



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE
& TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

COGTA

Newsletter

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“The Non-Negotiables Booklet serves as a critical instrument to strengthen governance, promote ethical leadership, and ensure consistent and responsive service delivery across municipalities,” said MEC Williams.

EDITORIAL COMMENT



Editor: Ms Thando Sonjica

2nd Leg of the Non-Negotiables Booklet Launched in Gqeberha to Recalibrate Local Government to Perform Better

Cogta MEC Zolile Williams led the successful second leg of the launch of the Non-Negotiables Booklet, held in Gqeberha. This initiative forms part of ongoing efforts to recalibrate local government and reinforce a culture of accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness to community needs. The first leg of this important rollout took place in the Senqu Local Municipality within the Joe Gqabi District, setting a strong foundation for this province-wide programme. Turn to page 3 for full coverage of the Gqeberha launch.

We also reflect on a moving and inspiring awards ceremony featured on page 4, which honoured frontline responders who played a critical role during the devastating June 2025 floods in Mthatha. The disaster left a profound impact, with families displaced, 103 lives tragically lost, and many residents facing the difficult journey of rebuilding their lives.

Amid these hardships, remarkable acts of bravery and compassion stood out. Led by Captain Jindela of the SAPS Mounted Unit, a dedicated team of 213 professionals and volunteers worked under extreme conditions to rescue 38 individuals from life-threatening situations. Their courage and selfless service embody the true spirit of public service.

Additionally, MEC Williams convened a Political MuniMEC meeting in the King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD) Municipality, focusing on service delivery challenges and governance matters within the local government sphere. This integrated approach aims to strengthen coordination and improve outcomes for communities. Read more about this engagement on page 5.

We invite you to explore these and other stories in this month's edition. Enjoy the read.

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MEC WILLIAMS LEADS OFFICIAL SECOND LAUNCH OF THE SOPs BOOKLET IN NELSON MANDELA METRO

By: Sonto Malinga

The MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Zolile Williams, officially led the second launch of the Municipal Non-Negotiables Booklet: Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at the Nangoza Jebe Hall in Gqeberha, Nelson Mandela Metro.

The launch brought together municipal leadership, government officials, stakeholders, Councillors, Ward Councillors, CDWs and community representatives to reaffirm the province's commitment to strengthen good governance and improve service delivery across municipalities.

Delivering the opening remarks, the Executive Mayor of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, Councillor Babalwa Lobishe, said the SOP in the booklet would strengthen municipal internal processes.

Executive Mayor Lobishe expressed confidence that the Booklet would support the implementation of the Municipality's turnaround plan, while promote long-term sustainability and improve the quality-of-service delivery. She further noted that clear processes and defined standards are essential to ensuring that municipalities operate efficiently and remain accountable to the people they serve.

Addressing stakeholders, MEC Williams highlighted the importance of the non-negotiables framework as a tool to reinforce accountability and strengthen governance across local government institutions.

“The Non-Negotiables Booklet serves as a critical instrument to strengthen governance, promote ethical leadership, and ensure consistent and responsive service delivery across municipalities,” said MEC Williams.

The MEC emphasised that the booklet outlines clear business processes and operational standards that municipalities must adhere to, ensuring that governance systems function effectively and that service delivery challenges are addressed with urgency and accountability.

As part of the program, MEC Williams also engaged with the media, including an interview with eNCA, where he elaborated on the significance of the SOPs in the booklet. During the interview, he underscored the importance of accountability, consequence management and strengthened governance systems within municipalities.

MEC Williams reaffirmed government's firm commitment to enforce compliance with the SOPs to restore public confidence in local government.

The launch formed part of the department's broader efforts to build capable, ethical and responsive municipalities, while ensuring that governance systems are aligned with the needs and expectations of communities.

Through the implementation of the Municipal Non-Negotiables SOPs Booklet, the Department of continues to drive its vision of a capable, accountable and people-centred local government system that delivers reliable and sustainable services to all residents of the province.



