ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

www.durban.gov.za

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

29 July 2025 [Issue 424]

DURBAN FIRST SA CITY TO JOIN WORLD TRADE CENTRES

IN a historic move to elevate trade and investment in Africa, eThekwini Municipality on 28 July officially announced the establishment of South Africa's first World Trade Centre (WTC) at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (Durban ICC).

The formal signing ceremony was attended by Chairperson of the Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli on behalf of the eThekwini Mayor. Also in attendance was eThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele, Durban ICC Chief Executive Officer Lindiwe Rakharebe, and representatives from the World Trade Centres Association (WTCA). Durban was granted a license that designates the Durban ICC as the home of World Trade Centre Durban.

In his keynote address, Councillor Ntuli said: "The World Trade Centre Durban will become an enabler of economic transformation. We are leveraging an already world-class facility, the Durban ICC, to elevate Durban's standing and impact on the global stage."

Mbhele described the development as a pivotal moment. "The acquisition of the WTC license represents a giant leap toward realising our vision of becoming a globally competitive, resilient, and economically inclusive City."

Durban now joins a global network of over 300 WTC in nearly 100 countries, including cities such as New York, Tokyo, Amsterdam, and Nairobi. The license gives Durban exclusive rights to the WTC brand and access to an international ecosystem of over one million affiliated companies.

Celebrating a new era for African trade, leaders from eThekwini Municipality proudly display their World Trade Centre (WTC) license, marking the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre as the official home for WTC Durban. This milestone serves as a catalyst for economic transformation and global integration. With this prestigious status, Durban is poised to enhance its position as Africa's leading hub for international business, driving growth and creating opportunities for local communities.

Rakharebe noted the transformation of the Durban ICC into a full-scale trade and business hub.

She said: "The World Trade Centre Durban will support everything from global trade exhibitions and trade missions to small business incubation and matchmaking."

The WTC will promote business confidence, support localisation, and create jobs by connecting local enterprises to global markets. Implementation will begin with brand activation and feasibility studies, followed by infrastructure roll-out.

Durban was chosen as the first South African city for the WTC due to its status as Africa's leading port city and major manufacturing and logistics hub. The City is home to major companies like Toyota, Unilever, and Aspen, and benefits from infrastructure such as Dube Trade Port Special Economic Zone and King Shaka International Airport among many others.

Robin Van Puyenbroeck, Executive Director of Business Development at WTCA, welcomed the City to the organisation.

"We are delighted to welcome Durban to our global family. WTC Durban holds immense potential to foster African trade integration and connect with global markets."

With this development, Durban strengthens its position as a strategic gateway for trade between Southern Africa and the world, aligning with development goals. The implementation phases of WTC Durban will begin with brand activation, followed by infrastructure development and then full-scale operations.

R1.4BN UMHLANGA DEVELOPMENT LAUNCH

EThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele congratulated KwaZulu-Natal business tycoon Vivian Reddy at the launch of the R1.4 billion North Oceans uMhlanga Residential Tower recently.

THE Oceans uMhlanga mixed-use development officially launched its R1.4 billion North Oceans uMhlanga Residential Tower on 25 July amid much fanfare.

The North Tower forms part of the R4.3 billion Oceans uMhlanga mixed-use development, which includes the internationally award-winning Oceans Mall and the five-star Radisson Blu Durban uMhlanga Hotel.

The North Tower is poised to become a landmark for long-term value and secure investment.

The project continues to anchor Durban's post-pandemic recovery and growing national interest in KwaZulu-Natal's property sector.

A number of high profile dignitaries attended the launch including the Minister of Public Works Dean Macphearson, KwaZulu-Natal MEC of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Thulasizwe Buthelezi, KwaZulu-Natal MEC of Public Works Martin Meyer, various captains of industry, and other stakeholders.

EThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele praised the vision, investment, and confidence that KZN tycoons, Vivian Reddy, Rob Alexander, and investors have displayed in the eThekwini region during the launch.

"This catalytic project has grown from strength to strength and has changed the landscape of uMhlanga," said Mbhele.

"This development has positioned eThekwini and KZN as a sought-after investment."

He added: "There are four or five developments planned, worth about R80 billion over the next few years. This is an indication that this City is working hard to achieve its vision of being Africa's most caring and livable City."

Mbhele announced that the City will be spending R22 billion in the next three years, a portion of which will be used to unlock developments of this nature.

Meanwhile, Reddy announced a R1.3 billion leisure investment by Southern Sun in the upcoming South Tower.

"The Oceans uMhlanga development has brought global attention to the potential of this province," he said.

More than 25 000 jobs have been created during and post-construction in the Oceans development thus far.

WORKSTREAM TO ACCELERATE SERVICE DELIVERY

TO transform service delivery, eThekwini Municipality has launched its Integrated Customer Relations Management Workstream. This is a pioneering initiative aimed at resolving long-standing service delivery challenges. The newly launched structure seeks to create a centralised platform where service delivery data can be tracked, monitored, and responded to in real time.

