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DISTRICT OF EXCELLENCE AND CLIMATE SMART INNOVATION

Swartklip learner dies amid scholar transport concerns in Delmas

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO
DELMAS — A Grade 4 learner from Swartklip Combined School has died after being struck by a vehicle, as concerns over scholar transport and safe access to schools continue to be raised in communities around Delmas. The learner, identified by the Mpumalanga Department of Education as Thabiso Mtsweni, died on Thursday, 17 September, after sustaining injuries in the accident. According to a joint statement by the Mpumalanga Department of Education and the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mtsweni was in the vicinity of his designated learner transport route when the incident occurred. The statement said the learner attempted to cross the road and was struck by an oncoming vehicle. He was rushed to hospital for urgent medical treatment but later died. The departments said the circumstances surrounding the incident remain subject to the relevant investigative processes.

Transport concerns
Mtsweni's death comes 14 days after learners and community members in Vukuzenzele, Delmas, took to the streets on 03 September 2026 over alleged failures in the scholar transport service serving the area and surrounding rural communities. The Vukuzenzele protest centred on learners travelling to Swartklip

Combined School, with protesters alleging that some learners had been left behind, buses were not serving parts of their designated routes and additional transport was needed. An SGB member, who spoke to the *Highveld Chronicle* on condition of anonymity because he feared possible repercussions, said parents had been paying R100 per child for transport since 2021. “Since 2021, we have been paying R100 for the buses, but we still have a problem getting the children from Ematshotshobheni onto them,” he said. The SGB member said the community had previously asked the principal to approach the department for an additional bus for learners from Ematshotshobheni. He alleged that although the principal indicated he would try to secure additional transport, no extra bus had been provided. Parents also raised concerns about transport serving communities including Big Mgqalano, Small Mgqalano, Bhodli, Nyawana, Mavedasini, Mazanganeni and Rocks. A parent from Rocks told the Highveld Chronicle that a bus had arrived late the previous day and failed to enter the area the

following morning. “We have a serious problem with this bus. It did not come into the Rocks at all this morning,” the parent said. The community also raised concerns about access to the school, with young people and learners calling for a safe, permanent bridge. Residents said learners faced long walks and unsafe conditions, including muddy or flooded areas and an unsafe crossing. On Friday, 04 September, the publication was informed that learners had travelled to school using scholar transport buses. It was not immediately clear whether this represented a permanent resolution.

Waaikraal protest
On 09 September, the Waaikraal community took to the streets over similar concerns. The community said the existing learner transport service was transporting learners attending Phaphamani Secondary School, while learners attending Swartklip Combined School, Botleng Secondary School and Mafa Max Motloug Secondary School were allegedly being left without adequate transport. Waaikraal community secretary Sibonelo Mwelase said the protest was driven by concerns over learners being left stranded and the need for transport to serve all affected schools. “The community has been raising this issue because our children are being left behind. We are calling for

an urgent and equitable solution so that every learner who depends on scholar transport can get to school safely,” Mwelase said. The protests in Vukuzenzele and Waaikraal placed scholar transport and safe access to schools at the centre of community concerns in the weeks before Mtsweni's death. **Department responds**
In their statement following Mtsweni's death, the provincial departments conveyed their condolences to the learner's family, fellow learners, educators and the broader Swartklip Combined School community. “We are deeply saddened by the loss of young Thabiso Mtsweni. No family should have to endure the pain of losing a child under such tragic circumstances,” the departments said. The departments said officials were providing support to the family and school and would continue to offer psychosocial and emotional assistance. They also called on all road users and stakeholders involved in learner transport to exercise the highest level of caution and vigilance to ensure the safety of learners. The *Highveld Chronicle* sent questions to the Mpumalanga Department of Education regarding the scholar transport concerns raised in Vukuzenzele and Waaikraal, including route coverage, learners allegedly being left behind and requests for additional buses. The department had not responded by the time of publication.

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



The Priority of Prayer

By Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6–7)
Prayer is primary—but not theoretical prayer. Prayer that gets the job done includes the conviction, “I'm available, Lord—ready and willing.” All who lead must place a high priority on prayer. Why is prayer so important? Here are the four shortest reasons I know. Prayer makes me wait. I cannot pray and work at the same time. I have to wait to act until I finish praying. Prayer forces me to leave the situation with God; it makes me wait. Second, prayer clears my vision.

Southern California often has an overhanging weather problem in the mornings, because of its coastal location, until the sun “burns through” the morning fog. Prayer does that. When you first face a situation, is it foggy? Prayer will “burn through.” Your vision will clear so you can see through God's eyes. Third, prayer quiets my heart. I find that prayer is the best channel for removing my worries. When I turn my anxiety into prayer, my spirit grows quiet. Prayer replaces angst with peace. Knees don't knock when we kneel on them! Fourth, prayer activates my faith. After praying I am more prone to trust God. How petty and negative and critical I am when I don't pray! Prayer sets faith on fire. Don't just fill the margins in your Bible with words and thoughts about ways a leader prays. Do it! Don't stop with just a sterile theology of prayer. Pray! Prayer was the first major step Nehemiah took in his journey to effective leadership. The Lord is the Specialist we need for these “uncrossable” and impossible experiences. He delights in accomplishing what we cannot pull off. But He awaits our cry. He listens for our request. Nehemiah was quick to call for help. His favorite position when faced with problems was the kneeling position. How about you?

