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RATLOU COMMUNITY WELCOMES R90 MILLION HOUSING PROJECTS

By Keorapetse Mosipidi

The community of Ratlou Local Municipality has welcomed with excitement the unveiling of a R90 million housing project, citing it as a significant step toward improving their living conditions.

The initiative highlights the Department of Human Settlement's ongoing efforts to accelerate transformation in rural communities, particularly by replacing unsafe mud houses with decent and quality houses.

According to community members, the project is expected to bring much-needed development by providing dignity and restoring hope to beneficiaries who have long-awaited access to adequate housing. David Setlhaku, a resident of Madibogo-Pan, expressed his excitement about the project, saying he is pleased to see development finally taking place in his village. "It is the first time I see so much happiness on the faces of our people", he said.

Another resident, Goitseone Sedumedi, welcomed the development and commended the department for bringing good news to the community. "As a community, we appreciate the 100



houses that will be built in our village. This shows that our government is finally recognising us," she said.

Sedumedi also expressed satisfaction that the MEC emphasised that housing allocations should prioritise those who are genuinely in need, including older persons, women, and child-headed households.

Residents also urged authorities to ensure transparency and fairness in the allocation process, as well as the timely completion of the project.

The project, which consists of 400 housing units, will be implemented in the villages of

Madibogo-Pan, Tshidilamolomo, and Moshawane, each receiving 100 housing units, while Loporung and Logagane will each receive 50 housing units. This will provide much-needed access to decent housing for communities in these areas. The project is expected to be completed before the end of 2027. Speaking during the introduction of the five contractors who will be responsible for the project, the MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, Gaoage Oageng Molapisi, emphasized the provincial government's commitment to accelerating housing delivery and ensuring that

vulnerable communities gain access to proper housing. He said the project will not only address the housing needs of communities but will also create employment opportunities for residents. "As the department, we will monitor progress closely to ensure that the project is completed efficiently and in line with regulatory requirements," he said.

MEC Molapisi further urged contractors to deliver quality housing within the set timeframe and ensure they uphold high standards of workmanship and accountability. He also appealed to the community of Ratlou to support the contractors to avoid any delays.

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NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL TREASURY AND COGTA ENGAGE DR RSM AND KAGISANO MOLOPO ON THE TABLED 2026/27 MTREF BUDGETS

By Tshepang Phetlhu

The North West Provincial Treasury, in conjunction with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), started a series of engagements with municipalities on their tabled 2026/27 Medium-Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework (MTREF) budgets.

The engagements commenced with the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality (Dr RSM DM), followed by Kagisano Molopo Local Municipality, and aimed to ensure, among other things, that municipalities align and integrate their Municipal Support Intervention Plans (MSIPs) with the action plans adopted at the recently held Provincial Local Government Kgotha-Kgothe.

The session also gave effect to Provincial Treasury's monitoring and oversight responsibilities in terms of Section 23 of the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA). The 2026/27 MTREF budgets were assessed against municipal revenue, operational expenditure, and capital expenditure projections, with a focus on budget credibility and implementation readiness.

Key discussion areas included infrastructure investment, service delivery priorities, institutional arrangements, and financial governance. The engagements also considered progress in the implementation of Financial Recovery Plans (FRPs) and associated implementation risks. Further attention was given to budget risks and areas requiring additional support. It emerged that municipalities continue to struggle



with revenue collection, with collection rates falling short of acceptable benchmarks.

COGTA provided feedback on its assessment of municipal institutional arrangements, good governance, infrastructure priorities, and service delivery plans.

The Head of Department of North West Provincial Treasury, Mr. Ndlela Kunene, underscored the importance of early municipal assessments to improve planning and responsiveness, rather than waiting until the end of the budget

cycle. Kunene commended the district municipality, which is in the rescue phase, for its implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan, particularly in the area of financial management, and indicated that the municipality should be able to exit the intervention programme if it sustains its gains.

The municipality has implemented prudent financial controls to ensure the budget remains within Treasury norms, and its financial health reflects a stable

position. Kunene further stated that upon exiting the programme, municipalities must be given the space to manage their own affairs, supported through continuous engagement with the Provincial Treasury.

The Provincial Treasury provided recommendations to be implemented by municipalities to improve their operational performance. The 2026/27 MTREF budget engagements will continue through structured sessions with municipalities and relevant departments to support the development of credible and funded budgets.

The engagements were attended by municipal administrative leadership, including Accounting Officers, Chief Financial Officers, senior managers, and representatives of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER LEADS OLDER PERSONS' RIGHTS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN ZEERUST

By Nonofa Lobelo and Tshenolelo Zebediela

The North West Office of the Premier recently coordinated an Older Persons' Rights Awareness Campaign in Zeerust aimed at promoting the protection, dignity, and well-being of elderly citizens, bringing together representatives from government departments, civil society organisations, traditional leaders, and community members to discuss issues affecting this vulnerable group and ways to strengthen local community support systems.

