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MANAGER

THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION-MAKERS

PSM

MAY 2017

Celebrating workers' rights

Minister Mildred
Oliphant puts the
spotlight on labour
relations

Welcome to Nkantolo

The village that
made OR Tambo

Shale gas

An answer to energy
independence?

Lifestyle

- Exploring the
Tankwa Karoo
- Olive is the
new black



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NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

CNBC Africa pioneered the annual All Africa Business Leaders Awards (AABLA) in 2011 to salute and recognize remarkable business leaders, who through strength, innovation and foresight induce positive changes in an evolving corporate Africa. These business leaders are recognised at this annual awards ceremony as well as in special AABLA programming that is broadcast across the continent.

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- Lifetime Achievement Award

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"It is our responsibility to break down barriers of division and create a country where there will be neither Whites nor Blacks, just South Africans, free and united in diversity."

(Source: SA History Online)

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South Africa remains an attractive global investment destination

With the recent credit downgrade and protests, the country has been going through a testing time. However, there are many reasons to remain positive.

Two recently published reports give South Africa something to celebrate despite the weakening economic climate.

The AT Kearney's 2017 Foreign Direct Investment Confidence report released in April indicates that South Africa is the 25th most attractive destination for foreign direct investment globally, and the first in Africa.

South Africa has made a return to the index, which publishes the 25 most attractive investment destinations, for the first time since 2014. Three other Brics countries are ranked in the top 25: China (third), India (eighth) and Brazil (16th).

This shows that South Africa's strategic partnership with foreign investors is gaining momentum. It also signals that the National Development Plan, released in 2012, is yielding results.

Improvements in short-term economic prospects and long-term investment in the country's manufacturing sector have been cited as some of the key drivers of South Africa's improved rating on the index.

A separate report, the latest Africa Investment Index 2016 by Quantum Global's independent research arm, ranks South Africa as the fourth most attractive investment destination in Africa after Botswana, Morocco and Egypt. South Africa scored well on GDP growth, ease of doing business, and its significant population.

The country's attractiveness as an investment destination of choice was further highlighted in the African Economic Outlook 2016 report, which places South Africa fourth among the leading African investment destinations in 2015 after Egypt, Mozambique and Morocco, with \$3.6 billion in foreign investment.

In addition, South Africa continues to build on its strong financial and business base, ranking 47th out of 138 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Com-

petitive Index 2016/17 – up two places over the previous year.

Even amid the tightening economic climate the government is pushing ahead to attract more investors. In March President Jacob Zuma launched the InvestSA One Stop Shop for investors.

In April my colleague Minister of Trade and Industry Rob Davies said InvestSA had recorded an investment pipeline of investment projects valued at R58 billion in the year to end February.

We are also moving ahead with the programme of radical economic transformation, to ensure that the economy is controlled by all who live in our country.

The news in April that the Industrial Development Corporation has so far approved over R2.8 billion in funding to black industrialists is therefore welcoming.

As South Africans we tend to focus too much on the negative. Other developing countries are facing arguably even more difficult times – with recessions in Russia, Brazil and Nigeria.

But there continue to be those that look at South Africa as a potential growth hub, particularly as it remains one of the continent's most diversified and sophisticated economies.

We have overcome much as a country.

We should not forget how we were

able to transition to democracy relative-

ly peacefully and

how we hosted

arguably one of

the most success-

ful football World

Cups. Let us

recall such

moments as

we strive

to move

ahead. 



The National Energy Regulator (NERSA) makes a valuable contribution to the socio-economic development and prosperity of the people of South Africa, by regulating the energy industry in accordance with government laws, policies, standards and international best practices in support of sustainable development.

NERSA is a regulatory authority established as a juristic person in terms of Section 3 of the National Energy Regulator Act, 2004 (Act No. 40 of 2004). NERSA's mandate is to regulate the electricity, piped-gas and petroleum pipelines industries in terms of the Electricity Regulation Act, 2006 (Act No. 4 of 2006), Gas Act, 2001 (Act No. 48 of 2001) and Petroleum Pipelines Act, 2003 (Act No. 60 of 2003).

NERSA's mandate is further derived from written government policies as well as regulations issued by the Minister of Energy. NERSA is expected to perform the necessary regulatory actions in anticipation of and/or in response to the changing circumstances in the energy industry.

The Minister of Energy appoints Members of the Energy Regulator, comprising part-time (Non-Executive) and full-time (Executive) Regulator Members, including the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Energy Regulator is supported by staff under the direction of the CEO.

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Africa Month - our continent celebrates

It was in this month 54 years ago that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the forerunner to the African Union (AU), was founded.

We as the government have chosen May as Africa Month to acknowledge the progress that we, as Africans, have made on the continent in collectively addressing the challenges that we face, such as armed conflict, climate change and poverty.

Africa, our home, is a continent of diverse cultures, regions and people stretching from Ras ben Sakka in Tunisia to Cape Agulhas in South Africa and from Cap-Vert in Senegal to Ras Hafun in Somalia.

It has been home to ancient kingdoms such as the Egyptians and the Bakongo, the ancient cities of Carthage and Timbuktu, and the ruins of Great Zimbabwe.

The continent has made significant progress of late with a rising middle class. Some of the fastest growing countries in the world are to be found on the African continent.

There are fewer civil wars than before and more governments change hands through the ballot than before. The number of free or partly free countries has increased from 16 in 1988 to 29 in 2015, according to Freedom House.

Africans are also living longer than before. Life expectancy surged by over 20 percent in many countries between 2000 and 2014, according to World Bank figures. Much of this is due to more affordable medication and the availability of anti-retroviral drugs.

Yet Africa remains one of the poorest regions in the world.

The continent makes up just five percent of world GDP. The 10 poorest countries ranked by the United Nations in 2015 according to gross domestic product (GDP) per capita were all African. The 10 lowest-ranked nations on the Human Development Index last year were also all African.


Thousands of Africans risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean to Europe in search of a better life. More continue to die of curable diseases or in wars.

As Africans we often struggle to come together to solve our own problems. The latest reforms at the AU aim to tackle this: turning the body into a self-funding organisation with which Africans can solve Africa's problems.

In addition, the AU's Agenda 2063 aims to make Africa a strong and prosperous, integrated, peaceful and just continent in the coming decades.

Among its 54 countries Africa often remains divided at times by language and region. Yet talks have begun on the creation of a Tripartite Free Trade Area, with an agreement signed in 2015. Once set up it will create a common trade area with a combined population of 600 million people and \$1 trillion in GDP.

Africa once basked in riches. With access to West Africa's abundant gold supplies, Mali ruler Mansa Musa was reportedly the richest man the world has ever seen, richer than today's billionaires. Yet few know his name.

This month let us look at our continent anew and appreciate the rich heritage that Musa and others before and after him have bestowed upon us in Africa. 



Acting Director-General
Donald Liphoko.

NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYERS WHO ARE REGISTERED WITH THE COMPENSATION FUND

Don't delay, please submit your returns online before 31 May 2017 to avoid penalties.

The 2016 Return of Earnings (ROE) season is now open.

To file your returns log onto www.labour.gov.za and under the online services **click** on the Compensation Fund Return of Earnings and submit your returns.

You can also get your Letter of Good Standing on-line To obtain the Letter of Good Standing log onto: <https://cfonline.labour.gov.za/OnlineSubmissions/?2>

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Workers' Month

focuses on labour rights

Constitutional protection for all workers is considered the hallmark of advanced industrial democracies, Minister of Labour Mildred Oliphant said at the launch of Workers' Month 2017.



South African workers should familiarise themselves with the country's labour legislation so that they know their rights.

This was the view of Minister of Labour Mildred Oliphant in giving an outline of her department's plans for May – Workers' Month in South Africa.

"If workers don't have a clear understanding of legislation, the Department of Labour is open to explaining its meaning and implications, and how the legislation is protecting them. We will be embarking on inspection blitz this month so that workers can understand what their rights are."

Minister Oliphant said her department has chosen Workers' Month to take stock and celebrate how far South Africa has come in its quest for social justice through labour relations dispensation.

"We also want to use Workers' Month to raise awareness of the rights and responsibilities of workers as enshrined in our labour laws."

Progressive labour legislation

Minister Oliphant said she was satisfied that through various forms of engagement, her department has

subscribed to global best practice labour conventions, and the South African Constitution.

"While this is merely providing information on the key aspects of our key labour laws, it is also an attempt to empower those who interact with these laws in general and workers in particular."

She said the Labour Regulations Act makes it much easier for unions to obtain rights within an organisation.

Labour commissioners can grant majority rights to sufficiently represented unions who do not have majority representation.

"In the past you had to have 50 per cent plus one union representivity to qualify for majority rights – such as the right to union representatives and access to information. Currently, even if there is not 50 per cent plus one representivity, a commissioner can award majority rights to a union that is at least sufficiently represented, where no other union in that workplace already has majority rights."

She added that the definition of dismissal has changed. In terms of Section 186 a dismissal is no longer just limited to the termination of a contract of employment by an employer, but termination of any employment.

"This means that, where an employee is stationed with the client of a labour broker, and the client decides to terminate his or her employment, the employee can refer the client to the CCMA irrespective of the contract with the labour broker, due to the fact that the employment relationship is between the employee and the client."

Rights under fixed-term contracts

She said failure to offer permanent employment once a fixed-term contract has lapsed can be seen as unfair dismissal, if the employer cannot justify why no such permanent appointment can be made.

"Any dismissals will be automatically 'unfair' if the reason for the dismissal is the employee's refusal to accept a demand in respect of any matter of mutual interest between them and their employer. Such changes are

now left solely to the ambit of collective bargaining."

Minister Oliphant pointed out that an employee may not be employed by a temporary employment service on terms and conditions not permitted by the Labour Relations Act or any employment law applicable to employees.

"This is important because it deals with the argument that workers will be subject to unfair labour practices in the first three months."

"We are not only concerned with the protection of workers. We also play a meaningful role in national efforts to grow the economy."

Fixed-term employees, who are employed for a period in excess of three months and earning below the Basic Condition of Employment Act earnings threshold, will be deemed to be employed indefinitely unless the employer can demonstrate a justifiable reason for employing them on a fixed-term basis.

"Fixed-term employees working for longer than three months must work under and receive the same benefits as all other permanent employees – unless a justifiable reason is given."

She added that fixed-term employees who are employed for a period in excess of 24 months must, upon the expiry of their contract period, receive

a severance payment equivalent to at least one week's remuneration for every completed year of service.

This applies "unless the employer offers the employee permanent employment or procures employment for the employee with another employer on similar terms and conditions," the minister said.


Department of Labour's role in the economy

Minister Oliphant added that the Unemployment Insurance Fund was now leveraging its investments to stimulate economic growth.

The fund's investment portfolio is made up of 58 per cent in bonds, 22 per cent in listed equity, 10 per cent in money market instruments, five per cent in listed property and five per cent in socially responsible investments.

"Of the 58 per cent invested in bonds, 78 per cent is invested in government bonds and 18 per cent in parastatal bonds," the minister said. "These bonds contribute significantly in the infrastructure development programme of the country. Roughly R26 billion is allocated to initiatives focused on job creation and job retention."

The UIF has played an important role in national efforts to improve access to education through its investments in Eduloan, which gives financial support to the South Point and Educor organisations that provide student accommodation.

"By March 2016, Eduloan had disbursed about R446 000 benefiting over 34 000 students, while South 



Point provided about 10 000 students with accommodation.

"We are not only concerned with the protection of workers. We also contribute and play a meaningful role in national efforts to grow the economy in line with National Development Plan," Minister Oliphant said.

Initiatives to reduce unemployment

The Department of Labour has spearheaded several initiatives to reduce unemployment, Minister Oliphant said. These include the Training Lay-off Scheme to prevent retrenchments in companies in distress, the Social Plan Productivity Technical Advisory under the auspices of Productivity South Africa, and the Labour Activation Programme, which is driven and funded by the Compensation Fund and Unemployment Insurance Fund.

She explained that the Labour Activation Programme provides skills training for Unemployment Insurance Fund beneficiaries who have lost their jobs through retrenchment or dismissal, and Compensation Fund beneficiaries who have lost their jobs due to injuries while on duty. These skills help prepare beneficiaries for re-entry into the labour market.

The training is provided in partnership with Skills and Education Training Authorities (SETAs), Technical and Vocational Education and Training

institutions (TVETs) and other accredited training providers.

"Recently the Compensation Fund, in partnership with the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA), enrolled 100 students in a training programme targeting students in medical and actuarial sciences as part of the Labour Activation Programme," Minister Oliphant said.

The difference between these programmes and conventional training programmes is that learners are guaranteed employment opportunities on successful completion of their training.

"In the case of the partnership with SAICA, the aim is to develop specialised skills for our own Compensation Fund needs. In some instances more than half of the learners on these programmes become entrepreneurs on completion of their training."

To access this programme for available training opportunities and placement in job opportunities, applicants must register, online, with the Public Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA). The link can be found at www.labour.gov.za.

Tackling unfair labour practices

Minister Oliphant said the Labour Relations Act deals explicitly with unfair discrimination when employees do the same or similar work, or work of equal value.

"Differentiation may amount to unfair discrimination unless the employer can show that differences in wages or other conditions of employment are in fact based on fair criteria such as experience, skill or responsibility," she said.


Minister Oliphant added that a retrenched employee may elect to refer an unfair dismissal dispute either to the CCMA, a bargaining council or to the Labour Court if the employer followed a consultation procedure that applied only to that employee.

She also said that in order not to suffocate small and start-up businesses, the provisions relating to fixed-term contracts did not apply to businesses employing fewer than 10 employees, or to companies that have been in operation for less than two years and have fewer than 50 employees.

Labour laws tick all the right boxes

"Constitutional protection for all workers is considered the hallmark of advanced industrial democracies. Our department is very in sync with international conventions and treaties, bringing change to the pre-1994 labour relations legislative framework."

She said the labour relations environment is unavoidably dynamic and continues to change, which is why labour relations instruments require constant fine-tuning.

"The most important pillar for labour relations in South Africa is the emphasis on worker rights, workplace democracy, affirmative action, and the harmonisation of labour and capital in pursuit of industrial peace and social justice." 

Benefits of Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act.



- **Claims application extended to 12 months (Ordinary benefit) and 18 months (Death benefit).**
- **Payment for unemployment benefit up to a maximum of 365 days.**
- **Maternity benefits to be paid at a 66% fixed rate.**
- **Applications for maternity benefits to be accepted eight weeks before the child is born, and up to 12 months after the child's birth.**
- **Coverage to include Learnerships and Public servants.**
- **Illness benefit to be claimed if sick for 7 days consecutively.**

Benefits to be effective once the new Amendment Act is implemented.

Visit **www.labour.gov.za** for more information.



Leah Manenzhe, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the GEP,

Steering the ship into calm waters

Two years ago, the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) was teetering on the brink of the collapse. Loans were not repaid, GEP owed a lot of money, corruption was rampant, corporate structure was bloated, morale was low and negative perceptions of the organisation were rising.

The agency was taking the wrong direction. Something had to be done to steer it right again. Leah Manenzhe, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the GEP, says soon after taking the reins she and her management team had to trim the fat.

"We came in at a point where there was no money at GEP. Almost 85 per cent of the grant they received from the shareholder went to salaries, leaving a small amount for programmes.

"One of the first things I had to do was launch a review process."

After pausing, reviewing and realigning the processes of the agency, the debtors were paid, loans were recovered, corruption dropped, staff

morale rose and the agency was back on track, able to focus on its core mandate.

GEP is an agency of the Gauteng Department of Economic Development, set up in 2005 to provide financial and other support to small businesses, and to coordinate stakeholders for the benefit of the province's small enterprise sector. The agency has a presence in all five regions of Gauteng.

Improvement in collecting the loans

For a long time, the GEP was unable to collect the money it loaned to small businesses. As a result, the agency's funds began to dry up.

"We were unable to collect the money from people because our due diligence processes were not very tight and people took advantage of that and were writing off a lot of money at that time," says Manenzhe.

After reviewing the processes, there was an improvement in the amount

of money recollecting from loans given to small businesses, a sign that the review is yielding positive results.

"In the 2014/2015 financial year, the set target was R10 million and we could only collect R8.6 million. Some of the businesses that we funded had just vanished. They provided addresses and when we went to those addresses the businesses did not exist. This talks to the poor due diligence system we had."

In the current financial year, the agency has increased its collection to R14.5 million. "This is better than what we did in the previous years because we had tightened our due diligence processes."

She adds that GEP has also started blacklisting defaulters.

"Before, GEP would not blacklist anyone because we were established to assist people. If people were blacklisted they would not be bankable.

"On merits, we do blacklist people, especially those who ➔

A single-minded focus on the Gauteng Economic Propeller's mandate helped acting CEO Leah Manenzhe bring the agency back from the brink. Today GEP is better equipped to help improve township economies.



disappear – those who we can't find when we do site inspections."

Creating a platform for small businesses

Manenzhe says one of the major reasons of existence for the GEP is to create an enabling environment for small business across the province – particularly targeting young people.

One strategy established by the GEP to assist small businesses is a partnership between retail giant Pick n Pay and spaza shops in Soweto.

Spaza shops buy stock from Pick n Pay in bulk and sell it in townships using Pick n Pay's model, infrastructure, corporate branding and pricing.

This partnership has proved to be a success. One spaza shop owner in Diepkloof, Soweto, increased his sales from 10 000 units to over 300 000 units in the first month of the partnership.

Manenzhe says these types of partnerships make GEP proud of


their mandate.

In September, she says, GEP will set up a construction centre where small business owners will be trained and incubated for three years, learning everything to do with construction manufacturing.

"We have already started with the feasibility study," she says. "We want to establish an institution that will be self-sustainable.

"We will be manufacturing anything that has got to do with construction. We will teach them on the job, manufacturing will happen on the job. We will have other players, such as the SABS, to assess the standards and processes we follow."

Manenzhe says the centre will also mentor the small business owners, and help them access markets. It is expected to create 800 jobs in small construction businesses.

With improved systems, a dedicated team, increased repayments and new projects, Manenzhe is confident the GEP is back on course. 

Who qualifies for a loan from GEP?

To be considered for financial support, businesses need to submit all the standard documents such as CIPC registration, tax clearance, FICA requirements, company profiles and management profiles.