Mayor Buda brings warmth and dignity to Delmas elders

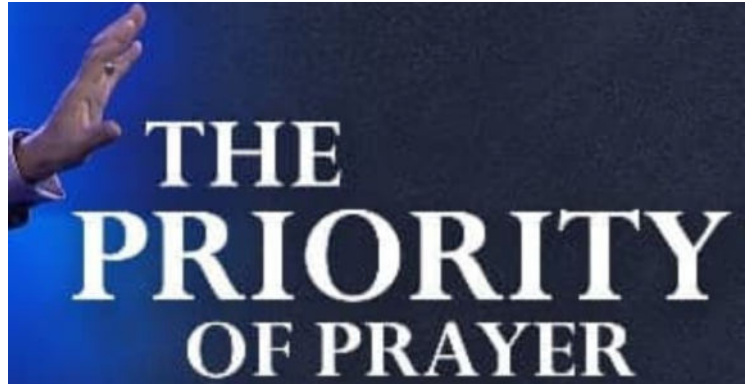
ESTHER MAHLANGU

DELMAS — Senior citizens from Delmas and surrounding wards received blankets on Friday, 18 September, during a Mayoral Blanket Handover at the Extension 6 Hall. The initiative, led by Victor Khanye Local Municipality Executive Mayor Vusi Buda, supported by One by One Supermarket provided practical support to scores of elderly residents as part of the municipality's efforts to assist senior citizens and vulnerable members of the community. Buda is currently listed as the Executive Mayor of Victor Khanye Local Municipality. Addressing the beneficiaries, Buda reaffirmed the municipality's commitment to programmes aimed at improving the well-being of residents, particularly senior citizens who have contributed to the development of their families and communities over the years. He also acknowledged the important role played by elders in families and communities, emphasising the need to treat them with dignity, care and respect. For the beneficiaries, the handover offered more than practical assistance, with some saying the gesture made them feel remembered and valued.

One of the beneficiaries, Linah Masango, expressed appreciation for the support, saying the blanket would provide much-needed warmth. “We are very grateful for this gesture. It shows us that our municipality still cares about us as elders. The blanket will help us during the cold days, and we appreciate being remembered,” Masango said. For Ntombizodwa Magagula, the initiative was also about recognising the value of senior citizens in the community. “As elders, we want to know that we are not forgotten. Today we felt valued. We would like to thank the municipality for thinking of us and for continuing to support senior citizens,” Magagula said. The Mayoral Blanket Handover forms part of Victor Khanye Local Municipality's programmes aimed at supporting vulnerable groups and providing social assistance to residents. The municipality said it remains committed to initiatives that promote care, dignity and support for residents, particularly those who may be vulnerable during challenging conditions.



VKLM Executive Mayor Vusi Buda and One By One Supermarket Manager Sonja Bothma hand over a blanket to one of the recipients.



Thembisile Hani tourism tour showcases hidden gems

● EMMANUEL N MTHIMUNYE

KWAGGAFONTEIN — A two-day tourism tour through Thembisile Hani has showcased the municipality's mix of nature, cultural heritage, accommodation, food and local businesses, while highlighting challenges that could affect tourism growth in the area. The Thembisile Hani Local Tourism Organisation (THLTO) tour was officially launched at Zithabiseni Resort on 16 September under the theme “**Tourism Drives Brighter Communities**”.

The tour formed part of the Thembisile

Tourism Route, under the tagline “**Discover, Experience, Belong — Our People, Our Places, Our Stories**”, and brought together tourism stakeholders, local businesses and other participants to showcase attractions and tourism products. THLTO chairperson Johannes “Snappy” Ntshwane says the initiative was intended to demonstrate the range of experiences available to visitors. “The purpose of the tour is to show that Thembisile has everything that a tourist needs. We have nature, we

have heritage, we have culture, we have luxury accommodation which is affordable, we have scrumptious food, we have shopping, everything is here,” Ntshwane says.

Nature, heritage and local businesses

The first day included visits to Zithabiseni Resort, SS Skhosana Nature Reserve, Temple Bliss, Dan Butchery and Chesa Nyama, De Rams Guest House, Kwa Khuzi Traditional Restaurant and Mrhali Boutique Guest House. After lunch at Kwa Khuzi, the delegation visited Solomon Mahlangu Stadium, home to Betway Premiership club TS Galaxy and Motsepe League side Casric Stars FC. The stadium now hosts PSL matches, which have become one of the biggest contributors to local tourism.

The day concluded at Swandle Guest House with a Tourism Show, Exhibition and Networking Dinner, where local crafters and tourism product owners showcased their work.

The second day kicked off with breakfast at Da Village Villas Lodge, followed by a visit to SS Guest before the delegation proceeded to Kghodwana Cultural Village in KwaMhlanga, where visitors were introduced to Ndebele heritage, culture and traditional art.

The final stop was KwaMaMtshweni Traditional Food Restaurant, where the media team and local influencers were treated to traditional food for lunch before departure.

At SS Skhosana Nature Reserve, tour guide Menzi Ntuli highlighted animal poaching as one of the challenges facing the reserve. “Our priority as the nature reserve is to cater for our tourists, but at the same time we are facing challenges of animal poaching because the place is surrounded and within the community. People come as hunters around the bushes and they end up getting into the reserve to hunt and that's animal poaching,” Ntuli says. He warned that declining wildlife numbers could affect the reserve's ability to attract visitors. Ntuli called on MTPA and THLTO to work with the reserve to protect and preserve its wildlife.

Food and cultural experiences

Food and cultural experiences also formed part of the tour, with Ntshwane saying local guest houses, butcheries and chesa nyamas offered visitors an opportunity to experience African and traditional cuisine. “In all the guest houses and chesa nyamas that we visited, they cater marvellous food, very scrumptious food which is mouth-watering, and that is African and traditional food that all tourists will want to experience,” he says. Ntshwane says Kghodwana Cultural Village also provides visitors with an opportunity to learn about the area's history and heritage. “At Kghodwana, that is where tourists will find cultural experience and history, how people were living, the evolution from back centuries up until today. It shows how our people have evolved while preserving their culture,” he says.

Thembisile Hani Local Municipality MMC for Community Development Themba Ntuli says the municipality participated in the tour because of tourism's potential contribution to the local economy. “As Thembisile Hani Local Municipality we took part in this



Mrhali Boutique Guest House founder Dinah Masango shares how she managed to achieve a four-star rating for the establishment.



