ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

# ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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By 2030 eThekwini will be Africa's most caring and liveable City

17 February 2026 [Issue 448]

# INVESTOR FRIDAY'S FAST-TRACKS STRATEGIC PROJECTS

AS PART of a focused drive to accelerate economic growth and unlock investment opportunities, eThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele, together with executive management, led a recent Investor Friday's site visit on 13 February. These engagements aim to remove development bottlenecks, fast-track catalytic projects, and reinforce eThekwini's position as a premier investment destination. It is supported by directorates under the Operations Management and Technical Services Departments, including the Catalytic Projects Directorate.

The delegation visited UPL South Africa, Energex Asphalt and Fuel Trading, Energex Commodities, and Balwin Properties. At UPL South Africa, discussions centred on expediting the water use licence application and resolving outstanding by-law approvals to enable demolition and redevelopment. Mbhele emphasised the importance of regulatory efficiency stating: "Our responsibility is to ensure that compliance processes are predictable, transparent, and responsive so that investment is not unnecessarily delayed."

**EThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele continues to lead the Investor Friday's site visit engagements which aim to remove bottlenecks and fast-track investment across eThekwini.**

A highlight was the engagement with Energex, a foreign direct investor headquartered in the United Arab Emirates, which plans to invest approximately R260 million in a bitumen import, storage, and distribution "Mother Terminal" in Durban. The facility will provide storage capacity of 6 000 to 8 000 tonnes, expandable to 10 000 tonnes, accommodate shipments of up to 15 000 tonnes, and support national demand of 60 000 to 70 000 tonnes per month. The project is expected to create about 40 jobs, facilitate annual distribution valued at R879 million, and generate approximately R130 million in duties and VAT. The final visit focused on infrastructure upgrades linked to the Izinga Eco Estate and Herrwood Drive. Balwin Properties will upgrade the road, while the Municipality will construct an attenuation tank to prevent flooding.

Mbhele said: "This disaster mitigation intervention must be prioritised. It protects existing investments and unlocks further development opportunities."

## DURBAN RANKED AMONG WORLD'S TOP TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

THE city of Durban has been ranked among the world's top destinations to visit by Time Out Worldwide.

In its newly released list of 'The Best Places to Travel in 2026', the global media and hospitality brand ranked Durban 14th, further cementing its status as a premier destination for tourism, leisure, and entertainment.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba has welcomed the announcement and described it as well deserved, noting that the City has worked tirelessly to ensure a thriving tourism sector.

"As a city, we are pleased to receive this global recognition. This is a clear indication that Durban's tourism sector is firmly on an upward trajectory as we work towards fully surpassing pre-COVID-19 growth levels," he said.

Mayor Xaba added that the City's commitment to accelerating service delivery through infrastructure upgrades is fundamental to creating a conducive environment for tourism growth and investment.

In 2025, the City recorded a significant increase in visitor numbers compared to the previous year.

During last year's festive season, Durban welcomed close to 1.2 million visitors, up from 998 000 in 2024, which is an impressive 19 percent increase.

Accommodation occupancy rose to 77 percent, compared to 72 percent in 2024.

Direct tourism spend increased from R2.2 billion to R2.7 billion, reflecting 24 percent growth. The sector's GDP contribution grew from R5.5 billion to R9.6 billion, creating more than 14 000 job opportunities. These figures reaffirm tourism as a key driver of the local economy. The latest development follows an announcement by the University of KwaZulu-Natal that business confidence in eThekwini improved significantly, rising from 52.12 points in the third quarter of 2025 to 63.38 points in the fourth quarter.

"This clearly demonstrates that eThekwini is rising, and we will spare no effort in ensuring that we live up to our slogan of being Africa's playground and a premier destination for investment," said Mayor Xaba.

He attributed the accolade to the political and administrative stability in the City.

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# DURBAN TEES UP FOR WORLD-CLASS GOLF TOURNAMENT

DURBAN is ready to host a world-class golfing spectacle as the Jonsson Workwear Durban Open tees off at the Durban Country Club this week from 19 to 22 February. Through strong collaboration between eThekwini Municipality, tournament organisers, and key partners, all operational, broadcast and hospitality plans are firmly in place to deliver an event of international standard.

The four- day professional tournament will host 156 professionals competing over 72 holes of stroke play for a prize fund of $375 000, with international players travelling from multiple countries including Great Britain, Germany, France, Australia and Zimbabwe. Two days of live broadcast on SuperSport, supported by dedicated City branding, vignettes, interviews and promotional features, will position Durban prominently before national and international audiences.

**From left, Thomas Abt, Sunshine Tour Commissioner; CEO and Chairman of Jonsson Workwear Nick Jonsson; and eThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele pictured at the launch of the Jonsson Workwear Durban Open. The R6 million Sunshine Tour and HotelPlanner tour event tees off in the City from 19 to 22 February.**

Importantly, the Durban Open is also structured to leave a lasting legacy through meaningful golf development. A Young Players Development Plan will see 60 local children participate in golf development clinics during tournament week at the Durban Country Club. From this group, ten talented youngsters will be identified to attend a five-day Golf Training Camp at Windsor Golf Club under the guidance of development coaches and the SA Golf Academy and Training.

