



Province of the  
**EASTERN CAPE**  
COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE  
& TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

# COGTA

## *Newsletter*

JANUARY - MARCH 2025



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# EDITORIAL COMMENT



Editor: Ms Thando Sonjica

Welcome to the last edition of COGTA News for the 2024/25 financial year. The end of the financial year is a busy time in the calendar of government departments as they enter into the bustle of completing their financial spending for the financial year. During this time departments also prepare as well as submit their planning documents such as annual performance plans, operational plans as well as Policy speeches to the legislature and to their stakeholders.

Within this period MEC's of different departments present their policy speeches to the legislature which is a platform where they outline the plans and focus areas of their departments. Also of significance in this period is the production of strategic plans for the five years which is statement of intent of the 7th Administration pertaining to service delivery. Service delivery takes place under the context of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Read more about the speech and what the departments plans to undertake during this financial year on the link: <https://www.eccogta.gov.za/speeches/>.

Linked to the strategic documents for this year is that the Department has developed a Municipal Non-negotiable Handbook with standard operating procedures (SOPs) for quality service delivery by municipalities, which will start in this 2025/30 five-year period. Capacity building for Traditional Leaders is a non-negotiable during the 7th Administration.

"Our communities need proper service delivery and therefore skilled traditional leaders are essential. For this to succeed we will strengthen the capacity building programme to sharpen the skills of traditional leaders and by extension help improve service delivery to our people," said MEC. The process of reviewing the ministerial handbook ensure that the traditional leaders obtain their "tools of trade" is expedited within the context of the Reviewed National Handbook. (Read an article about the handing over of tools of trade on page .....)

During the quarter under review the department led by MEC was engaged in many activities throughout the Province and I urge each and everyone to take time to read stories about the work that the department was involved in.

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# Premier Mabuyane Commits To STRENGTHEN TRADITIONAL AND KHOISAN LEADERS

By Anelisa Mabece

In his opening address of the House of Traditional and Khoi-San leaders Premier Oscar Mabuyane highlighted government's unwavering commitment to strengthening the HOTKL. "Over the years, we have worked together to improve the institutional capacity of traditional leadership through increased financial and administrative support to ensure that the HOTKL functions effectively in its advisory and governance roles."

Premier Mabuyane said there has been Infrastructure development in traditional councils, ensuring that traditional leaders have the necessary resources and facilities to perform their duties efficiently. "We also had training and capacity-building initiatives aimed at equipping traditional leaders with modern governance, conflict resolution, and development planning skills," he said.

In addition, he said there had been partnerships with government departments and municipalities to integrate traditional leadership structures in decision-making processes, particularly in rural development, land management, and local governance "These efforts reflect our unwavering commitment to strengthening the House of Traditional Leaders as a key pillar in our governance structures," said Premier Mabuyane. Furthermore, Premier Mabuyane insisted on the need to accelerate land tenure reforms and ensure traditional communities benefit from sustainable land use projects through economic participation and rural development.

"Traditional leaders have consistently called for more economic opportunities for their people. We must work together to leverage agriculture, tourism, and the ocean economy to create employment and growth."

The Premier reiterated that the safety of young men undergoing traditional initiation remains a priority done through strengthening collaborative efforts between government and traditional leadership institutions to eliminate illegal initiation schools and ensure safe passage for all initiates. He said Traditional leaders should look forward to building and refurbishment of more clinics and hospitals with over R3 billion invested over the next three years. He further encouraged Traditional Leaders to support the green revolution programme under the theme: "One household, one garden" to encourage all households and communities to produce food in every available piece of land.

In his closing the Eastern Cape Premier advocated for traditional leaders to be agents of their aspirations and assured that in the seventh term, government will be pursuing three interrelated strategic priorities, namely Inclusive growth, and job creation to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living. He emphasized that government would continue to support the Eastern Cape HOTKL in achieving its mandate.

"We need a unified approach where government, traditional leadership, and society work together to address our common challenges and advance the development of our people. Let us walk this journey together, ensuring our traditions and cultures remain the foundation of a modern, progressive, thriving Eastern Cape".

The Eastern Cape Premier further committed to transparency and ensuring public voices are heard while leading a capable, ethical and developmental state."



Deputy Chairperson of the Eastern Cape House of Traditional and KhoiSan Leaders, Nkosi Gwazinamba Matanzima



Premier Oscar Mabuyane

## DID YOU KNOW ?

### YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is your right to:

- ▲ Receive health education, good quality healthcare and counselling.
- ▲ Adequate supervision by an adult or care-giver you trust.
- ▲ An approved traditional surgeon/ healthcare practitioner to perform the circumcision.
- ▲ Clean hygienic equipment must be used.
- ▲ Demand the registration certificate of a prospective initiation school and traditional surgeon.

## TRADITIONAL MALE INITIATION

It is your responsibility to:

- ▲ Communicate any problems you may have to your parents, caregiver, healthcare worker, social workers, friends, etc.
- ▲ Report any illegal or unregistered initiation school to your nearest police station.
- ▲ Drink water.
- ▲ Use medication for your ailments.

