

Vuk'uzenzele

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South Africa's first veterinary nurses graduate

Allison Cooper

Being one of the country's first veterinary nurse graduates is a dream come true for Randburg resident Phumelela Mthimkhulu (21), who has been passionate about animals since she was a child. Mthimkhulu recently graduated from the University of Pretoria (UP), the only veterinary training facility in SA, with a Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing degree.

"It's crazy to wrap my head around. To know that I was part of the first class to do the bachelor's degree, which has been years in the making, is an honour.

"I'm grateful for the opportunities and doors that will open for us nurses to further our studies and specialise within our profession, which

was hard to do in the past," she says.

Tamarin Fisher, the President of the Veterinary Nurses Association of South Africa, says this is the biggest milestone in the profession's 42-year history.

"The new three-year degree will give qualified nurses the opportunity to enrol in postgraduate studies, which will hopefully



Phumelela Mthimkhulu is one of the country's first veterinary nurse graduates.

culminate in the awarding of masters and PhD degrees."

Veterinarians treat animals' injuries and illnesses, similar to how a doctor provides health treatment for people. Veterinary nurses are essential in vets' professional teams, says

Mthimkhulu.

"Some of the vital skills a nurse has to display are patient care, client communication, assisting veterinarians with procedures, and anything that will help the veterinary hospital to function at its best.

"It's one of the most rewarding professions. If you want to be a veterinary nurse, don't allow fear or a lack of knowledge to deter you from trying it out and enjoying it because it will change your life for the better," says Mthimkhulu.

Bursaries to address skills shortage

Due to a severe skills shortage in the sector, Mthimkhulu didn't battle to find a job.

"I was lucky enough to secure a job at Fourways Veterinary Hospital during my final year. I started working there about a month after my final exams and I've been enjoying every moment of it," she says.

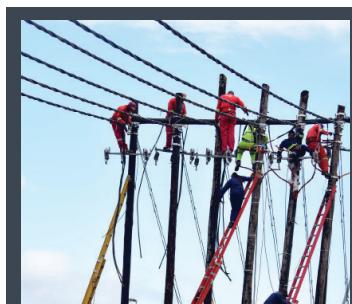
The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) is committed to addressing the extreme skills shortage in the veterinary sector and

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ensuring transformation. It recently launched a Veterinary Science Career Guidance Campaign, in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training, and will be visiting rural schools to encourage learners to consider veterinary services as a career path.

It also announced 60 bursaries to address the critical shortage of veterinarians and para-veterinarians in South Africa's rural areas.

"The bursaries are specifically aimed at learners in rural areas as they can take their knowledge back to their homesteads," says Dr Nomfundo Mnisi, the Chairperson of the HWSETA.

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Buti Manamela, welcomed the bursaries.

The UP's Faculty of Veterinary Science will assist

"I'm grateful for the opportunities and doors that will open for us nurses to further our studies and specialise within our profession, which was hard to do in the past."

the HWSETA in its marketing, bursary funding and recruitment campaigns.

"We will also assist the

HWSETA in administering the bursaries, which were allocated for first-year veterinary science students from the designated groups," says Chris van Blerk, the Head of Communications and Media at UP's Faculty of Veterinary Science.

He says youth hoping to follow in Mthimkhulu's footsteps and register for a first bachelor's degree at UP need to have completed their National Senior Certificate (NSC), or equivalent qualification, and meet minimum requirements.

"For the Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing degree, they need a minimum Admission Point Score of 28 and an NSC with English Home Language or English First Additional Language, mathematics, and physical sciences or life sciences," he adds.

For more information about the sector, youth

can contact private veterinary practices or speak to Compulsory Community Service (CCS) veterinarians which are part of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) around the country.

"The CCS programme aims to provide accessible and affordable veterinary services to under-served and poor resourced areas within South Africa. As such, vets in the programme will always serve as good information resources," says Van Blerk.

How to apply

To apply for one of the new bursaries, prospective students must strictly apply for the UP's Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing (both selection courses) on the UP's online system at www.up.ac.za/online-application. Applicants should not apply directly to the HWSETA

The closing date for applications is 30 June. For more information about careers in veterinary science within UP, visit www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-veterinary-science.

For more information about other bursaries available in the sector, visit www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-veterinary-science/article/33926/bursaries-for-veterinary-science-studies.

Collect your driver's licence card

Motorists who applied for a new or renewal driver's licence card or professional driving permit (PrDP) between October and December last year are being urged to collect them.

