

PublicSector

MANAGER

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Restoring public trust in freedom and democracy



Nomonde Mnukwa,
GCIS Acting
Director-General.

We mark Freedom Month at a time of heightened global uncertainty and profound democratic contestation. Across the world, societies are grappling with economic volatility, widening inequality, geopolitical conflict, the rapid spread of disinformation and growing scepticism about democratic institutions. In many countries, trust between citizens and the State is under

strain, and the principles of constitutionalism, the rule of law and accountable governance are increasingly tested.

South Africa is not insulated from these global dynamics. Our democracy, while resilient and grounded in a progressive Constitution, operates within a complex domestic environment characterised by socio-economic pressures, service delivery expectations and rising public impatience for tangible change.

Against this backdrop, Freedom Month 2026 is not only a moment of commemoration, but a call for renewed reflection, responsibility and action.

As we observe the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution, the theme "Freedom and the Rule of Law: Thirty Years of Democratic Citizenship" challenges us to examine not only how far we have come, but how effectively democratic values are being translated into lived experience for all South Africans,

particularly as we prepare for the 2026/27 Local Government Elections.

This theme invites us to reflect on two foundational pillars enshrined in the Constitution: freedom and the rule of law.

Together, they affirm not only the rights of citizens, but also the shared responsibilities of the State and every individual to uphold democratic principles, constitutional values and accountable governance.

While government continues to strengthen democratic institutions to better serve the people of South Africa, recent findings from the Human Sciences Research Council's Voter Participation Survey are a cause for concern. The survey, which explores the views and behavioural patterns of South Africans, provides valuable insights into electoral participation and is intended to inform the work of the IEC in promoting greater civic engagement.

The survey indicates declining trust in key governance

institutions, reduced public support for democracy and growing political disengagement.

Of particular concern is the finding that many non voters cite apathy, a lack of interest and frustration with the limited tangible outcomes of democratic processes as reasons for abstaining from voting.

These findings compel us to reflect on the state of our democracy. While South Africa's constitutional framework remains strong, the health of our democracy depends on its continuous nurturing through meaningful citizen participation, accountable leadership, and tangible social and economic progress.

As government, we cannot remain indifferent to these concerns. Democratic participation, including voting, is not only a constitutional right but a hard won expression of citizenship.

When civic engagement declines, it weakens democratic institutions and erodes the trust

that binds the State and society. Restoring that trust calls for collective responsibility, principled leadership and a renewed commitment to constitutional values.

Many South Africans still recall the long queues of 27 April 1994, when citizens stood patiently to cast their votes for the first time – a defining moment marked by hope, dignity and belief in a shared future. It is, therefore, deeply concerning that more than three decades later, a growing number of citizens appear disconnected from democratic processes such as voting.

As public servants, we occupy a unique and critical position in this national endeavour. We are the primary interface between government and the citizens we serve, and the quality of our work directly shapes public trust in the State.

Government's commitment to building a capable, ethical, and developmental state is central to restoring confidence in democratic institutions and renewing the social contract. Capable institutions deliver services efficiently, treat citizens with dignity, and respond effectively to the needs of communities.

For many South Africans, democracy is experienced not only at the ballot box, but through everyday interactions at a clinic, a Home Affairs office, a class-

room or a local municipality.

As leaders in the public sector, we must intensify efforts to improve performance, strengthen accountability, and entrench professionalism across

“Democratic participation, including voting, is not only a constitutional right but a hard won expression of citizenship”.

the Public Service. These actions are essential to restoring public confidence in democratic governance.

In addition to service delivery, we have a responsibility to promote civic education and democratic participation. Voter

education should not be limited to election periods. They should form part of ongoing engagement with communities. Such efforts must explain not only how democratic processes function, but also why participation matters and how citizens' voices shape policymaking and development outcomes.

Government remains committed to combating corruption and unethical conduct, which undermine public trust, service delivery and democratic institutions.

Ongoing efforts to strengthen consequence management, enforce accountability and uphold ethical standards across the public sector demonstrate zero tolerance for corruption and reaffirm government's commitment to protecting public resources and ensuring that democracy delivers tangible benefits for all.

As we move closer to the 2026/27 Local Government Elections, the task before us is both urgent and enduring. In a world where democratic norms are under pressure, South Africa's greatest strength remains its constitutional foundation and

the commitment of those entrusted to serve the public. Rebuilding public trust will not be achieved through rhetoric alone, but through consistent, ethical leadership, capable institutions and visible improvements in the daily lives of citizens.

As public servants, we are custodians of democratic values in practice. Every interaction with the public, every decision taken and every service delivered either strengthens or weakens confidence in the State.

By upholding professionalism, accountability and integrity, and by actively promoting civic participation beyond election cycles, we contribute directly to renewing the social contract between government and the people.

Let this Freedom Month reaffirm our collective responsibility to ensure that freedom, the rule of law and democratic citizenship are not abstract ideals, but realities experienced by all South Africans. In doing so, we safeguard the legitimacy of our democracy and help secure a future in which public trust is restored and sustained for generations to come. ♦



***Scan the QR code to access the Human Sciences Research Council's Voting Intention Report, which outlines key findings and recommendations aimed at increasing voter participation and informing effective civic engagement interventions.**

IEC Chairperson

Mosotho Moepya on the road to the Local Government Elections

As South Africa gears for the seventh Local Government Elections (LGE) – due between late 2026 and early 2027 – the question of the election date is far more than a diary entry.

Yet, as Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) Chairperson Mosotho Moepya illustrates, selecting that date is a constitutional obligation layered with logistical, political and social complexity.

“The election period is going to be a very difficult period,” he tells the *Public Sector Manager* (PSM) magazine during a recent sit-down interview in his office at the Electoral House in Centurion, Pretoria. “In terms of the Constitution, the term of municipal councils is five years. On expiry of that term, there is a 90-day window period”.

That 90-day window is non-

negotiable. The lesson was reinforced in 2021, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic..

“We went to [the Constitutional] Court and said, ‘this was not an ideal period to hold elections; can we postpone?’” The Constitutional Court was very clear... It said democracy requires regularity and regularity requires certainty – and 90 days provides that certainty”.

Complex process

For the coming LGE, that constitutional clock begins ticking on 2 November 2026, and runs until 30 January 2027. “Within that window lies a series of difficult trade-offs,” Moepya reiterates. “2 November falls squarely during the exam period in the republic,” Moepya notes. “It is one of the most important things in the calendar of the nation. A majority of

voting stations are schools”.

Holding an election during matric and university examinations risks disrupting learners and institutions alike. But moving away from early November introduces fresh complications.

“If we miss the early part of that window period, December is a holiday period and the issue of voting where you live comes into the picture,” he says. “People migrate during Christmas and the early part of January – they go ‘home.’ So, you are going to have displaced voters”.

University students are particularly vulnerable to being caught between addresses. “In December, where will they be? They would have registered to vote at university and they will be at home. They will be disadvantaged”.

The Minister of Cooperative

Governance and Traditional Affairs will ultimately proclaim the election date, following consultation with the Commission.

Determining the date

To avoid exams and holidays, the election may be pushed to late January – a move that carries its own political cost, according to Moepya.

“You are forcing political parties and candidates to campaign through the festive period. It is a near impossible thing to do,” he says.

The weight attached to the date decision, he adds, is amplified by the sheer complexity of local government elections.

The difference

“The national and provincial elections (NPE), which were

held in 2024, were very different to the local government elections we will hold in 2026 or early 2027,” Moepya explains.

Unlike the NPE, the LGE fragment into thousands of geographically distinct contests.

“Whereas in the NPE you are dealing with about 20 elections, in this upcoming election you are dealing with more than 4 000 different kinds of elections – and they are very geographically specific. They are isolated to a ward, to a municipality and to a district council”, explains the Chairperson.

Each municipal ward carries two ballots – one for a ward councillor and one for proportional representation. Multiply that by more than 4 000 wards and the operational demands escalate dramatically.

More contestants

Local elections are also typically more contested and, as such, they “generally raise the most conflict,” he says.

He offers a striking analogy. “When you have so many contestants – way above the positions selected – and only 884 win, these are two choirs. One is happy and singing. The choir with the unhappy people who do not win will drown out the people who win”.

When disappointment sets in, attention turns to the referee.

“The referee has to be squeaky clean. They have to stand in the open and explain how they got to this and



IEC Chairperson Mosotho Moepya.



“The level of satisfaction South Africans have with democracy is the lowest we have had since 1994”.

that result – there is no malfeasance and it has all worked out as the law says it should”.

In 2024 alone, the IEC appeared in court more than 80 times. “When it is like that in NPE, one can expect it to be a little more in LGE. That notwithstanding, we prepare for the toughest challenges.”

Declining public confidence

The logistical strain is unfolding against a backdrop of declining public confidence.

“The level of satisfaction South Africans have with democracy is the lowest we have had since 1994,” Moepya says. Only 49% of eligible voters say

they are open to voting.

“It does not mean they will come on election day – it means they must be persuaded”.

Satisfaction with political parties has dropped to approximately 18%, and confidence in the IEC has declined from about 62% to 34%.

“Are these challenges insurmountable? No. But it needs leadership. We have to communicate the work we do much clearer and wider. We need to engage with political parties, civil and labour organisations, as well as citizens”.

Strengthening processes

He is candid about internal

shortcomings, including the late withdrawal of voter management devices in parts of the 2024 elections.

“We disappointed ourselves,” he says. “The perception and the failure raised very serious concerns”.

At the same time, the commission is strengthening its technological infrastructure, including the self-registration portal. But digital progress is accompanied by risk.

Mis-disinformation

“We have seen efforts of disinformation and misinformation trying to find root. Those who abuse technology for this purpose are also a big industry.

I am challenging us to be vigilant and do better”.

