

LET'S GROW MPUMALANGA TOGETHER



The late Stanley Mkhwanazi was among the military veterans, whose tombstone was unveiled by Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane and the entourage in Lynville.

AGGRESSIVE PLAN OF ACTION LAUNCHED AS GOVERNMENT ADDRESS THE PLIGHT OF MILITARY VETERANS IN MPUMALANGA

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government has launched an aggressive plan to address the plight of military veterans in the three Districts. Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane launched the programme at the Lynville Community Hall, in the Nkangala District. The plan marks the first step towards restoring the dignity of military veterans who made significant sacrifices that ultimately birthed the country's democratic dispensation.

The function was attended by amongst others, MECs, Executive Mayors, Traditional leaders, representatives of families of the military veterans and community structures. The Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane articulated government's commitment to improve the livelihoods of the military veterans. Based on this commitment, each Provincial Department is assigned a responsibility to provide support that will give the plan a meaningful meaning. "An Advisory Desk will be established in my Office to provide an advice in relation to the implementation of the plan. In addition, the Desk will play an oversight role to monitor the Departments on whether they are implementing the plan," the Premier stated.

The plan entails the following:

1. Development of a comprehensive and an inclusive database of military veterans in Mpumalanga;
2. Development of wellness programmes;
3. Increase of access to economic participation;
4. Provision of counselling and related treatment for those who suffer from serious mental illnesses or post-traumatic stress, and
5. Establishment of military veterans' desks across all District Municipalities.

Further details about the plan were also shared by the Director General in the Office of the Premier, Mr Makhukhu Mampuru. Mr Mampuru indicated that plans are at an advanced stage to build 257 houses for military veterans, based on the R7 million earmarked for this purpose in the 2023/24 financial year. He stated that 5% bursaries from the Education Department will be provided to students from the families of the military veterans, as part of the intervention.

Earlier, the Premier unveiled the tombstones of the fallen heroes, erected in their honour at the Pretoria Memorial Park cemetery, in Lynville.

2023

SOPA 2023 UNDERPINNED BY JOBS MASSIFICATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



Ms. Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane
Premier of Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga is implementing aggressive measures to create jobs. The establishment of a war room was among the bold statements presented by the Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane when tabling the 2023 State of the Province Address (SoPA) in the legislature recently.

In a province faced a high youth unemployment rate, the establishment of the war room signals a high level of commitment to fight the high level of unemployment. This is evident in the StatsSA figures which suggests that 61% of the youth (between 15-34 years) in the country is unemployed. Mpumalanga is not spared, based on the 46.5 % unemployed youth rate in the 2nd Quarter of 2022. "As government at all three spheres, and working with our social partners, we will establish a jobs war room in the province. The objective of this war room will be to identify every job opportunity within and outside government and place young people into these job opportunities," she stated.

She alluded to the Premier's Youth Development Fund, among the key levers of job creation, as

Mpumalanga intensifies the fight against unemployment. "Since its inception, the project has empowered 97 youth-owned businesses across the province and funding to the tune of R140 million was allocated. In the current financial year, 36 companies have been approved for funding, with a total amount of R92.3 million disbursed thus far", Mtshweni-Tsipane expatiated.

State capacity is key to achieve the objectives of the 6th administration. As the Premier explained, the provincial government has filled positions to stabilize the administration since the moratorium was lifted in 2021. "Madame Speaker, we are hard at work to stabilize the public service, by filling vacancies and professionalizing the workforce. Since September 2021, we have filled approximately 6 000 vacancies," the Premier emphasized.

This year's SOPA was tabled amid the country's load shedding challenges. In a province, that prides itself as the home of the grid, the Premier cited electricity challenges, as a matter that government is addressing at all levels to protect communities from its effects.

"The President declared a national state of disaster and announced his intention to appoint a Minister of Electricity in the Presidency. Working in tandem with the National Electricity Crisis Committee, the Minister is expected to focus specifically and exclusively on resolving the prevailing electricity crisis," Mtshweni-Tsipane said. She urged community members that live near power stations and coal mines to be alert in defence of these national assets, through exposing of corruption and sabotage, aimed at creating frequent breakdown of power-generating units.

According to the Premier an amount of R4.294 billion was set aside in 2022/23 financial year for infrastructure development. "We have completed a total number of 102 projects which include both

building and transport infrastructure projects which include the 88 Educational facilities, 3 health facilities, 2 social development facilities, and 1 library," she explained.