According to the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), only 42% of the 32 748 driver's licence cards produced during this time have been collected.

Minister of Transport Fikile Mbalula opened the RTMC licensing centres in Midrand and Eco Park last year, in response to the backlog of expired driver's licences due to COVID-19.

The Driver's Licence Card Account, which prints the licences, is working around the clock to fast-track production and remains on course to clear the backlog by the end of June.

The RTMC says people can check the status of their application before going to the testing centre to collect it.

This can be done by SMS or online.

Driver's licence SMS query

For a driver's licence query, applicants can SMS their ID number to 33214. They will then receive one of the SMSes below:

- Application received: The application was received, but has not yet been processed.

- Production queue: The card is still being processed and manufactured.

- Produced and ready for collection: The card will be ready for collection in 21 days. However, due to the high number of cards being processed, the RTMC advises you to wait 35 days before going to collect.

- Problem card: There is a problem with the production of your card. Please return to the testing centre.

For a PrDP application



query, SMS your ID number to 44220.

2020 and 31 August 2021, who missed the renewal deadline of 5 May, are advised to obtain a temporary driver's licence when applying for their renewal to remain legally compliant.

While RTMC centres are open Monday to Sunday from 7am to 9pm, members of the public are encouraged to take advantage of shorter queues on Fridays and the weekend.

Information provided by the RTMC



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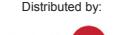
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Rebuilding lives and livelihoods after the floods

It has been almost two months since heavy flooding wreaked havoc across parts of KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and North West, causing extensive loss of life and damage to property and infrastructure.

I recently visited eThekweni in KwaZulu-Natal to meet with business people in the city to lend our support to their efforts to restore their operations.

When this natural disaster struck, there was some concern that authorities had neither the capacity nor the will to respond efficiently and effectively to the dire situation of those who had lost everything.

Having paid my second visit to the city since the floods, I am clear that this concern was misplaced. In KwaZulu-Natal, as in the Eastern Cape and North West, all stakeholders have been hard at work to recover from these tragic events.

The National Disaster Management Centre has been coordinating all spheres of government in their efforts to provide humanitarian relief to the many households that have been affected. It has been pleasing to see the non-governmental organisation community, business and relief organisations joining in working with government



to provide much-needed relief assistance.

All these stakeholders have provided food, clothes, blankets, dignity packs and school uniforms to vulnerable families to meet their basic needs. Sheltering services are currently being provided to over 7,000 people in the four most affected districts in KwaZulu-Natal. Work has started to build temporary residen-

ces for affected families on state-owned land parcels have been identified in KwaZulu-Natal for possible resettlement.

The Departments of Home Affairs, Health and Social Development have been assisting affected communities to access important services. For example, mobile units are helping those who lost critical documents in the floods to get new

smart IDs and to re-issue birth certificates. Mobile health services, including COVID-19 vaccinations, are being provided to people in areas where the physical facilities are not yet fully operational. Mechanisms are in place to pay out the social grants of affected individuals.

Mobile classrooms are being procured so that learning and teaching should not be interrupted for longer than necessary in flood-affected schools.

Work is underway to repair damaged waste water treatment works, pump-stations and reticulation. Damaged roads are being repaired. Eighteen new bridges are planned as part of the Welisizwe Rural Bridges programme.

There has also been considerable progress in fixing key infrastructure supporting the Port of Durban. Given the importance of the port to the national and continental economy, port traffic has been restored, terminal operations are back at full capacity and work to repair damaged rail infrastructure is underway.

Additional measures are being put in place to provide financial support to both big and small businesses in distress. This is needed as a matter of urgency to ensure that businesses can stay afloat and that jobs can be

sustained.

At different times in our democracy's history, we have been confronted with events and circumstances that have severely tested the resolve of our people and the effectiveness of our institutions.

We have seen extraordinary solidarity and support to affected communities in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and North West. Municipal and provincial governments have been working closely with national departments and agencies to enable people to rebuild their lives and to get local economic activity back on track.

They have been working with all stakeholders in all of these areas to ensure that we effectively coordinate recovery efforts and that we plan and rebuild in a manner that is more resilient to extreme events of this nature in the future.

The perseverance of affected communities, their determination to succeed and their ability to rally together in times of crisis has been an inspiration. We salute all those who have been part of the effort to help the people of the affected provinces.

As government, we are mobilising all available resources and undertaking every effort to ensure that, as we rebuild, no-one is left behind.

