

# PublicSector

## MANAGER

THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION-MAKERS

PSM

NOVEMBER 2021

## Eye in the sky

Zoliswa Kabini  
ensures safety from  
the skies

## Women empowerment

Economic inclusion of  
women in the spotlight

## GEPF provides recourse

Employees Pension  
Ombud ready to handle  
pension disputes





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**government  
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Government Communication and Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# Addressing SA's second epidemic



**Mondli Gungubele**  
Minister in The  
Presidency

**U**ntil everyone is free, no-one is free..

South Africa has made great strides towards deracialising society and affirming the rights of all citizens, as well as in advancing gender equality, we acknowledge that more still needs to be done.

With a past steeped in racism, sexism and inequality, South Africa remains committed to advancing the rights of all citizens.

Despite a Constitution grounded in the protection of human rights, the country continues to face a gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) crisis, which undermines all human rights efforts amongst others with the femicide rate at 4.8 times higher than the global average.

President Cyril Ramaphosa refers GBVF as South Africa's 'second epidemic' in the midst of the Covid19 pandemic, making the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign, which starts on 25 November, one of the nation's most important awareness

programmes.

It is fitting that Disability Awareness Month is also marked in November, because women and girls with disabilities are at even greater risk of abuse and inequality, in that they face both gender and disability discrimination.

This year, new legislation and a new multi-stakeholder initiative to advance women's economic empowerment and inclusion add an element of hope to a grim reality.

The Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill, Domestic Violence Amendment Bill and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Bill have been approved and are soon expected to be signed into law. The new laws will ensure the criminal and legal system is empowered to take tougher action against perpetrators of violence against women and the vulnerable.

Another bill on the horizon, the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Bill, will establish the legal frame-

work for the creation of the National Council on GBVF. This multi-sectoral, independent advisory body will ensure that the nation's GBVF plans and policies are properly implemented.

Other milestones include the designation of 32 regional courts as sexual offences courts, the training of around 3 500 Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences investigating officers, and the R141 million in pledges raised by the GBVF Private Sector Response Fund.

While swifter justice and harsher sentences might act as a deterrent to abusers, empowered women with the financial means to make life-changing decisions are also less likely to be marginalised and abused.

To this end, the Women Economic Assembly was inaugurated in October. This initiative will foster the participation of women-owned businesses in the mainstream economy, through preferential procurement policies, among others.

Despite the advancement of women being

a national imperative for over two decades, women remain woefully under-represented in big business, earn substantially less, and face bigger employment challenges (37% of women are unemployed, as opposed to 32% of men).

All government departments, public institutions and private companies can use procurement mechanisms and capacity-building programmes to help improve the economic circumstances of women.

This, in turn, will reduce their vulnerability to abuse and violence, because they will no longer be dependent on their abusers, or be without the means to change their circumstances.

The question to be answered by all leaders in the public service is: What am I doing, in my personal life and professional role, to advance gender equality?

# COVID-19

**Help prevent the spread of  
respiratory diseases like COVID-19**



**Wash your hands often with soap  
and water for at least 20 seconds.**

**COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999**



**health**

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# Vaccination certificate opens up a world of opportunities

**T**here's a new hot-ticket item available in South Africa.

It is citizens' passport to a world of opportunities, including travel and sports and recreational events. Obtaining it is free and the process is easy.

More good news is that to qualify to receive it, you simply have to take advantage of another priceless offer – free added protection for you and your loved ones, plus the bonus of assisting in South Africa's economic recovery.

Of course, I am talking about the COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate – a digital offering that when in the possession of the majority of South Africans, will be a powerful tool.

I urge you to ensure you are fully vaccinated – one Johnson & Johnson or two Pfizer doses – so that you

can access your certificate.

Let South Africa's public service, which has played such a meaningful role in the nation's efforts to defeat the virus, once again be at the forefront of the next chapter of our COVID-19 journey.

In the lull experienced after the passing of the third wave, government – and our dedicated vaccination teams – did not relax. Instead, efforts to get as many people as possible vaccinated in the shortest time possible were intensified.

This was done with one goal in mind – minimising the number of casualties that the expected fourth wave is expected to claim and, simultaneously, racing to offset more economic devastation.

The vaccination certificate will be instrumental



**Phumla Williams,  
GCIS Director-General.**

in putting our economy on a more stable footing, because it is the ticket to rebuilding our tourism sector.

In 2018, pre-COVID-19, the direct contribution of the tourism sector to GDP was R130 billion and constituted nearly 3% direct contribution to GDP.

The Department of Health and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research must be lauded for the development of a certificate that, within days of its launch, had already been recognised by

the United Kingdom. More security features will be added to the certificate, including digital signature technology.

Public servants now have a responsibility to encourage people, be they colleagues, family members, friends or members of the public, to download their certificates.

This goes hand in hand with encouraging people to vaccinate – not through bullying and intimidation, but by listening to their fears and providing fact-based responses, or – when practical obstacles have prevented people from vaccinating – by doing what you can to assist.

If you are still on the vaccination fence, or want to spread the vaccination message, data coming from hospitals is irrefutable. Only a small percentage of people being admitted to intensive care units with COVID-19 complications are vaccinated.

Remember to keep on sanitising, social distancing and avoiding overcrowded gatherings, especially those that happen indoors.

Together, we will triumph!



**1 PFIZER JAB = half vaccinated**



**2 PFIZER JABS = fully vaccinated**



If you were jabbed with the **Pfizer** vaccine then you are **not fully protected** from Covid-19 until you have get your second dose, which is about 6 weeks after your first dose (42 days).



Look out for your **SMS** confirming your second vaccination date and go to **ANY** vaccination site nearest to you.



**No pre-appointment needed** if you are overdue for your second jab.



You only need **one dose** if you received the **Johnson & Johnson** vaccine.

Call 0800 029 999 or email [info@vaccinesupport.org.za](mailto:info@vaccinesupport.org.za) for more information.



**health**

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**STAY  
SAFE**

VACCINATE TO SAVE SOUTH AFRICA

TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT CORONAVIRUS





# SA part of global efforts to tackle climate change

**D**elegates from across the world have gathered in Glasgow, Scotland, for the COP 26 UN Climate Change Conference.

The summit takes place at a crucial time. Nations of the world urgently need to slow down the rate of global warming and tackle the effects of climate change.

The agreements reached at the global climate summit affect the daily lives of all our people.

The extreme weather events that we are experiencing as a result of climate change affect the health, lives and livelihoods of people in every country, including our own.

Adverse weather such as droughts affect our already scarce water supplies, making access to water harder and causing widespread crop failure that threatens our food security. Polluted air negatively affects human health. Waterborne

diseases are more easily spread when there is frequent flooding.

As a country, we are committed to making our fair contribution to the global climate change effort, and have recently set new and more ambitious greenhouse gas emissions targets.

While we are undertaking national efforts to achieve these targets, it is equally important that we combat climate change through local actions.

At local government lev-

el, we need to integrate climate change considerations into service delivery planning.

This needs to be in areas such as the design of human settlements, in energy management though solar water heating for low-income households, and in the use of renewable energy in municipal water and wastewater infrastructure.

A number of municipalities, notably in KwaZulu-Natal, are already piloting the use of different re-



newable energy sources such as landfill gas to electricity, biomass, biogas and small-scale hydro power. Recently, the City of Cape Town launched the pilot phase of a floating solar power plant at a wastewater treatment works.

Recent amendments to electricity regulations that allow municipalities to buy and generate their own power are expected to lead to a greater uptake of renewable energy technologies over time.

