



### IMBIZO YAMADODA ENDS WITH A CALL TO END DEATHS

By Vuyani Sibene

THE MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Mr Zolile Williams and the Chairperson of the EC House of Traditional and KhoiSan Leaders (ECHTKL) Nkosi Mpumalanga Gwadiso convened a Men's Dialogue (Imbizo Yamadoda) to address the challenges impacting cultural initiation, with a specific focus to the OR Tambo District Municipality. The Imbizo brought together Kings, Ward Councilors, Headmen and Headwomen, Iinkosana, members of the Local Houses of Traditional and Khoisan leaders, Community Development Workers (CDWs), Ward Committees, Iingcibi, Amakhankatha, representatives of non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and medical practitioners with Ulwaluko experience.

Speaking at the Imbizo, MEC Williams said during the 2025 Winter Initiation Season, eleven initiates died and seven of those were from the OR Tambo District. He said they have observed several illegal activities relating including circumcision of underage boys, drug and alcohol abuse, abductions, kidnappings, car jackings, and stoning of vehicles that belonged to monitoring teams by members of some communities and the barricading of R61 road by unhappy parents in Port St. Johns.

Given the existing challenges, MEC Williams expressed serious concerns regarding the fatalities, attributing them to traditional surgeons.

"I must emphasize, without reservation, that these practices are resulting in the loss of young lives, and this must cease immediately. How can we justify the transformation of a child of ten years into a man?" questioned MEC Williams.

Deputy Minister of Cogta Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe also highlighted the persistent fatalities in the District and the province in both seasons. He said the situation was urgent hence the Imbizo to seek actionable solutions to mitigate these initiation-related deaths. The "We want answers to curb these deaths, said Burns-Ncamashe.

As a seasoned and dedicated medical professional, Dr Mthembeni Tebelele said whilst he is experienced with traditional initiation practices, the priority was to safeguard the lives of initiates.

"Please allow us as doctors to save lives of initiates whilst there is still time, Traditional surgeons must ensure that all young boys undergo a thorough premedical examination process prior to initiation. The assessment is crucial to identify and address potential health challenges in time," Dr Tebelele.

Conveying a message of support Mr Mhlobo Gqamane urged traditional surgeons to monitor the post-operative care provided by traditional nurses to the initiates.

King Zwelozuko Matiwane expressed his "deep concern" regarding the fatalities, particularly considering the recent launch of the winter initiation season at his Kroza Great Place. He said there is a critical need to prevent further loss of life during the summer season underscoring the need to save lives and restore the dignity of the practice.

"It is imperative that this winter marks the end of initiate deaths and tragedies in our District. The continued illegal occurrences could jeopardize the traditional initiation process, "said King Matiwane.











We want

answers

to curb

these deaths





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## MEMBERS OF TRADITIONAL COUNCILS SWORN IN FOR DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

By Sabo Dlelengana

A memorable occasion that underlines the enduring significance of traditional and Khoisan leadership in South Africa's democratic landscape was witnessed as CoGTA successfully concluded the swearing-in of 150 newly reconstituted members of Traditional Council (TC) across ten key regions in the province. The ceremonial events took place from 04 to 08 August 2025 in Dalindyebo, Western Thembuland, Nyandeni, Qaukeni, Gcaleka, Rharhabe, Fingoland, Embo, Maluti, and Sterkspruit Tcs.

The weeklong process marked a renewed commitment by the provincial government to enhance traditional governance structures in alignment with democratic principles and the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, 2019 (TKLA). These Councils are central to community development, customary law administration, land allocation, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Speaking during on one of the ceremonies, the Chief Director of Traditional Leadership and Institutional Support Ms Dumza Vuba emphasized the importance of a collaborative approach between government and traditional leaders.

"TCs remain important custodians of our cultural identity, community cohesion, and local governance. This swearing-in reflects our commitment to building effective partnerships for development, peace, and social justice across rural areas," said Ms Vuba.