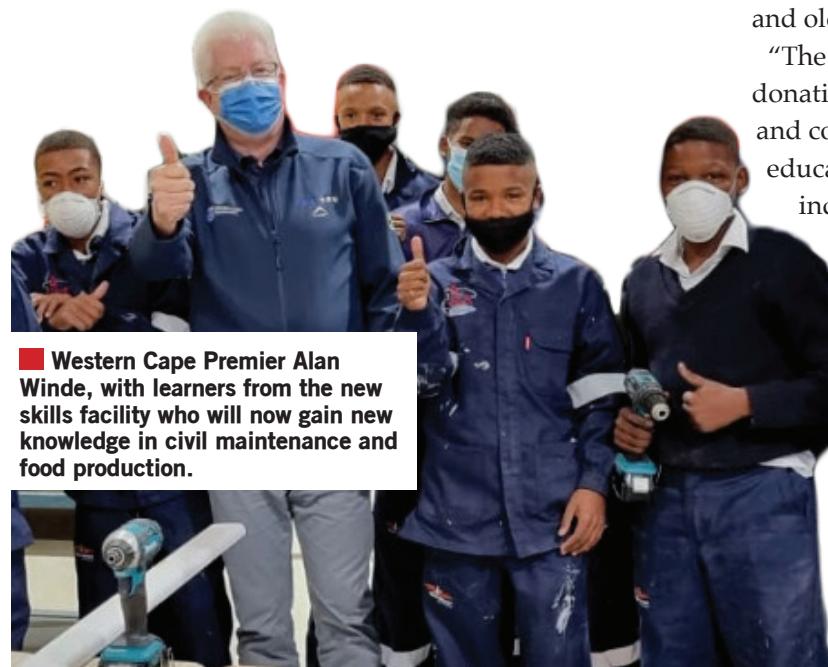
Struisbaai skills facility gives hope to high schoolers

Kgaogelo Letsebe

For the first time in its history, Struisbaai in the Western Cape has a post-primary school education offering, thanks to a newly launched R36 million skills facility.

This was made possible by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and the Struisbaai SOS Funding Trust, which collaborated to develop an extension of Struisbaai Primary School that offers civil maintenance and food production courses.

The Struisbaai SOS Funding Trust is a privately funded community trust that was established to find viable solutions to help the youth of Struisbaai build and develop their own economically viable future within the town.



■ Western Cape Premier Alan Winde, with learners from the new skills facility who will now gain new knowledge in civil maintenance and food production.

Resident and SOS board trustee Rev Franziska Andrag-Meyer says the project was started as a result of the alarmingly high school dropout rate. "Struisbaai has no high school. After finishing primary school, learners have to commute to Bredas-

dorp or Napier for further schooling."

These towns are 34.8km and 49km away, respectively.

Andrag-Meyer says that the trust decided to enter into partnership with Struisbaai Primary to add a skills facility for learners 15 years

and older.

"The trust searched for donations from private and corporate donors, educational trusts and individuals to raise 60% of the R36 million, while the WCED paid the other 40%. We also took responsibility for the construction, with appropriate government inspections and oversite. The trust also now appoints 50% of the school govern-

ing body; the other 50% comprises parents, teachers and staff who are elected and appointed as in any other government school," explains Andrag-Meyer.

The facility's civil maintenance component includes welding, metalwork, woodwork,

plumbing, electrical work, motor mechanics, glass-work and building; the food production division will focus on hospitality.

A future filled with hope

Speaking at the official opening of the facility, Western Cape Premier Alan Winde said: "The opening of this facility is aligned with our province's commitment to skills education. This is critical in ensuring that all of our learners have an opportunity to develop the skills they need to participate meaningfully in our economy."

The chosen 27 learners started their schooling at Onse Hoop community centre in January, but have since moved to the new facility.

"This is only the starting point. We expect to be at full capacity of 120 learners in 2024," says Andrag-Meyer, adding that an academic curriculum for at least Grades 8 and 9 might be implemented in the future.

Bridging the gap in the ICT sector

AN ICT COMPANY is demonstrating how the private sector can get involved in transforming the lives of South African children.

Ursula Graaff

Learners at Ratasetjhaba Primary Farm School in Meyerton were overjoyed when they received a new computer lab from Information Communication Technology company Rectron.

The lab was donated to the school to bridge the gap in the digital market and help learners broaden their learning and skill set. Few of the learners have access to technology at home, says school principal Goitseng Mokele.

