ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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

31 March 2026 (Issue 454)

CITY READY TO WELCOME THOUSANDS OF VISITORS DURING EASTER PERIOD

THE City is fully prepared to receive an influx of local and international visitors who will be descending on Durban for the Easter holiday.

Speaking during a media briefing held on 29 March, eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba assured visitors that the City has a comprehensive plan in place to guarantee their safety on the roads, beaches, and at other places of entertainment.

The plan has been developed jointly by the Metro Police, South African Police Service, private security, the KwaZulu-Natal Road Traffic Inspectorate, Home Affairs, and Customs.

The City has ensured high police visibility with over 1 000 officers on duty throughout the Municipality, patrolling streets, beaches, and places of entertainment 24 hours a day.

"We have increased patrols on freeways to address jaywalking by pedestrians. There will be heightened enforcement on public transport to remove unroadworthy vehicles from the roads, particularly those travelling long distances. Over 20 multidisciplinary roadblocks will be conducted during this period, focusing on all forms of crime, including drinking and driving," said Mayor Xaba.

He said the City is approaching this holiday period encouraged by the success achieved during the 2025 festive season.

He said the City is building on this success to ensure it delivers a safe and memorable Easter holiday.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba, alongside eThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele, during a media briefing on 29 March where plans outlining the City's readiness for the Easter holiday period were unpacked.

The City is expecting a similar trend to the 2025 festive season for the Easter weekend, with projections indicating that more than 1.2 million visitors could descend on Durban, injecting a direct spend of about R2.6 billion into the City's economy. Average accommodation occupancy is expected to be 62 percent, while 16 000 jobs are expected to be created over this period.

During Easter, visitors and residents can look forward to a vibrant line-up of events and activities catering to a wide range of interests, such as the One Man Concert featuring Kelvin Momo, Doek On Fleek, the Sjava 10th Year Celebration Tour, Bryan Adams: Roll with the Punches, Mandisi Dyantyi's Symphonic Celebration, and many more.

Families visiting Durban this Easter can look forward to exciting holiday programmes for children hosted at uShaka Marine World and local parks such as Mitchell Park Zoo and the Durban Botanic Gardens. These programmes are designed to keep young minds active, entertained, and engaged during the school holidays.

Mayor Xaba said all 23 bathing beaches are open and safe for swimming.

"Over the past few months, we have maintained the standard of having all our bathing beaches open, with only a few precautionary closures when necessary. This is a testament to the investment we continue to make in repairing and upgrading sanitation infrastructure," he added.

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ASIMILE SIYAQHUBA – FIVE YEARS OF ENSURING A RELIABLE AND EFFECIENT ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

OVER the past five years, the Energy Management Directorate has delivered critical electricity services to residents and businesses across the metropolitan area, balancing infrastructure renewal, network expansion, revenue reform and social support. Serving approximately 800 000 customers, the directorate remains responsible for one of the largest municipal electricity distribution networks in the country.

NETWORK SCALE AND CORE SERVICE DELIVERY

The City's electricity system comprises more than 110 high-voltage substations and over 14 000 medium-voltage substations. This extensive infrastructure network forms the backbone of electricity distribution, ensuring that power is transmitted safely and efficiently to homes, industries and commercial centres. Maintaining the stability of this system is central to service delivery, as reliable electricity underpins economic growth, public safety and household wellbeing.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND NETWORK RESILIENCE

A key focus over the five-year period has been addressing aging infrastructure. Significant investment has been directed toward substation refurbishment, equipment replacement and cable renewal programmes. The replacement of aging underground and overhead cables has reduced faults associated with deteriorating infrastructure, improving supply reliability and minimising unplanned outages in affected communities.

One of the most notable milestones was the commissioning of the KE Masinga Substation, a 132kV/11kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) facility. This is the first new GIS substation commissioned by the City in nearly a decade and marks a major step forward in adopting advanced, space-efficient and resilient technology. Constructed at an approximate cost of R120 million, the substation forms part of the City's 25-year Transmission Network Master Plan, designed to guide infrastructure upgrades, expansion, and renewal to meet future demand.

Additional upgrades are ongoing, including critical equipment replacement at the Mariannridge 132/11kV Substation, further strengthening network capacity and operational stability.

ELECTRIFICATION AND EXPANDING ACCESS

Despite operational challenges during the term, including prolonged shortages of electricity meters, the directorate continued to expand access to electricity. Over the past five years, 19 756 new residential electricity supply connections were installed. Thousands of residents in informal settlements and mixed formal–informal areas have benefitted from electrification projects, improving safety, dignity and access to economic opportunities.

SMART METERING AND REVENUE PROTECTION

With meter supply constraints now resolved, the directorate has launched its Smart Metering Deployment Strategy. This initiative is aimed at restoring revenue integrity, improving operational efficiency and enhancing customer service. The prepaid smart meters incorporate advanced features such as tamper detection and remote diagnostics, enabling improved monitoring and reducing non-technical losses.