The event served as a critical intersection between the Government, stakeholders, and civil society.

Representing the Office, Catherine Bossman said that the government remains committed to promoting the rights and the dignity of the older persons community, as they are the custodians of the societal values and history.

"Older persons continue to play an important role in society and should be treated with respect and dignity, and highlighted the importance of protecting elderly citizens from abuse, neglect, and discrimination while ensuring that their voices are heard", she said.

Chairperson of the Older Persons Forum, Mr Sehularo, thanked government and community partners for their commitment to promoting the well-being of elderly citizens. "Older persons have contributed immensely to building our communities. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that they continue to live in dignity and safety," he said.

Addressing Violence and Social Challenges

The dialogue also highlighted concerns around gender-based



violence and femicide (GBVF) and the vulnerability of older persons to abuse. Participants emphasised the importance of communities reporting crimes and supporting victims.

Community activist Onica Masemola called for stronger community action. "Violence against women, children, and older persons cannot be tolerated. Communities must work together

to protect the vulnerable and ensure justice for victims," she said.

The SAPS further encourages the local community to make follow-ups on their open cases and not to drop their case. SAPS stated that dropping cases is becoming a problematic issue.

Tlhakanye said that all stakeholders should play a role in protecting the rights of this targeted group.

"The discussions today remind us that protecting the rights of older persons requires the involvement of families, communities, and government institutions working together," she said.

The campaign concluded with a call for communities to strengthen partnerships that promote the rights, safety, and dignity of older persons.

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NORTH WEST COGTA CONTINUES TO PROPEL ITS MIG EXPENDITURE FOR GREATER GOOD



By Boitumelo Seleka and
Thebeetsile Keameditse

The North West Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) continues to make progress on the expenditure and implementation of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), with notable achievements recorded in infrastructure delivery across the province.

The Province has received a total MIG allocation of R2.19 billion, and the total annual allocation has been transferred to municipalities. The March expenditure report for the 2025/26 financial year, municipalities have collectively spent R1.3 billion, translating to 64% expenditure of the total allocation.

MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs - CoGHSTA,



Gaoage Oageng Molapisi remains impressed about the expenditure performance of municipalities.

"The expenditure reflects ongoing investments in critical infrastructure such as water and sanitation, roads, stormwater systems, waste management, and community social facilities, which remain central to improving service delivery and the quality of life for residents across the province.

The progress recorded demonstrates that municipalities are increasingly improving their capacity to deliver critical infrastructure. We remain on course to ensure 100% expenditure of funds allocated after achieving 99% last

financial year", MEC Molapisi said.

Several municipalities have demonstrated strong performance in infrastructure spending and project implementation, particularly in districts such as Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, where expenditure reached 82% of allocated funds, signalling improved planning and execution capacity. Six (6) Municipalities have been allocated additional funds in the financial year to further implement infrastructure projects in their localities. They are - Kgetleng Rivier Local Municipality with R15 million, Maquassi Hills with R16 million, Ditsobotla - R37 million, Ratlou - R17 million, Lekwa

Teemane - R12 million, Greater Taung - R19 million and Dr RSM with R50 million

"Some municipalities have lost portions of their allocation to other municipalities due to slow performance. In situations where problems persist, swift action is required to protect public monies. The lost portions will have an impact on the ongoing infrastructure projects implemented by the affected municipalities. Planned completion dates will now be prolonged into the new financial year.

These actions are not intended to penalise municipalities, but rather to improve performance. The reallocation is to ensure 100% expenditure of the grant in the province. When funds are reallocated, it is done to maximise impact and ensure that infrastructure delivery continues without delays", MEC Molapisi added.

In preparation for the 2026/27 Municipal Financial Year, which commences in July 2026, the Department has supported municipalities through the assessment of Draft 2026/27 Implementation Plans, ensuring alignment with grant conditions, infrastructure priorities, and compliance with the Division of Revenue Act (DoRA). This process is aimed at strengthening long-term infrastructure planning, addressing stalled projects, and ensuring sustainable service delivery.

The Department will convene a provincial MIG Workshop before the start of the next Municipal Financial Year to assess the State of Readiness for implementation of the MIG-funded infrastructure projects. The aim is to ensure that municipalities finalise the appointment by the end of June 2026 so that construction can commence at the beginning of the financial year in July 2026.



By Seloane Seleka

In a decisive move to strengthen governance and restore public confidence in key regulatory sectors, the MEC for Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT), Bitsa Lenkopane, recently ushered in a new era of accountability with the swearing-in of Board Members for the North West Gambling Board and the North West Liquor Authority.

