



Capt. Nompondwana strengthens forensic excellence in Upington



Captain Merrolyn Lindi Nompondwana

Upington

By: Phumeza Stungu

Captain Merrolyn Lindi Nompondwana, a 33-year-old member of the South African Police Service (SAPS), is making a significant impact in the field of forensic investigations through her role as Sub-Section Commander: Crime Scene Management at the Upington Local Criminal Record Centre.

In her current position, Captain Nompondwana is responsible for overseeing crime scene attendance and ensuring that forensic processes are conducted with precision and professionalism. Her work focuses on the effective collection, preservation, and analysis of evidence, particularly in the field of fingerprint identification. This critical function plays a key role in

linking suspects to criminal activities and supporting the successful prosecution of cases. Captain Nompondwana began her career in SAPS in 2014 as a Forensic Analyst in the Crime Scene Laboratory. During this time, she built a solid foundation in forensic science, working in a controlled environment that sharpened her analytical skills. She later transitioned into Crime Scene Investigation, where she gained extensive operational experience by working directly at crime scenes.

Her dedication and consistent performance saw her rise through the ranks, ultimately earning her promotion into a leadership role in 2023. Born and raised in Upington, Captain Nompondwana's journey reflects both determination and ambition. She attended Vela-Langa Primary School before relocating to Bloemfontein, where she completed her secondary education at HTS Louis Botha. She then pursued higher education at the University of the Free State, earning a Bachelor of Science

degree in Microbiology and a Bachelor of Science Honours degree. In addition, she obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration Honours degree, further strengthening her leadership and management capabilities. She also holds a National Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety Management.

Her academic achievements are complemented by her professional recognition. In 2022, she was awarded Criminalistic Expert Status by an adjudication panel, a prestigious milestone that affirms her competence to independently present expert testimony in court. This recognition highlights her expertise in fingerprint identification and reinforces her credibility within the criminal justice system. Captain Nompondwana's commitment to continuous learning remains evident in her ongoing professional development. In 2025, she completed the Discipline Management Process Learning Programme within SAPS, where she was elected class leader by her peers. Her exceptional performance and dedication earned her the Best Student Award, further demonstrating her leadership abilities and commitment to excellence. Beyond her qualifications and accolades, Captain Nompondwana is driven by a strong sense of duty to serve her community. Her leadership in forensic services ensures that investigations are conducted with integrity, accuracy, and professionalism. By strengthening the quality of forensic evidence, she contributes directly to the administration of justice and helps ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

Her journey stands as an inspiration to many young South Africans, particularly those aspiring to build careers in law enforcement and forensic science. Through hard work, education, and perseverance, Captain Nompondwana has established herself as a respected leader in her field. As she continues to advance in her career, her contribution to SAPS and the broader justice system remains invaluable.

Captain Nompondwana's work not only enhances forensic standards but also plays a crucial role in making communities safer, reinforcing the importance of skilled and dedicated professionals in the fight against crime.

MEC Makatong's Budget to accelerate Infrastructure Development and Service Delivery



Northern Cape MEC for Roads and Public Works, Ms. Fufe Makatong

Kimberley

The MEC for Roads and Public Works, Ms. Fufe Makatong, recently tabled the Northern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works' 2026/27 Budget Vote before the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature at the Galeshewe Recreational Hall in Kimberley. Presenting a budget of R2.347 billion, MEC Makatong outlined the

Department's commitment to accelerating infrastructure development, improving service delivery, strengthening institutional capacity and creating sustainable employment opportunities across the province. Addressing the Legislature, the MEC emphasised that infrastructure remains the foundation for inclusive economic growth, connecting communities to economic opportunities while improving access to education, healthcare and essential public services. She reaffirmed government's commitment to ensuring that every infrastructure investment contributes to a modern, growing and successful Northern Cape.

The budget prioritises transport infrastructure, with R1.771 billion (75%) allocated to road construction, maintenance and rehabilitation. Other allocations include R247 million for Public Works Infrastructure, R221 million for Administration and R108 million for Community-Based Programmes. Among the key priorities announced were the continued rollout of Operation Vala Zonke, expansion of the Department's R98 million Yellow Fleet, implementation of strategic road infrastructure projects, rehabilitation of flood-damaged roads, and strengthening partnerships with municipalities, SANRAL and the private sector to improve infrastructure delivery across all five districts. The MEC

further highlighted government's investment in skills development through the Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship Programme and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which will create more than 22,600 work opportunities during the 2026/27 financial year while equipping young people with technical and artisan skills required to support the province's long-term infrastructure programme.