L-R: Ms Xoliswa Nqakula, Executive Mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Cllr Lobishe, MEC Williams and HOD for Cogta, Mr Vuyo Mlokothi

FRONTLINE RESPONDERS RECEIVE SPECIAL AWARDS FOR THE 2025 DISASTER RESPONSE IN MTHATHA

By Sabo Dlelengana

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) hosted a special awards ceremony in Mthatha on 21 February 2026, to recognise and honour frontline responders who played a critical role during the devastating disaster incidents that occurred in June 2025.

Mthatha experienced severe flooding that left a trail of destruction across the city. Providing the background the MEC for Cogta Zolile Williams said thousands of residents were displaced, lives were tragically lost, and many communities were left struggling to recover.

“Amid the chaos and uncertainty, frontline personnel stepped forward without hesitation, they braved dangerous and unpredictable conditions to save lives, provided urgent medical assistance, and brought hope to those affected by the disaster” said MEC Williams.

MEC Williams commended the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders who responded swiftly and effectively to the disaster. He emphasised that recognition serves not only as an expression of gratitude but also as a tribute to those who consistently place the safety and wellbeing of communities at the forefront of their service.

“Tonight, we gather not only to present awards, but to honor bravery compassion and selfless service. You risked your own lives to save others, and for that, the people of the Eastern Cape will remain forever grateful. On behalf of the provincial government, I extend our deepest appreciation to every emergency worker, volunteer, traditional leader, and community member who played a role in the rescue and recovery operation,” said MEC Williams.

The Head of Department (HOD) for COGTA Mr Vuyo Mlokothi emphasised the importance of collaboration among government departments, municipalities, emergency services, and community structures in strengthening disaster preparedness and response.

“This ceremony serves as a powerful reminder of the vital role played by frontline responders in building resilient communities across the Eastern Cape. Through their bravery and service, these responders embody the spirit of resilience and compassion that helps communities recover and rebuild after disaster strikes” said Mlokothi.

During the disaster, a multi-disciplinary team of 213 professionals and volunteers worked tirelessly in coordinated shifts under the leadership of Captain Jindela of the South African Police Service Mounted Unit. Their mission was clear, to search, rescue, and recover. Through their courage, determination, and teamwork, the team successfully rescued 38 people from life-threatening situations.

Although the disaster claimed 103 lives, responders worked with unwavering dedication to recover and return victims to their families with dignity. One young boy remained unrecovered, a heartbreaking reminder of the fragility of life and the profound impact disasters have on communities.

The awards ceremony celebrated the extraordinary dedication, bravery, and commitment demonstrated by emergency personnel, disaster management teams, law enforcement agencies, municipal officials, and community volunteers who worked tirelessly to protect lives and support affected communities during the crisis.



L-R: Ms Jama, Rev Name Tyali, Cllr Zukisa Gana, MEC Williams. Awardees- L-R Col E. Van Der Westhuizen, Captian J.K Krugell and Cllr Ntshuba Chair of Chairs at OR Tambo DM

MUNIMEC FORUM CELEBRATES CLEAN MUNICIPAL AUDITS.

By: Sonto Malinga



L- R Mr Ntetha office of the Auditor General , Mayor of Mquma Municipality - Cllr Mnxila – Nkamisa, Mr Mahlasela Municipal Manager of Mquma Municipality and MEC Williams

COGTA MEC Zolile Williams, convened the Provincial Political MuniMEC Forum at Dans Country Lodge in Mthatha this month to address service delivery challenges in the interest of cooperative governance.

The Forum is a strategic intergovernmental platform which bring together Executive Mayors, Mayors, Municipal Managers, Chief Executive Officers, heads of State Owned Entreprises (SOEs), Heads of Department, senior directors from sector departments, representatives from, Eskom, and Municipal Infrastructure Directors. The Forum serves as an important platform for coordination and collaboration between provincial and local government leadership.

In his address, MEC Williams emphasised the importance of adhering to the Standard Operating Procedures outlined in the Non-Negotiables Booklet.