The tourism industry received a major short in the arm through a partnership between the provincial government and the SABC, which will culminate to the hosting of the prestigious Metro fm awards in Mpumalanga, for the next 3 years. The awards will be hosted in May 2023 at the Mombela Stadium. In addition, the construction of the God's Window Skywalk, was tabled by the Premier as one of the major projects to boost the tourism industry. It is envisaged that the project will attract an estimated 45 000 to 60 000 tourists to the province.



Ms Anele Zulu represents a cohort of graduates with an interest in farming.

FORTUNE 40 PROJECT CREATE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG GRADUATES IN MPUMALANGA

The Barberton Fortune 40 project has created opportunities for young graduates with an interest in the farming business. Fortune 40 is one of the various programmes, initiated by the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) in Mpumalanga to create job opportunities for the youth and to stimulate their interest in the farming business.

The Barberton project was established in 2016. Currently, the project consist

of a group of seven learners, among them, Ms Anele Zulu. The 33 year old young graduate, completed a Bachelor of Agriculture in Plant Production (University of Mpumalanga), joined DARDLEA as an Agricultural Assistant Practitioner, and was assigned to the project, as one of the four graduates.

Since joining the project, Zulu and her peers have earned valuable farming experience in vegetable production about spacing of plants, application

of herbicides and irrigation systems in the project, with a total farm size of 10 hectares.

Through this experience, they have produced various vegetables. Currently, they have planted spinach, cabbage, chilis and butternut.

Local chain stores such as Pick 'n Pay, Galitos, Spar, Multi Save and the local schools, have become their target market for their produce, and this give Zulu and her peers hope for a future in farming.

THEMBISILE HANI RESIDENTS EXPRESS THEIR ASPIRATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT



Residents share their aspirations in Thembisile Hani Municipality.

Thembisile Hani Local Municipality is one of the poorest municipalities in Mpumalanga. Unemployment is at 60.1% , according to the 2021 Stats SA figures. Access to water, health services, damaged road infrastructure and a high unemployment rate were raised sharply by the residents when the Provincial Legislature conducted a public engagement programme, Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) recently.

The municipality relies heavily on the Loskom Dam for bulk water supply. 15 ML of water is extracted daily. However, this amount is inadequate, leaving many communities in short supply. Although Thembisile Hani is rich in cultural heritage and tourism opportunities, however, these are overshadowed by the myriad of socio-economic challenges. This assertion was corroborated by the residents, among them, Vasco Sithole, during engagement sessions with Members of the Legislature (MPLs) and Members of the Executive (MECs). “The community need the clinic to operate for 24hours. We request Community Health Workers,” he explained.

Maria Masombuka’s concern focused on road infrastructure. “There is a damaged bridge that require repairs in Ward 31,” she emphasized. Her concern was reiterated by various

residents who suggested that government should repair the road infrastructure to revitalize the economy in Thembisile Hani Municipality.

The poor performance of local schools suggests a myriad of challenges in the school environment, making the municipality, the least with good results provincial wide. Observation has been made that the Grade 12 pass rate decreased from 77.1% in 2014 to 71.6% in 2021. It further dropped to 67.7% in 2022. This, as Rachel Mokoena of Ward 12 highlighted some of the challenges in the local schools, during public engagement session at the Kwamhlanga Stadium. “Tidimalo School cannot accommodate all children and government committed to extend it. Grades 2 and 3 are attending in a shack while others are sitting on the ground,” she emphasized.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the Kwamhlanga Stadium inspires hope. Since TS Galaxy, a Mpumalanga-based Premier soccer league team, chose it as a home ground, the stadium has become a hive of activity for league and cup games. The stadium has been renovated, and its precinct has a potential for economic spin-offs, such as entertainment functions and accommodation facilities.

GOVERNMENT’S RADICAL INTERVENTION PLAN IN THEMBISILE HANI



Water Intervention: “As such, EXCO directed that a scientific report, which depicts an accurate number of households, must be conducted to substantiate the water demand, in line with the growing population. The report will serve as a blueprint in future, while efforts are underway for the construction of the Loskop Dam, to increase the water supply”, **Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane.**



Road maintenance: “Upgrading of road D2920 from Ramokgeletsane to Senotlelo to commence in June 2023. Upgrading of Zithabiseng road from Bundu to R25 to commence in June 2023. To fix six bridges and the regravelling of provincial roads,” **MEC Mandla Ndlovu of Public Works, Roads and Transport.**



Access to healthcare: “The number of wards and hospital beds in Kwamhlanga hospital, will be increased to cater for the high patients intake. 36 Community Works Programme (CWP) participants will be recruited to keep the environment of health facilities clean”, **MEC Sasekani Manzini of Health.**



