ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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

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BUDGET CONSULTATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS CONTINUE

MORE than 1 000 residents attended the first regional Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP)/Budget consultations held on 20 April at the Mpumalanga Stadium. The consultation forms part of the City's broader programme to engage communities on development priorities and service delivery planning across the region.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba led the engagement, outlining key interventions aimed at stimulating economic growth in the region. These include the R15 billion Shongweni Development and the R10 billion Cato Ridge Logistics Park.

Several consultations have been held with ratepayers, the disability sector, and business.

During another 2026/27 Draft IDP/Budget consultation, it was revealed that the City has allocated over R2.1 million to support disability sector programmes. This information was unpacked during an enagagement at the Olive Convention Centre with the disabled sector on 18 April. The allocations towards disability sector programmes include empowerment, awareness, diversity, and education-focused strategic programmes and initiatives. Additionally, R13 million has been allocated to sustain the Dial-A-Ride service, which provides transport support to people with disabilities.

The Draft Budget of R74.7 billion, along with the IDP and Spatial Development Framework priorities, was presented to hundreds of disability sector members.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba was among City leadership that met with ratepayer associations to unpack the 2026/27 Draft Integrated Development Plan/Budget at the Moses Mabhida Stadium.

Speaking at the engagement, eThekwini Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni said the City is aware of the challenges faced by the disability sector and that engagements of this nature assist the City in crafting effective solutions.

Meanwhile, another budget consultation process was held with ratepayer associations at the Moses Mabhida Stadium on 16 April. Mayor Xaba emphasised that ratepayer associations are critical stakeholders in an ongoing process of engagement and collaboration.

The Mayor said the R74.7 billion Draft Budget, tabled on 31 March at a Full Council meeting, prioritises investment in water and sanitation, electricity, and roads infrastructure. These sectors remain central to improving service delivery, stimulating economic growth, and creating employment opportunities. He further highlighted progress achieved in the previous financial year, including improvements in electricity supply stability, service cleanliness, pothole repairs, and interventions addressing water supply challenges. Mayor Xaba also noted that approximately R50 billion in investment funding is expected to be injected into the local economy through development projects in the Sibaya and Riverside areas. The Municipality has also established partnerships with private developers for the development of the Durban Amusement Park and the upgrade of the Elangeni and Maharani hotels.

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ASIMILE SIYAQHUBA – FIVE YEARS OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARDS GROWING AGRIBUSINESS

SIGNIFICANT strides have been made in the Agribusiness sector. Highlighting the gains made in this regard is the Five-Year Service Delivery Milestones campaign. It is being rolled out under the theme: Asimile Siyaqhuba: Resilence Through Adversity. In this week's edition we unpack gains made in the Agribusiness value chain.

The Agribusiness Division of eThekwini Municipality, which falls under the Economic Development Directorate, supports Agri-SMME's operating across the agricultural value chain. Its work is guided by the eThekwini Agribusiness 10-Year Masterplan approved by Council in 2020. The Masterplan prioritises five strategic commodities: cannabis, sheep, piggery, vegetable crops, and poultry (broilers and egg layers).

Between 2021 and 2025, the division implemented targeted infrastructure investment, enterprise incubation, skills development and market facilitation programmes. Over the past five years, the division has strengthened the agricultural value chain, expanded market access for small-scale producers and created sustainable employment.

KEY AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES:

AGRIPARKS INCUBATOR PROGRAMME

The AgriParks Incubator Programme promotes inclusive participation through access to infrastructure, processing facilities, incubation support, and market linkages. The Municipality operates three AgriParks:

- Cato Ridge AgriPark (West Region)
- Cottonlands AgriPark (North Region)
- Ottawa AgriPark (North Region).

Between 2021 and 2025, the three AgriParks collectively invested approximately R42.5 million in infrastructure. This includes broiler production facilities, an intensive sheep feedlot, agro-processing facilities, storage units, fencing, irrigation systems, electrification of poultry houses, coal-fired stoves, and water infrastructure.

