



DID YOU KNOW ?

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is your right to:

- △ Receive health education, good quality healthcare and counselling.
- △ Adequate supervision by an adult or care-giver you trust.
- △ An approved traditional surgeon/ healthcare practitioner to perform the circumcision.
- △ Clean hygienic equipment must be used.
- △ Demand the registration certificate of a prospective initiation school and traditional surgeon.

TRADITIONAL MALE INITIATION

It is your responsibility to:

- △ Communicate any problems you may have to your parents, caregiver, healthcare worker, social workers, friends, etc.
- △ Report any illegal or unregistered initiation school to your nearest police station.
- △ Drink water.
- △ Use medication for your ailments.

2024/2025

Policy Speech Snippets



Acting HOD
Mr Vuyo Mlokothe



MEC Zolile Williams

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 This is a quarterly newsletter published by the Directorate: Corporate Communications of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

Praises For Fearless Women WHO CHAMPION GBVF FOR MARGINALISED GROUPS

By Mamnkeli Ngam

Protecting marginalised and designated groups in society, is the cornerstone to defend democracy and advance freedom and build safer communities.

In this respect, Cogta MEC Zolile Williams is committed never to tire to facilitate partnerships with Traditional Councils (TCs) and other organisations focusing on Anti Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) campaigns. This he said will be done through workshops to increase awareness in communities, key stakeholders and Traditional Leaders about issues of GBVF.

“We will monitor all 39 municipalities on the implementation of programmes that respond to GBVF challenges to mitigate the scourge in our midst. We are encouraged by the work of Women’s Caucuses in Joe Gqabi, Senqu and Elundini, for championing Anti-GBVF campaigns in partnership with the South African Council of Churches (SACC), Men’s Fora, Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and other organisations,” he said.

MEC Williams added that these courageous women apart from championing GBVF campaigns, they support GBVF victims in Elundini, and Ngqushwa local municipalities during court appearances, provide counselling services through the Department of Social Development (DSD), Victim Empowerment Programmes and establish White Door Centres (WDC) which are commonly known as shelters.

It is the same municipalities that demand reports from the local SAPS on the number of GBVF cases opened, their status, cases closed with reasons and cases where justice has been handed. MEC Williams said municipalities like Matatiele, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Mnquma, Ntabankulu, Alfred Nzo DM and Umzimvubu have established GBVF Rapid Response Task Teams. “It is pleasing to note that Joe Gqabi Men’s Forum held a summit to discuss issues such as drug abuse, cultural stereotypes, rape and other factors that contribute to GBVF, he said.



MATATIELE
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



ALFRED NZO
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



NTABANKULU
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



UMZIMVUBU
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Building A Capable, Ethical AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE CRITICAL

By Nosiphiwo Vokovi

Delivering the Policy Speech of the Department for the 7th Administration at the EC Provincial Legislature in Bhisho last month, MEC Zolile Williams, said building a capable, developmental, and ethical state is “critical to achieve a better life for our people.”

“Our commitment is premised on good governance, leadership, capacity building, development-oriented, effective, and efficient systems to realise government’s developmental goal. It is evident from our three-year consecutive clean audits that our department is stable and capable to deliver on these commitments. Let us translate this accomplishment into positive municipal audit performance that would ultimately translate to the rapid delivery of quality services.”

He added that the department remains committed to the provincial pledge to achieve between 98%-100% of the set targets for the financial year. Their department has institutionalised monitoring and evaluation across all programmes to report on the Annual Performance Plan (APP) and fulfill our vision for the term.

“We shall not rest until each employee understands his/her role to satisfying and monitor the performance of our Department. We will also monitor the budget so that at least 25% is spent in each quarter.” said MEC Williams.

Furthermore, He said that President Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, assented to the Public Service Amendment Bill and the Public Administration Management Amendment Bill into law which “represent a significant step forward in the ongoing journey to professionalise the public service, enhance efficiency, and serve the needs of the people of South Africa, better.”