# Premier Appeals To Traditional Leaders to be VISIONARIES AND NOT WAIT FOR GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS

By Anelisa Mabece

With numerous challenges affecting the progress of Traditional Leadership Institutions particularly in relation to constant budget constraints and lack of resources needed to execute their mandate, Premier of Eastern Cape, Oscar Mabuyane appealed for linkosi to be visionaries and not only wait on government to provide solutions but use creative efforts to be drivers of change.

Premier Mabuyane said this during Annual opening Ceremony of the 4th session of the 6th Term for the Eastern Cape Provincial House of Traditional and Khoisan leaders. This august occasion was graced by the presence of traditional leaders from across the length and breadth of the Eastern Cape, members of the executive council, the judiciary, technocrats, clergy and political organizations. The Premier highlighted that the Opening of the House was in recognition of the vital role that Traditional Institutions play in serving communities. This platform also allows us to reflect on the past term, acknowledge our challenges and highlight progress made.

As another five year-term in government is still in its embryonic stage the Premier implored Traditional Leaders to continue being the soundboards, to guide and serve their communities with pride and dignity ensuring a positive impact in people's lives and stressed that a collective effort was key towards the province's journey towards collaboration, development and enhanced service delivery pioneered through Traditional Leadership Institutions.

The premier further reiterated the commitment of his government to supporting and collaborating with traditional leadership institutions in the province. "The Eastern Cape government remains steadfast in strengthening the Houses of Traditional Leaders by ensuring their voices are heard and actively shaping policies and development programs through constant engagements." Additionally, the premier committed to enhancing collaboration between traditional authorities and government institutions to drive socio-economic transformation.

The premier assured traditional leaders that Infrastructure development in traditional councils must have the necessary resources and facilities to perform their duties efficiently. Raising key matters to be investigated, Premier Mabuyane said the recognition of women as traditional leaders is mandatory in terms of the Law. He also added that Traditional Leadership Institutions need to institute discipline amongst leaders that are violating the rights of members of their communities.

"As custodians of culture, land, and moral leadership in our villages and towns linkosi have the responsibility to provide stern leadership to avoid moral decay. Traditional leaders have a critical role in advocating for safer communities, protecting women and children and restoring the moral fabric of our society."



Members of the House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders

## Traditional Leadership AT THE CENTRE OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL AGENDA

By Nosiphiwo Vokovi

On 15 March 2025, the MEC for CoGTA, Zolile Williams, held an important engagement session with senior traditional leaders at Dan's Country Lodge in Mthatha. To discuss key issues affecting traditional leadership and to find practical solutions together. In his opening address, MEC Williams said the department's role is to support traditional leadership institutions. I am grateful for the chance to engage directly with you, our Senior Traditional Leaders. Now I understand the daily challenges you face, and let us work together to address those issues," he said. "Traditional leaders must not be afraid to stand firm and speak with one voice to restore recognition and ensure fair compensation," he added. Many people do not realize that traditional leadership is part of government.

"We must remove these unnecessary barriers and build stronger connections," he said. The MEC announced a plan to provide working tools to all Headmen, to ensure direct involvement with communities including Ward Committees. He said that a new handbook is almost completed, to address issues like retirement annuities and tools of the trade through national policy. "Policies must reflect the humanity and dignity of traditional leaders," he said. The Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Nkosi Mpumalanga Gwadiso, thanked the MEC and Traditional leaders who participated in the discussion.



From L-R: Nkosi Jezile, Nkosi Sigcawu, MEC Williams, Nkosi Gwadiso and Nkosi Ndamase.



# A Unified Commitment To All-of-Society THROUGH THE DDM WORKSHOP

By Nomasonto Malinga

Setting the tone for day two of the District Development (DDM) Workshop, MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Zolile Williams introduced the DDM political champions, emphasizing their pivotal roles in driving the successful implementation of the model at the provincial and district levels.

"The collaboration we are witnessing here today between government, traditional leadership, civil society, and the private sector is the cornerstone of our approach to integrated development," said MEC Williams. He added that the commitment of political leaders, and key stakeholders was key to ensure that the principles of the DDM are embedded in all levels of governance.

Speaking on the essential role of traditional leadership in the DDM framework, CoGTA Deputy Minister, Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe said traditional leadership is a critical part of our governance system hence it is essential that we recognize and incorporate traditional leaders in the planning and implementation of the DDM," said Prince Burns-Ncamashe. He said traditional leaders can bridge the gap between rural communities and formal government structures, ensuring that development reaches all corners of the Province. His remarks were met with nods of agreement, with many acknowledging the need for collaborative governance that includes all sectors.

The workshop continued with words of support from various political champions, including Executive Mayors, MECs, and Deputy Ministers, Business sector and Civil Society who pledged their commitment to the DDM framework.

The Chairperson of the Eastern Cape House of Traditional and Khoisan leaders, Nkosi Mpumalanga Gwadiso also made an impassioned plea for greater collaboration between traditional and political leadership in the province. "Traditional leadership is committed to supporting DDM in the same way we have supported other government initiatives. Our communities trust us to lead them toward a better future," the Chairperson stated.

