



MYDISTRICTTODAY



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CONTACT DETAILS OF THE GCIS PROVINCIAL OFFICES

For more information about similar programmes that are run across the country, contact one of the following provincial offices:

EASTERN CAPE

Ndlelantle Pinyana
043 722 2602 or 076 142 8606
ndlelantle@gcis.gov.za

FREE STATE

Yolisa Blom
051 448 4506 or 072 130 9893
yolisa@gcis.gov.za

GAUTENG

Peter Gumede
011 331 0164 or 083 570 8080
peterg@gcis.gov.za

KWAZULU-NATAL

Ndala Mngadi
031 301 6787 or 082 877 9420
ndala@gcis.gov.za

PRIORITY 3: EDUCATION, SKILLS AND HEALTH.

Integrated public services reach the youth of Zastron

By Yanga Ngcukana; GCIS, Free State

On 12 September 2024, the Government Communication and Information System held a career exhibition at the Motheo Vocational and Occupational Education and Training (TVET) College in Zastron, Mohokare Local Municipality, where students were given advice on various career choices and information about government internships. Officials from the Free State Office of the Premier, the Department of Health, and the Department of Employment and Labour interacted with the students on potential careers available to them upon completing their tertiary qualifications.

The exhibitions and information sessions formed part of Integrated Public Service Month and Thusong Service Centre Week, celebrated annually in September, during which public servants actively engage with local

communities and visit different municipalities to connect with citizens, listen to their service delivery challenges and ensure that their departmental mandates are achieved.

Officials from various departments interacted with the students on multiple issues, including the challenges they faced on and off campuses, substance and drug abuse, and where to find support should they be affected by such challenges. The students also received useful information on how to access the Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Helpline, guidelines on how to perform cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and the different non-governmental organisations that can assist with drug addiction.



Motheo TVET College students receive information on different career choices.



government communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



LIMPOPO

Thanyani Ravhura
015 291 4689 or 082 421 3461
thanyani@gcis.gov.za

MPUMALANGA

Poppy Maluka (Acting)
013 753 2397 or 071 606 3998
poppy@gcis.gov.za

NORTH WEST

Boitumelo Mosadi
018 381 7071 or 073 245 0906
boitumelom@gcis.gov.za

NORTHERN CAPE

Ofentse Moeti
053 832 1378/9 or 084 390 4330
Ofentse@gcis.gov.za

WESTERN CAPE

Geraldine Thoppes
021 418 0533/2307 or 081 281 2200
Geraldine@gcis.gov.za



Student Representative Council member at Motheo TVET College: Ms Mandisa Gole

“What I learnt today about Public Service Month is that those in the public service especially the South African Police Service, dedicate their lives to protect and serve the country, as well as communities.”



Student at Motheo TVET College: Ms Lerato Khelani

“Today I learnt about the Thusong Service Centre Week that is going to bring services from various government departments and entities closer to the community.”



Mr Simon Shongwe from the Gert Sibande District:

“Men’s mentalities are not mostly recognised by society. The government should employ more male nurses so that they can be able to visit health facilities with heads high, knowing that they will discuss their issues with them and get help.”



Bishop Welcome Mkhonza – Secretary of Men’s Sector:

“In all the traditional councils, there are a lot of government programmes happening, but they focus more on women and girl children. Where do we want our boy children to go for help and speak freely about the problems they face? Boy children grow up with anger as they notice this. Fathers should bring along the boy child to men’s gatherings such as these.”

OUTCOME 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFER COMMUNITIES.

Mpumalanga traditional leaders tackle gender-based violence and femicide

By Joy Themba; GCIS, Mpumalanga

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government in collaboration with traditional leaders, the Men’s Forum, the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM), and the Mpumalanga Men’s Sector (MMS) called on men to tackle gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) from a local level, as they converged under the theme: “Changing the cultural mindset to fight GBVF”. They were welcomed by the Siboshwa Traditional Council Headman, Mr Mandla Ndlovu, who lamented that the area was facing a high number of GBVF cases, and requested more men to join the council office’s local structures to change the situation. The gathering was also joined by Khalathi Daniel Mahlangu of Ubukhosi Baka Mahlangu ka Somarhura and the MMS Chairperson, Mr Adam Ndobe.

According to the MMS Provincial Secretary, Mr Edwin Sedupane, such campaigns had not been effective in changing men’s behaviour. He said that they had taken a stance to go to the local level where they could interact closely with men. “Men are saying there are so many programmes, including marches and dialogues, but still they do not see behavioural changes; hence, GBVF incidents are still high. As men, we have realised that children grow up and continue perpetuating this pandemic; they do not listen to what men are saying but only copy what they do,” he said.

Reverend (Rev) Micah Nthale, the Mpumalanga Provincial Chairperson of the MRM, encouraged men to foster a sound environment, as current societal issues stemmed from dysfunctional families. He said, “We must return to our values, instil respect and morality in our children and guide families in cultural teachings. Men are saying they cannot have so many people suffering at their hands. They need to be role models in families and communities. More local ambassadors who will be the champions of men for change are needed per ward and also involve young people.”

The gathering declared Wednesdays as Men’s Day, where men will sit down wherever they are and talk about their issues. Rev Nthale continued, “No one is born with these behaviours, they are societal ills that children learn, whether from families or community members. Men are saying they must change their status because children learn best from their fathers’ actions, not just what they say.”

Ms Sonto Nkosi, the Chairperson of Civil Society, concluded that such programmes should not end in community halls, but should be continuously taken to taxi ranks, shopping complexes, taverns and other places where men gather, in order to make them more impactful.



Men came out in numbers to condemn the GBVF pandemic.



Ms Nkosi, Chairperson of Civil Society and Rev Nthali, MRM Chairperson, delivered messages of support.



