

## THABONG COMMUNITY COMMEMORATES CHILDREN'S PROTECTION WEEK AT LEBONENG SPECIAL SCHOOL

Leboneng Special organized a peaceful March Wednesday, last using placards and messages to raise community awareness of Children's Week and amplify children's voices.

Child Protection National Week is commemorated annually to raise awareness children's rights of as articulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Children's Act (Act No. 38 of 2005). The week is an essential event on the UNICEF calendar and has been celebrated in South Africa since 1997. This year's theme is "Working together in violence against ending children."

of Social Department Development in partnership with key government

School departments and civil society organisations rendering child protection services.

> Ms Mokonenyane, the school's social worker, emphasized the need for love and support for the learners, recognising their unique qualities. Located in Thabong, between wards 12 and 25, the school serves the Tosa Village Jerusalema and Park communities and calls for increased support. Ms. Mokonenyane highlighted the reality unfortunate that individuals with disabilities often face exploitation, abuse, and, in some tragic cases, even violence. She asserted that democracy must be accompanied by responsibility and respect for all individuals, particularly those with special needs.

The campaign is led by the The learners and staff gathered celebrate their rights and to expressed the desire for a safe environment that aligns with the principles of democracy.

Participants wore green ribbons to symbolize their commitment to safeguarding the learners, advocating for the appropriate use of their social grants to meet their needs.

Ms Hlapo, a police officer, also addressed the gathering, expressing solidarity with the learners of Leboneng. She underscored the community's responsibility to care for the school, ensuring that the learners have access to a nurturing environment conducive to education. Ms Hlapo urged the community of Thabong to take an active role by engaging in volunteer work, such as assisting school cleanliness with and providing donations.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) has established a 2030 vision to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities, illustrating a commitment to fostering hope and opportunity for this population.

Statistics reveal that 27% of SAPS personnel have disabilities, with over 7% having attended various special schools, highlighting the valuable skills they bring to the workforce.

Ms Tshabangu, the acting principal of Leboneng, expressed gratitude to the Thandanani (2010), Tosa Village, and Jerusalema Park communities for their efforts in ensuring the school's safety. She noted a significant decrease in burglaries, attributing this positive change to the dedicated work of the local community, particularly the residents of Tosa Village. thanked Ms Tshabangu SAPS, the Community Policing Forum (CPF), Matjhabeng Traffic, parents, and all staff members for their unwavering support.





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#### 6 June 2025

## DEBT RECOVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA VIA THE SMALL CLAIMS COURT

By Advocate Sephiri Moshodi Executive Director: Justice Equality Foundation

## Any individual may seek help from the Small Claims Court if someone owes you money or doesn't pay for products or services.

It is crucial to try to reach a mutually agreeable resolution through open discussion before entering the judicial system. Such may be done by communicating with the person who owes you money and make an effort to get their viewpoint. Keep a record of every conversation, including texts, emails, and any formal agreements pertaining to the debt. In addition to being a diplomatic move, this first measure lays the groundwork for further legal action.

Through the voluntary process of mediation, a third party who is impartial helps the parties communicate with one another. A mediator can direct the negotiating process, find points of agreement, and investigate possible solutions. Financial conflicts may be settled more amicably by using and economically this alternative dispute resolution technique. The result may result in a mutually acceptable resolution without the need for court action, even though it is not legally binding.

Sending a formal demand letter is the next step if verbal communication doesn't work. This letter should include the debt's specifics, such as the total amount owed, the terms that were agreed upon, and the due date. Indicate in detail the repercussions of noncompliance, including potential legal action or harm to the debtor's credit score. A demand letter frequently lets the debtor know that you are committed to taking the case to court.

Consider bringing a case in small claims court if the debt is still outstanding after a demand letter has been sent. Small claims court is intended for disputes with less complicated facts and lower sums of money. People can now represent themselves without the need for costly legal counsel thanks to the streamlined laws and procedures. To make a strong case, be careful to collect any pertinent evidence, such as the demand letter and any supporting documents.

Civil disputes with claims under R20,000 are within the purview of the Small Claims Court. This covers disagreements over:

Debt recovery: Unpaid obligations, such as loans, sold commodities, or given services.

Goods sold: Unpaid items that have been transferred to the buyer, like furniture.

