



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE
& TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

COGTA

Newsletter
SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2024

INKCIYO CEREMONY



30
YEARS
OF FREEDOM

Merry Christmas

AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

We have come to the end 2024, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all employees for hard work, dedication and contributions to our success. Your commitment has been the foundation of our achievements this year, and I am proud of you as Team Cogta.

As we celebrate this season, we also celebrate 30 years of freedom and democracy depicted by the significant progress towards improving the quality of life of all South Africans. However, we must never tire to continue our journey towards the national duty to build the Eastern Cape We Want.

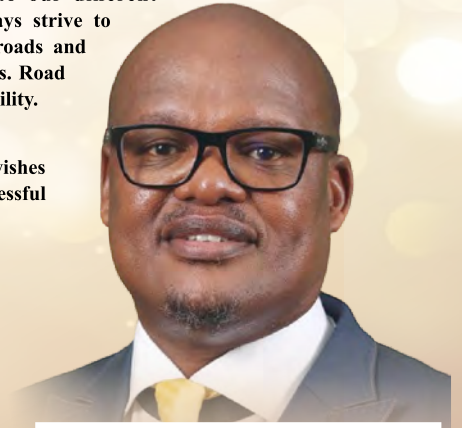
As custodians of culture, customs and traditions, we urge parents, families and communities to work harder to stem the tide of deaths and injuries of their children at traditional initiation schools (EmaBhumeni). Mabaye Bephila, Babuye Bephila. Siyazingca NgeSiko Lethu.

This festive season, I inspire you to find time to rest, recharge and celebrate with your families and loved ones the beauty of life God has given us.

As we will be travelling to our different destinations, we should always strive to respect one another on the roads and become responsible road users. Road Safety is Everyone's Responsibility.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy, healthy and successful New Year!

Zolile Williams
Member of Executive Council
Cogta EC
December 2024



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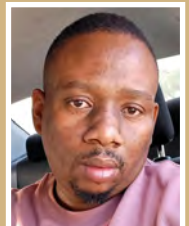
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Inkciyo Programme

INSTILLS DISCIPLINE AND RESTORES DIGNITY

By Dumisani Lindi and Anelisa Mabece

Mngqesha Great Place near Qonce was the host for the 2024 Inkciyo Ceremony, on 05 December 2024. Inkciyo is a programme spearheaded by the Eastern Cape House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders (ECHO TKL) in partnership with the Eastern Cape Kingdoms and municipalities to instill discipline and restore dignity and pride in young maidens.

The ceremony was attended by over 3000 maidens from all over the Province to celebrate and showcase their purity, pride and their love for tradition, customs and culture. Also, in attendance were King Dalimvula Matanzima of Qamata Great Place, Queens of Eastern Cape Kingdoms, the Deputy Chairperson of the National House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders Nkosi Langa Mavuso, Chairperson of the ECHO TKL, Nkosi Mpumalanga Gwadiso and Members of both the Provincial and Local Houses.

The day started off with a maiden parade showcasing their dance moves and songs to celebrate their purity which was followed by the presentation of an ox by His Majesty King Vululwandle Sandile to the maidens. Addressing the maidens King Sandile said the Great Place was proud of what the maidens are doing, to retain their purity.

"This brings back the dignity to our nation, keep our morals and restore our culture. Seeing that this brings tears in my eyes as it assures me that the future of our people is in great hands," said King Sandile.

He thanked parents of the maidens whom he said educated them well to understand the importance of culture.

In his address Nkosi Gwadiso also thanked the maidens and onomehlo (the women who look after the maidens) for their efforts to preserve the custom and ensure the dignity and pride to a girl child is maintained.

"This programme instills traditional customs among young maidens and enhances the values that build our nations. I am also happy to see young boys being involved because this gives us an opportunity to talk and instill pride in them early in their lives so that so as not to engage in issues like Gender Based Violence, Women and Child abuse. On behalf of the House, I am proud to be part of this beautiful ceremony," said Nkosi Gwadiso.



Nkosi Landubuzwe Ngwekazi

MEC Told Community

TO HOLD GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE

By Thando Sonjica

Cogta MEC Zolile Williams concluded his two-day Outreach Programme in Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM) on 11 December, with a robust community engagement session in the Maluti Civic Centre (MCC). The MEC's first stop was at Sikit township, in Maluti where Ms Beauty Masele, a lady resident living with a disability, was unable to access government services, including social grants, due to sharing an identity number with a deceased individual.