Each speaker reiterated the importance of collective action and shared responsibility in ensuring that DDM succeeds, stressing that no single sector can drive transformation alone. "We must collaborate across all spheres of government and society," said one of the Executive Mayors.

Civil society representatives also shared their material plans and commitments towards DDM, with an emphasis on ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable are prioritized. "We believe that community engagement is key to the success of DDM. Our role is to ensure that development is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable," stated a civil society representative.

A crucial part of the workshop was the signing of declarations of intent towards a social compact by all political champions, Executive Mayors, MECs, and Deputy Ministers. The signing symbolized a unified commitment to work together towards achieving the goals of the DDM. Each leader pledged to support the collective vision of integrated, sustainable development for the province and its people.

The social compact represents the collaborative efforts of all spheres of government, traditional leadership, the private sector, and civil society, aligning their goals and strategies for long-term, inclusive growth.

As MEC Williams concluded the session, he reiterated, "Today, we have made history. We are laying the foundation for a new era of development in the Eastern Cape, where every stakeholder is engaged, and every voice is heard." With the conclusion of day two, the momentum for DDM's implementation continues to build, setting the stage for a truly integrated approach to local development in the province.



L-R: Deputy Minister for Traditional Affairs, Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe, Mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay, Councillor Babalwa Lobishe, MEC Williams, Chairperson of the House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, Nkosi Mpumalanga Gwadiso



L-R MEC for department of Agriculture, Nonceba Kotsiwe and MEC for the department of Transport and Community Safety, Xolile Ngata

## DID YOU KNOW ?

- **SAPS's Emergency Services:** 0860 10111/10111
- **Crime stop tip-off line:** 08600 10111
- **Crime Line SMS:** 32211
- **Child Line South Africa:** 0800 055 555
- **Child Welfare:** 0861 424 453
- **Child Emergency line:** 0800 123321
- **Depression and Anxiety Helpline:** 0800 708 090
- **Department of Social Development:** 0800 121 314/SMS 32312 SA Substance abuse helpline
- **Gay-Lesbian Support:** 0860 333 331/SMS 079 891 3036
- **Gender-based Violence Command Centre:** 0800 428 428

## GENDER BASED VIOLENCE HELPLINES

- /please call \*120\*7867 #/SMS 'help' to 31531
- **Human Trafficking Hotline:** 0800 222 777
- **Lifeline SA:** 0861 322 322
- **Sonke Gender Justice for counselling and support:** Tel no: Cape Town: 021 423 7088; Johannesburg: 011 339 3589
- **Stop Gender Violence Helpline:** 0800 150 150
- **Suicide Crisis line (SADAG):** 0800 567 567/SMS
- **TEARS:** 010 590 5920/Dial \*120\* 7355#
- **Thuthuzela Care Centre:** 0800 0428428/ Please call me \*120\*7867

# Recognising Excellence THROUGH GREENEST AWARDS 2025

By Sabo Dlelengana

In an inspiring display of commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship, the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), hosted the Greenest Eastern Cape Municipality Awards (GECMA) 2025 in February 2025. This prestigious event, held in the heart of our region, served as a platform to recognize and celebrate municipalities that have excelled in environmental practices and green innovation.

The awards ceremony brought together local government representatives, environmentalists, and stakeholders to acknowledge municipalities that have integrated green initiatives into their governance. The competition evaluated key sustainability pillars, including waste management, water conservation, renewable energy adoption, climate change adaptation, and community involvement in environmental protection. Zolile Williams, the MEC for the Department of CoGTA highlighting the crucial role played by local government in environmental conservation. MEC Williams said municipalities must lead the charge in addressing pressing environmental challenges.

“Sustainability is not just a choice; it is an urgent necessity, and municipalities have the unique opportunity to shape our communities in ways that preserve our natural resources for future generations. The Awards serve as a reminder that when we come together, guided by a shared vision for environmental resilience, we can achieve remarkable outcomes. I am proud to witness the dedication and passion of the municipalities represented here today. Your efforts have a lasting impact on the health of our environment, and I commend you for your hard work and commitment to sustainability,” said MEC Williams.

The 2025 edition saw fierce competition among municipalities striving for top honors. In recognising Environmental Leadership, Kouga Local Municipality scooped the first prize as an Overall Winner of the cash prize of R500 000.00, followed by, Senqu as second runner up of the cash prize of R300 000.00 and Winnie Madikizela Mandela becoming the third runner up of the cash prize of R200 000.00.

The GECMA not only celebrates achievements but also inspire continued action towards sustainable development. By recognising municipalities that prioritize eco-friendly policies, the awards encourage stronger collaborations between government, private sector stakeholders, and communities in shaping a greener future. The winners of the Awards 2025 demonstrated exceptional leadership in these areas, creating a ripple effect that inspires others to adopt more sustainable practices.

As the event concluded, DEDEAT and CoGTA reaffirmed their commitment to support municipalities to implement sustainable policies and environmental innovations. With the growing climate challenges, initiatives such as these remain crucial to ensure that municipalities lead the charge in environmental stewardship for generations to come.