This clear pathway, from grassroots exposure to structured training and competition, ensures that the tournament serves as a springboard for emerging talent across the City.

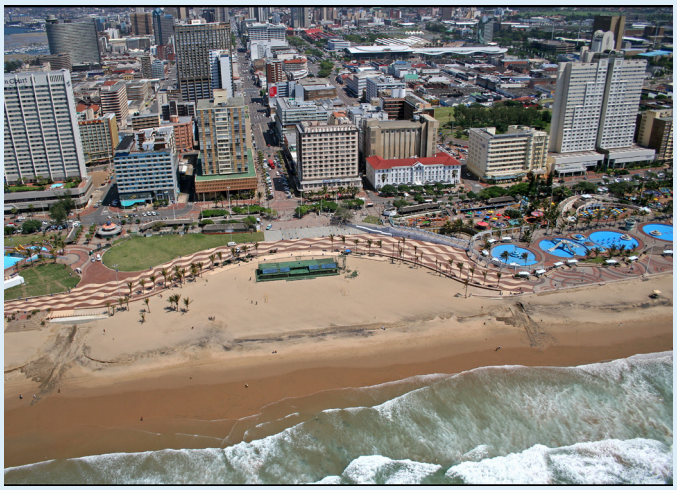
With free spectator access, a vibrant tournament village showcasing local vendors, and comprehensive national marketing across airports, transit hubs and outdoor networks, Durban stands ready to host a premier international tournament and to maximise on its economic, tourism, and community impact.

# PRESIDENT APPLAUDS CITY'S IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY AND RISING BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

ETHEKWINI Municipality has once again received national recognition, with President Cyril Ramaphosa commending the City for its improved service delivery during the State of the Nation Address (SONA).

During his SONA address on 12 February, President Ramaphosa highlighted the Municipality's progress, noting that strengthened service delivery interventions have contributed to a significant boost in business confidence, which now stands at over 63.38 points.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba welcomed the President's commendation, describing it as an important affirmation of the work being undertaken to stabilise and improve Municipal services.



"The President's acknowledgement inspires us to work even harder to ensure that eThekwini remains a premier destination for investment and tourism," said Mayor Xaba.

The Mayor also expressed optimism about the progress of the high-speed rail project between Durban and Johannesburg, noting that it remains on track.

The project is expected to significantly reduce travel time between the two cities, strengthening economic linkages and supporting national growth objectives.

Mayor Xaba further applauded the City's political and administrative leadership, as well as its social partners, for their hard work and strong collaboration in driving positive change across the Municipality.

# DISABILITY SECTOR INPUT SHAPES ETHEKWINI'S DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

ETHEKWINI Municipality continues to strengthen its drive for an inclusive, accessible and people-centred City, reaffirming this commitment during the Draft Annual Report public consultation with the disability sector.

The session, held this past weekend at the Amanzimtoti Civic Centre, forms part of city-wide consultations on the Draft Annual Report 2024/25 and underscores the Municipality's focus on service delivery that meaningfully responds to the needs of residents living with disabilities. During the engagement, attendees received an overview of the sector's achievements over the past year and identified areas for improvement.

Concerns raised included infrastructure accessibility, employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and the need for enhanced communication equipment.

The Municipality confirmed that building audits are underway across all Municipal facilities to assess and upgrade accessibility, ensuring residents can access services with dignity and ease.

**People with disabilities turned out in strong numbers for the Draft Annual Report 2024/25 consultations, raising critical issues while also acknowledging the City's ongoing efforts to make services more inclusive and accessible for all.**

Speaking on behalf of the eThekwini Speaker, Councillor Thamsanqa Mthethwa emphasised the Annual Report's role in promoting accountability, transparency and improved service delivery.

"People with disabilities play a critical role as residents of this Municipality. Their inputs ensure disability-specific needs are addressed in planning, budgeting and service delivery, directly influencing quality of life, economic participation and social inclusion," he said.

Secretary of the eThekwini Disability Forum, Siyabonga Sosibo, said: "We see improvements in areas that address our needs, although more must be done to ensure full representation in all Municipal programmes."

He emphasised that people with disabilities are capable.

Public consultations are ongoing, and the public has until 6 March 2026 to submit comments and inputs.

# R570 MILLION INVESTMENT UNLOCKED THROUGH ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

IN A continued effort to position Durban as a competitive and investor-friendly city, the Economic Development and Planning Committee held a meeting on 12 February where they supported key recommendations under the Economic Development Incentive Policy (EDIP).

The EDIP provides targeted property rates rebates that help lower development costs for investors while gradually expanding the Municipality's rates base over time. The policy prioritises developments that stimulate economic activity, support spatial regeneration, and create sustainable employment opportunities.

Two major private-sector projects were considered under the incentive programme.