Meanwhile, the IEC has announced that a national voter registration weekend will be held on 20 and 21 June 2026, to make it easier for citizens to register closer to where they live and encouraging broader participation in the electoral process.

The LGE elections come as the country marks 30 years since adopting the Constitution, which enshrines citizens’ rights to elect their leaders and hold them accountable.



Freedom Month 2026

Freedom and The Rule of Law—Thirty Years of Democratic Citizenship

#FreedomMonth2026 | #RuleOfLaw | #30yrsDemocraticCitizenship

   #GovernmentZA



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



A **NATION** THAT **WORKS** FOR ALL



Wheels in motion

for reimagined Gauteng public transport system

The Gauteng Provincial Government has set the wheels in motion for a significant overhaul of its fragmented public transport system.

Experienced Civil Engineering Technologist, Dorothy Mabuza, has been tasked with the herculean effort of breathing life into the newly established Gauteng Transport Authority (TAG).

Before assuming the role at the turn of the year, she already boasted an illustrious 27-year career at, among others, the City of Johannesburg and City of Ekurhuleni, where she led the Rea Vaya and Harambe Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, respectively.

An entity of the Gauteng Department of Roads and Trans-



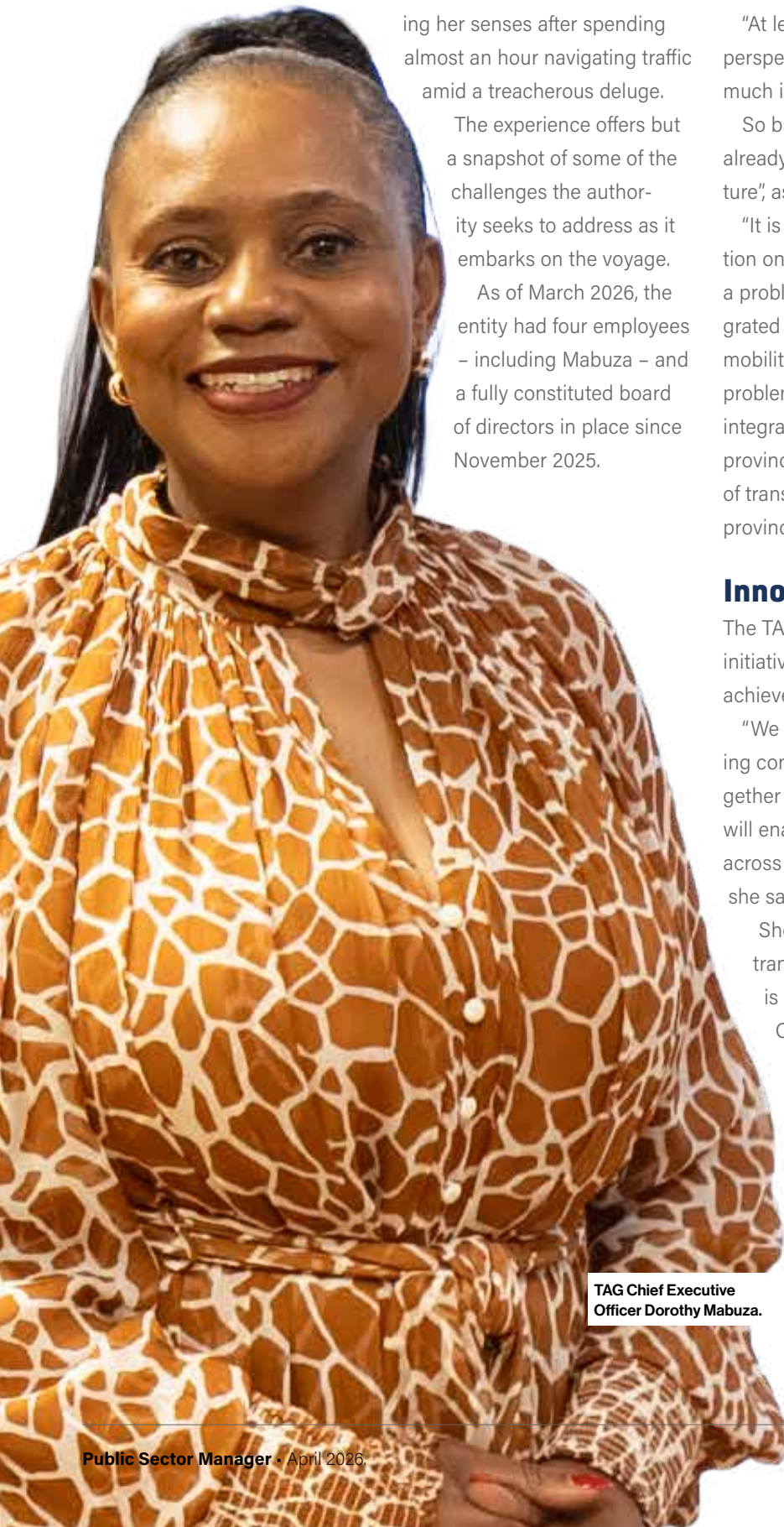
Photo: Raxpixel/Freepik

Expanding capacity can ease congestion on SA's roads.

port, the TAG is responsible for overseeing integrated transport planning across the country's economic hub. The entity is also expected to drive the development of a cohesive, accessible

and efficient public transport network in the province.

When Mabuza welcomes the *Public Sector Manager* (PSM) magazine team into her office in Midrand, she is still gather-



TAG Chief Executive Officer Dorothy Mabuza.

ing her senses after spending almost an hour navigating traffic amid a treacherous deluge.

The experience offers but a snapshot of some of the challenges the authority seeks to address as it embarks on the voyage.

As of March 2026, the entity had four employees – including Mabuza – and a fully constituted board of directors in place since November 2025.

“At least from a governance perspective, the TAG is very much intact,” she sets out.

So busy has she been that she already feels “part of the furniture,” as she puts it in jest.

“It is evident with the congestion on our roads that there is a problem. We have a disintegrated public transport system, mobility without ease. Our problem statement, really, is to integrate all transport across the province, integrate the provision of transport facilities across the province,” she said.

Innovative solutions

The TAG has adopted various initiatives and programmes to achieve this vision.

“We identified a single ticketing concept that will bring together the entire province. That will enable seamless mobility across all modes of transport,” she said.

She concedes that the transport system in Gauteng is currently fragmented.

One of the blights crippling the system was the increase in freight logistics, she expands.

“We know the impact; its fatalities, congestion and the degradation of road infrastructure because it cannot carry the load of the freight.

Unless we either expand the capacity of roads, dedicate networks for freight, or, as a strategy that we are now adopting, migrate freight to rail – at least the better part of it,” she explained.

Mabuza adds that the TAG has identified key strategic drivers that will support the entity in establishing a strong foundation.

“We have also identified matrices and tools that will enable strategy implementation and realisation. That will be your people, your systems and your processes.”

Building structures

Regarding human capital, the TAG is currently finalising its organisational structure, beginning with a high-level framework that outlines C-suite positions. The detailed micro-structure is expected to be completed by the end of the first quarter of the 2026/27 financial year.

“We are positioning the TAG as a high-end entity that will share skills, notes and insights within the transport sector in the country and on the continent.

“In terms of the systems, we are still reliant on the GMA [Gautrain Management Agency] platform insofar as ICT [Information and communications technology] is concerned, but we have already mapped out

our ICT architecture. We are building on the governance framework of ICT, which will then form the broader control environment of the entity," she outlines.

Although the entity is governed by the Transport Authority for Gauteng Act, 2019 (Act 2 of 2019), it will rely on the National Land Transport Act (NLTA), 2009 (Act 5 of 2009) to clarify and distinguish the roles of the three spheres of government.

"Within a municipal context, they are responsible for planning in their space. From a provincial setting, we have to consolidate the plans and coordinate," she explains.

Collaborative approach

In this regard, the TAG has adopted a collaborative, partnership-driven approach. Mabuza notes that the entity recognises its role at a coordination level, ensuring that the parastatal consolidates plans effectively.

"Municipalities, according to the NLTA [of 2009], have a duty to produce those integrated transport plans, which should be approved or concurred with by the MEC to enable the implementation of projects. The TAG is then assigned to ensure that



there is consolidation and coordination to enable the realisation of these programmes on the ground and to develop policies.

Plans were under way to approve an overarching strategy by the end of March 2026.

"That will be cascaded to municipalities as a framework within which municipalities must operate and align their plans," she says, emphasising that the primary objective was to create a seamless Gauteng city region. "We are taking a cue from the broader Gauteng provincial strategic direction".

Financial strategy

While the entity is currently funded through the fiscus, Ma-

buza said the TAG has begun developing a financial sustainability strategy to outline potential revenue streams.

"We have so far identified multimodal facilities integration as one of our key programmes. Inasmuch as we are commencing with the single ticketing system, the ultimate deliverable is to have that facility, but the single ticketing system should be supported by the relevant infrastructure and the relevant set-up, which we believe will bring together most modes of transport.

"We have had high-level discussions with various potential funders, and we are having follow-up meetings on the

potential possibilities for them to fund our projects.

"We are quite switched on to the fact that there might be an expectation that we should be a going-concern entity. At this point in time, we do not have a large asset base cover, but what we think can at least work in our favour would be our capacitation, the human resource part of it, from a transactionary perspective," she said.

Mabuza said the entity is also hopeful that the environmental, social and governance framework will play a role in enhancing its bankability. She added that the identified projects are being structured with a commercialised perspective.

"For instance, when we provide those facilities, what value can we derive from them through possible revenue generation – advertising, ranking facilities. It will not be your normal taxi rank; we are looking at a space that will also enable people to do various things, such as retail facilities and outdoor advertising within the very same precinct".

She said the entity will conduct roadshows and roundtable discussions on an ongoing basis to build relationships and strengthen stakeholder engagement. ♦

HARMONISATION ACROSS ALL SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT

Public Service Amendment Act (Act 9 of 2025 - PSA)

Public Administration Management Amendment Act, 2025 (PAMA)



Hon. Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi
Minister for the Public Service and
Administration.