Beyond energy considerations, we are also working to advance the constitutional right of citizens to a clean and healthy environment.

Air pollution remains a major concern for a number of vulnerable communities, particularly those in close proximity to areas of industrial activity.

We have improved air quality management over the years, putting norms and standards in place to regulate, manage and control air quality.

South Africa's expectations from COP26 are high.

It is our expectation that as we are playing our part in the global climate change effort and have raised the level of our ambition, other nations should do the same.

We will also affirm our position that developed countries have a responsibility to assist developing countries to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

We will continue with our efforts to build resilience in communities, and to harness the potential of the green economy to make a difference in the lives of our citizens and grow our economy.

This includes greater use of renewables in electricity generation and the use of green technologies in water and waste management. We will support the recycling economy by revitalising buy-back centres and integrating waste-pickers into the recycling economy value chain.

Through municipal land-use zoning we are planning to make more land available for agricultural production in communities, includ-

**“A number of municipalities, notably in KwaZulu-Natal, are already piloting the use of different renewable energy sources such as landfill gas to electricity, biomass, biogas and small-scale hydro power.”**

ing for communal food gardens.

Environmental conservation and climate action have the potential for new business development and to support job creation on a large scale, including through public employment programmes.

Under the first phase of the Presidential Employment Stimulus, we supported thousands of beneficiaries in environmental management, sustainable land management and ecosystems conservation programmes.

Communities that are safer, healthier and climate change resilient are key to our collective future. Even as actions are

taken at a national level and decisions made on the global stage, adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change is our shared responsibility.

We can all make a difference by making responsible decisions, whether it is by recycling our trash, by choosing sustainable food sources, by conserving water, or by keeping our communities clean.

Each of these decisions we make has an impact on our natural world and on the climate crisis that affects us all. Let us all play our part in the fight against climate change, whether in our homes, in our communities, in our country or on the global stage.

# Govt departments champion women empowerment



Minister in The Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane.

**G**overnment departments are becoming more gender responsive and making significant progress in promoting women empowerment.

Minister in The Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, says this is

evident in the strategic plans and annual performance plans for 2020/21, which show an improvement in gender-responsive planning by departments, when compared with previous years.

"Almost all performance agreements of Ministers are gender-responsive, compared

with the previous performance agreements," she adds.

In addition, the advancement of women, youth and persons with disabilities is being elevated as cross-cutting priorities in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024.

"The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation has ensured that planning guidelines are now inclusive of the priorities of women, and guidance is provided to departments for strategic planning and annual performance planning," says the Minister.

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, in coordination with the National School of Government (NSG), has

also developed a training module on gender-responsive budgeting, which is being rolled-out by the NSG.

The Minister adds that discussions are taking place with the Auditor-General's office to initiate and strengthen the gender-responsive auditing component, which will be significant for auditing predetermined objectives and other related audits.

"A Country Gender Indicator Framework (CGIF), that supplements the implementation of the Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing framework, is monitored annually to assess the empowerment status of women, youth and persons with disabilities.

"The CGIF strengthens



government's ability to plan for and measure progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women," she explains.

## Gender equality gains

The Minister says that since 1994, South Africa has made strides in attaining gender equality and women empowerment through legislation and practical steps.

"Our progressive policies and legal frameworks ensure that women access their

rights in all spaces," she says.

South Africa's endorsement of the Decade of African Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion, the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP-GBVF) and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security indicate the country's commitment to ensuring the equality of women.

## 16 Days of Activism

As the country marks

the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign from 25 November to 10 December, the Minister says despite many interventions, GBVF and inequality remain a stubborn shame on South Africa's conscience.

"This violence really reverses the gains we are making, and impacts on the safety and security of women to full participate in everyday life," the Minister says.

The time has come for South Africa to move

from promises to action, and from plans to accountability, she adds.

"We want to use the 16 Days of Activism to look at the past year, since last year's campaign, to see what has been achieved. We want to use the campaign to report on progress," she says.

## Disability Rights Awareness Month

From 3 November to 3 December, the country commemorates Disability Rights Awareness Month.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane says a key intervention of the MTSF 2019-2024 is the mainstreaming of people with disabilities across all programmes and services.

The Khawuleza District-based Coordination Model and the appointment of district champions for integrated planning and service delivery are also means to provide opportunities for focused interventions that will meaningfully change the lives of persons with disabilities.



# J&J boosters for healthcare workers



**T**he South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) have approved vaccine booster doses for all healthcare workers who received a J&J vaccine as part of the Sisonke Study.

This comes after the

United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommended a second dose of the J&J vaccine for all Americans 18 years and older, who received a single dose.

Early this year, the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) worked with

the Department of Health, Desmond Tutu Health Foundation, Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa and J&J to provide early access to the single-dose J&J vaccine.

A new trial has since evaluated a booster dose, given at least two months after the first dose, in 31 300 participants from more than nine countries.

According to the data, vaccine efficacy against the disease was 94% in the US and 75% globally.

At a global level, vaccine efficacy was 100% against severe disease and critical disease.

"In this study, two doses were safe and usual vaccine side effects were reduced following the second dose," the SAMRC said.

## Sisonke Study

In South Africa, 496 424 health workers received

a dose of the J&J vaccine, to evaluate its effectiveness, between 17 February and 17 May 2021.

"By rolling out the Sisonke Study, we bought valuable time for healthcare workers, and were able to protect them four months ahead of the national rollout and ahead of the Delta-driven third wave," said one of the co-national Principal Investigators of the study, Professor Glenda Gray.

The Sisonke Study showed that the J&J vaccine was safe, easy to administer and provided good protection against severe disease and death.

The single-dose regimen has since been administered to other essential workers, such as educators, police officers and those living in rural locations.

In addition, more than 5.2 million people in South Africa have re-

ceived at least one dose of J&J to date.

## **Need for booster doses**

According to the SAMRC, booster shots are becoming available in many parts of the world.

"Scientific evidence on the progressive decrease of immunity and the need for booster doses is evolving and some countries have decided to offer booster doses to certain high-risk populations like the elderly and health workers or other frontline workers."

The SAMRC said increasing coverage of first doses to reduce hospital admissions and deaths during a fourth wave remains a top priority since only 30% of eligible adults have been fully vaccinated.

The results will be used to guide future decisions regarding boosters.

"We are in the final stages of approvals from the regulators and ethics review committees, and vaccination will be open to all health workers, including pregnant and

breastfeeding women who received a first dose of the J&J vaccine," added the SAMRC.

The Department of Health's Acting Director-General, Dr Nicholas Crisp, reiterated the importance of vaccines.

"Vaccines remain our most powerful weapon in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and our priority remains the most vulnerable groups, especially senior citizens or adults who live with compromised immunity in the majority, ahead of a fourth wave," he said.

Health workers who participated in the Sisonke Study will receive an invitation by SMS on the number they used to enrol for the first part of the study. Enrolment will be through the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS).

## **Grocery vouchers**

Efforts to encourage more South Africans to get vaccinated are also being intensified with the recent launch of a pilot scheme that is providing R100

grocery vouchers to those over the age of 60 after they get the vaccine.

Health Minister Dr Joe Phaahla said the pilot scheme is valued at R26 million and is expected to benefit 260 000 pensioners.

"This will be on a first-come, first-served basis," he said.

The Minister explained that the voucher will be texted to the cellphone number senior citizens registered with on the EVDS. Coupons will be redeemable at Shoprite, Checkers and Usave stores.

Pensioners will automatically get an invitation to receive their voucher. However, due to the Protection of Personal Information Act, they will have to opt-in, by dialling 'YES' at no cost, upon receiving the SMS.