An expected guest came to welcome the touring team at SS Skhosana Nature Reserve

tour because this is a very important tour for our municipality, for our people, for our local economy. Therefore, being part of this tour we have local influencers who are doing well. We took them on this tour to help us advertise our beautiful place in Mpumalanga,” Ntuli says. He also highlighted Solomon Mahlangu Stadium as an attraction, noting that it now hosts professional football matches, including TS Galaxy.

Restoring Zithabiseni Resort

While the tour showcased tourism attractions across Thembisile Hani, the condition of Zithabiseni Resort emerged as one of the key concerns, with stakeholders calling for collective efforts to restore the once-popular destination. Youth activist Thando Mahlangu said it was painful to see the resort in its current state, particularly because of the economic opportunities it once provided to surrounding communities. “Through this place, people were able to feed their families, they were able to generate an economy and they were able to fulfil their needs. We call upon all stakeholders to partake in rehabilitating this resort so that it can continue to generate local economy and to create job opportunities for our locals,” Mahlangu said. THLTO chairperson Ntshwane said the rehabilitation should begin with local businesses and stakeholders before attracting investors from outside the area. “In order for Zithabiseni Resort to come back to life again, we need to take part in rehabilitating it here at home first. The rehabilitation must start with us. Therefore, we need to engage with our local stakeholders and business people around Thembisile Hani and Mpumalanga as a whole to invest in rehabilitating Zithabiseni Resort,” Ntshwane said. MTPA Product Marketing Manager Londi Dos Santos said the agency was also concerned about the condition of the resort. “As the MTPA, our purpose is to

provide sustainable management and promotion of tourism and nature conservation in Mpumalanga. Therefore, we are not happy with the current state of Zithabiseni Resort,” Dos Santos said.

Building a tourism destination

Dos Santos said the tour demonstrated the variety of tourism products available in the area. “Thembisile Hani has a complete tourism value chain. From Zithabiseni Resort that needs to be revived, to SS Skhosana Nature Reserve for nature lovers, to Kghodwana Cultural Village for cultural tourists, to our guest houses that offer comfortable accommodation and our chesa nyamas and butcheries that offer divine food, this area is ready for tourism,” she said. The tour highlighted the potential of local tourism while also drawing attention to challenges such as the condition of Zithabiseni Resort and wildlife poaching at SS Skhosana Nature Reserve. Organisers hope the initiative will attract visitors, support local businesses, build partnerships and create economic opportunities for communities in Thembisile Hani.



Cultural activist Thando Mahlangu reflects on Zithabiseni Resort's former glory and the economic opportunities it created when it was still in good condition.



THLTO members and local influencers pose for a picture at SS Guest House in KwaMhlanga.



Local artist and presenter Nqobile Masuku at Temple Bliss Beauty Spa in Kwaggafontein



De Rams Boutique Guest House staff ready to welcome visitors.



Solomon Mahlangu Stadium boasts a world-class athletics track and grass playing field



Enjoying a traditional meal at KwaMaMtshweni Traditional Food Outlet in KwaMhlanga



A breathtaking and refreshing poolside view at Da Village Villas Lodge

Mabuza condemns Mpumalanga runner's killing, calls for protection of women and children

LUCAS SHONGWE

MBOMBELA — Mpumalanga MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation Leah Mabuza has conveyed her condolences to the family of Elizabeth “Tsontso” Moselakgomo, 38, whose death has shocked her family, community and the running fraternity. Moselakgomo, who is originally from Mpumalanga, went missing after leaving her home in Rhodesfield, Kempton Park, for an afternoon run on 09 September 2026. Her body was later found and positively identified by her family at the Germiston Mortuary. In a statement issued on Wednesday, 17 September, Mabuza said she was shocked and saddened by Moselakgomo's death and extended her sympathies to her family, particularly her young daughter. “I wish to convey my deepest condolences to the family of our daughter, Elizabeth Moselakgomo. This is a devastating loss, and no family should have to endure the pain of losing a loved one in such tragic circumstances. Our thoughts and

prayers are with her daughter, family and all those who knew and loved her. May they find strength and comfort during this difficult time,” Mabuza said. Mabuza condemned the killing of women and violence against women and children, saying more needed to be done to ensure women could move freely without fear. “We strongly condemn the senseless killing of women and all forms of violence against women and children. The loss of Elizabeth is a painful reminder that we must do more as government and society to create environments where women can live, work, exercise and move freely without fear of violence. There can be no justification for taking an innocent life,” she said. Moselakgomo was a fitness enthusiast and a member of Team Vitality. Her eight-year-old daughter raised the alarm after Moselakgomo failed to return home following her run. Her death comes as police investigate the deaths of several women whose bodies have been found

in and around Kempton Park and surrounding areas in recent months. Police have established a multidisciplinary task team to investigate the cases and determine whether there are links between them. Authorities have not confirmed that the deaths were committed by a single perpetrator. Mabuza said she was confident that the investigation into Moselakgomo's death would be pursued with urgency and urged communities to provide information that could assist law-enforcement agencies. She also called for support for families affected by gender-based violence and femicide. Team Vitality also paid tribute to Moselakgomo, describing her as an avid runner and valued member of its community. The organisation said she had participated in Vitality events, including the Vitality Run Series, where she recently completed the Wanderers 21km. “Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with Elizabeth's family, her child, friends, loved ones and everyone whose lives she touched. We cannot begin to imagine the pain they are experiencing, and we stand with them during this incredibly difficult time,” Team Vitality said. “We ask the running community and the public to keep Elizabeth's family and loved ones in their thoughts during this time. Elizabeth, you will not be forgotten.” Moselakgomo is expected to be laid to rest in her home village of Phake, in Dr JS Moroka Municipality, on Sunday, 20 September 2026.