She added that the reconstitution process ensures that each TC comprises 60% traditional leaders and 40% elected community members, with a focus on youth and gender representation.

"This composition is designed to promote inclusivity, accountability, and alignment with the Constitution," explained Ms Vuba.

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Traditional leaders and community members alike welcomed the appointments with optimism. Nkosi Andile Makinana of AmaNdlambe TC in Rharhabe expressed confidence in the newly sworn-in members, saying, "This is not only a ceremonial duty but a call to serve with dignity, integrity, and a deep sense of responsibility towards our people."

Ms Vuba said the department noted that the reconstitution also seeks to improve governance standards, record keeping, and the administration of TC affairs through capacity building and the deployment of support personnel.

She said as the province continues to tackle socio-economic challenges, traditional leadership remains a vital link between the state and rural communities. With this renewed mandate, the TCs are expected to play a more active role to drive local development, resolving disputes, and preserving indigenous knowledge systems.



## MINISTERIAL VISIT TO ASSIST WITH SERVICE DELIVERY IN MAKANA MUNICIPALITY

By Vuyani Sibene

The Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Dr Namane Dickson Masemola, and the MEC of Eastern Cape (Cogta), Zolile Williams, led a series of accountability and support engagements with the Mayor, Councillors, and community of Makana Local Municipality on 07 August 2025. The visit formed part of the national initiative themed "Every Municipality Must Work", aimed at revitalizing governance, accelerating service delivery, and reinforcing accountability across local government structures.

The engagement was aligned with the implementation of the District Development Model (DDM), a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to enhancing cooperative governance and integrated planning.

The Eastern Cape Government Performance Report reveals critical and persistent challenges in the Makana Municipality, facing systemic risks that threaten service delivery and financial sustainability.

Service delivery is also under strain—Makana suffers from poor roads and stormwater infrastructure, aging Infrastructure issues (leakages, overflows, and spillages), limited capacity of the existing water services infrastructure, vandalism, and water distribution losses at 19–22% over recent years. The Makana municipality is grappling with severe water and electricity losse, the municipality reported water losses of up to 22% and electricity losses consistently above norms.

Speaking in one of the sessions MEC Williams said regarding the challenges in the technical services department of Cogta made it a point that an engineer has been hired. To be candid with all the councilors of Makana Local Municipality, regardless of their political affiliation, be it ANC, DA, EFF, Patriotic Alliance, or any other contacting media outlets to report the municipality's shortcomings will not be beneficial. The municipality's failures are, in a sense, a reflection of everyone's actions. It is imperative that each of us, as residents, set aside our political differences and work together to improve the situation, guided by the principles of our respective political parties. Let us all act as dedicated citizens of Makana, committed to the well-being of our community, as stated by MEC of Cogta Zolile Williams.

Also speaking at the sessions , Dr Masemola said financial governance is an area of serious concern. "Makana municipality remains under Section 139(5) intervention and has received multiple consecutive disclaimed audit opinions over the years, indicating serious financial management and governance issues. Most recently, it received a disclaimer audit opinion for the 2023/24 financial year, continuing a troubling pattern. I am here to deliver the terms of reference to the councillors and the community of Makana LM.

He clarified that the Technical Team (TT) is intended to support the political and administrative leadership to be effective in their role and to assist in the efforts to turn around the Municipality for the betterment of the lives of its residents. He further explained that the have skills and expectancies on Leadership & Management, Financial & Risk Management, Training & Mentorship, Change Management, Strategic Thinking & Planning, Engineering and Management, Technical consulting and support to the electricity industry, Planning, design and project management of infrastructure development; Energy management and Engineering Master Planning, Water & Wastewater Conveyance systems, Roads & Stormwater Management, Project Management. "This implies that they will work closely and collaboratively with the Makana LM and its officials. This is intended to avoid duplication, wastage, and bureaucratic impediments."