The Department also reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening governance, improving financial management, paying valid invoices within 30 days, combating the disruption of construction projects, and ensuring that public infrastructure investments translate into tangible improvements in the lives of Northern Cape residents. Concluding her address, MEC Makatong said the budget reflects government's determination to build resilient infrastructure, stimulate economic growth and restore public confidence through efficient and accountable service delivery.

"We will continue building a province where every road connects opportunities, every building serves our people, and every investment contributes to a better future for all," the MEC said.



Dignity Restored, 12 New Houses Handed Over in Lerato Park



Twelve lucky families in Lerato Park, Kimberly received the keys to their new homes on Wednesday, 8 July 2026, during an official handover led by senior government and municipal leaders.

The MEC Bentley Vass of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and

Traditional Affairs, together with Sol Plaatje Municipality Executive Mayor Cllr Martha Bartlett and Frances Baard District Municipality Executive Mayor Cllr Patrick Marekwa handed over the keys to 12 households, welcoming them to their newly built homes. The handover forms part of the Lerato Park 100 housing project, which aims to provide much needed

shelter and improve living conditions of residents in the area.

"Today is a dream come true. We have been waiting for so long and now we finally have our own house. My children will now have a safe and stable home, I'm really grateful to the government for this opportunity, it changes everything for me and my family," said one of the new house owners. This latest handover brings the total number of houses completed under the Lerato Park project closer to its target. It is confirmed that more houses will be completed and handed over in the coming months as construction continues.

For the twelve families who moved in on Wednesday, the day marked far more than just receiving property; it represented hope, security, and the beginning of a new chapter in Lerato Park.



Educational Adventure Begins, Kimberley Stars Fly to America as Youth Ambassadors



By Katleho Malangabe

On Wednesday, 8 July 2026, two bright young minds from Kimberley Technical High School boarded a flight that will take them thousands of kilometres away from home, marking the beginning of a life-changing international adventure.

Laone Mondela and Tamika Meyers are among only ten South African high school learners selected for the highly competitive Youth Ambassadors Africa Programme in the United States. Their selection stands as a proud achievement not just for the learners themselves, but for the entire Northern Cape education community.

Over the next three weeks, the pair will participate in a programme focused on leadership training, community service projects, cultural exchange activities, and valuable educational experiences. They will live with American host families, gaining first-hand insight into a different culture while sharing aspects of their own South African heritage.

The programme is designed to develop well-rounded young leaders who can return home with new skills, broader perspectives, and fresh ideas to contribute positively to their communities. Both learners were chosen based on their academic excellence, demonstrated leadership qualities, and strong commitment to making a difference in society. The school principal, Mr Michael Ludick, who also served as their mentor, played a crucial role in the learners' success.

His consistent guidance and support helped Laone and Tamika navigate the highly competitive national selection process. This opportunity highlights the quality of talent emerging from Kimberley schools and serves as powerful motivation for other young people in the province.

As Laone and Tamika represent South Africa abroad, they carry with them the hopes and pride of their school, their city, and their province.

Integrated Outreach Programme Brings Essential Services To Solar Capital Workers



De Aar

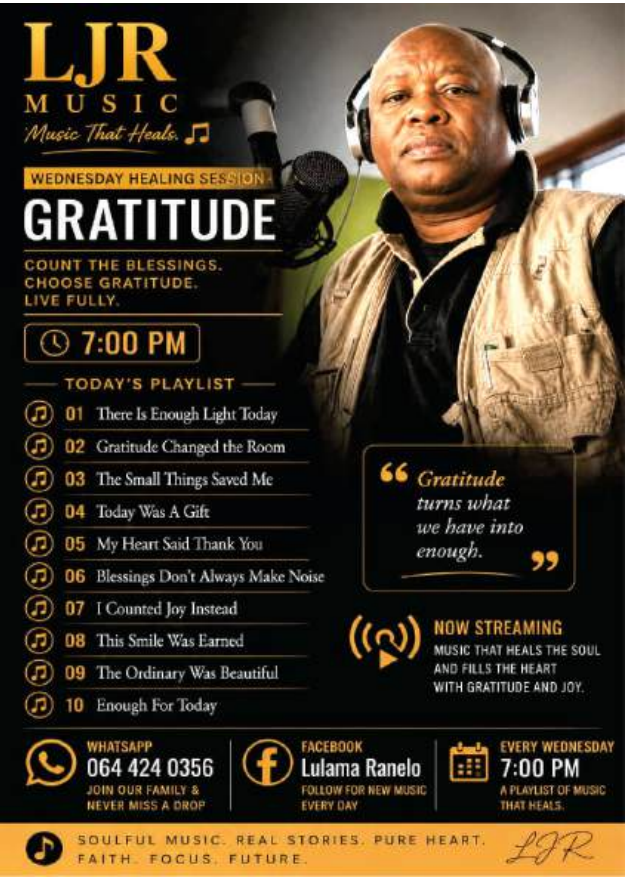
Workers at the Solar Capital maintenance site received essential government services and awareness information during an Integrated Outreach Programme held recently.