The late Elizabeth “Tsontso” Moselakgomo, 38, pictured after completing a race as a member of Team Vitality. Moselakgomo, originally from Phake village in Dr JS Moroka Municipality, went missing while on a run in Rhodesfield, Kempton Park, on 09 September and was later found murdered. Picture: Team Vitality

LIBERTYCOAL

EXTERNAL VACANCY

19 September 2026

Vacant Positions:

Closing Date

MINE PLANNING OFFICER

25/09/2026

Liberty Coal - Optimum Colliery

Time: 23:59

Vacancy Overview:

LIBERTY COAL is looking for a **Mine Planning Officer** to join our technical services team at our coal mine. You will be responsible for providing support to mine planning engineers with managing data, creating and owning reports, performing regular reconciliations of mining data.

This is a hands-on, data-driven role for someone who lives in spreadsheets, understands what actually happens at the face, and can turn both into a plan the production team can execute.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Compile short-term (weekly, monthly) and medium-term (quarterly, annual) mine plans and production schedules
- Build and maintain detailed scheduling and production models in Excel, including reconciliation of planned versus actual tonnes, yield, strip ratio and grade
- Update plans with survey, geological and grade-control data, and flag variances to the Mine Planning Manager
- Support the compilation of the annual business plan, budget and Life of Mine plan
- Prepare mining layouts, cut sequences, dump / dozer and box-cut plans OR section and pillar layouts and equipment allocation schedules
- Track ROM production, waste movement and equipment productivity against plan, and report weekly and monthly
- Assist with drill-and-blast planning, road and haul profile design, and dewatering scheduling
- Provide planning input into resource and reserve statements
- Work closely with survey, geology, production, engineering and processing teams to keep the plan realistic and current

Qualification Criteria, Knowledge & Competencies

- National Diploma or Degree in Mining Engineering, Mine Planning, Mine Surveying or a related discipline
- Minimum 5 years' experience on a coal mine
- At least 2 years of that experience in a mine planning role
- Advanced Excel skills – complex formulas, lookups, pivot tables, data modelling and building scheduling and reconciliation models from scratch
- Sound working knowledge of coal mining processes, from exploration and grade control through mining, ROM handling, beneficiation and product quality
- Proficiency in mine planning and design software
- Strong understanding of MHSA requirements and mine planning standards
- Valid driver's licence and ability to obtain a Red Ticket (medical certificate of fitness)

How to Apply

Email your CV, certified copies of qualifications and contactable references to jobs@liberty-coal.com with “**Mine Planning Officer – [MPO001]**” in the subject line, by 25 September 2026.

Preference will be given to candidates in line with our Employment Equity Plan. Shortlisted candidates will be subject to medical, qualification and background verification. If you have not been contacted within 14 weeks of the closing date, please consider your application unsuccessful.

LIBERTYCOAL

EXTERNAL VACANCY

19 September 2026

Vacant Positions:

Closing Date

QUALITY CO-ORDINATOR – LABORATORY

25/09/2026

Liberty Coal - Optimum Colliery

Time: 23:59

Vacancy Overview:

LIBERTY COAL is seeking a suitably qualified and experienced **Quality Coordinator – Laboratory** to implement, maintain, control and continuously improve the Laboratory Quality Management System. The incumbent will ensure compliance with ISO 17025, TQMS and applicable laboratory quality requirements, while supporting the Laboratory Manager and laboratory personnel in maintaining quality, accuracy and continuous improvement.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Implement, maintain, evaluate and continuously improve the Laboratory Quality Management System. Assist the Laboratory Manager with ISO 17025 and TQMS compliance and conduct regular internal audits.
- Coordinate the investigation and resolution of Incident Reports, including root cause analysis. Monitor and ensure effective implementation of corrective and remedial actions.
- Coordinate, administer and evaluate the Proficiency Testing (PT) Programme and action activities relating to the PT portfolio. Evaluate PT failures, complaints, audit findings and improvement requests and support continuous improvement initiatives.
- Maintain the scope of testing and required SOPs and quality documentation. Assist with method validations and ensure the accuracy and integrity of monthly Quality Report inputs. Apply statistical methods to evaluate laboratory and quality data.
- Identify quality training and awareness requirements and coordinate interventions. Provide guidance to laboratory personnel on quality control, document control, method development, policies, procedures and data reporting. Build effective relationships with technical, professional and support personnel.

Qualification Criteria, Knowledge & Competencies

- BTech in Analytical Chemistry, Total Quality Management or related field, together with an ISO Quality Management System certification or equivalent qualification.
- Minimum 3–5 years' laboratory experience, with practical knowledge and application of ISO 17025. Experience in internal/external audits, document and report writing, LIMS systems and Statistical Quality Control.
- Advantageous:
- Knowledge of coal and/or coal laboratory testing and Project Management experience.

How to Apply

Email your CV and relevant qualifications to jobs@liberty-coal.com. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. The Company reserves the right not to make an appointment.

Huawei roadshow puts ICT opportunities in reach of Nkangala TVET students

● NODICAH FUNDAMA

EMALAHLENI — Students at Nkangala TVET College's Witbank Campus were introduced to emerging technology skills, certification opportunities and an international ICT competition during the Huawei ICT Roadshow on 16 September. The roadshow formed part of Huawei ICT Academy's efforts to reach students at selected higher education institutions and recruit participants for the 11th edition of the Huawei ICT Competition. It also aimed to raise awareness of the skills and certification opportunities available through the academy. Nkangala TVET College was among 15 higher education institutions selected for the roadshow. The college is also one of more than 80 institutions in South Africa working with Huawei ICT Academy, a collaboration between Huawei and higher education institutions aimed at strengthening links between education and the ICT industry. The initiative comes as technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, the Internet of Things (IoT) and 5G continue to influence workplaces and create demand for new technical skills. Sakhile Mathaba from Nkangala TVET College's Office of Innovation and Development said programmes such as the Huawei ICT Competition give students practical exposure to technologies associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). “We normally hear people speak of 4IR, but at a practical level, we still don't know what that is. So, obviously, it's made up of different sets of skills, such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing, and so on and so forth,” Mathaba said. He explained that students who participate in the competition undergo training and develop technical competencies that can benefit them beyond the competition. “Participating in competitions like this exposes the students to those skills because they have to undertake those trainings to be competent to participate in the competitions. But again, these are skills that will benefit them in their future endeavours in the place of work,” he said. Mathaba said the exposure could also benefit students interested in entrepreneurship by helping them identify ways of using technology to develop or strengthen their businesses. The Huawei ICT Academy provides students with access to courses and certifications in more than 20 technical

