ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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

12 May 2026 [Issue 460]

CHAMPIONING CONTINENT'S TOURISM GROWTH AT AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa officially opened Africa's Travel Indaba on 12 May, saying it was a joy to welcome attendees to Durban, a city that embodies the spirit of African hospitality.

Africa's Travel Indaba takes place from 11 to 14 May under the theme; "Unlimited Africa: Growing Africa's Tourism Economy". Also in attendance at the launch was Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille, KwaZulu-Natal Premier Thami Ntuli, and eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba along with Ministers and Deputy Ministers from across the African continent.

President Ramaphosa said last year, South Africa welcomed 10.5 million international visitors. "Three-quarters of international arrivals come from the SADC region. This tells us something important: Africans are choosing Africa. That is why South Africa is working with our neighbours to advance the SADC Tourism UNIVISA, which would enable seamless, borderless travel for tourists across SADC member states."

He said eThekwini has recently added two new attractions to its tourism offering namely the statues of Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo which were unveiled in March. "This demonstrates the importance of expanding and diversifying our tourism offering, catering to a broad range of domestic and international travellers."

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa officially opened Africa's Travel Indaba on 12 May. The event takes place over three days and brings together stakeholders in the tourism sector to forge relations and showcase the continent on a global stage.

President Ramaphosa said Africa's Travel Indaba has become one of the most powerful platforms for tourism growth on the continent. "Last year, about 10 000 delegates gathered in Durban and more than 1 300 exhibitors showcased the best of African tourism. The Indaba contributes to local economic development," he said. "Every conversation at this Indaba, every partnership formed, every idea shared, these are the building blocks of a continent that is rising and is confident in its potential."

Preceding the three-day Indaba, was the Business Opportunity Networking Day (BONDay) which took place on 11 May and was opened by Deputy Minister of Tourism Makhotso Sotyu. The BONDay programme included critical conversations around policy, entrepreneurship, destination competitiveness, sports tourism, and culture.

RESURGENCE DURBAN 2026 ACTIVATION AT AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA

THE reSURGEnce Durban Conference 2026 officially forms part of this year's Africa's Travel Indaba which takes place from 12 to 14 May at the Durban Exhibition Centre. This comes as organisers ramp up awareness, registrations, and momentum ahead of the third edition of the conference taking place from 24 to 28 July at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre. Delegates and visitors are encouraged to visit the reSURGEnce Durban Stand DEC1H41 to learn more about the upcoming conference, themed "Access, Connect, and Thrive". Hosted in partnership between eThekwini Municipality and partners from the United States of America, reSURGEnce Durban continues to position the City as a gateway for investment, tourism, innovation, and global business collaboration.

The conference has already demonstrated economic impact. According to an independent socio-economic impact assessment, the previous edition attracted nearly 4 000 attendees, contributed more than R105 million to the City's GDP, and supported 155 jobs.

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USHAKA MARINE WORLD REMAINS MOST POPULAR TOURISM ATTRACTION

THE City's five-year service delivery milestones campaign: Asimile Siyaqhuba: Resilience Through Diversity highlights service delivery gains made from 2012 to 2026.

This week the focus is on the Municipal entity, uShaka Marine World which is a world-class entertainment theme park and tourism destination. This speaks to the importance of tourism in attracting visitors to the City and the creation of jobs in the sector. UShaka Marine World remains one of KwaZulu-Natal's most popular entertainment facilities, attracting over 130 000 visitors into the paid for environment in December 2024. Since its opening 21 years ago, the theme park has welcomed about 17 million visitors to date.

According to uShaka Marine World Chief Executive Officer Ndabo Khoza, as at the end of the financial year on 30 June 2025, the theme park recorded over 19 percent growth in revenue (year on year), a positive trajectory well on the way towards pre-COVID-19 figures.

Khoza said the water theme park's strong recovery and continued popularity among visitors makes it one of Durban most popular tourist attractions and remains a favourite entertainment destination for locals.

The theme park blends cultures like no other destination in Africa, all within a safe, secure, and clean environment that echoes with the sounds of fun, laughter, and togetherness.