The initiative was led by the Local Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) in partnership with the Department of Health, the Department of Social Development, Emthanjeni Local Municipality, and the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality. The outreach

targeted employees working under Solar Capital's subcontractor, Juwi.

The programme aimed to ensure that workers, who often struggle to access government services because of their demanding working hours, could receive important information and support directly at their workplace. Representatives from the participating departments engaged with employees on various social and health-related issues, while also providing an opportunity for workers to ask questions and access available services.

LJR Music restoring hope through timeless African Soul



By Lulama Ranelo

In a world where music often comes and goes with changing trends, a new South African creative initiative is quietly taking a different path. LJR Music was founded

on a simple but profound belief: music can restore hope. Created by De Aar-born poet, published author and musician Lulama Ranelo, LJR Music is more than a recording project. It is the beginning of a long-term vision to build an African institution dedicated to creating timeless soul music that inspires, heals and connects people across generations.

Ranelo, author of the poetry collection BY THE GRACE OF GOD – I Am Still Standing, has transformed years of poetry, personal experiences and reflection into a growing catalogue of original songs rooted in hope, resilience, gratitude, mature love and the beauty of everyday life. Drawing inspiration from Soul, Afro Soul, Neo Soul and R&B traditions, LJR Music combines heartfelt storytelling with warm, emotionally honest music that speaks across generations. Among the growing catalogue are songs such as My Scars Carry Light, The World Didn't Win, What Becomes of Us, After the Hurt?, The House Is Still Standing, and many others that reflect the project's commitment to uplifting and restoring the human spirit.

What makes LJR Music distinctive is that it is being developed not simply as a music catalogue, but as a long-term cultural legacy project. Behind every song is a carefully documented creative process, a clear artistic philosophy and a long-term institutional vision aimed at preserving African storytelling through music for future generations. The guiding philosophy of LJR Music is captured in its mission: "Restoring Hope Through Timeless African Soul." This philosophy influences every lyric, every melody and every decision made within the project. An important part of this vision is building a consistent relationship with listeners. Every evening at 19h00, LJR Music shares music, reflections

and creative updates through its WhatsApp Status, creating a daily moment of encouragement and connection. This growing tradition allows supporters to experience new songs, revisit favourites and journey alongside the development of the catalogue.

In addition, every Sunday at 13h00, listeners are invited to the LJR Sunday Soul Sessions—a carefully curated musical experience celebrating timeless African soul. The Sunday sessions have become the flagship weekly gathering of the LJR Music community, offering moments of reflection, healing and gratitude through music. Looking to the future, LJR Music is laying the foundations for what is envisioned as the LJR Music Institute—a future home for songwriting, creative education, artistic research, music preservation and cultural development. The long-term vision includes a digital archive, a catalogue library, educational programmes, community partnerships and initiatives that support emerging artists while preserving African musical heritage. "LJR Music is not only about making songs," says Ranelo. "It is about leaving behind something meaningful. If one person finds hope through a song today, and another discovers that same hope many years from now, then the music has fulfilled its purpose."

Although still in its founding stages, LJR Music continues to expand its catalogue while steadily building the structures that will sustain its vision for decades to come. As the music grows, so too grows a dream—that music can once again become a place of comfort, dignity and restoration. The House, as those close to the project affectionately call it, is still being built. But its doors are already open.

