

Taking Stock at 97: Mr Kona's legacy lives in his learners



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NDINISA RESIGNS AS EMAKHAZENI SPEAKER FOR ANC ELECTIONS ROLE

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MK party queries MDB impartiality after official shares DA poster

ANC urges MDB to uphold impartiality and protect public trust ahead of elections, 'Officials cannot be seen to favour any party, even unintentionally.'

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — The MK Party in Steve Tshwete Municipality has lodged a formal complaint against the Municipal Demarcation Board's (MDB) Mpumalanga office after a senior official shared a Democratic Alliance (DA)-branded poster in the board's provincial WhatsApp group.

The poster, which carries the DA logo, reminds voters about the IEC registration weekend scheduled for 20 to 21 June 2026. It was shared on Wednesday, 29 April 2026, by Hester Marais, the MDB provincial coordinator for Mpumalanga.

Johan Matshiane, a member of the MK Party's Mpumalanga Provincial Elections Structure, said he was alarmed by the post and questioned why content promoting a political party was shared on a platform belonging to an independent institution.

"Publicly sharing partisan political material compromises the actual and perceived independence of the MDB, contrary to Section 3 of the Municipal Demarcation Act and the MDB Code of Conduct for Employees," Matshiane said.

"This conduct creates a reasonable apprehension of bias, undermining public trust in MDB processes currently underway and previous submissions made and objected to in the province."

Matshiane has filed a complaint with the MDB's national chairperson and Chief Executive Officer, calling for an urgent investigation and decisive action against Marais to protect "the institution's independence".

"The integrity of the demarcation process is critical for free and fair local

government elections. We trust the Board will act decisively to protect the institution's independence," he said.

He has given the board 30 working days to provide written feedback on the outcome of the investigation.

The ANC in Nkangala also weighed in, saying public trust in Chapter 9 institutions must be protected.

"The MDB must be above reproach, especially now with elections approaching. Officials cannot be seen to favour any party, even unintentionally. We expect the Board to deal with this matter transparently and remind all staff of their duty to impartiality," said regional secretary Sello Matshoga.

"The registration weekend belongs to the IEC and to all South Africans, not to any political party's branding."

EFF chairperson in the Steve Tshwete Municipality, Joseph Ngubeni, said the incident points to deeper accountability concerns.

"This is not just a WhatsApp mistake. When an MDB official pushes DA material in an official group, it tells our people that the referee is wearing a team jersey," he said.

"The MDB must not only investigate Marais but also audit all internal communication. We can't go into the 04 November elections with communities doubting whether wards were drawn fairly. Suspension pending

investigation would show they are serious."

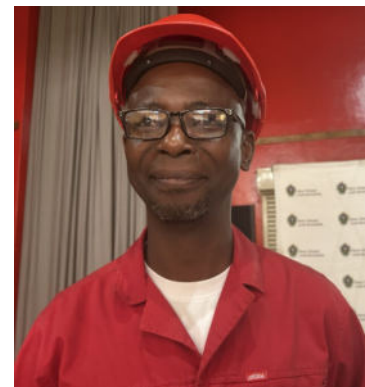
DA Mpumalanga provincial chairperson Bosman Grobler said the party had no role in the post and supports voter education initiatives.

"The DA did not ask any MDB official to share our material. We are a party that follows procedures; we are not dependent on favours from any institutions," he said.

"However, MDB staff must follow their own code of conduct. If there was a breach, the Board must handle it internally and apply its rules fairly."



MK Party Mpumalanga Provincial Elections Structure member Johan Matshiane lodged the formal complaint with the Municipal Demarcation Board.



EFF chairperson in the Steve Tshwete Municipality Joseph Ngubeni says the incident suggests that "the referee is wearing a team jersey".

The MDB is an independent authority responsible for determining municipal boundaries, with its decisions directly affecting ward layouts and voter distribution ahead of the local government elections set for 04 November 2026.

Attempts to obtain comment from Marais were unsuccessful, as she referred the publication to the board's spokesperson, Barileng Dichabe.

"The MDB unreservedly apologises for the unintended post shared by a staff member. The content does not reflect the organisation's values or position. Appropriate steps have been taken to address the matter and prevent a recurrence," Dichabe said.

She added that the MDB remains an independent and apolitical organisation committed to executing its mandate without fear, favour or prejudice.

"Therefore, the MDB affirms that our ward delimitation and demarcation systems are uncompromisingly geared to prevent any form of manipulation or unfair and biased outcomes. This statement serves to clarify the organisation's position," she said.