He said a there was clear mandate and objectives, detailing the team's role in providing specialized technical assistance and capacity building to the MLM, with a focus on areas like infrastructure development, development planning, financial management, human resource management, service delivery, and project management. "The scope of services, outlining the specific technical expertise offered, includes engineering, development planning, human settlements management, financial management, human resource development, ICT management, SCM, Audit turnaround, and stakeholder management,".

Dr Masemola said there were also governance and reporting structures, clarifying the team's relationship with key stakeholders, such as CoGTA at a national and provincial level, and specifying reporting requirements and accountability mechanisms. "I give these teams 96 hours per month in a period of three months to six months," said Dr Dickson Masemola,





L-R Dr Masemola, Deputy Minister of Cogta, Community, Councillors of Makana LM and MEC Williams



## NKOSI JOYI INSPIRES UNITY, RESILIENCE IN THE BHAZIYA COMMUNITY

Mr Vuyani Sibene of the Directorate of Communication Management sat down with Inkosi Joyi on the work of his Traditional Council (TC) towards the development of the community of Bhaziya

Mr Sibene

#### 1. Tell us about yourself, and the TC

I am Nkosi Ntsika Minenkulu Joyi, duly recognized reigning Senior Traditional Leader of Bhaziya community, in the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality, in the Abathembu Kingdom, administratively known as the Dalindyebo region. Our Council is entrusted with the responsibility to uphold traditional governance, preserve cultural heritage, and drive rural socioeconomic development. Beyond cultural custodianship, we have taken a proactive role to advance agriculture, education, healthcare, and small business development to empower our people. The Bhaziya TC serves as both a cultural pillar and a development partner with government and private stakeholders to improve livelihoods in our jurisdiction.

2. What are the development opportunities geared towards addressing unemployment in your traditional communities?

Our strategy focuses on creating sustainable jobs through agriculture, skills development, and entrepreneurship. Through the Bhaziya Maize and Soya Bean Commercial Farming Project, we are currently focused on expanding our local famers from a 400-hectare pilot to a 1000-hectare farming operation, creating employment opportunities and stimulating the local economy. We are also establishing partnerships with entities like UBU Holdings and exploring other private and government entities that can channel resources into youth skills training, small scale manufacturing, and cooperative development. Additionally, we work closely with the Department of Small Business Development to link local entrepreneurs with funding and market opportunities.

3. Also linked to the triple challenges is poverty in our communities, yet agricultural land is lying fallow. What is your plan to bring people back to ploughing their mielie fields to mitigate poverty?

We believe that household food security is the foundation of poverty alleviation. Under the slogan "Isisu Bathembu"...a phrase passed down by our elders indirectly emphasised that "work the land to feed yourself"...we are currently planning a household garden movement encouraging families to cultivate their own food. Through partnerships with provincial programs, we aim to mechanize small scale farming, enabling households to increase productivity and commercialize surplus produce.

4. Do you have any programmes to encourage young people to livestock farming?

Yes, livestock farming remains central to our identity and economy. We have collaborated with our Department of Agriculture for a feedlot that will receive its supply from the local farmers and support to link with local abattoirs and markets. Our goal is to make livestock farming profitable and attractive to the younger generation by integrating modern farming techniques, veterinary support, and value-chain development. We have a livestock improvement through breed enhancement programs, vaccination campaigns, and farmer training. This partnership also focuses on introducing superior breeds and improving herd management practices to boost productivity and income for rural farmers and this will be more focused on youth as stated above.





Officials ensuring the cabbage is up to commercial standards

## 5. As the Chairperson of the Economic Development, Tourism and Mineral Resources Committee in the National House? Your comment.

Leadership always comes with responsibility. My initial concern was the need to balance tradition with modern development demands while uniting diverse stakeholders. I overcame these challenges by fostering strong collaborations, continuous learning, and placing institutional interests at the forefront of every decision. I also rely on a collective leadership approach, where Provincial Houses, Local Houses and TC contribute to shaping our path forward.