March and March Movement Adopts Action Plan Amid Rising Concerns Over Irregular Migration



By Phumeza Stungu

Upington

Following a special National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held on Friday, July 3, the March and March Movement has officially adopted a comprehensive three-month action plan aimed at addressing the growing challenges associated with irregular migration in South Africa. The strategic roadmap, developed after reflecting on the events leading up to June 30, outlines a structured and

intensified approach to national advocacy. The movement indicated that the plan will focus on community mobilisation, stakeholder engagement, and heightened awareness campaigns to bring attention to concerns surrounding undocumented migrants and their impact on local communities.

In Upington, tensions around the issue continue to rise as residents voice frustration over what they describe as ongoing criminal activities allegedly linked to undocumented migrants. Cheriza Van Schalkwyk, representing a concerned community group in the area, said residents have reached a breaking point. "We

are fed up and tired of illegal immigrants who are constantly involved in criminal activities within our community," she said. "As residents of Upington, we feel unsafe and unheard." Van Schalkwyk confirmed that the group has committed to weekly protest action, stating that marches will take place every Thursday as part of what they refer to as "one of the country's ongoing marches" addressing migration-related concerns.

The group recently handed over a memorandum to the South African Police Service (SAPS), outlining their grievances and calling for stronger enforcement of immigration laws, as well as increased accountability within law enforcement structures. Among the issues raised were serious allegations of corruption within SAPS, with claims that some police officers are accepting bribes from undocumented migrants. These allegations have further intensified mistrust between the community and local law enforcement. Responding to the memorandum, SAPS ZF Mgcawu District Commissioner, Major General Monica Sebili, acknowledged receipt of the document and addressed the concerns raised by the group.

"We take the concerns of the community seriously," said Sebili. "However, we urge the group to provide concrete evidence regarding the allegations of police officers accepting bribes so that appropriate action can be taken." Sebili further emphasised that SAPS remains committed to upholding the law and ensuring that any misconduct within its ranks is investigated thoroughly. The March and March Movement's national leadership reiterated that their action plan is not only focused on protest but also seeks constructive engagement with government institutions, law enforcement, and civil society to find sustainable solutions to irregular migration.

As the three-month plan unfolds, all eyes will be on how both authorities and communities respond to the growing calls for action, accountability, and reform. The situation in Upington reflects a broader national debate, one that continues to stir strong emotions and demands careful, lawful, and inclusive solutions.





the dr&pw

Department:
Roads and Public Works
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



R2.3bn Budget Puts Land, Debt and Disaster Repair on the Table

MEC Fufe Makatong tabled Budget Vote 5 in Kimberley on 7 July 2026, using the Expropriation Act to unlock a landlocked community, confirming a R95 million debt settlement with Sol Plaatje Municipality, and putting a zero-tolerance line on construction site disruptions.

BUDGET VOTE 5: 2026/27

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

LANDEXPROPRIATION: SKEYFONTEIN
For years, residents of Skeyfontein in the ZF Mgcawu District have had to ask permission from neighbouring private farmers just to reach Postmasburg, the nearest economic hub, even though their land was returned to them through the land restitution process. The Department will now use the Expropriation Act 13 of 2024 to acquire the land needed for a proper access road, and will formally proclaim and gazette it as a public road under provincial protection.

“Skeyfontein will not wait forever; and with this Act, they will not have to.”

RATES AND TAXES: THE MUNICIPAL DEBT TURNAROUND
The Department is responsible for rates and taxes on all provincial properties, schools, hospitals and offices, across all 31 municipalities. Total arrears owed to municipalities have been brought down from R700 million to just under R400 million. The standout deal is

with Sol Plaatje Municipality: R95 million was paid against the outstanding debt, with the remaining disputed balance written off, cutting that debt from over R600 million to below R300 million.

VACANT LAND AND VANDALISED BUILDINGS
The province is sitting on 13,443 hectares of vacant land and 33 vandalised buildings. Rather than selling them off, the Department wants to place them in a Renovate, Operate and Transfer model that lets the private sector restore derelict buildings at no cost to the state, with priority going to previously disadvantaged individuals, women, youth, persons with disabilities and rural communities.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION MAFIA
MEC confirmed the Department will invoke the Intimidation Act and the Prevention of Organised Crime Act against site disruptions, which have already stalled the Galeshewe Library (now at only 10% progress) and held community development hostage.

FLOOD DAMAGE: A R4 BILLION BACKLOG
Floods across the ZF Mgcawu, Frances Baard and John Taolo Gaetsewe districts damaged 1,369.25 kilometres of provincial roads, at an immediate estimated repair cost of R1.211 billion, part of a wider R4 billion reconstruction backlog. John Taolo Gaetsewe, the province's manganese heartland, was hit hardest at R481.5 million. A national MINMEC report led by Transport Minister Barbara Creecy is now before National Treasury motivating for disaster recovery funding.