The ceremony was held at Sun City and was presided over by the Mogwase Senior Magistrate, Mantsie Matebesi.

The ceremony signals a firm commitment to tighten compliance, curb illegal activities, and ensure

that the province's gambling and liquor industries operate with integrity while contributing meaningfully to economic growth and community wellbeing.

The swearing-in marks a critical governance milestone aimed at reinforcing oversight, accountability, and effective regulation within the province's gambling and liquor sectors. These sectors play a dual role in driving economic activity while requiring strict regulation to safeguard communities and ensure responsible practices.

In her address, MEC Lenkopane underscored the weight of responsibility entrusted to the newly appointed Board Members, describing the oath of office as a solemn commitment to ethical leadership and public service.

"This oath is not ceremonial; it

demands loyalty, integrity, and discipline, and requires that you always act in a manner that is beyond reproach," she said.

She further emphasised that the gambling and liquor sectors operate at the intersection of economic development and social responsibility, calling on the Boards to strike a careful balance between industry growth and addressing societal challenges.

The North West Liquor Authority, through its Board, is responsible for adjudicating liquor licence applications and ensuring compliance across approximately 8,000 licensed establishments in the province.

These include taverns, pubs, nightclubs, liquor restaurants, accommodation establishments, and retail outlets.

Similarly, the North West Gambling Board is mandated to regulate the gambling industry through licensing, compliance monitoring, and enforcement.

Its role also includes combating illegal gambling activities and protecting vulnerable groups, particularly young people.

MEC Lenkopane noted that the Gambling Board is currently in a stable position, with a clean audit and strong performance, and urged the incoming Board to build on this foundation.

"We are handing over an institution that is stable and performing well.

Continues to page 6



This must be protected and improved; we will not accept regression. The responsibility now rests with you to maintain confidence and demonstrate professionalism," she said.

The MEC also issued a firm warning against misconduct and weak enforcement, stressing the need for fairness and decisiveness in regulatory action.

"There must be no corruption, no selective enforcement, and no inaction. These Boards must

regulate fairly, act decisively against non-compliance, and contribute to rebuilding public trust," she emphasised. The appointment of the Boards gives effect to commitments made during the 2025/26 Budget Speech to strengthen governance, improve accountability, and enhance the performance of departmental entities.

As part of strengthening compliance, MEC Lenkopane announced

that the department will roll out a 15 to 18-day province-wide compliance operation targeting illegal gambling and unlawful liquor trading. The initiative will focus on intensified inspections and enforcement to ensure that all operators comply with legal requirements. The department will also work closely with law enforcement agencies to conduct targeted operations aimed at addressing illegal activities. These efforts form

part of broader interventions to reduce the social harms associated with substance abuse, including gender-based violence and femicide. The newly appointed Board Members are expected to play a pivotal role in advancing a regulatory environment that supports both economic growth and social protection, ensuring that the sectors contribute positively to the development of the North West Province.

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NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT GOES DIGITAL IN ROLLING OUT SERVICES

By Lerato Majobe

Briefing the public on the progress registered in implementing the Provincial Digital Transformation Strategy recently in Mahikeng, North West Premier Lazarus Kagiso Mokgosi said that this is not just a technological initiative, but a transformation machine that changes how government operates internally and the way it provides services to the people, enterprises, and other stakeholders.

This strategy was approved by the Members of the Executive Council (EXCO) recently.

“This strategy is not merely a technology programme, it is a central pillar of our broader agenda to build a capable, ethical and developmental state, supported by modern systems, efficient processes, and strengthened accountability.

It is about fundamentally transforming the way government works both internally and in how it serves citizens, businesses, and institutions across the province”, he said.

Premier Mokgosi said that this is to fulfil the promise he made during this year's State of the Province Address (SOPA), to contemporize the provincial government's way of doing things using modern-day technology, and added that what he pronounced as an aspiration has come to fruition.

“During the State of the Province Address in February this year, we made a clear and deliberate commitment to the people of this Province that we would modernize government systems, strengthen administrative capability, and transition towards a digitally enabled provincial administration.



We further indicated that from 01 April, key systems would transition into operation. We can now confirm that this commitment has been delivered. The systems that were announced are now live and operational, and we have now entered the next critical phase, the adoption, onboarding, and institutionalization phase, which will ensure that these systems are embedded into the daily functioning of government”, he said.