If the funding is for start-up, expansion and franchise purposes, businesses also need to submit a business plan. GEP will assist in the development where applicable within GEP's qualification processes. For contract finance, a business plan is not required.

The viability assessment of contract financing is based on the actual contract or purchase order. Business plans are not required for micro-finance applications below R50 000. All products under financial support will be assessed and funded based on assessment report.

GEP's financial support offerings include start-up finance, growth and expansion finance, franchise finance, contract finance, micro-finance, and sponsorship.

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LISTING FOR GROWTH

.....

CONTINUING TO SERVE

Alexander Forbes listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on 24 July 2014. We are confident this will accelerate the growth of our business while providing for new investors to support us. The listing will serve to strengthen our pledge to create, grow and protect our clients' wealth and assets. We thank you for your support and remain committed to securing your financial well-being.



Fast facts at your fingertips

R&D fast facts at your fingertips

Newly released research is good news for the future of innovation in South Africa. Despite a slowing economy, spending on research and development has increased.

R&D spend in South Africa

- In 2014/15 there was a total of R29.3 billion invested in R&D in South Africa, an 8.1 per cent increase over the previous year despite a slowing economic growth rate.
- Government is the largest funder of R&D, accounting for 43.9 per cent of gross domestic expenditure on R&D. This figure represents government funded research through science councils and higher education institutions.
- There were 41 712 researchers in public sector employment and 6 767 researchers split between the private sector and the not for profit sector.
- The private sector is responsible for the second largest R&D spend, accounting for 40.8 per cent. This equates to around R12 billion.
- There have been increases in R&D spend in the electricity, gas and water and transport, storage and communication industries – industries that had cut spending in the three years prior.
- Multinationals earning contracts with State-Owned Enterprises are allowed to earn higher BEE scores by investing in R&D, or skills and training support and enterprise development.
- Government established a R1 billion Small and Medium Enterprise Fund in 2015 for start-ups. Beyond funding, entrepreneurs have access to business leaders as mentors.

South African tax incentives for R&D

- The Government offers an R&D tax incentive to boost innovation, improve the capacity to develop new products and processes or improve existing ones. Section 11D of the Income Tax Act (Act No. 58 of 1962) is one more tool to improve competitiveness and growth of the economy.
- Companies of any size and in any sector undertaking scientific or technological R&D can deduct 150 per cent of R&D spend when determining taxable income.
- The incentive is run by the Department of Science and Technology with support from the South African Revenue Service and the National Treasury.
- R&D incentives have allowed companies to spend R33.1 billion and employ 26 526 high skill staff between 2006 and 2015.

Socio-economic impact

- Government-funded research created 100 new technologies, patents or trademarks every year (on average) between 2011 and 2014.
- In 2014/15 there were 48 479 research personnel working in both the private and public sectors.
- There were 21 471 female and 48 479 male researchers working in R&D in 2014/2015, with the largest year on year increase among women.
- In 2013, for the first time, more doctorates were awarded to black candidates than whites.
- By 2013, 2 051 PhDs were awarded, almost double the number from 2004 – 1 105. In the same period the number of science and technology awards more than doubled.



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Championing the rights of children



Angie Makwetla, the new commissioner for children's rights at the Human Rights Commission, believes partnerships with other institutions – and with the people of South Africa – are the way to take human rights forward.

management School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and an SMME management certificate from Galilee College in Israel.

Fast-forward decades, and Makwetla is living her dream of helping other people. She is one of the newly appointed commissioners at the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC).

She is responsible for the portfolio on children's rights, one that is vast and challenging. It is a huge responsibility, says Makwetla, because children are among the most vulnerable members of society and need special care.

"Children need special focus. Youth also need attention because there is no branch that is focused on youth.

Since taking over her new role, she has realised that there is a lot of ground to be covered. Children's rights to basic education, the right to social security, prohibitions on corporal punishment, the right to food and basic services, are just some of the issues Makwetla will have to deal with in her portfolio on children.

"It has been hard work from the first day. This role has made me realise that there is a lot that needs to be done in South Africa given the upheavals that erupt ever so often in relation to human rights violations.

As a young girl, Human Rights Commissioner Angie Makwetla had a recurring dream in which she was surrounded by children. It was this dream that led to her choosing a career path where she would help others.

"I think in a way it was a calling. Without any career guidance, when I heard that there was a qualification in social work and it's about helping other people, I said, that's what I want to do."

Her family background also played a role because her mother was always helping others. "My mother was always helping out in situations where people were more disadvantaged."

Makwetla holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Social Work from the University of Limpopo, formerly University of the North, a management certificate from the Arthur D Little

"In as much as we are aware of the violations that exist, we are never truly aware of the magnitude and seriousness thereof."

Having worked with the well renowned community builder and former editor-in-chief of Sowetan newspaper Dr Aggrey Klaaste, Makwetla took to her new role like a duck to water.

"It has been most interesting and not different from what I have been doing all these years. The work that I'm doing now seems to be a culmination of everything that I have been doing over the years and is now summarised into this new position that I'm currently occupying."

Working with other institutions

Makwetla says one of the important aspects that she plans to introduce is cultivating close working relationships with other state institutions that support our constitutional democracy, such as the Commission for Gender Equality, the Public Protector, and other Chapter 9 institutions.

Children's rights

Commissioner Makwetla says one of the things that she would like to do is to make the SAHRC focus on children's rights popular and take it to the people.

"South Africa is globally recognised as having one of the most liberal and comprehensive constitutions in the world, that is the envy of many countries. However, the challenge that remains is transforming formal equality (laws) into substantive equality and a lived reality for the majority," she adds.

"Remember that there is a vast gap between the policies and the people and it is up to Chapter 9 bodies like the SAHRC to fill this information gap and to assist in translating and educating the public on laws and policies that impact their lives. Education and advocacy are two crucial constitutional mandates that the SAHRC takes very seriously. Knowing your rights is the first step to

asserting your rights. The Commission's advocacy and education programmes are geared towards ensuring that rights assertion happens so that the protections provided by our constitution do not exist only in theory and the law."

During 2016/7 the Commission's advocacy and outreach work in rural and remote communities reached in excess of 51 000 people.

Educating parents about children's human rights is one of the key priorities for her SAHRC portfolio, says Makwetla.

"Parents need to know and understand children's rights, because if they do not, then they are unable to ensure that their children's rights are protected."


Types of cases the SAHRC deals with

The Commission received over 9 000 complaints and queries during the 2015/6 Financial Year, finalising 4 613 complaints and dealing with 4 625 human rights related queries. Since 2012, the right to equality has been the number one human rights violation lodged with the Commission. Equality is also the issue most frequently litigated by the Commission in the Equality Court.

After equality, says Makwetla, the top violations involve labour related complaints, complaints about access to

healthcare, water, food, social security; complaints about just administrative action and the rights of arrested, detained, or accused persons.

Educating the public on the Commission's Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) is a top priority for the SAHRC.

In terms of the CHP, the Commission can accept a complaint and make a finding if there is a prima facie violation of a fundamental human right. The Commission, as governed by the CHP, can also reject a complaint or refer it to another Chapter 9 if it falls within their jurisdiction. The Commission can also refer a complaint to the Equality Court and can assist complaints in instituting proceedings at the Equality Court" 

"We need to educate our people. We need to make people aware that the Human Rights Commission exists, and that it is accessible."

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African Public Service Day 19–23 June 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda

The sixth African Public Service Day conference will take place in Kigali, Rwanda, from 19 to 23 June 2017 with the theme “Entrenching a citizen-centred service delivery culture: Partnering with the youth for Africa’s transformation”.

African Public Service Day celebrates the achievements of people on the frontline of service delivery. The African Union’s (AU) 55 member states mark the day every year, with a continent-wide celebration every two years. AU members use the event to reward excellence in the public sector and encourage public servants to continue going beyond the call of duty.

The event is also an opportunity for public sector leaders to evaluate progress in the objectives of the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, the AU Agenda 2063, the Post-2063 De-

velopment Agenda and Vision 2030.

Attendees discuss innovative approaches that have worked in their home countries, sharing best practice that can be used across the continent. The conference is also an opportunity to celebrate the professionalism and raised image of public servants.

This year’s themed roundtable discussions are:

- Partnering with the youth to build a responsive and sustainable public service
- Nurturing a culture of professionalism and ethical values in Africa’s public service
- Promoting self-reliance and empowerment of African youth for socio-economic development
- Leveraging ICT skills for quality service delivery

Public sector managers, public service institutions, academics and civil society organisations have been invited to discuss policy and best practice that will continue the advancement of national and continental development agendas.

Africa Oil and Power 2017 5–7 June 2017

Africa Oil and Power (AOP) is an elite event for energy investment and policy in Africa. It takes place annually in Cape Town, South Africa, with this year’s edition scheduled for 5 to 7 June.

AOP’s 2017 theme is “Catalysts for change”. The conference will examine the sparks that will ignite a recovery and the strategies that oil and gas companies and governments are employing to succeed at a sustained low price point. The event is the benchmark for top-tier networking and high-level discussion of a multitude of issues concerning the African energy landscape.

For more information, email Aydanur Akkurt at aydanur@africaoilandpower.com



Pan-African Health Tourism Congress 2017 8–9 June 2017

The municipality of uMhlathuze in KwaZulu-Natal will host the Pan-African Health Tourism Congress under the theme “Tapping a Larger Share of the Health Wallet”.

The 2017 congress is staged as the de facto African Health Tourism sector flagship event with the specific purpose of tabling and endorsing the policies and strategies which will expand the industry to address a broader market.

The event aims to bring together all roleplayers, thought leaders, project developers, financiers, practitioners, regulators, private and public sector officials and health industry supporting service providers, to shape the regional and industry agendas of the health tourism sector. Mayor of uMhlathuze Mduduzi Gift Mhlongo will address the event that will take place at the uMfolozi Hotel and Convention Centre.

For more information, call Yasmine Kazadi on 072 082 2681 or 011 436 9014, or email yasmine@mcgroupco.za.

Website: www.panafricanhealthtourismcongress.com 



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Teaching with technology

makes Sara Motsitsi a winner

Maths is fun for the Grade 4 kids in Sara Motsitsi's classroom, thanks to their IT-savvy teacher's enthusiasm for computer technology as an educational tool.

Motsitsi, a 26-year-old educator at Reseamohetse High School in the Free State, recently won first prize for excellence in Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning in the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) 2017 National Teacher Awards.

The annual awards acknowledge the extraordinary efforts made by South Africa's public school teachers, often in very

challenging circumstances, caring teachers, and their efforts to develop every learner.

The latest teaching methods

Motsitsi has been a teacher for only three years. But what set her apart from the other nominees, she says, was her use of online digital technology – apps and the internet – to ensure her learners benefit from the very latest maths teaching methods.

"Most of the older teachers still use textbooks published 10 years back," she says. "I use the internet to access new information and methods on how to deal with difficult

mathematical concepts.

I encourage learners to use all the resources available to them – tablets, computers, smartphones, and laptops."

Effective teaching

One of the keys to Motsitsi's success is her use of a suite of maths-teaching apps.

The DBE has built a maths app into its curriculum, with the eMaths app installed on the school's computers.

The app uses animations and interactive activities to engage learners' interest in maths. It also empowers educators, and helps the students

understand this often difficult subject more easily.

Motsitsi says she has seen a big improvement in her learners' performance since she started teaching with digital tools.

"I have a pass rate of between 80 and 90 per cent of the learners I teach maths to," she says. "My learners say maths is more fun and easier to understand."

Her love of technology, she says, was boosted when she saw the children in her classroom learning how to use a computer and starting to really understand maths.

"I just fell in love with it when I started to see my learners progressing," she says. "It motivates me to go the extra mile to help them."

Funza Lushaka Bursary

The road to the classroom – and to winning – has not been easy for Motsitsi. But she believes anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

It was in high school at Boitlamo Secondary School in the Free State that her passion for technology began. "My favourite subjects at school were mathematics and computer application technology, because I really enjoyed practical work more than theory."

She matriculated in 2009, but financial difficulties then kept her from





her at home for a year. In 2011 she secured a place at the Central University of Technology, qualifying with a national diploma in 2013.

"In 2014 I started looking for a job but I was not lucky," she explains. "I told myself I would not stay as an unemployed young person. So I applied for the Funza Lushaka Bursary from the DBE."

The bursary allowed her to register for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the Central University of Technology. She qualified successfully, and the DBE's Funza placement office found her a position at Reseamohetse Public School. In 2015 she was given a permanent post at the school. While working Motsitsi studied towards a BEd honours degree, and is currently doing a project management degree.

Motsitsi says she is proud to be an educator because she is not only helping learners, but is also building

the nation – building the people of the nation, at the important stage of primary school.

The love of teaching with technology

Motsitsi teaches mathematics to Grade 4, but is also qualified to teach information technology (IT) and computer application technology (CAT), as well as to teach at Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

She never imagined she would actually win first prize in her category. "When it was announced that I had won I was so happy and excited. It is a true testament that if you are passionate about what you do, you will succeed."

As prizes for her win, Motsitsi walked away with a Chevrolet Spark, a tablet and a mobile phone – sponsored by the Vodacom Foundation – as well as a Legacy Resorts weekend away. 🍷

DBE rolls out HeyMath!

One reason for maths educator Sara Motsitsi's success is her use of HeyMath! digital teaching tools.

HeyMath! is a range of information-rich animated lessons, interactive tools, maths lab activities, games and stories that really engage learners in the difficult concepts of mathematics.

It supports South Africa's maths curriculum all the way from Grade R to matric.

Since 2009, the Department of Basic Education has successfully rolled HeyMath! out across the country, installing it in school computer labs in the Free State, Northern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

This and that

How do you relax?

I watch movies—and I love to read.

What is your favourite food?

Pizza, and homemade beef stew with green salad.

If you were not in your current job what would you be doing?

I would be an IT technician or an IT trainer.

What is your favourite holiday destination?

I would really love to visit New York City one day.

InvestSA wins runner-up award in Dubai

InvestSA, an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, was recently honoured by the global community in recognition of its outstanding work.

As South Africa's investment promotion agency, InvestSA took home the runner-up award at the seventh edition of the two-day Annual Investment Meeting (AIM) held at the Dubai World Trade Centre in the United Arab Emirates.

The AIM Investment Award is granted to investment promotion agencies in each region globally in recognition of their work in attracting sizeable and beneficial foreign direct investment (FDI) projects and thus contributing to economic growth and the development of their markets.

Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies congratulated InvestSA on the award, the fourth South Africa has received from AIM in its seven-year history.

"These awards are a vote of confidence in South Africa as an investment destination of choice and our ability to facilitate investments as a government. President Jacob Zuma recently launched the InvestSA One Stop Shop in order to enhance our investment facilitation and aftercare service.

"In InvestSA we have a capable team that offers investors a professional service and is able to fast-track, unblock and reduce red tape in government," said Minister Davies.

He added that receiving the award is evidence that InvestSA could compete with the best investment promotion agencies in the world and is capable of facilitating large-scale projects that contribute to growing the country's economy and creating much-needed employment opportunities.

The acting head of InvestSA, Yunus Hoosen, accepted the award from UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheik Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, under whose patronage the meeting is held.

AIM is a premier event focusing on FDI in developing markets. It is the leading global platform aimed at facilitating strategic networking and promoting investments while providing a learning experience.

The meeting gathers the international investment community, corporate leaders, policy makers, experts and practitioners from across the globe to discuss strategies for attracting FDI and to connect businesses and countries to engage in sustainable partnerships with investors.



South Africa continues to attract tourists

South Africa continues to attract record numbers of global tourists, despite difficult economic times.

This was revealed by Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa at the South African National Parks (SANParks) Tourism Investment Summit held at the Sandton Convention Centre recently.

"It goes without saying that as we move forward, one of the major attractions for tourists is our national parks, nature reserves and marine protected areas."

Tourism is not just a major contributor to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP). It is also a source of investment and job creation, especially in rural areas, she said.

"Our National Development Plan highlights tourism as a sector where millions of jobs can be created, small businesses can be developed, and spin-off investments can take place as more and more tourists visit South Africa."

"We aim to focus our efforts on harnessing the potential of the sector, not only to increase its contribution to GDP growth, but also to enhance and develop the skills of those working in the tourism industry."

In 2016/17, six million people visited the 19 parks managed by SANParks. ➔



Business R&D spending in South Africa shows signs of recovery

Naledi Pandor
Minister of Science and Technology

Our aim in government is to double the investment in research and development (R&D) from the 2014/15 figure of 0.77% to 1.5% of GDP. That means doubling the 2014/2015 investment of R29 billion to roughly R60 billion a year by 2020.

The latest R&D survey (2014/2015) shows an improving outlook for R&D investment. It was R29.3 billion, an 8.1% increase over the previous year.

This improvement took place against a slowing rate of GDP growth that was 2.2% in 2013 and 1.5% in 2014.

There are a number of trends to observe.

First, Business Enterprise Expenditure on Research & Development (BERD) contributed most to the increase, and the bulk of the increase came from the manufacturing industry.

The financial and business services industry, which includes software development, continues to be the largest contributor to BERD, having surpassed the manufacturing industry in 2011/12.

Furthermore, the electricity, gas and water supply industries and the transport, storage and communication industries that have reported declines over the past three surveys have increased their R&D expenditure.

R&D spending in mining and quarrying has declined by 20% and this is an area of concern, given the current interventions under the Operation Phakisa initiative to help revitalise the economy.

Second, the government was the largest funder of R&D, funding 43.9% of BERD. The second largest R&D funding source was the business sector with 40.8%, foreign sources with 12.2% and other local sources with 3.1%.

The continued year-on-year increases in government funding for R&D is particularly important in sustaining the R&D spending and performance of science councils and higher education institutions. These two sectors are dependent on government R&D funding and have consistently increased their R&D spending since the start of the global economic crisis in 2008. However, aside from the number of publications, we have been unable to track the outputs, outcomes and socio-economic impacts of this investment in public research institutions. It's in this context that I welcome the publication of the first *South African National Survey of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer at Publicly*

Funded Research Institutions. The survey reveals many trends that we did not know before, but I want to highlight four in particular.

First, the management of technologies, patent families, trade mark families, registered design families and new patent applications filed, increased more rapidly than the increase in research expenditure. This is clearly good news. Between 2011 and 2014, on average 100 new technologies were added annually to the portfolio managed by universities and science councils.

