

CITY AND PUBLIC WORKS SIGN MOU TO ADDRESS PROBLEM BUILDINGS

ETHEKWINI Municipality signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National and KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Departments of Public Works and Infrastructure. The signing ceremony took place at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre on 6 November.

Public Works Minister Dean Macpherson, KwaZulu-Natal Public Works MEC Martin Meyer, and eThekweni Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba together with member of the City's Executive Committee attended the signing ceremony.

The collaboration of three spheres of government will assist in conducting a comprehensive inventory of all abandoned, hijacked, under-utilised and neglected buildings within



eThekweni Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba, Public Works Minister Dean Macpherson, and Public Works MEC Martin Meyer signed a memorandum of understanding to work together to address state-owned problem buildings in the City.

the Municipality that are owned by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

Minister Macpherson commended the Municipality for

being the first City to embark on this project. He said the days of state buildings standing empty, attracting crime, and chasing away investment are coming to an end. A tech-

nical task team will identify problem buildings across the City to work together to find solutions for these properties.

He said the provincial Public Works Department will soon officially handover the West Point Building to the Municipality.

Mayor Xaba said the signing of the MOU confirms their commitment to strengthening partnerships with all government spheres and the private sector.

"The signing ceremony demonstrates our plans to rejuvenate the City. We have identified a total of 149 properties for disposal, and already 91 have either been released or are currently out for request for proposals.

Our target for this financial year is to release 50 properties," said Mayor Xaba.

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA APPLAUDS ETHEKWINI'S ACHIEVEMENTS

PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa addressed representatives of the KwaZulu-Natal Growth Coalition and the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC on 7 November at Coastlands Musgrave where he reported on the progress of the Presidential eThekweni Working Group (PeWG).

Established six months ago, the PeWG has responded directly to pressing issues raised by the business community in eThekweni. President Ramaphosa praised the collaborative efforts of eThekweni Municipality, business leaders, and local stakeholders, acknowledging their impact in positioning Durban as a model of urban

resilience and economic progress.

President Ramaphosa highlighted the PeWG's success in tackling infrastructure challenges, improving economic opportunities, and bolstering public safety. He affirmed that the PeWG's multi-stakeholder approach has set a new benchmark for urban transformation across South Africa, commending eThekweni as a "shining example" of what can be achieved when government, the private sector, and communities work in unity. The President outlined significant progress in several priority areas since the PeWG's formation including:

Water Security and Infrastructure Resilience:

Agreements for the Upper Mkhomazi Water Project mark a crucial step towards long-term water security.

Economic Growth and Tourism Revival:

An investment of R1 billion in tourism, along with the reopening of landmark hotels, is projected to attract 1.3 million visitors this summer season.

Public Safety and Law Enforcement:

Under the PeWG's Integrated Safer Cities Programme, over 22 000 law enforcement officers have been deployed, resulting in thousands of arrests and a boost in public safety.

President Ramaphosa

extended special appreciation to KwaZulu-Natal Premier Thami Ntuli and eThekweni Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba, whose leadership has supported a conducive environment for growth and investment. Looking ahead, President Ramaphosa noted ongoing challenges with the Umlaas Canal, beach access, and water management.

He supported the PeWG's plan to launch an Investment Facilitation Team to reduce red tape and expedite project approvals. As he concluded, the President affirmed: "Our collective confidence is growing, and together, we are turning the tide towards a brighter future for eThekweni."

INAUGURAL AFRICA MARITIME INVESTMENT INDABA SUCCESS

THE INAUGURAL three-day Africa Maritime Investment Indaba (AMII) concluded on 8 November with a promise for even greater opportunities for collaboration and investment as Durban strengthens its role as a leader in Africa's Blue Economy.

Organised by the African Oceans Council (AOC) and hosted by eThekweni Municipality, AMII underscored Durban's commitment to solidify its role as a smart port city region and a key player in Africa's Blue Economy. This landmark event gathered national and international delegations, bringing together industry leaders, investors, and policymakers to discuss sustainable investment in the continent's expansive maritime sector.

The Indaba arose from the need to harness Africa's



EThekweni Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni welcomed delegates at the Inaugural Africa Maritime Investment Indaba Gala Dinner, which was one of several events held throughout the three-day Indaba.

estimated \$3 trillion ocean economy through sustainable, inclusive growth.

EThekweni Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni expressed pride at the City's readiness to lead the ocean economy. "Durban is open for

business and ready to unleash its Blue Economy potential. We see this sector as pivotal for addressing the skills shortage, empowering coastal communities, and positioning Durban as a premier maritime hub," said Deputy Mayor

Myeni.

Key themes of the Indaba included innovative financing for maritime trade, offshore energy development, aquaculture, and ocean conservation. These discussions aligned with the eThekweni Inner City Regeneration Plan, reinforcing the Municipality's vision of using the Blue Economy as an engine for job creation, infrastructure growth, and sustainable development.