The MEC committed to continue to strengthen the technical capacity of municipalities with skilled personnel for greater coordination and planning of service provision, with the active involvement of citizens.

“We will support municipalities to reduce their reliance on outsourcing services, which weakens the state’s capacity to build competencies within government. Strengthening planning and project implementation capabilities, improve monitoring and evaluation tools, and attract, develop, and retain skilled personnel across the government, are our priorities. We will further build a professional, ethical, and developmental public service, advance e-government and digital services to make government services accessible, interoperable, and efficient. Additionally, we will work with labour, civil society, and business on social and economic initiatives. Increase disaster response capacity and funding. We will also support the legislature in fulfilling its legislative mandate, oversight, and accountability responsibilities as well as support institutions that uphold democracy,” the MEC told MPLs.

The MEC said that it was important to strengthen local government and ensure that municipalities fulfil their basic obligations to citizens through public employment programmes by fixing potholes, paving roads, maintaining community and rural roads, as well as other road infrastructure, removing refuse regularly, keeping communities clean and green, and providing clean water and sanitation.

“Furthermore, we will foster infrastructure maintenance through the District Development Model (DDM) protocol. For a very long time, municipalities have not tapped into the 10% provided for in their Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) capital funding for repairs and maintenance. All our municipalities will henceforth be directed to set aside the 10% for repairs and maintenance of the built infrastructure,” he said.

MEC Williams said increasing revenue collection, resource mobilisation, reviewing the sustainability and funding of local government are his priorities. “To us, these issues constitute a minimum set of performance non-negotiables.”

He had observed a “growing social distance between Councillors and communities” they are meant to serve leading to a culture of non-payment of municipal services by communities thus increasing municipal debt books. “Our Councillors will be persuaded to encourage payment for municipal services and municipalities to have credible billing systems, ratepayers have meters both for water and electricity to maximise revenue collection including applying revenue enhancement strategies,” he said.

The MEC said the department will support municipalities to promote local industrialisation and job creation with a specific focus on township and village economic development and collaborate with traditional leaders on local economic development and land use management. “We will strengthen cooperation with key strategic stakeholders that have an interest in matters affecting traditional leadership. The Department will monitor the functionality of Water Services Authorities (WSAs) and Providers (WSPs) on water quality standards (blue, green and no-drop) status. This will be enhanced by the review of the Water Services Act 108 of 1997 to permit the Department of Water and Sanitation to intervene when there are water quality and provision failures by municipalities.”

He called for an “agile local government” that responds to the challenges associated with governance, financial management and service delivery. “In fact, we have started to professionalise the local civil service so that people with the right skills are appointed to key positions.” Despite the positive trajectory to support municipalities and traditional leadership institutions, there is a need to tackle challenges such as escalation of the municipal debt to ESKOM, finalise the reconstitution of Traditional Councils, fill critical posts within the Department.



Demonstration of drone technology

Non-negotiables TO ENHANCE AGILITY TO SERVICE DELIVERY

By Vuyani Sibene

"In our commitment to enhance the agility of municipalities to deliver essential services, we will introduce a comprehensive booklet outlining the non-negotiables that all municipalities will be expected to implement fully," said MEC Williams whilst delivering his first Policy Speech in the 7th administration at the Eastern Cape Legislature last month.

He said the booklet will serve as a guiding framework, detailing the critical operational standards and expectations necessary for effective service delivery.

"By establishing clear benchmarks and requirements, we aim to empower municipalities to respond more swiftly and efficiently to the needs of their communities," he clarified.

He said the implementation of the non-negotiables will not only streamline operations but also foster accountability and transparency in municipal governance. "By equipping municipalities with the right tools and guidelines, we can improve their capacity to deliver quality services, thereby enhance the overall well-being of our citizens. We reaffirm our dedication to support municipalities as service providers, so that they are well-prepared to meet the challenges of our ever-evolving society."

MEC Williams explained that the foundation of the non-negotiables is to enhance service delivery in municipalities by implementing a performance management system alongside a robust monitoring and evaluation process.

