ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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

05 May 2026 [Issue 459]

DURBAN STANDS READY TO HOST AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA

MEC for Economic Development, Tourism, and Environment Affairs Rev Musa Zondi, Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille and eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba at the launch of Africa's Travel Indaba 2026 held at the Nelson Mandela Cruise Terminal.

ETHEKWINI Municipality is prepared to welcome thousands of delegates, exhibitors, and global tourism leaders for the upcoming Africa's Travel Indaba 2026, set to take place at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre from 11 to 14 May. The event will kick off with a Business Opportunity Networking Day on 11 May, followed by three days of trade engagements.

Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille, together with MEC of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environment Affairs Rev Musa Zondi, and eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba officially launched Africa's premier tourism trade show on 4 May at the Nelson Mandela Cruise Terminal.

This year's Africa's Travel Indaba will be held under the inspiring theme: 'Unlimited Africa: Growing Africa's tourism economy'.

The Travel Indaba brings together exhibitors, buyers, and media from across the world to promote African destinations and forge business partnerships. It is set to deliver significant economic benefits for the City. Increased visitor numbers will boost tourism spend, support local businesses, and create job opportunities across various sectors, including hospitality, transport, and retail.

Minister de Lille announced during the launch that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will open the trade show this year. She emphasised that tourism is not merely a sector, but a powerful economic lever capable of delivering immediate, inclusive, and geographically distributed impact across the country.

MEC Zondi said the current buyer composition of the Indaba already shows strong value for the province and the City with more than 700 buyers confirmed.

He said this year's platform has confirmed 600 exhibiting companies with 22 African countries participating. This includes South Africa with all nine provinces represented as well as 191 independent micro, small, and medium enterprises.

"There will also be 840 hosted and non-hosted buyers from applications across 71 countries, and 3 315 confirmed meetings taking place," MEC Zondi added.

Speaking at the launch, Mayor Xaba reaffirmed Durban's readiness to host a world-class event. He said the City's strategic location, well-developed infrastructure, and warm climate continue to position Durban as a destination of choice, whether for business or leisure.

As anticipation builds, the City stands ready to once again roll out the red carpet, offering delegates a unique blend of business and leisure.

With all systems in place, Durban is poised to deliver yet another successful edition of Africa's Travel Indaba.

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DURBAN ICC'S STORY OF ONGOING SUCCESS

ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ASIMILE SIYAQHUBA

2021-2026

05 YEARS OF ACCELERATED SERVICE DELIVERY

THE story of the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre, referred to as the Durban ICC, is one of success. Highlighting this success is the City's five-year service delivery milestones campaign being rolled out under the theme: Asimile Siyaqhuba: Resilience Through Adversity. It looks at service delivery gains made from 2021 to 2026.

The Durban ICC has continually affirmed its leadership in governance and operational excellence by securing its 11th consecutive clean audit from the Auditor-General of South Africa for the 2024/2025 financial year. This clean audit confirms that the Centre's financial statements are free from material misstatements and that there were no compliance findings, and no fruitless, wasteful, or unauthorised expenditure recorded. The result reinforces the organisation's strong ethical culture and disciplined financial management.

The Durban ICC Chief Executive Officer Lindiwe Rakharebe praised the achievement as a testament to the organisation's unwavering commitment to accountability and responsible stewardship of public resources. The Centre continues to deliver substantial economic benefits. An independent economic impact assessment reported that the Durban ICC contributed over R7 billion to South Africa's GDP in the past financial year and supported 12 464 annualised jobs through its operations and event hosting activities. These results demonstrate its vital role as a catalyst for regional and national economic growth.

The clean audit comes during a year marked by several high-profile accolades. The Durban ICC received the Future of HR Award for Employer of Choice: Public Sector Organisations, recognising its progressive, people-centred leadership and commitment to employee wellbeing, development, and transformation. Internationally, the centre retained its title as Africa's Leading Meetings and Conference Centre at the World Travel Awards—its 20th win—cementing its reputation as a world-class business events destination. The Durban ICC also achieved Green Star certification, affirming its dedication to environmental sustainability and responsible operations.