Impact of the three AgriParks (2021-2025):

- Enterprises supported: 19
- Jobs created: 375
- Estimated economic benefit generated: R70 million
- City's investment: R42.5 million
- Over 1 million chickens sold since 2022 resuscitation at Cato Ridge.

These investments strengthened production capacity, expanded agro-processing, and improved market access. They also revitalised poultry and livestock operations across the metro.

FARMER SKILLS AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Farmer Skills and Enterprise Development Programme improves productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness through structured training and mentorship. It began in 2022 and is implemented in phases.

Across phase one and phase two, the programme reflects a combined investment of R32 million, initially funded through the Public Employment Programme.

Impact and Targets:

- Agri-SMMEs supported: 673
- Beneficiaries skilled and mentored: 457
- Job opportunities created and projected: Over 1 050
- City's investment: R32 million.

Support includes technical and managerial training, business planning, financial management, and sustainable farming practices.

NEW VENTURE CREATION LEARNERSHIP

In partnership with the Food and Beverages Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority, the Municipality secured R6.2 million in 2024 and 2025 to train 100 unemployed youth and women.

- Duration: 12 months
- City's investment: R6.2 million
- Additional equipment and infrastructure funding: R12 million from the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency
- Total programme value unlocked: R18.2 million.

The programme enabled 100 beneficiaries to establish and strengthen mainly township-based enterprises.

The verified impact during 2021 to 2025 saw an infrastructure investment of over R20 million and R32 million for the Farmer Skills and Enterprise Development Programme.

POWERFUL LINE-UP TO TACKLE SMME GROWTH AT DBF BUSINESS INDABA

CRITICAL discussions on funding, compliance, and market access will take centre stage when industry leaders, corporates, and government meet for the Durban Business Fair (DBF) Business Indaba on 29 April at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre.

Hosted by eThekwini Municipality, the session will unpack challenges facing small businesses and provide practical solutions and growth opportunities.

Businesses must RSVP to zamani.shezi@durban.gov.za to attend. The Indaba is being held under the theme 'Enabling SMME growth through funding, compliance, market access, and strategic partnerships'. Speakers include representatives from Proudly South Africa, the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency, the South African Revenue Service, and Illovo Sugar to name a few. Key focus areas include access to funding and financial pressures on small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs), rising cost of living and business sustainability, tax compliance and expanding the tax base, survival and growth strategies, corporate partnerships and market access and localisation, as well as branding of South African products. The Indaba forms part of the broader DBF exhibition, taking place from 30 April to 2 May at the Durban Exhibition Centre under the theme '28 Years of connecting SMMEs to markets and opportunities'. The exhibition will host hundreds of businesses showcasing products and enabling trade, networking, and enterprise growth.

Chairperson of the City's Economic Development and Planning Committee, Councillor Thembo Ntuli, said the Indaba is key to preparing businesses for opportunities at the fair.

"It equips SMMEs with insights, tools, and connections that drive real economic participation." Businesses are encouraged to RSVP and join this important conversation shaping SMME development.

INNOVATION FESTIVAL'S 10 YEARS OF IMPACT

THE 10th annual Innovation Festival took place on 16 April at the Coastlands Hotel under the theme: 'Innovating for a sustainable future: Harnessing technology, collaboration, and investment'. It marked the 10 year celebration of Innovate Durban driving change through the festival. The event, hosted by Innovate Durban in partnership with the City, convened thought leaders, entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers from across KwaZulu-Natal and beyond. This year's programme called for a systems-based approach to development, focusing on advancing five key pillars namely: people, planet, profit, peace, and partnership. Stakeholders engaged in robust discussions on how technology and collaboration can be leveraged to build resilient communities and sustainable economies.

Innovate Durban, in partnership with eThekwini Municipality, hosted the 10th Innovation Festival.

The festival programme featured a series of panel discussions, networking sessions, and exhibitions designed to foster collaboration.