ANC Nkangala regional secretary Sello Matshoga says MDB officials cannot be seen to favour any political party, even unintentionally. (Image from Facebook)



DA Mpumalanga provincial chairperson Bosman Grobler says the party did not request any MDB official to share its material and does not rely on favours from institutions

"the path of the righteous winds upwards to flee from hell beneath us" Prov 15:24



A Biblical Mentality

By Pastor Chuck Swindoll

You know how badly we had been treated at Philippi just before we came to you and how much we suffered there. Yet our God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, in spite of great opposition. So you can see we were not preaching with any deceit or impure motives or trickery. For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts. (1 Thessalonians 2:2-4)

Did you catch these thoughts as you read 1 Thessalonians 2:2-4?

When Paul spoke amidst the strong current of public opposition, it was "the gospel of God" he shared (v. 2; NASB). The very foundation of his being was not "error" or "impurity" or "deceit," but rather the truth of the Scriptures (v. 3; NASB).

Furthermore, he considered the Word of God as something "entrusted" to him. And it gave him such security and confidence that he didn't feel the need to compromise and become a "people pleaser" (v. 4; NASB). Even though it may sound old-

fashioned, the first and most significant priority we can cultivate is to make the Scriptures a part of our lives. A biblical mentality is the secret to surviving the aimlessness of our days.

I find it interesting that being committed to a biblical mentality and lifestyle is so old it's new! For some, it's rare. It also leads to a good deal of self-examination. Did you observe this at the end of v. 4? As we begin to soak up the truths of God's Book, He goes to work on us!

"The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (Hebrews 4:12-13 NIV 1984)

Descriptive, isn't it? The principles and precepts of Scripture touch what no surgeon's scalpel can touch—the spirit, thoughts, attitudes, the very essence of our being. And God uses His truths to help shape us and clean us up and mature us in our walk with Him.

Let's take this to heart. Let's determine that we are not going to allow the tyranny of the urgent to steal from us those vitally important moments with our God in His Word. First and foremost, let's become people who are thoroughly committed to biblical thinking and action.

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Delmas residents call on municipality to act on toxic smoke from dumping site

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — Residents living near the N12 dumping site in Delmas, under the Victor Khanye Local Municipality, say they are being forced to endure constant exposure to toxic smoke as uncontrolled waste burning continues to blanket their homes.

Community members describe a worsening situation, with thick, dark smoke regularly engulfing entire neighbourhoods, forcing families indoors and exposing them to what they believe are harmful air pollutants. Despite repeated complaints, residents say there has been no visible or meaningful intervention from the municipality.

According to those affected, the problem has escalated from a nuisance to a daily health hazard. The smoke is accompanied by a persistent foul smell and swarms of flies, creating conditions residents say are unfit for human habitation. Even with doors and windows shut, the smoke continues to seep into their homes.

Residents report a growing number of

health problems, including chest pains, sinus complications, persistent coughing and breathing difficulties — symptoms they directly link to prolonged exposure to the burning waste.

Frustration within the community has reached a breaking point, with residents accusing authorities of neglect and failing to protect basic living conditions. Many warn that continued inaction is placing lives at risk.

The *Highveld Chronicle* contacted the Victor Khanye Local Municipality on 20 April 2026 for comment. However, no response had been received by the time of publication. Residents say the silence from officials has deepened their sense of abandonment.

Residents Speak Out

Mangaliso Sibanyoni described the daily impact on his family:

“The dumping site is affecting us badly. When it’s not the smoke, it’s the smell. I have a child with a

chest problem, and this makes it worse. You can’t even open your door because of the smell and the flies. It’s not a good situation at all.”

Pinkie Sonqa echoed similar concerns:

“The dumping site smells a lot. I never had sinus problems before, but now I do because it is always burning. It affects us every day, and I don’t understand why it keeps burning.”

She added that residents are left to cope on their own:

“I’m now relying on spray just to manage. They must remove it here. At night, when we are supposed to be resting, you can’t sleep because of the smoke.”

As conditions continue to deteriorate, residents are calling for urgent intervention from the Victor Khanye Local Municipality, warning that further delays will have serious and lasting consequences for the health, dignity and safety of the community.



Thembisile Hani residents march over healthcare, water and service failures

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

THEMBISILE HANI — Hundreds of residents from across Thembisile Hani marched to the municipal offices on Wednesday, 29 April 2026, protesting ongoing service delivery failures and demanding urgent intervention, particularly on healthcare, water supply and emergency services.

The peaceful march, led by the Service Delivery Party, brought together community members from multiple wards who submitted a memorandum of demands to municipal leadership.

Protesters said they are no longer willing to endure what they described as years of neglect, broken promises and ineffective governance. Central to the memorandum were concerns about healthcare and emergency services affecting more than 431,000 residents.