In another landmark development, the centre was awarded a World Trade Centre licence, officially establishing World Trade Centre Durban. This positions Durban within a global network of major trade and investment hubs. It continues to host a wide range of local and international events across the meetings, exhibitions, entertainment and trade sectors.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Durban ICC has been voted 'Africa's Leading Meetings and Conference Centre' by the World Travel Awards 20 times in the past 27 years.
- The Durban ICC is Africa's largest convention centre.
- The Durban ICC was South Africa's first international convention centre built, making it the most experienced.
- The Durban ICC is the host venue of Africa's Travel Indaba, which is Africa's biggest travel and tourism show.
- With all its internal doors open, the Durban ICC is big enough to park four Boeing 747s nose to tail.

DRAFT BUDGET PRIORITISES BASIC SERVICES AND WARD BASED INFRASTRUCTURE

The City continued with the IDP/Budget engagement at the Chatsworth Youth Centre on 4 May. The community in the area and surrounding wards turned up in numbers to provide their input.

THE City continues to roll out the draft Integrated Development Plan/Budget to communities.

The most recent budget hearing took place on 4 May in Chatsworth and surrounding wards, including wards 17, 33, 65, 66, 68, 75, and 77. During the enegagement, eThekwini Municipality presented its draft budget for the 2026/27 financial year, outlining a total budget of R74.7 billion, comprising R68.8 billion in operating expenditure and R5.86 billion in capital spending. The budget reflects Council's commitment to service delivery, infrastructure renewal, and social protection, while responding to fiscal pressures arising from infrastructure damage, increased bulk tariffs, and constrained revenue growth.

The operating budget focuses on sustaining essential services, maintenance, and institutional capacity, with significant allocations directed towards creating a quality living environment and ensuring a financially sustainable city. The capital budget prioritises long-term infrastructure investment, particularly in water, sanitation, electricity, housing, transport and community facilities.

A major driver of the capital programme is Trading Services, which accounts for over R2.5 billion in 2026/27. This includes R995 million for sanitation, R495.7 million for water, and R746.4 million for electricity infrastructure. Over the medium-term, key citywide projects include wastewater treatment works upgrades, water loss reduction and pipe replacement programmes, as well as electricity network reinforcement to improve reliability and capacity.

The Municipality has reaffirmed its commitment to protecting vulnerable households through an expanded social package. This includes free basic water (6kl per month), free basic electricity (50–65 kWh per month depending on supply area), sanitation relief, refuse removal exemptions, and rates rebates for qualifying households, pensioners, persons with disabilities and child-headed households.

At a ward level, significant investments, worth R530.6 million are planned across the Chatsworth zone.

Some of the major investments include:

- Ward 33 records the highest allocation in 2026/27, driven by R137 million for the Umbilo Wastewater Treatment Works flood dam rehabilitation and R30 million for the Bulwer Electricity Substation upgrade.
- Ward 74 sees major sanitation investment, including R40 million for the uMlazi Canal inverted syphon and extensive road rehabilitation projects.
- Ward 75 is anchored by R45 million for the new Lansdowne Pumpstation, alongside electricity upgrades at the Durban South 275kV Substation.
- Ward 17 features a substantial R14.1 million electricity upgrade in Klaarwater and ongoing community infrastructure block funding.

Wards 65, 66, and 68 benefit from a mix of sanitation pipeline repairs, wastewater treatment upgrades and electricity substation improvements, ensuring improved service reliability and resilience.

Speaking at the engagement,eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba said: "Through this budget, eThekwini Municipality seeks to balance financial sustainability with accelerated service delivery, placing communities at the centre of infrastructure investment and social support."

The Mayor thanked residents for their participation. "These engagements are important, as your input will be considered in finalising the budget."