"To ensure accountability, I will sign performance agreements with Executive Mayors and Mayors to signify a commitment to uphold the (spirit and ethos of) non-negotiables. The agreements will serve as a vital tool, to demonstrate dedication on behalf of councillors, to serve our communities," said MEC Williams.

He added that the non-negotiables have emerged from a "concerning trend" whereby municipalities struggle to deliver essential services in needy and essential areas.

"Our primary objective is to prevent the decline in the provision of basic services, including water, sanitation, refuse removal, electricity, landfill management, and environmental health. Additionally, we must focus on services such as town planning, local economic development, project management, financial management, good governance, risk management, public participation, accountability, and ensuring value for money," said MEC Williams.

MEC Williams said the current state of infrastructure in many municipalities paints a "grim picture, reminiscent of a decaying city or town thus not only discourages tourism but also negatively affects investment opportunities." He encouraged municipalities to strike a balance between maintaining existing infrastructure and expanding access to services for all previously disadvantaged areas.

He clarified that municipalities are expected to fulfil their responsibilities as outlined in the Constitution, specifically in Schedules 4 and 5B, while maintaining their capacity to deliver services through the implementation of proper standard operating procedures, clear system descriptions, financial sustainability, and planned maintenance for overall municipal infrastructure.

To effectively address infrastructure backlogs and maintain existing facilities, MEC Williams said municipalities must enhance their internal capacity, both strategically and technically, to fully utilize all government grants allocated for these purposes.

Putting People First TO ADDRESS THEIR INTERESTS

By Anelisa Mabece

Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs MEC Zolile Williams stated that the Department managed to establish Ward Committees (WC) in most Wards of the Province, not without challenges. He further indicated that the establishment of the Committees contributed to the improvement of accountability and dealt with trust deficiencies.

The MEC reported that 50% of women, 10% of youth, and 10% of people with disabilities benefitted from the establishment of Committees. "Ward Committee members benefited from receiving suitable training and the out-of-pocket (stipend) amount. This has impacted positively on the human development of the individual members as well as the communities they serve, who will also benefit through their involvement in governance matters inclusive of service delivery," said MEC Williams.

He added that one of the primary focus areas this year is the functionality of WCs through the institutionalisation of Ward Operational Plans and Assessment tools.

On the management of petitions, MEC Williams said these petitions attended to in Chris Hani, OR Tambo, Alfred Nzo, Joe Gqabi, BCMM, and Nelson Mandela Bay Metro municipalities. This effort was achieved through the Provincial Rapid Response Team guided by the Petition Management Framework to coordinate and facilitate petition response plans.

"Municipalities are expected to establish a Public Participation and Rapid Response (petitions) Committee to promptly handle community concerns. Section 79 (S79) (Public Participation and Petitions Committee) will speedily resolve the community concern to avert violent protests that are now taking place in many areas of the province. The Sarah Baartman, Amathole, and Joe Gqabi Districts have the S79 Committees and Petitions systems in place.

"We will also increase community engagement through outreach programmes to enhance participatory democracy."

He added that the Department has provided support for free and fair elections, through the establishment of a Provincial Election Steering Committee with sub-structures at the district and local levels. The focus of these structures was to provide support to Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) on matters related to voter infrastructure challenges and managing proper communication throughout the period towards elections.



**YOUR DEMOCRACY
OWN IT** ✕
#SAelections24

DID YOU KNOW ?

**National Fraud Hotline
0800 701 701**

15 Bursaries FOR TRADITIONAL AND KHOISAN LEADERS

By Anelisa Mabece

The MEC said fifteen (15) bursaries will be awarded to Traditional Leaders to pursue studies in Public Management and Law to enhance their skills to fulfill their statutory role with a budget of R1.2 million. The Department has been inducting newly recognised Traditional Leaders, this year through a 2-day reorientation programme who have been in service for a long time. As part of enhancing support for an improved functioning of Kingships, MEC Williams announced that a budget of R5.6 million has been set aside and a further R1.7 million allocated for the construction of aMaMpondomise King's Palace.