To date, over 6 500 smart meters have been installed, with plans to roll out more than 200 000 units in the coming years. The programme is expected to significantly strengthen billing accuracy, reduce electricity theft and provide customers with better control over their consumption.

FREE BASIC ELECTRICITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

The directorate continues to administer the Free Basic Electricity programme in line with national policy guidelines. Since 2003, qualifying indigent households consuming less than 150 kWh per month receive 65 kWh of free electricity monthly, automatically credited to their prepaid meters.

Currently, close to 100 000 customers benefit from this subsidy.

REFINERY RESTORATION BRINGS ENERGY REVIVAL

EThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele and the Deputy Minister of Mineral and Petroleum Resources Phumzile Mgcina visited the former SAPREF refinery to plan its revival as the SANPC Refinery. The project will create jobs, boost industry in KwaZulu-Natal, and help secure South Africa's long-term energy supply.

IN A decisive move to strengthen South Africa's energy security, eThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele, alongside the Deputy Minister of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, Phumzile Mgcina, conducted a strategic oversight visit to the former SAPREF Refinery in Prospecton on 30 March.

This high-level engagement reflects a coordinated effort between national and local government to revitalise the currently inactive industrial site.

Once a cornerstone of the country's fuel production, the facility, now rebranded as the South African National Petroleum Company (SANPC) Refinery, is being repositioned as a key driver of industrial renewal.

Strategically located within the petrochemical value chain and adjacent to the Port of Durban's logistics hub, the refinery is central to the economic vitality of KwaZulu-Natal.

"This is more than a technical inspection; it signals strong alignment between national and local government," said Deputy Minister Mgcina.

Mbhele added: "The SANPC Refinery is a critical asset for both the municipal and national economy. Its revival will ensure that eThekwini remains globally competitive in industrial development."

The refinery's return to operation is expected to unlock strategic crude supply opportunities aligned with BRICS partnerships.

The restoration project is projected to deliver significant economic benefits, including approximately 12 500 construction jobs and 2 850 permanent positions.

The oversight visit included a comprehensive technical briefing and strategic discussions on aligning infrastructure investment with long-term energy objectives.

LANDMARK DIGITAL INVESTMENT FOR DURBAN

THE uMhlanga Hills Tech Connect launch, held on 27 March in uMhlanga, marked the unveiling of a landmark multi billion rand technology and infrastructure investment set to position KwaZulu Natal as a leading African digital innovation hub.

Developed in partnership with South African investors and global technology leader Huawei, the uMhlanga Hills Tech Hub Campus is a large scale smart development expected to create up to 100 000 jobs while attracting billions of rands in new investment into Durban's regional economy. The project strengthens the City's role within South Africa's rapidly expanding digital economy.

Acting Director of Invest Durban Russell Curtis said developments such as the uMhlanga Hills Tech Connect Campus signals growing confidence in South Africa.

Envisioned as an integrated smart campus, the development combines advanced digital infrastructure with commercial, residential and lifestyle components to create a connected live work play environment. Key elements include an Artificial Intelligence driven hyperscale data centre, a large contact centre and business process outsourcing hub, technology innovation facilities, and smart logistics infrastructure featuring one of Africa's first intelligent warehouse systems. These are complemented by integrated residential, retail, and commercial precincts.

Acting Director of Invest Durban, Russell Curtis, highlighted the City's long standing involvement in the project alongside South African project lead Frank Mni, Huawei, and Tongaat Hulett Developments. He noted that the initiative reflects growing global confidence in Durban's northern economic corridor.

CANEHAVEN CLINIC SET TO BOOST SERVICE DELIVERY

The City reinforced its commitment to a high-performing workforce with the unveiling of the Canehaven Occupational Health and Safety Employee Clinic.

ETHEKWINI residents can expect stronger, faster, and more reliable Municipal services following the launch of the new Canehaven Employee Clinic in Phoenix recently. This is a strategic investment designed to keep frontline workers healthy, protected, and ready to serve.

By prioritising employee wellbeing, the Municipality is strengthening a performance driven culture that recognises workforce health as a key enabler of service excellence.

The modern, fully equipped facility supports Municipal employees whose daily work underpins essential services across the City.

Access to quality occupational healthcare directly translates into improved responsiveness, reduced absenteeism, and consistent service delivery to communities.

Chairperson of the Governance and Human Resources Committee Councillor Nkosenhle Madlala said the clinic reflects the City's responsibility to care for those who keep it running.

"The Municipality has more than 28 000 Municipal employees who carry out the essential work that keeps the City functioning. We have a duty to ensure that the health and safety of our employees remains a central priority," he said.

"Physically healthy and mentally well employees are better positioned to deliver effecient and quality services."

The clinic offers medical surveillance, workplace injury management, health assessments, and preventative care.

STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

COMMUNITIES located near high risk petroleum pipeline servitudes received a safety boost as eThekwini partnered with Sasol and emergency stakeholders to strengthen the City's Emergency Response Plan. Hosted at the Municipal Disaster Management Centre, the workshop highlighted the value of public-private collaboration in managing risk, protecting infrastructure and safeguarding lives. The engagement reinforced a shared commitment to proactive planning and responsible systems supporting communities near major hazardous installations. For businesses, effective emergency response planning is essential to operational continuity, compliance and public confidence.

Municipal emergency services and stakeholders partnered with Sasol for an Emergency Response Plan Workshop.

Sasol Inland Pipeline Manager Zwelakhe Mkhasibe said the initiative reflects industry accountability. "This workshop shows our commitment to equipping emergency services with practical tools, technical insight, and aligned protocols that strengthen the City's Emergency Response Plan."

Disaster Management Manager Jotham Khumalo said collaboration remains critical.

Following consolidation of the plan, a community awareness campaign will be rolled out.

OCEAN INNOVATION AFRICA SUMMIT SUCCESS

FOLLOWING three days of intensive collaboration at the Ocean Innovation Africa Summit, eThekwini Municipality has officially unveiled its roadmap to transform its 100km coastline into a premier global hub for the sustainable blue economy.

From the opening sessions to the closing remarks, the City demonstrated how it will balance industrial expansion with environmental stewardship. The summit took place from 23 to 25 March and served as a catalyst for a unified vision which is integrating economic growth with climate resilience.

In his keynote address, eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba emphasised Durban's strategic role in shaping the future of the sector.

"From regenerative action that heals our coastlines to cutting-edge maritime technology powering our ports, Durban is the heartbeat of the African blue economy."

The summit highlighted several key pillars that will define Durban's coastal future including infrastructure and logistics and climate resilience and stewardship.

A firm commitment to reinforcing seawalls and coastal roads against extreme weather, alongside accelerated wastewater upgrades, dune rehabilitation, and mangrove restoration to protect beach water quality were discussed.

The conference also marked the introduction of the Blue Economy Forum. This body will coordinate efforts between the Municipality, Transnet, national government, and academic institutions to ensure all future decisions are data-led and evidence-based.

APPLY FOR LIONS' DEN BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

TO SUPPORT local small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs), eThekwini Municipality has opened entries for the 2026 Lions' Den Business Plan Competition.

The programme invites SMMEs and co-operatives with innovative ideas to showcase their potential while accessing mentorship, development support, funding, and market opportunities.

Entrepreneurs can use this platform to grow, gain recognition, and connect with partners and investors.

The competition encourages strong business ideas, sustainable entrepreneurship, and competitiveness across the City.

Categories include emerging businesses with a turnover of under R100 000; established businesses with a turnover of between R100 000 and R500 000; and high-performing enterprises with a turnover of above R500 000.

A beneficiary of the Lions' Den Business Plan Competition, Ntsike Magwaza, receiving her award from Councillor Thembo Ntuli. Entries for this year's competition are open.

Application forms are available at: https://tinyurl.com/2tea3aby or www.durban.gov.za under the Business tab as well as at all Sizakala Centres, Durban Small Enterprise Development Agency offices, the City's SMME Development offices at 199 Anton Lembede Street, or via email request to yanga.nyakeni@durban.gov.za.

Completed applications must be submitted by 30 April.

The City's SMME Development Deputy Director, Nonku Mthembu, said: "Over the years, the programme has supported entrepreneurs to grow, create jobs, and access networks. It remains a powerful platform for turning ideas into thriving businesses."

A previous winner Kwanele Mngoma, founder of KIK Refrigerator Rentals, said the funding from the competition expanded capacity and sharpened his business skills, preparing the company for growth and exposure.

For enquiries on the competition, contact 031 309 8280.

WORKSHOP UNLOCKS OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Entrepreneurs with disabilities engaged fully, listening attentively and taking notes during a recent Business Empowerment Workshop.

THE Business Empowerment Workshop for entrepreneurs with disabilities, held on 20 March at the Durban Music School, was a resounding success.

Business owners with disabilities came out in their numbers to gain insights, practical tools, and access to economic opportunities.

The workshop forms part of eThekwini Municipality's ongoing commitment to inclusive economic participation, ensuring no entrepreneur is left behind.

Representatives from key institutions shared valuable information and resources.

Jabulani Dladla from the National Youth Development Agency highlighted programmes available to youth-owned businesses explaining how entrepreneurs with disabilities can benefit.

Ntokomalo Bophela from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs spoke about the newly launched KZN Chamber for Persons with Disabilities and government initiatives, including free business registrations at regional offices. Thobile Ntshangase of Ithala Bank provided guidance on accessing funding, emphasising that businesses with proof of contracts or tenders can secure loans to deliver on projects.

Siphiwe Zwane from the City's Business Licensing Division explained compliance requirements and the process for obtaining business permits in eThekwini, while Bonga Makhathini from the Mayoral Parlour's Youth Office shared support available to host events.

Programme Manager from the City's Economic Development Directorate, Welcome Maduna, said the workshop reinforced the Municipality's dedication to enterprise development.

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

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