He further said that at the centre of this transformation is the SmartGov platform, which is now live across the North West Provincial Government as a centralised digital service led by his Office and this space represents a fundamental shift from fragmented, manual and paper-based processes towards a standardized, integrated and automated administrative environment across all departments, emphasizing that

implementing this programme will result in improved efficiency and standardisation across government processes, enhanced transparency in procurement and financial management, reduced delays and faster turnaround times, accountability and auditability of transactions and a more accessible and predictable system for businesses.

Appreciating the Microsoft South Africa team for their active participation in making this materialize, Premier said that the government is enthusiastic to work closely with this Software company to bolster local business establishments.

“We look forward to working closely with you in advancing digital transformation, innovation, enterprise development, and inclusive economic participation within the province”, he concluded.

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CONSUMER COURT ENFORCES RIGHT TO REDRESS WITH R273 000 REFUND IN DEFECTIVE VEHICLE CASE

By Seloane Seleka

The North West Consumer Court has reinforced the fundamental right to redress by securing a refund of more than R273 000 for a consumer who was sold a defective motor vehicle, underscoring the practical impact of the Consumer Protection Act in protecting consumers.

The case, facilitated by the North West Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT) through its Consumer Affairs Office, highlights how consumers can seek fair remedies when goods fail to meet expected standards of quality, durability, and performance.

The dispute involved Tsiane Services (Pty) Ltd, represented by Mr Joseph Thapelo Makgeledisa, who purchased a motor vehicle through an instalment sale agreement financed by Nedbank Limited and facilitated by Robsmail Motor CC.

Within three months of purchase, the vehicle developed serious mechanical defects, prompting the consumer to return it. An independent assessment estimated repair costs at R81 568, confirming that the vehicle was not fit for purpose.

In terms of the Consumer Protection Act, consumers are entitled to receive goods that are of good quality, in working order, and free of defects. Where this standard is not met, the Act provides for remedies, including repair, replacement, or refund, collectively known as the right to redress.

Following the complaint, the Consumer Affairs Office instituted legal proceedings to enforce this



right, seeking cancellation of the instalment sale agreement and a full refund of payments made. Both the dealership and the financier were served with summons in accordance with the Act.

Through the court process, Nedbank Limited agreed to settle the matter, resulting in the cancellation of the agreement and a refund of R273 463.38 to the consumer.

MEC for DEDECT, Bitsa Lenkopane, welcomed the outcome, describing it as a clear demonstration of the power of consumer protection legislation.

"This case demonstrates that the Consumer Protection Act is not merely legislation on paper, but a powerful tool that protects ordinary consumers against unfair business practices. The successful resolution of this matter reflects our

commitment to ensuring that justice is accessible and that businesses are held accountable", she said. The MEC Lenkopane further highlighted the critical role played by the Consumer Affairs Office and the Consumer Court in safeguarding consumer rights and promoting ethical conduct within the business environment. "Consumers must never feel powerless when confronted with defective goods or unfair treatment. We will continue to strengthen consumer protection mechanisms to ensure that residents of the North West Province are treated fairly in the marketplace," she added.

"This outcome affirms the right of consumers to redress when they are sold defective goods. The law is clear: consumers must not be left out of pocket for products that fail to

meet acceptable standards. We will continue to ensure that businesses comply and that consumers receive fair remedies," she said.

She further stressed the importance of consumer awareness, noting that informed consumers are better positioned to assert their rights and seek assistance when necessary.

"Consumers must not suffer financial loss for defective goods; the right to redress is protected by law," emphasised MEC Lenkopane.

The department has encouraged consumers to report unfair business practices and defective goods to the Consumer Affairs Office, where support is provided to resolve disputes in line with the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act.

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PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND PLANNING SESSION FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

By Kebue Moralo

In an ongoing effort to drive inclusive economic growth, poverty reduction, job creation, and build a capable, ethical, and developmental state, the Special Programme chief directorate recently conducted a performance review and planning session in Mahikeng to assess progress made and challenges encountered in bettering the lives of the targeted groups across the province.

These groups are Women, People with disabilities, Youth, Children, Older persons, and military veterans.

The session brought together senior officials from different departments and other stakeholders, including, amongst others, the North West Gambling Board, South African Local Government Association (SALGA), National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), and North West Development Corporation (NWDC)

The Chief Director for Special Programmes in the OOP, Salome Nyokong, said that it is the obligation of the government to work with all role players to ensure that what was planned in the session comes



to fruition.

"We have this responsibility to ensure we monitor the implementation of policies, frameworks, acts, and different legislations to ensure that they are properly executed", Nyokong said.

All stakeholders were encouraged to adopt innovative approaches to improve overall performance and implement the following recommendations after broader EXTECH and EXCO's approval.