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# Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 21 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000 as amended, that Matjhabeng Local Municipality has framed its estimates of revenue and expenditure for the year ending June 2026 as follows:

Description	2025-2026	Increase
RATES HOUSES (R 75 000 rebate)	0,01552	4%
VACANT STAND - RESIDENTIAL	0,01552	4%
RATES BUSINESS	0,03105	4%
VACANT STAND - BUSINESS	0,03105	4%
RATES INDUSTRIAL	0,03105	4%
PROPERTIES OWNED BY AN ORGAN OF STATE AND USED FOR PUBLIC SERVICES PURPOSES	0,04843	4%
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SCHOOLS	0,03105	4%
RATES AGRICULTURE (farms)	0,00388 0,06233	4% 4%
AGRICULTURAL/MINES		
RATES SMALL HOLDINGS AGRI	0,00388	4%
RATES SMALL HOLDINGS BUSSINESS & COMMERCIAL	0,03105	4%
RATES SMALL HOLDINGS INDUSTRIAL	0,03105	4%
RATES SMALL HOLDINGS RESIDENTIAL	0,01552	4%
RATES FARM PROPERTIES BUSSINESS & COMMERCIAL	0,03105	4%

## Rates become due and payable in twelve monthly payments from 01 July 2025. TARIFFS FOR SERVICES

## It is further notified that tariffs for municipal services for the financial year (I e with effect from 1 July 2025) will be as follows:

## Refuse removal: 6% increase on tariffs

## Sewerage : 6% Increase on tariffs

Water:

Description	Step	Step value	2025/26	Increase
Water house	Step 1	0 - 6 KL	21,75	9%
	Step 2 Step 3	7 - 50 KL > 50 KL	26,33 34,88	9% 9%
Water house Indigent	Step 1 Step 2 Step 3	0-6 KL 7-50 KL >50 KL	26,33 34,88	9% 9% 9%
Water Business	Step 1	1 - 50 KL	26,33	9%
	Step 2	> 50 KL	34,88	9%

## Electricity

The average tariff increases of 12 % for the 2025/2026 period which conforms to NERSA's guideline.

\*Electricity tarifs subject to approval from NERSA\*

A schedule of actual tarifs for these services and other general services is available for inspection during office hours at all the finance offices of the Matjhabeng Municipality.

All money due to the council will be payable on the due date following the consumption and usage, failing which interest shall be levied at a rate of one percentage point higher than the rate by council to the bank in respect of an overdraft for the period during which such amount remains unpaid.



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## Adopted final Integrated Development Plan and final Budget 2025/2026 financial year

Notice is hereby given in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, No. 32 of 2000, as amended, and the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, No. 56 of 2003, as amended, that the final Integrated Development Plan and final Budget 2025/2026 has been adopted by Council.

The final documents and annexures were adopted at the Ordinary Council meeting that was held on the 29th of May 2025, copies and summaries are available on the Matjhabeng Local Municipality's website, <u>www.matjhabengmunicipality.co.za</u>, at municipal offices and libraries in all towns of Matjhabeng Local Municipality.

## Enquiries on the above notice may be directed to:

Acting Senior Manager, Mr. Thabiso Goralotsi during office hours on 057 391 3339/email <u>thabiso.goralotsi@matjhabeng.co.za</u> and IDP Manager, Mr. Tsekiso Majake during office hours on 057 391 3108/email <u>tsekiso.majake@matjhabeng.co.za</u>.

Kind Regards, Mr. Thabo Panyani Acting Municipal ManagerNotice:

## Mourners gathered to bid a heartfelt farewell to Olorato Mongale

### By Masedi Mofokeng

The nation mourns the tragic loss of Olorato Mongale, a young woman remembered for her radiant spirit, unwavering resilience, and goal-driven nature. Family, friends, and members of the community gathered this past Sunday at the Bloemfontein City Hall to pay their final respects to the 30-year-old whose life was cut short in an act of senseless violence.

Olorato Mongale, originally from the Free State, held an Honours Degree in Journalism from Rhodes University and is enrolled for her Master's Degree at Wits University.

She was found murdered and her body abandoned in Lombardy West, Johannesburg, the previous Sunday. Her passing has left a profound void, not only within her family but also in the broader community where she was known and loved.

Her mother, Keabetswe Poppy Mongale, delivered a moving tribute, recalling her daughter as a fighter who lived purposefully and authentically.