areas, including AI and cloud computing. Its certification pathway includes HCIA at associate level, HCIP at professional level and HCIE at expert level. The academy also aims to connect trained ICT talent with industry. Following certification, students' details may be included in a talent pool used for Huawei ICT Talent Job Fairs, where opportunities can be matched with Huawei, its customers and partners. Another focus of the roadshow was the Huawei ICT Competition, an annual global competition in which students test their theoretical knowledge, practical abilities and innovation skills. The competition includes a Practice Competition, which assesses theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and an Innovation Competition, which focuses on applying technology and innovation through solutions incorporating Huawei technologies. Participants progress through several stages, beginning with the preliminary stage, followed by the national stage in South Africa and the regional stage involving students from the Southern Africa region. Successful participants can ultimately reach the global final. Students who qualify for the global final are sponsored by Huawei to travel to China to participate in the international event and engage with students from other countries. For Nkangala TVET College, the initiative provides an opportunity to expose students to skills that reflect the changing demands of the technology sector. Mathaba said the exposure was important for students seeking employment as well as those considering entrepreneurship. “Those who are aspiring to entrepreneurship, they can still start businesses that are either powered by those technologies or they can start businesses that can benefit from those technologies,” he said. He said the broader objective was to prevent students from entering the job market without exposure to current technologies. “For the most part, it's to expose students to the latest technology and also to align with what the tech industry is doing so that when they go to the job market at a later stage, when they are done with their studies, they don't arrive there void of the latest tech skills,” Mathaba said.



Nkangala TVET College phases out NATED programmes as more than 600 graduate

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — Nkangala TVET College is phasing out its NATED programmes to make way for occupational programmes and trades as it prepares to open applications for the 2027 academic year next week. The announcement was made by the college's Acting Deputy Principal for Academic Services, Goodman Ndlala, during the college's 19th graduation ceremony at the Banquet Hall in Middelburg on Thursday, 17 September. Ndlala confirmed that there would be no new intake for NATED programmes. “Unfortunately, we are phasing out the NATED N4 programmes for both Engineering and Business, so there will be no applications accepted for that. We are moving towards occupational programmes,” Ndlala said. He said applications for 2027 would open on Monday, 21 September, with prospective students advised to check the Nkangala TVET College Facebook page and website for the application link. “We no longer have NATED - no N1, N2, N3, N4 at all. Only N5 and N6 for students who are already in the system, but they are also being phased out,” he said. According to Ndlala, new students will be able to enrol for Level 2 programmes in Engineering, IT, Hospitality and Tourism, and Transport and Logistics. The college will also offer occupational programmes at Level 5, including Bookkeeper, Project Manager, Office Administrator and Solar Technician. Trades offered include Plumbing, Welding, Electrical, Boilermaking and

Millwright. The announcement came as the college held a two-day graduation ceremony, which began on Wednesday, 16 September, and concluded on Thursday. More than 600 graduates received diplomas and certificates in Business and Engineering Studies. On Wednesday, more than 250 students received National N Diplomas, while more than 300 students were capped with National Certificate Vocational (NCV) Level 4 qualifications on Thursday. College management congratulated the graduates on their perseverance and urged them to use their skills to contribute to the economy of the district and the country. Among the graduates was Eugene Chauke, who studied Electrical Infrastructure and Construction at Witbank Campus. He said it took him five years to complete his qualification. Chauke has already completed his trade test through Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL) and is now seeking employment. Grace Mahlangu from Siyabuswa Campus, who studied Transport and Logistics, said she was not yet employed as she was furthering her studies in Supply Chain Management. Paul Lubambo, also from Witbank Campus, completed Transport and

Logistics Level 4. He said he was currently employed and planned to further his studies in Supply Chain Management at university. Parents, lecturers and local leaders attended the ceremony to celebrate the graduates' achievements. Ndlala wished the graduates well as they entered the next stage of their careers. “To the graduates, we appreciate that they joined the college and have now completed. That is our mission as a college. We wish them all the best in life. They must believe in themselves - they can work anywhere, they are well equipped. They must remain disciplined when they get into the workplace, respect supervisors and employers, and they will be successful,” he said. The phase-out forms part of the Department of Higher Education and Training's gradual move away from NATED Report 191 programmes towards occupational qualifications accredited by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). DHET's 2026/27 Annual Performance Plan states that NATED Report 191 programmes are gradually being phased out and replaced by occupational qualifications, with 24 new occupational qualifications introduced at TVET colleges from January 2026.



Some of the more than 600 Nkangala TVET College graduates who received their National N Diplomas and NCV Level 4 certificates
Picture: Nkangala TVET

Mswati calls for urgent progress on TVET campuses in Thembisile Hani and Victor Khanye

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — The lack of TVET college campuses in Thembisile Hani and Victor Khanye has prompted Nkangala District Municipality's MMC for Rural Development, Mduduzi “Mswati” Nkosi, to call for urgent progress in finalising a business plan for campuses in the two municipalities. Speaking to the *Highveld Chronicle* on the sidelines of the Nkangala TVET College graduation ceremony in Middelburg on Thursday, 17 September, Nkosi said he was unhappy with delays in finalising the business plan, “regardless of who is responsible”. “If it is us – whether politically or in government – who are delaying the business plan or the framework for Thembisile Hani and Victor Khanye to have satellite campuses of a TVET college, then I am pleading that we must pull up our socks,” Nkosi said. He said the lack of colleges was a major concern raised by young people during election campaigns. “As we are in electioneering campaigns, these are the very things young people raise when we do door-to-door. We must respond because we are serving our people,” he said. Nkosi said young people from Thembisile Hani had to travel outside the municipality to access further education and training. “Young people from Thembisile Hani have to drive or take taxis and e-hailing services to Pretoria just to get an education. Others have to travel to Siyabuswa, Witbank and eMalahleni,” he said. He said young people in Victor Khanye faced similar challenges.