Chairperson of the Workstream and Director of the Customer Relations Management Directorate (Sizakala) Mavuso Tshabalala, emphasised the importance of collaboration and innovation. "Government departments can no longer work in silos. Instead, we are creating one shared platform to track service delivery, monitor progress, and respond swiftly to the needs of our communities," said Tshabalala.

Members of the Integrated Customer Relations Management Workstream who are tasked with resolving long-standing service delivery issues in the City.

Key focus areas of the workstream include:

- Establishing communication platforms in departments where none exist
- Standardising how service delivery data is collected and reported
- Integrating service delivery information across departments
- Developing performance standards and data management protocols
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the integrated system.

Chairperson of the Governance and Human Capital Committee Councillor Nkosenhle Madlala described the workstream as a vehicle for restoring public faith in local government.

"We are here to transform how we engage with communities. They deserve action, transparency, and a Municipality that listens."

MAYOR APPLAUDS REVENUE COLLECTION

ETHEKWINI Municipality has recorded a notable milestone in its financial sustainability journey, achieving a 95 percent revenue collection rate by the end of June.

This is the highest increase in five years and within National Treasury norms.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba attributes this success to targeted revenue enhancement strategies the City has implemented.

He vowed to continue putting pressure on the administration to ensure that the City does not regress on the current collection rate.

"Revenue collection is the engine behind expanding services. We must ensure that the spirit of the Masakhane campaign lives among our communities by encouraging people to pay for services," said Mayor Xaba.

Among the revenue enhancement strategies Mayor Xaba has championed is the 50 percent debt write-off programme which ended in June.

The ongoing deceased estate debt write-off initiative and migration of meter reading from line directorates (water and electricity) to the Revenue Directorate also form part of revenue enhancement strategies. The migration of meter reading has assisted in addressing the challenge of estimated bills as meters are now being read regularly and customers are paying for the monthly services they have consumed.

Meter reading in the City has improved to an extent that only 12 percent and 20 percet of water and electricity bills are estimated respectively.

One of the reasons contributing to some meters not being read include lack of access to properties.

Mayor Xaba encouraged residents to use the Municipal App to upload their meter readings monthly so they can be billed for the services they have consumed.

"We have made technology available to our customers to make their lives easy. While our officials will continue to read meters, customers must also play their part," said the Mayor.

He called on officials to speed up investigations in cases where customers complain about irregular spike in their water and electricity bills.

"I am happy that the Revenue Directorate is dispatching technicians to recalibrate or change faulty meters so that residents are billed correctly," said the Mayor.

Mayor Xaba added that he was pleased that the order for electricity meters will be delivered by the end of next month.

"This will assist us in ensuring that all properties are properly metered, and the City can start collecting revenue from them. Our main priority will be properties that have bypassed meters and those that have benefitted from the deceased estate debt write-off programme. We want all our customers to be connected to services legally and account for their monthly consumption," said Mayor Xaba.

To increase revenue collection, Mayor Xaba said that the revenue management team continues to engage provincial and national departments as well as parastatals to make payment arrangements on the debt they owe the City.

SCIENTISTS ATTRIBUTE FLOODS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

ETHEKWINI Municipality has welcomed the results of research conducted by the University of Witwatersrand's Global Change Institute (GCI) that scientifically proved that the severe nature events, including flooding, experienced in April 2022, were due to climate change.

By developing a specialised climate change attribution system, the first-of-its-kind in Africa and the Global South, the GCI, was led by Professor Francois Engelbrecht and several partner research institutes. They were able to determine that rainfall totals on 11 and 12 April 2022 were at least 40 to 107 percent higher compared to what rainfall totals would have been in a counter-factual cooler world in which most of the recorded anthropogenic warming has not occurred.

Recent research has attributed floods to climate change. Pictured is the aftermath of the floods in 2022 in the City.

"The attribution system is based on a so-called 'km-scale" climate model that runs at spatial resolutions so high that it can resolve the deep convection that caused the heavy downpours of rain that led to the flooding in Durban. This type of modelling is computationally expensive and was performed on the computer clusters of South Africa's Centre for High Performance Computing," said Prof Engelbrecht.

He added: "The climate modelling clearly revealed the mechanisms that made the Durban floods worse. Firstly, the warmer atmosphere and secondly, the Agulhas Ocean Current flowing east of Durban has been warming in recent decades, with more evaporation fuelling storm systems in KZN with moisture. And finally, wind patterns have changed and are favouring the influx of moist air into the province. The GCI-led research team has subsequently explored how storm systems impacting on the province may change into the future if global warming continues, and found that future rainfall totals may be even higher."

Sean O'Donoghue, Senior Manager, Climate Change Adaptation said this research will influence the City's response and planning for climate change impacts.