- Aligns national, provincial, and local government systems

Standardises:

- HR practices
- Governance frameworks
- Conditions of service
- **Purpose:** Create a single, coherent public administration system



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Department:
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Breaking barriers:

Dr Tawane's journey as South Africa's trailblazing palaeoanthropologist and heritage leader



Dr Mirriam Tawane.

Dr Mirriam Tawane, the first Black South African woman to qualify as a palaeoanthropologist, exemplifies how the achievements of freedom and democracy have transformed the everyday lives of South Africans.

As the country marks Freedom Month this April, *Public Sector Manager* magazine shines a spotlight on Tawane – an exceptional achiever in a field historically dominated by men. With freedom came the call for equal rights for all, enabling many people like Tawane to pursue their dreams and break through longstanding barriers.



Breaking new grounds

As a palaeoanthropologist, Tawane studies human evolution and prehistory by analysing

“Her work draws on physical anthropology, archaeology, and geology to reconstruct the lives, behaviours, and biology of human ancestors.”



ing fossilised remains, such as bones and footprints, typically focusing on early hominins and their extinct relatives.

Her work draws on physical anthropology, archaeology, and geology to reconstruct the lives, behaviours, and biology of human ancestors.

“Obtaining this qualification in 2012 was indeed a great achievement, especially obtaining a career that is still

not well known by the previously marginalised population group,” explained Tawane.

For Tawane, being among the first to defy discouraging statistics is both humbling and a sign that opportunities are becoming more accessible – opportunities that were previously denied to people of colour.

She acknowledges that transformation in certain sectors is not progressing at a rapid pace, but notes that there has been some improvement in inclusiveness and diversity in the intake of these fields.

Heritage management

Tawane serves as the Executive for Core Business at the National Heritage Council (NHC). She oversees four key units focused on heritage management, including the Living Heritage Unit; Funding Unit; Research and Knowledge Production Unit

and the Resistance, Liberation and Heritage Route (RLHR) Unit, supervising their activities and ensuring the effective implementation of their mandates.

“These units are structured to support the mandate of the NHC which is mainly to preserve, protect and promote the country’s heritage,” she explained.

The Living Heritage Unit focuses on preserving intangible heritage in all its forms, while the Funding Unit provides financial support to heritage projects run by non-profit organisations, aligning with the NHC’s objective of funding initiatives that safeguard and promote heritage.

The Research and Knowledge Production Unit partners with diverse stakeholders to generate knowledge and advance education within the heritage sector. Meanwhile, RLHR Unit highlights South Africa’s journey to independence, documenting and sharing the story of the lib-

eration struggle in line with the NHC’s mandate to promote the nation’s liberatory processes.

Right candidate for the job

Tawane brings extensive expertise to her role, holding a Bachelor of Science, an Honours Degree in Palaeontology and a PhD (originally a master’s qualification, later converted), all awarded by the University of the Witwatersrand. When she began her undergraduate studies, Tawane was uncertain about which career path to pursue due to limited career guidance. Nevertheless, she approached her education with a desire to keep multiple career options open, demonstrating foresight, adaptability and a commitment to exploring diverse opportunities – qualities that now inform her leadership at the NHC.

“Palaeoanthropology was never one of them. The interest began when I was doing a short course in Palaeontology, and I got to learn that women, especially women of colour, are not represented in the field. Since then, I have never looked back. It was a challenging educational journey, and I guess the motivation came from studying a course that sounds so foreign,

yet the source of the research materials are the sites scattered in the country," she explained.

Before joining the NHC, Tawane was a curator of the Plio-Pleistocene collection at the DITSONG: National Museum of Natural History in South Africa. She was responsible for curating a diverse and very significant collection consisting of hominid fossils and some faunal collections.

The collection includes the renowned "Mrs Ples" (*Australopithecus africanus*), a famous hominid fossil discovered at Sterkfontein in 1947. It also features exceptionally well-preserved faunal remains, including specimens of sabre-toothed cats and hyenas, highlighting the collection's scientific and historical significance.

"One was to undertake research in these collections and publish peer-reviewed articles; thereby contributing to knowledge production in the

Palaeoscience. I also had to do outreach programmes, where I would take school learners and visitors through the collections and the museum exhibitions focusing on evolution," said Tawane.

Empowering the next generation

Passionate about sharing knowledge and inspiring the



Dr Tawane shares her passion for palaeoanthropology with young people through outreach programmes.

next generation, Tawane began engaging with youth and school children while still a postgraduate student, encouraging them to explore opportunities in her field.

During this time, Tawane secured funding to implement human evolution workshops in Taung, aimed at educating local scholars about the Taung Skull World Heritage Site, which is situated in their own community.

The workshops highlighted the site's most significant discovery, the Taung Skull (Child), *Australopithecus africanus*, uncovered in 1924 during mining activities, and also introduced students to the diverse career opportunities within the palaeosciences.

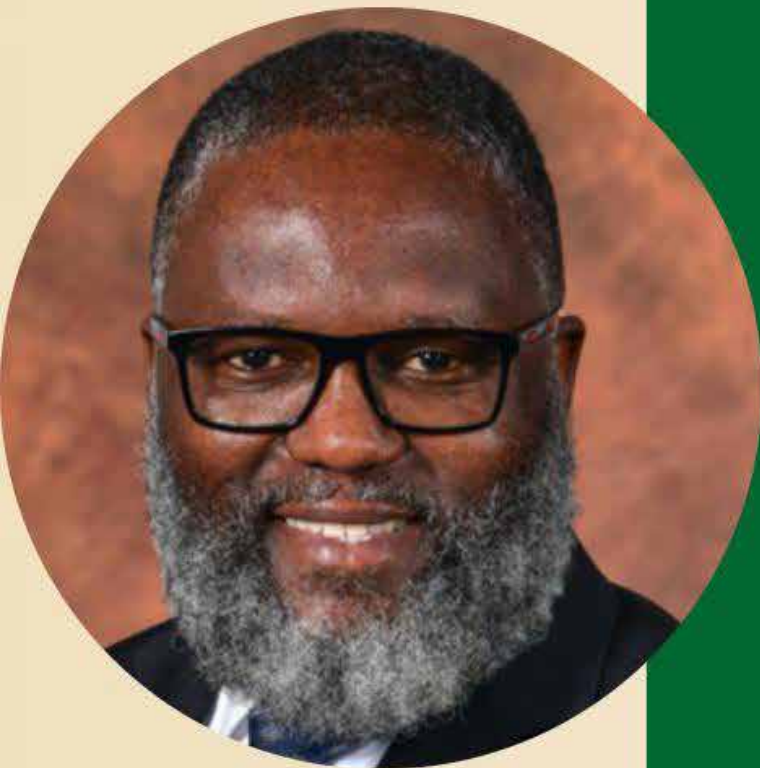
Tawane explained that when the Taung Skull was first discovered, the scientific community did not accept Raymond Dart's conclusion that it represented

a species closely related to humans, as the prevailing view held was that humanity originated in Europe or Asia. It took nearly two decades for the importance of the Taung Skull, along with other African hominid fossil discoveries, to be fully recognised, ultimately establishing Africa as the cradle of humanity and underscoring South Africa's contributions to global anthropology.❖

STRONGER ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

Public Service Amendment Act (Act 9 of 2025 - PSA)

Public Administration Management Amendment Act, 2025 (PAMA)



Hon. Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi
Minister for the Public Service and
Administration.

Ministers still:

- Approve strategic plans
- Hold HODs accountable

BUT now:

- They can intervene if HODs fail to perform
- Escalation goes to the President or Premier



the dpsa

Department:
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A **NATION** 
THAT **WORKS** 
FOR ALL



Advancing social cohesion through arts, culture and sport



The Theatre and Poetry West
Rand Main Festival was held at the
Gauteng Provincial Archives

When Mpho Nawa speaks about leadership, development and service, he does so with the conviction of someone who has lived South Africa's story from many angles as a teacher in exile, a policy thinker, a municipal leader,

an economist and now, the Acting Head of Department (HOD) for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation in Gauteng.

Appointed as part of the Gauteng Provincial Government's strategic reshuffle of Heads of Department, Nawa's

role comes at a time when the province is sharpening its focus on accountability, performance and service delivery. Yet for him, the position is more than a title. It is an opportunity to build people, restore dignity and nurture talent in ways that infrastructure alone never can.

making sure our programmes are designed so that no one is left behind," says Nawa.

"From developing women's football and rugby to hosting the Golden Games for senior citizens and rolling out disability-focused sporting initiatives, inclusion is not an afterthought; it is a measurable commitment that guides our work every day".

Gauteng's corridor-based development model also plays a key role in identifying talent across rural and urban areas. "One thing I always say to my colleagues is that we cannot set targets and then sit back and make no effort to realise them," he stresses.

"Every target in our Annual Performance Plan must be achieved, because that is how we make a direct and positive impact in people's lives".

Collaboration

He emphasises that collaboration is essential. "Government cannot resolve society's challenges alone. That is why we are intensifying public-private partnerships to deliver impactful and sustainable programmes."

For Nawa, leadership is deeply personal. He believes it is about influencing people to do positive things, appreciating those one works with, and understanding that no leader

Preserving history and heritage

A critical part of the department's mandate is preserving history and heritage. Through research institutions, indigenous games programmes and partnerships with cultural committees, the department works to ensure that communities do not lose their stories, traditions and collective memory. Annual cultural events and community-based initiatives help sustain heritage while creating opportunities for economic participation.

Transformation remains central to the department's work. "We monitor targets for women, youth, people with disabilities, the elderly and military veterans on a monthly basis,



succeeds alone. Emotional intelligence, adaptability and trust, he says, are essential.

A firm believer in gender equity, Nawa says leadership structures must reflect the society they serve not merely to meet targets, but because diversity strengthens institutions.