Through tears, she shared haunting memories of the search for Olorato, revealing how she resorted to checking black plastic bags on the roadside, clinging to hope, as her daughter was last seen wearing black.

"She was a fighter," her mother said. "When I saw her body at the mortuary, I could tell she fought for her life. Even her nails were broken."

Despite the horror of her death, those closest to Olorato are choosing to hold on to the light she brought into their lives. Her mother described her as deeply spiritual and focused, noting that she had recently given up alcohol and embraced new chapters in her life.

"She told me I wouldn't understand her journey," Keabetswe shared. "She left on Wednesday for choir auditions and later told me she had been accepted. She was also preparing to start confirmation classes. She was truly living with purpose." The brutal nature of Olorato's death has reignited public concern about genderbased violence in the country. Free State Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, speaking in response to recent incidents, expressed deep concern over the increasing number of femicide cases in the province.

"The killings of our women are a national crisis," the Premier stated. "We must intensify efforts to protect women and ensure justice is served. Olorato's death must not be in vain." As the Free State community grieves, there is a renewed call for action, compassion, and justice. Olorato Mongale's life, full of promise and passion, will be remembered by those who knew her and those moved by her

story.



## Moqhaka Local Municipality Tables 2025/26 Budget Amid Economic and Capacity Challenges

The Moqhaka Local Municipality officially tabled its 2025/2026 budget during a special Council meeting, marking the culmination of a broad public participation process and extensive internal deliberations. Although delayed beyond legislative timelines, the gathering served as a platform to present a budget that the leadership calls "The People's Budget" – a financial plan built on community input, economic realities, and a renewed commitment to service delivery.

### Key Themes: A Vision for Progress

Addressing the Council, the municipal leadership acknowledged the municipality's pressing challenges, fiscal constraints, including ageing infrastructure, and internal capacity limitations. Despite these, the budget is described as a tool for transformation, anchored in six key service delivery pillars:

- 1. Quality, sustainable services for all residents
- 2. Rebuilding a financially sound municipality
- 3. Maintenance of public infrastructure
- 4. Investment in critical infrastructure, with private sector collaboration
- 5. Job creation and economic development
- 6. Good and ethical governance

#### **Budget Overview**

The proposed budget outlines both operational and capital plans aimed at boosting service delivery and restoring public confidence:

- 1. Operating Revenue: R1.421 billion (6.7% increase from previous year)
- 2. Operating Expenditure: R1.352 billion
- 3. Capital Budget: R108 million (R6 million decrease from 2024/25)
- 4. Gazetted Grants: R66.5 million
- 5. Municipal Own Funding: R41.8 million

#### Tariff increases include:

- 1. Property Rates, Water, Sanitation, Refuse: 4.4%
- 2.Electricity: 12.74% (as regulated by NERSA)





#### Service Delivery Priorities

The budget focuses on tangible service delivery improvements that address community frustrations and essential infrastructure needs:

- 1. Reliable water and electricity supply
- 2.Sewer maintenance and sanitation improvements
- 3.Pothole repairs, grass cutting, and stormwater system upgrades
- 4. Expanded street lighting and waste collection
- 5. Residential site development and anticorruption initiatives

### Notable Achievements and Planned Projects

Achievements from the past year include upgrading roads in Gellukwaarts, sewer infrastructure projects, electrifying Koekoe Village, and issuing 1,186 title deeds in partnership with the Free Market Foundation.

## Projects for 2025/26 include:

- 1.Upgrading of sports facilities in Phomolong
- 2.Sewer pump station improvement in Constantia
- 3. Water treatment upgrades in Steynsrus
- 4.Paving of roads in Makobe Street and Brentpark
- 5. Replacement of 17.94 km of water pipes and installation of booster pumps

The municipality is undertaking projects such as installing high mast lights, building bridges, and upgrading roads in underserved areas. However, internal capacity issues, especially unfilled senior management roles since 2022, have led to underperformance, with only 52% of targets met by March 2025. The upcoming appointment of new senior managers is expected to enhance governance and service delivery.

## Looking Ahead: Budget with a Funding Plan

The municipality has presented another unfunded budget, supported by a detailed funding plan. Over the next six months, it aims to improve efficiency, enforce cost-cutting measures, and strengthen internal capacity. The address also acknowledged systemic challenges such as limited capacity, financial strain, and excessive regulation, which hinder local development. Despite these issues, the municipality remains committed to the principles of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, even as it is being reviewed.