With high-profile leaders and experts guiding conversations, the AMII laid a solid foundation for eThekweni to advance as a dynamic, sustainable port city region. The partnership with the AOC will continue to foster growth in Africa's maritime sector, while Durban remains steadfast in its commitment to creating a robust and resilient Blue Economy.

DEBT RELIEF PROGRAMME IN PLACE UNTIL 31 DECEMBER

RESIDENTS and business are reminded that the Municipality has reinstated the Debt Relief Programme until 31 December 2024.

The programme is available for customers who are in debt for 90 days or more. Customers will have 36 months to pay off their debt and no interest will be added.

Customers will sign a payment arrangement and must make a down payment of 5%

if they are residential customers; small, medium, or micro enterprises; or non-profit organisations (NPOs). A 10% down payment will be required for non-residential customers excluding government departments/institutions and parastatals. Interest accumulated will be written-off once the payment arrangement has been entered into.

Lihle Ndzelu, Head of the Revenue Management Unit ex-

plained: "Existing customers on a payment plan will also be afforded an opportunity to take part in this incentive, such customers will have to follow the conditions of the Debt Relief Programme and make a similar down payment." Ndzelu said if a customer does not honour the terms of their agreement, the agreement will become null and interest will be reinstated.

Additionally, customers

whose water loss insurance claim was partially settled by eThekweni contracted water loss insurance can also benefit from debt relief. The payment arrangement terms will be the difference (capital debt) between the amount claimed, average monthly consumption and the amount settled by the insurance will be written-off.

Interested customers can visit their nearest Sizakala Centre.

DECEASED ESTATES DEBT WRITE-OFF CONTINUES

BENEFICIARIES of deceased estates are reminded that if there is debt which is older than 24 months, they may qualify for a debt write-off.

The property value must not exceed R1 million and the beneficiary must be willing to take over the Municipal account so that no debt re-emerges. The property

must be solely owned by the deceased and applicants are encouraged to report the late estate to the Master of the High Court.

Additionally, the applicant must be of South African descent.

The documents that are required for the application are:

- Applicant's certified copy of identity document or smart card
- Deceased's death certificate
- Letter of executorship or Letter of appointment from the Master of the High Court
- In absence of a Letter of executorship or Letter of appointment, the applicant must obtain a proforma

affidavit from the Municipality and it must be certified by the South African Police Service

- Proof of address and recent valid contact numbers
- Proof of employment; proof of any source of income
- Copy of title deed.

Those interested in applying can approach their nearest Sizakala Centre.



CATO RIDGE POULTRY FARM FLOURISHES

SINCE its acquisition by eThekweni Municipality in December 2018, the Cato Ridge Poultry Farm has made impressive strides in economic development, turning challenges into opportunities for job creation, business growth, and agricultural innovation. Originally purchased from Rainbow Chicken, the farm is now a model of transformation and growth. The farm began operations with a single business in 2020. Fast forward to today, and Cato Ridge is home to seven thriving businesses, producing over 120 000 birds per cycle—an increase from just 45 000 birds in its early days. It has a target of manufacturing 250 000 birds per cycle. This expansion is a testament to the success of the Municipality's investment

in the farm, which has seen over R6 million invested in infrastructure to ensure its ongoing functionality.

In the current 2024/25 financial year, an additional R10 million has been allocated to further upgrade the farm, with a focus on enhancing operations and expanding capacity. This upgrade, which began in July this year, includes the installation of power backup systems, additional heaters, air cooling systems, and the introduction of a low-throughput abattoir capable of slaughtering 500 birds per day. These improvements are underway and are set to be completed by June next year.

"We're not just building infrastructure; we're building opportunities," said Councillor



Renovations are in full swing at the Cato Ridge Poultry Farm, which began operations in 2020. The upgrades are designed to enhance the farm's operations, expand its capacity, and accommodate more poultry farmers.

Thembo Ntuli who is the City's Economic Development and Planning Committee Chairperson. He underscored the importance of this project to the Municipality's long-term Agro-Business Masterplan.

Nonhle Mdunge, Chairperson of Isukile Co-operatives, said: "When we were displaced by layoffs, the City welcomed us. Now our business is growing stronger and we supply markets across the region."

DURBAN DESIGNERS SHINE AT 2024 MTC WINDHOEK FASHION WEEK



Sihle Dlezi of YATSAR had her first international showcase at the 2024 MTC Windhoek Fashion Week where her unique collection was praised.

ETHEKWINI Municipality funded two Durban-based designers to participate in the prestigious 2024 MTC Windhoek Fashion Week

from 6 to 9 November at the Maerua Mall in Windhoek, Namibia. This initiative highlights the Municipality's ongoing commitment to

empowering emerging designers. The two designers who represented Durban were Sandile "Duke" Mngadi, the creative force behind DUKE "Clothe Your Soul", and Sicelo Dlezi, the founder of YATSAR Clothing. Both designers have been nurtured through the Municipality's Fashion Development Programme, which provides mentorship, skills development, and a variety of initiatives to help local talent thrive in the competitive fashion industry.