Besides great strides taken, the MEC mentioned that there were delays in the construction of Traditional Councils (TCs) over time coupled with financial constraints. The Department is developing a strategy that will see improvement in the turnaround time for the construction of Tcs. The strategy, he said will consider the engagement of other implementing agents over and above the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for new construction work. A further consideration is for the Department to consider executing the maintenance of TL structures internally.

"We undertake to facilitate the construction of Five (5) TCs and the renovation of two (02) TCs to provide office space for Traditional Leaders to perform their functions as outlined in the legislation. An amount of R2.6 million has been set aside for ad hoc maintenance of Kingdoms and TCs in response to climate change and disasters," said Cogta MEC.

The Department is in the process of publicising Regulations for the Reconstitution of TCs to guide the selection and election of members. He added that the King's Councils will be reconstituted immediately after TCs have been reconstituted. The Department will continue to support the TCs through, amongst other things, quarterly sittings with a budget of R1.4 million.

The Department hosted the official opening of the Amathole Local House of Traditional and Khoi San Leaders and this event was the first of its kind in the province and across the country. This, year, he said Cogta committed R6.4 million for the operations of Local Houses and to strengthen their role in monitoring the traditional male initiation programme.

Cogta MEC said that, in the light of the shrinking government purse the House of Traditional and Khoisan leaders formed partnerships with private sector institutions to change the lives of people in rural areas for the better. He said a signed MOU with Women Investment Portfolio Holdings (WIPHOLD) and the agreement focuses on agrarian development, fight against gender-based violence and tourism focusing on heritage sites. He proudly expressed that the processes for the recruitment of support staff for the Local Houses of Traditional and Khoi San Leaders is underway for appointment during the current financial year.

Customary Male Initiation Practice

"Our Premier rightly stated in the State of the Province Address (SOPA) that the traditional male initiation is a societal matter that upholds culture and customs. Still, it is now a health matter because we are losing lives. This is despite the concentrated risk-responsive interventions made by the sixth administration such as age and health assessments, parental support, screening of traditional surgeons, quality assurance of initiation schools, and safety. Government will continue to support communities by mobilising all social partners to take responsibility for this important rite of passage for boys to manhood."

MEC Williams expressed his appreciation through working with NGOs that continuously assist in fighting the carnage. He proudly mentioned that 1281 customary male initiation practitioners (iingcibi namakhankatha) Have been trained on management of initiates from the initial stage up to the end of the process. He emphasized that wrongdoers from families and practitioners will never be spared when they mismanage this practice.

"It is in the above context that it is with regret to report in this esteemed House that a total of 14 deaths and 113 hospital admissions were registered in the 2023 summer season." He said

The MEC said in line with the Customary Male Initiation Legislation, the Department will continue to coordinate and facilitate programmes focusing on safeguarding and promoting customary male initiation to ensure a clear understanding of initiation protocols towards the reduction of injuries and fatalities in the practice.

"In the financial year 2024/25, we have committed an amount of R4.1 million to support the customary male initiation programme."



Mec monitoring visit at emabhumeni

RAS Is Proving To Be A SUCCESS STRATEGY IN MIG SPENDING

By Thando Sonjica

The introduction of the Risk-Adjusted Strategy (RAS) in April 2023 is beginning to yield positive results. Although there are glitches in few municipalities, in the overall, RAS is proving to be a success strategy concerning the expenditure on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). MEC Zolile Williams said the 7th Administration "for the first time in the history of the province, municipalities spent on the MIG an average of 98%."

Out of thirty six (36) Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) receiving municipalities, seventy percent (70%), which is comprised of twenty five (25) municipalities had spent one hundred percent (100%) of their allocations. While some of the municipalities that had spent less than one hundred percent are still busy reconciling accruals and this could potentially further improve the provincial MIG expenditure.

The rand value of this expenditure translates to the province having spent R3, 3 billion out of the R3, 4 billion allocated in the 2023/24 financial year," said MEC proudly.