“Thembisile Hani is currently served by only one level-2 hospital that lacks a functional ICU, while just four ambulances are expected to serve 32 wards.

This chronic shortage has resulted in dangerously slow emergency response times and severely overburdened clinic staff,” the Service Delivery Party said.


The party called for urgent intervention, including the construction of a fully functional hospital and improved emergency services.

Water supply issues were also raised, with residents reporting that some areas receive water only once a week.

“This situation represents a direct violation of residents’ right to access clean, reliable and safe drinking water,” the memorandum stated.

The memorandum further called for “an urgent and transparent intervention plan” and stricter implementation of Operation Vula/Vala. Residents also raised concerns about crime, unemployment and drug abuse.






NOTICE TO THE COMMUNITY


OF VICTOR KHANYE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (VKLM)

NOTICE NO: **22**

DATE: **22 APRIL 2026**



NERSA TARIFF APPLICATION FOR 2026/2027 FINANCIAL YEAR



The Victor Khanye Local Municipality hereby informs all residents, businesses, and stakeholders that the municipality has submitted its tariff application to the **National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA)** for the 2026/2027 financial year.

The application forms part of the municipality’s annual tariff review process, in line with applicable regulatory requirements governing electricity tariffs.

PLEASE NOTE THAT:

- The municipality has officially submitted the tariff application to NERSA for consideration and approval.
- A draft copy of the application is attached for public information purposes.
- The municipality is currently awaiting approval or rejection from NERSA.
- Once NERSA has completed its review process, the municipality will immediately communicate and publish the final approved tariffs to the public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NOTICE:

Residents, businesses, and stakeholders are invited to submit written comments on the tariff application. Kindly note that **comments are open until MONDAY, 11 MAY 2026.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Residents are advised that **no final tariff increases** have been implemented at this stage, as approval from NERSA is still pending.

The municipality remains committed to transparency and will ensure that all stakeholders are informed of the final outcome as soon as it is received.

ENQUIRIES

For any enquiries, residents may contact the municipal offices through the usual communication channels or email:

✉ Fanele Maphanga
fanelem@vklm.gov.za

✉ Botlhale Dube
botlhaled@vklm.gov.za

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Ramaphosa announces 04 November 2026 for local government elections

IEC urges eligible South Africans to register or update details ahead of June weekend, reminding voters they can only vote where they are registered

● LUCAS SHONGWE

SOUTH AFRICA — President Cyril Ramaphosa has announced Wednesday, 04 November 2026, as the date for South Africa's next local government elections, ending months of speculation about when voters will return to the polls.

"I therefore determine that the next local Government Elections will be held on a Wednesday, on a date I now determine as the 4th of November 2026," the President said.

Ramaphosa made the announcement on Thursday, 30 April 2026, during the Extended Presidential Coordinating Council (PCC) meeting at the Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre in Ekurhuleni.

However, Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) Chief Electoral Officer Sy Mamabolo cautioned that the President's announcement is not the final legal step.

"In terms of the law, the official proclamation will be made by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, at which point the voters' roll will be closed," Mamabolo said.

The last municipal elections were held on 01 November 2021. Ramaphosa said the November date completes a full five-year term.

"This is in line with our constitutional construct to keep to those timelines that are clearly set out in our Constitution," he said.

He added that the announcement provides clarity for all stakeholders.

"The race has started, and people will do the best they can." Mamabolo urged eligible South Africans to act.

"We encourage all eligible South Africans who are not yet registered, or who have changed their place of residence, to ensure that they are registered in the voting district where they ordinarily reside, as voters may only vote at the voting station where they are registered."

Prospective voters can register online via the Electoral Commission website on a desktop computer or mobile phone to update their details.

Alternatively, citizens may register during the national voter registration weekend on 20 and 21 June 2026 at the voting stations where they intend to vote on election day.

The Ahmed Kathrada Foundation said the announcement must be followed by urgent action on voter education and municipal accountability.

"We welcome the certainty of an election date, but dates alone don't fix broken municipalities," said Executive Director Neeshan Balton.

"The IEC and government must now run an aggressive registration and education campaign, especially for young and first-time voters. We also need commitments from all parties that candidates will be

ethical, qualified, and rooted in communities – not deployed for patronage."

Balton said local government is where citizens experience the state.

"If we don't get these elections right, service delivery protests will only get worse." In Belfast, eMalahleni, 34-year-old shop assistant Thandi Mokoena said she hopes the election will bring change "I just want clean water every day and a working clinic. I've been voting since 2016 and nothing changes in our ward. But I will register again in June. Maybe this time it will be different," Mokoena said.