YELLOW FLEET AND THE APPRENTICESHIP PIPELINE
Since 1 April 2026 the R98 million Yellow Fleet, graders, tipper trucks, water tankers, loaders and excavators, has moved under direct departmental control. Alongside it, the Phakamile Mabija Apprenticeship Programme is now in its fifth cycle with more than 800 youth earning Red Seal qualifications in welding, fitting and turning, boilermaking and refrigeration, with qualifying graduates set to be absorbed as permanent, salaried departmental employees.



BUDGET AT A GLANCE	
Total departmental budget, 2026/27	R2.347 billion
Equitable share (incl. R40m earmarked)	R842m (+17%)
Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant	R1.5bn (-4%)
EPWP Incentive Grant	R4m
Transport Infrastructure (Programme 3)	R1.771bn (75%)
Public Works Infrastructure (Programme 2)	R247m (11%)
Administration (Programme 1)	R221m (9%)
Community Based Programmes (Programme 4)	R108m (5%)
Flood-damage repair backlog (2026 floods)	R4 billion
Immediate flood damage assessed	R1.211bn / 1,369km
Rates & taxes arrears reduced from R700m to	under R400m
Yellow Fleet investment (own control, 1 Apr 2026)	R98 million



the dr&pw

Department:
Roads and Public Works
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Inside the 2026/27 Budget Vote:

Rebuilding a Department, Rebuilding a Province

BUDGET SPEECH SUMMARY

BUDGET VOTE 5: 2026/27

A programme-by-programme account of the speech MEC Fufe Makatong delivered to the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature in Galeshewe, Kimberley.



SETTING THE SCENE

The MEC tabled the R2.347 billion budget in Galeshewe, Kimberley's oldest township, invoking its links to Kgosi Galeshewe and the Makgosi of Kuruman. She placed the speech against a national warning from built-environment leadership that nine in ten major construction projects finish over budget or over time, and noted the Northern Cape's own examples, including the Mamathwane Road between Kathu and Hotazel, where a second contractor has had to be terminated for non-performance.

ECONOMIC BACKDROP

The Northern Cape holds over 77% of the world's on-land manganese resources, and the Namakwa Special Economic Zone is targeting growth from R164 billion to R200 billion in GDP and 60,000 new jobs by 2030. Every tonne of that manganese moves on a road this Department maintains, along a roughly 1,000-kilometre corridor from the mines of Hotazel and Black Rock through Kimberley, Upington, De Aar and on to the port of Gqeberha. Construction inflation of 5.9% in 2026 means the same allocation now buys less.

REMODELLING THE DEPARTMENT

An institutional review is targeting an approved new organisational structure by 31 March 2027, decentralising posts to district level in response to a 54.17% vacancy rate. Eighteen staff are on a CETA-funded candidacy programme toward professional registration as engineers, project managers, quantity

surveyors and architects, and the white fleet function has moved to NCEDA while the yellow fleet came fully in-house.

PROGRAMME 2: PUBLIC WORKS INFRASTRUCTURE

Beyond the rates, land and property stories, delivery highlights include the new Schmidtsdrift Clinic, electrical infrastructure replacement at Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital, the Tshwaragano Hospital upgrade in Kuruman at 82% progress, eleven Department of Education projects under construction, and the Parliamentary Village Public-Private Partnership, now at draft feasibility stage with National Treasury.

PROGRAMME 3: TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The province's road network spans 26,542.38 kilometres, of which only 2,991.26 kilometres are paved. The paved network's condition index improved from 63% to 65%, though 16.74% remains in poor condition. Capital projects for 2026/27 include the MR974 Laxey-Heuningvlei, MR778 Kakamas, and DR3252 Rooiwal-Vioolsdrift, alongside co-investment partnerships with Mkhulu Mine and PMG Mining in John Taolo Gaetsewe and with agricultural stakeholders in the Vaalharts irrigation scheme. Internal teams will patch 23,000 square metres of potholes in 2026/27.

THE SANRAL PARTNERSHIP

SANRAL's provincial network has grown to 4,472

kilometres, the second largest in the country, with a further 336 kilometres approved for incorporation. Six SANRAL projects worth over R1 billion are under construction, including the R27 Brandvlei-Kenhardt and the N7 Arakoo-Brakfontein, with twelve more to be advertised in 2026/27. The MEC flagged that manganese haul routes such as the N12 Britstown-Strydenburg still have no budget allocation, and called on National Treasury to prioritise the corridor.