He said the focus this year was on the full institutionalisation of RAS in all municipalities, introduce the RAS Infrastructure Audit programme to improve the quality of the projects in all municipalities and introduce RAS Operations & Maintenance (O&M) programme to ensure sustainable provision of services in all municipalities. MEC Williams told members of the ECL that the Province has 36 municipalities receiving the following grants, MIG, Integrated National Electrification Programme (INEP), Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG), and Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG), and these grants can only be translated into outputs in the following basic services accessibility water, sanitation, refuse removal and electricity.

He added that the Department has set aside R1 million to continue to closely monitor, through the Provincial Municipal Infrastructure & Service Delivery (PMISD) assessment tool, the eradication of the infrastructure backlog, to monitor the provision of basic services by municipalities and to support municipalities with infrastructure project planning and implementation.

Over Two Hundred Thousand Rands ALLOCATED FOR FBS

By Thando Sonjica

Regarding Free Basic Service (FBS), MEC Williams said municipalities improved the rolling out of free indigent benefit to deserving households in thirty eight (38) municipalities except for Sarah Baartman District.

"An amount of R231 935 is allocated as a special focus to the management of Indigent Registers so that services are accessed by deserving indigent beneficiaries and that those who are not indigent are paying for municipal services," he said.

On delegated different legislation, MEC Williams said the Department is to provide technical support on land use administration, town planning, and Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

"The plan is to engage in the municipal processes of reviewing/drafting of Spatial Development Framework (SDFs) and Land Use Schemes that are compliant with SPLUMA on the earmarked municipalities. Our analysis reveals that key to Land Survey and Cadastral Information Management is to restore and advance orderly land development and resolve encroachments such property boundary disputes, facilitate disposal/sale of land parcels and guide infrastructure development. We are planning for sustainable solutions that must contribute to environmental, social, economic, political, and broader planning considerations, especially as it pertains to solutions to quality service delivery provision for the poorest of the poor," he said.

He said the department guided and supported municipalities like Enoch Mgijima, Mhlontlo, Mbashe, Ngqushwa, Dr Beyers Naude, Umzimvubu, Elundini, Great Kei Local Municipalities (LMs), and Sarah Baartman District Municipality (DM) to comply with administrative systems as required by SPLUMA.

"We established structures such as Municipal Planning Tribunal (MPT's) that enable municipalities to consider and dispose of land use applications," he said.

In addition, he said the Department will review the Eastern Cape Provincial Spatial Development Framework to be in synergy with the recently promulgated National Spatial Development Framework, the Karoo Regional Spatial Development Framework and the Eastern Seaboard Regional Spatial Development Framework which is in its final stages of development. MEC Williams added that the Department continuously participates in Integrated Development Plans (IDP) sessions of municipalities for alignment with the National, Provincial, District, and Municipal Spatial Development Frameworks and Plans.

"The Department has developed plans to conduct training for Municipal Planning Tribunals, municipal officials, councillors, and Traditional Leaders on SPLUMA. In addition, the Department will render support to municipalities concerning the development of legally compliant IDPs, concerted efforts will be applied to the alignment of IDPs and DDM One Plans. This will be implemented through the currently utilised IDP assessment tool, in pursuit of enriching the municipal IDPs. The Department will also roll out a programme of development of Ward Based Plans targeting the distressed municipalities," he said.

The MEC said the Department will continue to assess the extent of compliance of municipalities with different sections of the Municipal Property Rates Act (MPRA) and guide municipalities on compliance with the MPRA. In 2024/25 financial year the Department is planning to support 13 local municipalities.

COGTA Identifies Risk OF POOR URBAN AND SMALL-TOWN DEVELOPMENT

By Thando Sonjica

Delivering his Policy Speech of the 7th administration recently, MEC Williams said the Department identified the risk of poor implementation of the Small Towns Revitalisation Programme which will hinder the successful implementation of improved public and private sector investments in targeted towns.

"As a mitigation measure, the Executive Council approved the Small-Town Development Framework. Its implementation has been piloted through the development and implementation of the Stutterheim, Port Alfred, and Alexandria master and precinct plans."