He is also candid about the department's funding constraints. "I fully understand the frustration of artists," he says. "Budget pressures have had an impact, but part of my mandate is to rebuild trust and create platforms for artists to showcase their work."

These platforms include market access initiatives and film incubation programmes that help young creatives connect with industry professionals.

"We may never be able to financially support everyone due to limited resources," he explains, "but we

try to ensure funding reaches township-based programmes and previously disadvantaged communities. Public funds must be accounted for every cent."

Looking ahead, Nawa believes stronger collaboration among artists and deeper partnerships with the private sector will reduce reliance on government

alone and unlock more sustainable growth.

Building people

Nawa describes his department as "a beautiful space to build a country." He is passionate about its power to foster social cohesion, nurture identity and unlock potential, particularly among young people.

"Sometimes building a country is not about physical infrastructure," he reflects. "It is about building human beings helping them smile, giving them confidence to stand on a stage and sing, write poetry, debate ideas or express themselves through sport"

Under his leadership, the department continues to support artists, athletes and cultural practitioners not only through funding, but also through training, advocacy and infrastructure, such as mobile stages, sound systems, and large digital

screens. These resources allow artists to perform professionally without carrying heavy production costs.

Background

Born and raised in Mohlakeng, Randfontein, Nawa's early life was rooted in community and education. He completed both his primary and high school education there before political circumstances forced him into exile – a defining chapter that shaped his worldview and commitment to public service.

His journey took him across several African countries, including Zambia, Tanzania, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, exposing him to diverse cultures, systems of governance and educational philosophies.

It was in Nigeria, where he began his professional life, training as a teacher. Teaching, he says, laid the foundation for his lifelong belief in human development as the cornerstone of nation-building. He later returned to South Africa and

pursued further studies in the Western Cape, completing a junior degree, before moving to Zimbabwe to undertake a Master's programme at the Southern

Photo: Supplied

Acting HOD for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation in Gauteng, Mpho Nawa.

African Policy Studies Institute. His academic journey continued at the University of the Witwatersrand, where he deepened his expertise in economics and policy.

Nawa's career reflects a rare blend of activism, scholarship and governance. He worked for Transparency International, a non-governmental organisation focusing on anti-corruption advocacy and policy development.

Through this experience, Nawa developed a deeper understanding of ethical leadership and accountability. From there, he entered local government, where he spent more than 15 years shaping policy and service delivery at municipal level. He served as Speaker and Chief Whip in local government before becoming District Mayor of what is now Mogale City.

His leadership saw him elected as Deputy National President of the South African Local Government Association, where he participated actively in global local government movements and networks, representing South African municipalities on international platforms and participated in global government networks.

Nawa has had an extensive career in economic development



and government administration. He served as Deputy Director-General in both the Mpumalanga and Gauteng Departments of Economic Development and held advisory roles within various provincial departments, including the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

In addition, he served as Head of Economic Research and Chief Economist for the City of Johannesburg, and later as a Lead Economist at the Land Bank – roles that strengthened his expertise in economic systems, development finance, and inclusive growth. ❖



SA's Investment Prospects Buoyed by Economic Recovery

This week we will be welcoming delegates from more than 50 countries to the sixth South Africa Investment Conference (SAIC) in Sandton, Gauteng.

Since its inception in 2018, the SAIC has grown to become a premier global forum for showcasing the attractiveness of investment opportunities in our country to domestic and international investors.

Investment conferences play a key role in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) as high profile platforms that connect international investors with local opportunities. They also facilitate strong partnerships by bringing together governments, business, banks and development finance institutions.

As investors look to destinations that have demonstrated resilience in the face of increasingly volatile global financial



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INVESTMENT CONFERENCE
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conditions, South Africa presents a favourable proposition.

We are Africa's largest economy with a diversified industrial base. Since we began our first R1,2 trillion investment mobilization drive in 2018, we have secured investment pledges in mining, healthcare, automotive, food and beverage and others, reflecting the sophistication of our economy.

South Africa is also the leading destination for renewable energy investment on the continent, with these investments making up a considerable

share of the total pledges made at previous conferences.

We have a sound policy and regulatory environment, offering certainty to investors at a time when we are just one of many emerging markets across the globe vying for capital.

We are also a gateway for businesses looking to set up or expand their operations in Africa.

Through this conference, as well as the five preceding ones, we will be seeking to build even greater confidence in our country as an investment destination, and to demonstrate our commit-

ment to structural reform, policy certainty and policy execution.

The green shoots of economic recovery we are experiencing further bolster our position.

The macroeconomic outlook has improved. We experienced four consecutive quarters of growth by the end of 2025, national debt has stabilized and more jobs are being created.

Last year, our sovereign rating was upgraded for the first time in 17 years, and we were removed from the Financial Action Task Force grey list.

The structural reform agenda

being driven through Operation Vulindlela has unlocked progress in electricity, freight logistics, water, telecommunications, and the visa system.

We have brought load-shedding to an end and are creating a new, competitive electricity market that will ensure energy security and attract investment.

The country's logistics sector is being rapidly modernised, and we are enabling private investment in port and rail operations.

Among the projects for which we have initiated a Private Sector Participation (PSP) process

are the Ngqura Manganese Export Corridor in the Eastern Cape and the Richards Bay Dry Bulk Terminal in KwaZulu-Natal.

Last year we also signed a 25-year concession for the Durban Container Terminal Pier 2, representing R11 billion in private investment.

A system for third-party access to the freight rail network is in place and 41 freight rail slots have been allocated to private companies.

We have implemented reforms to the visa regime to attract new skills and promote tourism. These include operationalising the Remote Work Visa, introducing a Trusted Employer Scheme to support major investors, and piloting an Electronic Travel Authorisation system.

By showcasing the progress and durability of the reform agenda, our goal is to grow the pool of inward investment from businesses and countries that will ultimately be a bridge to new markets, technologies and networks for South Africa. This year's conference has to date attracted more than 1 000 delegates from more than 50 countries.

At the end of our first five-year investment mobilisation drive in 2024 we exceeded our target by 26 per cent, securing pledges valued at R1,57 trillion. Over 300

By showcasing the progress and durability of the reform agenda, our goal is to grow the pool of inward investment from businesses and countries that will ultimately be a bridge to new markets, technologies and networks for South Africa.



projects were initiated and to date, 161 of these have been finalized or are under construction.

The pledges have not been merely vague commitments and promises, but have materialised as tangible, brick-and-mortar projects that are creating jobs for our people.

Last year I opened the Platreef Mine in Mokopane in Limpopo that is positioned to play a leading role in the production of sought-after critical minerals for the energy transition.

This facility that employs

more than 2 000 workers from the local community and is partly owned by a community trust, emanated from a R2,8 billion investment pledge by Ivanhoe Mines at the South Africa Investment Conference in 2022.

Last year I also visited the BMW plant in Rosslyn in Tshwane where the automotive giant has invested R4,2 billion for electrification of its only plant

on the continent that will be producing the BMW X3 Plug-in Hybrid electric vehicle. This was also an investment pledged at the SAIC.

By showcasing our unique and favourable proposition as an investment destination of choice, we have set ourselves the goal of mobilising R2 trillion in new investments by 2028.

As we strive to achieve growth that creates jobs for our people, this next phase will move from pledges towards implementation.

This year's investment conference stands at the crossroads of opportunity and ambition.

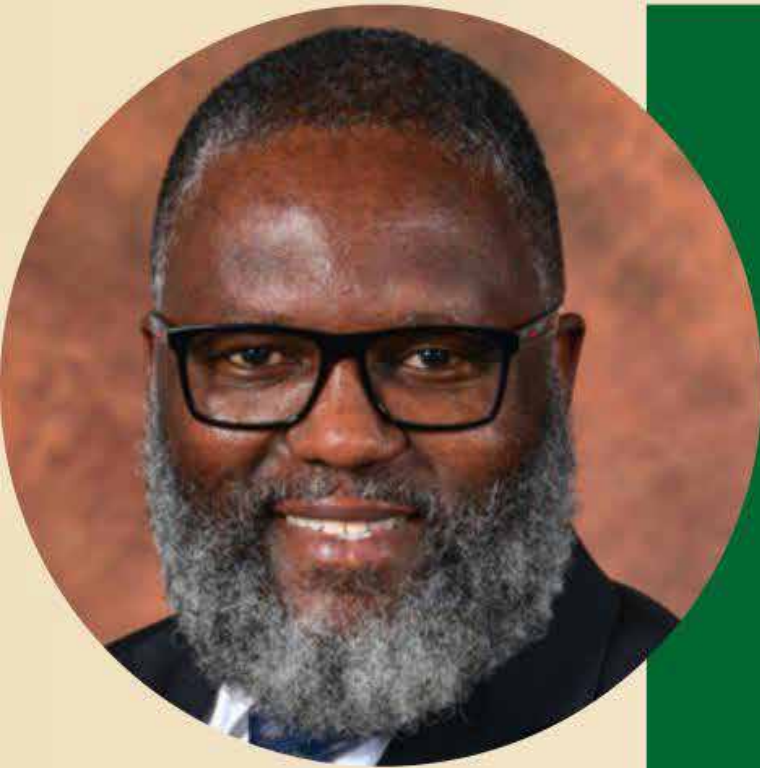
The clear message we will be delivering is that we remain committed to staying the course on fiscal discipline, to accelerating the momentum of the reform agenda – and to leveraging investment to build an economy that is inclusive, transformed and that benefits all.

****This message was first published on 30 March 2026***

WHY THIS MATTERS

Public Service Amendment Act (Act 9 of 2025 - PSA)

Public Administration Management Amendment Act, 2025 (PAMA)



Hon. Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi
Minister for the Public Service and
Administration.