President Cyril Ramaphosa announces 04 November 2026 as the official voting date for the 2026 local government elections
Image By: GCIS

Bail denied in Calvin Mothoa murder case as community demands justice

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — The Delmas Magistrate's Court on Wednesday denied bail to Adrienne Jakobus VanTonder, who is accused of fatally shooting 33-year-old Calvin Mothoa, as tensions ran high during proceedings.

Community members gathered outside the court during the bail hearing, calling for justice and opposing the release of the accused. Members of Delmas First Women held a peaceful picket, saying their action was driven by concerns for community safety and justice.

"As women of this community, we stand united for justice and the safety of our people. Granting bail to individuals accused of violent crimes sends the wrong message and places our communities at further risk," the group said.

They further called on the justice system to prioritise victims and their families.

"Calvin deserves justice, and our community deserves peace of mind."

Inside court, proceedings focused on the bail application, which was ultimately denied. The magistrate cited the seriousness of the case and surrounding circumstances. The matter was postponed to 28 May 2026 for further investigation.

Following the ruling, the Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party Mpumalanga Provincial Elections Committee welcomed the decision.

"The Umkhonto weSizwe Party Mpumalanga Provincial Elections Committee notes and welcomes the decision of the court to deny bail to Adrienne Jakobus Vantonder," the statement read.

The party added that while challenges such as the water crisis affect communities, they do not justify violence or loss of life.

"We respect the independence of the judiciary and the legal process, and we welcome the court's decision to postpone the matter to 28 May 2026 to allow for further investigation," the party said. Delmas First Women said they would continue their peaceful protest action until justice is served. Both organisations and community members also expressed support for the Mothoa family.



Ndinisa resigns as eMakhazeni speaker for ANC elections role as party gears up for local government elections

● LUCAS SHONGWE

BELFAST — eMakhazeni Local Municipality Speaker Lucky Ndinisa has resigned as both speaker and councillor to take up the position of ANC Provincial Elections Manager in Mpumalanga.

Ndinisa, who is also the ANC deputy chairperson in the Nkangala region, confirmed his resignation to the *Highveld Chronicle* this week.

He said the decision followed a resolution of the ANC Provincial Executive Committee to deploy him to strengthen party support ahead of the local government elections set for 04 November.

"In its ordinary meeting, the ANC resolved that I should be appointed as the provincial elections manager," Ndinisa said.

"This position demands that I must run the entire province. It would therefore be unfair of me to continue as a councillor of eMakhazeni while serving the ANC at a provincial level. One would have suffered, and it would most likely have been the people of eMakhazeni."

Ndinisa previously served two terms as ANC Provincial Secretary from 2008 to 2015 and as Speaker of the Nkangala District Municipality from August 2016 to July 2023. He served as Speaker of eMakhazeni from August 2023 until 30 April 2026.

Describing himself as a "volunteer of the ANC", Ndinisa said redeployment is part of organisational discipline.

"I am a tool of the ANC. I am a volunteer of the ANC. From time to time, the ANC deploys and redeploys its cadres, and I am part of that pool of ANC volunteers."

He said he brings institutional knowledge to the new role.

"I come into this position not as a new person altogether. I know the length and breadth of Mpumalanga and I know the comrades of the ANC. I am able to work within the collective leadership, and I have the capacity to lead when the need arises. That is what I am bringing into this position."

Ndinisa added that he is confident in the leadership collective ahead of the elections.

"I believe that together with the leadership collective, we will be able to deliver what is expected of us come the 4th of November."

The eMakhazeni Local Municipality is expected to begin the process of electing a new speaker and councillor to fill the vacancies. The ANC in Nkangala has not yet announced a replacement.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

Reference Number ZADE_Grounds_RFI022026

Provision of Large-Scale, Heavy Duty Groundskeeping



1 Background

BME, a member of the Omnia Group is an Explosives Service Provider operating in Dryden within the Victor Khanye Local Municipality (Delmas, Mpumalanga Province) and surrounding areas. BME requires Large-Scale, Heavy-Duty routine Groundskeeping to be provided at the site.

As part of BME's ongoing efforts to support local entrepreneurs, BME invites interested members of the local community to participate in the RFI (Request for Information) process.