However, he said Cogta continues to support small towns like Port St Johns, Maluti, Port Alfred, Stutterheim, Engcobo, Mt Fletcher, and Qumbu through the cleaning, repairs, and maintenance of infrastructure programmes.

"For the financial year 2024/25, we shall support Matatiele and Mhlontlo municipalities to develop Master and Precinct plans for Maluti-Cedarville as well as Tsolo-Qumbu, respectively," he said.

Supporting Local Economic Development To Create Job

MEC Williams said the Department supported municipalities in the development of Local Economic Development (LED) Strategies and Plans informed by their competitive and comparative advantages wherein potential catalytic projects were identified. The identified potential catalytic projects are being submitted to sector strategic partners and Development Funding Institutions (DFIs) for funding and technical support.

"We piloted the development of the Small-Medium-Micro Enterprises (SMME) database in Enoch Mgijima LM by conducting a survey that profiled local SMME's, township and rural enterprises," he said.

In compliance with Section 154 of the Constitution, MEC Williams said Cogta will continue with the planned hands-on support to the following municipalities; Ntabankulu, OR Tambo, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Amahlathi, Mbashe, Makana, Senqu, Walter Sisulu, Sakhisizwe, Sundays River Valley, Intsika Yethu and Ingquza Hill to implement LED projects and programmes to stimulate local economies for the creation of jobs.

He revealed that Department has partnered with SALGA and the national Department of COGTA to develop a LED capacity-building programme for LED training and development to enhance capacity in the municipalities to better plan and implement LED.

He said in the 2023/24 financial year, the Community Work Programme (CWP) was implemented in all thirty-one (31) Eastern Cape Local Municipalities and two (2) metros, and it has created 48 538 job opportunities.

"The CWP benefited 74% of women against the provincial target of 55% and 2% of people with disabilities. We also supported the implementation of the Provincial Integrated Anti-Poverty Strategy (PIAPS) by creating 3 500 CWP job opportunities across 34 poorest Wards and created 182 EPWP job opportunities in Dimbaza, Tsomo and Cofimvaba small towns," said MEC. He added that for the 2024/25 financial year, 36 170 public employment job opportunities shall be created through CWP and EPWP in thirty-one (31) local municipalities and the two (2) metros with an R2 million EPWP conditional grant allocation as well as CWP funds held by National COGTA.

"The CWP and EPWP maintain community assets through the useful work to be performed by participants including general cleaning, clearing storm water channels, fixing water leaks, assisting in Early Childhood Development (ECDs) and school homework, etc," he said.

COGTA To Professionalise LOCAL GOVERNMENT

By Vuyani Sibene

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Leaders has responded to the call to professionalize Local Government through capacity-building programmes and monitor the implementation of Municipal Staff Regulations, especially concerning the recruitment and appointment of Senior Managers, said MEC Williams whilst delivering Cogta Policy Speech at the Provincial Legislature

MEC Williams said Cogta conducted a workshop for both Municipal Councillors and officials on Local Government: Staff Regulations of 2021. In addition, an accredited Skills Development Programme has been conducted in all Districts for two hundred and forty (240) Councillors.

“Out of 240 Councillors trained, one hundred and eleven (111) were males, and hundred and twenty-nine (129) were females. Five (5) District Municipalities including their Locals have been capacitated on Local Labour Forum (LLF) except for Joe Gqabi and its Locals which will be targeted during the financial year 2024/25.”

The department adopted a proactive approach to build the capacity of municipalities to sustain sound labour relations to minimise industrial action and clarify roles in local bargaining, he said.

“We need to strengthen the Local Labour Forums (LLF) and assist in labour issues of municipalities. We will continue to train Councillors and officials on emerging Policies and Legislation and respond to training needs. We build municipal capacity by providing hands-on support in areas of municipal institutional deficiencies,” said MEC Williams.

In addition, MEC Williams said the department will support twelve (12) Municipalities to review their Human Resource Plans and six (6) Municipalities to review their organograms in line with relevant pieces of legislation.