“Compliance with these procedures is not optional but mandatory for all municipalities to improve governance, accountability, and service delivery,” said MEC Williams.

He further called on political and administrative leadership to conduct regular walkabouts in their municipal towns. “Visible leadership is critical to understand the real conditions within and lived experiences of our people by identifying service delivery challenges first-hand, and ensure that local government remains accountable to communities,” he said.

The two-day forum focused on reviewing municipal performance, assessing service delivery milestones, and strengthening coordination between municipalities and sector departments across the province. Discussions also centred on improving accountability and ensuring that municipalities remain responsive to the needs of communities.

Key presentations during the meeting included a summary of the 3rd Generation One Plan, which outlined a collective vision for integrated development and long-term sustainability across the province. The forum also received an update on the implementation of Consultant Guidelines to promote responsible spending and improve oversight in municipalities.

In addition, deliberations focused on strengthening alignment between municipal planning requirements and liquor licensing processes to improve compliance and more streamlined service delivery.

As part of the programme, MEC Williams took a moment to celebrate excellence in governance by honoring municipalities that attained clean audits in the 2024/25 Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) Audit Cycle. These accolades served as a testament to the municipalities' unwavering commitment to prudent financial management, accountability, and transparent governance.

The recognition was bestowed upon Ntabankulu Local Municipality, Umzimvubu Local Municipality, Great Kei Local Municipality, Mquma Local Municipality, Joe Gqabi District Municipality, the Joe Gqabi Economic Development Agency, Senqu Local Municipality, Kouga Local Municipality, and Sarah Baartman District Municipality each standing out as a benchmark of good governance within the province.

The forum concluded with a renewed commitment to work collaboratively to build capable, ethical and developmental local government institutions that deliver quality services to communities across the province.



PDMC TAKES DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TO SCHOOLS AHEAD OF NON-NEGOTIABLES SOPs LAUNCH

By: Sonto Malinga

As part of the build-up towards the official launch of the Non-Negotiables Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Booklet, the Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC) continued to strengthen disaster preparedness and awareness at community level.

In this regard, the PDMC, under the leadership of Chief Director Ms Chuleza Jama, conducted a Disaster Risk Reduction awareness campaign at Charles Duna and Phendla Primary Schools in Gqeberha. The initiative formed part of broader efforts to promote safety, preparedness and responsible disaster management practices among communities, particularly young learners who play an important role in sharing information within their households and communities.

During the engagement, PDMC officials provided learners and educators with practical knowledge on disaster preparedness, highlighting the importance of understanding potential risks such as fires, floods and other emergencies that may affect communities. Learners were encouraged to remain alert, follow safety protocols and report potential hazards to responsible authorities.

A key highlight of the programme was the demonstration of firefighting exercise, where officials showcased how basic firefighting tools are used to respond to emergencies. The demonstration generated great interest among learners and helped them gain a better understanding of the importance of early response and safety measures in preventing disasters.

Educators welcomed the initiative, noting that awareness programmes equipped learners with life-saving knowledge and cultivate a culture of preparedness from a young age. By engaging schools, the PDMC ensured that disaster risk reduction messages reached both learners and their families, thereby extending the impact of the campaign beyond the classroom.

Ms Jama said community awareness and education are pillars of disaster risk reduction. “Empowering young people with knowledge builds resilient communities that are better prepared to respond to emergencies,” explained Ms Jama.

The campaign also aligned with the objectives of the Non-Negotiables SOPs Booklet, which seeks to ensure that municipalities and communities adhere to clear and consistent procedures aimed at improving governance, accountability and service delivery.

As the department moved closer to the official launch event, similar awareness initiatives were expected to continue across communities to reinforce the message that disaster preparedness thus spread the message far and wide.

The PDMC reaffirmed its commitment to build safer, informed and resilient communities across the province, while supporting the broader vision of strengthening municipal governance and disaster management systems.



PDMC team conducting disaster risk reduction awareness at Charles Duna primary school