Second, there has been a quadrupling in the actual number of licences executed per year in the period. More than 88% of this revenue accrued consistently each year to the same four institutions that have well-established Technology Transfer Funds. The majority of IP transactions yielded less than R100 000 per year.

Third, 45 start-up companies were formed to commercialise the institutions' technology, 73% of which were based on publicly funded IP.

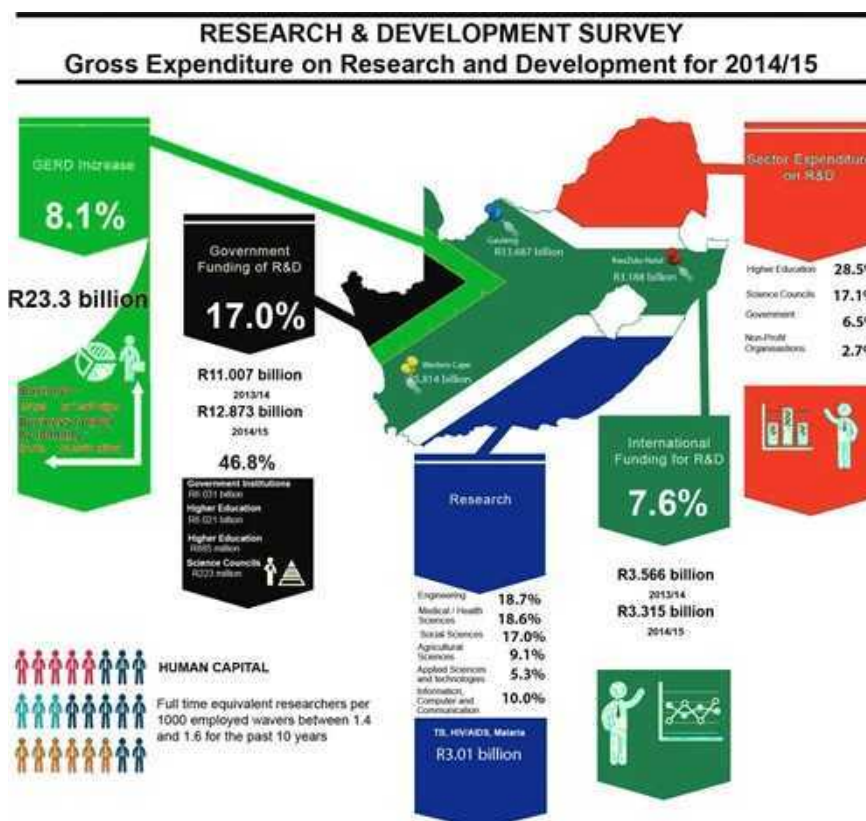
Fourth, the majority (53.5%) of all staff in the Offices of Technology Transfer had four years or less TT experience; women comprised 56.4% of TTF staff in HEIs, and 65.2% in SCs. Viewed in the context of overall trends in the racial and skills composition of the labour force in the country, these statistics show that there is clear room for improvement.

Overall we are beginning to see enhanced socio-economic impact from public investment in R&D.

What the current report does not reveal is detailed information on the IP portfolio and outputs of commercialisation activities. Nonetheless, this survey constitutes a critical baseline study. I hope that future editions will be able to track other indicators that are not reported on here as well as make a number of international comparisons.

Returning to the R&D Survey, the third trend to note is the increase in the number of R&D personnel – this includes researchers and other personnel directly supporting R&D.

The number of researchers increased to 48 479 in 2014/15. Postgraduate students made up approximately 84% of the increase in R&D personnel. The DST attributes this to the Research Chairs Initiative and postgraduate bursaries, which are helping to expand the pipeline of researcher workforce.



products that are new to the firm or new to the market.

BERD is concentrated within larger-sized enterprises, with about 80% performed by 20% of enterprises. State-owned enterprises (SOEs) are counted in the business category for R&D purposes and they are a key driver of major public-procurement programmes. They form the core of the network industries, which play a central role in addressing developmental objectives (economic infrastructure for energy, ICT, transport, water, mining, defence technology).

SOEs have the necessary bargaining position to mobilise international R&D. Major international procurement supply contracts that are provided by these entities hold good opportunities for technology transfer, strengthening the local research and technology infrastructure and developing local expertise.

Government is working to attract international R&D and to take better advantage of our integration into global R&D value chains.

One mechanism that is popular is an 'equity-equivalent arrangement', whereby multinational companies that do business with government are required to earn BEE points through a once-off equity equivalent funding contribution. A company can earn points for making investments towards skills and training support, enterprise development, and R&D. I think of the recent substantial ten-year investments made by GE and IBM.

There are many more smaller enterprises than larger ones. Innovation activity occurs in a much wider community than just R&D intensive, larger enterprises. We are encouraging the level of activity of SMEs in R&D. In fact, our Technology Innovation Agency has now been repositioned as an agency whose funding instruments will better enable innovators, entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises to commercialise their technology innovations.

However, there is a need for a venture capital fund for high-technology SMMEs, as well as start-ups.

Government encourages South African venture capitalists to facilitate joint investments in commercial science, technology and public-benefit projects, as well as to assist with developing a new generation of venture capital companies through mechanisms such as Treasury's Venture Capital Company Tax Incentive scheme.

Treasury announced last year that a Small and Medium Enterprise Fund is being established, with over R1 billion already committed and complemented by mentoring by seasoned business leaders for start-ups.

The ratio of researchers per 1 000 employed was 1.5 in 2014/15 and had remained around this level for the previous decade. This is mainly because the researcher workforce has only been expanding at an equivalent rate to that of total employment.

All in all, the most important trend to observe from the R&D survey is that the business sector has replaced the higher education sector as the lead contributor to the increase in R&D spending.

The growth of BERD has a direct and immediate impact on economic growth because the private sector is more likely to embrace related commercial opportunities by creating new and improving existing products, services and production technologies. These activities can impact directly on the creation of new enterprises, new industries, and new jobs.

To encourage the private sector to invest in R&D, government introduced the R&D tax incentives in 2006. The initial uptake was less than government had hoped. So the incentive was modified by the Taxation Laws Amendment Act in October 2012. The subsequent increase in applications caught government by surprise and additional resources have had to be secured to deal with the increase and the backlog that formed as a result thereof.

Private sector innovation activities are dominated by activities that are not necessarily new. The bulk of private sector innovation-related expenditure is spent on the acquisition of new machinery, equipment and software, as opposed to introduction of new products and processes. A limited portion of turnover of innovative companies is generated from

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science & technology
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Minister Molewa pointed out that South Africa's 19 national parks don't just play a role in conserving wildlife. The parks also provide business and investment opportunities.

"These investment opportunities are part and parcel of our strategy for the sustainable financing of our national parks.

"The returns from SANParks' tourism arm are significant contributors to the sustainability of its conservation activities."

Minister Molewa explained that

the National Development Plan calls for emphasis to be placed on increasing the number of tourists entering the country.

Earlier this year, the Department of Tourism announced that the number of tourists arriving in South Africa every month had broken through the one million mark for the first time since 2009.

In 2016, over 10 million tourist arrivals were recorded in South Africa, representing a 13 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

In January this year, 1 012 641 tourists arrived in South Africa, which was 15.4 per cent more than January last year.

Month-to-month growth in arrivals began improving prospects for the sector in October last year.

Positive growth was recorded from all regions in January 2016.

Arrivals from Asia improved by a staggering 45.6 per cent, and overseas markets recorded a total growth of 16.2 per cent, compared to arrivals in January 2015.

SEZ programme attracting billions

South Africa's Special Economic Zones (SEZ) programme is attracting billions in foreign direct investment (FDI), says Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies.

There are eight designated zones. These are Saldanha Bay in the Western Cape, Dube Trade Port and Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal, East London and Coega in the Eastern Cape, the soon-to-be launched Maluti-a-Phofung in the Free State, as well as the recently added Musina in Limpopo.

"The Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone has been designated as the first zone under the new SEZ Act. It will be established in the Vhembe region in Limpopo and will focus on four major industrial clusters, which are energy and metallurgical, agro-processing, petro-chemical, and trade and logistics," said the minister.


So far the new zone has attracted investment interest from Chinese consortia. The total investment is currently estimated at approximately R56.9 billion.

"There has been a substantial increase in the number and value of secured but not yet operational investments. The total number increased from 47 to 72, while total value increased to R41.2 billion. At least 13 of these investments are expected to be operational

within the next 12 months, as soon as infrastructure development is completed," said Minister Davies.

The minister highlighted some achievements of the SEZ. These include the R11.5 billion BAIC automotive investment and the 1 000MW Project (under independent power producers), with an investment value of R25 billion, in Coega. There's also the R1.3 billion agreement with pharmaceutical and biotechnology company Cipla to produce biosimilars at the Dube Trade Port, the R260 million new investment covering horticulture and metal refining at the OR Tambo IDZ, and the 2 000MW Project under Gas Independent Power Producers awarded to the Richards Bay IDZ.

The Special Economic Zones Act came into effect on 9 February 2016, and work at the SEZ Advisory Board has since started. The board is responsible for advising the minister on policy and strategy issues as well as evaluation of the new applications for the designation.

The SEZ programme is one of the critical instruments that the Department of Trade and Industry is using to accelerate industrialisation. SEZs create sophisticated centres of industry, far from major established urban areas, where economic and infrastructure development – and the decent jobs that come with them – are most needed by the people. 

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Gwen Ramokgopa

Redeeming tragedy, building a team

Gauteng Health MEC Gwen Ramokgopa was appointed at a time of crisis, after 94 patients died during the Life Healthcare Esidimeni tragedy. But in her first 100 days in office she has moved swiftly to ensure healthcare in the province serves patients first.

The conviction that good always prevails and human nature will always manage to overcome challenges, no matter how difficult, is what keeps new Gauteng Health MEC Gwen Ramokgopa going.

Her appointment came at a sensitive time. Earlier this year Health Ombudsman Malegapuru Makgoba released the findings of an investigation into the deaths of 94 mental health patients who were transferred from Life Esidimeni to 27 Gauteng NGOs in 2016. Incumbent Health MEC Qedani Mahlangu resigned with immediate effect,

and MEC Ramokgopa was appointed to replace her a few days later.

To deal with the tragedy, she had to hit the ground running. Her days were filled with media briefings, visits to grieving families, meetings with stakeholders that included the National Department of Health and NGOs, and more.

Patient care the priority

The pressure was intense. But MEC Ramokgopa, who had not finished her first 100 days in office when PSM ➔

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interviewed her, believes tough times never last.

The crisis is now resolved, but the MEC is as busy as ever. It will probably stay that way, because health is one of the key priorities of government.

Sipping a cup of rooibos tea, she reflects on her first days in office as Gauteng's new Health MEC.

"I understood my mandate to be more sensitive to patient care and needs, and also to stakeholder relations. The department needed to reorientate its priorities towards that direction.

"I must say that when I came to the department, having interacted with management – including those in the district hospitals and various stakeholders, also NGOs, universities and labour – I realised that the department has good intentions on paper, and that in quite a number of cases those intentions are carried through. But equally, we also found that there are areas that need decisive intervention to ensure there are consequences for non-compliance."

'Our people need us'

MEC Ramokgopa found that the process of appointing hospital boards and clinic committees needed to be fast-tracked.

"Since I came, the issue of conscientising everyone in the department that this is also about building our reputation as a patient-focused, quality-focused, and excellence-orientated department was important. We have reinforced the importance of team effort. A multidisciplinary approach in the care of our patients is absolutely sacrosanct in health.

"If there was a team effort, we would not be speaking about the Life Healthcare Esidimeni tragedy that befell our people. Specialists were not involved in the process. The administration side was supposed to process funds to NGOs and coordinate properly with the team on the ground. The licensing process was also not aligned," says the MEC.

"This is our health system. Let us own it, let us share areas of concern, but where they are doing well let us also compliment our healthcare workers."

She recalls that when she was appointed, she thought to herself: "Our people need us during these difficult times, especially the families."

MEC Ramokgopa says the journey has been painful. Even now, she fails to understand why it had to happen.

"I do not understand how so many of our people lost their lives under those conditions," she says. "The family members said they knew that their relatives could have died, but the conditions they died under were very inhumane – and I agree with that. So we need to say, as a people: 'How do we work together to ensure that we obviate those circumstances?' I thought I should come and make my small contribution."

Detailing progress made in relocating the surviving pa-

tients – as per the Health Ombudsman's recommendations – MEC Ramokgopa says more than 600 mental health patients have been removed from NGOs so far, and fewer than a hundred still need to be relocated.


"I am happy that we have made that progress. We appreciate the role of the project management team and the support of the offices

of Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi and Gauteng Premier David Makhura."

Improvements in the department

Moving forward, the MEC says the Gauteng Department of Health must use its resources to benefit frontline services.

"We have just concluded the process of assigning budgets and budget letters to hospital CEOs, district managers and special programmes managers. We have also indicated that it is important to delegate authority to the frontline.

"I am also finalising the appointment of hospital boards and clinic committees within my first 100 days in office. We have met with both, as well as with stakeholders that include specialists, labour, NGOs and others – in line with the National Health Act that established the provincial 



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consultative forum," she says.

For MEC Ramokgopa, any success she has during her tenure as MEC of Health will be because of the time she has spent listening to hospital boards and clinic committees. These have direct access to the MEC, cutting through red tape.

"I would like to see hospital boards and clinic committees doing effective oversight in the best interest of the communities where health facilities are located. I'd like them to support management at clinics and hospitals, and be more responsible for the patient complaints system," she says.

The MEC says it is the responsibility of every hospital and clinic to assess both complaints and compliments received from patients, to ensure they provide good quality care.

The five priorities

MEC Ramokgopa has five main priorities for the Gauteng Department of Health.

The first is to reorientate the department to patient care, by ensuring responsiveness to patients' needs.

The second priority is to strengthen the participation of hospital boards and clinic committees, and reinstate the Mental Health Review Board. "Instead of one for the whole province there must be five: one per district. What happened to involuntary patients must never happen again."

The third is to build a multidisciplinary approach and effort in the department.

The fourth priority is to stabilise finances. "We had not been able to pay our suppliers within 30 days of receiving invoices," the MEC points out. "We have prioritised this now, and have set up a system so that we will not relapse.

"But we have also realised that the Department of Health is generally underfunded, given the burden of disease and health inflation, which is higher than the consumer price index. With the economy facing difficulties and rand value going down, healthcare becomes unaffordable. So we have to come up with innovative ways to ensure that we live within available resources.

"It is in that context that we call upon those who can afford to pay for services to do so. We are also following up on those who owe us, including universities, other provinces, the National Health Laboratory Services, and medical

aids, to collect revenue that is due to the department."

The fifth and final main priority, the MEC says, is to "share with the public various centres of excellence that are happening in our health facilities. Every day, there are thousands of healthcare workers who service our people for long hours, over public holidays and weekends.


"This is our health system. Let us own it, let us share areas of concern, but where they are doing well let us also compliment our healthcare workers."

Health infrastructure

MEC Ramokgopa says infrastructure is a priority, as many hospitals are dilapidated. "There are many communities far from clinics. With the population increase due to migration, Gauteng is under pressure in terms of health services.

"We are going to open quite a number of clinics in the next two years. We will also be building hospitals over that period, including a tertiary hospital in Tembisa. We will invest over R1.6 billion in infrastructure this financial year.

"I am not happy with that R1.6 billion. In the previous financial year we had R2 billion, so it has gone down. We are working on that to ensure that we present projects that can be accepted by the National Treasury for funding," says the MEC.

It may look like she has a lot on her plate, but MEC Ramokgopa believes that if all work together and stand in solidarity with one another, the good will always prevail. 





NORTH WEST DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

Interview with MEC Ontlametse Mochware

Please share with our readers what your department is responsible for and some of its key projects?

A: Our department is responsible for the promotion of culture, arts, heritage, libraries, archives and matters relating to traditional leaders. Our vision relates to a thriving arts, culture and traditional affairs sector that contributes to a sustainable economic development in a socially cohesive Bokone Bophirima Province.

Cata wants to enhance job creation by preserving, protecting and developing arts, culture, heritage and the institution of traditional leadership. The whole idea is to play our part in the province's drive to rebrand, reposition and renew itself.

Some of our key projects are the preservation of culture through such institutions as initiation schools, traditional leadership, promoting the culture of reading and writing, heritage and arts. Every month we engage the youth in all the municipalities in the province in cultural competitions. We support and encourage our artists to participate in national and international events.

Two of our flagship events are the Taung Cultural Calabash and the Mahika Mahikeng Festival. The Calabash is a developmental festival for artists in the Province.

We then support the finest of those through training with Mmabana, which is our entity that promotes arts and culture in the province.

For those who may not be aware, some of South Africa's finest actors and musicians that have their roots in our province are products of Mmabana. These include success stories like Tsotsi's Presley Chweneyagae.

We also work very closely with the traditional leaders to preserve and promote the heritage of the people of Bokone Bophirima. We go into the villages across the province.

How did the department celebrate heritage in 2016?

in Mahikeng. I was happy that the venue was packed, which helped us with our mandate of promoting and reviving our cultural heritage. Before that we had a number of weekly build-up events to promote heritage.

Equally important, we used those heritage events to promote Bokone Bophirima artists who were nominated for this year's South African Traditional Music Advancement (Satma) Awards, which were scheduled for Richard's Bay in October. Not only were we celebrating, but also highlighting the impact our artists are making on a national scale.

Which of the department's achievements are you most proud of or do you think have made the greatest impact on the people of the North West?

A: Our close working relations with the traditional leadership is something we are proud of. That is a constituency that tends to be forgotten by some in modern society.

We are also very active in the promotion of writing and the culture of reading. Every year, we run competitions for the youth where they compete in reading and writing, particularly in Setswana, which is one of the previously-marginalised languages in our country. Further, every year we participate in the National Book Week, which promotes a culture of reading and writing.

We ensure that community libraries are provided with books and other information resources, including toy libraries. The department ensures that libraries in the province are equipped with Internet facilities and that they are friendly to those clients who are visually impaired.