Featuring Africa's highest slide, the largest aquarium in Southern Africa, and a vibrant open-air shopping mall, uShaka Marine World offers exciting experiences that will get your adrenaline pumping.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The highest slide in Africa is located at uShaka Marine World.
- UShaka Marine World is open 365 days a year.
- UShaka Marine World houses the largest aquarium in the Southern Hemisphere.
- UShaka Marine World has a total number of nine Cape Fur seals.
- It is home to 60 African Penguins, seven Dolphins (five female and two males), and seven seals.
- It is home to nine species of sharks.
- It is Africa's largest marine theme park.
- UShaka is the only facility in Sub-Saharan Africa where visitors can watch a dolphin show.
- Approximately five kgs of vegetables are fed to the theme's park fish each week.
- Approximately eight million litres of seawater is pumped from the ocean into uShaka Marine World every day.
- UShaka Marine World is home to the internationally renowned Oceanographic Research Institute.
- It remains Africa's leading conservation facility.
- The public can host special functions or a wedding in the aquarium.
- Around 120 000 learners visit uShaka each year.
- Shark diving experiences are available at uShaka Marine World.

CITY-WIDE 2026/27 BUDGET AND DRAFT IDP CONSULTATIONS CONCLUDE

The final 2026/27 Budget and Draft IDP public consultation was held in Amanzimtoti on 11 May.

ETHEKWINI Municipality has successfully concluded its city-wide 2026/27 Budget and Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP) public consultation programme, following a final engagement session held at the Amanzimtoti Civic Centre on 11 May.

The final consultation marked an important milestone in the City's ongoing commitment to participatory governance, providing residents from the south of Durban with a direct platform to engage on the proposed R74.7 billion draft budget for the 2026/27 Medium-Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework.

Addressing residents from the South Durban Basin, eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba acknowledged ongoing concerns regarding service delivery backlogs and ageing infrastructure.

"This budget prioritises the rehabilitation of water and electricity systems to ensure sustainable growth and a better quality of life for residents," said Mayor Xaba.

The City has earmarked significant investment towards critical infrastructure upgrades, including:

- Wastewater Treatment: R3.01 billion
- Electricity Infrastructure: R2.45 billion
- Low-Cost Housing: R2.34 billion.

Specific interventions for Ward 93 include R15 million allocated for the Amanzimtoti/Nyathi Road pipe repairs and R3.8 million for the rehabilitation of the Amanzimtoti Bird Park.

To sustain essential services, the Municipality has proposed tariff increases of 5 percent for property rates, 10.5 percent for electricity, 15 percent for domestic water, and 13 percent for sanitation and refuse removal.

Despite these increases, the Municipality remains committed to protecting vulnerable residents.

Residential properties valued at up to R350 000 will remain exempt from rates, while qualifying low-income households will continue receiving free basic services, including 6kl of water and 65kWh of electricity.

PROGRESS ACHIEVED ON STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT PROJECTS

THE Presidential eThekwini Working Group (PeWG) has welcomed the significant progress being made on several strategic infrastructure, transport, and road rehabilitation projects under Workstream 5. They reaffirmed government's commitment to rebuilding resilient infrastructure and strengthening service delivery across eThekwini.

A progress report was presented during the monthly meeting of Workstream 5, held on 7 May, where notable achievements across a number of flagship projects were highlighted. Progress was noted particularly within the City-Wide Road Upgrading and Inner-City Rejuvenation Programmes. This includes major upgrades along Umgeni Road, Sandile Thusi Road, Smiso Nkwanyana Road, and Lilian Ngoyi Road.

The uMlazi Canal expansion project's completion was lauded by the Presidential eThekwini Working Group.

Encouraging progress has also been recorded in flood damage remediation and canal revitalisation initiatives.

The Umlaas Canal Revitalisation Project has been completed ahead of its original contractual deadline, delivering vital flood mitigation benefits, while also creating employment opportunities.