She says the lab – which is available to learners from grades 1 to 7 – is going to



■ Learners from Ratasetjhaba Primary Farm School in Meyerton will now be techno savvy thanks to a new computer lab donated by ICT company Rectron.

make a huge difference to the science and mathematics marks. Becoming techno savvy will also improve the learners' confidence, she says, and enable them to compete with more privileged schools.

Grade 7 learner Auli Shamimu says she is grateful for the computer lab. "I feel so happy and I think we will learn a lot."

In her thank you speech to Rectron, Shamimu said she and her fellow learners

will benefit from using the computers and will learn new skills.

"Finally, we are going to be just like other schools. Rectron, your sponsorship to us will help us reduce poverty, crime and unem-

ployment because we will grow up equipped like other learners."

Kutlwano Rawana, Chief of People at Rectron, told the gathering that they aim to uplift communities by donating techno labs to previously disadvantaged areas and schools. "The purpose of these labs is to facilitate the improvement in STEM-related subjects [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] in schools," she said.

Rectron has donated four labs to date and aims to do more for other communities and underprivileged schools in South Africa. In choosing schools to assist, it looks at how actively involved parents and teachers are in the learners' education.

For more information about Rectron, visit their website at <https://www.rectron.co.za/home>

South Africa's youth are a top priority



Allison Cooper

Government continues to drive various initiatives to ensure that SA's youth are given access to opportunities to better themselves, drive change in their communities and contribute to the economy.

Vuk'uzenzele highlights some of these opportunities in celebration of Youth Month.

Presidential Youth Employment Intervention

The Presidential Youth

Employment Intervention (PYEI), part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES), includes a range of priority actions to boost youth employment.

It has established the National Pathway Management Network and Presidential Youth Employment Services (YES), and is delivering agile workforce development, supporting youth self-employment and enterprises in the township and rural economy and strengthening workplace experience.

The PES, SA's largest public employment programme, was estab-

lished to create jobs and strengthen livelihoods, supporting meaningful work while the labour market recovers from COVID-19.

It has since supported over 850 000 opportunities, 80% of which were for youth, President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed in his State of the Nation Address in February. The number of direct beneficiaries will soon rise to over one million, he added.

For more information about the PES, visit www.stateofthenation.gov.za/employment-stimulus-dashboard.



Youth Employment Service

The YES 12-month quality work experience programme equips unemployed youth with a toolkit to be a beacon of hope for their families, households

and communities.

The initiative has created over 75 055 opportunities and funnelled over R4.2-billion into the economy.

The initiative has a variety of hubs that assist in upskilling the youth, including:

- Digitate Lab, which offers digital learning programmes.
- Green Engine Aquaponics and Farming, which teaches youth about urban agriculture and how

to sell their produce.

- Drone Academy, where candidates are taught how to repair, operate and fly drones to provide services to key sectors of the economy.
- Culinary Academy, which offers chef training and entrepreneurial development.
- Textile Manufacturing Centre, which trains, upskills and connects seamstresses, manufacturers and networks to develop

SA Youth

SA Youth, launched on Youth Day last year (2021), saw eight government departments forming a network to support young people to find pathways into the economy.



It is a free and zero-rated national platform that connects talented and engaged work-seekers to various opportunities, including YES, full-time jobs, part-time jobs, learnerships, volunteering and learning opportunities.

To register, visit <https://sayouth.datafree.co/Home/Index/EN>.

National Youth Development Agency

The National Youth Development Agency addresses challenges faced by SA's youth, offering grant and voucher programmes to

and find retail markets for their products.

- Sanitary Pad Production, which manufactures and markets compostable sanitary pads.
 - Participants who register at the hubs are offered access to networks, training, markets, work opportunities, ideas for careers and new businesses and partner support.
- For more information, visit <https://yes4youth.co.za/hubs>.



help young entrepreneurs to access financial and non-financial business development support.

For more information, visit www.nyda.gov.za/index.html.

Learning opportunities and bursaries

SA's sector education and training authorities (SETAs) provide career guidance and offer learnerships and bursaries.

For contact details for each SETA, visit <http://www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/SETAlinks.aspx>. Opportunities are published on each SETA's website.

Government departments also offer bursaries and other assistance to the youth. To view available opportunities, visit each department's website.

Youth Challenge Fund

The Youth Challenge Fund aims to stimulate the establishment and growth of youth-owned businesses, promote digital skills, grow the economy and foster job creation.