6. Our country is infested with crime, drugs, and lawlessness as the main challenges, amongst others. How is the situation in your area?

Rural areas are not immune to the scourge of crime and drug abuse. However, through close cooperation with law enforcement agencies, traditional leaders, and community policing structures, we have managed to curb some of these challenges. We emphasize moral regeneration, youth engagement in sports and skills programs, and community vigilance to restore social order.

7. Tell us about the functionality of the Community Policing Forum.

The Community Policing Forum (CPF) in our area is mildly functional with issues of no resources and lack of stronger coordination from the South African Police Service (SAPS). We have encouraged active participation of traditional structures within the CPF to ensure early detection of criminal activities, especially concerning stock theft, drug trafficking, and GBV. Continuous training and improved community cooperation remain essential for the CPF to be more effective.

8. How does traditional initiation affect your TC?

Traditional initiation is both a cultural rite and a responsibility for us. It requires vigilant oversight to ensure the safety, dignity, and cultural integrity of the process. The Council plays a key role in regulating initiation schools, Monitoring during initiation season, working with health and safety authorities, and educating communities to prevent illegal practices. While it demands significant resources, it also strengthens cultural cohesion and identity.

## 9. Land grabs and illegal sale of land in rural areas remain another challenge. How do you deal with it?

We have adopted a zero-tolerance approach to illegal demarcation and land sales. We work closely with the Traditional leadership structures of which is from the Senior Traditional Leader, Headmen and sub-headmen of which we also collaborate with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development to enforce government regulations that seek to assist us by also maintaining strict records and require verification of any land transactions under our jurisdiction to prevent exploitation.

10. GBVF is the main challenge currently in the rural areas. What is the strategy of your TC to fight this scourge?

GBVF is a crisis that requires a firm stance. Our Council has implemented awareness campaigns through partnerships with the Department of Social development where we had several child marriages in the community. We also collaborate with local NGOs to provide support services, including counselling. Importantly, we continue to challenge harmful cultural practices.

11. What is your message to the communities in your jurisdiction?

My message to the people of Bhaziya is one of unity, resilience, and action. "Amandla, Ubunye, Nobabalo eBukhosini" translated to Power, Unity, and Grace in Leadership. We must work together to transform our community, protect our culture, and seize opportunities for development. Every household, youth, and elder has a role to play. Let us move forward with pride, innovation, and solidarity to ensure that Bhaziya thrives for generations to come.

Work the land to feed yourself

### CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW APPOINTMENT

The MEC for COGTA, Zolile Williams, Management & Staff would like to congratulate Mr Mlokothi on his appointment as the new Head of Department with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2025. This promotion is a well-deserved acknowledgment of your hard work and commitment. Your strategic thinking and dedication have significantly contributed to the success of the COGTA team, including achieving a clean audit. We extend our best wishes to you in your new role.

WHERE
HARD WORK
MEETS REWARD.

Mr. Vuyo Mlokothi Head of Department



#### PLANNING NOT A COMPLIANCE EXCERCISE - MS SIHUNU

By Sabo Dlelengana

The Eastern Cape Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) successfully hosted the Provincial Assessment of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) for the 2025/2026 financial year from 28 July to 01 August 2025 at Mpekweni Beach Resort. This annual assessment, mandated by Section 31 of the Municipal Systems Act (MSA), No. 32 of 2000, plays a pivotal role in promoting effective local governance, intergovernmental alignment, and developmental planning. This legislative framework ensures that IDPs are not just bureaucratic requirements but serve as dynamic and inclusive blueprints for sustainable development and service delivery. The primary objective of the annual IDP assessment was to evaluate the extent to which municipal IDPs comply with Section 26 of the MSA, which outlines the core components of an IDP, such as vision, development priorities, performance targets, and financial plans. Section 29, which prescribes the process to be followed in preparing an IDP, emphasizes public participation and intergovernmental consultation. The provincial assessment offered an opportunity to verify that the IDPs are credible, implementable, and aligned with both provincial and national development priorities. This inclusive platform ensured robust engagement, shared learning, and the opportunity to identify areas of support needed to enhance IDP quality and effectiveness.