- Conduct retirement workshops.
- Raise advocacy on Victor Sefora bursary
- Provision of burial support for military veterans
- Address gender based violence through intense support services
- Penetrating the community, rural areas where the need is the most for social grants.
- Monitoring and strengthening of food poverty hotspots.
- Coordination on the implementation of the older persons plan across the province.
- Conduct workshops on agricultural programmes.
- Ensure persons with disabilities have assessable equipments.



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THE CIVILIAN SECRETARIAT FOR POLICE SERVICE ASSESSES THE STATUS OF POLICING IN THE NORTH WEST

By Lemogang Foke

Crime analysis indicators paint a complex and multidimensional picture of the challenges of crime in the North West Province. In the main, organized crime and socio-economic conditions are the primary drivers of criminality. Revealing, unlawful possession of firearms, unemployment, alcohol, and substance consumption are some of the causal factors of crime.

Statistics further indicate that Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), illegal mining, and stock theft are key elements in crime combating strategies. Significantly, crime-fighting efforts then require a varied approach, which includes an integration of stakeholders.

In light of this approach, the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management recently welcomed an oversight visit by the National Department of Civilian Secretariat for Police Service to the province.

The oversight exercise forms part of a nationwide programme to monitor quality control measures, operational capacity, and performance evaluation at hotspot police stations on the national top 30 list. This also included those on the provincial radar identified as incapable of effectively mitigating crime challenges.

The Acting Head of Department, Molefi Morule, says the province has made some progress in the implementation of the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS) as a mechanism to integrate the fight against crime.

“As an oversight body over the police in the province, we rely on the ICVPS as a tool that sets out



processes to align monitoring and evaluation systems as well as

reporting frameworks across multiple departments. Therefore,

we welcome the visit by our national counterparts.

“It has become clear that there is a need to also include other clusters alongside the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster to improve efficiency. By so doing, our combined efforts to significantly reduce crime and make an impactful change in the creation of safer communities can be optimised”, Morule said.

The National delegation, led by the Director General, Thulani Sibuyi, visited police stations in Nietverdiend, Itsoeng, Makgobistad, Sun City, Skilpadhek Border Post, and the 10111 Command Centre in Mahikeng. DG Sibuyi placed much emphasis on the significance of accountability when it comes to under performance by the police.

“Our assessment of policing in the province is to determine the causal factors of non-performance. Accountability should be evident, as efforts are linked to all priority stations.

The focus is centred around trends that have emerged over time, where police find it challenging to contain them despite additional resources at hand.

“The outcome of the visit will inform the baseline of discussions at the MINMEC, the determination of increased resources and budget allocation, as well as finding a common approach as we integrate all provinces through the ICVPS,” said Sibuyi.

The oversight visit provided critical insight into operational challenges, service delivery gaps, and areas requiring urgent intervention.

The findings will guide targeted support and ensure that police stations are better equipped to respond effectively to the needs of communities and to combat crime more efficiently.

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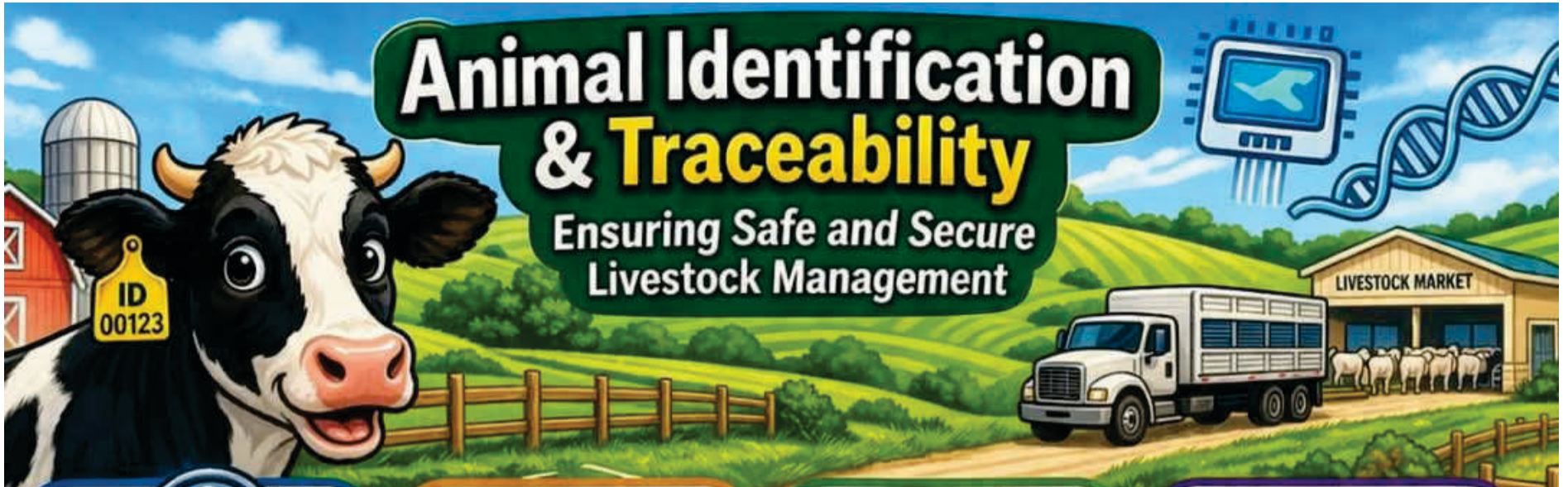
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Ensuring Safe and Secure Livestock Management



