



MYDISTRICTTODAY



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PRIORITY 2: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND JOB CREATION.

Biometric identity verification system helps to combat fraud

By Zukiswa Mqumbisa; GCIS, Eastern Cape

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in the Eastern Cape is the first to use the new biometric identity verification system for beneficiaries of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant. The system was launched for the first time in Nelson Mandela Bay in Gqeberha on 16 of July 2024. It aims to combat the escalating rate of fraudulent activities and enhance security.

SASSA has identified Nelson Mandela Bay Metro as a high-risk area for social grant fraud. Some beneficiaries have been complaining that they are not receiving their grants. The Nelson Mandela Bay SASSA District Manager, Mr Vuyo Toto, said “the current system requires people to call in to verify their

bank details while others use their smartphones. However most of our clients do not have access to smartphones.” He said in certain cases, relatives of beneficiaries would fraudulently change the bank details and substitute their own, resulting in the actual beneficiaries not receiving their SASSA payouts.

An SRD Grant recipient who had a problem with his social grant was happy to visit SASSA offices on the day of the launch and found the system useful. During the launch, some SRD Grant beneficiaries pleaded with SASSA to visit residential areas and assist those who could not afford a taxi fare to Gqeberha.



Mr Toto outlining the importance of the biometric identity verification system during an interview with SABC.



SASSA clients being interviewed by Mpuma Kapa TV and KQFM on the SRD Grant.



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PRIORITY 1: CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

Information Regulator hosts stakeholder engagement session

By Motseki Ngubenj; GCIS, Free State

On 26 July 2024, the Information Regulator (South Africa) held a stakeholder engagement session at the Protea Willow Lake Hotel in Bloemfontein for public and private sector organisations. The breakfast session focused on compliance and implementation issues related to the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), 2013 (Act 4 of 2013) and the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2000 (Act 2 of 2000). The Information Regulator is, among others, authorised to monitor and enforce compliance by public and private bodies with the provisions of the PAIA of 2000 and the POPIA of 2013.

Senior officials from the Information Regulator spoke about how their respective divisions operate, and reflected on some of their previous findings and how they were addressed. The engagement enabled the stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how the regulator will assess them when processing people’s personal information.

Adv Tshepo Boikanyo, the executive in charge of the POPIA division at the Information Regulator, stated that the POPIA of 2013 has changed the landscape of information handling and processing in South Africa by both public and private entities.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Information Regulator, Mr Mosalanyane Mosala, said that the awareness of POPIA is gradually growing and attributed this growth to the Information Regulator’s diligent efforts, particularly through platforms such as community and stakeholder engagements.

“To exercise all other rights, you first need to obtain information,” said Mr Ntsumbedzeni Nemasisi, the executive responsible for the PAIA division from the Information Regulator.



CEO of the Information Regulator, Mr Mosala, addressing the attendees.



Stakeholders listening and engaging with the presentations from the Information Regulator.

PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFER COMMUNITIES.

Botlokwa Thusong Service Centre ploughs back to the community

By Doctor Marebane; GCIS, Limpopo

On 8 August 2024, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) based at the Botlokwa Thusong Service Centre distributed vegetables harvested by ex-parolees to help feed needy members of the community, learners at local schools and children at creches in surrounding villages.

Capricorn District Municipality and Molemole Local Municipality councillors joined the Botlokwa Thusong Service Centre and DCS officials in harvesting vegetables and planting new ones at the Fedile

High School, one of the local beneficiaries of the vegetable project. The harvested vegetables included spinach, onions, cabbages, carrots and beetroots.

According to Mr Takalani Khomola from the DCS, the vegetables were planted and cared for by ex-parolees from their correctional centres. He thanked the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for supplying vegetable seedlings and advising on how to care for the vegetables.



Stakeholders and community members with some of the vegetables from the garden.



Some of the vegetables harvested by ex-parolees at the Fedile High School in Botlokwa.

PRIORITY 3: SKILLS, EDUCATION AND HEALTH.

Mothers told about the importance of breastfeeding

By Jethro Grootboom; GCIS, Western Cape

The Knysna Community Day Care Centre in the Knysna Municipality in the Western Cape celebrated World Breastfeeding Week from 1 to 7 August 2024, with the theme: “Closing the Gap.” The event sought to promote breastfeeding as the best and healthier nutritional choice for feeding infants.

The Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness joined the global community in celebrating the weeklong event by providing useful information to breastfeeding women. It focused particularly

on first-time mothers, and those who work full-time or part-time and are unable to sleep due to breastfeeding.

Although breast milk is safer and healthier for infants, some mothers use formula to feed their babies, as breastfeeding may not be possible for them.



Ms Joritha Meyer, a pharmacy supervisor at the Knysna Community Day Centre, said: “Factors that made my breastfeeding journey easier were supportive colleagues at work and a support system at home.”



Ms Leensie Lotter, a mother of two, said: “My daughter is two-and-a-half years old and we are gradually weaning according to her needs. Both my daughters were exclusively breastfed until six months. I recently stopped expressing for my second daughter at 15 months but continue with on-demand breastfeeding when we are together. This journey had its challenges. I work in a fast and high paced environment. I expressed while driving to and from work, and at work at 10-15-minute intervals at a time at least three times per day during the first couple of months, then gradually less and less. My advice to working and pumping moms is to take it day by day and don’t set any expectations. Always remember that our babies are only little for a little while.”