KINGS PARK SWIMMING POOL UPGRADE

THE R42 million upgrade of the City's Kings Park Swimming Pool is progressing well.

This was revealed during a walkabout with the media on 25 July.

The aim of the walkout was to assess the progress made thus far and provide a status update.

Acting Director of the Recreation and Parks Directorate Dr Zakhi Mkhize said the emergency phase of the revamp is complete.

This included attending to deteriorated concrete columns and the roof structure works.

"We are now entering the phase of the project focusing on the facelift of the swimming pool to improve its efficiency and productivity as well as to ensure an aesthetically pleasing appearance," said Mkhize.

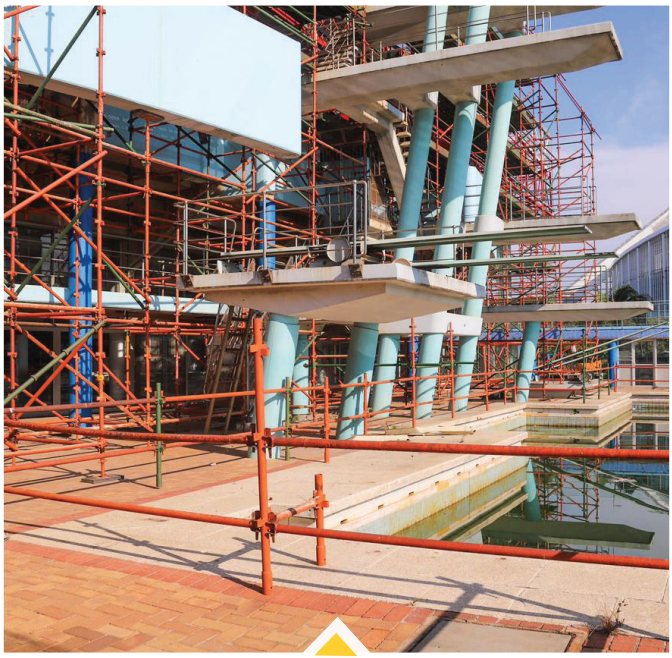
The swimming pool upgrade is expected to be completed by July 2026.

Mkhize said the Kings Park Swimming Pool is one of the country's premier aquatic venues and the only swimming facility in South Africa that has World Aquatics status, which is recognised by the International Olympic Committee for administering international water competitions.

The Kings Park swimming complex consists of both indoor and outdoor facilities.

The indoor facility has a 50-metre swimming pool while the outdoor facility has a diving pool that is 25 metres in length and is 6.5 metres deep.

The revamp is part of the City's maintenance programme for all its swimming venues.



A walkabout of the City's Kings Park Pool was recently conducted, where a status update of the revamp was provided.

USHAKA REMAINS MAJOR ATTRACTION

About 40 members of the media attended a tour at uShaka Marine World, which aimed to showcase the various attractions available at the marine theme park.

USHAKA Marine World remains one of KwaZulu-Natal's most popular entertainment facilities, attracting over 130 000 visitors in December 2024 alone. Since it opened 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 this financial year (which ended on 30 June) the theme park recorded over 19 percent growth in revenue (year on year).

Speaking at the uShaka Marine World Media Day on 23 July, Khoza highlighted the park's strong recovery and continued popularity among visitors. UShaka Marine World, Africa welcomed more than 40 media attendees for the media tour. The event aimed to showcase the marine park's commitment to world-class entertainment, conservation, education and community engagement.

The tour also highlighted uShaka Marine World's conservation efforts and educational programmes.

UShaka Marine World is a premier marine park located on Durban's Golden Mile.

The park is home to a diverse range of marine life, including sharks, dolphins, and sea turtles as well as dangerous creatures.

Khoza said they are thrilled to have hosted these media houses to share their passion for marine conservation, education, and world-class entertainment.

"We believe that by working together with our media partners, we can inspire a love of the ocean and its inhabitants in a new generation of conservationists," he said.

Durban Tourism updated media representatives on their tourism recovery initiatives through the Presidential eThekwini Working Group Committees, also highlighting the importance of reshaping Durban's tourism narrative which is aimed at attracting more visitors.

Durban Tourism Manager Zimasa Dlamini said: "Durban Tourism recognises uShaka Marine World as one of Durban's flagship tourism attractions and fully supports its ongoing development."

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

Email: news.desk@durban.gov.za

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR: Mandla Nsele, Director of Marketing and Communications
CONTENT EDITOR: Nondumiso Mathomane • **SUB-EDITOR:** Charmel Payet
WRITERS: Nonduduzo Ngcongo, Sohana Singh, Zimbili Mazibuko, Gugu Mdlalose and Jessie Singh
• **PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Nonjabulo Chamane and Pumla Khwela
• **DESIGN & LAYOUT:** Siyabonga Mkhize