MEC Williams was accompanied by officials from the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and Home Affairs (HA), who resolved the matter, thus enabling Ms Masele to apply for her social grant and that of her daughter. Officials from the department of HA promised to rectify the issue of the duplicate identity number.

Later on MEC Williams attended a community engagement session in a packed hall at MCC, where he encouraged members of the community to hold government officials and Councillors accountable by demanding updates on the delivery of services. MEC Williams said government was in the area to bring answers to challenges that the community have raised and report back about what government had done to assist to resolve those challenges.

"We have come here as part of participatory democracy and we are not doing you any favour by reporting back to you," said MEC Williams.

He praised the SASSA official who had intervened to assist a community member living with disability to apply for her social grant pension. "This is a model of a civil servant whom we want, someone who cares and takes people's matters serious and act on them," said MEC Williams.

He pleaded with government officials to be loyal and serve people with dignity because this is the government of the people. "If we do not serve our people well when they see government property, they will protect it because they know that it brings services to them. If we do not service them properly, they are not going to vote for us again," said MEC Williams. In addition, he said Councillors must stop fighting amongst themselves rather bring services to the communities. "If Councillors use municipal funds to take wrong decisions they are going to pay out of their own pockets," he said.

Community members were given an opportunity to raise their concerns which in most Wards were about the unavailability of water and access roads. Government officials from various departments and MLM provided updates on issues that community members had complained about in different Wards.



A member of the community during the outreach programme



MEC Williams and Ms Beauty Masele

Local Government Communicators Forum: A PLATFORM FOR PROGRESS AND COLLABORATION

By Sonto Malinga

The Local Government Communicators Forum (LGCF) hosted by the Corporate Communication Directorate of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), took place from 05 to 06 December 2024.

“This dynamic gathering serves as a crucial platform for communicators across municipalities to assess progress, exchange insights and chart a path forward for effective communication practices in local government”, said the chairperson of the forum, Mr. Mamnkeli Ngam, who is also a Director for Corporate Communication at COGTA.

The forum, convened municipal communication professionals and sought to address several key objectives including, evaluating the implementation of communication action plans, fostering best practices and refining the LGCF’s modus operandi.

One of the forum’s primary goals was to measure progress on communication strategies implemented at the municipal level. This evaluation enabled participants to identify successes and areas requiring improvement, ensuring that local government remains responsive and transparent to their communities. Discussions highlighted innovative strategies used by various municipalities to improve community engagement, with emphasis on inclusive, citizen centered communication. Recognizing the evolving nature of communication, the LGCF emphasized the importance of equipping municipal communicators with modern skills and tools.

Interactive workshops and training sessions were conducted, focusing on emerging trends such as digital transformation, social media engagement and crisis communication. Participants were left with enhanced capabilities to adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing communication landscape.

In addition, the forum served as a platform for municipalities to showcase innovative practices that have yielded positive results in their regions. From digital campaigns that boosted public participation to strategies for managing misinformation. These shared experiences provided a wealth of actionable insights. Communicators were encouraged to replicate and adapt these models to suit their local context, fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual learning through best practices.

Another significant outcome of the forum was the review and refinement of the LGCF’s modus operandi. Delegates engaged in robust discussions on how the forum could be better structured to meet its objectives. Proposals included more frequent engagement, the establishment of thematic working groups and leveraging technology to maintain continuous collaboration among members.

In closing Mr Ngam said that the local government communicator’s forum remains a vital mechanism for strengthening communication within municipalities. “The two-day session underscored the importance of a coordinated approach to municipal communication, particularly in enhancing service delivery and fostering trust between government and citizens.”

As the forum concluded, participants expressed renewed commitments to improve communication practices and ensure that municipalities become models of transparency, inclusivity and responsiveness. With strengthened capacity and shared vision, the LGCF is well positioned to drive impactful communication across local governments in the years ahead.