"By dialling in, they'll then be given access to the Money Market account of Shoprite, which protects their money. They cannot lose their voucher and once they've registered, that money is available to them," he

added.

The grocery vouchers have been sponsored by DG Murray Trust, Alan Gray Financial Services, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Elma Vaccines Foundation and the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation.

"We hope the pilot will be a success so that it can encourage other companies to come forward. We welcome other initiatives which are still being considered."

The Minister is confident that 40% of all adults will be vaccinated by mid-November.

"We're also happy that we see much steadier and consistent return for the second dose of Pfizer. So, this is not a major worry, as much as it was pointed out previously, since a lot more people are returning," he said.

According to the Minister, the vaccination of 12 to 17 year olds is proceeding steadily, with 99 900 having already vaccinated by the end of October.

"We expect the numbers to pick up during the school holidays," he said.

# Major investment boost for **KZN**

**K**waZulu-Natal (KZN) is picking itself up after bearing the brunt of violent unrest earlier this year, and is once again attracting major investment that is leading to job creation.

Toyota and Tetra Pak recently announced massive investments in the province, which will ultimately lead to more jobs.

The first production run of the Toyota Corolla Cross Hybrid vehicle was recently celebrated in KZN, with President Cyril Ramaphosa present to witness the achievement.

The production of the Corolla Cross on home soil will result in Toyota investing R2.6 billion in the country.

The President described the local production of

the Corolla Cross as a fine achievement, adding that it is a historic moment.

The Corolla Cross is the first generation of commercial-scale hybrid electric vehicles to come off a South African assembly line.

According to the President, this development is more than simply a new model coming off a production line, it is also

indicative of the country embracing the opportunities for a green economy, country and continent, while ensuring that South Africa benefits.

President Ramaphosa said South Africa has identified three key priorities for climate action. These include Eskom reducing its carbon emissions, electric vehicles to be locally produced and

**President Cyril Ramaphosa at the Toyota South Africa production plant in KwaZulu-Natal, where he witnessed the first production run of the Toyota Corolla Cross hybrid vehicle.**





the green hydrogen economy to be fast tracked.

South Africa is one of only seven global locations for the production of this hybrid car, along with Japan, America, Brazil, Thailand, Malaysia and Taiwan, which the President believes is a testament to the skilled, productive workforce and competitive plant.

"During the plant tour, I met workers who are passionate and committed and I saw the value of the skills programme management has put in place."

The Corolla Cross will be exported to 40 countries across Africa, which will boost the African Continental Free Trade Area.

"I am advised that the company will seek to ramp up its projected 4 000 hybrid vehicles planned for next year, if the availability of batteries improves," the President said.

He added that the R2.6 billion investment by the Japanese multinational automotive manufacturer was a vote of confidence.

Toyota South Af-

rica CEO Andrew Kirby said the company has invested over R6.1 billion in the plant over the past five years.

"So, we're therefore committed to further developing and strengthening our business in South Africa."

According to Kirby, Toyota South Africa also plans to change the new-energy vehicle landscape in South Africa, from selling a few hundred to well over 10 000 units per year.

The President thanked the company for its support following the unrest in the province in July.

## Job creation

Toyota has created 575 new jobs at the plant and a further 1 200 new jobs have been created in supplier companies.

The auto industry is one of the drivers of the country's localisation programme and a significant contributor to the gross domestic product, accounting for more than 100 000 jobs.

President Ramaphosa added that Toyota is also looking at increasing

the number of new local suppliers from the global supply chain, which is key in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

"I am advised that there are 56 local suppliers for this new model, of which 16 are black-owned companies," said the President.

## Tetra Pak investment

In another vote of confidence in the province recently, Swedish multinational food packaging and processing company Tetra Pak announced the investment of approximately R500 million to upgrade the production capacity of its packaging material factory in Pine-town, Durban.

KZN Premier Sihle Zikalala welcomed the investment, saying it will create new jobs in the wake of the Coronavirus Disease pandemic and related socio-economic challenges.

The Premier said the investment confirms the company's long-term commitment to KZN, and showcases South Africa

as a key manufacturing hub, with the capacity in infrastructure and skills to serve all Southern Africa markets.

"We welcome this injection of half a billion rand into our economy, which will certainly foster economic growth and boost much-needed jobs in the province. Tetra Pak's investment will safeguard approximately 120 jobs, with an additional minimum of 20 new technical professionals to be employed."

He added that with its current production location, Tetra Pak is seeking to position itself as an export hub for South Africa and a platform for growth on the continent.

Tetra Pak Southern Africa Managing Director Stefan Fagerang said the Pinetown investment is about increasing the local content of its manufactured product by 50%, to 80%.

"The investment also supports the company's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 and its ability to serve the Southern African market," Fagerang said.

# Sergeant Kabini soars to new heights



Sergeant Zoliswa Kabini of the SAPS Johannesburg Airwing Unit is a highflyer of note.

**G**rowing up in the small town of uMzimkhulu in KwaZulu-Natal, Zoliswa Kabini never imagined she would one day become an Airborne Law Enforcement Officer (ALEO).

Sergeant Kabini (34) is attached to the Johannesburg Airwing Unit.

According to South African Police Service (SAPS) spokesperson Colonel Athlenda Mathe, Kabini is one of 10 female ALEOs in the country. As an ALEO, she takes to the skies to provide air support to high-risk units during operations, ranging from search-and-rescue missions to routine patrols, public unrest and crowd-control and vehicle, game and livestock theft operations.

She works with the police's Special Task Force, National Intervention Unit, Tactical Response Team, Public Order Police and the Counter Assault Team.

## Humble beginnings

Kabini says law enforcement appealed to her from an early age, but she never thought she would be one of the organisation's leading ladies.

"Growing up, I was surrounded by police officers who were very disciplined, professional and always available to assist the community. I really admired those individuals and somehow, they made being within the police organisation appealing.

"This encouraged me to join the SAPS as a police reservist and later join the SAPS band as a trombonist. From then on, I knew that I wanted to be part of the organisation," she explains.

However, she lost her parents, which made obtaining higher education a challenge.

"After completing my matric, life was hard. I was

raised by my father, who unfortunately passed away before I started high school. My mother also passed on after that and I was left with my siblings.

"I had no means to further my studies. In 2009, I applied for a vacancy at the SAPS and was fortunately hired and placed with the Benoni SAPS, where I worked in the charge office."

Being employed meant that she could enrol for a Bachelor of Policing degree at the Southern Business School.

Slowly yet steadily, Kabini started climbing the ranks. She was promoted to Social Crime Prevention co-ordinator in 2013, where she worked within communities and spear-headed crime-prevention campaigns.

Her next career move was definitely a step up – into the skies!

To qualify as an ALEO, a SAPS member needs to have at least three years' experience in an operational environment. Following a rigorous selection process, successful applicants undergo

training.

"In 2018, I applied to become an ALEO. Following my selection, I was enrolled in a training programme and successfully completed the course."

According to Kabini, an ALEO needs to be assertive and decisive.

"To survive in this environment requires discipline, dedication, the ability to put in double [the effort] and to multi-task. It is also important to be alert at all times, brave and calm. You need to know what to say, what to do, how to do it and when to do it."

She adds that being a female in such a physically demanding role has its challenges.

"It's not impossible, but it does require added effort. I love my work and I don't get intimidated by my male counterparts, because everything they do, I can equally execute."

"We also receive a lot of support from the SAPS in the form of counselling and mentors who can relate to our challenges," Kabini adds.

She recalls one of her

most dangerous yet satisfying operations. A police member had been shot in Tembisa, Ekurhuleni.