CITY'S INDIGENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME OPERATIONAL

THE CITY'S Indigent Support Programme is fully operational, and applications are currently being processed.

The Indigent Support Programme exists to protect residents facing genuine financial hardship by providing low-income and impoverished households access to free basic municipal services.

This basket of services is provided for in the Indigent Policy and includes support for water, electricity, refuse removal, sanitation, and other basic services.

The Municipality wishes to clarify that the recent transition of the Indigent Support Programme function to the Revenue Management Directorate forms part of a broader effort to improve efficiency, accountability, and integration of services.

While this transition has revealed historical backlogs and other related challenges, it has also created an opportunity to address these issues in a structured and sustainable manner.

An internal review is currently underway to assess the full extent of outstanding and incomplete applications, if any.

Immediate steps are being implemented, including:

- Reinforcement of assessment capacity through the allocation of additional personnel
- Prioritisation of outstanding applications, particularly those affecting vulnerable households
- Verification and restoration of services where pre-assessed applicants and beneficiaries' services are disconnected
- Acceleration of plans to digitise records and modernise application tracking systems.

DURBAN BUSINESS FAIR SPARKS DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

THE Durban Business Fair (DBF) continues to cement its legacy as one of the City's most powerful economic empowerment platforms, transforming small enterprises into scalable businesses while reinforcing Durban's reputation as a hub of trade and entrepreneurship. This was evident following the success of the 28th instalment of the DBF, held from 29 April to 2 May at the Durban Exhibition Centre and Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre.

A total of 18 743 visitors attended the exhibition.

For first-time exhibitor Sithembile Ndlovu, founder of Mushroom Queen, the impact was immediate. Already supplying major retailers, she said the fair "has opened doors to new suppliers and sparked promising deals with interested restaurants."

Similarly, Gugu Nyakata of GM Aura perfumes recorded R4 000 in sales, with bulk orders continuing to flow.

The Durban Business Fair, held from 29 April to 2 May, was a resounding success, sparking deals, facilitating international trade, boosting sales, introducing businesses to new clientele, and rewarding excellence.

Beyond sales, the fair delivered life-changing opportunities. A total of R550 000 in bursaries was awarded by Newbridge Graduate Institute to 10 young entrepreneurs to pursue Diplomas in Customer Management, while 16 businesses received commercial printers sponsored by Boxer to scale their operations. The Best Stand Awards Programme recognised excellence in exhibition standards. Elo Interiors took first prize, receiving enterprise development support worth R50 000, along with additional benefits including memberships to the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Proudly South African, a Newbridge bursary and advertising support. Marcus Mkhasibe secured second place with support worth R30 000, while Noor Scents took third place winning R20 000. All winners also received additional support, including First National Bank and iKhokha hampers, and Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry membership.

Minister of Small Business Development Stella Ndabeni reaffirmed that Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of the economy, driving job creation and inclusion and should not be stopped by a "bank door being closed". Chairperson of the City's Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli said: "The fair is testament of what can be achieved when government, private sponsors, and communities unite with a shared purpose."

ENTREPRENEURS EMPOWERED THROUGH SERIES OF MASTERCLASSES

THE dynamic masterclasses, focusing on topical and key business elements, emerged as a major drawcard of the 28th Durban Business Fair.

The masterclasses attracted packed rooms of eager entrepreneurs seeking practical knowledge to grow their businesses. A standout session was the Supply Chain Management masterclass hosted by eThekwini Municipality's Procurement and Supply Chain Management Directorate. The session saw businesspeople fill the Durban Exhibition Centre's Coast of Dreams, keen to understand procurement processes.