Ms Nosiphiwo Vokovi, Intern at Cogta



L-R: Ms Thando Sonjica, Ms Olwethu Mabovula and Dr Siviwe Mditshwa



Mr Thandi Matebese from Buffalo City Municipality



Ms Yamkela Mhlaluka



Mr Luncedo Walaza, Head of Communication, Alfred Nzo District Municipality

Minister For Cogta Convenes Emergency MINISTERIAL MEETING AMID DEATHS OF INITIATES

Story and Pic Supplied

Late in December, the Minister of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa, convened an emergency Ministerial meeting in Butterworth amid the high number of the deaths of initiates. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Minister for Traditional Affairs, Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe, MEC Zolile Williams, Executive Mayor of Amathole District Municipality (ADM), Councillor Anele Ntsangani, Deputy Chairperson of EC House of Traditional and Khoisan leaders, Nkosi Gwazinamba Matanzima and other local leaders.

The Minister's emergency visit followed the unfolding crises, which saw more than 20 initiates losing their lives at various traditional initiation schools. These deaths sent shockwaves across the country as confirmation of the unfortunate passing of initiates was publicised. "To this effect, it cannot be business as usual. We value life, and we have to stop at nothing to ensure that this age-old cultural practice is performed safely and its dignity is restored," said Minister Hlabisa.

The visit of the Minister also confirmed that culture does not kill, but it is those who are not following the norms and standards as contained within the Customary Initiation Act who drag down the reputation of this cultural tradition.

Minister Hlabisa visited Butterworth in ADM, which is amongst the districts that have experienced the highest number of initiate deaths. During the visit, the Minister met all stakeholders, including the provincial and local government, district initiation forum, Provincial initiation committees and the broader communities.

"The passing of any human being under any circumstances leaves families devastated. Therefore, this mass devastation caused by the passing of 20 initiates impacts and affects the whole nation and is tantamount to a disaster," said Minister Hlabisa.

"We have lost lives. Therefore, we cannot go on as if it is business as usual. Something drastic must happen to protect our youth who undertake this important cultural and traditional journey," said Minister Hlabisa.

The Minister also urged everyone to join hands to protect this ancient cultural practice from abuse, exploitation, and extinction.



Minister Hlabisa



L-R: Executive Mayor of Amathole District Municipality, Councillor Anele Ntsangani, Minister Hlabisa, MEC Williams and Speaker of Amathole District Municipality, Councillor Onke Mgunculu



L-R: MEC Williams and Councillor Mgunculu

Forum Aims To Ensure Use Of By-LAWS IN MUNICIPALITIES

By Nosiphiwo Vokovi

Opening the third quarter Legal Advisory Forum meeting, held in Buffalo City Municipality (BCM), the Director for Legal Services in Cogta, Mr Siphiso Maqungu said the purpose of the meeting in terms of Section 154 of the Constitution, the Department has a legislative mandate to provide support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to effectively manage their own affairs, to diligently exercise their powers and to efficiently perform their functions. "This 3rd quarter I would like the forum to focus more on the drafting of bylaws because they have been long overdue," said Mr Maqungu. The Forum is organised by the Legal Advisory Services Directorate of Cogta and is attended by Legal Advisors from the Eastern Cape Municipalities.

Welcoming the forum members, Advocate Mlamli Zenzile of BCM reassured members that they should take pride in their work of rendering a critical task as legal advisors in government and they should own their space. "I personally thank Cogta for the support they give to municipalities recognized", said Advocate Zenzile.

The forum kickstarted its business by considering the Draft By-law on the Development and Enforcement Manual for Municipalities. The manual according to Mr Maqungu was aimed at ensuring that municipalities in the province legislate and enforce on their functional areas and can develop by-law that are enforceable, including measures for enforcement of by-laws.

Mr Maqungu said the Framework for the Development of By-Laws and Enforcement, was meant to provide guidance to municipalities on the process to be followed when by-laws are development and enforced. He said in terms of Section 156 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, a municipality may make and administer by-laws for effective administration of the matters which it has a right to administer. "The matters which a municipality has a right to administer are listed in Part B of schedule 4 and Part B of schedule 5. The municipality also has a right to administer any other matter assigned to it by national or provincial administration," he said.

Mr Maqungu further explained the legislative power of Municipal Councils and in terms of Section 43(c) of the Constitution, the legislative authority of the local sphere of government is vested in the Municipal Council, as set out in Sections 156 and 160(6) a Municipal Council may make by-laws which prescribe rules and orders for – (a) its internal arrangement; (b) its business and the establishment, composition, procedures, powers and functions of its committees.

"The role of the legal advisory services unit is to assess technical legal compliance issues and is not the primary developer of the draft by-law," explained Mr Maqungu.