Ajiv Maharaj, Deputy Head of the Economic Development Directorate, said the City, in partnership with Innovate Durban, continues to empower young innovators.

DURBAN BUSINESS BREAKFAST ENCOURAGES GROWTH

THE sold-out Legacy Speaks: The Talk of Tomorrow Business Breakfast drew approximately 650 business leaders, professionals, and entrepreneurs to the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre on 17 April. Hosted by MANCOSA in partnership with East Coast Radio, the event brought together a distinguished panel of speakers including award-winning sports broadcaster Carol Tshabalala, entrepreneur and philanthropist Rachel Kolisi, business growth expert Pavlo Phitidis, and Ocean Basket CEO Grace Harding. The speakers shared practical lessons on leadership, resilience, and building meaningful impact in an ever-changing business landscape.

EThekwini Municipality's investment arm, Invest Durban, attended the session, reinforcing its commitment to engaging with platforms that promote business confidence and growth.

Acting Director of Invest Durban Russell Curtis said the breakfast provided valuable perspectives on modern leadership and the importance of translating ambition into lasting legacy. "From fearless leadership to purpose-driven impact, every speaker proved that legacy isn't something you talk about – it's something you build through action, authenticity, and lifting others along the way," said Curtis.

Tshabalala highlighted the importance of staying relevant, resilient, and visible in male-dominated spaces. Kolisi shared personal insights on identity, stability, and growth, encouraging delegates to "build forward" rather than recreate the past while Harding emphasised purpose-led leadership and the value of putting people first.

METRO FM AWARDS SET TO DELIVER MAJOR ECONOMIC BOOST

Senior Manager from Durban Tourism Hlengiwe Dube discussed the City's plans ahead of the Metro FM Music Awards with Metro FM presenter Tumi Ngubeni.

THE City is ready to welcome one of South Africa's biggest entertainment events, the Metro FM Music Awards 2026 taking place on 25 April at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre. The highly anticipated ceremony is expected to generate significant economic activity while reinforcing Durban's reputation as a leading destination for major events.

The total estimated economic impact is between R34 million and R86 million, reinforcing its importance as a major city-wide economic driver.

Around 258 job opportunities will be created.

Projections show that the Metro FM Awards will attract approximately 11 500 visitors. Currently, more than 3 200 confirmed hotel room bookings have already been secured ahead of the awards.

This surge in bookings is a welcome boost for the local hospitality sector, benefiting hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, transport operators, and tourism attractions in Durban.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba said the opportunity will also bring the City national exposure.

"Hosting a celebrated event of this magnitude reinforces that eThekwini is a city of opportunity, talent, and celebration. It also shows that eThekwini is open for business. We remain committed to growing the local economy through arts, culture, and tourism," he added.

Mayor Xaba is expected to receive mayors from other cities on 24 April who will be in eThekwini to attend the Metro FM Awards.

The event forms part of a three-year hosting partnership that will see Durban host the awards from 2026 to 2028.

COMMENT ON CONVERSION OF SHEPSTONE STREET

THE public is encouraged to share their views on the proposed permanent conversion of Shepstone Street to two-way traffic following the completion of a six-month pilot project. The pilot conversion, implemented by the eThekwini Transport Authority in August 2025, changed traffic flow on Shepstone Street between Dr Langalibalele Dube Street and Bell Street from a one-way system to a two-way configuration. The trial period concluded in February this year.

Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback by completing a survey. Feedback forms are available online via eThekwini Municipality's website at www.durban.gov.za as well as from the reception area of the eThekwini Transport Authority offices at 30 Archie Gumede Street. Alternatively, the public can contact the Public Transport Information Centre on 087 121 9446 or email info@godurban.co.za to request that the survey form be emailed to them. Completed surveys must be submitted via email to info@godurban.gov.za or delivered to the eThekwini Transport Authority offices by no later than 25 May 2026.