Agricultural initiatives: Refurbish all fortune 40 tunnels with SFG boxes to respond to water challenges. Install new milling at the refurbished lphakeme Mill Cooperative benefitting 65 farmers and four cooperatives within the municipality,” **MEC Busi Shiba of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs.**



Eradicate drug abuse: “Will intensify programme in identified areas to educate the youth against substance and drug abuse”, **MEC Lindiwe Ntshalintshali of Social Development.**



Renovation of tourism facilities: “Renovation of the Zithabiseni lodge chalets underway and this will be completed in November 2023. Finalizing discussions with tribal authorities regarding industrial parks in Kwaggafontein and Tweefontein for ownership purpose,” **MEC Nomphumelelo Hlophe of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism.**



Educational support: “Provide 40 mobile classes to identified schools by April 2023. Makhosoke and Zakheni Secondary schools will be prioritised. Renovate Thuthukani Secondary school by May 2023”, **MEC Bonakele Majuba of Education.**



Fighting crime: “Activate overall Friday in the municipality quarterly. Re-launch Tactical Intervention Unit (TIU) at Solomon Mahlangu Stadium in August 2023”, **MEC Vusi Shongwe of Community Safety, Security and Liaison.**



Housing: “Additional one hundred (100) housing units will be constructed in response to the growing population in the municipality. The housing project will start in May 2023. Five areas have also been identified for land proclamation. The land will be utilized for economic development and settlement, once the proclamation is finalized,” **MEC Speed Mashilo of Human Settlement.**



Construction of library: Kwamhlanga Public Library to be completed by end of March 2024. Free Wi-Fi, internet services, photocopying machines, books and e-books will be available. Participating teams in the school sports will be provided with sports attire, transport, catering and accomodation,” **MEC Thandi Shongwe of Culture, Sports and Recreation.**



Mkhondo Executive Mayor, Cllr Ndhlovu has adopted a hands on deck approach to improve service delivery.

NEW MKHONDO EXECUTIVE MAYOR ADOPTS “BUSINESS UNUSUAL” APPROACH TO TURN AROUND THE MUNICIPALITY

The Mkhondo Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr. Ngelosi Ndhlovu is committed to deliver

“business unusual” services for the people of Mkhondo. Her commitment was central in her acceptance speech, when she took over the reins as the Executive Mayor recently. She replaces former Mayor, Cllr. Mthokozisi Simelane, following a special Council sitting which culminated into her election.

She called for a business unusual approach, considering the poor state of service delivery in the Municipality. “Time is not in our hands. We are already in the second year of the term of office. Therefore, we are not here to make promises of service delivery, but to bring much-needed services to the citizens of Mkhondo. This new council is by the people for the people, and I stand here with the promise to the citizens of Mkhondo that we will engage, listen and

serve them with excellence,” she told the gathering.

Her call for the business sector and all relevant stakeholders to participate in the efforts of revitalizing the local economy, suggests the Executive Mayor’s deep understanding of the private sector role in the affairs of Local Government. “Our youth and the community at large are looking at us to create business opportunities and fight unemployment. Businesses are looking to us to improve the roads, electricity, water and sanitation, and waste management. Investors are expectant and it will be for our gain to put things in order,” she explained.

Her ascension to the Mayoral position came at the time when the Municipality was in a panic mode due to the brutal assassination of two Councillors. This culminated in the establishment of a special task team by the Police Minister, Mr Bheki Cele, for

investigation. Several arrests were made and the suspects have since been charged.

Cllr. Ndhlovu condemned the assassinations, stating that Mkhondo should remain a stable, peaceful and progressive Municipality. “I know without a shadow of doubt that if we set aside our political differences, we can revitalize our municipality and bring it back to life. We owe this to the law abiding citizens of our town,” she stated.

New members of the mayoral committee; Cllr. Mthandeni Mkhabela - MMC for Corporate Services, Cllr. Thembi Khumalo - MMC for Planning and Economic Development, Cllr Thokozani Manana – MMC for Financial Services, Cllr. Walter Vilakazi - MMC for Community Services, Cllr. Mary Thwala - MMC for Technical Services.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON A WARPATH OF SERVICE DELIVERY



Msukaligwa Local Municipality has declared war on potholes.

It is all hands on deck as Municipalities in Mpumalanga embark on aggressive campaigns to accelerate service delivery. The campaigns include improvement of the infrastructure, clean environment and waste collection.

In Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, the campaign focuses on cutting grass, trees and shrubs, to pave way for the free flow of water in the culverts. The environment is also cleared within the vicinity of electrical lines and transformers, in a quest to make the job of engineers easier.

The municipality is among the 17 in Mpumalanga, and the most attractive tourist destination in the province. It boasts with, among others, God's Window, a spectacular scenery and the Graskop Gorge. The construction of the Graskop Skywalk project, to start in the new financial year, will further entrench the position of the municipality as the most attractive tourist destination.

Through the introduction of action Fridays, a management flagship programme to fast-track service delivery, the Executive Mayor, Cllr Fridah Nkadimeng, accompanied by Councilors, the management and officials, leads the campaign. This has attracted the business sector to participate through facilities such as TLBs and chainsaws

for the improvement of the roads and the surroundings.

In Steve Tswete Local Municipality, the Environmental and Solid Waste Management team is also hard at work to pick up solid waste in the streets for recycling. Through the waste management programme, the Steve Tshwete Municipality is poised to achieve the following objectives:

- To reduce waste by sending it to landfills and incinerators;
- To reduce pollution;
- To conserve natural resources and energy;
- To create jobs.

The municipality states that the recycling campaign seeks to educate households to achieve the benefits of waste management.

In Msukaligwa Local Municipality, the patching of potholes is in earnest. The municipality has procured 120 drums of emulsions and tons of a mixture of asphalts to fix the potholes. Through the support of the local business sector, which contributed a 100 tones of crushed aggregates and the Gert Sibande District, which provided a Jetpatcher machine, it is envisaged that the conditions of the road will improve drastically.

MORE AND MORE YOUTH-LED BUSINESSES SUPPORTED THROUGH PREMIER'S YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUND



Amukelani Nxumalo's farming business in Bushbuckridge represents one of the approved enterprises in Mpumalanga for the Premier's Youth Development Fund.



Lindokuhle Mamba's Internet business in Breyten is among the funded youth initiatives.

A total number of ninety seven (97) businesses owned by the youth have been supported since the introduction of the Premier's Youth Development Fund (PYDF) was established. R140 million has since been allocated in this regard. In the current 2022-23 financial year, about thirty six (36) businesses have been approved for funding, with a total amount of ninety two-point-three million (R92,3 million), disbursed.

This was announced by the Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane during the State of the Province Address (SOPA) in the Legislature recently. The beneficiaries represent the youth from the three (3) Districts, based in the seventeen (17) local municipalities.

It is envisaged that the number of beneficiaries will increase astronomically, following the drastic measures taken by the Provincial Government. These measures include the extension of the closing date and the outreach programmes. The Premier, announced the extension of the deadline for applications, from the 24th of February 2023 to the 17th of March 2023. The extension came after a two week outreach programme, in which

the Office of the Premier in collaboration with several local municipalities, visited the young people to guide them on the application process. "We have allowed this extension so that we try and make sure that most of our young people do apply. We don't want to leave anyone behind, with a potential to grow our economy, to participate in the programme", the Premier emphasized.

The fund was established to support youth-led enterprises in Mpumalanga, amid the high unemployment rate. Mtshweni-Tsipane added that the highest ethical standard of adjudication is maintained to ensure that only legitimate applications are approved. "The process is subjected to a rigorous process of adjudication and verification. We ensure that only the Mpumalanga youth, with legitimate businesses, are approved for the financial support," she stated.

For enquiries contact Mr Bheka Ntandane (Manager for the Youth Desk in the Office of the Premier) on 013 766 2108 or send e-mail to: MYDF@mpg.gov.za.

IT'S ALL HANDS ON DECK AS DEPARTMENT FINALIZES CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SCHOOL IN ERMELO



Construction of the New Ermelo School is at the tail end.

Teaching and learning will soon take place at the New Ermelo Primary School in Msukaligwa Local Municipality. This as the Department of Education in Mpumalanga put final touches to the construction of the new school. The construction process is currently at 75% towards completion.

According to MEC Bonakele Majuba of Education, the construction of the school seeks to create favorable conditions for the delivery of quality education and to achieve the objective of universal access to quality education by learners in Mpumalanga. "Everything humanly possible is being done by the Department to accelerate the project completion," he emphasized.

The school will consist of an administration block, 32 classrooms, two grade R centres, a library, a computer centre, ablution facilities, a kitchen, car park, ramps, steps, rails and sports grounds.

Mr Majuba added that the completion of the school will add impetus in the 6th administration's quest to alleviate overcrowding of learners in schools, not only in Ermelo but province wide. "We are resolute in our commitment to improve access to education in the province, and the construction of the new Ermelo Primary School, provide evidence to this commitment," he explained.