Currently the total number of libraries across the province is 107. The department recently held events to officially hand over four community libraries in Lethabong (Madiheng Local Municipality); Tlokwen (Moses Kotane Local Municipality) and Lomanyaneng (Mahikeng Local Municipality). There is also progress with new building projects, such as Ipelegeng community Library, Tlakaamena Community Library and Khunwana Community



What progress has been made on the community arts centres as far as supporting artists is concerned?

A: The department has assessed and assisted 28 community art centres with business plans in recent months. Business plans were also submitted to the Department of Arts and Culture (national) for further assistance on infrastructure and programmes. Three community art centres were approved in recent months.



to exhibit and show people what they are capable of. In the short-, medium- and long-term, that tends to create jobs – something we are proud of.

Tribal authorities are hosting traditional symbolic ceremonies across the province each year. What is the purpose of these symbolic ceremonies and what do they want to achieve?

The programme is meant to support our traditional leadership and its communities to revive, preserve and promote cultural heritage.

There are a total of 56 traditional leaderships and these activities are meant to revive indigenous practices of cooking, brewing, clothing, dance, music, identification of sites of historical and cultural importance, ritual practices, taboos and many others. The symbolic ceremonies are visually recorded as part of preserving the history and culture of the people of Bokone Bophirima.

The idea is to select a certain number of traditional communities each year for these symbolic ceremonies and the department works with the House of Traditional Leaders in selecting activities for each.

So far the department has covered almost half of the traditional leaders in the province and the support will continue until we reach everybody.

However, this does not mean the department does not assist communities that have their own annual celebrations of their cultural heritage such as the Ama-Hlubi of Kgosi Zibi in KhayaKhulu who celebrate Isikhumbuzo annually; and also Kgosi Phoi in the village of Sethwatlhwe where they celebrate ritual practices of washing away misfortunes and a rain making ceremony annually which the department in one way or the other support as part of promoting cultural heritage to posterity.

In what ways has the department been able to play a role in job creation and alleviating poverty?

Through the events we hold, we create jobs for the artists and all who are involved in the events industry. The arts industry does create jobs in various forms and we seek to be involved in empowering the broader value chain of the industry. We promote our visual artists not only through exposure, but we also use them for our own buildings so they can showcase what they can do. The crafts practitioners are also part of our engagement in terms of empowerment. At the

What have been your keys to running a successful department?

Working closely with senior managers and other members of staff to ensure service delivery. Further, we engage constantly with stakeholders, including artists and other Provincial and National Departments with whom we share responsibilities for service delivery.

You recently said that you believe that the respectable image of government depends highly on the conduct of public servants. How can public servants ensure they rise to meet these standards and to maintain them... what effective checks and balances can be put in place to guide and monitor public servants... and what do you see as the great benefit for the province (and the country) if our public servants can succeed in this endeavour?

The Administration of the province has set out its clear strategic thrusts in order to deliver quality services to our communities. Our public servants need to reflect that, and be exemplary. They need to be the living embodiment of these strategic goals in whatever they do for the people. At the end of the day, these strategic goals serve to enhance the goals of the National Development Plan, which is why they are important. These strategic goals are about the rebranding, repositioning and renewal of the province.

In short, these goals are:

- Improving our economy through agriculture, culture and tourism (ACT)
- Boosting our economy with special focus on villages, townships and small dorpiess (VTSD)
- Reconciliation, healing and renewal (RHR)
- Setsokotsane, which is a rapid-response mechanism to service delivery at every ward in the province of Bokone Bophirima
- Saamtrek, saamwerk, which is self-explanatory

So, if every civil servant could reflect the above-mentioned ideals, we could all be winners and benefit.

In what ways are the department embracing technology as a means of fulfilling its mandate?

Our libraries are equipped with the latest technology, ranging from computers to the Internet and facilities for the internet





impaired. We have also embraced social media platforms like Facebook, which helps us mobilise people to meetings at short notice. Recently, it helped when we were preparing for a workshop for artists on how to apply for funding. Those are only a few examples.

Are there any exciting projects in the pipeline?

One of our most important projects is the Mahika-Mahikeng Festival, scheduled for December. This is a festival that showcases the best of what the province has to offer. The different genres reflect the province. It is now in its second year, and we want it to be one of the festivals that are of national importance.

As a department, we are also involved in the Liberation Heritage Route, which traces the route taken by freedom fighters on their way to exile in countries like Botswana, Tanzania and many others. This is very important for the reflection of our history as a country, and the role played by the people of the province in helping liberate this country, including Dikgosi (traditional leaders).

Please tell us about your provincial language services, how you help to develop previously marginalised indigenous languages used in the province, and to promote respect and tolerance for our linguistic diversity?

We work together with various stakeholders, including the University of North West, to develop programmes and competitions to promote languages. We have also set up a publishing house in the province to promote indigenous languages.

School-going youth are encouraged through competitions in various genres to write and read our languages. These competitions take place across all four districts of the

province. At the end of the process, each year, we give them prizes such as laptops and certificates.

How does the department intend to preserve our heritage as a province?

We have a unit that has been able to identify new heritage sites, particularly those based in townships, villages and small dorpiés. Currently the province boasts a database of 400 heritage sites from four districts and 18 local municipalities.

Most of these heritage sites are underdeveloped but there is a plan to raise funding through establishments of NPOs, for the purpose of improving them.

Bokone Bophirima has two world heritage sites graded and declared as such by UNESCO. The first one is Taung Skull in Buxton Village in the Greater Taung. And the other one is Vredefort Dome Meteorite site in Parys in Tlokwe Local Municipality. The Department has managed to send youths from various communities to register for degrees in the Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the North West University (NWU). Cathsseta has funded a total of 50 learners from the sector for a heritage management course which was conducted by KARAHeritage Institute.

Initiation schools are a crucial issue in the province. What has been done to ensure that schools are legalised and communities are made aware of illegal schools.

Recently the North West Initiation Schools Matters Bill was gazetted. The Tradition and Culture Committee of the North West House of Traditional Leaders and the Task Team are conducting outreach programmes for awareness to the communities so that they can make a meaningful contribution during the consultation stage.

The contact details are as follows:

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Department of Culture, Arts & Traditional Affairs – Bokone Bophirima

Visiting Tambo's birthplace

West of Bizana in the Eastern Cape, below the majestic Ngele Mountains that stretch all the way to KwaZulu-Natal, is the peaceful and quiet village of Nkantolo.

This is where Oliver Reginald Tambo was born, grew up and attended school.

At first glance, Nkantolo looks like any other village in South Africa.

Like many villages, it is loosely held together by several gravel roads which are a feature of South African rural areas. Houses are made of mud, grass and stones and virtually every second dwelling has a rondavel or two. Chicken, sheep and goats can be seen patrolling the streets. Locals wave at passing vehicles while children, some with hardly any clothes on, run up and down the hills – seemingly carefree and enjoying themselves.

Attractions at the village include the Oliver Tambo Garden of Remembrance, which lies near the top of a hill looking over the village. The site of the Garden of Remembrance was chosen for one reason. It used to house the home where Tambo was born on 27 October 1917. This is where he used to look

after the family cattle and other livestock. He learned many things here, including hunting for birds and stick fighting.

Tambo was baptised Kaizana, after Kaizer Wilhelm of Germany, whose forces fought the British during World War 1. Historians say this was his father Mzimeni's way of showing opposition to the British colonisation of Pondoland in 1878.

In 1946, the Tambo family had to move to another site when the old houses in the family compound collapsed. The one-bedroom flat an adult Tambo stayed in whenever he visited his home is still standing, having been refurbished in recent years.

On the other side of the Garden of Remembrance, a few kilometres from the Tambo homestead, is the road leading to Mbhobheni School, one of the first schools Tambo at-

tended. While current children at school may know very little about Tambo, for the community here, the school is their pride – having produced one of South Africa's finest politicians and a central figure in South Africa's liberation history.

Oliver Tambo led the African National Congress through its darkest days, in countries like the UK and Zambia where the party operated until it was unbanned in South



The OR Tambo Garden of Remembrance at Nkantolo village just outside Bizana is popular with tourists.

Africa in 1990. He became its longest serving leader.

Tambo's ability to keep the ANC together in London and later in Lusaka is probably the reason he is known the world over. Nobody lands at Africa's biggest airport near Johannesburg without hearing the name of this icon.

But to the village of Nkantolo and to his remaining family members there, he was, and remains, more than just a hero and a liberation stalwart. To them, he was a son, father, grandfather and a local hero who put Nkantolo and the greater town of Bizana on the map.

All Tambo's siblings have died, with his last surviving sister Getrude passing away in 2014 at the age of 84.

Tambo himself would have been 100 years old this year. He died in April 1993, exactly a year before South Africa held its first democratic elections – a dream he had fought for his entire political life.

It's perhaps for this reason that on

the occasion of his centenary, the government has declared 2017 "The year of Oliver Tambo". It's a fitting tribute, given the sacrifices this legend made for both his movement and the country he so loved but had to flee due to political persecution.

Some have asked why the government would honour Tambo in this way, dedicating the whole year to an individual's memory. Not even Nelson Mandela has been honoured in this fashion. Although Tambo never made it into government, like Mandela and others, South Africa would probably not be a constitutional democracy without the sacrifices made by Tambo and others who fled the country to keep the fight for liberation going abroad. While Mandela and others were kept in prison, Tambo led the call for their release and for South Africa to end apartheid.

Back in Nkantolo, his family and fellow villagers suffered under the abusive system of apartheid which condemned them to poverty and

underdevelopment.

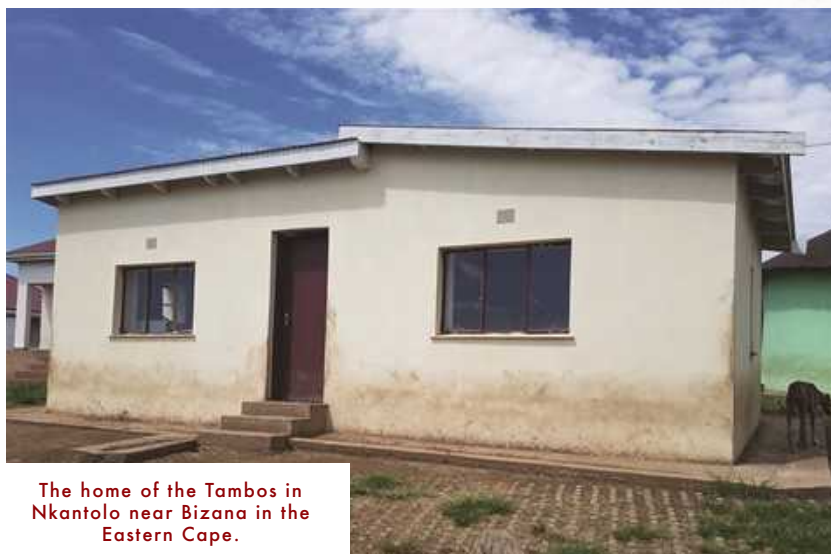
Today his nephew Mzukisi Tambo and his brothers are working hard to preserve the icon's legacy. They make a living through livestock farming and managing heritage sites such as the Tambo Garden of Remembrance that honour their late uncle.

During a visit to the modest home of the Tambos, it is almost unbelievable that this is a place that one of South Africa's great legends once called home. There is nothing special about the house, at least from a structural point of view. It looks like any other house in the neighbourhood – except of course for one-bedroom flat that the family says used to be occupied by Tambo whenever he visited. It's a piece of history that they are determined to preserve.

"We are told that whenever he came around before he fled the country from Johannesburg – that is the room he used. In recent years it was not in a good condition and as such, the government came here and when they were renovating the whole house, they renovated that flat as well," says Mzukisi Tambo.

He also takes us to the wooden church where Tambo attended school. The Ludeke Methodist Church is situated about 15 kilometres from the Tambo homestead and is regarded as a great historic building by the locals. Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela were married in this very church.

Although the old structure of the church, founded by a Reverend



The home of the Tambos in Nkantolo near Bizana in the Eastern Cape.



Bloemfontein



Durban



East London



Lusaka



Johannesburg



Hoedspruit



George



Harare



Kimberley



Lubumbashi



Maputo



Port Elizabeth



Windhoek



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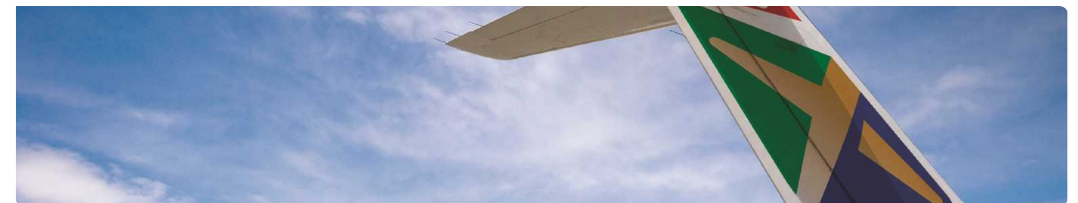
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Clarke Church, is still in good condition, a new modern building has been constructed nearby to cater for modern churchgoers.

"It is our pride, this church, and not only because two of South Africa's icons began their married life here," says local elder, Lungiswa Pepeta. "This church also served as a place of comfort for many people during those dark days. It still is a centre, a sanctuary for the community to this day."

It was at this church that Tambo received his standard six schooling. Missionary schools were popular in South Africa in the 19th and early 20th centuries, providing education to black elites.

Pepeta, who is approaching the age of 80, grew up in the village and lived the life Tambo would have, had he not left for Johannesburg to become a lawyer and open a firm with

Nelson Mandela.

Also nearby is Mbhobheni School, one of the first schools young Tambo attended. The ruins of the old classrooms have long settled into the earth and a proper structure is now being used. This is where Tambo learned about European history and how Europeans arrived in South Africa. Here he was also introduced to formal music, which became a lifelong passion.

But it cannot be said that at this stage the young Tambo was aware of the hardships of his people, inflicted upon them by the Europeans.

At the age of 16, while on holiday in Kantolo, Tambo and some friends formed the Bizana Students Association (BSA). He was elected secretary of the organisation. This was an early indication of his leadership qualities.

Many historians say it was at university and later, when he joined the Afri-

can National Congress Youth League, that Tambo became radicalised. His upbringing in Nkantolo and the various schools he attended would have shaped his political life, but it did not directly cause it.

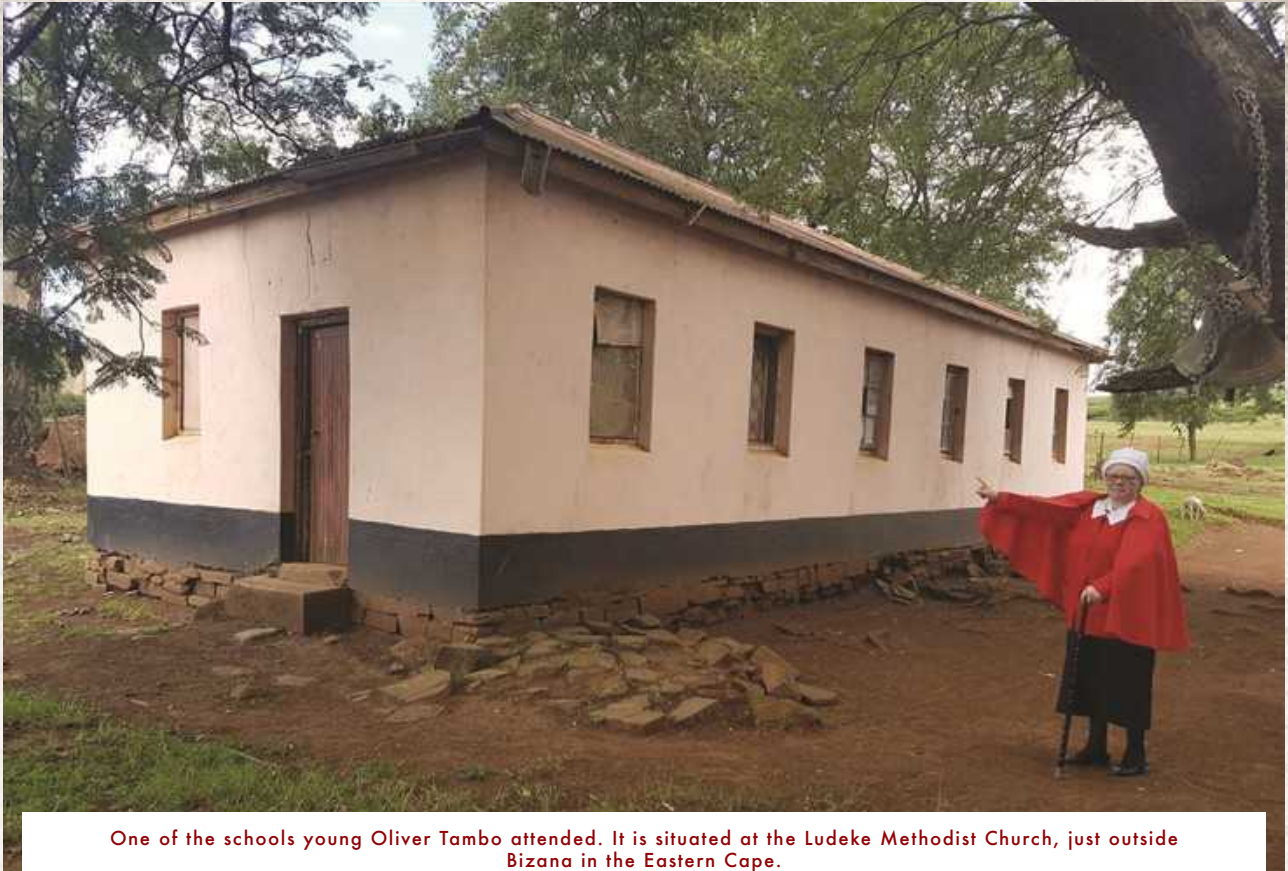
Tambo initially wanted to study medicine, but at the time, no tertiary medical school accepted black students.

Instead, he opted to study the sciences at the then-named College of Fort Hare. It was here that he would meet his lifelong friend and comrade Mandela. In 1942, he was unanimously elected chairperson of the Students' Committee of his residence, Beda Hall. After three years, Tambo graduated with a BSc degree in mathematics and physics from Fort Hare. He then enrolled for a diploma in higher education.