Khalathi Daniel Mahlangu of Ubukhosi baka Mahlangu ka Somarhura closed the men’s gathering.

PRIORITY I: A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

Pacaltsdorp community gets new Thusong Service Centre

By Jethro Grootboom; GCIS, Western Cape

A new Thusong Service Centre was launched on 18 September 2024, in Pacaltsdorp, George Local Municipality. The centre is located at the Old Tourism Information Building on Mission Street.

The event was attended by the Executive Mayor of George Local Municipality, Ald Jackie von Brandis, along with councillors, stakeholders from various organisations, representatives from government departments, local entrepreneurs, community leaders and the Pacaltsdorp community.

During the opening, Mayor von Brandis expressed enthusiasm over the new facility: “It is an absolute privilege to open this centre today. I am pleased to have the councillors, community and all stakeholders here to witness the start of bringing services closer to where they are needed most. Please come and see what the centre offers. The Thusong Service Centre in Pacaltsdorp will offer key government services, including among others, the South African Social Security Agency, the departments of Employment and Labour, Home Affairs and Social Development (on a scheduled basis), as well as community development workers.”

Thusong Service Centres are one-stop, integrated community centres where residents can access crucial government information, services and resources. The centres’ programmes are designed to bring government services closer to the people, promote access to opportunities and improve livelihoods.

The establishment of a Thusong Service Centre in Pacaltsdorp was identified as a key priority in the municipality’s Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The IDP highlighted a pressing need for such a facility in the community, which has now been addressed by the George Local Municipality. The facility’s maintenance will be supported through a grant from the Western Cape Department of Local Government.

There are currently three Thusong Service Centres within the municipality, including those in Thembaletu and Waboomskraal. With the addition of the Pacaltsdorp Thusong Service Centre, service delivery across the community will be significantly enhanced, with all three centres working to deliver essential services at grassroots level. The municipality serves 294 929 people from 85 931 households (Statistics SA, 2023) across 28 wards, with service hinterlands geographically separated from the main city area.

The launch coincided with the annual Thusong Service Centre Week, which took place from 16 to 20 September 2024 nationwide, and forms part of the Integrated Public Service Month (IPSM) also held annually in September. The IPSM aims to emphasise the critical role played by Thusong Service Centres in enhancing community access to services and information.

A video of the launch can be accessed on youtu.be/-wJJKEZKbR8.



Mayor Jackie von Brandis with councillors, stakeholders and officials.



Mayor Jackie von Brandis with a team from Muzi FM, a local community radio station.



Members of the Pacaltsdorp Business Association were also present.



Pcaltsdorp Primary School Choir.



The George Local Municipality Community Development team.



Executive Mayor von Brandis:

"As the Executive Mayor of this great municipality, I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the officials involved in bringing this project to fruition. We call on our residents to safeguard and protect this centre, it belongs to you as much as it belongs to us. With the services offered here and the community's commitment to its preservation, I am confident that this Thusong Service Centre will thrive and provide lasting benefits to all."



Mr Adam Lewie (The George Local Municipality Thusong Service Centre Manager):

"We in the George Local Municipality are blessed to have three Thusong Service Centres, where the community can access much-needed government services and information where they live. The George Local Municipality, in the Garden Route District of the WC, is the 2nd largest municipality in terms of population."

PRIORITY I: A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

Umsobomvu Local Municipality collaborates with NGOs for Thusong Centre Service Week

By Thenjiwe Konono and Kgomtso Sentso; GCIS, Northern Cape

The Umsobomvu Local Municipality in the Pixley Ka Seme District, in collaboration with various stakeholders, provided services to the community as part of Thusong Service Centre Week. The 2024 Thusong Service Centre Week, which forms part of Integrated Public Service Month, took place from 16 to 20 September under the theme: “30 years of democracy and partnership”.

Thusong Service Centres are one-stop institutions that provide integrated services and information from government and other civil society groups to communities, as part of a comprehensive strategy to improve their lives.

During Thusong Centre Service Week, various government departments and stakeholders visited different wards within the Umsobomvu Local Municipality to render services. Non-governmental

organisations (NGOs) such as Partners in Sexual Health and *Mme Re Ka Thusa*, shared information with community members, especially women, on how start and grow their businesses. Ward councillors were there to educate the community about the Municipal Indigent Policy, which is a social safety net for disadvantaged individuals who cannot afford basic services such as water and electricity within a municipality. Legal Aid South Africa helped community members to draw up their wills free of charge, as part of National Wills Week.

Other stakeholders included the South African Revenue Service (SARS), who assisted public servants and businesspeople with their annual tax returns. Members of the South African Police Service assisted the community with affidavits and certification of documents.



Partners in Sexual Health distributes leaflets and shares information on sexual health.



Cllr Sibusiso Yabo verifies documents for indigents to access services.



Cllr Nontlupheko Mlungwana from Ward 5.



Verification of documents by councillors.



Community members came for government services.



SARS officials assist community members with tax returns while others await their turn.



Ms Bulelwa Kweleta:

"I am happy for the review of indigent services. We are almost five kilometres away from the municipality, police station and Thusong Service Centre. All these three places are far from each other. Also, you need to pay R30 for a taxi to access the services. Today I did not utilise taxi fare. I received all services in one venue for free. Thank you, Thusong Service Centre Week!"



Ms Mydare Majuda:

"I am an administrator at the municipality and our role is to register indigents to access services with lower tariffs or free service for those who qualify. As public servants, we find out there are few indigents that receive service under the Indigent Policy; therefore, we partner with the Thusong Service Centre with the support of Communication Officer, Siyabulela Phololo, who lobbies the Thusong Integrated Programme and brings services closer to the community. The aim is to reach as many indigents as we can, and remove the stigma of residents who are afraid to visit offices or access government services."