"I remember reporting for duty that day with nothing extraordinary happening. I was working with a female pilot, Capt Kgothatso Khonou, when we received a call that one of our members had been shot in Tembisa."

"The weather was not favourable [for flying], but we managed to fly to the area and were able to save the injured member's life."

Saving a colleague or community member's life, apprehending suspects, recovering stolen motor vehicles and controlling crime incidents makes her career rewarding, she says.

## **Paving the way**

Kabini says there will always be a need for young women to join the SAPS.

"I encourage more women, especially young females, to join the service and play their part in making South Africa a safer place."

"We need more strong women in the organisa-

tion, now more than ever. Perhaps with such changes, we will also be able to gradually change the bad perception that the community has about the police."

She says there are a variety of jobs in the SAPS. Apart from the obvious – police officers and detectives – there are pilots, social workers, lawyers, logistics and human resources officers, and more. "The opportunities are endless; you just need to be determined and focused."

Kabini says she intends to continue growing her career. She wants a higher rank and position in the near future. "I always say through hard work and consistency, everything I touch will turn to gold."

She adds that her story is proof that with determination you can succeed.

"Your background should not determine your future. Despite any hardships you may experience in life, through hard work, you can achieve your dreams," says Kabini.



# Women's economic inclusion prioritised

**S**outh Africa is on a journey to reshape its economy by exploring opportunities that can potentially change the lives and prospects of millions of women.

Recently, government, the private sector, civil society, women's organisations and businesswomen joined forces to form the Women Economic Assembly (WECONA).

WECONA's aim is to facilitate the participation of women-owned businesses in the economy.

WECONA National Convener and Co-chairperson Futhi Mtoba said the assembly will activate, coordinate and monitor government and private sector actions towards preferential procurement

for women-owned businesses.

"The initiative seeks to connect and inspire innovation, thought leadership and action, to transform value chain eco-systems as well as obtain a deep, common understanding and detailed articulation of sector-specific value-chain eco-systems," she explained.

## Economic participation

The intention is to help businesswomen identify entry points and opportunities for sustainable economic participation.

"Preferential procurement can help small firms achieve goals of equitable distribution of resources, enable sustainable

development and play a significant role in promoting gender equality and poverty reduction," added Mtoba.

WECONA also aims to build a long-term framework for monitoring and a measurement index.

Mtoba said WECONA will become an annual national programme that will include pre- and post-assembly activities.

"It is time that, as women, who constitute 52% of the population, we play an equitable role in the human and social development of our own country," she added.

Speaking at the launch of WECONA, President Cyril Ramaphosa said although South Africa has made strides

in transforming society by bridging the material divides between different races, genders and social classes; it has not fundamentally transformed patterns of ownership, control and benefit in the economy.

"For as long as women shoulder the greatest burden of poverty, are more likely to be unemployed, are paid less than their male counterparts and struggle to start businesses; for as long as they face discrimination in the workplace and confront other challenges, our vision of an equal and just society will remain elusive," he stressed.

The President said the empowerment of women is an integral part of government's efforts to achieve inclusive growth, create jobs and expand economic opportunities for all.

"The unemployment rate among women is nearly 37%, compared with 32% among men. In 2018, women's average monthly earnings were 76% of those of men.

"These disparities are



**Representatives from government, the private sector, civil society, women's groups and businesswomen gather for the inaugural Women Economic Assembly.**

not only the product of a profoundly imbalanced economy, but they also arise from, and contribute to, gender inequality in society," he noted.

In addition, 42% of children in South Africa live with their mothers only, compared with 4% who live with their fathers only. The great divide in parental responsibility translates into a great divide in economic opportunity and circumstance.

President Ramaphosa said the economic empowerment of women is not a technical exercise that can be achieved merely by improving policy and introducing progressive programmes.

"It is fundamentally a process of social transformation in which every

institution, sector and citizen must be involved."

## **Addressing inequality and GBVF**

The President said improving the economic circumstances of women equates to reducing their vulnerability to abuse and violence, adding that the economic empowerment of women as one of the pillars of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).

"By being less economically dependent on male partners, women have a better chance of leaving an abusive relationship.

"That is why a significant portion of the R21-billion that national government departments

have allocated to implementing the National Strategic Plan over the next few years is dedicated to economic empowerment programmes," he added.

President Ramaphosa called on every government department, public institution and private company to implement mechanisms to fast-track preferential procurement for women-owned enterprises.

The Presidency, working with the departments of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities; Social Development; Small Business Development; Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development; and National Treasury, has mapped out a strategy to achieve 40%

preferential procurement in the public sector.

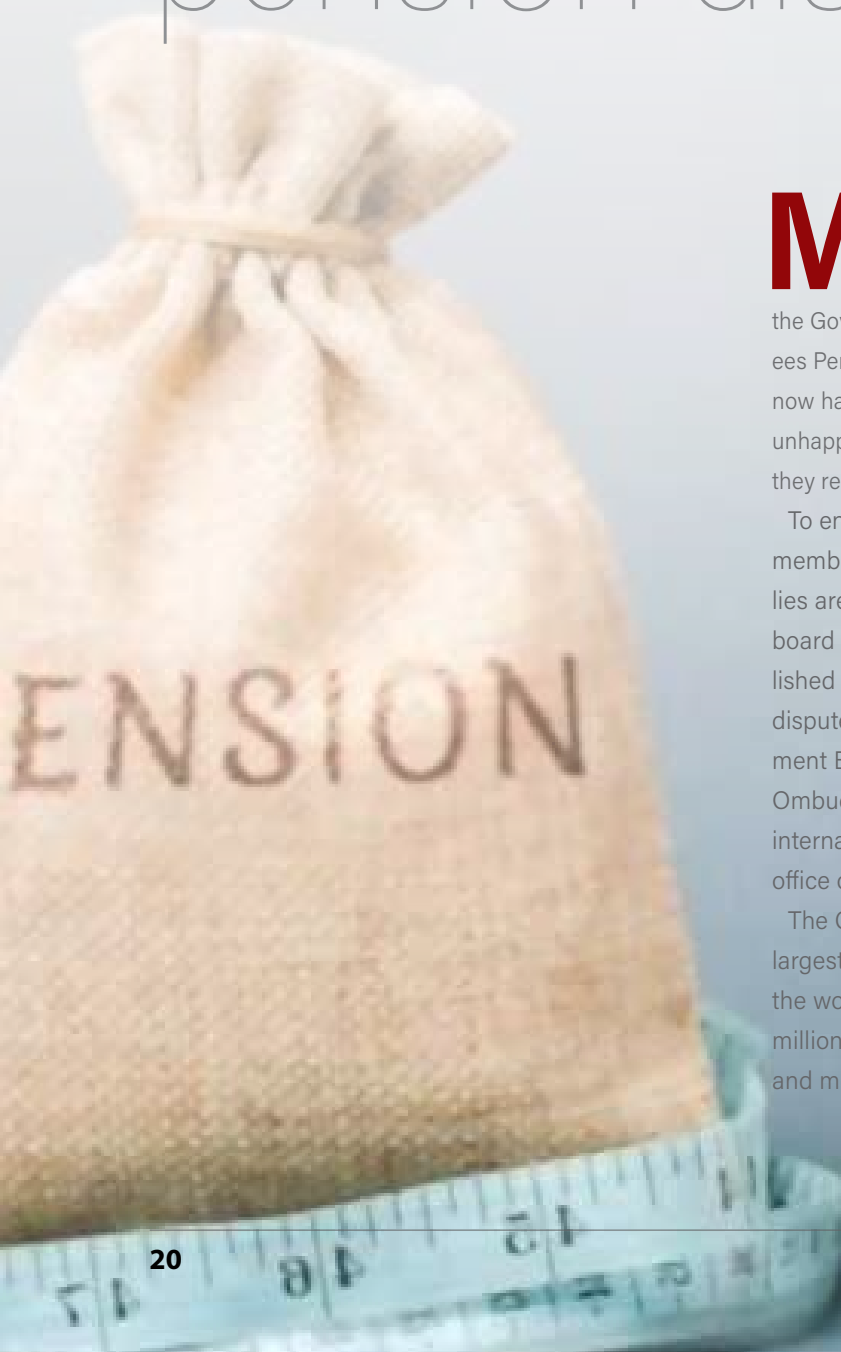
"Current public procurement accounts for 9% of the gross domestic product, which is about R500 billion annually. Of this amount, 12% went to women-owned enterprises in the first and second quarter of 2021," the President said.