Track Outbreaks
Quickly trace infected animals back to their source.

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Follow livestock through farms, markets, and transport.

Targeted Containment
Isolate and control affected areas precisely.

Product Recalls
Trace products back to the original animal.

Animal identification is the first step that makes traceability possible.

Without a reliable ID system, authorities cannot:

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- ✓ Isolate risk zones
- ✓ Protect the food chain
- ✓ Prevent economic losses

Traceability Involves:



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RE-GRAVELLING AND INSTALLATION OF MAJOR CULVERTS ON THE ROAD BETWEEN DISANENG AND KABE VILLAGES IN NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA

By Onthatile Moatlhodi

MEC for Public Works and Roads, Sempe Elizabeth Mokuia, accompanied by Head of Department Moses Kgantsi and senior departmental managers, conducted an oversight visit to Disaneng outside Mahikeng as part of the department's infrastructure rehabilitation intervention on April 16.

The visit forms part of the government's deliberate action to restore critical provincial infrastructure, improve road safety, strengthen connectivity, and facilitate local economic activity.

During the meeting with Kgosi Mogolodi Masibi and the Tribal Council, MEC Mokuia reaffirmed the department's commitment to serving communities through responsive infrastructure delivery and appealed to Kgosi Masibi and the Tribal Council to work hand-in-hand with the department on the basis of the upcoming projects.

Among the priority matters raised during the visit was the collapsed roof of the Traditional Offices building.

The building was completed in 2018 and sustained structural damage in October 2024 when a portion of its roof collapsed, affecting electrical and mechanical systems.

MEC Mokuia assured the tribal council that the department will ensure that the tribal offices are restored.

"We are committed to repairing, rehabilitating, and restoring the community building and associated facilities to their full functionality.

"We will refurbish the building to comply with all relevant legislation, national norms and standards, building regulations, and municipal



by-laws requirements." Mokuia expressed.

The oversight visits also included inspections of roads and bridges scheduled for rehabilitation.

The department will undertake

regravelling and culvert installations on road Z437 from Bray road to Disaneng for a 5km stretch, and on road Z470 from Disaneng to Kabe for an 8km stretch.

The department will also

improve drainage alignment by reconstructing new bridges to replace the two low-lying bridges, which are prone to flooding during the rainy season.

MEC Mokuia announced that the projects are scheduled to commence in May 2026.

"Despite the limited budget, this forms part of our ongoing efforts to improve road conditions and enhance the economic status of the Disaneng community," emphasizes Mokuia.

MEC Mokuia added that the bridges remain critical in linking communities to neighboring villages and essential services.

Kgosi Masibi, together with the Traditional Council authority, welcomed the department's intervention and commended the provincial government for prioritizing the village, while also guaranteeing full collaboration from the Tribal Council.



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MARANG ESTATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT RESTORED TO AUTHORITIES

By Keorapetse Mosipidi

The long-stalled Marang Estate Housing Development in Mahikeng has finally reached a significant milestone, with all properties successfully transferred to the Mahikeng Local Municipality and the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA).

This significant development follows an intervention by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), through its Asset Forfeiture Unit, which facilitated the return of properties linked to the troubled Marang Estate Housing Development. Among the recovered assets are 23 erven allocated to the Mahikeng Local Municipality, as well as unfinished residential blocks and building material, which have been transferred to SHRA.

The Marang Estate Social Housing project had been stalled for years, delaying the delivery of much-needed social housing to local communities. Its recovery is being hailed as a turning point in efforts to revive the development and address housing backlogs in Mahikeng.

Head of Department for Human Settlements, Kgomotso Mahlobo, described the development as a significant milestone, noting that reclaiming the project removes a critical barrier that had hindered progress and delayed access to housing for residents.

"With the project now returned to the rightful authorities, the government, working together with the municipality and SHRA, can move ahead with planning, infrastructure completion, and the allocation of homes to communities.

"The focus will be on fast-tracking construction, including the



provision of essential internal services such as water, electricity, and roads, which will help restore public confidence in the project," said Mahlobo.