Information provided in the RFI will be used to identify and shortlist suitable beneficiaries to be invited to partake in a formal (RFP) Request for Proposal Process. Interested parties are required to submit the following documentation:

- 1.1 Company Profile (or web site address)
- 1.2 Contact Name, email and phone number
- 1.3 Company Registration Documents or Identification Document if a sole trader
- 1.4 A copy of Identification Documents and/or Shareholders' Certificates or declaration of shareholding and demographic group for all shareholders of the business.
- 1.5 Proof of Domicile (registered address) of the business/sole trader in the Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality (Municipality Account / Utility Bill)
- 1.6 Valid VAT Registration Certificate from SARS (if entity has been trading for more than 12 months).
- 1.7 SARS Tax Clearance Certificate for the most recent Tax Year
- 1.8 Current, valid Letter of Good Standing (Department of Labour)
- 1.9 BBBEE certificate/ affidavit for confirming level of black ownership.
- 1.10 Proof of bank account not older than 2 months (in the company/sole trader name)
- 1.11 Proof of Insurance for All Risks and Public Liability
- 1.12 One page business plan on how the required services will be provided, i.e. workforce capacity, available equipment and machinery, ability to expand services, safety policy, experience.

2 Conditions

- 2.1 BME will only invite shortlisted candidates from this RFI to partake in a formal Request for Proposal
- 2.2 BME reserves the right to invite external Service Providers to participate in the formal Request for Proposal
- 2.3 BME reserves the right to terminate this process and withdraw the RFI at any time.
- 2.4 Only shortlisted candidates will receive feedback from BME.
- 2.5 No submissions communicated through any other mechanism than that stated in Section 3 will be considered.
- 2.6 No submissions received after the closing date will be considered.

3 Submissions and Closing date

All submissions must be done electronically via email quoting subject line: **Reference Number ZADE_Grounds_RFI022026** to drydengroundsrfi@bme.co.za by no later than 16:00 on 20 May 2026.

This is not a job advertisement and any CVs received will be discarded

Mayor Nhlapho intervenes to address SASSA service delays in eMalahleni

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

EMALAHLENI — Elderly and disabled residents in eMalahleni are struggling to access social grants due to long queues, early closures and limited service access at South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) offices, prompting Executive Mayor Vusi Nhlapho to intervene.

“I arrive as early as 04:00, but by the time the offices open, the queue is already too long. Sometimes we are told to come back the next day, and that is very difficult for us,” said Maria Nkosi (72) from KwaGuqa.

Nhlapho recently conducted a walkabout with representatives from SASSA and the Department of Social Development as part of efforts to address ongoing service delivery challenges.

The intervention follows concerns raised during Integrated Development Plan (IDP) consultations, where

residents cited long queues, early closures and the challenges faced by elderly people and those living with disabilities in accessing services.

Another resident raised concerns about the lack of prioritisation for older persons.

“We are old and cannot stand for hours, but there is no proper system to assist us. It feels like our struggles are not being taken seriously,” said Johannes Mabuza (68) from Ackerville.

The municipality has identified potential facilities that could be used to ease pressure on existing SASSA offices. However, officials confirmed that no fixed timelines have been set for the relocation or expansion of service points.

The process remains subject to ongoing engagements and

administrative procedures between the municipality and relevant government departments, with a focus on sustainable and responsive solutions.

On prioritising vulnerable groups, the municipality clarified that it does not interfere with SASSA's operational mandate, as this is a national function. However, it continues to advocate for improved accessibility and efficiency during standard operating hours.

Both the municipality and SASSA have emphasised the importance of prioritising the elderly and persons with disabilities. The municipality is also exploring ways to improve accessibility within its own facilities to ensure that future service points are inclusive.

Nhlapho said concerns raised during IDP engagements highlight the urgency of improving service

delivery. “While due processes must be followed, the municipality remains committed to working collaboratively with SASSA to ensure dignified, accessible and efficient service for all beneficiaries,” he said. The municipality has reaffirmed its commitment to responsive governance and said the community will be kept informed as engagements continue.



eMalahleni Executive Mayor Vusi Nhlapho Image: eMalahleni



Taking Stock at 97: Mr Kona's legacy lives in his learners

'Education remains the key that opens doors.' – Mr Kona

● LUCAS SHONGWE

EMALAHLENI — Civic leaders, educators and former learners gathered at the Civic Hall in eMalahleni on Tuesday, 28 April 2026, to celebrate the 97th birthday of Mr Andrew Kona, former principal of Elukhanyisweni High School, whose legacy lives on through generations of professionals he mentored.

The event was organised by former learners who credit Mr Kona with shaping careers in medicine, law, education and the trades. Many of his learners have gone on to become doctors, teachers, lawyers, politicians and artisans.

Among his former learners are Manfred Mabuza of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), former City of Mbombela Mayor Lacy Chiwayo and the late Minister Jackson Mthembu.

Mr Kona's academic journey began with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Africa between

1954 and 1956. He qualified as a teacher with a Bantu Teacher's Diploma from Bantu Normal College in Mamelodi, Pretoria, in 1957, and later obtained additional qualifications in education management.