He added that government, working with industry, has started building the capability of women-owned businesses to submit proposals to provide goods and services in the public and private sectors.

Approximately 1 300 women in the Eastern Cape, Free State and Limpopo have so far been supported to do business government through this extensive capacity-building programme."

These are female business owners who have been trained in compliance and registration, procurement and regulatory framework, financial literacy, marketing and access to markets, and finance and growth opportunities.

# Ombud to mediate in government pension disputes



**M**embers, pensioners and beneficiaries of the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) now have recourse when unhappy with the service they receive.

To ensure the GEPF members and their families are treated fairly, the board recently established an office to handle disputes. The Government Employees Pension Ombud (GEPO) is an internal but independent office of the GEPF.

The GEPF is among the largest pension funds in the world, with over 1.2 million active members and more than 450 000

pensioners and beneficiaries. The fund was founded and is regulated in terms of the Government Employees Pension Law.

Advocate Makhado Ramabulana has been appointed as the Ombud. He says the office was established to assist people who are unhappy with the services of the GEPF.

It will be especially beneficial to people who cannot afford legal recourse. Before people take their disputes to the Office of the Public Protector or to the courts, they can seek mediation from the Ombud.



The Ombud will intervene in matters that lead to unreasonable delays in the processing of payments due to claimants. It may only mediate in complaints that have arisen within the past three years.

Other issues within the GEPO's scope include:

- The failure of officials to perform their duties in terms of the Fund's law and rules;
- Breaking a commitment without a justifiable reason; and
- Incorrect or misleading information provided by the GEPF employees.

Before lodging a complaint with the GEPO, a person must send a written complaint to either the GEPF, the Government Pensions Administration Agency (GPAA) or their employer, and give them a chance to settle the matter.

Complainants must state how they believe the GEPF, GPAA or their



employer has failed to perform their duties according to the rules of the fund or the law.

"You must allow them 30 days to correct the issues that you identified. If, after 30 days, your issues remain unresolved, you can submit a complaint to the Ombud," explains Ramabulana.

He adds that when lodging a complaint with his office, people must describe their relationship to the fund, set out the background facts that led to the complaint, specify the dispute between the complainant and the fund, and outline the desired outcome.

The Ombud cannot accept a case if there is already an official investigation underway elsewhere.

"Within two weeks from the date that the complaint is received, the GEPO will consider [the case] and inform the complainant whether it can investigate and decide on the matter.

"If the Ombud accepts the complaint, an acknowledgement letter will be sent to the complainant, detailing the process to be followed until the complaint is concluded."

A determination will be issued within four months from the date that the

complaint is received, depending on the complexity of the case.

If the Ombud refuses to investigate a complaint, the complainant can write to the GEPO office within 21 days of receiving a rejection letter, providing reasons why he or she believes the complaint falls within the GEPO's mandate.

The Ombud will then reconsider the decision and decide if the submission is a proper complaint in terms of GEPO's mandate.

Detailed guidelines on how to lodge a complaint are available on the GEPO website at [www.gepo.co.za](http://www.gepo.co.za). Complaints may be lodged online, in writing, or via email.

**Contact details:**  
**Complaints Manager,**  
**PO Box 11005, Hatfield,**  
**Pretoria, 0028**  
**Email: [enquiries@gepo.co.za](mailto:enquiries@gepo.co.za)**  
**Phone: 012 110 4950**

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# Vuk'uzenzele

## Vuk'uzenzele Print Edition Rate Card for Government Departments and Entities

Vuk'uzenzele Government Newspaper is published twice a month (one print edition, which is also available online, and one online-only edition) by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). It is a widely-read newspaper which endeavours to carry an eight-page recruitment, tender, notices and advertisement section. This section is part of the newspaper that focuses on communicating programmes and opportunities created by government and how to access these opportunities. It is a free newspaper with selected pages translated in all official languages and the majority of the print run in English. It is also available in Braille, on the GCIS website and Gov APP.



### Media Info

Total Monthly Print-run	850 000 copies
Frequency	Twice a month (one print edition, which is also available online, and one online-only edition)
Distribution	Distributed in all nine provinces in rural and peri-urban areas, directly to homes and GCIS offices.

### Advertising Rates

Tabloid Size	2021/22 Rate (R's)
1 Page	R 89 999.52
1/2 Page	R 46 153.60
1/4 Page	R 20 769.12
The rate per column centimeter	R 288.46

### Booking and Material deadlines for Vuk'uzenzele print editions 2021/22

- November 2021, Edition 1**
- Booking deadline – 10 October 2021
  - Delivery deadline – 15 October 2021

- December 2021**
- Booking deadline – 10 November 2021
  - Delivery deadline – 15 November 2021

- January 2022**
- Booking deadline – 1 December 2021
  - Delivery deadline – 5 December 2021

- February 2022, Edition 2**
- Booking deadline – 1 February 2022
  - Delivery deadline – 5 February 2022

- March 2022, Edition 1**
- Booking deadline – 15 February 2022
  - Delivery deadline – 20 February 2022



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### Technical specifications

Full page advert size	254 mm (w) x 377 mm (h)
Half page advert size	254 mm (w) x 187 mm (h)
Quarter page advert size	125 mm (w) x 187 mm (h)
Material format (requiring layout)	Word document with logos and images separate
Material format (artwork supplied by client)	Pdf/tiff with fonts embedded
Resolution	300dpi and above
Colour	Full colour (for any other adverts) Grey scale (for recruitment adverts)

### Publishing dates

Issue date	Publishing / distribution date
First edition of the month e.g. April 2022 edition 1	1st of each month
Second edition of the month e.g. April 2022 edition 2	15th of each month

**Vuk'uzenzele will not be held responsible for advertisements published with incorrect closing dates. For full colour advertisements, the artwork should be designed in CMYK no RGB or pantone colours will be accepted.**

Contact:

Irene Naidoo irene@gcis.gov.za (012) 473 0103

Jauhara Khan: jauhara@gcis.gov.za (012) 473 0010



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# SA, Singapore

## partnership to boost the public service



**E**fforts to professionalise the public service have been enhanced thanks to a partnership that will see

public service managers receiving development training.

The National School of Government (NSG)

is partnering with its Singaporean counterpart, the Civil Service College (CSC) of Singapore, in the initiative. The two recently

signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

The NSG says the two institutions will work together to train staff at



both national and local government in South Africa. They will also share research and knowledge, deliver programmes in areas related to governance and public administration, and develop and share case studies.

"The programmes are targeted at executives and senior and middle managers. However, some programmes are transversal and could cover other categories of staff as the purpose is to build capacity across the hierarchy of the entire public sector," explains NSG Director of International Relations and Partnerships Bongani Mayimele.