According to Mahlobo, the handover sets the stage for renewed collaboration between the provincial government and the municipality, with a focus on ensuring that the project is completed.

"For residents who have waited

years for the project to materialize, this development offers renewed hope that Marang Estate will finally fulfil its original purpose, providing safe, affordable housing to the community."

Mahlobo added that the department remains optimistic that the project rollout will proceed as planned. This is expected to help address the current housing backlog while also contributing to

local economic activity through job creation in construction and related sectors.

Social housing refers to rental housing for low- to middle-income households. It is typically owned by the government or non-profit organisations and managed by accredited institutions. It provides affordable, safe, and stable housing, often in high-density, well-located areas, to individuals who cannot afford market-related rentals.

The Department of Human Settlements also welcomes the apprehension of officials involved in the illicit activities linked to the project, stating that the law will take its course. This underscores the government's zero-tolerance stance on corruption, particularly within the human settlements sector. The Asset Forfeiture Unit in Bloemfontein Team has been involved in the Marang Estate case since the beginning of 2015. The AFU obtained various Preservation Orders, which were subsequently set aside, and were successfully reinstated on several occasions. In October 2024, the AFU obtained a Forfeiture Order.



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NORTH WEST DECLARES 20 NEW NATURE RESERVES IN MARICO BIOSPHERE TO BOOST BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AND ECO-TOURISM

By Seloane Seleka

The North West Province has delivered a landmark achievement in protecting its natural heritage with the official declaration of twenty new Nature Reserves in and around the Marico Biosphere Reserve.

This milestone forms part of the province's broader commitment to biodiversity conservation, sustainable land use, and inclusive economic growth.

The newly declared reserves were gazetted on 10 February 2026 in the North West Provincial Gazette (Notice No. 8968, Vol. 269), in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003.

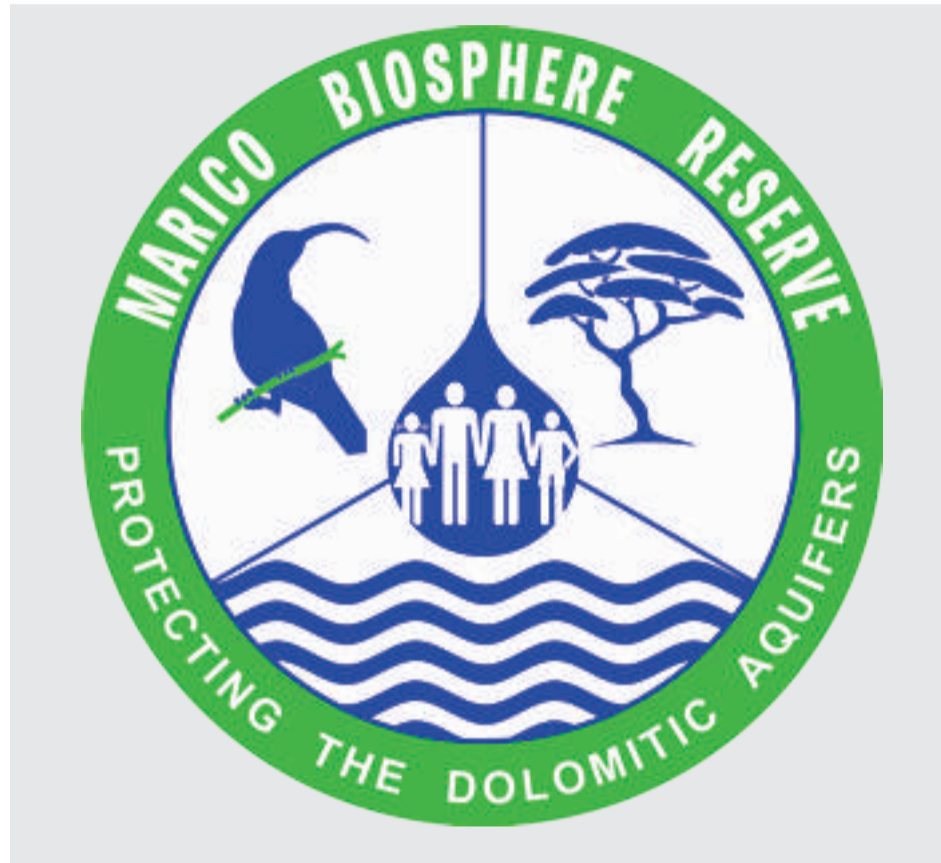
Their inclusion expands the province's conservation footprint and strengthens the protection of ecologically sensitive landscapes.

At the heart of this achievement lies a collaborative approach between government and private landowners. Through the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme, landowners in the Marico area voluntarily committed their land to long-term conservation, demonstrating a shared responsibility for safeguarding the environment.