L-R: Director of Community Services for Senqu Municipality, Nokulunga Nyezi, Manager of Community Services for Senqu Municipality, Mr Mxolisi Salman, MEC for the Department of CoGTA, Zolile Williams, Mayor of Senqu Municipality, Velile Stokwe, MEC for Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Nonkqubela Peters, Noncedo Zonke, Mayor of Inxuba Yethemba Municipality, and COGTA MEC Spokesperson, Pheello Oliphant,

## Eastern Seaboard Development On Track FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By Sabo Dlelengana

A two-day Eastern Seaboard Development (ESD) Traditional Leadership summit which took place on 23- 24 March, 2025, in Wild Coast concluded that ESD was on track to become a model of sustainable development for the rest of the country. The summit convened by Deputy Ministers of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe and Dr Namane Masemola brought together key stakeholders from the Eastern Seaboard region to discuss and celebrate the ongoing efforts to drive sustainable development, community empowerment, and regional prosperity.

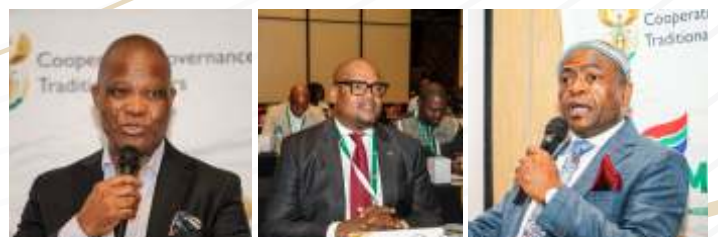
The summit provided a platform for Traditional leaders, municipal representatives and key stakeholders to share insights, review progress, and plan future strategies for the region's growth. The event was graced by the presence of the National House of Traditional and Khoisan leaders (NHTKL), Chairperson Kgosi Thabo Seatlholo as well as the Eastern Cape Cogta MEC, Zolile Williams. The Eastern Seaboard Development is a comprehensive initiative aimed at unlocking the economic potential of the region, focusing on infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, and technology. The development of the Eastern Seaboard has long been seen as a catalyst for regional economic growth, providing new job opportunities and improving the quality of life for local communities.

Strategically located along South Africa's eastern coastline, the region is rich in natural resources, cultural heritage, and biodiversity. This has created a unique opportunity to develop a sustainable economy that leverages both the natural environment and the region's deep-rooted cultural traditions. Opening remarks by the Deputy Minister of COGTA Dr Masemola emphasized the importance of discussion on proper analysis and realization of this development. “To be in a better position and afford an opportunity to discuss the vision of the Eastern Seaboard Development, proper integration, coordination, accountability and transparency should be the most important aspects for this historic event” said Dr Masemola

Speaking at the summit, MEC Williams highlighted the importance of the ESD in shaping the face of the rural communities, enhancing governance, and the active

participation of all stakeholders including traditional leadership in local economic growth. One of the key highlights of the summit was the emphasis placed on traditional leadership and its crucial role in the development process. “Traditional leaders are deeply embedded in the social and cultural fabric of the region. Their involvement in guiding development initiatives ensures that the benefits of growth are distributed equitably and in alignment with local customs and values,” added MEC Williams.

At the summit, traditional leaders from various communities came together to discuss how they can collaborate with government bodies and private sector organizations to foster inclusive development. Their discussions focused on balancing modernity with tradition, ensuring that development does not come at the cost of cultural heritage and community well-being. The discussion focused on ESD programme progress and steps to be taken, including strategies to address service delivery in the Eastern Seaboard development region. The summit concluded with a renewed sense of optimism and a clear commitment to collective action. With continued leadership, collaboration, and respect for local values, the Eastern Seaboard is on track to become a model of sustainable development for the rest of the country.



Deputy Minister for department of Cooperative Governance, Dr Namane Masemola, MEC Williams and Deputy Minister Ncamashe



# Revenue Management Indaba

## TOWARDS FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

By Ms Sabo Dlelengana

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) successfully hosted the Revenue Management Indaba (RMI) in East London in March 2025. The two-day gathering brought together municipal officials, financial experts, and policymakers to discuss sustainable revenue management strategies to improve service delivery across municipalities.

Officially opening the Indaba, the Acting Head of Department (HoD), Mr Vuyo Mlokothe emphasized the importance of revenue management to ensure financially stable municipalities. Mr Mlokothe added that aligning revenue collection strategies with government priorities is key to enhance municipal self-sufficiency and reduce dependency on national grants.

Ms Babalwa Mbangeleli, the Deputy Director for Municipal Development Finance, said COGTA's strategic initiatives are aligned with the national goals to strengthen municipal finances. She said it was important to build capacity at the provincial and local government levels, thus helping municipalities not only comply with the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) but also to integrate new technology and methodologies to streamline financial management processes.

"There is a critical need for municipalities to embrace financial innovation, especially in the context of modernizing billing systems and improve the collection of revenue from both formal and informal sectors," she emphasized.

The RMI was more than just a platform for discussion, it was a forum for real solutions and actionable strategies. Leading and chairing the panel discussions Dr. Siviwe Mditshwa, the Chief Director for Strategic Management, Communication and Information Services in Cogta highlighted innovative revenue collection mechanisms, policy reforms, and technological advancements that can improve municipal revenue streams.