His teaching career started in 1958 at Emmarentia Boarding School in Settlers, Warmbaths, where he taught English, Afrikaans, Physics and History. After the school closed, he moved to Botshabelo Secondary School in Middelburg, teaching the same subjects.

In 1965, he was appointed principal of Elukhanyisweni High School in Witbank. Under his leadership, the school introduced its first matric class in 1972, opening opportunities for hundreds of learners to access higher education.

One of his former learners, Professor Charles Mampuru, paid tribute at the event.

“Under your leadership, Elukhanyisweni did not wait for resources to arrive before we produced results,” Mampuru said. “You reminded us every Monday at assembly: 'Discipline is the bridge between dreams and delivery.' You inspected our uniforms, yes, but more importantly you inspected our ambition. You chased away the spirit of mediocrity and told us that the world would not lower its standards for us, so we must raise ours.”

“At 97 years today, Tata Kona, your voice still echoes in our lecture halls, in our boardrooms and in the classrooms where your grandchildren now teach. The slogan 'My School is Second to None' was never about arrogance. It was about responsibility.”

Lawyer Jonas Sibanyoni of JB Sibanyoni Attorneys, also a former learner, said Mr Kona's contribution to society was profound.

“Mr Kona produced many

professionals, including myself,” Sibanyoni said. “His contribution to society was immense, and we thank him for the role he played.”

In 1982, Mr Kona was appointed inspector of schools by the Department of Education, where he served until his retirement under the Gauteng Department of Education in April 1995.

“Mr Kona taught us discipline, respect and the value of education when access was not easy,” said Grace Mampane, a former learner who is now a teacher. “He produced generations of professionals and gave this community hope.”

Beyond education, Mr Kona also served in local government. In June 1981, he became a councillor on the Witbank Community Council. In 1984, he was appointed to the newly established Local Authority and was later elected Mayor of the Town Council of KwaGuqa. Colleagues described him as “honest, just, diplomatic and competent”.

Since retiring, Mr Kona has pursued

his passion for restoring vintage motor vehicles and spends time reading philosophy, religion and history.

Addressing the gathering, Mr Kona thanked his former learners for the honour.

“Education remains the key that opens doors,” he said. “Use it well, and serve your communities with honesty.”



Mr Andrew Kona, 97, former principal of Elukhanyisweni High School and former Mayor of KwaGuqa, thanks former learners for honouring him

Image supplied

Solar boreholes bring clean water to Kleinfontein community

Mafube coal donates R3 million water project to Steve Tshwete farming community

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — Access to clean water has become a reality for 147 residents of the Kleinfontein farming community in Middelburg after Mafube Coal handed over three solar-powered boreholes worth R3 million on Tuesday, 21 April 2026.

The project, delivered through Thungela's 50% joint venture with Exxaro, includes boreholes fitted with solar power systems, pumps and water storage infrastructure capable of delivering about 30 000 litres of water per day.

Mafube Coal General Manager Tamara Qwatekana said access to water is non-negotiable.

“Access to clean, reliable and affordable water is a basic human right and essential to human dignity, health and food security,” Qwatekana said.

“The infrastructure we have provided will supply residents of

this farming community, largely made up of the elderly and unemployed, with a long-term, safe and consistent water supply to support them and their livestock.”

She added that the project speaks to the company's broader purpose.

“This is in line with our purpose, to responsibly create value together for a shared future.”

Steve Tshwete Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Councillor Mhlonishwa Masilela, welcomed the investment and highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships in service delivery.

“Collaboration between local government and industry plays a critical role in extending essential services and enhancing the living standards of the residents of STLM,” Masilela said.

“Now that this community has

received this infrastructure, we can direct our efforts to other areas without water supply.”

The handover forms part of Mafube Coal's Social and Labour Plan commitments to support development in communities surrounding its operations, with six temporary jobs created during construction.

The Kleinfontein community, located within the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, has historically relied on limited and inconsistent water sources for household use and livestock.

The solar-powered systems are designed to be low-maintenance and sustainable, reducing reliance on Eskom and diesel pumps while ensuring year-round water security for residents.