The session was honored by the presence of the acting DDG Local Government, Development and Planning, Ms. Charity Sihunu. In her opening remarks, she emphasized the importance of the strategic value of integrated planning, stating, "Integrated planning is not just a compliance exercise; it is a strategic tool to ensure that government responds to the real needs of our communities. Alignment between spheres of government is key to impactful service delivery." Her remarks set the tone for a week of constructive dialogue, critical analysis, and the reaffirmation of the collective commitment to developmental local government. As the province continues to confront challenges such as poverty, inequality, and service delivery backlogs, the role of IDPs remains central. The 2025/2026 Provincial IDP Assessment affirmed that when local plans are grounded in community needs, technically sound, and institutionally supported, they can be powerful instruments for change. The department remains committed to its oversight and support mandate, ensuring that all municipalities are empowered to deliver on their developmental objectives through responsive and integrated planning.





#### FMS ARE CUSTODIANS OF PUBLIC FUNDS TO REINFORCE PUBLIC TRUST

By Vuyani Sibene

THE Financial Management Services team of the department gathered in East London recently to review the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for the 2024/2025 financial year. This exercise marked yet another milestone in the team's ongoing commitment to financial accountability, accuracy, and good governance.

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Ms Kutala Shinta said the review was a fundamental process so that the financial records are "complete, accurate, and compliant" with legislative and regulatory frameworks.

"This does not only reflect the integrity of financial reporting but enables sound decision-making and supports the achievement of the clean audit outcomes. The first step is introspection which is comprehensive audit readiness assessment to identify loopholes in procurement processes, contract management and financial reporting," she said.

Ms Kutala Shinta said spearheaded financial controls overhaul is key, insisting on daily reconciliation practices and automated system for budget tracking.

"What made this year's session even more remarkable was the unwavering dedication and teamwork demonstrated by all employees involved. Over the years, our team has consistently gone above and beyond the call of duty, navigating tight deadlines, and embracing a shared responsibility to uphold the financial integrity of the department," said Ms Shinta.

She added that diligence to review the AFS contributed to the department's efforts to maintain financial discipline and transparency.

"As custodians of public funds, our work needs to continue to reinforce public trust and set a standard for service excellence within the public sector."





#### MINISTER HLABISA BELIEVES ELIMINATING CORRUPTION IS ESSENTIAL TO EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LAST month, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA, Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa, concluded the fourth strategic CoGTA National Business Initiative (NBI) Roundtable on the Review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government. This final leg of the engagement was held in East London, ahead of the 31 July 2025 deadline for public submissions on the Discussion Document for the White Paper Review process.

This Eastern Cape-focused iteration follows successful engagements in the Western Cape, Gauteng, and KwaZulu-Natal, forming part of a broader, inclusive, and participatory policy reform process under the theme: "Every Municipality Must Work, A Call to Collective Action."

The roundtable aimed to harness practical insights from the business sector to shape a modern, fit-for-purpose local government system. In his keynote address, Minister Hlabisa emphasized the critical importance of leadership in local government, particularly regarding competence, capability, and ethical conduct.

The engagement provided the business sector with a platform to reflect on the legacy and limitations of the 1998 White Paper, Identify policy priorities for a renewed local government framework, offer practical recommendations from business and provincial perspectives and strengthen partnerships to improve governance and infrastructure delivery.

Minister Hlabisa commended the cleanliness of East London town, noting that his final consultation session was not a "cosmetic exercise but a substantive effort to reset the vision of the 1998 White Paper." He acknowledged the current challenges facing municipalities, including rapid urbanisation, climate change, youth unemployment, and declining public trust.