Councilor Zukisa Gana from the King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD) Municipality said municipalities can strengthen their revenue base through improved billing systems, debt recovery strategies, and community engagement initiatives. He emphasized the need for collaboration between government entities to address revenue collection challenges and enhance financial sustainability.

The Indaba concluded with a call to action for municipalities to implement effective revenue management strategies to improve service delivery and financial health. Participants expressed commitment to fostering accountability, transparency, and efficiency in municipal revenue collection.



Acting Head of Department of Cogta, Mr Vuyo Mlokothe



L-R: Chief Director for Strategic Management, Communication and Information Services in Cogta, Dr Siviwe Mditshwa, Mr Chris Mapeyi - CFO Chris Hani District and Mr Nceba Bomvane - Director Municipal Finance (Treasury)



The Deputy Director for Municipal Development Finance, Ms Babalwa Mbangeleli, and Director Municipal Development Finance, Mr Sabelo Tini

**DID YOU KNOW ?**

**National Fraud Hotline**  
**0800 701 701**

# Mec Williams Engages WITH AMAMPONDOMISE KINGDOM

By Vuyani Sibene

The Eastern Cape MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Zolile Williams, engaged in a dialogue with the AmaMpondomise Kingdom at Upper Kroza in Qumbu under Kumkani Mhlontlo Local Municipality early in February 2025. The engagement was with view to discuss mainly matters around the Reconstitution of Traditional Councils (TC) and to perform Royal greetings (ukukhahlela) as he was supposed to do that before elections.

The meeting, attended by traditional leaders, community stakeholders and government representatives, focused on strengthening relations between the provincial government and the traditional leadership. Key issues discussed included service delivery, rural development and economic empowerment initiatives tailored for the AmaMpondomise community. MEC Williams reiterated the government's commitment to working closely with traditional authorities to enhance socio-economic conditions in rural areas.

With the late recognition of the Kingdom of AmaMpondomise, the MEC said "I would like the Kingdom to submit a report that puts emphasis on the challenges of Reconstitution and I will speak with the Minister for the National Department of Cogta as he will be coming back to the Eastern Cape Province," MEC Williams stated.

Traditional leaders, led by King Luzuko Matiwane, raised concerns regarding infrastructure development, unemployment, and access to essential services. The MEC reassured them that these issues would be prioritised in the upcoming government programmes.

In closing his King Matiwane thanked traditional leaders who participated in the meeting coming from far flung places. He further urged He also assured MEC Williams of their support as AmaMpondomise Kingdom. The engagement marks a continued effort by the provincial government to foster inclusive governance.



King Luzuko Matiwane and MEC Williams

## Handover Of Amagasela Traditional Council A MILESTONE IN CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

By Sabo Dlelengana

The Bulembu community witnessed a historic moment in February 2025, as the highly anticipated handover ceremony of the AmaGasela Traditional Council (TC) took place in a vibrant, well attended event. The event marked a significant shift in cultural leadership as a new chapter began for the AmaGasela community.

The ceremony was held at the heart of Bulembu, near eQonce in the Buffalo City Municipality (BCM), a picturesque village nestled in the rolling hills, where tradition and modernity converge. The handover symbolized a seamless changeover of authority and responsibility to safeguard and nurture the rich heritage of the AmaGasela community. The Council, an institution deeply woven into the cultural fabric of the region, plays a critical role in overseeing the customs, traditions, and governance of the AmaGasela people.

The event was graced by key figures in traditional leadership, local government officials, and community members, all gathered to honor the passing of the mantle. The leadership, led by Inkosi yamaGasela Nkosi Zwelizolile Welcome Toise, expressed pride in their legacy, acknowledging the collective achievements during their tenure. He emphasized the importance of unity and strength within the community, which allowed the Council to uphold its commitment to tradition while embracing necessary developments.

Speaking at the hand over event, Ms Dumza Vuba, Chief Director for Traditional Leadership Institutional Support Services said TC were important in preserving cultural heritage and fostering community development. "TC are the custodians of our rich cultural heritage and play a crucial role in the social and economic development of our communities. We remain steadfast in our support to ensure that resources and capacity to serve their communities effectively are made available."

The handover ceremony was not only a transfer of leadership but also a celebration of AmaGasela's cultural richness. Traditional dances, music, and the display of local customs were a vivid reminder of the community's deep ties to its roots. Elders shared stories of the Council's history, and younger members took the opportunity to learn from their forebears about the values that continue to shape the AmaGasela's identity. It also highlighted the importance of community driven development. Local leaders reiterated the role of the council in fostering collaboration with regional authorities to ensure that the community's needs are met, both culturally and socio-economically.

The AmaGasela TC is seen as a crucial institution in balancing tradition with progress, and the leadership transition has been positioned as an opportunity to enhance the Council's role in preserving and advancing the cultural heritage of the AmaGasela community.

Nkosi Zwelizolile Toise concluded the ceremony with a heartfelt vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all attendees and stakeholders who contributed to the success of the event. "We are deeply grateful for the unwavering support from our partners and the community. This handover marks a new chapter in our journey towards sustainable development and cultural preservation."