In addition, he said when consulting with the community, the first step in the process is the publication of the draft by-law for public comments. "The publication must be done in a manner that enables members of the public an opportunity to make representations. The notice must indicate by what date and to whom must the representations be made," said Mr Maqungu. He said the municipality must establish its own mechanisms, processes, and procedures to ensure an effective consultation process.

He said it cannot be overemphasised that a By-Law may only be enforced after it has been published in the official Provincial Gazette. "Making By-Laws accessible or known to the members of the public, as required by Section 162(3) of the Constitution may reduce incidents of non-compliance. Accessibility includes publication thereof in official languages that are most understood by the community in the relevant municipal area," he said.

Selected cases were also presented at the Forum to mitigate incidents of litigation in municipalities. The forum also dealt with the issue of dormant cases and municipalities were encouraged to take measures to remove those cases in their litigation registers as these have a potential to overstate contingent liabilities and affect the quality of financial statements.



Legal Advisory Forum Members

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.

42 Vehicles Handed Over TO ENSURE SMOOTH MOTORING OF ULWALUKO

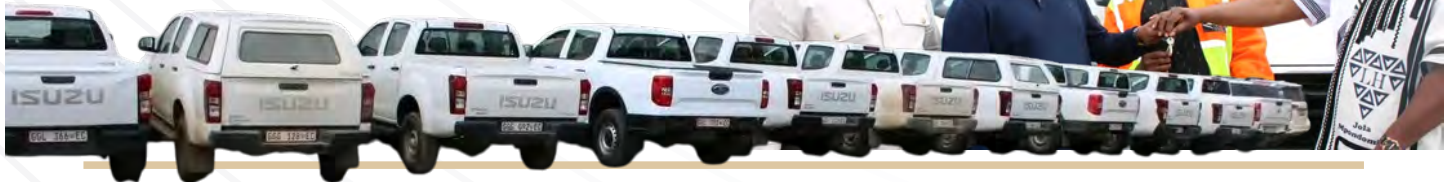
By Dumisani Lindi

During the official launch of the Summer Traditional Initiation Season, forty-two (42) vehicles from the departments of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Health and Right to Care were handed over to the Province to ensure the smooth monitoring of Ulwaluko.

The launch event which took place on the 13th of November 2024 at KwaBhaca Community Hall was a collaborative effort between the Eastern Cape House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders (ECHO TKL) together with the departments of Cogta, Health, Alfred Nzo District and uMzimvubu Local Municipalities.

In attendance amongst others were the MEC for Cogta, Zolile Williams, Chairperson of the ECHO TKL, Nkosi Mpumalanga Gwadiso, Chairperson of Provincial Initiation Coordination Committee (PICC), Nkosi Gwazinamba Matanzima and the Chairperson of the Alfred Nzo Local House, Nkosi Jongilanga Sigcau. The purpose of the launch was to educate and inform the community of KwaBhaca and the Province to ensure that no initiate dies in initiation schools. MEC Williams urged communities and parents to follow the rules which guide traditional initiation.

"I know in the past we believed that Initiates do not need to drink water for a certain time while in the mountains. Now that has changed hence, we need to give our children water because dehydration is the number killer of Initiates. I urge communities to give Initiates nutritional food and that parents must visit the initiation schools daily.



L-R: Mr Vuyo Stofile, Nkosi Gwadiso, Mr Zwelakhe Yothe and MEC Williams

In addition, MEC Williams advised the attendees that iiNgcibi namaKhankatha (traditional surgeons and nurses) "must be registered and be a person with the great track record not just any one from the community." "So please follow the rules to stop the death of Initiates," added MEC Williams. Also speaking at the event, Nkosi Gwadiso said communities need to understand that Ulwaluko (customary male initiation) is a family matter.

"As government, we here to support and find easy ways to make each season a safe passage to manhood. The awareness campaigns that we do through radio stations and other platforms are meant to inform and educate our communities about Ulwaluko. The rest is for families to take care and be vocal and present and choose capable people to take care of their children," said Nkosi Gwadiso.

He added that government will be firm and strict with the rules and those who disobey them will be prosecuted. "I hope all that was said here will be followed and implemented so that our boys come back alive as per our slogan "Mabaye Bephila, Babuye Bephila, Siyazingca Ngesiko Lethu," said Nkosi Gwadiso.