## A Call to Action

Council was encouraged to view the budget as a vital tool for long-term community development, not just a compliance task. Strong oversight and disciplined execution were emphasized as key to achieving real impact. Drawing inspiration from the resilient aloe ferox plant, the municipality framed the budget as a symbol of perseverance, reform, and hope for a better Moqhaka.





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# FAMILIESOFSANDFMEMBERSWHODIEDINWARCONTINUE TO GRIEVEINININ

Families of South African National Defence Force(SANDF)members who died while working in other countries say there's no time limit when it comes to grief. These families came together at the SANDF event last Thursday to mark the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, held at De Brug Military Base just a few Kilometers outside Bloemfontein. Bongiwe Mobe, who lost her husband in DRC ON 24 January this year, spoke on behalf of the families. She said the ceremony helps them to heal and find peace slowly."But for many, it's still hard to move on, even if they lost their loved ones more than 20 years ago. This kind of pain takes time. However, we are very grateful to the (SANDF) for their ongoing psychological support," said Mabe.

The event was held to honour the brave men and women who served and gave their lives for peace and stability. Important guests at the ceremony included South African National Defence Force(SANDF)Minister Angie Motshekga, Free State Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, and Mangaung Executive Mayor Gregory Nthatisi.



"With a high-energy campaign this May, Bloem Plaza experienced a notable increase of 46,432 feet year-onyear, and an impressive 65,409 feet growth compared to the previous month.

General Rudzani Maphwanya, Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), led the ceremony with a message of respect and commitment."This year's theme," The Future of Peacekeeping," highlight how the nature of global conflicts is changing and why peace missions also need to change.

New technology in today's wars means we must rethink how we do peacekeeping. The UN's new plan points us toward more modern and flexible peace strategies," said Maphwanya. He added that South Africa has been part of global peacekeeping since 1999, starting with its role in the DRC (MONUC) UN mission. Today, SANDF troops are involved in missions like MONUSCO, UNISFA, and UNMISS, and they have also worked at places like Darfur, Liberia, and the Ethiopia-Eritrea border.



Regarding South Africa's gradual withdrawal from the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC), Maphwanya said they are committed to ensuring soldiers and equipment return safe."We believe in solving conflict through dialogue and political talks; I also want to ask the media and the public to be careful about sharing information. In times of conflict, information can be powerful. Let's not spread rumours or fake news as these can cause panic and fear and damage our society," said Maphwanya.

By Masedi Mofokeng

## BLOEM PLAZA HOST'S THE ICONIC SPIN CHAMPION – TEAM SIYA

The event generated a significant buzz, resulting in free publicity through media interviews — turning this into an added-value campaign that extended our reach well beyond the centre.

As part of our ongoing efforts to position Bloem Plaza as a prime destination and an emerging tourist attraction, we were delighted to have BON Hotel graciously introduce their guests from Johannesburg to the unique experience of visiting our Plaza.

In conclusion, the Bloem Plaza Marketing team is proud that our recent initiatives have successfully increased foot traffic, boosted brand visibility, and enriched the overall visitor experience.

These outcomes reinforce a vital insight into understanding our consumers' interests is key to the success of our centre. By aligning with what truly engages our shoppers, we continue to build meaningful, lasting connections that support the centres' growth and reputation." – Lerato Matlabe, Bloem Plaza Marketing Manager.

## **SPORTS** Welkom Runners Prepare for the 2025 Comrades Marathon

The 2025 Comrades Marathon is set to be a grander and more organised event, featuring a new finish line and staggered starts. This 98th edition, a Down Run, will cover a distance of 89.98 km, slightly longer than the 2023 Down Run. It will culminate in a new street finish outside Durban's People's Park.

The race will implement a two-start system to enhance safety and facilitate a smoother flow of runners. This change is particularly significant given the anticipated record-breaking field of 22,000 participants for the Down Run.



Scheduled for Sunday, June 8, 2025, the marathon will commence at Pietermaritzburg City Hall and conclude outside Durban's People's Park.

Welkom Runners participated in various activities last weekend to prepare for the race. On Sunday morning, members attended blessings at the Anglican Church of Grace in Thabong, while others participated in a service at St. Augustine Catholic Church in Virginia. This was followed by a 16 km group run in the afternoon, further solidifying their readiness for the upcoming marathon.