EPWP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

In 2025/26, provincial departments created 19,463 work opportunities against a target of 18,000-odd, 108% of target, benefiting 9,325 youth, 11,469 women and 161 persons with disabilities. For 2026/27 the target rises to 22,643 opportunities across all spheres. More than 600 EPWP participants are pursuing matric completion, ABET and digital literacy alongside their work, and 305 young people and 75 persons with disabilities will benefit from training interventions including the Phakamile Mabija Programme this year.

CLOSING THE ACCOUNT

The MEC closed by committing the Department to honesty about its shortcomings and consistency in showing up, framing every unrepaired kilometre, every uncreated work opportunity and every unmaintained building as a debt owed to a family, a young person or a community. Budget Vote 5 for the Department of Roads and Public Works, 2026/27, was formally tabled before the House.



Northern Cape Welcomes 109 Young Agricultural Professionals in Major Youth Empowerment Drive



In a significant boost for youth employment and the future of farming in the Northern Cape, the Department of Agriculture has welcomed 80 unemployed agricultural graduates and 29 Assistant Agricultural Practitioners into the sector.

The new intake was officially welcomed by MEC for Agriculture, Mr Motlaping, together with the Head of Department, Mr Monakali in Kuruman on the 3rd of July 2026. The initiative forms part of the Comprehensive

Agricultural Support Programme Unemployed Agricultural Graduates Programme, aimed at giving young professionals real-world experience while strengthening support for farmers across the province.

The 80 graduates have been placed at 23 different commercial and smallholder farming enterprises throughout the Northern Cape. Over the next two years, they will work directly on farms, learning practical skills, gaining hands-on experience, and bridging the gap

between what they studied in the classroom and the daily realities of agriculture. This placement is expected to help them develop strong technical knowledge, business skills, and an entrepreneurial mindset.

At the same time, 29 Assistant Agricultural Practitioners have been deployed across various districts. "This is more than just a placement, it is a chance to grow. Learn from every experience, ask questions, work hard, and remember that no task is too small when you are building your future. Your dedication and willingness to serve will help grow agriculture, improve food security, and support rural development in our province," said MEC Motlaping.

This programme clearly is part of the Northern Cape government's strong commitment to youth empowerment, skills development, and building a stronger agricultural sector. By investing in young graduates, the province is not only tackling unemployment but also ensuring that farming communities receive better support and that food production continues to grow.

For the 109 young men and women starting this new journey, it marks the beginning of what officials hope will be long and successful careers in agriculture. Their success will contribute directly to a more food-secure and economically stronger Northern Cape.

Final Voter Registration Weekend Ahead Of 2026 Local Government Elections



The Electoral Commission (IEC) has announced that it will host its final in-person voter registration weekend on 1 and 2 August 2026, giving eligible South Africans another opportunity to register to vote before the 2026 Local Government Elections.

The registration weekend is aimed at making voter registration more accessible by opening voting stations across the country. Eligible citizens will be able to register for the first time, update their voter registration details,

and receive assistance from Electoral Commission officials on election-related matters.

The IEC has encouraged all eligible South Africans to make use of the opportunity and to motivate family members, friends, neighbours, and colleagues to register and ensure they are correctly registered in their voting districts.

According to the Commission, every registration contributes to strengthening South Africa's democracy

MEC Vass visits blocked Skeifontein Housing Project



Postmasburg

MEC Bentley Vass, responsible for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), in the Northern Cape, accompanied by the Mayor of the Tsantsabane Local Municipality, Councillor Helena English, the Council Speaker, Councillor Lindiwe Teise and other Councillors, conducted a site visit to the long-standing blocked housing project in Skeifontein, in Postmasburg. The purpose of the visit was to meet directly with local community members, listen to their concerns, and provide a transparent update on the way forward.

Recognizing the frustration caused by the prolonged delays, MEC Vass made a firm commitment that government is actively raising the necessary funds to unblock and complete this vital housing project. In an address to the community, MEC Vass emphasized the department's commitment to honesty and accountability."No difficulties should be

masked, and no lies must be told about the challenges we face, especially the limited allocation to human settlements development compared to the province-wide backlog of housing.