Singapore is ranked in the top six of the least corrupt countries, according to the Corruption Perceptions Index of 2020. In last year's United Nations' Human Development Index, Singapore was rated number 11 in the development of its citizenry.

Mayimele says the MoU will expose public servants in South Africa to international best practices.

"The aim is not to copy,

but to inspire innovation in our own development trajectory, as set by the government.

"We are in different levels of our development trajectory. Singapore rapidly developed from a struggling island nation to one of the most developed countries in the world," he adds.

## Sharing knowledge

Mayimele says that the sharing of knowledge and lessons can help avoid costly mistakes.

"The courses assist the officials to gain insights from the development trajectory of other countries, to do comparative analysis and use the lessons to inform our strategies and policies, where applicable," says Mayimele.

Public servants will benefit from courses that tackle innovation and design thinking, leadership, human resources management, public sector reform, data analytics and service delivery, among others.

"The course duration varies per course or

programme. The interventions include seminars and masterclasses. Our main focus is on short learning programmes," he says.

## New journey

As part of the agreement, a masterclass titled 'The challenges of governance in a complex world' has already taken place, with public servants from both countries participating.

Singapore's High Commissioner to South Africa Chua Thai-Keong says the partnership is the beginning of a new journey for the two nations.

"This is important for the development of both countries and the dignity of all citizens concerned," adds Thai-Keong.

In terms of the MoU, the NSG identifies areas where the State can strengthen its lessons, and elected and non-elected public officials from national, provincial and local government; state-owned enterprises; legislative sectors; and other organs of state can attend various programmes.

The classes are currently being conducted online due to the restrictions enforced by the Coronavirus Disease. The virtual classes allow for more participants to be reached within the budget.

NSG Principal Busani Ngcaweni says the signing of the MoU is very timely for the NSG, as it is in the process of finalising the Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service, which aims to ensure an effective civil service in South Africa.

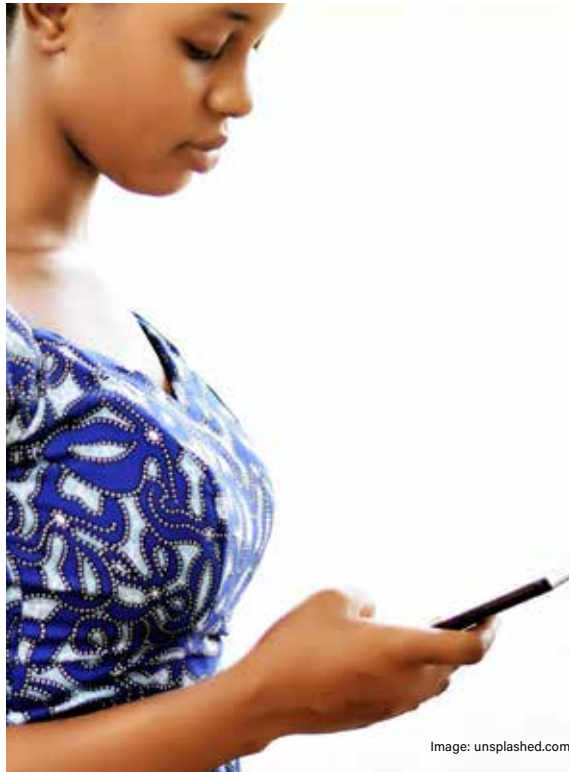
"From this partnership, we are hoping to achieve a new cadre of public servants who are diligent and committed to the national development of the country, prudent in the management of government resources, and cadres who understand why they always need to be ethical," he adds.

State entities that want to enrol their staff in courses offered through this partnership can visit [www.thensg.gov.za](http://www.thensg.gov.za) for more information or call 086 100 8326.

# Harnessing tech to fight **GBVF**

**A**s the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) continues cementing its presence in our everyday life, keeping abreast of the developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs) is everyone's responsibility.

There is no better time to start thinking of ways in which technology can be harnessed to improve the lot of women and girls, especially when it comes to their safety in a predominantly misogynistic world.



## The more things change...

The abuse of women and children must haunt those women who stood defiantly against South Africa's unjust apartheid government at its citadel in 1956.

Granted, a lot has changed since then, with the democratically elect-

ed South African Government stridently putting in place measures to foster a society where gender equality is a reality. Political will is a key ingredient in fighting the scourge of violence against women.

The commitment to draft the Bill on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) should

be followed with action. Whatever the policy outcomes, this initiative must provide impetus to this fight through effective implementation.

## Hostility follows women online

Despite efforts to improve the status of women, we have seen the peren-

nial problem of women's subjugation in a male-dominated society follow us into the cyberspace.

Troubling behaviour has manifested online. Incidences such as revenge porn (where jilted boyfriends post nude pictures, addresses and names of their exes) are not uncommon.

Women who use their influential voice against patriarchy and injustice are often trolled, with threats of rape made against them. Also, it is almost always the women who face public scorn whenever there is a heterosexual sex tape. All this leads to the conclusion that the internet has no firewall for patriarchy.

Of course, this does not mean that government is impervious to these abuses. The recently promulgated Films and Publications Amendment Act of 2019 is a step in the right direction when it comes to addressing the online abuse of women. The Act makes specific provisions to outlaw revenge pornography. But a lot more work still needs to be done and the use

of technology should be explored.

## Technology to enhance the safety of women

Many across the world welcome the advent of artificial intelligence (AI). The potential of this innovation to improve many aspects of life is lost only on the pessimists among us.

We need to constantly ask ourselves: "How can we invoke AI to improve the lives of the many left behind in the transition to our democracy?" Women constitute the majority of the marginalised.

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic exposed the scourge of women abuse. When Police Minister Bheki Cele reported that 87 000 cases of gender-based violence were reported across South Africa during first week of hard lockdown, it did not come as a surprise. It was a chilling reminder to us that across the country one in four women face violence from their partners daily.

It is high time we add technology to the arsenal to fight GBVF. We do

not for a second propose that technology will end violence against women, or GBVF. This is a problem rooted in our cultural practices, including how women are portrayed in the media.

Data, however, can come in handy. Accurate data gives us objective information about trends, incidences and locations where things happen.

Our counterparts in Egypt have been using hard data to great effect. The Egyptian organisation Harrassmap was set up in 2010. It collects stories on street harassment, gang abuse and maps of where the incidents took place.

Witnesses are prepared to attend court to corroborate victim stories. This data also helps in terms of policy and intervention from authorities and other stakeholders. This is the kind of tool we could learn from and tweak to our needs.

Statistics show that there are more than 101 million smartphones in South Africa. That means almost every household has one smartphone. Social media networks can be used to share informa-

tion and educate women about GBVF.

This same platform could be used also to educate young men about positive masculinity (as a counterpoint to promoting toxic masculinity), where respect for women is normalised and misogyny is frowned upon.

In other words, as social media today is a platform for carrying messages that are anti-women; the same tool can be repurposed to turn the tide of patriarchy and misogyny online and affirm women as deserving of equitable treatment in all spheres of life.

In rural and isolated locations, local authorities and community workers could partner to lobby for centres where women are trained in the use of social media tools and to share lessons and resources to spread education about GBVF and what to do when attacked.

Wearable technology has also become common, helping individuals track the progress of their exercise and diet. It is good to note that there is an application that sends out a loud alarm when pressed by a rape victim.

It alerts several people she has handpicked to assist in such an event.

We hope to see such applications being used, which will save women and deter perpetrators. Where smartphones or wearable gadgets are not available, a text version of such a service should be made available.