Mngadi said his show was a success, receiving positive feedback and generating

interest from attendees.

For Dlezi, this was her first international fashion show, and the experience exceeded her expectations. She noted the overwhelming response from the crowd and the subsequent social media buzz, which she believes has significantly boosted her brand's visibility.

Councillor Thembo Ntuli, Chairperson of the City's Economic Development and Planning Committee, emphasised the importance of this collaboration in expanding Durban's fashion footprint globally.

FIRST QUARTER DEBT COLLECTION REPORT REVEALS GROWTH IN REVENUE AND RISING DEBT

A REPORT presented at a recent Council meeting provided insights on the City's debt collection performance for the first quarter, ending in September 2024. The report highlighted impressive revenue collection results, surpassing

expectations with R10.6 billion collected, achieving a collection rate of 99%, well above the 95% target.

Despite this achievement, the report also noted an increase in Municipal debt, which has grown by an

average of 3% monthly, totalling R34.64 billion as of 30 September 2024. This debt growth is largely due to backdated charges, including a 6kl water back charge, compounding the total debt figures. The report

reflects both the successes and challenges in the City's revenue collection and debt management efforts, highlighting the importance of continued strategies to improve collection rates and reduce arrears.



SUCCESSFUL KZN INVESTMENT CONFERENCE HOSTED IN THE CITY

A SUCCESSFUL KwaZulu-Natal Investment Conference took place on 11 and 12 November and was hosted by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs together with Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal, and backed with financial support from Invest Durban.

Speaking at the conference, eThekweni Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni said with Durban being selected as the host city for the conference, it was a clear indication that the City “is open for business and ready to roll the red carpet for investors”.

“We are delighted that this conference focused on, among other things, promoting KwaZulu-Natal’s potential as a premier investment destination, attracting new investments, while fostering the expansion of existing ones,” said Deputy Mayor Myeni.

She said they are encouraged by the recent Business Con-



EThekweni Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni spoke at the KwaZulu-Natal Investment Conference which took place on 11 and 12 November in the City.

fidence Index Report which indicated that in the third quarter of 2024, the business confidence in eThekweni increased to 63.01%, up from 55.49% in the second quarter. This is the highest increase in many years in eThekweni.

The Deputy Mayor said to ensure to attract more investment to the City, they continue to engage the business community by not only listening to their challenges, but to also

unlock more investment opportunities. This being a role that Invest Durban performs in partnership with all.

“In the past three months, eThekweni Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba has embarked on an intensive listening campaign meeting with investors in the City who raised concerns about a number of issues that adversely affect investment in eThekweni. The issues ranged from delays in issuing develop-

ment applications, safety, and aging water and sanitation infrastructure. We want to assure you that as the leadership of the City, we are aware of these challenges and resolving them remains top of our priority list,” she concluded.

With regards to issues of development applications, the City is implementing several reforms across various service units in the Municipality to enhance the customer experience and facilitate the ease of doing business in the City.

A further notable achievement is the automation of the rates clearance certificate process which is at its final step of implementation.

The system will enable online approvals or authorisation, thereby reducing the turnaround time for property transfer.

Attracting new investment to eThekweni also remains a top priority and Invest Durban continues with its award-winning performance in this regard.

REGISTER NOW TO EXHIBIT AT THE INNER WEST DURBAN BUSINESS FAIR



EThekweni Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni spoke at the KwaZulu-Natal Investment Conference which took place on 11 and 12 November in the City.

BUSINESSES based in the inner west region, now is the time for you to shine! The City’s premier Durban Business Fair will take place from 6 to

8 December at the Anderson Sports Ground (next to Lahee Park).

Register by 22 November to showcase your business.

To register:

- Click here to download the application form: <https://bit.ly/IWRReg>
- Or email zamani.shezi@durban.gov.za to request a form.

You can also obtain registration forms from:

- All Sizakala Centres
- The Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry (101 Isaiah Ntshangase Road, Stamford Hill)
- SEDA Durban (127 Johannes Nkosi Street) from the Business Support Co-operatives Office
- Embassy Building (199 Anton Lembede Street from the security desk).

Don’t miss out, register today

to grow your brand, boost sales, and take full advantage of all the opportunities the exhibition offers!

Chairperson of the City’s Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli said: “Unlocking rural and township economic growth is a key focus for eThekweni Municipality. Taking the Durban Business Fair to local communities is a strategic move to stimulate economic growth and job creation. We plan to host the exhibition in various regions throughout the 2024/25 financial year.”

Councillor Ntuli encouraged businesses in the inner west and surrounding areas to seize this opportunity and exhibit.

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