He was expelled from Fort Hare due to his political activities on ➔



This is the church Tambo attended. Nelson Mandela and Winnie Mandela also got married here. It's situated at Ludeke Methodist Church in Nkantolo Village outside Bizana



One of the schools young Oliver Tambo attended. It is situated at the Ludeke Methodist Church, just outside Bizana in the Eastern Cape.

campus and later set off for Johannesburg where he met Walter Sisulu, and started a law firm with Mandela.

Professor Luvuyo Wotshela, director of the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre at Fort Hare, says although Fort Hare may not have been the launch pad for Tambo's radicalism, the university did shape his radical thinking and political activism.

"It was at this university where he was exposed to different young leaders from across the continent who were thinking the same as him. It was also at Fort Hare where Tambo began to organise student marches and this really influenced his future which was the joining of the ANC Youth League," says Professor Wotshela.

"He was a very young man when he arrived at Fort Hare – full of ideas – and rubbed shoulders with key young people who influenced him and shaped him for what could later be his role in the ANC and the struggle for liberation."


Although Tambo left South Africa in 1960, his presence was felt in the country throughout his exile years as he built the ANC from outside, ensuring it was strong and ready when the time to govern arrived.

The government says it is for this contribution that the 2017 centenary of Oliver Tambo is befitting.

Recently, President Jacob Zuma launched the Mbizana Rural Enterprise Development (RED) Hub

in honour of Tambo's legacy. The government says the hub, as one of its efforts to stimulate growth through agriculture and agroprocessing, will alleviate poverty and address low levels of development in the district.

The development is also expected to stimulate local economic development as well as the investment drive to expand beyond agriculture and traditional subsistence farming. Farmers in Bizana will now be able to move from subsistence to commercial farming.

This is something that Oliver Tambo would be proud of. 

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crisis,
Hamberg
is using
containers
as housing.

Durban's
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worth over
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a year and
it handles
44.8 million
tons of
cargo.

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to your home, goods go through
different modes of transport.

One of
South
Africa's
main imports
is equipment
and
machinery
from places
like India.

Shipping is kind of like
a Secret Society.
The Greek Ship Owners'
Association, among others,
won't reveal how many
members it has.

One container
ship emits 37 t of
CO₂ every hour.
While a train emits 15 t
and a truck 4.5 t.
Making container ships
the most eco-friendly
form of cargo
transport.

IN 1955,
MALCOLM McLEAN
THOUGHT "WHAT IF
YOU COULD JUST LIFT
THE WHOLE TRAILER AND
PLACE IT ON THE SHIP?"
ONE YEAR LATER THE
FIRST CONTAINER
SHIP LEFT THE PORT.

IT IS CHEAPER
FOR SCOTLAND
TO SHIP ITS
COD FISH OVER
1000 MILES TO BE
FILETED
AND RETURNED
THAN FOR THEM
TO DO IT
THEMSELVES.

Enterprising community makes most of restituted land

When the Ravele community outside Makhado, Limpopo, lodged a claim on their ancestral land, government was worried that the claim would disturb economic activity in the region.

Little did it know that the claim would bring together long-lost relatives, create jobs, feed the community and even offer sponsorship to young people from the area.

Unlike many people across the country who had been removed from their land, the Ravele community in Levubu, 30 km east of Makhado, did not let the misfortune of being displaced stand in their way.

Government transferred 16 macadamia, avocado, banana, sweet potato and litchi farms worth R42 million in the subtropical area to the Ravele Community Property Association (CPA) in 2005. The business has survived liquidation and turned its fortune around.

Profit margins are rising. The CPA made R9.7 million in profit last year and has put away R11 million in investments since 2014. In 2014, the CPA made R3.5 million, improving to R5.1 million in 2015.

“The majority of our employees are from the community because we want them to be part of this project because it is their land.”

CPA Chairperson Bethuel Ravele stands guard at the gate. It's bucketing down and there is no sign of the rain letting up. It has been raining for most of the week and the lush and fertile Levubu valley is teeming with life.

The grass is green, mango trees cover the entire region and the banana trees resemble a green carpet stretching for kilometres. This is really Africa's Eden.

The CPA represents 324 families with 880 beneficiaries.

The majority of them live in nearby villages. The association was formed in April 2004 but the claim was lodged in 1995.

The tale of the removal as told by his great grandparents and his parents brings back sad memories for Ravele.

“They told us that the government of the day told them that this land is not suitable for black people because it is fertile, and we had to make way for white people to come and stay on our land.

“They came and loaded our grandparents into trucks and gave them a small piece of land very far from here and others were taken to Nenzhelele.”

Since taking over the farms the CPA, in partnership with a managing agent, have divided the area into four business units, each managed by one person supervising a group of farm workers.

The four business units employ 175 permanent staff who are all from the community and 51 seasonal employees.

“The majority of our employees are from the community because we want them to be part of this project because it is their land and we cannot do this without their support,” says Bethuel.

Appointment of a strategic partner

In 2007, Danie Basson was appointed as chief production officer for the agent that was managing the farm. The agent, South African Farm Managers (SAFM), teaches communities whose land government returns to them.

Bethuel says the CPA and SAFM did not see eye-to-eye on a number of things pertaining to the running of the farm.

“One of the major issues is that they did not support the production process designed by the chief production officer – and the CPA agreed with those plans.”

The disagreement led to the collapse of the agreement between Ravele CPA and the managing agent.

After the disbandment of the agreement, the CPA hired Basson directly to manage the four business units. They



Employees at Ravele CPA wash freshly picked bananas at the CPA's pack house. The bananas will be sold at local markets across Limpopo.

are Applefontein & Bull, Machikiri & Britz (banana), EMS (macadamias, litchis and avocados) and Redbank (macadamias).

The CPA gave Basson a six-month contract and within that time he did wonders for the farm. "He developed sound production processes that brought the units back to life and, based on his work ethic, we decided to give him a five-year contract."

The CPA sells its produce at local markets in both Pretoria and Johannesburg (litchis); macadamias are exported to China, the United States, the Middle East, Europe and Canada; while the avocados are exported to France.

Ploughing back into the community

The beneficiaries share the profits from the sale of the produce and the CPA has established a bursary fund that supports 40 students at different universities across the country.

The students are pursuing qualifications in different fields of study at the Cape Town, Western Cape, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan, Johannesburg, Free State and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences universities at a combined cost of R410 000 per year.

Among the students aided by the CPA is Dakalo

Nemauluma who is studying for a Master's of Science Degree in Chemical Engineering at the University of Cape Town.

Coming from a poor background, Nemauluma says he is grateful for the sponsorship from the CPA. "My parents are both unemployed and they hold piece jobs now and then to cover expenses for their survival.

"They cannot afford to pay for my university expenses and I hope to finish my Master's degree by the end of next year so I can help them come out of the poverty they have been living in from their childhood."

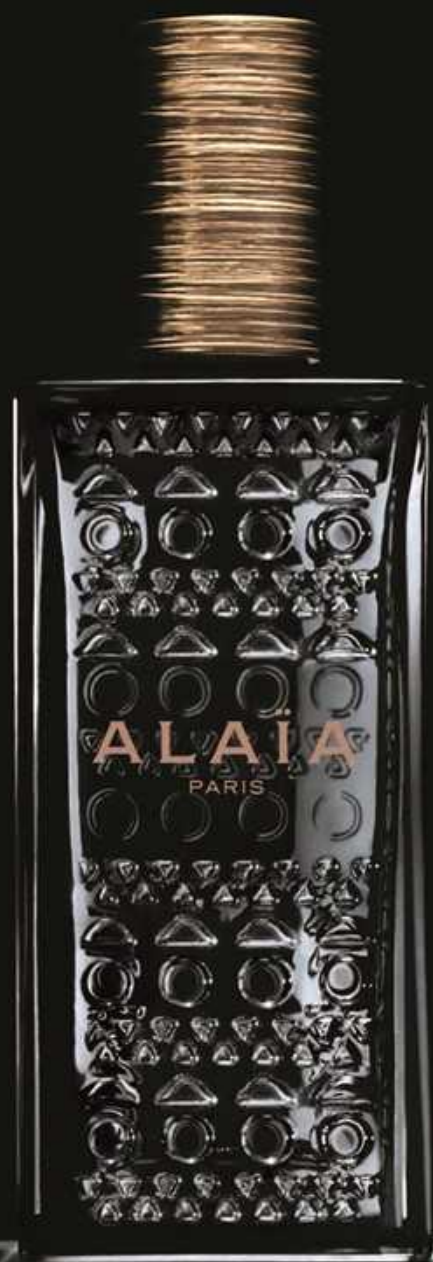
He uses the money from the CPA to cover transportation, tuition, accommodation, food and books. "The sponsorship has helped me a lot and in various ways from the times when I didn't have enough money for accommodation, transport and tuition. The contribution this funding has made is invaluable."

The CPA also sponsors the best Grade 12 learners from the community. The best learner is given R3 000, and the second, third, fourth and fifth-ranked learners receive R2 500, R2 000, R1 500 and R1 000 respectively.

"The aim is to encourage them to know that there is a reward if you work hard and study. We also choose from the same pool to sponsor those who will go to university the following year." ●

ALAÏA

PARIS





President Jacob Zuma delivering the keynote address at the Presidential Local Government Summit

Working together – to get Back to Basics

It is possible to create a better future for all, President Jacob Zuma told delegates at the third Presidential Local Government summit. Municipalities that are more responsive to the needs of their people lie at the heart of this.

All three spheres of government must work together with business and labour to overcome the challenges faced by municipalities, President Jacob Zuma told delegates at the third Presidential Local Government summit held recently.

"From this summit must emerge a focused action plan on the way in which all three spheres of government

and all partners should work together to ensure the deepening of the Back to Basics programme."

The President challenged delegates to change gears. "We now have to move to the second phase, in which the Back to Basics approach continues to build a functional and developmental local government system that delivers on its constitutional and legislative mandates ➔

within a system of cooperative governance.”

He reaffirmed the belief that success can only be achieved once local government, labour and business work together to deal with challenges faced by municipalities. He added that above all else, any plan needed to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

Back to Basics

Launched in 2014, the Back to Basics programme is designed to build municipal administrations that served their communities. The objectives are encapsulated in five pillars:

- Putting people first and ensuring effective public participation platforms for them;
- The delivery of municipal services of a high quality, including the maintenance and delivery of needed infrastructure and amenities;
- Good and efficient administration and accountable governance;
- Sound financial management and prudent control of resources; and
- Capable administrative and institutional capability.

The second phase of the programme should, and will, focus on key areas to allow municipalities to build on their successes the president said. “First, is ensuring that we build programmes to manage municipal spaces for radical social and economic transformation.

“Second is affirming the centrality of integrated and spatially coherent development planning across sectors and spheres and thirdly strengthening intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder relations in Disaster Risk Reduction.”

President Zuma said everyone should pull in the same direction to defeat these challenges. “We are aware of these challenges and affected municipalities should work harder and faster to correct them.”

He also instructed municipalities to work hard to raise the living standards and quality of life of all the people in their areas. He highlighted the importance delivery of crucial services such as provision of roads, human settlements and sanitation.

“They must include effective public transport infrastructure development, as well as new integrated and sustainable human settlements and post-apartheid cities that are more connected, liveable, smart and green.”

Entrepreneurs have a role to play

Municipalities must encourage local solutions to local problems. The president expressed the hope that municipalities would create an environment that encouraged the development of small businesses and the emergence of entrepreneurs in their communities.

He argued that local enterprises, cooperatives and SMMEs are best situated to meet the needs of their neighbours. “Township entrepreneurs must be used to produce food such as bread for school nutrition and

hospitals, clothes for school and police uniforms, and furniture for government offices.

“If we do this, we would bring millions of township residents into the mainstream of the economy, hence the need to revamp economic infrastructure and improve these areas.”

Cooperation is key

All three spheres of government would continue to work together to deliver services to improve the lives of all citizens. President Zuma called for ministers to ensure that, among other challenges, roads are tarred and maintained, township bucket systems are eradicated and all hostels are redeveloped into family residences.

Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Des van Rooyen said local government stood ready to continue playing an important role in delivering services to the people.

“Township entrepreneurs must be used to produce food such as bread for school nutrition and hospitals, clothes for school and police uniforms, and furniture for government offices.”

"The improvement of the peoples' lives can be achieved through the provision of basic services, development and growth of the economy, recognising and harnessing the skills potential of people living in the municipality, job creation, and mobilising the people to make their own contribution to improve their living conditions."

Making radical socioeconomic transformation a living reality

Mayor of Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality, Boitumelo Mahlangu, says her municipality will focus on doing business with local suppliers.

"The president is spot on; that is what we have been looking at and he has also given us an approach to that. There is no way we can implement radical socio-economic transformation except at municipalities, that's why the president is talking directly to us as champions of service delivery.

"We already have a plan and that is to focus on cooperatives because that's where a number of people will benefit and we have to instil that culture in our municipalities."

Youth unemployment: our great challenge

In the second quarter of last year, the country's unemployment rate rose to 27.1 per cent from 26.6 per cent, the highest it's been in 13 years. For South African youth in the same period, the unemployment rate was an eye watering 53.7 per cent.

Mayor Mahlangu says her municipality will focus on doing business with young people residing in the district municipality. However she cautioned: "The benefit of doing business with young people will not be realised today, but in the near future, that is why it's important that



Delegates at the recent Presidential Local Government Summit held in Midrand, Johannesburg.

we focus on the youth and take them on board."


Emfuleni Local Municipality Mayor Simon Mofokeng echoed Mayor Mahlangu's sentiments. Emfuleni, he said, will develop spaces for people to start businesses closer to where they reside. Furthermore, their ongoing efforts to address youth unemployment, has resulted in the municipality modifying the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP). He pointed out that the bulk of the administrative staff in municipal finance section were young people who have gone through the amended EPWP programme.

"We have changed the approach and we've said, for example, those who train as electricians, we bring them in to do their internship and once they've qualified, they can stay or open their own businesses."

A brighter future

President Zuma reminded delegates that the National Development Plan (NDP) was a road map to a better future for all South Africans. A future free from poverty, inequality and unemployment was only possible through stronger collaborations and implementation of the Back to Basics programme.

It is possible, he said, to create communities where there is water, good roads, electricity, recreational parks and other amenities. "Indeed, there is a lot we should do to build better municipalities and ensure that our people's experience of local government is a pleasant one.

"We must all ensure that when people visit municipal offices, they return home smiling because of an excellent service they would have received." 





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International



Shale gas mining gets go-ahead

South Africa could create thousands of jobs and add hundreds of billions of rands to the economy through the mining of shale gas.

Mineral Resources Minister Mosebenzi Zwane announced in late March that the government intended to proceed with the exploration of shale gas. He said the decision was based on the need to diversify the country's energy sources.

A 2012 report on shale gas by a government task team estimates that the extraction of the gas in the Karoo could generate thousands of jobs for South Africa and add as much as R960 billion to the economy over the next 20 to 30 years.

The task team based its estimate on the extraction of 50 trillion cubic feet of shale gas, when the rand was at R8 to the US dollar (\$) and natural gas was priced at \$4 per thousand cubic feet.

It said a large resource would have the potential to reduce national dependence on other fossil fuels and may contribute to energy security and help reduce the country's carbon footprint.

PetroSA manager of licensing and legal compliance Tebogo Motloung said the expectation is that gas will contribute 9 per cent towards the country's energy mix by 2030.

He pointed out that it might be necessary to revise the

economic benefits of shale gas in light of changes in commodity prices as well as changes in the recoverable reserves assumed.

Depending on the amount of gas extractable, and the scale of production, local economies will benefit from direct and indirect employment at power stations, he said.

A study is being carried out by the South African National Energy Development Institute (Sanedi) to quantify the direct and indirect employment opportunities from shale gas extraction.

The Department of Science and Technology through the Academy of Science of South Africa has already completed a study to assess the country's technical readiness to support shale gas industry.

At the time the task team warned that banning the exploration of shale gas would delay or prevent improved understanding of the real extent of the potential resource, hamper the development of coalbed methane, and remove the potential economic benefit to severely deprived communities in the Karoo.

Fracking

There has been concern that the removal of shale gas by hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, could cause environmental damage.

The process, which has been used in the oil and gas

industry for over 50 years, involves pumping water and sand and chemicals into the reservoir with sufficient pressure to create artificial fractures by which to remove the gas.

However, Motloung said, it is a commonly misunderstood issue that fracking will significantly contaminate the ground water resources of the Karoo region.

He pointed out that shale gas is found between 1 500 m to 4 000 m below the surface, which is far deeper than where acceptable drinking water is located.

"The likelihood of contamination is significantly reduced due to the location of target formation and eliminated by the manner in which wells are to be constructed – in other words, encased in cement – to achieve the desired well integrity," he said.

In addition, he said, the technology itself allows for a number of wells to be sunk in one main well, thus significantly reducing the ground that might be damaged, in contrast to drilling vertical wells.

He stressed that the current regulatory framework provides for adequate mechanisms and standards to which operators must adhere to ensure that the environment, including the country's scarce water resources, enjoys protection.

The task team recommended that South Africa's regulatory framework be reviewed to identify any shortfalls and ensure that rules are sufficiently detailed and specific.

However, it said, in order for the regulations to be effective, better coordination between departments and adequate resourcing of regulatory and enforcement agencies is required.

To address this, a monitoring committee has been set up, made up of representatives from the departments of mineral resources, science and technology, energy, environmental affairs and water and sanitation, as well as PetroSA and the Council for Geoscience.

"The most important contingency measures that gov-

ernment can make is to ensure all relevant regulatory departments and agencies represented in the monitoring committee are ... adequately capacitated to ensure absolute compliance with the provisions of all relevant legislation," said Motloung.

"A monitoring committee has been set up, made up of representatives from the departments of mineral resources, science and technology, energy, environmental affairs and water and sanitation, as well as PetroSA and the Council for Geoscience."

Under the National Environmental Management Act, applicants must carry out mandatory environmental impact assessments. Further regulations for petroleum exploration and production were gazetted in June 2015, augmenting the existing regulatory framework.

The departments of environmental affairs, mineral resources and others are also carrying out an overall environmental assessment to develop policy and legislation.

The task team said the effects of dolerite intrusions, kimberlite fissures and existing fracture systems are relatively unknown. Further investigations and modelling are therefore required.

To better understand these, a number of scientific studies were published last year. These include assessments of impacts of shale gas development on air quality, earthquakes, water resources, biodiversity and ecology, heritage and spatial and infrastructure planning.