- Strengthens **accountability**
- Improves **efficiency in government**
- Builds a **capable and ethical public service**
- Supports a **professional and development-oriented state**



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Public Service and Administration
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SALGA envisages more coalitions post-2026 municipal elections



Photo: GCIS/Kopano Tlape

SALGA President Bheke Stofile.

With the 2026 Local Government Elections approaching, the President of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Bheke Stofile envisages that there will be an increase in coalition governments across municipalities. Speaking to *Public Sector Manager* (PSM) magazine, Stofile said the country must prepare

for an increase in coalition governments.

He highlighted that although coalitions are not a new phenomenon, prevalence in municipalities has grown significantly over the years. Stofile added

that, through a coalition framework developed by SALGA in collaboration with the Dullah Omar Institute and the University of the Western Cape, the association is well prepared to navigate coalition governments.

The framework offers practical, implementable guidelines for political parties and independent councillors in coalition governments to resolve challenges of instability and encourage cooperation in coalitions.

It outlines clear mechanisms to help structure and manage coalitions effectively in practice, covering the formation of coalitions and their ongoing governance.

The framework also acknowledges that instability within local coalition can have serious consequences. It may hinder a municipality's ability to adopt policies and by-laws, make senior management appointments or



Photo: City of Ekurhuleni

Coalitions in local government can affect service delivery in communities.

pass a budget. Ultimately, such instability undermines the municipal administration's capacity to deliver essential services to local communities.

Collaborating for smooth elections

To help ensure the smooth running of the upcoming local government elections, Stofile said SALGA's role includes advocating for and encouraging its member municipalities to work closely with the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC). He explained that municipalities provide key support to the electoral process, including voting

facilities and certain materials such as ballot papers.

"Through this, we believe that we are contributing to entrenching democracy in our country," said Stofile.

Voter turnout

He urged South Africans to turn out in large numbers to register and to exercise their constitutional right to choose their leaders.

The IEC has announced that voter registration will take place on 20 and 21 June 2026.

Amid a steady decline in voter turnout in South Africa over the years, Stofile acknowledged the

public's waning interest and growing mistrust of government institutions.

He noted that declining voter participation directly undermines democracy and the selection of representatives. He cautioned that if the trend persists, it could place significant strain on all spheres of government, leaving many citizens without a voice in choosing leaders tasked with driving transformation in their communities and enhancing living conditions.

Serving the people

To address this, he urged local government officials to serve the

public diligently and responsibly.

"We must work hard to address the service delivery challenges that are facing our communities. If you do not serve our people with credibility and integrity, the purse that pays for those services and your salary is going to dwindle," he said.

"All of us are in government for one purpose: changing the lives of citizens for the better. We believe that we can achieve this with the collaborative efforts from all spheres of government. We wish for those who work in municipalities to take their jobs as a call to serve," he added.

Fighting corruption

At the heart of service delivery challenges in municipalities, Stofile said, is persistent corruption, which has wide-ranging effects on government performance and the country's development.

"The issue of fighting corruption in municipalities also needs a multi-disciplinary approach that involves SALGA, various spheres of government and political parties because that is where elected leaders come from," he said.

One way SALGA supports municipalities in combating corruption is through its collaboration with the Ethics Institute, an independent public organisation

that provides original thought leadership, services and products focused on organisational ethics.

The collaboration is designed to promote ethical behaviour among public representatives and municipal officials, while also encouraging political parties to implement programmes that foster ethical conduct.

"If this succeeds, I believe we can turn a tide regarding municipalities that are embroiled in corrupt activities," he said.

Overcoming local government challenges

Stofile emphasised that municipalities cannot overcome their

challenges alone and reiterated the importance of collaboration across all spheres of government. He highlighted that municipalities can be empowered through several key mechanisms, including:

- reforming the funding model to ensure municipalities receive a fair share of resources and have access to innovative financing;
- professionalising local government by protecting technical roles from political interference, investing in skills development and promoting ethical leadership;
- building genuine partnerships with banks, insurers and the South African

Revenue Service to support revenue collection and financial sustainability; and

- aligning national, provincial and local plans to eliminate duplication and ensure that every rand spent delivers maximum impact.

SALGA has a constitutional mandate to transform local government, enabling it to fulfil its developmental role. Representing all 257 municipalities, its core responsibilities include lobbying for and protecting the interests of local government in intergovernmental relations, acting as an employer organisation, and building capacity within municipalities. ♦



Photo: City of Joburg

DECENTRALISATION OF POWER

Public Service Amendment Act (Act 9 of 2025 - PSA)

Public Administration Management Amendment Act, 2025 (PAMA)



Hon. Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi
Minister for the Public Service and
Administration.

- Administrative powers are moved from **Ministers to Heads of Department (HODs)**

This is meant to:

- Speed up decision-making
- Reduce political bottlenecks
- Professionalise administration



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Record investment

pledges a turning point for South Africa's economy

South Africa has entered a new phase of growth, with the country securing the highest-ever investment commitments at the 2026 South Africa Investment Conference (SAIC).

Closing the conference in Sandton on 31 March, President Cyril Ramaphosa said the scale of pledges both in value and number of projects, marked a significant milestone since the launch of the investment drive in 2018.

"The cumulative value of the pledges made at this conference are the highest we have achieved since the first South Africa Investment Conference. It is also the highest number of projects.

"Much of this is domestic capital, demonstrating the strong and growing confidence of South African investors in our own economy," the President said.

The large share of the commitments from domestic investors was complemented by a sharp rise in foreign direct investment and participation from development finance institutions.

Investing across the country

The President said the breadth of investments across all nine provinces

demonstrates that growth is no longer concentrated but increasingly distributed across the country's economic landscape.

Major announcements included a R10.4 billion investment by Toyota in KwaZulu-Natal to support the automotive sector's energy transition, while Sasol committed R60 billion to modernising operations in Mpumalanga and the Free State.

Other investments span mining, renewable energy, infrastructure and global business services including projects expected to create thousands of jobs, such as Teleperformance's

R145 million investment set to generate 2 600 employment opportunities.

"These investments span across all nine provinces, affirming their potential as engine rooms of growth," President Ramaphosa said.

Investor confidence

Beyond the figures, the President highlighted South Africa's structural advantages, including a sophisticated financial sector, advanced infrastructure, abundant renewable energy resources and a youthful population.

He also underscored the

importance of the country's constitutional democracy, noting that the rule of law remains a cornerstone for investor confidence.

"South Africa's investment case is not in doubt, and the reform agenda has proven to be consistent and measurable," he said.

However, the President cautioned that while sentiment has improved, the country must now translate commitments into tangible economic activity.

"As we leave this conference, let us carry forward the momentum. This is just the start - we

still have much farther to go. Let us turn commitments into projects on the ground and translate plans to progress," he said.

The President reiterated government's ambition to double fixed investment levels over time, as part of efforts to unlock faster and more inclusive economic growth.

"South Africa is rising. Those who see our economy's potential and invest now will be rewarded in years to come. We look forward to walking this journey of growth and change with you until the next investment conference," the President said. ♦





THE
CREATIVE
BIZ NEXUS
2026

Small Business Development Minister Stella Ndabeni addressing the CreativeBiz Nexus event in Durban.

Constitutional rights in action: CreativeBiz Nexus empowers South Africa's entrepreneurs

As the country commemorates Freedom Month, government is in the process of reinforcing the rights of entrepreneurs in the creative sector, recognising them as key drivers of innovation, culture and economic growth. Through the CreativeBiz Nexus; micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)

in the creative economy are receiving targeted support to scale, commercialise, and compete in a rapidly evolving market.

The initiative draws on insights from the Creative Sector Engagement held in Limpopo in September 2025, where industry stakeholders called for a structured, coordinated and sustained

platform to support creative enterprises. The engagement revealed persistent challenges, including limited market access, weak intellectual property protection, and gaps in commercialisation that hinder the growth of creative MSMEs.

Administered by the Department of Small Business Devel-

opment (DSBD) in partnership with the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDFA), CreativeBiz Nexus connects talent, enterprise, policy and investment – creating a collaborative ecosystem designed to unlock sustainable growth in the sector.

By providing a consultative,

solutions-driven platform, the initiative not only strengthens the commercial viability of creative enterprises but also reinforces their role as catalysts for economic development, job creation, and cultural expression across South Africa, aligning with the freedoms and opportunities enshrined in the Constitution.

Government support

Small Business Development Minister Stella Ndabeni recently hosted a consultative engagement for the creative sector at the Durban International Convention Centre in KwaZulu-Natal. She explained that the CreativeBiz Nexus initiative was developed in direct response to stakeholders' calls for more coordinated support. The en-

gagement was aimed at bringing together creative practitioners, entrepreneurs and ecosystem partners to explore opportunities across the entire creative value chain.

It also was aimed at identifying barriers to entry and growth for creative MSMEs. Stakeholders across music, arts and crafts, film, television and digital content, as well as fashion and design directly engaged policymakers and enterprise development ecosystem partners at this catalytic gathering.

Addressing attendants, the Minister said the work they do including producing music, creating films, writing books, animating characters, designing brands, and building digital worlds is not simply art, but entrepreneurship, intellectual

property and economic participation.

Constitutional right

"[Your work] is protected by one of the most powerful guarantees in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. Section 22 declares: 'Every citizen has the right to choose their trade, occupation or profession freely'".

She added that Section 22 serves as the constitutional foundation for entrepreneurship. As the country commemorates 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution, the Minister highlighted that in today's digital era, Section 22 empowers innovators – such as prompt engineers – to establish enterprises that influence the development and outputs of tomorrow's arti-

cial intelligence systems.

The Minister further emphasised that Section 22 underscores the principle that economic participation is a right, not a privilege and that government has a duty to uphold this right by providing enabling systems.

"The promise of Section 22 cannot remain theoretical. It must translate into real opportunities for entrepreneurs. This is the responsibility of the DSBD [Department of Small Business Development] whose mission is to create an enabling environment in which MSMEs and co-operatives can start, grow and thrive," she said.