ENSURING AIR QUALITY TRANSPARENCY IN THE CITY

BUSINESSES in eThekwini have access to a powerful new tool designed to support informed decision-making and sustainable growth. The Air Quality Management Information Stand is located at the Natural Science Museum. This one-of-a-kind installation provides live air quality data streamed directly from the Municipality's network of 15 ambient air quality monitoring stations via the South African Air Quality Information System. This interactive stand serves as an educational and awareness tool, empowering residents, learners, and stakeholders with real-time insights into the air they breathe.

From a business standpoint, the initiative promotes transparency and environmental accountability. Industries and investors will benefit from access to reliable environmental data, supporting compliance with regulations and encouraging sustainable practices.

The stand also provides learners with hands-on exposure to environmental data analysis.

An Air Quality Management Information Stand has been placed at the Natural Science Museum.

CITY HOSTS TAKE A CHILD TO WORK PROGRAMME

LEARNERS from grades 8 to 12 across disadvantaged communities in eThekwini were given the opportunity to shape their futures when the Municipality recently hosted its Take a Child to Work Programme.

The initiative, which included learners with disabilities, saw over 200 young people from different schools participate. It was designed to guide informed subject selection while responding to unemployment, skills shortages and the persistent mismatch between education outcomes and labour market demand.

Learners gathered at the City Hall Church Walk, where Municipal leadership and senior management emphasised early career exposure as a strategic investment in economic growth, productivity, and service delivery excellence.

Learners were empowered through the City's Take a Child to Work Programme.

Chairperson of the Governance and Human Resources Committee Councillor Nkosenhle Madlala said the City cannot afford graduates entering unemployment while critical skills remain scarce.

"Early exposure empowers learners to make subject and career choices aligned to labour market needs and real economic demand," said Councillor Madlala.

After the engagement, learners were placed in Municipal departments where employees mentored them and exposed them to daily operations, workplace culture, and professional standards that support organisational effectiveness.

Learners expressed gratitude to the Municipality, stating that first hand workplace exposure will help them to make sound subject decisions, expand their employability prospects, and encourage innovation, competitiveness, and economic participation.

30 WOMEN GRADUATE FROM IDLELLA INCUBATOR

One of the cohort of 30 women that graduated from the IndlELLa Incubator. Some graduates received grants to ensure their business growth beyond the programme.

A POWERFUL new chapter is unfolding in Durban's creative sector as 30 women graduated from the IndlELLa Incubator, equipped with the tools, networks, and confidence to transform their ideas into thriving enterprises.

EThekwini Municipality celebrated the graduation of the inaugural IndlELLa Incubator cohort on 16 April, marking a significant milestone for the programme.

In a dynamic partnership between Alliance Française de Durban and Innovate Durban, with support from the Embassy of France, these 30 visionary women have completed a six-month journey.

Launched in November 2025, IndlELLa is a programme designed specifically for women in the cultural and creative industries.

What sets the initiative apart is its dual approach: delivering high-level business development while simultaneously providing on-site parenting support.

This model enabled participants, many of whom are mothers, to focus on growing their enterprises while their children participated in a structured educational playgroup facilitated by Kindling International and Zoë Life.

Over the six-month period, participants were based at the Innovate Durban Innovation Co-Lab in Cato Manor, where they received intensive training, participated in international masterclasses, and benefited from mentorship provided by both local and French industry leaders. A key highlight of the graduation was the announcement of seed funding and strategic partnerships for several high-potential ventures.

Selected participants will also benefit from equipment grants and observation internships within partner organisations, ensuring continued growth beyond the programme.

ETHEKWINI HONOURED FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT

THE Waste Management Directorate earned national recognition at the National Waste Management Awards, receiving accolades for excellence in sustainable and innovative waste management practices. The City stood out as a leading metropolitan, demonstrating measurable progress in addressing sector challenges and advancing sustainable solutions. Another key achievement was the recognition of its waste-to-energy initiatives, particularly the landfill gas-to-electricity project. This initiative reflects a strategic investment in climate-responsive infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gas emissions while contributing to energy generation. The Buffelsdraai Landfill Conservancy Site received an award for the most improved municipal landfill operation and management.

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

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