“To support the fight against corruption, and harnessing ethical conduct, Local Government Anti-Corruption Strategy and Municipal Integrity Management Framework, a total of four (4) municipalities (Port St. Johns LM, Sarah Baartman DM, Dr. AB. Xuma LM and Dr. Beyers Naude LM) are planned to be capacitated through advocacy sessions and monitoring of the development and reviewal of Municipal Fraud risk registers, fraud prevention plans as well as the existence of governance structures to provide oversight and ethics officers to drive the anti-corruption and ethics management programmes within the municipalities.”

Cogta will continue to be part of the Local Government Anti-corruption Forum, to attend to the fight against corruption and all forms of maladministration in the municipal space with other law enforcement agencies.

“The establishment of the Eastern Cape Ethics Officer Forum has started with each municipality identifying their Ethics Officers who will be trained accordingly to implement the programs within the local government space. The other pillars of the anti-corruption strategy remain equally important which is the detection, investigation, and resolution of the previous cases,” said MEC.

Municipal Audit Outcomes ARE IMPROVING, MPLS TOLD

By Vuyani Sibene

MEC Williams told members of the Provincial Legislature that audit outcomes have improved with municipalities that obtained clean audit opinions increasing from three (3) to four (4), those with unqualified with matters maintained the number of nineteen (19) and the ones with negative audit outcomes dropped drastically i.e., qualified from fifteen (15) to thirteen (13), for disclaimers dropped from four (4) to three (3) and currently no municipality has an adverse opinion.

He said municipalities that obtained the clean audit are characterized by sound financial and performance management disciplines and perform their functions by applicable legislation.

“They plan adequately, implement effectively and report on performance credibly and those are Senqu, Mnquma, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Joe Gqabi,” said MEC Williams.

He added that the aim was to increase the number of municipalities with unqualified audits with no matters or with reduced findings.

“We are encouraging municipalities to prepare interim financial statements quarterly to circumvent the use of consultants, share best practices on the improvement of audit outcomes by best-performing municipalities on forums aimed to capacitate the municipalities on the execution of their internal audit and risk management. We also want to capacitate internal auditors and risk management officials in municipalities, and encourage municipalities to develop standard operating procedures, incorporate and implement the Auditor General’s guide on preventative controls,” said MEC Williams.

Additionally, he said the Department in collaboration with Provincial Treasury (PT) and South African Local Government Association (SALGA) will institutionalise the audit response and improvement plans in all municipal meetings and structures.

MEC Williams further advised the MPLs that the Department of Cogta will monitor the municipalities where Financial Recovery Plans (FRPs) are implemented together with strengthening support to municipalities on the collection of debt owed by government departments to ensure improved Municipal Revenue Collection and provide support and build capacity to Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPACs) and support staff to ensure effectiveness governance.

He said some municipalities are making strides on sound financial management, clean administration and good governance with the support from the capacity interventions provided by Cogta, PT, SALGA, National COGTA and National Treasury capacity interventions.

“We have allocated R968 745 for 2024/2025 for this programme,” he added.



L-R Mayors: Daniswa Mafumbatha from Winnie Madikizela, Veleli Stokhwe from Senqu, Nomvuyo Mposelwa from Joe Gqabi and Tunyiswa Manxila-Nkamisa from Mnquma

RAS Assists Municipalities TO AVOID LOSING FUNDS

By Nosiphiwo Vokovi

Speaking on day one of the LGCF meeting about the establishment of the Government National Unity (GNU) the Executive Director of Rivonia Circles Mr Lukhona Mnguni said this is a broad coalition government consisting of all parties or major parties that support it. It is usually formed during a time of war or another national emergency.

Mr Mnguni said the GNU came when no one was expecting it because it introduced itself slowly in the lives of South Africans when they were not watching.

"I think that is where we are now as a country, and everyone is nervous. We live in an environment of uncertainty, and I think for us to be able to go forward, we need to accept this new environment of uncertainty and not be in denial," We should ask ourselves why we are here now and what does this potentially mean for politics and government. The road to the 2026 Local Government Elections is going to be extremely bumpy," he added.