Financing the creative sector

Minister Ndabeni acknowledged that creative entrepreneurs face unique challenges as their assets are often intangible – ideas, music, designs, stories, characters, publishing catalogues and prompt libraries.

"Traditional finance often fails to recognise these assets. That is why we are exploring the creation of a creative sector fund, which is designed to recognise intellectual property as capital. Because when we invest in creativity, we invest in industries that can generate global value for



The CreativeBiz Nexus event connected creative entrepreneurs with investors and policy makers to boost the creative industry.

decades,” she explained.

Creatives also face challenges such as limited market access, weak intellectual property protection, inadequate infrastructure and difficulties with scalability and commercialisation.

Strengthening support

Over the past few years, the DSBD has taken significant steps to strengthen the MSME ecosystem. These efforts include amending the National Small Enterprise Act, 1996 (Act 102 of 1996) to modernise the institutional framework that supports entrepreneurs.

“Through this amendment, we

established the SEDFA, integrating financing and development support under one structure.

This ensures that entrepreneurs receive not only funding, but also mentorship, market access and development support,” the Minister explained.

“We are advancing the Business Licensing Bill to simplify licensing across municipalities. Too many entrepreneurs struggle not because their ideas are weak, but because the regulatory environment is complicated.”

Additionally, the department is collaborating with provinces and municipalities to eliminate unnecessary obstacles through its Red Tape Reduction Programme. It is also reinforcing the Office of the Small Enterprise

Ombud to safeguard MSMEs against unfair practices and late payments.

Through its Township and Rural Economic Development programmes, the department ensures that entrepreneurship flourishes beyond metropolitan areas, affirming that the right to choose a trade applies in every corner of the country.

VAT relief for MSMEs

The National Treasury has also addressed the concerns of small businesses. Recent fiscal measures provide VAT relief for MSMEs, including raising the VAT registration threshold so that many smaller enterprises no longer need to register, simplifying VAT filing for micro-businesses, and accelerating VAT refunds to improve cash flow.

“For a writers’ cooperative, an animation studio, a design agency or an independent

publisher, these changes make a real difference. Less time on administration, and more time on creation. This is how we give practical meaning to Section 22,” she added.

The National Development Plan 2030, recognises MSMEs as a key engine of job creation. Minister Ndabeni reiterated that, by 2030, most new jobs should come from small enterprises, as MSMEs democratise economic participation and transform job seekers into job creators. She added that government aims to support more than one million MSMEs and cooperatives during the 7th Administration.

Creativity and social cohesion

Minister Ndabeni believes that creative industries do more than generate revenue because they build identity, strengthen unity, and shape perceptions. In this way, creative entrepreneurs contribute not only to the economy but also to the nation’s social and cultural fabric.

She added that entrepreneurs must have the ability to create, monetise and export digitally so that they can scale their businesses on a global level. ♦

For more information, visit: www.dsbd.gov.za and www.sedfa.org.za

Artists gathered at the CreativeBiz Nexus to discuss challenges faced in the creative industry.

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Writer: More Matshediso
Photos: Proudly South African

Driving economic resilience through localisation

Efforts to strengthen South Africa's local economy and supply chains received a significant boost at the 2026 Proudly South African (Proudly SA) Buy Local Summit and Expo. The annual event, held on 16 – 17 March at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, showcased initiatives aimed at promoting domestic production and supporting local businesses.

A highlight of the summit was the Automotive Industry Transformation Fund's (AITF) pledge of R1 billion to enhance local production capacity. Established by multinational automotive original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), the AITF seeks to expand inclusive participation across the automotive sector value chain, fostering growth and innovation within the industry.

This commitment was among 12 key pledges unveiled at the summit to accelerate enterprise and supplier development. The initiatives are designed to particularly benefit micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises that manufacture and utilise locally produced goods, reinforcing South Africa's push towards economic self-reliance.

The R1 billion localisation commitment adds to the R6 billion already secured since the programme's inception in 2018.

Inclusive economy

Announcing the latest pledge, AITF Chief Executive Officer Jabulani Selumane emphasised that localisation is not merely a policy goal, but a strategic imperative essential to ensuring the long-term

Minister Stella Ndabeni addresses delegates at the summit.

competitiveness and sustainability of the automotive sector.

“As part of this commitment, the AITF is working with industry, partners and stakeholders to unlock approximately R1 billion in funding, focusing on localisation and investment over the next four years,” said Selumane.

He added that the investment will focus on strengthening the capabilities of local manufacturers, enhancing supplier competitiveness and broadening the participation of black-owned enterprises across the secondary value chain.

Selumane noted that, collectively, these efforts reinforce the AITF’s commitment to building a robust local supplier base, ensuring that a greater share of automotive components is manufactured locally. He emphasised that the impact of these localisation initiatives extends far beyond financial investment.

“By strengthening supplier capabilities and strengthening participation in automotive value chains, they are helping to create new employment opportunities, supporting industrial entrepreneurs, as well as retaining existing jobs within the South African manufacturing ecosystem,” he said.

Growing confidence

Proudly SA CEO Eustace Mashimbye described the commitments as encouraging, highlighting a rising market appetite to boost South Africa’s production capabilities.

“These R1 billion commitments and additional commitments are indicative of the growing confidence by our private sector partners that localisation is not only the right thing to do, but an intervention that makes commercial sense,” he said.

As supply chains come under mounting pressure from geopolitical tensions and global uncertainty, Mashimbye argues that localisation is no longer simply a viable option, but an existential necessity.

He added that the growing localisation commitments are galvanising Proudly SA to bring more like-minded partners on board, with the aim of turbocharging economic growth, reindustrialising the economy and creating much-needed jobs.

More support

Standard Bank, the headline sponsor of this year’s summit and expo, also reaffirmed its commitment to its enterprise

and supplier development programme, aimed at enabling 51% black-owned small and medium-sized businesses to access finance, markets and business development support.

“Through our comprehensive Enterprise and Supplier Development Programme, we have worked with thousands of black-owned enterprises, supporting them with access to finance, markets and business development. The programme has had significant success, enabling the sustainability of local South African businesses,” said Naledzani Mosomane, Head of Enterprise and Supplier Development for Business and Commercial at Standard Bank South Africa.

In 2025, the programme supported more than 1 200 participants, of whom 38% were women and 32% were youth-owned small and medium-sized enterprises.

“We disbursed R143.6 million worth of funding, and our enterprise and supplier development loan book stood at R228 million. Furthermore, we created over 890 new jobs through our various initiatives,” she said.

She added that, through the Basali Development programme, the bank has supported more than 600 black women-owned businesses and disbursed R5.4 million in grant funding, while the Youth Forward programme, in partnership with the Gordon Institute

Some of local and popular brands were on exhibition at the Buy Local Summit.



of Business Studies, strengthens entrepreneurial and leadership competencies among young business owners.

Building a resilient economy through localisation

Addressing the summit, Small Business Development Minister Stella Ndabeni described localisation as a strategic imperative towards building a more resilient economy. She stated that government has now prioritised it

alongside the development of regional value chains with other countries in the Southern African Development Community and across the African Continental Free Trade Area.

“Every rand spent at a local business helps circulate money within our economy, enabling businesses to grow, employ more people and build communities. MSMEs employ millions of people – with most reports suggesting this could be as high as 60% of employed persons in

the country,” she said.

She said her department is pleased to have officially partnered with Proudly SA, using localisation as a lever to facilitate market access. A key objective of the collaboration is to leverage the Buy Local Summit and Expo as a platform for small enterprises to showcase their locally made products. The occasion also provides opportunities for businesses to network through the business-to-business matchmaking programme,

helping them benefit from the import-replacement imperative.

“We are confident this will make a significant contribution towards our National Development Plan target of 9 million of the 11 million jobs by 2030 being created through MSMEs,” she said.

This approach will also help build critical economic resilience against rising global volatility, trade protectionism, and disruptions in supply chains. ♦



The Buy Local Summit brought together government, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs to invest in, promote and support local business.



Freedom Month 2026

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#FreedomMonth2026 | #RuleOfLaw | #30yrsDemocraticCitizenship

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Mkhwanazi steering skills development for a transformative W&RSETA



South African informal traders visited Kenya on the W&RSETA Informal Traders Exchange Programme to gain skills in business development and growth.

Tom Mkhwanazi's reappointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA) affirmed the sector's confidence in a leader who has spent years reshaping the country's largest labour-absorbing industry through inclusive, future-focused skills development.

Reappointed in October 2025, his previous tenure was marked by strategic expansion, international benchmarking, and a fierce commitment to ensuring

that South Africans thrive.

Facilitating skills development

The W&RSETA was established in 2000 under the Skills Development Act. It is mandated to facilitate skills development in the wholesale and retail sector through learning programmes, grant disbursements and rigorous monitoring of training.

It operates under the Department of Higher Education and Training as one of 21 Sector Edu-

cation and Training Authorities (SETAs) servicing distinct parts of the economy. For Mkhwanazi, the significance of the sector cannot be overstated.

"This sector contributes about 14% to the GDP and about 20% to the country's labour market, so it is quite a big sector. Our role is quite broad because we are looking at people who are in the organisation to be up-skilled, multi-skilled and re-skilled. We are also looking at young people who do not have opportuni-

ties because they have just left school... young people leave universities and colleges with knowledge but they do not have the skills to get into employment," he said.

Inclusive economic participation

Much of Mkhwanazi's leadership is centred on expanding support to constituencies that operate beyond formal structures. His foreword to the W&RSETA's 2024/25 Annual Report highlights an intentional shift towards ensuring that young people, informal traders, small enterprises and community-based groups can participate meaningfully in the economy.

"We focus on ensuring that young people who come out of this environment start their own employment. We have a segment that focuses on four areas, including Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMME) support for skills development, informal sector, entrepreneurship

development, and community-based organisation,” he explained.