The Water Research Commission is also conducting a study to develop good practice standards to inform policy and to develop early warning water pollution detection systems.

Much of the task team's work was based on a study tour of gas fields in the United States. To understand the effect that shale-gas exploration will have on the ➔

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local environment the Council for Geoscience in collaboration with PetroSA has embarked on a Karoo deep drilling project.

However, Motlounq said, while all the assessments have been based on the experiences of those jurisdictions where hydraulic fracturing is currently practised, common environmental risks associated with shale gas development are largely known.

"What is critical though is for those risks to be assessed, taking into consideration the South African environment," he said.

He said the current regulatory framework does not make provision for compensating individuals whose water resources have been contaminated. However, he pointed out, operators are required to ensure that their operations do not pollute a water resource. If this does occur, necessary remedial measures are to be implemented.

"In addition to that, the Polluter Pays Principle – which implies that 'the costs of remedying pollution, environmental degradation and consequent health effects must be paid for by those responsible for harming the environment' – would be enforced if the resource is compromised," he added.

Meanwhile the departments of science and technology and mineral resources together with PetroSA are continuing to engage with one another to develop mechanisms to ensure that shale-gas activities will not compromise the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project.

The Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act provides

for the protection of the areas affected by the SKA and related areas, as do regulations for petroleum exploration and production.

Motlounq pointed out that site-specific assessments can only be undertaken once it becomes clearer what equipment will be used on each site.

While the government has yet to grant any company exploration rights for shale gas, three companies have among them lodged five applications to do so.

The companies are Bundu Gas, a local subsidiary of Challenger Energy which is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange; Shell; and Falcon Oil and Gas, a global company headquartered in Ireland. PetroSA is not involved in any of the shale-gas applications thus far, said Motlounq.

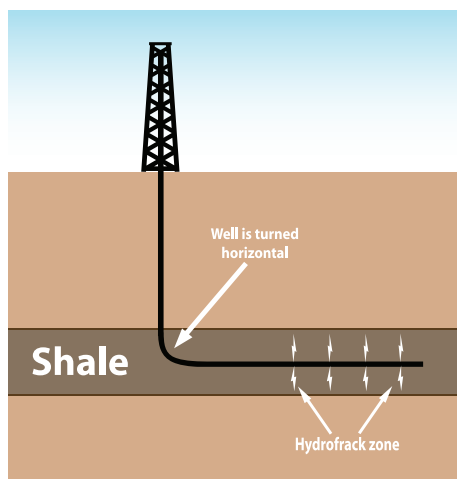
He said drilling is likely to start towards the end of the second year of the three-year exploration right term.

Meanwhile geological field mapping and other data gathering activities are under way.

In 2016 and earlier this year the Department of Mineral Resources held two public awareness meetings – one in Cradock in the Eastern Cape, and the other in Richmond in the Northern Cape.

Companies seeking approval to develop shale gas are required to undertake comprehensive consultations with interested and affected parties, including communities.

The three applicants that have lodged applications to explore for shale gas have also held several consultation meetings in the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape.



FAQs on fracking

What is hydraulic fracturing?

Hydraulic fracturing, generally referred to as "fracking", involves injecting a mixture of water, chemicals and sand at high pressure into the ground to allow natural gas to flow freely from the rock pores to production wells.

What is shale gas?

Shale gas is natural gas that is attached to, or adsorbed onto, organic matter or is contained in thin, porous silt or sand beds interbedded in the shale. ➔

Aren't hydraulic fracturing fluids and flow-back harmful to water resources?

Hydraulic fracturing fluid is typically made up of 99.5 per cent water and sand, and 0.5 per cent chemicals. Most of these chemicals are commonly used in household applications. There has been a move by the industry to reduce the use of potentially toxic additives and replace them with non-toxic alternatives. The industry would also be required to disclose additives to the Regulator.



Will hydraulic fracturing and shale gas production cause any atmospheric pollution?

Compared with traditional sources of energy, natural gas production is considered one of the cleanest energy sources. The draft regulations prohibit any venting of natural gas to the atmosphere and also require operators to maximise resource recovery, thus preventing any potential impacts.

Will the process interfere with existing land-use activities? If so, how will these be managed?

As part of the application for exploration or production rights, the applicant is required to assess the impact of the proposed operations on existing land use and consult with any affected landowners. Once operations are complete, the holder is required to rehabilitate the site such that future land use in the area is not compromised.

How will the roads and other infrastructure be affected?

A traffic impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment to determine the actual effects of shale gas development and how such impacts can be mitigated, including making provisions for the maintenance of roads.

What benefits does hydraulic fracturing provide?

The extraction of a modest estimation of the Karoo resources of 50 trillion cubic feet of shale gas will have a significant positive impact on economic growth, diversification of the energy mix, employment opportunities and other benefits from multiplier activities such as manufacturing, skills development and transportation.

Has the government provided sufficient mechanisms to protect communities and the environment?

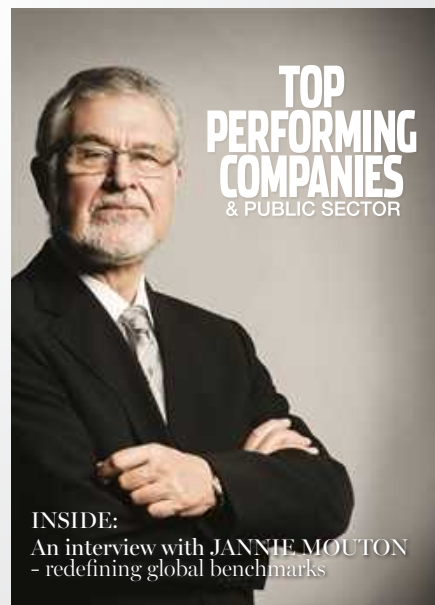
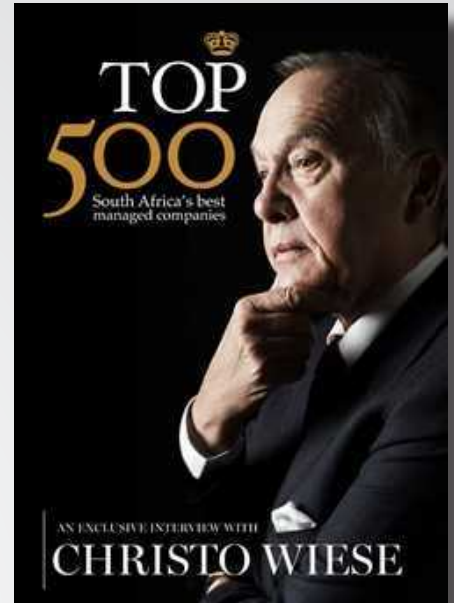
The regulatory framework has been benchmarked against well-developed and matured jurisdictions with over 50 years of experience, and adapted to a South Africa-specific environment. In terms of the law, companies seeking approval to develop shale gas are required to undertake comprehensive consultations with interested and affected parties, including communities. ●



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Works Programme responds to societal challenges

Given the country's stubbornly high unemployment rate, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) continues to play a role in alleviating poverty by providing work and training opportunities for poor and unskilled South Africans.

Since 2014 the EPWP, which is in its third phase, has created 2 343 147 work opportunities throughout the country. In the first year of EPWP Phase 3 (2014/15), the programme created 1 103 983 EPWP work opportunities; 741 540 work opportunities were created in 2015/16; and 497 624 by the third quarter of 2016/17.

Most of those who benefit from

these opportunities are community members who otherwise would not have had any chance of entering the formal world of work because they are unskilled and/or have never worked before. Think about the people who fell by the wayside as you progressed from Grade R to Grade 12 and later tertiary level. Where did those people end up? Many of them end up in the temporary employ of the EPWP, where they gain the skills needed to enter the formal job market.

Programme has developmental task

Once in the EPWP, participants receive training in various things such

as gardening, security, community care giving, firefighting, or learn to be basic pharmacy assistants or artisans.

We have many good stories in the EPWP where a participant enters the programme as a cleaner, gardener or working as a volunteer caregiver and eventually becomes a skilled and qualified artisan, fire fighter and even a small businesses owner who provides jobs to our people.

The EPWP plays an important role in development in the betterment of the lives of our people.

This developmental role relates to the community assets and services delivered through the programme.

Assets delivered include dams, roads, community recreational facilities, schools and hospitals that are constructed and maintained using the EPWP's labour intensive methods. For instance, in the Mbashe Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape, community members – EPWP participants – took part in the construction of a multi-million rand dam that has enabled the municipality to provide clean drinking water to villages around the municipality.

Some of the community services rendered through the EPWP include participants caring for thousands of senior citizens as well as for hundreds of thousands of children.

Creating permanent jobs is not the aim

Although the EPWP remains a good story to tell in our work of delivering a better life for all, the programme



“The EPWP was designed as a strategy to alleviate poverty, create work and training opportunities for the unskilled, while delivering socio-economic developmental assets and services.”

faces challenges such as the expectation that the programme create permanent jobs for our people. The public or even participants in the programme have demanded the opportunities provided by the programme to be made permanent.

Although many participants have found permanent jobs after participating in the EPWP, it must be stressed that the programme is not aimed at creating permanent jobs. The EPWP was designed as a strategy to alleviate poverty and create work and training opportunities for the unskilled, while delivering socio-economic developmental assets and services.

On the matter of the EPWP minimum wage, it must be clarified and emphasised that the Ministerial Determination sets EPWP wages. According to the Ministerial Determination, the current daily wage for the EPWP is R83.59, however, many public bodies pay participants more than this.

Despite the good work the EPWP has done to fight poverty and underdevelopment in our communities while creating work and training opportunities, Deputy Min-

ister Jeremy Cronin would always caution against using the EPWP as a “silver-bullet for the country’s high unemployment rate”.

To fully appreciate the EPWP’s effectiveness one must view its contribution towards employment creation and community development within a broader picture of government and private sector employment creation and development strategies.

Public works programmes meet societal challenges

Finally, it is important for South Africans to understand the role of EPWP or Public Employment Programmes (PEPS) from a global perspective. Fundamentally, the Peps world over are implemented to respond to societal challenges such as poverty, high unemployment rates, political conflicts and/or even natural disasters. For instance, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the United States implemented Peps to respond to the high unemployment rate that prevailed at the time. The American government employed millions of poor and unskilled Americans as a way not only to



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tackle rampant unemployment in the country, but also to deliver public assets such as roads.


With South Africa experiencing a stubbornly high unemployment rate, in 2004 the government set out to implement a programme that would tackle poverty and underdevelopment while delivering community assets and services such as roads and community-based home care programmes in South Africa. This is how the EPWP was born. Some of us argue that South Africa in fact revolutionised the nature of Peps globally by expanding the programme beyond the traditional infrastructure sector onto which many countries had always anchored their Peps. In South Africa, the programme has expanded into infrastructure, environment and culture, non-state as well as social sectors.

Other countries learn from our experience

As a result of the sheer expansion of our programme, to date the government has created over seven million EPWP work opportunities

since 2004. Its successful implementation has elicited accolades from many countries in the world who have in turn visited our country to learn how best to implement the programme. The EPWP is a good story that has also endeared us to the United Nation's International Labour Organisation (ILO), which frequently uses the EPWP as a case study on the successful implementation of Peps worldwide.

In line with the National Develop-

ment Plan the Government will continue using and maximising programmes such as the EPWP to create work and training opportunities for poor and unskilled South Africans, while delivering developmental socio-economic assets and services. 

Opinion piece by Michael Mokoe-na, EPWP PR and Communication Directorate in the National Department of Public Works.



Trailblazing youth awarded for hard work

The 2nd South African Youth Awards recognised young South Africans who are helping to shape the future. The 23 winners show the country that South Africa's future is indeed bright.



Minister Jeff Radebe

Speaking at the recent South African Youth Awards hosted by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Minister in the Presidency responsible for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Jeff Radebe dared young award winners to help government to create jobs. The time had come, he said, for the youth to become creators of work instead of perpetual jobseekers.

Minister Radebe reminded winners that the country expected them to take the baton from the older generation to move the country forward. "All eyes will be on you. The nation will look up to you to play significant leadership roles in society. You are the faces of the future of our country. You are expected to play an active role in uplifting your communities. You are expected to assist

in empowering other young people. You are expected to contribute to national development."

He reassured them of assistance from government, their peers and the country. Only together would the country realise a better future for all. "As government, we must ensure that young people inherit a country full of possibilities. A country destined for success. A country with a brighter and more prosperous future."

Recognising and rewarding achievement

"The South African Youth Awards offer us the necessary platform to cultivate the soil for the growth of our future leaders. The young people that we will be honouring this evening have distinguished themselves as trailblazers in a variety of fields. They stand out as the brightest stars in the galaxy of young people in our nation. They illuminate our paths as we journey towards a brighter future."

The South African Youth Awards recognises exceptionalism in youthful South African entrepreneurs. Celebrating their success would inspire other young people to start businesses and create

jobs. Minister Radebe reminded the winners they were the beacon that promised a brighter future, and it was in their hands to define that future.

It was government's responsibility to create an environment where the best and brightest could succeed. "We must work collectively as a nation in supporting and cherishing the efforts of young people to move South Africa forward against all odds. We must dig deeper into our pockets and redirect funds to youth development. It is a worthy investment."

Deputy Minister in the Presidency Buti Manamela added that the young award winners showed that South African youth were more than the troubled and indifferent ➔

**"This is one of those times where I'm grateful to be South African and to be a young person and to have a government that is so supportive."
Nneile Nkholise**

generation seen in the media. "Our youth are often characterised as an entitled generation who would rather burn schools, destroy property, disrespect elders and smoke nyaope. We often hear these sentiments.

"But this is not the sum total of South African youth. It is not an accurate characterisation of our young women and men. It is an incomplete picture. It is an imperfect image. It is an unfinished story."

Doing extraordinary things

Deputy Minister Manamela added colour and nuance to the image so often portrayed in the media. The young people celebrated at the awards are youth with positive energy, willing to play their part in making South Africa great.

"Today you will hear stories of young women and men making a difference in their communities and in their own lives. They continue to make South Africa a better place. They continue to bring a smile to our faces. We don't hear about them often. We don't read about them often. We don't see their faces often. But they exist. And they are here today."

The winners

Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Khathutshelo Ramukumba, said the awards


were not just about recognising their positive contribution. The winners could also inspire other desperate young people. Their success would be motivation.

"Our message is, regardless of your circumstances and background, you can achieve your dream and live the life that you've imagined. We are saying to the winners, post tonight, they must become ambassadors of youth development."

Nneile Nkholise, Presidential Award winner, said she was grateful for the role government was playing by empowering young people.

Nkholise is the co-founder of Likoebe Group, an umbrella company of iMed Tech. This medical innovation company uses additive technology to produce custom prostheses. "This is one of those times where I'm grateful to be South African and to be a young person and to have a government that is so supportive," she said.

She holds a B Tech degree in mechanical engineering from Central University of Technology and is currently pursuing her M Eng at the university, with a research focus on the applications of additive manufacturing in medicine.

Nkholise walked away with the main prize of R100 000. In other categories, the winner received R50 000, the first runner up R30 000, and the second runner-up R20 000. 

The winners, by category

Presidential Award

Nneile Nkholise

Academic excellence

- Winner: Mokhwetha Mabula
- 1st runner up: Khethelo Xulu
- 2nd runner up: Thulile Khanyile

Entrepreneurship

- Winner: Lethabo Mokoena
- 1st runner up: Promise Machimane
- 2nd runner up: Bulelani Balabala

Social cohesion and civil society

- Winner: Gugu Nonjenge
- 1st runner up: Mfundo Radebe
- 2nd runner up: Koketso Marishane

Health and well-being

- Winner: Matreki Mabizela
- 1st runner up: Thabo Letsiri
- 2nd runner up: Mlungisi Freedom Luthuli

The environment (including agriculture)

- Winner: Ntsako Baloyi
- 1st runner up: Aluwani Netshia
- 2nd runner up: Cyprian Gumbi

Science, technology and innovation (including medicine)

- Winner: Nneile Nkholise
- 1st runner up: Ludwick Marishane
- 2nd runner up: Andries Pretorius

Extraordinary champions (differently-abled individuals)

- Winner: Lebohang Monyatsi
- 1st runner up: Lubabalo Tybosch

Arts and entertainment

- Winner: Lucas Tshwane
- 1st runner up: Duncan Maphanga
- 2nd runner up: Nonal Tose



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Land reform –

a pillar of radical economic transformation

Land reform is a central pillar of South Africa's radical economic transformation programme.

President Jacob Zuma touched on this government imperative at the launch of the Operation Phakisa for agriculture, land reform and rural development in February.

"If we do not radically change the patterns of land ownership, control and management in South Africa, we will be creating problems for ourselves in future. We need to take bold steps that will transform our economy, including land ownership, very fast."

It is partly because of the urgency with which South African societies need to be transformed that, in July 2011, Operation Phakisa was introduced. Known as the Big Fast Results Methodology, it was adapted from a similar programme in Malaysia.

Phakisa is a seSotho word which means "hurry up". The methodology is used by government to focus intensively on the growth of a particular sector and has successfully been implemented in education, health and the ocean economy. Once it is kickstarted in the agriculture, rural development and land reform sectors, it will be launched in the mining industry.

"Through the Operation Phakisa programme, we wish to hurry up the delivery of services to the people and the transformation of our society as a whole." It is through Phakisa that the Ideal Clinics were conceived and ICT in education received a boost.

Five weeks of focus

Operation Phakisa saw government creating a platform of engagement for all stakeholders in the agriculture sector. During a five-week laboratory process, challenges were discussed and solutions proposed.

President Zuma said 161 participants worked tirelessly to understand the obstacles to and find solutions for



President Jacob Zuma.

greater inclusivity in rural economies, and looked at ways to stimulate growth in the agricultural sector.

The deliberations of the lab participants were organised according to seven work streams: land reform, producer support, livestock, grains, horticulture, labour and rural development.

"The land reform work stream, for instance, has identified the establishment of District Land Reform Delivery Centres, fast tracking outstanding land restitution claims, promoting and protecting the rights of persons living under insecure tenure, and accelerating land development and redistribution as key priorities."