SUPPLIER PORTAL TRAINING UNDERWAY

HUNDREDS of suppliers have been trained on how to navigate the City's paperless procurement innovation- the eThekwini Supplier Portal (ESP). These trainings are important to ensure that suppliers understand the ESP. Training for suppliers continues on 14 and 15 May via MS Teams.

Suppliers that have undergone training have shared their appreciation saying it provided them with an opportunity to learn and get the necessary support. The ESP went live in April and since then, payments amounting to billions of rands, has been successfully made to suppliers. This is through the online invoicing module, a prominent feature on the ESP.

The online invoicing module allows invoice payments to be approved online, eliminating the need for manual intervention in the current process. All users who have access to the JD Edwards System will be able to access it via the ESP. In addition, suppliers can submit invoices for work done and populate required details on the platform. Among the many benefits of the ESP is that it has Supplier Database Integration, where registered suppliers will receive system-generated notifications for relevant opportunities. It also has standardised documentation where all required forms, specifications, and declarations are standardised within the system. The system also allows real-time tracking for end users to track the status of their requests. Support is also available at Sizakala Centres and suppliers are reminded to provide valid invoices along with supporting documentation to ensure a smooth payment process.

To register on the ESP, visit https://ethekwinisupplierportal.durban.gov.za

FORUM AIMS TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

ETHEKWINI Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba convened the second Municipal Forum for Climate Change meeting on 5 May, bringing together municipal leadership, sector experts, and stakeholders to deliberate on key climate policy frameworks, global developments, and implementation priorities shaping the City's climate response. EThekwini became the first municipality to set up a governance structure of this nature, in accordance with section 9 of the Climate Change Act and Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act.

Mayor Xaba said: "By bringing together organised labour, business, civil society, traditional leadership and other stakeholders, we are ensuring that our climate response is inclusive, informed, and aligned with the principles of a just transition to a climate resilient and low carbon future."

He said climate change is a present reality. "As a Municipality, we are enhancing our preparedness, strengthening infrastructure resilience, and mobilising partners to protect communities, safeguard essential services, and reduce climate-related risks.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba convened the 2nd Municipal Forum for Climate Change to strengthen local climate leadership.

Central to discussions was the Durban Climate Change Strategy (DCCS), presented by Dr Luyanda Mafumbu, the Deputy Head of Climate Change.

The DCCS remains the City's overarching framework guiding climate action across adaptation, mitigation, and a just transition. The strategy reinforces eThekwini's commitment to building climate resilience, while pursuing inclusive economic development.

INCLUSIVE RESILIENCE TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT ETHEKWINI DISASTER SUMMIT

A three-day summit on disaster risk reduction was held in the City recently, bringing together stakeholders to shape people-centred solutions to disasters.

ETHEKWINI has placed inclusive disaster resilience at the centre of sustainable urban and economic development.

This was evident during the three-day Inclusivity for All on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Summit, which brought together stakeholders to shape practical, people-centred solutions aimed at building a stronger, more resilient City.

The summit comes at a critical time as cities globally face increasing pressure from climate change, natural disasters, environmental degradation, and growing socio-economic challenges.

These disruptions continue to impact supply chains, productivity, and investor confidence.

EThekwini Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni emphasised that building resilience requires a deliberate shift towards inclusive systems that prioritise people while protecting critical infrastructure and economic stability.

COMMUNITIES ENCOURAGED TO PROTECT MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

WIDESPREAD vandalism and theft of critical Municipal infrastructure, are causing major interruptions to water and electricity supply across eThekwini, placing significant strain on resources and hampering the delivery of essential services to communities.

The Municipality is experiencing significant levels of vandalism, theft, and destruction affecting key assets such as pressure reducing valves (PRVs), chambers, kiosks, valves, substations, and perimeter fencing.

The situation is particularly concerning in Ntuzuma, where critical components like PRVs are frequently vandalised.

Power supply is vital for the operation of water systems, including pumping and distribution. Damage to electrical components or cable theft can halt operations entirely, compounding service delivery challenges and extending outage periods.