“The same applies to Victor Khanye. We know that some e-hailing drivers are not registered, some are using fake number plates, and they end up doing terrible things to our sisters. As you know, we now have this scourge where many women are being killed and we cannot trace the perpetrators,” Nkosi said. Nkangala TVET College currently has five campuses: Middelburg, Witbank, Mpondozankomo, CN Mahlangu and Waterval Boven. These are located in Steve Tshwete, Emalahleni, Dr JS Moroka and Emakhazeni municipalities, leaving Thembisile Hani and Victor Khanye without campuses. The need for additional TVET provision in the district has been raised previously. Nkangala District Municipality's Integrated Development Plan identified the establishment of an additional Nkangala TVET College campus and skills centre in Thembisile Hani as an intervention. At the end of a two-day strategic planning session held at Nkangala District Municipality in Middelburg on 23 and 24 April 2026, Nkangala Economic Development Agency (NEDA) CEO Prince Mangani announced plans for a TVET college in Victor Khanye. “Our plan is that ultimately all Nkangala municipalities will have TVET colleges. There's land available, owned by the municipality. We just need an investor,” Mangani said at the time. Nkosi warned that the absence of colleges could have serious social consequences. “If you do not have a college in Thembisile Hani, what do you expect from the matriculants, especially young

women? Do you expect them to just sit at home? That will lead to a high rate of teenage pregnancy and a high rate of unemployment. The same applies to Victor Khanye,” he said. Nkosi also pointed to Victor Khanye's proximity to mining operations and the proposed cargo airport as reasons he believes greater access to technical and vocational education is needed. “Victor Khanye is surrounded by mines. It is next to an airport where we must also implement a Cargo International Airport. There is no TVET college there. You might think Victor Khanye is a small municipality with only nine wards, but trust me, young people there want to go to school. They cannot be expected to leave Mpumalanga and go to Springs – and Springs is in Gauteng, Daveyton is in Gauteng. They are from Mpumalanga. We must serve them,” Nkosi said.



ISIKO LETHU

Our Story

ILIZWI

WITH SIPHO MAHAMBA

Ikghodwana Cultural Village iyikaba yamagugu wamandebele kanye nokuvilela umlando wesintu

Emmanuel N Mthimunya

Ikghodwana kuyi ndawo yoku buthelela nokufukamela ilwazi lamasiko, ubukgwari kanye ne siko pilo khulu khulu yamaNdebele. Umlando uveza bona ikgodwana yakhiwa mbuso wakwandebele ngomnyaka ka 1989 kwathi ngo 1990 yavulwa ngokusemthethweni njenge ndawo yamagugu wamandebele. Kwathi ngo mnyaka ka 1994 eku mnyaka wombuso wentando yenengi indawo le khenge isiqala kwaphela umlando nemvelaphi yamandebele kwaphela kodwana kwaba yindawo yomuntu woke nanyana ipakama yakhona beku kukuba mthombo lwazi wama ndebele indawo le, iyindawo

yeze vakatjho bukelo, begodu iyindawo yokuhlumisa umnotho ngakwandebele.

Kuliqiniso ukuthi umuntu naka vakatjhele indawo le uzizwa asekabeni yemvelaphi yakhe godu nama gugu wakhe ngombana la kula abantu bafundiswa khona ukugwala, ukuphotela ukurhuphula, ukutshidza kanye noku sinda.

Okuqakatheke khulu nge Kghodwana Cultural Village kukuthi yindawo yokufundisa abantu nges'milo, ihlonipho kanye nokuzi vikel ekhambeni lepilo lokhu kufaka hlangana iimisebenzi ekufanele yenziwe babantu nge'ngaba ngoku hluka kwazo njengo kuthi abesana bafundiswa ukulusa, ukuzingela nokutheza kanye noku senga, bese kuthi abentazana bafundiswe uku tlhogomela ikhaya njengoku hlwengisa, ukupheka kanye nokuzithoba. Yeke lezo ngezinye zezinto ezenza iKgodwana ukuthi kube yindawo eqakathekileko ekuvikeleni nekubuyisa isimilo kanye nobuntu esitjhabeni lokhu kufaka hlangana ukuvikelwa kwamagugu, ubukgwari kanye namasiko wabantu.



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From shared vision to empowering women: The story behind BWIM

LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — What began in 2023 as a partnership between two women determined to help transform the male-dominated mining industry has grown into a network of women-owned businesses.

That organisation is Business Women in Mining (BWIM), founded on Ntombi Mahlangu's vision of seeing Black women-owned businesses grow, thrive and take the lead in the mining sector.

Co-founder Fehmida Silas, who is also the founder and owner of Middelburg-based Black women-owned engineering firm JFK Business Solutions, says the journey began when Mahlangu approached her to help turn that vision into reality.

“Ntombi recognised that women, particularly Black women, continue to face significant barriers when trying to establish themselves in an industry that has historically been dominated by men,” Silas says.

“Her vision was not only to create opportunities for women in mining, but to break barriers, empower and mentor women and young people, and uplift communities. She wanted a platform where women could learn, grow, support one another, and access opportunities to become sustainable and successful.”

Silas says she brought her own experience in the mining sector to the partnership.

“Having faced challenges myself within the mining sector, I understood first-hand the difficulties that women-owned businesses encounter. My vision was to help women-owned companies become

stronger, more compliant, and better prepared to operate within the mining sector,” she says.

“I wanted to help women understand how to navigate challenges, how to position their businesses, and importantly, how to approach and engage with mining houses professionally and effectively.”