- Cedar Point (Pty) Ltd is undertaking a R320 million mixed-use commercial development within the Aerotropolis precinct. The project has already generated more than 600 temporary and permanent jobs and is strengthening economic activity in this growth node.
- Estine Development (Pty) Ltd is investing R250 million in a new development in Kingsburgh. The project is expected to create 1 000 construction jobs and sustain 350 permanent positions once operational. It will also deliver a modern retail facility.

These developments represent a combined investment of R570 million being injected into the economy.

Councillor Thembo Ntuli, Chairperson of the City's Economic Development and Planning Committee, said: "The Economic Development Incentive Policy is one of the City's most effective tools for attracting and retaining investment. It directly supports inclusive growth."

# REHABILITATION OF KINGS PARK SWIMMING POOL ON TRACK

THE STRUCTURAL upgrades and repairs of the Olympic-size Kings Park Swimming Pool are progressing well, following the successful completion of phase one of the project.

The swimming pool sustained severe damage during the heavy storms of 2024, which resulted in its closure after structural risks were identified.

The Municipality wishes to clarify that the total Bill of Quantities for the Kings Park Swimming Pool project has always amounted to R86 million. This amount reflects the full cost of the upgrade, rehabilitation, and refurbishment of the facility.

Due to limited available funding, the project is being implemented in phases, as outlined below:

- R42 million was allocated in the previous financial year
- R20 million has been allocated in the current financial year for phase two
- A remaining balance of approximately R24 million will be budgeted for in subsequent phases.

Phase one of the project was completed in September 2025 at a cost of R41.2 million. This phase included extensive structural, electrical, mechanical, and aesthetic upgrades.

Kings Park Swimming Pool remains one of South Africa's premier aquatic venues and is the only facility in the country certified with World Aquatics (formerly FINA) status.

This designation, recognised by the International Olympic Committee, enables the venue to host international water sports competitions. Hosting international events will bring revenue for the City and cement its status as a sporting hub.

# DRIVING EMPOWERMENT THROUGH AGRICULTURE SKILLS INITIATIVE

THE first Tshala Nathi roadshow, held at the Umbumbulu Community Hall on 12 February, was a resounding success. The programme is a 12-month skills development initiative targeting young women in agribusiness.

A second roadshow was held on 17 February at the KwaBester Hall in KwaMashu, while the final session will take place on 18 February at the KwaMagaba Hall in Hammarsdale starting at 10am.

The Tshala Nathi programme is designed to empower and support young women in agriculture. It provides market access and funding support, technical and financial training, sustainable farming guidance, and structured mentorship, equipping participants with the tools to establish and grow successful, resilient farming enterprises.

**Following detailed presentations on the benefits of the Tshala Nathi programme, young women in agriculture eagerly registered to be part of it. The roadshow was held at the Umbumbulu Community Hall recently.**

**Application criteria:**

- Women aged between 18 and 35 years
- Access to at least one hectare of securely fenced land
- Functional irrigation infrastructure
- Minimum of two years' farming experience.

Women who meet the requirements are encouraged to attend the roadshows and register onsite. Applications may also be submitted online at: https://ahamedical.knack.com/tshalanathi#home/.

Chairperson of the City's Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli praised the programme, saying it will play a vital role in strengthening the agricultural sector. in eThekwini.

"The Tshala Nathi Programme is a strategic investment in women-led agriculture. By equipping young female farmers, we are building a more sustainable and competitive agricultural sector. This initiative will contribute to economic development, skills development, and job creation."

For more information, visit www.tshalanathi.co.za or email info@tshalanathi.co.za

# MARITIME STAKEHOLDERS CELEBRATE TOP ACHIEVERS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

THE eThekwini Maritime Cluster, in partnership with the provincial Department of Education and the KwaZulu-Natal Education Trust, successfully hosted the KwaZulu-Natal Maritime Education Stakeholder Engagement and Maritime Economics Awards ceremony on 13 February at the Maritime School of Excellence.

The event brought together key stakeholders from government, higher education, and the private sector to reflect on progress made in maritime education across the province. The event honoured schools, teachers, and learners who excelled in Maritime Economics during the 2025 academic year and celebrated milestones such as the launch of the Maritime High School, which aims to strengthen skills development and encourage participation in the Ocean Economy.

**Top-performing schools, learners, and teachers from KwaZulu-Natal were honoured at the 2025 KwaZulu-Natal Maritime Economics Awards, recognising their exceptional achievements in Maritime Economics.**

Among the distinguished schools recognised were Sibusisiwe Comprehensive Technical High School and Phendukani Full-Service School, who both achieved a 100 percent matric pass rate.

Mowat Park Girls' High School, with a 98.3 percent pass rate, was also honoured.

Busi Mahlambi, uMlazi District Director, welcomed guests and emphasised collaboration. "Partnerships are key to driving innovation in our curriculum and ensuring learner success. Through collaboration, the maritime sector will continue to deliver meaningful benefits for our province's economy," she said.

If you would like to submit feedback or contribute to eThekwini Weekly Bulletin

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