Senior Manager for Accounts Payable, Lungisa Msiya, took attendees through online invoicing, delivering a live demonstration that demystified the process. Purchasing Manager Mdu Tenza unpacked acquisitions, tendering, and the quoting system, while Aveer Banwarilal guided attendees through submitting quotations, also via a live system demonstration. Businesses were further empowered with step-by-step guidance on registering and maintaining compliance on the Municipality's Supplier Self-Service system. Equally compelling was the Digital Marketing Masterclass, which explored the science of ideation and crafting content that converts into sales. Additional sessions included the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority masterclass, which unpacked funding opportunities and business support mechanisms. Businessman Altaaf Suleman shared global best practices to strengthen local enterprises. To round off the programme, an Intellectual Property masterclass, led by the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission, was held.

Lungisa Msiya, Senior Manager for Accounts Payable at eThekwini Municipality, led a live demonstration on online invoicing during the Supply Chain Management masterclass during the 28th Durban Business Fair.

39 NEW FIREFIGHTERS BOLSTER ETHEKWINI'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE

ETHEKWINI Municipality has injected fresh energy into its emergency services with the appointment of 39 newly trained firefighters, reinforcing the City's ability to respond swiftly and decisively to disasters.

The recruits, drawn from diverse backgrounds, have completed rigorous training in structural firefighting, hazardous materials handling, emergency medical response, and intensive physical conditioning, equipping them to operate under pressure and save lives.

EThekwini Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni welcomed their deployment saying this job was a calling that demands courage, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment. She encouraged the new firefighters to serve with bravery, act with urgency, and never forget the lives that depend on them.

Newly appointed firefighters displayed their operational readiness during a pass-out parade, which marked their commitment to protect and save lives.

The new intake of recruits, comprising of 29 men and 10 women, have earned their place in the service, proudly wearing their badges and helmet crests as symbols of courage, discipline, and duty.

Among the recruits, Nosipho Kunene said stepping into this role is both a personal victory and a responsibility to break barriers in a male-dominated field. "I am proud to stand in a space where women are proving every day that courage has no gender. This journey tested my strength, but it also defined my purpose. I am ready to serve and protect."

R17 MILLION BOOST FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

SMALL, traditional businesses in Dalton and eMahawini have received a significant boost, with R10 million invested in the development of modern business infrastructure.

Speaking on the development was Ward 32 Councillor Protas Mngonyama.

He said: "We invested R10 million during the previous financial year in the eMahawini project, and this year we will allocate a further R7 million towards building a business centre for small businesses."

Officials also visited eMaphinifeni where a factory, mainly operated by women, has already created more than 20 jobs and aims to generate an additional 15 positions in the next financial year.

"We have handed over sewing machines to the women operating in eMaphinifeni, and we are working towards creating even more job opportunities in the coming financial year," Councillor Mngonyama added.

Small businesses in Ward 32 have received a cash injection to help them grow. Ward Councillor Protas Mngonyama said they have donated sewing machines to help women at a factory create and sustain jobs.

"As Ward 32, we recognise the potential of these developments and look forward to working with the City and residents to uplift and improve these facilities. Ward 32 is being transformed."

Mayor Xaba congratulates Durban City FC on historic win

ETHEKWINI Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba has congratulated Durban City FC, the 2026 Nedbank Cup champions, for bringing the prestigious trophy back home.

This historic victory, the club's first major trophy, highlights the continued progress across all sporting codes in the City.

"We are pleased that with this achievement; we are truly becoming a city of champions. Sport not only plays a critical role in promoting a healthy lifestyle but has also become a significant economic driver through tourism, infrastructure development, and job creation," said Mayor Xaba.

He added that the achievement will inspire young footballers and future Bafana Bafana stars in eThekwini and across KwaZulu-Natal to continue pursuing their dreams.

"More importantly, it serves as a reminder to children in rural and township communities that hard work and dedication does pay off," he said.

"As the leadership of the City, we join the people of eThekwini in celebrating this remarkable achievement. It is our hope that Durban City FC's victory will serve as a catalyst for promoting unity and fostering social cohesion in our sport-loving society," Mayor Xaba added.

"This is a win for the football club as well as for eThekwini Municipality as a whole," he concluded.

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

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