MPUMALANGA AND SABC LAUNCH METRO FM AWARDS TO PROMOTE THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY AND TOURISM

Mpumalanga will be the home of the Metro FM Awards, as the public broadcaster's second biggest commercial station, stage a world class production in the province.

The first instalment of the function takes place in May 2023 and will run for a three-year period.

Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane says the event is a pathway towards promoting Mpumalanga's tourism sector for economic opportunities. "I am happy to announce that we have partnered with the SABC to host the prestigious Metro fm awards, for the next 3 years, as part of our efforts to bolster tourism within the Province and heighten our focus on the arts and creative industry. All these developments

are aimed at increasing tourist arrivals both domestically and internationally", she explained.

Activities linked to the events, are also designed to boost the township economy, across the three Districts in the province, through entertainment activations, as a build –up to the main event, at the Mbombela Stadium.

SABC's Group Executive for Radio, Ms Nada Wotshela stated the following: "We are aware that there is a lot of interest in the awards and we promise the public that they won't be disappointed with the world-class broadcasting production".

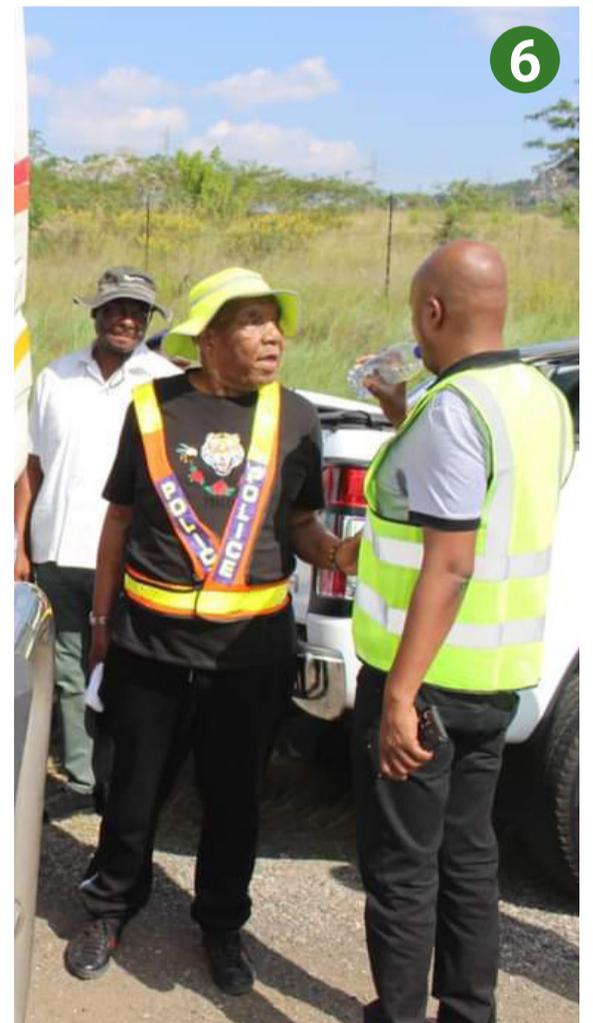


One of Metro FM's decorated DJs, Wilson 'B' Nkosi will entertain revellers during the Metro FM Awards in Mpumalanga.



A set to mark the launch of the coveted Metro FM Awards.

IN BRIEF



1. Residents of Msukaligwa Local Municipality raise salient points in the Gert Sibande District's stakeholder engagement session in Ermelo.
2. Msukaligwa Local Municipality determined to fix potholes.
3. Thaba Chweu's Acting Municipal Manager, Mr Peter Mankge leading the Action Friday in Mashishing.
4. Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane performs a wreath-laying ceremony in honour of military veterans at a cenotaph in Emalahleni. She is flanked by amongst others, MEC Sasekani Manzini of Health [left].
5. Ingwenyama Makhosoke I of the Ndebele nation [in traditional attire] takes to the podium to address the King Silamba commemoration at Komjekejeke. MEC Mandla Msibi of COGTA [grey suit] delivered a message of support.
6. MEC Vusi Shongwe of Community Safety, Security and Liaison monitors the flow of traffic during a roadblock on the N4 near Mataffin.



Get the latest updated on the Mpumalanga Government's programmes and community based initiatives by tuning in to your local radio station and social media platforms on MONDAY (once a month) on the following time slots 19h30, 19h45 and 20h15.

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Premier of Mpumalanga