L\_R: Chief Director for Institutional Support at Cogta, Ms Dumza Vuba, Nkosi yamaGasela Nkosi Zwelizolile Toise, MEC Nqata and SANRAL Project Manager Mr Athi Kiviet



# *Ms Sokutu Calls For The Alignment of* **RESOURCES TO REALISE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

## **Ms Sonto Malinga**

The District Development Model (DDM) workshop convened in Gqeberha on the 6th of March 2025, with key senior government and private sector representatives, business, tertiary institutions, civil society, state-owned entities, Eskom and Transnet. The main objective was to engage in productive discussions about the future of local government and development.

Opening the workshop, Ms Welekazi Sokutu, the Acting Director-General (ADG) in the Office of the Premier (OTP), had this to say, "The purpose of the workshop is to co-create actionable strategies for the implementation of One Plans. Our primary objective is to bring together all sectors of society and government to engage in an integrated approach that accelerates development across District and Metro municipalities."

She added that the workshop was a platform for all stakeholders to share insights and make meaningful contributions towards the implementation of DDM.

Mr. Ashely Losch, Acting Director-General from the National Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in his in-depth overview of the DDM said the Section 47 are pivotal in guiding our collective approach to integrated development at the district level.

"The regulations define the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, ensure a clear framework for executing DDM effectively. Collaboration between government, business, and civil society is key to ensure that the objectives of DDM are achieved. The regulations are designed to ensure that all stakeholders, from local government to the business sector, are aligned and that every action is driven by evidence-based planning," he added.

A critical session of the workshop focused on the rampant issue of infrastructure vandalism, with a key presentation by Advocate Thabo Namba from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). Advocate Namba said the devastating impact of infrastructure damage, hindered service delivery and economic growth.

"The damage to essential infrastructure not only disrupts services but also has a long-lasting impact on local communities. The failure to report and cooperate with law enforcement is a serious issue, and it requires a coordinated effort across sectors to address it," said Adv Namba.

He proposed innovative solutions, such as the use of drones for monitoring infrastructure and the need for audio statements to expedite investigations.

"We must also look at improving collaboration between infrastructure owners, law enforcement, and the NPA to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable," he added.

Following the presentations, the workshop participants engaged in three transformational Roundtable Discussions, each focused on a different pillar of the DDM. The first discussion focused on governance and financial management, where various stakeholders emphasized the importance of transparent and accountable financial practices.

The second panel discussion explored the integration of infrastructure engineering, spatial restructuring, and environmental sustainability within DDM. Representatives from Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) and Eskom stressed the importance of aligning infrastructure projects with sustainable development goals. Key commitments included aligning district development strategies with the needs of local economies and improve coordination between sectors to create a more holistic approach to service provision.

The panel, focused on the people development pillar, emphasized the importance of human capital to drive the success of DDM. Representatives from tertiary institutions, including Nelson Mandela University, presented ongoing initiatives to build leadership capacity in municipalities.

"Investing in people development, particularly in leadership training, is fundamental towards long-term sustainability of DDM," said Dr Ongama Mtshaka acting Director of the Raymond Mhlaba Centre for Governance and Leadership at the Nelson Mandela University. The discussion also highlighted the importance of aligning educational curricula, such as introducing physics and mathematics into early childhood development (ECD) education, to create a foundation for future growth.

This panel focused on the importance of an "all of society" approach to address challenges within DDM, including infrastructure engineering and spatial restructuring.

Business representatives, such as those from Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) and National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC), stressed increased collaboration with government to address the economic challenges facing local businesses, particularly in areas such as crime and infrastructure deficits. "For businesses to thrive, we must ensure that infrastructure is safe and reliable. We are ready to work with government to find solutions," said Mr Phumelele Madikiza from the Chamber of Commerce.

The final panel discussion focused on key commitments by sectors of society to support the successful implementation of DDM. Representatives from various sectors, including State-Owned Entities (SoEs) including Municipal Infrastructure of South Africa (MISA), Eskom, and Transnet, committed to work collaboratively to address the challenges faced by local government.

The workshop concluded with a renewed commitment from all sectors to work together in a more coordinated and strategic way.

"DDM is not just a framework for planning, it is a way of doing things differently, one that requires clarity, commitment, collaboration, and consensus. If we can align our resources, efforts, and ideas, we can make real progress to transform our District and Metro municipalities thus realise sustainable development for all," said Ms Sokutu.



L-R: Mr Phumelele Madikiza from the Chamber of Commerce, Ms Welekazi Sokutu, the Acting Director-General (ADG) in the Office of the Premier (OTP), Mr. Ashely Losch, Acting Director-General from the National Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)

# Key Tools Of Trade DELIVERED TO KING MATANZIMA

By Sonto Malinga

On March 20, 2025, Ms Dumza Vuba, the Chief Director for Traditional Leadership Institutional Support Services alongside Mr Mamnkeli Ngam, the Director for Corporate Communication, made a significant visit to King Dalimvula Matanzima in Comfivaba, outside Queenstown, to officially hand over a vehicle intended to help the king in the performance of his royal duties.

