamulajucu

Gcwalisa bese ungenisa sicelo sakho.



Gcina inombolo yakho yekubhekisa

Utawutfoli i-inombolo yekubhekisa ngemuva kwa kutfumela, kutfobela.



Landzela sicelo sakho

Ngena ku-myNSFAS ku landzela sicelo sakho sikhundla.



KUVULIWE TICELO

18 Inyoni 2026



TICELO TIVALWA

31 Imphala 2026



Kufaka sicelo MAHHALA

Ungalokotsi ubhadale umuntu kutsi akufake sicelo, futsi ungelokotsi wabelane ngephasiwedi yakho nobe i-OTP.

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