Throughout the public consultations, a consistent message that emerged from Traditional Leaders, Business, Civil Society Organisations, and citizens alike was that every municipality must work to create a conducive environment for investment, stimulate economic activity, and ensure sustainable service delivery matched by payment for services.

"There is a need to reposition municipalities as economic enablers through a differentiated funding regime, overseen by a competent and accountable leadership. We need to also streamline regulatory frameworks to enable climate-resilient planning, budgeting, and infrastructure development guided by investment foresight and institutionalised collaborative partnerships beyond the review process," said Minster Hlabisa.

In conclusion, he committed to request for the establishment of a dedicated unit within the South African Police Service (SAPS) to combat corruption in local government, noting that eliminating corruption is essential to achieving effective governance.

The Minister was joined by the Executive Mayor of Buffalo City Metro, Cllr Princess Faku, who welcomed the timely review, highlighting the complex challenges municipalities face and the need for tailored collaborations with business to address capacity constraints and stimulate local economic development.

Ms Shameela Soobramoney, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NBI, described the engagement as a pivotal moment to shape sustainable and inclusive local government systems. She emphasized the need for the evolution of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) into investment prospectuses for bankable project portfolios that can drive meaningful

This roundtable offered business leaders a strategic platform to influence policies that reduce investment risk and foster a more conducive business environment.



Attendees of the Roundtable

## PROGRESS TO RESETTLE FLOOD DISPLACED COMMUNITIES IN MNQUMA AND KSD MUNICIPALITIES

FOLLOWING the June 2025 flood disasters that left hundreds of members of communities displaced around the province, with OR Tambo and Amathole Districts hardest hit, the Provincial Government has made significant strides to resettle the affected families. Mnquma and King Sabatha Dalindyebo municipalities were the most affected.

The significant milestone in the province's recovery programme is the resumption of relocation operations in Mnquma and King Sabata Dalindyebo municipalities. While permanent housing solutions are in development, the government has undertaken the construction and allocation of Temporary Residential Units (TRUs) in high-priority areas.

In the Mnquma municipality, a site was identified at New Rest, located approximately 1.5 kilometres from the Butterworth Central Business District (CBD). Currently, 32 families are accommodated at two mass care centers, Lillies Guest House and Cuba Community Hall, where they are being provided with meals and necessities. These families will receive priority during relocation.

The construction of TRUs is at an advanced stage, with 28 being ready for occupation and a further three due to be completed tomorrow. The remaining 89 TRUs are planned to be completed on 07 August 2025. Families are expected to move-in, in phases as TRUs become available.

In the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality, contractors are on standby, for the installation of more than 470 TRUs, including units donated by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the National Department of Human Settlements, and civil society partners.

Measurable progress has been made in identifying and securing land parcels in identified areas including Maydene Farm, KwaLink, Tracor, Old Transkei Meat Industry and Old Enkululekweni. Land has been earmarked within proximity to essential services such as schools, clinics, and transport routes. Preparation of the site has been completed at KwaLink and is in progress at Tracor. At KwaLink, the contractor is on site with effect from today. In some areas work is scheduled to commence this week.

Ongoing consultations with traditional leaders, landowners, and community representatives are being conducted to ensure transparent and inclusive processes. Spatial planning processes have also been initiated to facilitate formal township establishment, ensuring access to bulk infrastructure such as water, sanitation, and electricity.

Since the onset of the disaster, the Provincial Government and its social partners have been actively coordinating humanitarian support across all affected areas. Key actions include the provision of three hot meals a day and this in some instances is enabled through the provision of groceries for the displaced families to cook for themselves.

The South African Social Security Agency has also made preparation for the provision of a Social Relief of Distress (SRD) vouchers to enable families to set-up once they have been moved to the TRUs.

The Eastern Cape Provincial Government remains steadfast in its commitment to rebuild safer, stronger, and more resilient communities.

**Source: OTP Provincial Communication Services** 



## MID 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.