The three commodity-based work streams, namely grains, livestock and horticulture, focused their initiatives on expanding the potential for trade in both domestic and export markets, developing and strengthening value chains, sharpening research and innovation systems, and making the most of water resources.

"The horticulture work stream, for example, ➔

developed three initiatives, one of which is called trade promotion, retention and optimisation.

This initiative aims to increase South Africa's horticultural trade potential from an estimated R54 billion in 2015 to R90 billion by 2030."

The livestock work stream, on the other hand, looked at the need for a national livestock census and an animal identification and traceability system, as well as the need to strengthen meat exports, improve disease control mechanisms and ultimately ensure adherence to international trade protocols.

The grain work stream developed a programme called Unlocking Finance for Grains through Private Public Partnerships. This initiative attempts to address the limited impact that grant-based financial models are having on growth in the grain industry. It seeks to use grant funding as collateral to unlock much-needed financial support from development finance institutions (DFIs) and commercial banks.

"This initiative will link farmers to buyers and processors of grain using contractual innovations which mitigate the risks for both parties. The estimated impact is an added 507 000 hectares under production, in turn creating about 53 000 new jobs."

President Zuma also said the greatest challenge raised by farmers at the lab was the fragmented nature of support services.


"As a solution, the Ndimok Desk initiative is a centralised, virtual platform linking producers to services offered by participating public and private sector institutions."

Re-engineering agricultural financing

A producer support work stream initiative is the Re-engineering Agricultural Development Finance model, which will develop blended financial products from public and private funds to lessen the current reliance on grant funds.

"The financial products will be designed to cover both long- and medium-term loans for buying farms, equipment and machinery, as well as short-term loans for production inputs. The new blended financial products will consist of a grant component from government, and a loan component from commercial banks, DFIs and other financiers."

Vibrant rural economy

Land reform and various kinds of agricultural development must contribute to a more inclusive and vibrant 



rural economy. President Zuma said the rural development work stream identified Strategic Leadership and Coordination for Structural Transformation; Augmentation of Existing Essential Basic Services Roll-out Programmes; and Rural Enterprise Development as key initiatives.

"The slow delivery of rural transformation due to ineffective coordination, planning, execution and implementation has kept rural households trapped within the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment."

The Strategic Leadership and Coordination for Structural Transformation initiative seeks to address the fragmentation of budgets and programmes aimed at rural development.

President Zuma said there is a proposal to establish an agency at national level to mobilise, co-ordinate and manage resources, finance rural development projects, and coach and train participating co-operatives in business and managerial skills.

"The next step is to seek public private partnerships with business, organised labour and civil society in the implementation of the initiatives identified by Operation Phakisa. In July 2017, the main stakeholders in the sector will sign agreements committing themselves to their implementation.

"We are all determined to change the face of agriculture and land reform. We must move beyond business as usual and seek new ways of doing things which will change the economic landscape in our country and ensure that the black majority shares in the wealth."

Thumbs up from farmers

Maleshoane Mokhachane-Moeti, a cattle and crop farmer from Wesselsbron in Free State, said Operation Phakisa is the answer to growing the agricultural economy.

She said that, as a black African woman, it was an honour to be part of the launch. "I think the government is on the right track with the launch of Operation Phakisa focusing on the agricultural sector. As farmers we really have the potential to grow the economy and create jobs."

Mokhachane-Moeti is part of the Mokhachane Community Property Association. She has over 100 cattle, 159 sheep and grows spinach, employing five people permanently and casuals come harvest time. "I also have a partnership with the Central University of Technology in which they bring agricultural students to our farm for their practicals."

She says the land was acquired through the land redistribution programme in 2005 and this was when


she fell in love with agriculture. Farming is about food security and ensuring that people do not go hungry. "That is why it is so important that women – as the carers of families – are at the forefront of farming; if you teach women, you teach a village."

"We are all determined to change the face of agriculture and land reform."

Exporting South African beef to China

President Zuma said international trade was a powerful tool of economic diplomacy and welcomed the opportunities provided by strategic partners in opening up their markets to South Africa's products.

During the launch, South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries signed a protocol agreement with the People's Republic of China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine on the export of South African beef to China, as well as a memorandum of understanding on the entry, exit and quarantining of animals.

"The agreement will give effect to the export of South African beef to China and unlock opportunities for our black smallholder farmers to access the Chinese market." 



Anthony Ngcezula Chief Executive Officer, Johannesburg Social Housing Company (Joshco)

Anthony Ngcezula has been appointed chief executive officer (CEO) of Joshco as of 1 March 2017.

Joshco provides affordable housing to families that would otherwise not be able to afford a home.

Ngcezula has more than 16 years' experience as a CEO, proven experience in managing social housing institutions, and the requisite technical knowledge and experience in local government and construction and the building environment sector.

He also has vast experience in strategic and business planning, including in the banking and social housing sectors.

He holds a BCom and MBA from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, BSc honours and an MSc in mathematics from the University of London (UK) and Louisiana State University (USA) respectively.

He is the former CEO of Housing Company Tshwane and Imizi Housing Company in Port Elizabeth.

He fosters a culture of ethics and high work performance, coupled with an accurate monitoring and evaluation system wherever he is afforded the privilege and responsibility to manage any organisation.

As the accounting officer Ngcezula will ensure timeous management of accounts. He believes that his deep knowledge of housing legislation and the Municipal Finance Management Act will lead the entity to greater heights.

Ismail Essa Transformation Manager, Sanral Head Office

Ismail Essa has been appointed transformation manager at Sanral's Head Office, effective from 3 April 2017. He is a qualified civil engineering technologist and registered professional project manager. He is an industry heavyweight with 36 years' experience within the roads and civil engineering sector.

He started working for a large listed construction company in July 1980, as a trainee engineer. He qualified in November 1983, and worked his way up to the level of director at the same company in June 1996.

Essa left the company at the end of April 2001 and joined Sanral in June 2001 as a senior project manager.

He was promoted to the position of regional manager of Sanral's Northern Region (covering Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West and Limpopo) in January 2004, a position he held for almost 14 years. In his new position Essa will ensure subsector transformation across the supply value chain within which Sanral operates. ○





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Biggest MINI yet, now in South Africa

One of the most successful British premium compact automobile brands, MINI, has just launched the new-generation MINI Countryman.

Manufactured by BMW, the MINI boasts a number of styling derivatives. Don't be surprised if they decide to contest the successful double-cab market in the not-too-distant future as well!

The new MINI Countryman is the biggest and most versatile model in the brand's 57-year history. Having been completely newly developed, it now reflects considerable advance-

ments in the areas of space, functionality, athletic flair and premium characteristics.

The new MINI Countryman is 20 cm longer than its predecessor and approximately 3 cm wider. Its wheelbase has been extended by 7.5 cm. This means significantly increased space on five fully fledged seats as well as a definite increase in storage volume and luggage transport versatility. The raised seating position ensures an excellent view and hallmark driving fun. The rear seats can be shifted longitudinally by up to 13 cm. The folding rear backrest

offers a 40: 20: 40 split. The luggage compartment volume is 450 litres and can be extended as required to 1 309 litres. This constitutes a maximum increase of 220 litres compared to its predecessor.

Even with its model designation, the new edition MINI Countryman remains firmly rooted in the tradition of the British brand. A particularly versatile variant of the classic MINI once bore the same name back in the 1960s. The Austin Seven Countryman had a highly versatile interior, and the version with wood frame panelling – popularly known as 

Woodford Secures Softbev Distribution in Gauteng

Woodford Vehicle Rentals was proud to announce the securing of a 36-month contract with Softbev – a major player in the FMCG industry that specialises in a variety of soft drinks, including Pepsi, Coodee, and Jive.



The contract – confirmed in April – will provide Softbev with a total solution for distribution in the Gauteng region via a fleet of 36-ton Nissan UHD 490 Super Links. The value of the contract is roughly R45 million, and is an extension of the already beneficial relationship between the Woodford Group and Softbev.

The agreement follows a similar arrangement with Softbev that has seen Woodford Vehicle Rentals successfully distributing for the soft drinks manufacturer and supplier in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape over the past few years.



“We’re very humbled to have received the thumbs up from Softbev for Gauteng. Servicing them in three provinces is a sign of the mutual trust between our companies,” said Owais Suleman, Managing Director of the Group. “We feel we’re the perfect fit for a company that has similar values and ambitions, and will endeavour to service Softbev with the same passion and commitment we have in the past.”

The determining factor in securing the contract was the unique offering that Woodford Vehicle Rentals presented that provided a fixed cost inclusive of a number of benefits, including drivers, fuel management, tracking, maintenance, and any unforeseen incidents or circumstances.

“Our main priority is to keep our clients’ goods moving with as little hassle as possible. Our promise is that we’ll handle any issues or situations that may arise, and will get the goods to its destination in good time,” said Mr. Suleman.

“OUR MAIN PRIORITY IS TO KEEP OUR CLIENTS’ GOODS MOVING WITH AS LITTLE HASSLE AS POSSIBLE”

The system relies on what Woodford believes is the perfect blend of in-house capabilities and strategic relationships that ensure added benefits such as roadside assistance, mechanical repairs, and tyres and tyre repair.



The offering has been shaped by almost 25 years of experience in the industry, with Woodford Vehicle Rentals having adapted and tailored solutions for its clients to provide better value in a highly-competitive market.

Woodford Vehicle Rentals currently has a fleet of 145 commercial vehicles, ranging from 1 to 36 ton vehicles.

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"Woody" – attained cult status that it continues to enjoy to this day. The MINI Countryman likewise offered additional ways of enjoying the brand's hallmark driving fun when it was launched in 2010. It was the first MINI with four doors, a large tailgate, five seats and optional all-wheel drive. More than 540 000 were sold worldwide.

The MINI has numerous storage binnacles. At both front and rear there are door pockets that hold one-litre beverage bottles. The centre console, extending up to the instrument panel, has an integrated storage compartment and two cup holders in front of the gear or selector lever.

With a clear horizontal structure, stretched lines and generously sized surfaces, the distinctively designed

cockpit emphasises the solid character of the new MINI Countryman. The profile of the air vents echoes the vertical orientation of the exterior design elements. In addition to the high-quality materials and precise finish, the modern, ergonomically-optimised controls contribute to the car's exclusive ambience.

The hallmark central instrument is integrated in the instrument panel and surrounded by an LED ring that provides a lighting display in response to driving situations by way of control feedback. This forms part of the MINI Excitement Package, which also comprises the LED ambient lighting and a projection of the MINI logo from the exterior mirror on the driver's side when opening and closing the car door.

The new edition of the MINI Coun-

tryman lines up for the start, featuring entirely newly developed engine technology. For the market launch there are two petrol and one diesel engines of the latest generation available to choose from, each with MINI TwinPower Turbo Technology:

MINI Cooper Countryman: 3-cylinder petrol engine, capacity: 1 499 cc, output: 100 kW, max. torque: 220 Nm.

MINI Cooper S Countryman: 4-cylinder petrol engine, capacity: 1 998 cc, output: 141 kW, max. torque: 280 Nm

***MINI Cooper D Countryman:** 4-cylinder diesel engine, capacity: 1 995 cc, output: 110 kW, max. torque: 330 Nm.

*available in the third quarter of 2017.

The range also includes the first ever MINI with plug-in hybrid drive, which will be available in South Africa in 2018.

If you're looking for something funky that is versatile, but still handles with that well-known MINI go-kart sensation, visit a MINI dealership today and be pleasantly surprised. The car oozes character and will go on to amaze each time you take it out of your garage; be it for the school run, commuting to work or going on that well-deserved road trip! 📍

Benefits of retiring with GEPF

Retirement Plan

Pension

With the cost of living rising, many South Africans are finding it harder to make ends meet. Government employees are no exception.

The Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), the pension fund for eligible government employees, notes with concern that some members, who are still in service, are resigning in order to cash in their pensions. They then use this money to pay off debts and attend to other short-term needs without considering the long term effects of cashing in their pensions.

Many people do not take into account the possibility that they may have insufficient money to sustain a reasonable standard of living.

Pension benefits are there to take care of members in their old age and should be preserved until this time. GEPF encourages its members to continue in service and to continue contributing until they retire as the fund offers members valuable and sustainable benefits, as well as access to non-contributory benefits

such as a funeral benefit and the payment of a pension to eligible orphans or life partners.

What you can lose when you resign

If you have more than 10 years' service and you decide to resign, you will lose the following GEPF benefits:


- 1. Monthly pension:** you will only receive a gratuity – a once-off lump sum payment – rather than a lump sum and a monthly pension for the remainder of your life, called an annuity. Your spouse or life partner will also not receive anything from GEPF after you pass away, whereas they would have received 50 per cent or 75 per cent of your monthly pension, based on your choice of retirement package, for as long as they live.
- 2. Medical aid subsidy:** you will not receive any contribution towards your medical aid from the state if you resign. If you have 15 or

more years of service, you may have been eligible to receive a government subsidy towards your monthly medical aid membership for the rest of your life on retirement. Pensioners often find their medical costs rising steeply after retirement.

- 3. Funeral benefits:** GEPF pays a funeral benefit to help its members and pensioners pay the costs of a funeral when a GEPF member or pensioner dies. These benefits are also paid out on the death of a spouse, life partner or eligible child of a member or pensioner. This benefit is not paid if you resign.

Be aware that there are also unscrupulous intermediaries targeting long-serving members who are close to retirement. They claim that cashing out pensions would be better than retiring, focusing on issues such as a member's ability to leave an inheritance, but do not provide information on the tax implications nor on all the other benefits members would forfeit by resigning.

Members are reminded that GEPF is a defined benefit fund and their pension benefits are secure; the fund will pay your monthly pension until you die, it does not matter how old you live to be.

Think about your future and preserve your pension. 

For more information on GEPF contact: Toll free number: 0800 117 669
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Trench coat, G Couture, zando.co.za, **R1199**.

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Kallie lace-up heels, Plum, **R949**.

Classic cross-body, Style Republic, zando.co.za, **R249**.

- 6 Spring Icons bomber jacket, H&M Man, **R749**.
- 7 Crew neck jersey, Spree.co.za, **R379**.
- 8 Cutty Cglenn camo backpack, zando.co.za, **R 329**.
- 9 Jeep turn-up beanie, Jeep, Spree.co.za, **R229**.
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Ghana Must Go by Taiye Selasi

In January 1983 the Nigerian government ordered all undocumented migrants to leave the country, or face prison. Within days of the announcement, two million people packed a bag and headed out of Nigeria. The majority – 700 000 – were Ghanaian citizens.

Taiye Selasi's debut novel takes its title from the popular name given to the big chequered bags that fleeing migrants stuffed as much as they could carry into. As *Ghana Must Go* opens Kwaku Sai, a Ghanaian surgeon, lays dying in the garden of his home, his second wife, Ama, asleep inside.

At its centre *Ghana Must Go* is the story of a family broken apart by the secrets of the past and the impact of an absent father's death on the children and the wife, Folasadé, he left behind.

The book opens lyrically with the description of Kweku's passing. "Kweku dies barefoot on a Sunday before sunrise, his slippers by the doorway to the bedroom like dogs." But the novel is Folasadé's – Fola – story, a story of her life remembered like, "dewdrops on grass blades like diamonds flung freely from the pouch of some sprite-god who'd just happened by".

Selasi manages to weave the 1983 season into her novel through her characters. The Sai family is half Ghanaian and half Nigerian. Kweku is married to the vivacious Fola, a Nigerian. They are in love, or seem to be. They epitomise hard work and determination, and of finally making it in America. They made it through pov-

erty, through the dusty streets of Ghana and the sleek and mighty corners of Lagos.

Kweku is a respected surgeon. His wife dearly supports him. He is a hardworking, strong man - perhaps too hardworking. So much so that he has difficulty reading his children's emotions. If you have read Chimamanda

Ngozi Adichie's book *Purple Hibiscus*, you will remember this recurring theme: African parents who either became so fixated on overcoming poverty that they forget their children.

Fola is a good wife to Kweku. He is not all bad, but passages in his heart are undone. They have been through a lot together, having dodged numerous huddles in their relationship. With that said, nothing could have prepared them for what was to befall them.

Kweku in his brilliance is tricked at work into performing a critical surgery. He does everything well, as he has always done. It is however a trap, because he is later fired.

He has never considered himself a failure, so he doesn't know what to do with the news. He hides it from his family and continues as though nothing has happened.

Until one day, the truth comes out in an attempt to embarrass him further. After this final embarrassment, Kweku makes a cowardly decision.

Many would liken Selasi to Adichie because of her genuine prose. She does not try too hard to impress the reader because her story represents itself. She allows the reader to engage personally with the characters.

Selasi is a talented writer, and *Ghana Must Go* a stunning debut. It is a gem of African literature, and worth the read. ○



Get fancy in your own kitchen

If you're looking to expand your impressive kitchen repertoire or learn to make some fancy dishes to amaze your dinner guests, then look no further than these recipes created by Tsogo Sun chefs. These are dishes that have been served at the restaurants in their hotels, so you know they'll blow your guests away. Instead of store-bought sushi and regular roast vegetables, try these alternative gourmet versions.



Blue chip hand roll Chef Blake Anderson

Ingredients

- 1 nori sheet
- 45 g cooked sushi rice
- 10 g Languedoc French cheese (or any blue cheese as alternative)
- 10 g avocado slice
- 1 skewered prawn tail, de-veined and shell removed

- 10 g Cajun spice
- 5 g butter
- 10 g Japanese mayonnaise
- 1 tsp mixed and toasted sesame seeds

Method

- Slice blue cheese and set aside.
- Slice fresh avocado into slices, set aside.
- Pan-fry prawn tail in butter and Cajun spices, set aside once cooked to cool.

- Place nori sheet on sushi mat, place rice in centre and spread lengthwise on the sheet.
- In the corner, place the cheese, avocado and prawn tail. Add mayonnaise and sprinkle with sesame seeds.
- Roll nori to make a cone, using a bit of rice to close off the sushi and squeeze to close.
- Serve with wasabi paste, ginger and soy sauce.