This partnership model continues to prove that conservation efforts are most effective when communities, government and stakeholders work together.

MEC for Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism, Bitsa Lenkopane, welcomed the development, highlighting its dual impact on conservation and economic opportunity.

The newly declared reserves

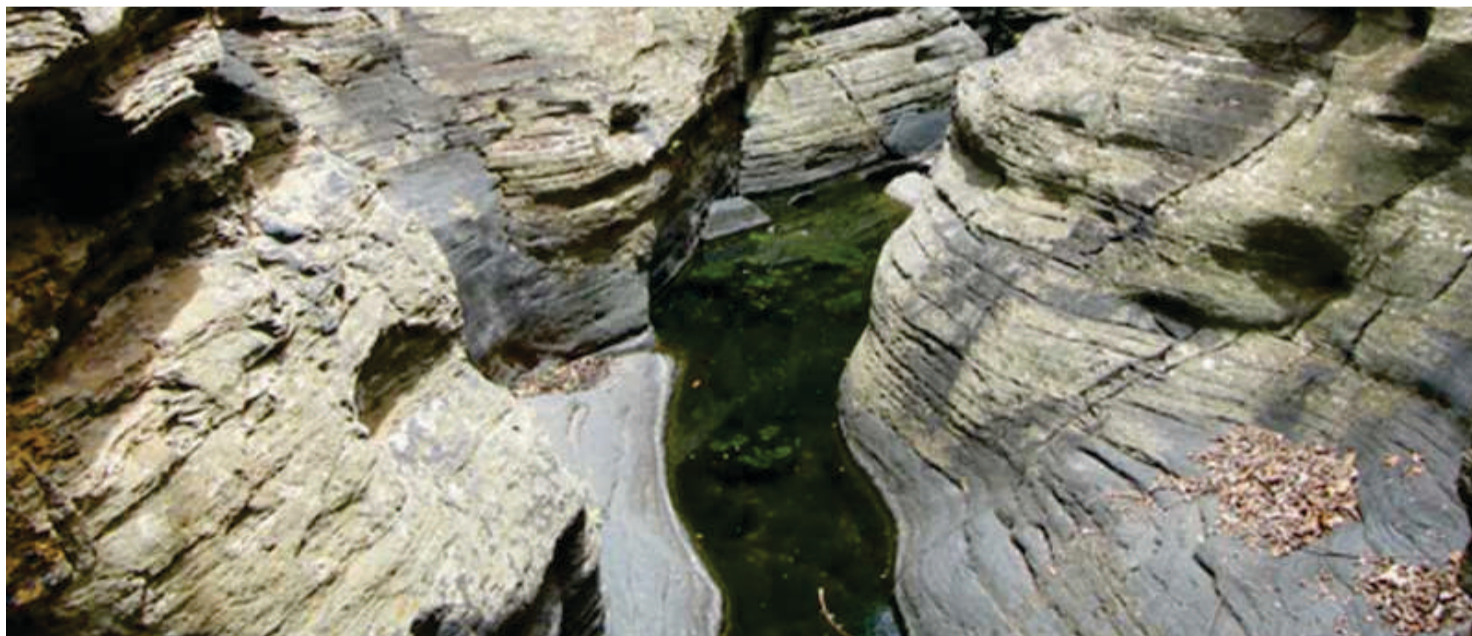


are expected not only to preserve critical ecosystems but also to unlock new avenues for eco-tourism and sustainable livelihoods, particularly in rural communities.

Collectively, the 20 Nature Reserves contribute over 6,500 hectares towards the province's conservation targets outlined in the North West Protected Areas

Expansion Strategy (2025–2030). This progress aligns with South Africa's broader environmental goals and reinforces the province's role in protecting biodiversity hotspots. Beyond conservation, the declarations position the Marico region as an emerging eco-tourism destination. Visitors can look forward to authentic, nature-based experiences that showcase

the area's rich biodiversity, scenic landscapes, and cultural heritage. As global demand for sustainable tourism grows, such initiatives place the North West Province on a stronger footing to attract both domestic and international travellers. The 2025/2026 financial year has already seen notable gains, with over 113,000 hectares of protected land declared across the province. This sustained momentum reflects a clear and deliberate effort to balance environmental protection with economic development. Recognised as one of South Africa's ecologically significant landscapes, the Marico Biosphere Reserve remains central to these efforts. Its unique ecosystems and biodiversity continue to make it a vital area for conservation, research, and sustainable land management. The department builds on this progress to strengthen partnerships with landowners, conservation organisations, and local communities, ensuring that biodiversity protection goes hand in hand with socio-economic development and a thriving, sustainable tourism sector.



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