We are here to confront the issues head-on, work with you, and ensure that the people of Skeifontein get the dignified housing they deserve. We are busy exploring all available avenues to ensure that this project is completed." said MEC Vass. Mayor English, appreciated the visit by the MEC to engage with the communities and said efforts to address all the service delivery challenges of the Skeifontein community and all others across the Tsantsabane municipal area, will continue with the assistance of the provincial and national government, in the spirit of the District Development Model (DDM).

The department will continue to keep the community informed as funding models are finalized and contractors are readied to return to the site.

Premier Zamani Saul Leads Strategic Delegation to SARAQ to Advance Northern Cape Innovation



By Phumeza Stungu

Northern Cape

Premier Dr. Zamani Saul is leading a high-level Northern Cape Provincial Government delegation on a strategic visit to the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAQ), reinforcing the province's commitment to science, innovation, and economic development.

The delegation includes the MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ms Venus Blennies-Magage, senior government officials led by Director-General Mr Justice Bekebeke, as well as representatives from Sol Plaatje University. The visit marks a significant step towards strengthening collaboration between government, academia, and scientific institutions. At the centre of the visit is a shared vision to unlock opportunities that will benefit the people of the Northern Cape through research, skills development, and innovation-driven growth. The engagement aims to deepen partnerships between the provincial government, Sol Plaatje University, and SARAQ, ensuring that local communities are not only spectators but active participants in the global scientific space.

SARAQ, operating under the National Research Foundation (NRF), is responsible for managing South Africa's radio astronomy facilities. It plays a crucial role in advancing the country's contribution to the globally significant Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project. The SKA is one of the largest scientific undertakings in the world and is expected to revolutionise humanity's understanding of the universe. With key SKA telescope infrastructure located in Carnarvon, the Northern Cape has positioned itself as a global hub for astronomy and cutting-edge scientific research.

This has brought increased international attention to the province, while also opening doors for local economic development, infrastructure investment, and educational advancement. Premier Saul emphasised the importance of ensuring that these developments translate into tangible benefits for the people of the province. He highlighted the need for inclusive growth that prioritises skills development, particularly among young people, so they can participate meaningfully in emerging sectors driven by science and technology. "The Northern Cape is uniquely positioned to lead in the field of astronomy and innovation," said Premier Saul. "Through partnerships such as these, we aim to

create sustainable opportunities that will uplift our communities and contribute to long-term economic growth."

The involvement of Sol Plaatje University in the visit underscores the critical role of higher education institutions in bridging the gap between scientific research and community development. By aligning academic programmes with the needs of the science and technology sector, the university can help produce graduates equipped with relevant and in-demand skills. MEC Venus Blennies-Magage noted that strengthening ties with institutions like SARAQ is essential for driving economic diversification in the province. She added that investing in innovation and research can unlock new industries and reduce reliance on traditional sectors. The visit also serves as a platform to explore future initiatives, including internship programmes, research collaborations, and community outreach projects that can bring science closer to the people.

As the Northern Cape continues to host world-class scientific infrastructure, leaders are optimistic that these strategic partnerships will contribute to building a modern, growing, and successful province.

The engagement with SARAQ reflects a broader commitment by the provincial government to harness science and innovation as key drivers of development, ensuring that the Northern Cape remains at the forefront of global astronomical research while delivering meaningful impact at a local level.



Treasury withholds funds from 69 municipalities in all 9 provinces



The National Treasury has withheld funding from 69 municipalities across all nine provinces.

According to the department, the move is aimed at ensuring public money is properly managed.

It also seeks to curb unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, while holding municipal office-bearers accountable where required by law."The decision follows persistent and serious non-compliance with the Municipal Finance Management Act and its supporting regulations," says the Treasury in a statement. The

affected municipalities are in:

Eastern Cape

Buffalo City; Nelson Mandela Bay; Makana Sundays River Valley; Inxuba Yethemba; Port St Johns

Free State

Mangaung; Letsemeng; Kopanong; Mohokare; Xhariep District Municipality; Masilonyana; Tokologo; Matjhabeng; Nala, Dihlabeng; Nketoana; Maluti-a-Phofung; Phumelela; Mantsopa; Ngwathe; Mafube

Gauteng

City of Johannesburg; Emfuleni; Lesedi; Sedibeng District Municipality; Merafong City; Rand West City

KwaZulu-Natal

iMpendle; uMzinyathi District Municipality; Newcastle; eMadlangeni; Amajuba District Municipality; AbaQulusi uMkhanyakude District Municipality