BWIM was officially established in 2023, with Mahlangu as founder and Silas as co-founder. What started with two women soon expanded as more members joined, bringing their own experience, knowledge and expertise.

“BWIM was therefore not created simply as another organisation. It was born out of a genuine desire to see women succeed where barriers have traditionally stood in their way,” Silas says.

“Our purpose is to encourage women to believe in their businesses, equip them with knowledge and skills, mentor them through challenges, and create pathways for them to engage meaningfully with the mining sector.”

For Silas, the impact of supporting women-owned businesses extends beyond individual companies.

“When women-owned businesses grow, they create opportunities, contribute to local economies, develop young people, and help build stronger communities.”

She says the organisation's vision remains focused on increasing the

participation and leadership of Black women in the engineering and mining sectors.

“We want to see more well-established Black women in the engineering sector. We want to see Black women not only participating in mining, but leading, owning, designing, engineering, innovating and making decisions. We want to see more Black women owning engineering companies that are sustainable, compliant and capable of competing at the highest levels.”

Most importantly, she adds, young women should be able to see themselves reflected in leadership positions across the sector.

“We want young Black women to look at an engineer, a mining executive, a business owner or a project leader and say: ‘I can become that too.’”

As part of its efforts to equip women-owned businesses, BWIM, in partnership with Absa, will host a Business Finance Masterclass aimed at women entrepreneurs in the mining value chain.

Silas says the masterclass will be held on 29 September 2026 at 09:00 at ANEW Hotel in Witbank, under the theme **“Practical Insights. Smarter Decisions. Stronger Growth.”**

“This masterclass is about practical insights, smarter decisions and stronger growth. We will be empowering women with financial knowledge – how to manage their business finances, how to access



Fehmida Silas, founder and owner of JFK Business Solutions and co-founder of Business Women in Mining (BWIM). Picture: Lucas Shongwe

funding, how to be compliant and how to grow sustainable businesses within the mining sector,” she says.

“We know that many women-owned businesses struggle with finance, and this masterclass will give you the tools you need.”

The session will focus on financial management, access to funding and sustainable growth strategies.

Silas calls on women in mining,

suppliers and emerging entrepreneurs to book their places early as seats are limited.

“BWIM is about women supporting women, women opening doors for women, and women creating opportunities where there were once barriers. This is our journey. This is our purpose. And this is the vision that we continue to build together,” she concludes.

Wetland clean-up raises concerns over dumping in Mandela Section

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — Illegal dumping and pollution at a wetland in Mandela Section have raised concerns about waste management and the condition of the area.

The concerns emerged during an Environmental Protection Awareness and Clean-Up Campaign hosted by Victor Khanye Local Municipality (VKLM) and Ukwanda Kwemvelo Organisation NPC on Tuesday, 15 September 2026.

The programme began at the Simon Gondwe Sport Centre before officials, civil society representatives and other stakeholders moved to the wetland to remove waste.

Those taking part included Acting Speaker Councillor Blondie Balathi, VKLM Environmental Management representative Boitumelo Kgapane, DARDLEA's Prayer Lubisi, VKLM Transversal Office Coordinator Thuli Skhosana, Zanele Mabanga from CoGHSTA, Civil Society Forum chairperson Nhlanhla Siteo and representatives from the Traditional Healers Organisation (THO).

Ukwanda Kwemvelo NPC president Siyabonga Ndebele said the organisation became involved after growing concerned about the deterioration of wetlands around Delmas.

He said waste had “choked” some wetlands, while pollution and stagnant water were affecting their natural function.

Household waste, plastic, nappies, building rubble and tyres were among the materials reportedly being dumped in the wetland.

Ndebele also raised concerns about uncontrolled grazing, reed cutting, vehicle washing near the wetland, wastewater from the municipal wastewater treatment plant and agricultural chemicals potentially entering the water.

“Our motto is Nature's Expansion & Growth. We were motivated by the urgent need to restore our natural ecosystems that are dying in front of us,” Ndebele said.

He said the clean-up was not intended to be a once-off exercise.

Ukwanda Kwemvelo plans to continue environmental education in schools, churches and households, introduce an adopt-a-wetland programme and train young people and women as waste champions.

The organisation also plans to promote recycling and work with communities and ward councillors on environmental awareness and signage.

Siteo said the condition of the wetland was among several environmental concerns raised by residents in Mandela Section.

She said these included poor waste collection, blocked drainage, flooding, poor water quality, invasive plants and sewer spillages.

She said civil society had raised the concerns through Integrated Development Plan (IDP) consultations, ward committee and community meetings, as well as

with municipal and environmental authorities.

The forum is calling for regular waste collection, enforcement of municipal by-laws, wetland monitoring, signage and fencing, recycling and rehabilitation.

Siteo also urged residents to stop illegal dumping, separate waste, report offenders and take part in clean-up initiatives.

“We cannot have a clean environment if residents are not part of the solution,” she said.

The campaign has placed responsibility on both authorities and residents, with calls for improved services and enforcement alongside greater community participation in protecting the wetland.

The publication approached VKLM's Environmental Management section and the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) for comment on the concerns raised about the wetland.

No responses had been received by the time of publication.

“That wetland is not a dumpsite,” Siteo said. “We are the ones who must protect Delmas.”



VKLM Transversal Office Coordinator Thuli Skhosana leads the clean-up

Pump brings relief to Sundra residents after water shortages

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS, SUNDRA — Residents in Sundra and surrounding areas are receiving improved water supply after Schurco Slurry South Africa donated equipment worth more than R180,000 following a pump failure at the Sundra pump station.

The company donated a pump, motor and accessories after being approached about a lack of water pressure at the station.

Schurco's engineers identified a PF150 pump as suitable for the station, after which the company's managing director and sales manager agreed to sponsor the equipment.

The pump and motor were donated on 28 August 2026, with installation beginning immediately.

Schurco's field services team worked through the weekend before the system was commissioned on 02 September.