Steve Tshwete Executive Mayor Cllr Mhlonishwa Masilela cuts the ribbon at the official handover of three solar-powered boreholes in Kleinfontein on 21 April 2026. He is flanked by Mafube Coal officials and community members as the R3 million water project begins delivering 30 000 litres of clean water daily to 147 residents. Image supplied

ISIKO LETHU

Our Story

WITH SIPHO MAHAMBA

Umsebenzakho akukakafaneli bonyana ukugulise

Emisebenzini yethu kula siqeda khona isikhathi sethu esinengi. Ye-ke kuqakathekile bona senze isiqiniseko sokobana sisebenzela endaweni enokuthula nenethabo, kodwana kwezinye iindawo akwenzeki lokho ngebanga labaphathi abaphatha ngesandla sakaFaro. Iindawo zokusebenzela ezilimazako ngilezi ezilimaza umkhumbulo womuntu, ukuzithemba kanye nobuyena bomuntu qobo lwakhe. Akubi lilanga elimbi nje kwaphela emsebenzini kodwana kuba yipilo esele inephethe embi eyenzeka mihla namalanga. Zimbadiwana izinto ezenza bonyana kungasabi mnandi namkha umuntu angasabi netjiseko yokuvukela emsebenzini. Lapho kufaka hlangana ukungaphathwa ngokulingana baphathi, nababeregisani bakho. Ukubekwa imilandu ngaso soke isikhathi, ukubandlululwa, ukuthathelwa phasi, ukuthukwa

nokuraselwa, ukuhlelana, ukungahloniphani nokuzikhukhumeza kwabanye ngebanga leenkhundla abakizo, ezibenza bona bacabange bonyana bakhulu kunawe. Into umuntu angayenza lokha nakasebenzela endaweni elimazako kukuthi abe nenewajana lapha azokutlola khona zoke izehlakalo ezenzekako, atlole ilanga nesikhathi. Nawukghonako thola ufakazi, ubenomuntu omabela zoke iinkinga ohlangabezana nazo. Umsebenzi olimazana ngokomkhumbula akusilo iphutha lakho. Zijamele, uvikele ubuwena bakho. **Umtloli: Skosana Sibongile Precious**
Umhlaziyi: Mahlangu Busisiwe Treah



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Spar Delmas bids farewell for NOW as municipality assures community of return

● ESTHER MAHLANGU

DELMAS — Residents of Delmas have been assured that the local SPAR store is not permanently closing, but will temporarily shut its doors as part of a transition to new ownership and upgrades.

The Office of the Executive Mayor confirmed that the business has been sold following the retirement of long-time owner Peter Paraskeva, who has operated the store for many years.

According to the municipality, the new owners, Excelsior Trade and Invest, will take over the establishment and temporarily close the store for approximately one to two months to allow for renovations and rebranding.

“The Office of the Executive Mayor wishes to address concerns arising from recent reports suggesting that the local SPAR store is closing down,” the statement read.

“We would like to reassure residents that this development does not represent a permanent closure, but rather a transition that is expected to bring renewed investment and improved services to the area.”

The municipality also acknowledged Paraskeva's contribution to the local economy, noting his long-standing role in serving the Delmas community.

The business will be transferred to the

new owners on 01 May 2026, from which date they will take possession. It is not yet clear when the store will reopen, but loyal customers have expressed hope that the closure period will be short.

The municipality stated that they will continue engaging with the new owners to ensure that the reopening process proceeds smoothly and that community interests, including employment opportunities, are safeguarded.

The store is expected to reopen under new management once renovations and rebranding are completed.

For many residents, however, the transition marks the end of an era.

In a farewell message to customers,

Delmas SPAR thanked the community for decades of support.

“It is with sadness that we say goodbye to our loyal customers. Most of you became our friends and family, and it is heartbreaking for us to come to the end of our road,” the store said.

“We want to thank each one of you for all the years of loyal support. We are going to miss all of you.”

The store confirmed that its last trading day was 30 April 2026, marking the end of a 42-year journey under Paraskeva's leadership.

Local resident Hanri Ehlers reflected on the store's place in the community.

“For us, it was 42 years of Saturdays — more than just a store, it was part of our home,” she said.



Image By: Hanri Ehlers

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Freedom Day marred by power outage and water shortages in Delmas

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — Residents in Delmas spent Freedom Day without electricity after a planned power outage extended beyond the municipality's communicated schedule, and for some, without water, as many have learned to live with the unreliable water supply.

“We were told the electricity would be back by 18:00, but it never came back. It's disappointing, especially on a day like Freedom Day,” said one resident.

The Victor Khanye Local Municipality (VKLM) had earlier informed residents that power would be restored by early evening following planned maintenance. However, many households remained without electricity throughout the day and into the night, raising concerns about service delivery and infrastructure reliability.

According to a municipal public

notice issued on 23 April 2026, residents were informed of planned emergency maintenance at the Delmas North substation. The work, scheduled for 27 April from 09:00 to 18:00, was intended to strengthen the protection system following recent lightning strikes that caused repeated outages.