The event marked an important step to strengthen the support provided to traditional leaders, emphasizing the role they play in community development and cultural preservation. During the handover, Ms Vuba said “the vehicle was not a gift, but a necessary tool of trade designed to enhance the King's capacity to carry out his responsibilities effectively.”

She acknowledged the vital work that traditional leaders do in their communities and noted that this vehicle would help King Matanzima move freely between communities, attend important ceremonies, and meet with local leaders to attend to all tasks that are crucial for his leadership role.

On the other hand, Mr Ngam said the practicality of the vehicle, making it clear that the provision of such a resource is not intended as a luxury, but rather as a functional necessity for the King's work.

“The vehicle is not a symbol of opulence, but a tool that will assist the King to execute his duties to his people. This is another way our government restores the dignity of traditional leaders to serve their communities better,” he said.

The handover ceremony was a testament to the government's commitment to supporting traditional leadership structures, ensuring that they have the resources needed to continue their roles as pillars of society.

King Matanzima expressed his gratitude for the gesture and noted how this new addition would ease his movement, help him attend various traditional gatherings and fulfill his obligations as the King of Western Thembuland.

“The vehicle symbolizes more than just mobility rather a recognition of the invaluable role traditional leaders like King Matanzima play to maintain cultural heritage, promoting social cohesion, and preserving traditions for future generations. We pledge to continue to provide the necessary tools for leaders to perform their duties with excellence,” said Ms Vuba.



L-R: King Dalimvula Matanzima of the Western Thembuland and Ms Vuba

## Cogta To Embark On Programme TO CAPACITATE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN MUNICIPALITIES

By Mamnkeli Ngam

Cogta will embark on a training programme to capacitate the political and officials in all Eastern Cape municipalities in the first quarter of the new financial year, so said Mr Andile Sidinile, the Director for Municipal Capacity Building.

Speaking during a two-day session of the Forum for Directors of Corporate Services in the Sarah Bartman District, Mr Sidinile said the need to upskill municipal leadership towards competency remains the priority of the department. The Forum was attended by Corporate Services Directors, officials from the South African Local Government Association (Salga), national Cogta, National School of Government and the Chief Audit Executive (CAE).

“The Forum capacitates municipalities to review their Human Resource Plans and staff establishment as well as identify skills gap going forward. Because we value the role of labour unions in the transformation process in the workplace, we seek to normalise working relations between the employer and the employees.

We identify problem areas including those associated with the grading system, job evaluation, staff regulations to allow labour unions to make suggestions and make amendments,” said Mr Sidinile.

Meanwhile, Mr Sidinile announced that Merseta has allocated R280m for Mega Projects in the Province to benefit young people from 18-35 years of age. The training will focus on the mechanical skills in the municipal space for apprenticeship, artisans, learnerships, training of graduates, bursaries, mechanical learnership, etc. Municipalities are encouraged to make submissions to the Office of the Premier (OTP) by the 28 February 2025.

“We encourage municipalities to make submissions as soon as possible. In March Cogta will make a follow up on how the application process unfolded,” said Mr Sidinile.

L-R: The Director for Municipal Capacity Building, Mr Andile Sidinile



L-R: Ms Yolisa Mniki Director Community Services at Blue Crane Local Municipality and Ms Novuko Kubone- Senior Manager Corporate Services from Umzimvubu Local Municipality.



# Minister Hlabisa On A Mission TO END THE SCOURGE OF INITIATION DEATHS

By Vuyani Sibene

The Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa met with the representatives of the Eastern Cape Senior Traditional Leaders and Headmen/Headwomen to find lasting solutions to the challenges facing Ulwaluko (traditional male initiation).

The Minister was joined by the Deputy Minister of CoGTA, Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe, Provincial CoGTA MEC Zolile Williams, Chairperson of the National House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, Kgosi Thabo Seatlholo; members of the Forum of Royal Leaders, members of the Provincial and Local Houses, Municipalities and Executive Committees of Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) and Royal Leaders of South Africa (ROLESA).

Minister Hlabisa appreciated the level of representation at the meeting, which demonstrated the commitment of various stakeholders. The urgency of the meeting was due to the deaths and amputations of initiates during the 2025 summer season. Minister Hlabisa said deaths are not just numbers but lives of children who are the future leaders of our country, some of whom were the only children of their parents. He added that it was important to note that addressing the challenges experienced with Ulwaluko will restore the dignity of the initiates and the customary initiation.

"As parents, we cannot transfer our responsibilities to our children who undertake this cultural journey with other people," said Minister Hlabisa. The delegates acknowledged that Ulwaluko does not kill and committed to finding solutions now ahead of the Winter Initiation season and called for safe initiation. "We value our tradition," was a clear message from the discussions that ensued in the meeting. MEC Williams said key interventions include the need for strengthened communication with communities.

"Communities must be made to understand the legislation that governs initiation. Let us also understand that this programme needs to be funded by government," he said. The Chairperson of the House of Tradition and Khoisan Leaders Nkosi Mpumalanga Gwadiso said government should support monitoring teams with funding due to the negative impact of the new American policies of cutting funding to South Africa. He added that Traditional Councils must also be empowered to ensure that all communities and traditional schools comply with the legislation.