Limpopo

Mopani District Municipality; Musina; Thabazimbi; Modimolle-Mookgoong; Fetakgomo Tubatse

Mpumalanga

Victor Khanye; Emakhazeni; Nkomazi

Northern Cape

Kamiesberg; Khâi-Ma; Ubuntu; Umsobomvu; Emthanjeni Renosterberg; Thembelihle; Siyathemba; !Kai !Garib; Magareng; Phokwane

North West

Madibeng; Kgetlengrivier; Tswaing; Mafikeng; Ditsobotla Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality; Naledi; Mamusa; Dr Ruth Segomotsi, Mompoti District Municipality; City of Matlosana; Maquassi Hills; JB Marks

Western Cape

Theewaterskloof; Laingsburg; Beaufort West.

According to Treasury, the municipalities were given sufficient written notice and urged to improve their financial management before the funds were withheld. They were also given an opportunity to submit written reasons why their funds should not be withheld. Treasury says the intervention is a corrective, rather than punitive, measure and that the withholding of funds is temporary. "The National Treasury does not foresee any impact on service delivery," the department said.

Qplankies Earn Win and Draw Against Gunners in De Aar



De Aar

Plankies FC produced a solid away performance against Gunners FC at Gunners Field on Sunday, 5 July 2026, collecting a win and a draw in their league fixtures.

In the first match, Plankies claimed a convincing 3–1 victory over Gunners. Minqweno was among the goalscorers as Plankies secured all three points with an

impressive display. The second encounter ended in a 2–2 draw, with Minqweno once again finding the back of the net, while Cherki added the team's second goal. Despite surrendering the lead, Plankies showed determination to earn a valuable point away from home.

Following the matches, the team acknowledged that although the results were encouraging, there is still room for improvement. The players and technical team

have committed to returning to the training ground to correct mistakes and continue building on their performance.

The club remains optimistic as it looks ahead to its upcoming fixtures under the slogan: "We Will Rise Again."

SAFA hosts another successful FIFA Women’s Football Campaign



The South African Football Association (SAFA) Women’s Football department concluded Youth Month (June) with two successful campaigns.

Held under the FIFA Women’s Football Campaign banner, the project visited Witbank in Mpumalanga as well as Mothibistad in the Northern Cape for an uplifting programme for girls between 6-12 years in each province. The Campaign focused on immediate grassroots engagement and capacity building through sport, fostering confidence, self-esteem and vital leadership skills. It was a busy period which saw 30 coaches and the same number of volunteers leading over 300 participants across the two provinces. The FIFA Women’s Football Campaign is an initiative integrated with the FIFA Forward funding platform to boost grassroots participation among girls and women globally, with key objectives to increase participation and to offer safe environments to the next generation of female footballers. This event, held under the auspices of the FIFA Forward Program, is aligned with

the SAFA Women’s Football Strategy that aims to increase girls’ participation in football.

At the two events in Mpumalanga and in the Northern Cape, the day was packed with exciting football field activities, blending structured technical drills with energetic free play sessions designed to ensure every child thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It was a memorable day of sport, growth, and community empowerment for the next generation of female footballers. The visit to the two provinces was an important step reviving women’s football in the two areas. Mpumalanga boasts a proud history in the women’s game having produced historic national contenders like Detroit ladies and continuing to nurture modern talent for the national team Banyana Banyana. Despite the rich history, many exceptionally talented players in the far-flung municipality remain isolated from the mainstream football activities due to geographical barriers. On the other hand, Mothibistad was enjoying their first ever hosting of the FIFA Women’s Campaign, representing a transformative opportunity for young girls in the poverty-stricken community.

The presence of FIFA Women’s Football Campaign in the two areas highlighted a critical gap where grassroots intervention was sorely needed, and the initiative created a meaningful impact by promoting confidence, teamwork while also bringing to the fore the importance of inclusive opportunities for girls in underserved areas.

“Our campaign was just the beginning, let us secure the future by expanding schools’ programmes, driving grassroots festivals, and creating clear pathways to success. Let’s show the girl child that success in football is possible,” said Dawn Lubisi, Head of Women’s Football at SAFA.

 Pixley Independent

**FOR NEWS COVERAGE
IN THE NORTHERN CAPE**



**CONTACT:
KATLEHO MALANGABE
069 184 6640**

The Independent Voice Of Northern Cape