## Data costs

The cost of data in South Africa remains high, ranking among the highest in Africa. The worst part of this story is that this cost is higher for the poor, since data cost becomes significantly reduced when you buy in bulk, which the poor cannot afford to do.

Government should play a key role through regulation and best practice networking in the region and continent. The private sector also needs to invest resources in this drive. The low hanging fruit can come by way of reducing data costs by the internet service providers.

**\*Oupa Makhalemele is a Film and Publication Board Research, Policy and Advocacy Officer.**

# Cathy Dreyer tracks success



Cathy Dreyer is the first female head ranger at the Kruger National Park.

**A**s a youngster, Cathy Dreyer often hiked up Table Mountain and she knew that when she was older she wanted a career that involved the outdoors.

That desire has led her on a journey that has seen her become a dedicated conservationist and law enforcement officer.

Dreyer is also the first female head ranger at the Kruger National Park (KNP), a position she took up in May.

"I chose to study nature conservation because part of the course required completing a full year of experiential training, gaining experience in all aspects of conservation.

"After that, it was a natural progression for me to continue working in conservation and ranger services," she explains.

Dreyer was born in Cape Town and grew up in Grassy Park but later moved to Diep River.

She relocated to the KNP from Addo Elephant National Park in the Eastern Cape – approximately 1 500 kilometres away – to take up her new post.

## **Saving rhino**

Dreyer was previously based at the KNP, from 2017, monitoring black rhino and conducting surveillance in the intensive protection zone.

"I spent just under three years doing this



before relocating to Addo Elephant National Park, where I took a permanent position as the conservation manager," she says.

Dreyer's appointment came after the KNP's strategy session to prepare a Rhino Implementation Plan to address the decline of rhino in the park.

SANParks is developing strategies to protect the rhino population and manage conservation and wildlife crime more effectively. The Turnaround Plan addresses these and other key security, infrastructure and human capital challenges.

Dreyer will be key in driving these changes, bringing new energy, ideas and passion to the park's team.

## New challenges

"It is an exciting time to join the KNP as it embarks on its Turnaround Plan. At the same time, however, the world continues to feel the effects of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic and there is less funding available for

conservation efforts," she adds.

Dreyer says the biggest challenge is balancing the security and conservation functions and the demand they place on the ranger corps, within the current COVID-19 climate.

She adds that the welfare of rangers is a priority.

"Ensuring that the men and women who dedicate their lives to protecting our wild places and wildlife receive the support they deserve, will always be challenging, but it is also critical. I am looking forward to making a meaningful contribution to rhino conservation and the rangers."

For Dreyer, being the first female head ranger is all about hard work, commitment and character.

"Some of the most committed, ethical and dedicated conservationists I have met are men and women. It really is about the individual's character – it all comes down to integrity, fairness and a passion for what you do."

She adds that women have already made massive strides across all spheres of life.

**"There isn't anything that cannot be achieved through hard work, dedication and the right people supporting you."**

"I hope my appointment will further prove that one should never place any limitations on oneself. There isn't anything that cannot be achieved through hard work, dedication and the right people supporting you."

## Protecting our heritage

Dreyer's passion for wildlife is mostly driven by a need to make a difference and meaningful

contribution to conservation.

"This extends further than wildlife, it also extends to the people who dedicate their lives to protecting our national heritage.

"Conservation is everyone's heritage. When visiting the parks, people must ensure that they don't leave their litter anywhere as animals are curious and some materials may be harmful," she adds.

Dreyer says poaching, which is largely criminality involving sophisticated syndicates, is not just a SANParks' problem, but one that South Africans and the world should also address.

"People can share information with law enforcement agencies to assist in curbing the scourge. Should we match the efforts of rangers outside of the park, this will help minimise poaching," she says.

As head ranger, Dreyer is responsible for four regional rangers, 22 section rangers and numerous field rangers in each section of the KNP.



# Budget beaters

If you're watching your budget closely, but still want to eat as healthy as possible, look no further.

We've rounded up some delicious, nutritious and easy to prepare meals for you and your family.

These options are full of goodness and go a long way with leftovers for lunch.

## Tuna pasta salad

(serves 2 as a main or 4 as a side)

### Ingredients

- 2 cups pasta (macaroni, curls or elbows)
- 2 small cans of your favourite tuna (or fresh, baked fish)
- ½ medium red onion, minced
- 6 spring onions, thinly sliced
- ½ large bell pepper or several colourful minis, cut in small dice
- 5-7 quartered baby tomatoes
- sliced cucumber

- 8-10 green olives (pitted)
- A handful of baby spinach or rocket leaves
- Boiled eggs cut in wedges or halves

### For the vinaigrette dressing

- 1 small clove of garlic
- ¼ tsp coarse salt
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar or plain vinegar
- Pinch of thyme

### Instructions:

Cook the pasta in salted water. Drain and rinse in cold water. Dry on a clean towel.

Layer the pasta with the various prepared vegetables and place the tuna, boiled eggs and baby spinach or rocket on the top.

Make the vinaigrette: Mince the garlic and then add them to a mortar with a pinch of coarse salt and thyme and turn into





a paste using the pestle. In a mason jar, combine the olive oil, vinegar and garlic paste with a whisk or a fork. Dress the salad. **Tip:** Use whole wheat pasta for a nutrition boost and try salmon or baby shrimp instead of the tuna.

## Meatloaf

### Ingredients

- Vegetable oil, for greasing
- 700g minced beef or 500g minced beef and 200g minced pork

- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 2 tsp dried thyme
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 250g fresh breadcrumbs
- 50ml milk
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tsp mustard

### Method

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Grease a 1kg loaf tin. In a bowl, mix the mince, onions, garlic,

carrot, thyme and egg.

In a separate bowl, mix the breadcrumbs with the milk, then add to the meat mixture. Stir in the Worcestershire sauce, mustard and season well.

Fill the loaf tin with the mixture and cover with foil. Place the loaf tin in a deep roasting tin and pour boiling water to cover a third of loaf tin. Bake for about 90 minutes, until cooked through.

Cool for 15 minutes in the tin, then remove,

slice and serve with mashed potato, gravy and any vegetables you prefer.

## Chickpea and cauliflower curry

### Ingredients

- 1 red onion
- 4 garlic cloves
- 1cm piece of ginger
- 1 tbsp curry powder, medium
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 1/4 tsp ground turmeric
- 1/4 tsp chilli powder
- 1/4 tsp salt



- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tin full fat coconut milk (optional)
- 1/2 cup vegetable stock
- 1 medium cauliflower (around 4 cups)
- 1 tin chickpeas, drained
- Fresh coriander

### Instructions

Heat one tablespoon oil

in a large pan on medium heat.

Add the finely chopped onion and let it cook for a few minutes. Then add the minced garlic and grated ginger. Cook for a minute, keep stirring so it doesn't burn.

Add all the spices and cook for around 30 seconds until fragrant. Add a

little more oil if it's too dry.

Add the chopped tomatoes and tomato puree. Stir and allow it to cook for a few minutes. Blend until smooth.

Add the coconut milk, stock and cauliflower. Cut the cauliflower into bite sized pieces.

Allow to simmer for 10-15 minutes and then add

the chickpeas and cook for a further 5 minutes.

The cauliflower should be soft but still have a bit of a bite. If you prefer it soft cook it for longer. Garnish with some fresh coriander.

***\*Recipes courtesy of Taste Australia***



# COVID-19

Help prevent the spread of  
respiratory diseases like COVID-19



COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# Dressing down made easy

**T**here is no better feeling than the sand between your toes at the beach or splashing away in the pool without a care in the world. The holidays are around the corner and if you've putting together your holiday wardrobe, make sure these items are on the list so that you are pool or beach ready.