MEC Williams Calls On Amahlathi Municipal EMPLOYEES TO END UNPROTECTED STRIKE

By Mr Vuyani Sibene

The MEC for the Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) , Zolile Williams called upon the staff of Amahlathi Local Municipality (ALM) to end their 16-day strike initiated by the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union (IMATU). The strike was centered around resolving disputes between the institution's employers and employees on the standardisation process.

The management of ALM applied for a court order against its employees and their trade unions in the Makhanda High Court. . The unions argued that the decision made in March 2017 to include 43 employees in the standardization process was inconsistently implemented, leading to discrepancies within the municipality. "The policy, which was implemented in July 2016 to standardize employee salaries according to job titles and organizational structure did not consider factors such as complexity, influence, and expertise that determined initial pay levels," argued the representatives of the unions, MEC Williams stepped in by mediating in the conflict wherein workers ceased to work on 15 October 2024.

Officials from Amahlathi Local Municipality

"The order clearly indicated that the decision to add 43 more employees to the standardization policy was deemed void under section 172(1)(a) of the Constitution. Therefore, it was ruled invalid under section 172(1)(a) of the constitution," said MEC Williams.

However, MEC Williams expressed disapproval of employees littering the streets in town because it leads to clogging of drainage systems during rainfalls, as witnessed in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. He expressed the need for prompt resolution of the matter, emphasizing the importance of achieving labor peace by acting in a mature manner. As part of the department's efforts to resolve the impasse, three officials specializing in human resource management we dispatched to facilitate the standardization process smoothly.



MEC Williams and Mr Nkoliso Mbaleki Head of MEC's Office

Two Day MEC Outreach PROGRAMME IN MATATIELE

By Thando Sonjica

On 10-11 December, the Eastern Cape Cogta MEC, Zolile Williams embarked on an Outreach Program (OP) with stakeholders and the community of Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM). The OP was aimed at enabling government to track the implementation of its undertakings and to glean a sense of what impact is being made on the ground so said MEC Williams. He added that the OP also serves as a very useful platform for performance monitoring across all the spheres and sectors in the Province and is practicing the government slogan "Seamless progress in building the Eastern Cape we want."

MEC Williams initially met with Traditional Leaders, who highlighted various challenges, including electricity, land restitution, water scarcity, road maintenance, and illegal initiation schools. They also expressed concerns about infighting amongst Councillors, which affects service delivery. Nkosi Morena Gregory Lebenya of Bakoena Traditional Council said when there is going to be development they sometimes do not see eye to eye with developers because of their lack of investment in local communities.

"We ask the developers to leave something for the community and they refuse. Also the infighting amongst Councillors affect the delivery services and we are willing to assist in this matter, said Nkosi Lebenya. In response, MEC Williams acknowledged the concerns by Traditional Leaders and emphasized the importance of integrating traditional leaders and Ward Councillors to enhance community development. "This misunderstanding between the traditional leaders and Councillors sometimes results in projects being stalled because one is not well informed about development. Traditional leaders and Councillors both have important roles to play in the development of communities and we need to do away with the silo mentality," said MEC Williams. He also announced the finalization of the Funeral Policy and the revision of the policy for gratuity for traditional leaders. "We are trying to move with speed on all things that are a challenge to traditional leaders and the Minister of Cogta is assisting us," explained MEC Williams.

Furthermore, MEC Williams committed to collaborate with the departments of Agriculture and Land Affairs to address land-related issues. Later on, MEC Williams met with departmental officials, where he stressed the need for diligence and being compassionate when serving communities. He explained that in 2019 government developed District Development Model (DDM) where all government departments must respond to service delivery issues promptly "You must not be that valve that that is misfiring," he said. He called upon civil servants and Councillors to take their responsibilities seriously. "If you do not respect the shareholder, they have a right to fire you. People have shown us what happens when we do not take them seriously. They are also looking at us as we are going towards local government elections," he said. He said officials who do not do their jobs must leave. If you do not communicate disruptions of services and sewerage is running in the streets, then you do not take your work serious. We need to make sure that government is presented differently," said MEC Williams.



L-R: MEC Williams, Mayor of Matatiele
Councillor Sonwabile Mngenela and Mr Ntsikelelo Saleni of Cogta

Maidens During the Inkciyo Programme



King Sandile and the Maidens



DID YOU **KNOW** ?

National Fraud Hotline
0800 701 701