Fred Aslett, sales manager, and Emile Fourie, managing director at Schurco Slurry South Africa, said the team worked through the weekend to get the pump running.

The company also adjusted the station's variable speed drive, which it said had been running the pump too fast. Once the adjustment and commissioning were completed, water began flowing again.

However, residents say the water supply has not yet returned to normal.

Rina van Aswegen, an Eloff resident, said water was now reaching the area, although only intermittently.

“We had, for a long time in Eloff, we didn't have any water, no water, nothing. So, at least now, every second day we are having water. It is a bit stronger, but it is not like it is supposed to be. But at least we can say thank you, we are having water now,” she said.

At Cosmos Old Age Home, the shortage was particularly difficult for elderly residents.

Val Marcus said some residents had been walking to JoJo tanks with buckets to collect water for basic needs.

“We old people here, we have to walk to JoJos with buckets, try and get

water to flush our toilets. And there's a lot of old people that just can't do it,” Marcus said.

She said residents were grateful for the intervention.

“There's not enough words to tell you how grateful we are for the donation of that pump. May God bless you for that,” she said.

The shortage also affected residents in Rietkol, where water is needed for livestock.

Bernice van Dyk said the improved supply had helped her provide water to her animals after struggling during the shortage.

“We really, really appreciate it because it did help for me to be able to give water to my animals, because we were struggling when there was no water,” she said.

Rosemary Korff, from Sundra, also welcomed the return of water.

“I just want to say thank you. It's so awesome to have water again to give my animals water,” she said.

Schurco said its decision to intervene was driven by the community's need and the availability of suitable equipment.

“Helping a community in need is always a privilege for Schurco. We have the pump on our shelf and there was a need,” the company said.

The company said it would provide further assistance if needed.

For residents, the donated pump has provided welcome relief, although intermittent water supply remains a concern in some areas.





Linda Ka Zwane gets the nod to lead at SAFA as vice-president for another term

From hard tackles to football boardrooms, Zwane keeps grassroots game in focus

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — Linda Ka Zwane's football journey has taken him from hard tackles on the field to decisions in the boardroom, but his focus remains close to where his journey began: grassroots football.

The Mpumalanga football administrator is starting another term as a South African Football Association (SAFA) vice-president after being re-elected at the SAFA Elective National Congress at Vodaworld in Midrand on Saturday, 12 September 2026.

For Zwane, the new term is about more than holding a position. He wants grassroots football to move closer to the centre of SAFA's development plans, particularly in rural and township communities.

"It serves as a vote of confidence from provincial and regional structures in the collective vision for South African football," Zwane says.

"It represents both a responsibility and a mandate to continue pushing for constitutional governance, financial stability, and development integration across all nine provinces."

Zwane's journey into football administration began at grassroots level in Mpumalanga. He moved through local club and regional structures in Nkangala before taking on provincial and national responsibilities.

His time at SAFA Nkangala, he says, exposed him to some of the challenges facing players and officials outside the country's established football centres.

He says there is a "systemic need for equitable resource distribution, structured youth leagues, and formal coaching pathways".

That experience remains central to how

he sees the future of the game.

For Zwane, where a child is born should not determine how far that child can go in football.

Talent cannot depend on chance

One of his priorities is getting more resources closer to SAFA's 52 regions.

"SAFA must decentralise resources directly to the 52 regions," he says.

He also wants municipal facilities to be improved, coaching qualifications to be more accessible at local level and age-group competitions to be properly regulated.

But Zwane acknowledges that there is still a gap between where young talent is discovered and where players eventually enter professional structures.

"Fully integrating school sports and local municipal facilities into a unified national talent identification pipeline remains work in progress," he says.

"Closing the gap between rural talent discovery and professional academy structures requires further systemic alignment across departments."

For communities that regularly struggle with inadequate playing facilities and limited access to structured competitions, that gap can determine whether talented youngsters are seen at all.

Building the coaches

Zwane also wants coaching development to remain a major part of SAFA's work.

He points to the training of thousands of coaches from D to A licence level and SAFA's return to the CAF coaching convention among the developments he is proud of.

He also highlights the number of South African coaches who have gone on to work outside the country. For the new term, he wants coaching education expanded across all regions, alongside stronger school and youth football infrastructure.

He wants sustained school competitions linked to SAFA's regional structures and better administrative capacity within the regions.

Women's football is another area he believes needs continued attention, particularly its professionalisation. His focus is therefore not only on producing players, but also on strengthening the structures around them.

A football administrator beyond SAFA

Zwane's responsibilities stretch beyond SAFA.

He has also been re-elected president of the Mpumalanga Sport Confederation and joined the COSAFA executive committee.

He serves on the SASCOC board, where he chairs the Coaches Commission, and is a trustee of the Thoroughbred Horseracing Trust.

Away from sports administration, Zwane is a public servant, an executive leader in the broader sports sector, a law student at Regenesys Business School, a livestock farmer and a family man.



Linda Ka Zwane surrounded by football legends Kaizer Motaung, Kaizer Chiefs Chairman (left), and Irvin Khoza, Orlando Pirates and PSL Chairman (right).

Together with his wife, Carol Zwane, he is also a patron and co-founder of the Linda Ka Zwane Foundation, which focuses on community upliftment, youth development and literacy.

And then there is the nickname that has followed him from his playing days: "Mercedes Benz".

Zwane says the name came from his style of play.

"I was a hard tackler like Linda Buthelezi, a former Bafana Bafana midfielder," he says.

The hard tackling may belong to his playing days, but Zwane's attention is now on what happens away from the

pitch — from municipal fields and school competitions to coaching classrooms and regional football offices. His ambition is to build what he calls "a sustainable, self-reliant administrative ecosystem".

He wants a system where "a child from any rural village or township in South Africa has an equal, structured pathway to national team selection and professional sports administration".

For Zwane, that is the bigger job of the new term: making sure the pathway exists not only on paper, but where young players actually live and play.

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