1. Camel straw hat, **R129.99**, available at The Fix.
2. One-piece swimsuit with tie detail, **R370**, available at Foschini.
3. Belted high waist cotton shorts, **R399**, available at Woolworths.
4. Miss Black Murano8 sandal, **R399**, available at Superbalist.

*\* Prices correct at the time of publishing.*



5



6



7



8



- 5. Polo reversible monogram bucket hat, R449, available at Superbalist.
- 6. Casual statement vest, R89.99, available at Mr Price.
- 7. Ice cream swimshorts, R150, available at Markham.
- 8. Uzzi navy flip flops, R170, available at Truworths.

\* Prices correct at the time of publishing.



# Wet and wild in Lake St Lucia



Taking in the estuary view from the beach.

Take a walk on the Estuary Boardwalk at sunrise.



There are few places in South Africa as breathtakingly wild as St Lucia in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Driving the narrow R618 via Mtuba-

tuba, across the St Lucia estuary and into St Lucia town feels like taking a step into a veritable Eden.

Here, hippos roam the streets at night, monkeys

patrol the rooftops and any number of song birds bejewel the trees.

But visitors here haven't come to see the town. Wrapping around the town and extending northwards, the inter-linking St Lucia estuary and lakes stretch an incredible 70km and more from the town of St Lucia through grassland, forest and wetlands that resound with the grunt of hippos and the rumble of elephants.

The coastline that parallels it is marked by turtle tracks, the waves are alive with dolphins and

the blue horizon is interrupted by spray from the whales.

Lake St Lucia is the crowning jewel of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. A visit to this region offers a chance to be immersed in nature - from beach to bush, wet or dry, on foot or by car or boat. It's also a visit that can be taken slowly at leisure or with enough different activities to easily stretch a weekend into a fortnight (as we discovered).

## Explore on foot

There is plenty to explore without even leaving the



Cape Vidal's beaches stretch into the distance.



town. Take a gentle stroll along the Estuary Boardwalk to take in views of the estuary and do some birding along the way. The waters of the estuary lap at the base of this beautifully-constructed boardwalk that winds its way through coastal thicket and mangrove forests, and visitors need to keep a sharp eye out for hippos and crocodiles along the way!

Then, as the sun starts to paint the horizon red, head to Sunset Jetty for the best views of the sunset over the water and reedbeds of the estuary.

Between St Lucia town and the Eastern Shores' Bhangazi Gate is the iPhiva Game Area. Visitors can hike, run or cycle here free of charge.

This small game area is home to a variety of animals such as zebra, wildebeest and antelope. It is a great opportunity to explore the bush up close, keeping a sharp eye out for hidden treasures like dung beetles or leopard tracks in the sandy path.

If it's more time out-

doors you're after, there are breathtaking beaches within the Eastern Shores section of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

Pack a mask and snorkel for the warm water and rocky reef at Cape Vidal. Otherwise, time your visit for low tide and hike for hours along sandy bays and rocky points where the only other footprints you'll find are made by nesting loggerhead and leatherback turtles (seasonal).

## By car

The waterways of Lake St Lucia divide the park into two sections, namely the Eastern and Western Shores, and are home to big game that includes elephant, rhino, buffalo and leopard. Highlights of the Western Shores include lake access at Charters Creek and spectacular views over the wetlands from the uMthoma Aerial Boardwalk.

A visit to the Eastern Shores combines the best of the lakes and game area with the park's stunning coastline and

beaches including Mission Rocks and Cape Vidal.

After dark, join a guided night drive through the park and spot chameleons by starlight.

**An estuary boat cruise is a great activity for children.**



**Cape buffalo graze on the Eastern Shores.**

## By boat

Perhaps the best way to experience Lake St Lucia is on an estuary boat cruise. Climb aboard a late afternoon cruise and be serenaded by the

Estuary Beach at St Lucia is the perfect spot for reflective beach walks.



Make time to stop at one of the scenic view sites in the park.



haunting call of an African fish eagle while you gently drift past hippos grunting in the shallows. These boat tours are guided and are a fantastic way to learn more about the plants and animals that live in the estuary.

If it's an open water cruise you're after, ocean whale watching tours launch from the sandy

beach almost every day in season.

Humpback whales undertake a breeding migration from the frigid feeding grounds off Antarctica to calving grounds near Madagascar between mid-May and December, and mate in St Lucia's warm subtropical waters just offshore.

Cruise passengers can

be treated to the awe-inspiring sight of female whales being pursued by groups of six or more males all vying for position and the right to mate.

Even if you are not caught up in the middle of the whale mating

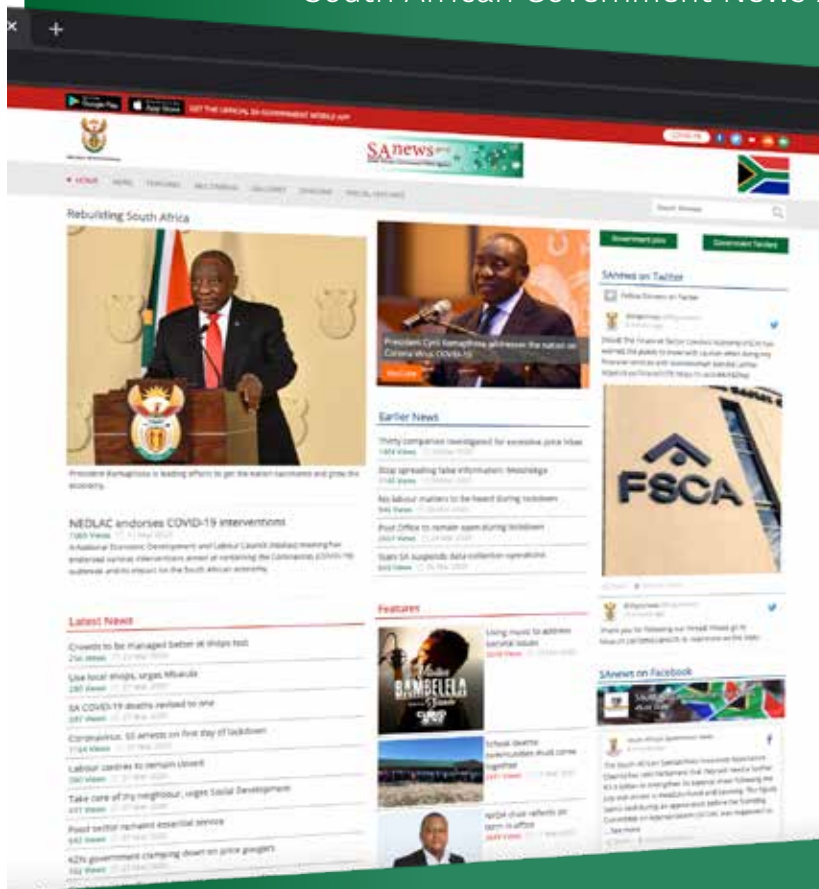
mayhem, an ocean cruise offers a good chance of seeing some of the smaller dolphin species that play along this coastline, as well as impressive views of Maphelane sand dune, the highest in Africa.

## Know before you go

An easy 2.5 hour drive from Durban via the N2 and R618, St Lucia is a fantastic place to escape to for a weekend or more. Accommodation ranges from camping to luxurious hotels and there are plenty of restaurants and other amenities in town. Visit [www.isimangaliso.com](http://www.isimangaliso.com) or [www.strayalongtheway.com/things-to-do-st-lucia](http://www.strayalongtheway.com/things-to-do-st-lucia) for more information on the park as well as tour operator listings.



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