These efforts formed part of a broader five-year strategy in which the SETA supported 83 678 unemployed youth and 60 440 workers through learnerships, skills programmes, graduate placements, bursaries, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship initiatives, with 42 473 participants completing their programmes.

This large-scale contribution laid the foundation for a more

inclusive and adaptable workforce across the wholesale and retail sector.

A tailored approach

The needs across the sector's priority groups differ greatly, and Mkhwanazi is acutely aware of this complexity. He noted that the informal sector requires tailored approaches that recognise time constraints, operational risks and regulatory pressures.

“The informal sector consists of people who work and do not have the time to be going for training programmes. Therefore, we had to ensure that the training programme is fit for purpose... They obviously struggle with compliance, municipal bylaws and food safety [among other challenges]. We must implement our programmes to assist them.”

Under his stewardship, the W&RSETA delivered support at an unprecedented scale: over 20 000 SMMEs, 15 000 informal traders, more than 1 000 emerging entrepreneurs, and over 1 000 community-based organisations.

Post-school education infrastructure

The SETA also made significant investments in post-school education infrastructure, allocating R108.3 million to nine Communi-

ty Education and Training (CET) colleges and R246.5 million to 43 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges over the five-year period.

Mkhwanazi is candid about the contextual difficulties that hinder seamless skills development in South Africa.

“Our work is only on post-school education... people in South Africa and the rest of Africa leave school at different levels and and, therefore, cannot then have one form of a training programme that is going to work for everyone. Those are the type of challenges we are facing.”

To improve impact, he has looked to African peers for solutions. For instance, Ethiopia's large-scale SMME training model, which reaches 400 000 trainees annually, offers valuable lessons in diagnostic planning, language considerations and innovative scheduling.

“They have found a niche in terms of assessments, diagnostics and dealing with issues of language... these are all the issues that we take for granted.”

Regional collaboration

This regional collaboration has become a hallmark of his leadership. Under his guidance, informal traders have been exposed to new ecosystems in Kenya and Egypt, while young

graduates have benefited from cross-border e-commerce training in China, forming part of a hybrid graduate placement and entrepreneurship initiative.

Strengthening local partnerships

He is equally committed to strengthening local value chains. In partnership with major retailers, the W&RSETA has supported small-scale farmers in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, enabling 200 participants to secure market access where they previously operated only at subsistence level.

For Mkhwanazi, the future of skills development cannot hinge on isolated interventions. “No education or skills development will be successful without working with a whole other ecosystem. If we are not collaborating in a certain area, we are just training people for unemployment,” he asserted.

This principle guides his approach to partnerships across government, industry, academia, civil society and international networks. It also underpins his vision for a W&RSETA that is more agile, more developmental and more attuned to the realities facing both workers and entrepreneurs.



W&RSETA Chief
Executive Officer
Tom Mkhwanazi.

South Africa cannot achieve peace without ending GBVF and fixing the economy



South Africa speaks often about peace. We celebrate reconciliation. We invoke unity. We remind ourselves of our democratic miracle. But peace is not a slogan – it is a lived reality. And for millions of South Africans, particularly women and young people, that reality remains fragile.

South Africa cannot claim peace while

gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) continue at crisis levels and economic exclusion persists on a massive scale. Safety and economic justice are not separate conversations. They are two sides of the same coin of national stability.

Statistics alone should alarm our collective conscience. Data from the South African Police Service (SAPS) reveal that thousands of rape

cases are reported every quarter, highlighting a deeply troubling reality.

In recent annual crime statistics, over 50 000 sexual offences were recorded in a single year –and experts consistently warn that sexual violence remains significantly underreported. South Africa's femicide rate has historically been among the highest in the world, with research from the South African Medical

Cassius Selala, is Director of Communications at the DWYPD.



Young women are at risk of being subjected to violence due to limited job prospects, skills gaps and systemic inequality.

Economic dependency often traps women in abusive relationships with financial insecurity limiting their escape options.

Research Council indicating that a woman is killed every few hours in our country.

A threat to peace and development

Behind each number is a life interrupted, a family traumatised and a community destabilised. Violence against women is not merely a criminal justice issue; it is a fundamental threat to peace and development. When women cannot live free from fear, participate fully in the economy, or access justice

swiftly and effectively, the social contract is weakened.

Yet GBVF does not exist in isolation. It is deeply intertwined with economic conditions. South Africa's official unemployment rate remains among the highest globally. According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), the unemployment rate has hovered above 30% in recent quarters, with youth unemployment exceeding 40% under the narrow definition and significantly higher under the expanded definition.

Young women, particularly in rural areas and townships, face compounded vulnerability due to limited job prospects, skills gaps and systemic inequality.

Freedom from violence and economic exclusion

Economic dependency often traps women in abusive relationships with financial insecurity limiting their escape options. If a survivor has nowhere to go, no income and no institutional support, leaving is not a realistic solution.

This is why peace in South Africa must be understood as both freedom from violence and freedom from economic exclusion.

The Constitution guarantees dignity, equality and freedom. But constitutional rights must translate into lived protection. The establishment of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF and the strengthening of specialised courts were important steps. However, implementation gaps remain.

Survivors still report inconsistent police responses,



lengthy court processes and inadequate shelter capacity. Rural communities often experience even greater service deficits.

At the same time, economic reform has not yet delivered inclusive growth at the scale required. While macroeconomic stability and investor confidence are important, growth without inclusion deepens frustration. A peaceful society cannot rest on a foundation where opportunity is structurally unequal.

The way forward

Economic reform must, therefore, become gender-responsive by design. This means targeted support for women-owned enterprises, especially in townships and rural economies. It

means expanding access to finance through blended funding models and reducing bureaucratic red tape that locks small businesses out of procurement systems. It means investing in the care economy, early childhood development, community health work and social services sectors that both employ large numbers of women and strengthen social resilience.

It also means recognising that social grants are essential but cannot be a substitute for sustainable livelihoods. Long-term peace depends on economic participation, not perpetual precarity.

Culture shift

There is also a cultural dimension that policy alone cannot solve. Patriarchal norms, toxic masculinities

and intergenerational trauma require deliberate societal engagement.

Men must be active participants in prevention efforts. Schools must integrate gender equality education. Faith leaders and traditional leaders must use their influence to condemn violence unequivocally.

Peace requires a capable state. It requires a professionalised police service, well-resourced forensic units, functional courts and accountable public officials. It requires reliable electricity, safe public transport and infrastructure that enables economic participation. It requires corruption to be treated not as a political inconvenience but as a direct threat to national stability.

The connection is simple: when justice systems fail and economic systems exclude, frustration accumulates. When frustration accumulates, instability follows. True peace is preventive; it addresses root causes before crises erupt.

Imagine a South Africa where a young woman in a rural village can access funding to start a business, secure in the knowledge that if she faces violence, the justice

system will protect her swiftly.

Imagine cities, where public transport is safe, police response times are consistent, and communities trust law enforcement.

Imagine an economy where youth unemployment is not a defining feature of national identity.

Sustainable peace

That vision is not naive. It is strategic. Peace is built when women feel safe in their homes and streets. Peace is strengthened when young people see pathways to opportunity. Peace is sustained when justice is accessible and the economy is inclusive.

As South Africa stands at a crossroads, we can choose to continue managing crises reactively, or we can pursue bold, coordinated reform that tackles GBVF and economic exclusion as interconnected priorities.

If we choose peace, it should not merely be commemorated in speeches; it should also be embodied in action. It must be experienced in households, workplaces and communities across the nation and that is the only peace worthy of our democracy. ❖



Freedom Month 2026

Freedom and The Rule of Law—Thirty Years of Democratic Citizenship



#FreedomMonth2026 | #RuleOfLaw | #30yrsDemocraticCitizenship

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A **NATION** THAT **WORKS** FOR ALL



Enjoy Chef Leyfort's Chicken Stew with Royco Tikka Masala Cook-in Sauce

As autumn paints South Africa in warm, golden hues, there is nothing quite like a hearty, soul-warming meal to embrace the season. This month, *Public Sector Manager* invites you to savour the comforting flavours of **Chef Kholofelo Leyfort Mogane's** exquisite Chicken Stew, elevated with the aromatic richness of Royco Tikka Masala Cook-In Sauce. Perfect for crisp evenings, this dish promises both warmth and nourishment in every bite.



It takes about 15 minutes to prepare and 40 minutes to cook, serving eight people. Serve with white rice or pap, and enjoy with a glass of Chardonnay.

Ingredients:

- ⦿ 120 ml Royco Cook-in Sauce Tikka Masala Curry (8 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 60 ml cooking oil (4 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 15 ml chicken spice (1 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 15 ml turmeric (1 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 15 ml ginger powder (1 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 30 ml soy sauce (2 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 15 ml mixed dry herbs (1 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 15 ml black pepper (1 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 15 ml salt (1 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 15 ml crushed garlic (1 tablespoons)
- ⦿ 650 g chicken thighs and drumsticks
- ⦿ ½ diced onion
- ⦿ Fresh chopped mint, dill, thyme and coriander

Cooking method:

- ⦿ In a large pot, heat the oil over medium heat
- ⦿ Add the chicken pieces and fry for about 10 minutes until golden brown.
- ⦿ Sprinkle in turmeric, chicken spice, ginger powder, black pepper, mixed herbs and salt
- ⦿ Fry everything together for another 5 minutes so the flavours mix well with the chicken
- ⦿ Add the diced onion and crushed garlic. Cook for another 10 minutes, stirring often
- ⦿ Pour in the soy sauce and stir for about 3 minutes. Keep the heat low so

the sauce does not burn

- ⦿ Add the chopped fresh herbs – dill, mint, thyme, and coriander. Stir them in
- ⦿ Pour in enough water to cover the chicken, then reduce the heat and let it simmer for about 20 minutes until the chicken is tender and the stew is full of flavour

Tips:

Always brown the chicken first – this locks in the juices and adds a rich, savoury depth that takes your stew to the next level.