Affected areas included Botleng Extensions 4 to 7, the Delmas Water Purification Plant and food production facilities at McCain Foods. Residents were also advised to treat all electrical installations as live during the maintenance period, with the municipality apologising in advance for any inconvenience.

Despite this, residents said power was not restored as scheduled, leaving many households without electricity throughout Freedom Day.

Electricity was only restored in some areas at approximately 04:00 the following morning, while others, including Mandela and Extension 7 (N12), remained without power.

Frustration was further compounded by ongoing water supply challenges, with residents describing persistent shortages as a daily struggle.

“This is not just about electricity. Water shortages have become a daily issue. It's the same story every day,” said a community member.

The impact on households has been severe, particularly for families relying on electricity for daily needs.

“The power outage is really disrupting our lives. We rely on

electricity. How are our children supposed to study when they depend on WiFi for research? How do we prepare food when we cannot afford takeaways? Worse still, food in our freezers goes bad, leading to further losses,” said Jabulile Mahlangu.

Residents also criticised local leadership, accusing officials of failing to respond adequately to ongoing service delivery issues.

“Councillors are not taking this matter seriously. This reflects poor leadership from the electrical department. The director and the mayor must account for what they are saying about this?” said Moses Masuku, a resident of Extension 4.

The ongoing water supply issues have

further worsened conditions, with some households reporting unreliable access to clean water, particularly in N12, where residents rely on water carts instead of taps.

Questions were sent to Victor Khanye Local Municipality seeking clarity on the prolonged outage, communication failures and ongoing water challenges. However, by the time of publication, no response had been received.

Residents are calling on the municipality to provide clear explanations and implement sustainable solutions to ongoing infrastructure challenges, particularly when planned maintenance does not proceed as communicated.



NOTICE IN TERMS OF SECTION 34 OF THE INSOLVENCY ACT, ACT 24 OF 1936

Notice is hereby given, in terms of Section 34 of the Insolvency Act, No. 24 of 1936, as amended, that **PETER PARASKEVA (SPAR)**, carrying on business at **ERF 167, 33 SAREL CILLIERS STREET, DELMAS, MPUMALANGA**, intends to transfer its business to **EXCELSIOR TRADE AND INVEST**.

The nature of the business was a general grocery store. The transfer shall be effected on or after **1 MAY 2026**, and the purchaser shall take possession of the business on that date. All creditors of the seller are hereby called upon to take notice of this intended transfer.

Dated at **DELMAS** on **29 April 2026**



IS THIS THE LEAGUE TITLE DECIDER, WILL KAIZER CHIEFS END UP HELPING RIVALS ORLANDO PIRATES AGAINST MAMELODI SUNDOWNS?

Mamelodi Sundowns vs Kaizer Chiefs: Date, kick-off time, how to watch Mamelodi Sundowns host Kaizer Chiefs in a massive mid-week encounter – with Orlando Pirates fans watching closely ...

Mamelodi Sundowns host Kaizer Chiefs at Loftus Versfeld next week in what could prove to be a defining moment in the 2025/26 Betway Premiership title race.

Naturally, Orlando Pirates supporters will be watching just as closely.

MATCH DETAILS: MAMELODI SUNDOWNS VS KAIZER CHIEFS

Mamelodi Sundowns welcome Kaizer Chiefs to Loftus Versfeld on

Wednesday, 6 May. Kick-off is scheduled for 19:30. The match will be broadcast live on SuperSport channel 202.

TITLE RACE REACHES BOILING POINT

The stakes could not be higher. Mamelodi Sundowns currently lead the latest Betway Premiership standings with 61 points from 26 matches.

Orlando Pirates sit just two points

behind on 59, with both sides having played the same number of games.

The title race is finely poised with just four matches – and a maximum of 12 points – remaining.

For Mamelodi Sundowns, the equation is simple: Win their remaining fixtures and the title is theirs.

However, the Buccaneers will be hoping for a slip-up from The Brazilians.

A draw or defeat for Masandawana against Amakhosi would reopen the race completely.

If that happens, Orlando Pirates must capitalise and deliver a perfect finish to their season.

ALLEYES ON LOFTUS

Kaizer Chiefs may be out of the Betway Premiership title race, but they hold significant influence over who lifts the trophy.

For Orlando Pirates supporters, this is more than just another match. It is a genuine opportunity for the title race to swing back into their favour.

Orlando Pirates fans will be passionately cheering on Kaizer Chiefs as if it is their own side when Amakhosi travel to Pretoria to face Mamelodi Sundowns for this decisive mid-week PSL encounter.

Source: TheSouthAfrican.com



Image By: Mamelodi Sundowns



Image By: Kaizer Chiefs



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