Vegetable patch Chef Chesley Chetty

Ingredients

- 20 ml truffle oil
- 100 g cauliflower head
- 100 ml milk
- 1 garlic clove
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 30 g exotic mushrooms (enoki, shimeji, etc.)
- 10 g salted butter
- 80 g beetroot, peeled
- 10 ml olive oil
- 45 g white wine vinegar
- 45 g water
- 60 g white sugar
- 30 g castor sugar
- ¼ tsp black peppercorns
- ¼ tsp fennel seeds
- 1 bay leaf
- 10 g micro herbs
- 4 baby radishes, washed and cleaned with greens still attached
- 4 baby carrots, washed and cleaned with greens still attached.

Method

- Preheat oven to 180°C.
- Cauliflower purée: In a medium-sized saucepan boil cauliflower, milk, garlic and thyme until cauliflower is soft.
- Remove from heat, drain off milk and keep milk aside. Transfer cau-

liflower to a blender and blend until smooth, add milk slowly to the mixture to create a smooth purée. Add truffle oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside to cool.

- Peel beetroot, keep skins and place in a warm and dry place to dry out.
- Taking half the beetroot, peel thin slices and set aside. Sprinkle with caster sugar and place in a warm and dry place to dry out.
- Cut the remainder of the beetroot into small cubes. Place in a roasting tray with olive oil and roast till soft. Remove from oven and set aside to cool.
- Drop oven temperature to 50°C. Place beetroot skins and beetroot slices in the oven to dry out. Remove once dried.
- Pickling liquid: In a medium-sized pot, combine vinegar, water, sugar, fennel seeds, bay leaf and black peppercorns. Bring to the boil and cook for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.
- Cut baby radishes in half. Cut baby carrots in half lengthways. Place vegetables in pickling liquid.
- In a medium-sized saucepan, sauté mushrooms in butter. Add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

- Remove dried beetroot skins and beetroot slices.
- Place beetroot skins in a blender and blend until a fine dust is created.
- To assemble: place cauliflower purée on base in a long line. Along the line place carrots, radishes and fried mushrooms. Sprinkle with beetroot dust and garnish with beetroot crisps and micro herbs.

Elderflower gin Pieter Brits

Ingredients

- 35 ml gin
- 25 ml elderflower syrup
- 1 sprig of rosemary
- 10 ml fresh lime juice
- 75 ml tonic water

Method

Items are partly shaken then topped with tonic water and a rosemary sprig. •





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Vaccinations can protect whole community

Without vaccines the world would still be struggling with terrible diseases such as polio and smallpox. Vaccinations protect individuals as well as communities against serious diseases.

African Vaccination Week is celebrated every year in the last week of April. It is part of the World Health Organisation's global effort to prevent the spread of dangerous diseases by raising awareness of the importance of vaccines.

"The Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) encourages everyone to have their children vaccinated, as this is the best way to prevent serious illnesses such as polio, diphtheria, mumps, measles and tetanus," says Dr Vuyo Gqola, GEMS Executive: Healthcare Management.

The theme for the 2017 African Vaccination Week was "Vaccines protect everyone, get vaccinated", emphasising the deep connection between personal health and community health.

"When people get vaccinated against a particular disease, they are not only protecting themselves, but are also helping to protect their communities. This is because the more people who are immune to a disease, the

slower it spreads – even among those who do not have immunity due to not being vaccinated," says Dr Gqola.

Vaccinations save lives

"The medical progress that has been made in the prevention of diseases through vaccinations is truly remarkable, and we are fortunate to live in a time when we have access to these life-saving resources. Let us not forget that measles and polio were once common, and are now relatively uncommon thanks to vaccination programmes."

One of the greatest vaccination success stories is the eradication of smallpox. This highly infectious viral disease was deadly for most people who contracted it. It killed hundreds of millions.

"Through global vaccination efforts, naturally-occurring smallpox was eliminated in 1977 with the last case diagnosed in Somalia," says Dr Gqola.

“The girls who have received the HPV vaccine will have a considerably reduced risk of developing cervical cancer and several other types of cancer.”

In 2014, the Department of Health rolled out a school-based human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign to prevent cervical cancer, aimed at girls aged nine and older in grade four.


“There is a link between certain strains of HPV and cervical cancer, which is a leading cause of death for women in South Africa. The girls who have received the HPV vac-

cine will have a considerably reduced risk of developing cervical cancer and several other types of cancer.

“We are likely to start seeing the positive impact of this campaign in the next 15 to 20 years, when the first generation of girls given the HPV vaccination will reach the age where these types of cancer are more likely to develop,” Dr Gqola says.

“The risks associated with vaccinations are extremely rare, and hugely outweighed by the risks of developing the disease itself if one is not vaccinated. Talk to your family practitioner about which vaccinations you and your children should have, as a tiny percentage of people are severely allergic to certain ingredients contained in some types of vaccine,” she advises.

While no vaccine to protect against HIV has been clinically proven yet, there is a significant global research effort focused on developing it. “We hope that one day our grandchildren will benefit from an HIV vaccine. For now, we must rely on awareness of the importance of prevention of HIV through other methods, such as safe sex and avoiding contact with bodily fluids.

“It is in the best interests of our children, ourselves, our communities, and our country to stop diseases in their tracks by ensuring we are vaccinated against illnesses that can be prevented through this means. If we work together and embrace prevention measures such as vaccinations, South Africa will be a healthier and more prosperous country for generations to come,” Dr Gqola concludes. 

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| 14 TO 16 WEEKS | Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis Haemophilus influenzae type B and Inactivated Polio Hepatitis B Rotavirus Pneumococcal Conjugated |
| 9 MONTHS | Measles |
| 12 MONTHS | Hepatitis A, Pneumococcal Conjugated |
| 15 TO 18 MONTHS | Measles, Mumps, Rubella |
| 18 MONTHS | Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis Haemophilus influenzae type B and Inactivated Polio Hepatitis A (booster) |
| 6 YEARS | Measles, Mumps, Rubella Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis and Inactivated Polio |
| 12 YEARS | Measles, Mumps, Rubella (if missed at 6 years) Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis and Inactivated Polio (if missed at 6 years) |





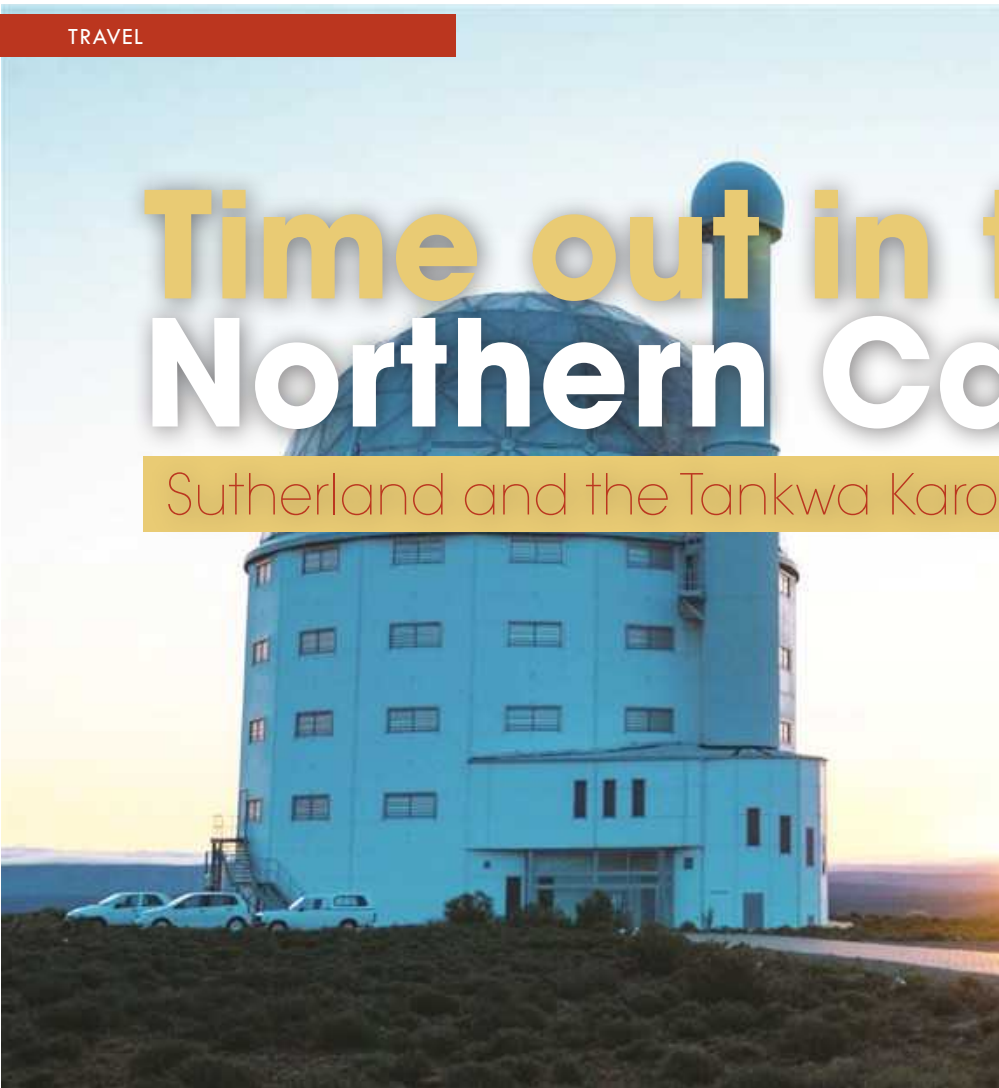
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Time out in the Northern Cape

Sutherland and the Tankwa Karoo National Park



it turned away from the sun. Slowly, as the sky darkened, it became dotted with stars; streams upon streams of them, layers upon crusted layers of glimmering sparkles that hazed and swirled from horizon to horizon. We lay back on a groundsheet and became lost in a world of shining magic. In the distance, a jackal cried. We could have been the only people on the planet.

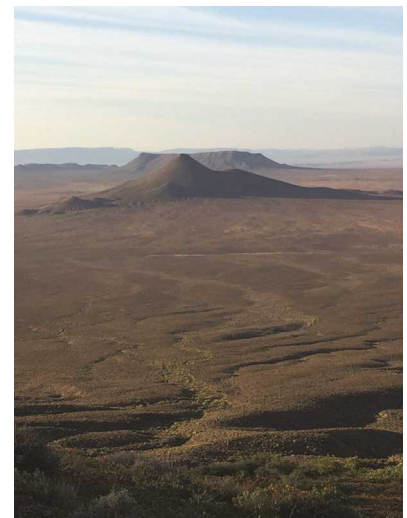
Tankwa Karoo National Park is an arid place; and one of the more recently acquired parks. Located in the south of the Northern Cape, it is a perfect place to get away from it all. Since 1986, the Government has been buying up these tracts of semi-desert land from local 

A screech splintered the air! The barn owl burst out past the gaping door. I stood in the only roofed room of the ruin, my eyes adjusting to the gloom after the bleached-bone brightness of the afternoon light outside. In front of me was a shelf piled high with a tangle of the tiny skulls, bones and fur of hundreds of little mice. We were not alone. The owl landed silently in the bare branches of a half-dead tree nearby and watched us balefully. We'd disturbed his silent world.

This was Biesjesfontein, a campsite for self-contained campers, in the west of Tankwa Karoo National Park. We'd just arrived there in our second-hand camping combi. A hot wind was blowing and other

than a couple of small mud and stone ruins, we were surrounded by flat plains rising up into distant flat-topped hills, small succulent shrubs, dry ground glinting in the sun and endless sky. Just us and the owl ... and if I stood still long enough, a small lizard ... and a beetle ... and another one ... and shimmering in the distance, a springbok.

As we set up our campsite, I wondered about the lonely man or woman who had built this mud and stone dwelling; who'd had the strength to rise each morning and face the emptiness and heat and dryness; day after day. At our campsite we made our fire, sat back with some coffee and watched the world warm to gold, then amber as



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farmers and it now measures 146 400 ha. In spring it features a startlingly varied display of flowers, in summer it is vast and dust-grey but it is always a place of deep solitude, endless open spaces, incredible nights and glowing mornings. Wrinkled along its eastern boundary are the Roggeveld Mountains with their verdant gorges and the rugged Gannaga Pass, rising up to the long white road that winds to Calvinia and Sutherland. We never saw much more than the odd springbok and Cape mountain zebra, but the brochure assured us that the park has a selection of mammals, including eland, gemsbok and the black-backed jackal.

Reward of an early start

When we woke at dawn on our first morning at Biesjesfontein, we set off on foot to climb one of the hills, about 4 km from the campsite. They are not difficult to climb, especially in the cool of the morning; but beware of the very loose shale that litters many of the slopes. The view towards the Cederberg in the west and the Oude-

baaskraal Dam in the south made the early start more than worthwhile. Tankwa Karoo National Park is one of only 35 biodiversity hotspots in the world and one of only two that are categorised as entirely arid. We were amazed by the variety and beauty of the succulent shrubs and flowers; and I imagine that anyone with any interest in geology would be fascinated by the different rocks and stones in the area.

We arrived back at camp at 10:00am, hoisted our camping shower from a rusty nail jutting out of the wall, and rinsed off all the dust and sweat under cold water.


As the heat of the day settled in, we started the fairly slow drive over the rutted road to our next campsite in the Langkloof. As we entered the valley along the Rhenoster River, the vegetation changed quite dramatically to trees and Rhenosterveld. This part of the park is obviously more popular so we passed three cars that day and shared the campsite with one other couple. Each party had their private kitchen, shower and toilet. The

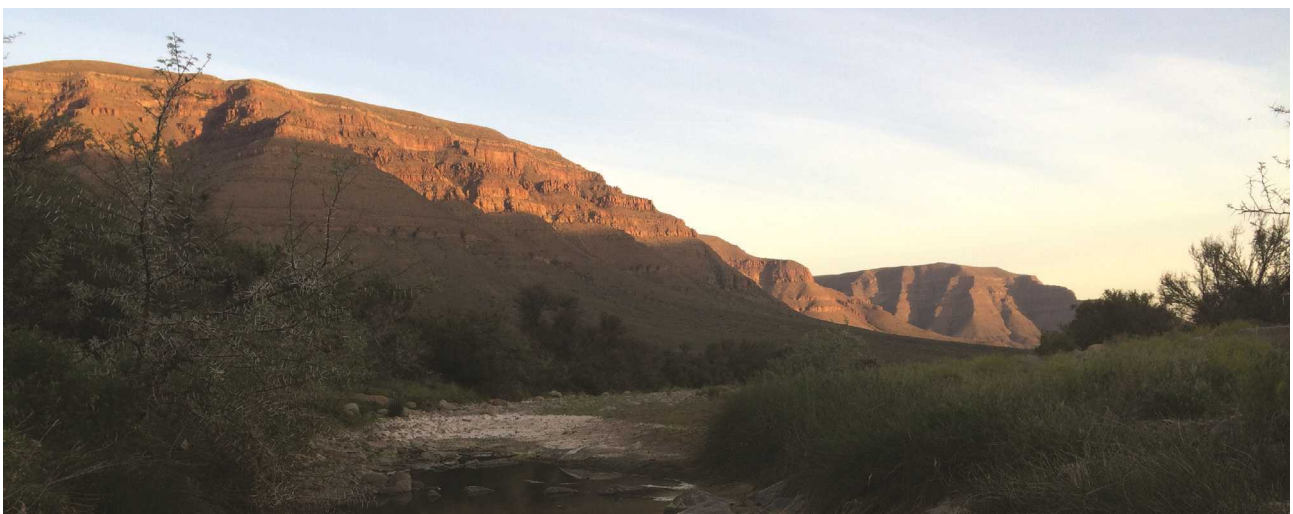
facilities are simple, but well designed and maintained. We put our chops on the Cobb, made a fire, poured a beer and watched the sun gently tinge the valley slopes and rocks with pink and mauve. Silence –within and without!

For star-gazers and snow-seekers

Apparently this valley had been given to Richard Shepard, an engineer, who had helped build the Gannaga Pass in the first half of the 1900s. He went on to have numerous children and so the simple mud and stone dwellings increased in size and number.

Located in one of South Africa's driest areas, the arid Tankwa Karoo National Park is truly a sight to behold. With so much open space, it is a perfect escape. It is also attractive to birding enthusiasts because it is home to about 188 species. Peak birding season is from August to October.

The park's headquarters are located at Roodewerf, in the middle of nowhere, and the nearest towns are Sutherland (120 km), Calvinia (110 km) and Middelpos 





(52 km). When planning your trip, be sure to visit Sutherland. This small Northern Cape town punches above its weight in terms of activities on offer, and is frequented by star-gazers and snow-seekers alike.


The superb conditions for star gazing are world-renowned. A tour of the Southern African Large Telescope (SALT) makes for a great outing, with night tours typically starting between 6pm and 8pm (depending on the season). This

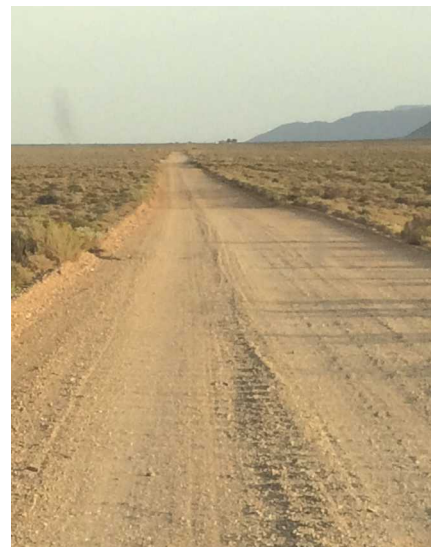
will afford you an unparalleled view of our planets and nearby constellations. Between 10:30am and 2:30am the day tours tell you more about the technology behind the telescope. The guides are extremely well qualified, making a visit to the facility a world-class experience.

Sutherland is also home to a lesser known secret. The conical mountain outside the town, known as Salpeterkop, is an extinct volcano believed to be the last volcano

to have been active in South Africa. The kilometre-wide lava ash field is still evident today, and makes for a rare sight.

The area is also famous for its record low temperatures. It is considered the coldest place in South Africa, with night time temperatures dropping to well below freezing. The area is known to get heavy snow, during winter (July to August) which is the perfect time to experience the warm hospitality of the area. Sutherland is an affordable destination if you want to see snow but just be sure to pack warm jackets and beanies.

Sutherland, the Tankwa Karoo National Park and surrounds provide a unique South African experience. It is an arid and silent world that offers the perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Why not skip the traffic and holiday hot spots, and make the Tankwa Karoo the destination for your next holiday? 





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