About the Chef

Chef Kholofelo Leyfort Mogane is the founder of Leyfort's Kitchen, a proudly South African full-service catering company based in Midrand, Gauteng. After being retrenched from his corporate career in 2019, he turned his passion for food into a thriving business, drawing on his extensive experience in food service and event management. Leyfort's Kitchen caters to corporate functions, weddings, private celebrations, and social gatherings, offering thoughtfully curated menus tailored to each client's unique tastes. He holds an International Diploma in Culinary Arts from the Johannesburg Culinary and Pastry school.



For more information, contact: 0766208074

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You can follow him on social media:

Instagram: [@Leyfortskitchen](https://www.instagram.com/Leyfortskitchen)

TikTok: [@Leyforts_Kitchen](https://www.tiktok.com/@Leyforts_Kitchen)

Facebook: [@Cookingwithleyfort](https://www.facebook.com/Cookingwithleyfort)

Local designer expresses her freedom and heritage through fashion



This month, *Public Sector Manager* (PSM) magazine features the latest collection from Beautiful African Raiment (BAR) titled *African Faces*. Known for dressing confident men and women, BAR is a luxury brand celebrated for its high-quality garments that honour African heritage and culture.

Founder Rirhandzu Nukeri explains the inspiration behind the collection: "African Faces is a celebration of beauty that started by making patterns through scarifica-

tion, to tattooing and now using cosmetic products to put colourful marks on your face, especially when wearing cultural attire.

The designs show how African culture and traditions can be incorporated in modern fashion. It is the art of beautification, identity and strength".

Garments:

1. The dress at the back is **R14 000**.
2. Mohair cardigan **R9 000**.
3. The top for women with

the head with tassels earrings - **R2 500**.

4. No price on the skirt
5. Golfers **R5 000**.
6. Shirt (cream and black) **R5 200** inclusive of vat.
7. The two pieces for women (jackets with yarn fringe costs **R11 000** and the pants cost **R3 999**).

In celebration of Freedom Month, PSM asked the young creative what freedom means to her. She described it as more than a distant ideal whispered through history – something she wears, embodies and continually redefines.

"Freedom," she explained, "is no longer abstract; it lives in how I move, create, and express myself."

On democracy, she noted, it has grown beyond ballots and policies. "It is present in access, visibility, and the courage to imagine a life that previous generations were denied. It is the quiet power of

knowing that your existence, your dreams and your expression all matter".

Yet, she acknowledges that freedom is layered and complex. With it comes the responsibility to recognise what still needs to change. With democracy comes the duty to question, challenge and expand the very definition of inclusion.

"A young South African woman stands in this tension between gratitude and hunger, between legacy and reinvention. She is both the result of progress and the driver of what comes next," said Nukeri.

For her, freedom is not static. It is fluid, evolving and deeply personal. It is the right to define beauty in her own terms, to build, to disrupt, to exist fully in her identity without compromise. She views democracy as the very foundation of her future. ❖



About the designer

Hailing from the small town of Nkowankowa in Limpopo, Nukeri (above) founded BAR in 2022, drawing inspiration from her late grandfather's distinctive style and the rich storytelling traditions of Africa.

Before launching the brand, she gained extensive experience in the cosmetics industry, where she remains actively engaged. This diverse background fuels her dedication to design and craftsmanship, enabling her to blend modern elegance seamlessly with African cultural heritage.

For enquiries, email Sales@bar-sa.com.
You can also follow Nukeri on Instagram: [@Bar_sa_clothing](https://www.instagram.com/Bar_sa_clothing)

* Prices correct at the time of publishing.

Escape to Bontebok

National Park for tranquility and natural beauty

Bontebok National Park is a place of simplistic beauty and peaceful charm. The majestic Langeberg Mountains provide a picturesque backdrop for this ark of colourful riches.

Located on the outskirts of the historic and picturesque town of Swellendam, the park falls within the renowned Cape Floristic Region, one of the world's richest plant kingdoms. Visitors can stay at the well-equipped rest camp

or enjoy the scenic camping sites nestled along the banks of the tranquil Breede River.

Natural and cultural history

Bontebok National Park was originally established to conserve a species – its namesake, the bontebok.

When the species was approaching extinction in the early 1800s (approximately 17 bonte-

bok were left) some landowners set aside portions of their properties to form temporary reserves for the bontebok.

In 1931, the first Bontebok National Park was proclaimed on an area near Bredasdorp. The park was later moved to the area it is in now, to suit the habitat requirements of the bontebok. By 1969, it was estimated that the numbers had grown to around 800 globally.

Today, the smallest national park in the South African National Park stable, Bontebok is proud to boast of its achievements in biodiversity conservation, from the endangered fynbos veld type, coastal Renosterveld, to the bontebok. The conservation story of this species is one of heart-warming success, bringing the numbers worldwide from a mere 17 bontebok, to a current global total



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

Visitors can enjoy scenic hiking trails in the park.



Canoeing and kayaking on the Breede River.

of approximately 3 000, 200 of which call Bontebok National Park their home (the maximum this park can support taking into consideration biodiversity conservation as a whole).

Southern Africa has one of the longest records of human activity anywhere in the world. The Swellendam region in the Overberg is rich in historic sites dating from over 1 million years ago to more recent colonial set-

tlements. The later Stone Age can be linked to the Khoe Khoe who, in the Swellendam region were known as the Hessequa. This name translates to mean "people of the trees".

European settlers landed at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 and the first contact with the Hessequa Khoe Khoe was in 1660. The arrival of settlers in the Overberg was catastrophic for the indigenous inhabitants.

Smallpox, land competition, alcohol and tobacco decimated the clans of the Hessequa's living in this region. Two Hessequa captains and their followers lived in the area where the Bontebok National Park is now situated. The Park's rest camp is named after the first of them, a remarkable female captain by the name of Lang Elsie. Between 1734 and 1800, she lived with her followers at the southern part of the park, grazing their stock all the way to the Buffeljags River.

Experience history

Visitors to the park can still see

the open werf area where Lang Elsie's kraal of woven reed huts was situated. Next to this open space are the ruins of a small stone house where Captain Lang Elsie lived.

Nouga Saree, a contemporary of Lang Elsie, lived with his followers in the western part of the Park, at what came to be called the Ou Tuin. Here too an open homestead area is evidence of their settlement.

According to authors and residents of Swellendam, the graves of Nouga Saree and some of his people were found at the foot of the small ridge above Ou Tuin

Photo: Supplied



when the Bontebok National Park was established. People recalled that the graves were covered with 'blue mountain stones'. Although there are several references to the Khoe graves in the Ou Tuin, these graves are not to be found today. The park is committed to preserving these cultural heritage sites and plans are in place for further research and interpretation of Lang Elsie's Kraal and the gravesite of Noug Saree.

What to do, where to stay

This family-friendly destination offers a variety of outdoor activities, including mountain biking, cycling, swimming in the refreshing river waters, and exploring scenic hiking trails and nature walks. Birdwatchers will delight in spotting a diverse range of bird species, while wildlife enthusiasts can marvel at the park's namesake, the rare and beautiful bontebok, as well

as other indigenous animals.

The Bontebok Rest Camp (Lang Elsie's Kraal), situated on the banks of the Breede River, is the first rest camp in South African National Parks to be built according to a "Touching the Earth Lightly" design. The camp of 10 units provides pristine scenery of the park, Breede River and Langeberg Mountains - a perfect rest stop for visitors.

Apart from Bontebok, the park is home to grey rhebuck, red hartebeest as well as many smaller mammals - take yourself and your family on a drive

around the park and spot as many animals as you can.

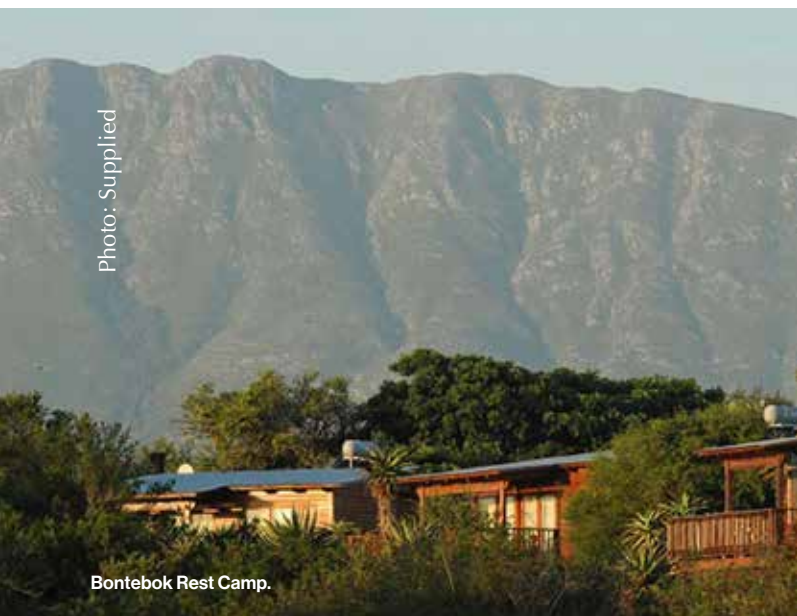
There are four nature-hiking trails, starting and ending in the rest camp area for overnights and old pump house for day visitors.

Take a dive into the Breede River from either the Rest Camp Area or at Die Stroom - on hot days in the park, this can be a more than welcomed relief.

Take a cycle or mountain bike ride in the park. The Cobra Mountain Bike Trail (9.2km) is a circular route around Mooi Dam in the east of the park and the longest bike trail. ❖

For more information,
contact the park on
+27 (0)28 514 2735, or email
bontebok@sanparks.org

Photo: Supplied



Bontebok Rest Camp.