Between July 2025 and April 2026, the Municipality's City Integrity and Investigation Directorate investigated 241 cases related to infrastructure theft. Of these, 108 cases were confirmed, and all have been referred to the relevant law enforcement authorities for further action.

Executive Director for Technical Services, Ednick Msweli, emphasised the serious impact of these criminal activities. "This ongoing destruction of Municipal infrastructure represents a major setback in our efforts to provide reliable water and electricity services.

The City strongly condemns all acts of vandalism."

Incidents of theft or vandalism can be reported to the Water and Sanitation Toll-Free number on 080 311 1111 or via WhatsApp on 073 148 3477. The City Integrity and Investigations Directorate can be reached on 0800 20 20 20 or ombuds@durban.gov.za

OVER 100 BUSINESSES ENTER LION'S DEN COMPETITION

ENTREPRENEURSHIP continues to gain momentum in eThekwini as this year's Lion's Den Business Plan Competition attracted approximately 121 applications before the deadline of 30 April.

Facilitated by eThekwini Municipality's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMEs) Division under the Economic Development Directorate, the programme continues to empower entrepreneurs through mentorship, business development support, and market exposure.

The next phase of the competition will involve screening applications with assistance from stakeholders including the Small Enterprise Development Agency and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs. About 30 participants will then be selected to undergo mentorship and coaching ahead of the pitching sessions.

Last year's Lions' Den Business Plan Competition winner, Bidy Wood Design Manufacturing, received her cheque from eThekwini Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni and Municipal Planning Department Executive Director Lihle Phewa.

Programme Manager from the City's MSMEs Development Division, Qondani Mamase, said the competition remains an important platform for unlocking entrepreneurial potential and supporting business sustainability.

"The Lion's Den Competition is viewed as a vehicle capable enough to spark entrepreneurial flair while ensuring enterprise development interventions. It has unleashed and elevated several small businesses from infancy to the sustainability phase," said Mamase.

Last year, the Municipality invested approximately R350 000 in the programme, with R170 000 directed towards winners' support packages and a further R180 000 spent on mentorship, coaching, and bootcamp-style business development interventions.

According to Mamase, the competition continues to produce notable success stories that contribute to job creation and economic growth. Previous beneficiaries, such as Premier Group, Spot on Fire, Cosmic Dreadlocks Specialist, and Refrigerator Rentals have collectively created more than 35 employment opportunities while expanding their businesses. The programme continues to play an important role in strengthening MSMEs and promoting inclusive economic development.

STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH COLLABORATION

IN A powerful demonstration of how strategic partnerships can drive meaningful change, eThekwini Municipality's Primary Health Care Services Directorate continues to forge impactful collaborations with academic institutions to address food insecurity across KwaZulu-Natal.

Londiwe Ncube, Food Security Manager from the Primary Health Care Services Directorate, participated in an assessment of Advanced Diploma Food Security Projects at the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT). This follows a formal invitation from Professor Xolile Mkhize from the Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences, Community Extension Department. This engagement builds on a growing relationship between local government and higher education institutions, one that is rooted in shared commitment to sustainable development and community upliftment.

EThekwini Municipality and stakeholders from the Mangosuthu University of Technology during an assessment of innovative food security projects.

The assessment brought together innovative students from various districts across KwaZulu-Natal to present practical, research-driven solutions aimed at tackling pressing food security challenges in their communities. The projects, developed under the Food Security IV Module, reflected not only academic excellence but also a deep understanding of real-world issues affecting vulnerable populations.

Ncube served on a distinguished panel alongside Langa Ndwandwe, Senior Agricultural Economist from the Ugu District. The panel provided critical insights, constructive feedback, and professional perspectives to guide students in refining their proposals into actionable, scalable interventions.

Said Ncube: "By working together as government and academia, we are investing in practical solutions that can be implemented on the ground."

As eThekwini Municipality continues to address the multifaceted challenges of food insecurity, initiatives like this serve as a reminder that collective effort, bridging government, academia, and communities, is essential for a food-secure future.

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

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