"I am just talking about mapping out what is the political landscape and environment of South Africa that we will be part of navigating. Many people because of proximity to local government when they do not understand the ways government operates, they revolt or complain to municipalities because their first point of government is through municipalities," said Mr Mnguni.

He said Chapter 3 in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa talks about Cooperative Governance because the country is not a federal state rather unitary, meaning most or all the governing power resides with the central government.

"So, we are here today because people are tired of politics and government. The GNU is going to demand a highly competent and independent public service because this it has come with both opportunities and challenges. As communicators, you need to step out and be ready for this uncertain environment that we are entering," said Mr Mnguni.

MEC Williams Brags ABOUT RISK MANAGEMENT FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

By Mamnkeli Ngam

Building a responsive, capable, developmental, ethical and accountable department remains priority in the departmental Policy Speech (PS) for the 2024/2025 Financial Year in the 7th administration, reports Mr Mamnkeli Ngam. Contained in the departmental PS by MEC Zolile Williams is his boastful assertion that Cogta has "an effective and efficient risk management system" born of "an independent" Risk Management Committee (RMCOM) chairperson to continue to monitor the real implementation of the risk appetite and risk tolerance framework.

"With respect to ethics and integrity management, our does not have employees who trade with the organs of state. We will continue to monitor 100% submission of financial interest disclosures by all designated categories," he committed.

He added that the department produced a Consolidated Quarterly Assessment Report informed by the assessments conducted in various municipalities focusing on the work of municipalities to provide correct governance and oversight institutional functionality. Feedback will be provided to the assessed municipalities, in the current financial year. The focus will be to strengthen the oversight function of municipal Councils and their Committees through training on their roles and responsibilities.

"We will assist municipalities to amend Section 12 Notices that establish such municipalities for proper and optimal functioning. In collaboration with the Provincial Treasury (PT), we will monitor progress in the Section 139 (5) interventions in Makana, OR Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Amathole District Municipalities," vowed MEC Williams. He said, various municipalities were assisted to review the Rules of Order and workshopped on the Roles & Responsibilities of Executive Committees and the Troika as well as the Terms of Reference for the Whippyery Committees, Ethics & Rules Committee and the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

The Department supported municipalities to also review the Performance Management System (PMS) Framework to be aligned to the Staff Regulation Chapter 4 on Performance Management Development System (P M D S) .

Moreover, assistance was provided to develop and conclude Workplan Agreements of employees below Section 56 Managers. "All municipalities are reviewing their PMS Framework for implementation in the 2024/2025 Financial Year."

MEC Williams said a Consolidated Municipal Performance Report (CMPR) revealed "progress" on the implementation of the Municipal Support & Intervention Plans (MSIPs) "although municipal Councils did not adopt their MSIPs."

Progress, he said is monitored and reported to the National COGTA including consultations done with the South African Local Government Association (Salga) and Provincial Treasury (PT). To this end, a final Provincial State of Local Government Report (SLGR) was developed which classified municipalities according to their levels of performance.

MEC Williams added that the recent pronouncement by the National COGTA to assess municipalities using the Municipal Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) and to develop 2023 SLGR "confirms this improvement" with the outcome classifying seven (7) municipalities as being dysfunctional, twenty-eight (28) at risk and four (4) as stable. "Additionally, we are tasked to intensify the operationalisation of the Municipal Support & Intervention Framework (MSIF)," he said.

Reflecting about the 2024/25 horizon in the departmental PS, MEC Williams said it his intention to "intensify coordination of all government support to Municipalities and Traditional Leadership Institutions." This he said, is within the purview of the District Coordination Support programme to integrate departmental plans in this regard. Mr Mamnkeli Ngam elaborates.

Cogta management and staff, he said are committed to "build a coherent and effective IGR system" in the province by supporting and monitoring the District Mayors Forum (DIMAFO), Provincial Technical Inter-Governmental (PTIGR) Forum and the political MUNIMEC.

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