Minister Hlabisa

## Endorsement Session Enabled Stakeholders TO ENGAGE IN CRITICAL DEBATE

By Sonto Malinga

The recent Strategic Planning Endorsement Session, held on 05 March 2025 in Port Alfred, served as a pivotal forum for key stakeholders to engage in critical discourse on the organization's strategic trajectory. With a confluence of thought leadership and collaborative insight, the session provided a platform for deliberation on governance frameworks, organizational development, and financial sustainability. The discussions illuminated the imperative of strategic foresight in shaping policies that drive long-term institutional resilience and service excellence.

The Chairperson of the session, Dr Siviwe Mditshwa who is the Chief Director for Strategic Management, Communication and Information Services, outlined the necessity of a unified strategic vision.

"Our ability to plan strategically today determines the sustainability of our initiatives tomorrow hence the need to foster alignment between institutional priorities and overarching developmental goals. This session is not merely an academic exercise in policy discussion, (rather) an opportunity to cement a roadmap that is both pragmatic and aspirational, to ensure a lasting impact on governance and service delivery. Effective governance is the linchpin of any sustainable strategic initiative, providing the clarity and accountability required for meaningful progress," said Dr Mditshwa.

The acting Head of Department (HoD) Mr Vuyo Mlokothe provided an insightful exposition on the Department's strategic thrust for the 2025/26 financial year, advocating for a balanced approach to service delivery, resource optimization, and policy innovation.

"Our priorities for the upcoming financial year must be both responsive and forward-looking, striking a balance between immediate needs and sustainable development. Achieving long-term growth necessitates an equilibrium between innovation and sustainability investing in human capital, refining operational efficiencies, and fostering institutional adaptability," Mr Mlokothe.

In her presentation, Ms Charity Sihunu, Deputy Director General (DDG) for Development Local Government (DLG) unveiled the Booklet on Non-Negotiables, which is a framework to ensure municipalities comply with governance and service delivery standards. She emphasized the importance of good governance, institutional management, financial sustainability, and effective service delivery. "The booklet will serve as a roadmap to prevent service failures and enhance municipal accountability," said Ms Sihunu. Mr Tandabantu Gwebindlala, DDG for Traditional Affairs updated the session on the reconstitution of Traditional Councils (TC), emphasizing the importance of structural realignments to enhance governance efficacy. "The reconstitution of TC is not merely an administrative exercise it is a transformative process to reinforce inclusive governance.



Director for Strategic Management and Planning, Mr Willie Galli

## Happening AROUND COGTA



L- R: Mr Asanda Manzana, Nkosi Gwadiso, and acting Director House Operations, Mr Mfundo Ngele at the opening of the house of Traditional and KhoiSan Leaders



L - R: Premier Mabuyane with Morena Moshoeshe member of the EC House of Traditional and KhoiSan Leader at the opening of the house of Traditional and KhoiSan Leaders



Chief Director of Strategic and Executive Support National Cogta, Mr Xolani Xundu at Cogta Endorsement Session



Chief Director for Inter Governmental Relations and District Co-ordination, Mr Don Nyatela at Cogta Endorsement Session

## House Spearheads Campaign TO TEACH MORAL VALUES TO NEW INITIATES

By Dumisani Lindi

January 2025 marked the closing of the 2024 Customary Male Initiation Summer Season, that ended with Uyalo Lwamakrwala (teaching moral value) which is a campaign to educate and inform Amakrwala (new initiates) about manhood, how to conduct themselves, gender based violence and the importance of upholding moral conduct in society. These campaigns were conducted in the following District Municipalities Chris Hani, OR Tambo, Alfred Nzo, Amatole, Joe Gqabi and Buffalo City Metro municipality. The messages relayed to the young initiates were the same in all districts and the messages were anchored on the initiates to be protectors of their communities, be a man their communities want them to be and not be abusers or monsters that everyone one fears.

Addressing students from Matthew Goniwe and AJ Calata high schools in Cradock under Inxuba Yethemba Local Municipality, Nkosi Buchule Zimema who was part of the team which visited the Chris Hani District told the initiates that there have been complaints about their behaviors when initiates come back from initiation schools. "These complaints are about you becoming bullies and abusers of women, teachers, girls and boys when you come back from the initiation schools.

Let me tell you now that such conduct is not part of manhood and such behavior like that will not earn you respect. All that is needed of you is to be men who will build our nation, take this country to another level, men who will stand for what is right no matter how much pressure is exerted" said Nkosi Zimema. "I see strong leaders in you, I see nobility and strength so please do not let the country down by doing the opposite" said Nkosi Zimema.

The campaign went well in all Districts with the purpose to enhance the education which was given to the new initiates by elders during graduation ceremonies. The campaign also aims to bring a generation of young men who will do right by their communities and be ambassadors of communities and families who will safeguard the nation.



Standing in front of new initiates, Deputy Chairperson of the House of Traditional and KhoiSan Leaders, Nkosi Gwazinamba Matanzima and on the right is Nkosi Zimema