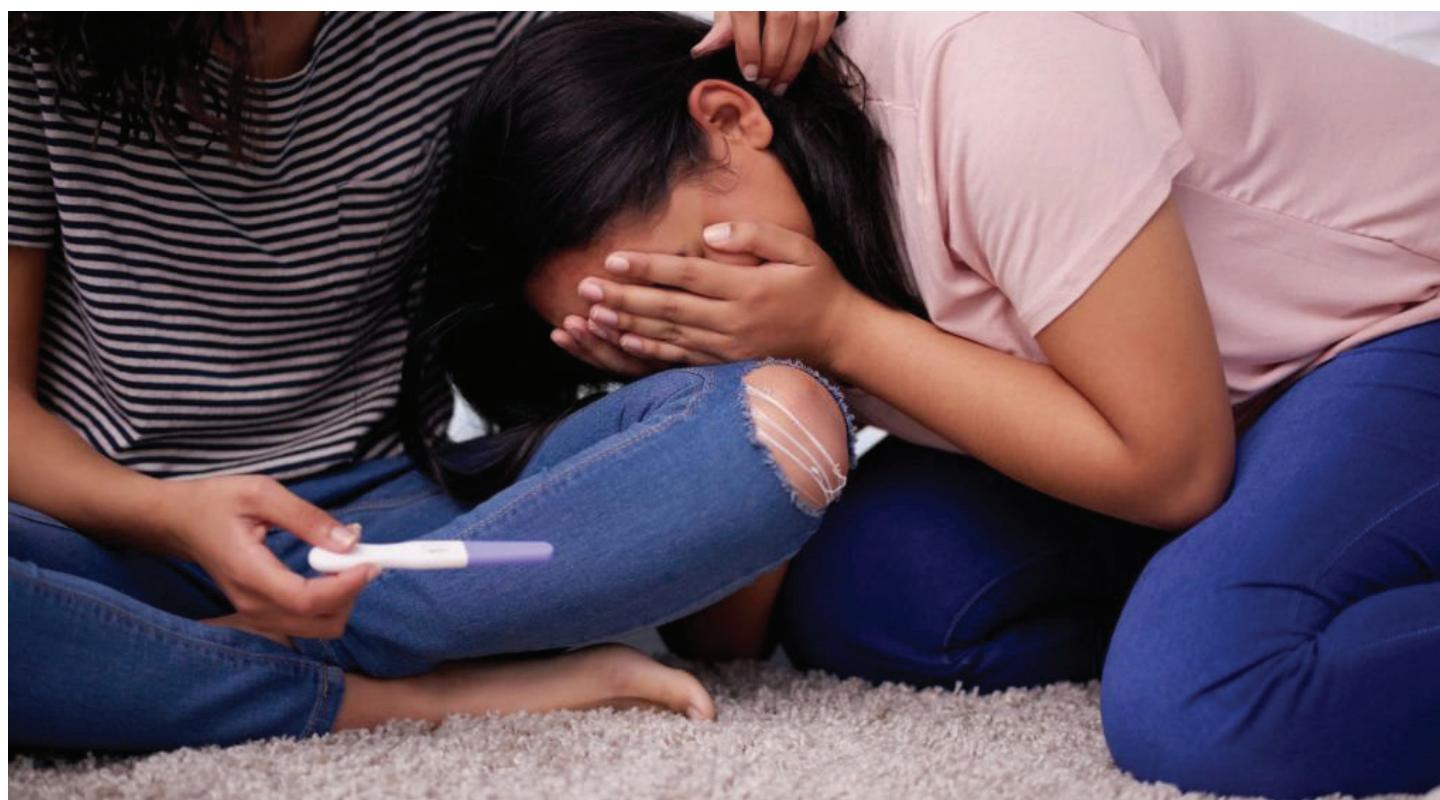
For more information, visit www.dsbd.gov.za/programme/youth-challenge-fund.

Industrial Development Corporation

The Industrial Development Corporation funds black-owned and empowered companies, black industrialists and women and youth-owned and empowered enterprises.

For more information, visit www.idc.co.za.

Pregnancy not an end to girls' education



Schools must provide an environment that prevents inequality and unfairness towards pregnant learners, who have the right to education during pregnancy.

"No educator, school staff member or fellow learner may discriminate against, humiliate or abuse a learner physically, emotionally or psychologically, based on their pregnancy or post-pregnancy status," says Department of Basic Education (DBE) Care and Support Chief Director Coceka Nogoduka.

She says in February 2022, the DBE launched the Learner Pregnancy Prevention and Management Policy

(LPPMP) which seeks to ensure that learners are given the knowledge they need to make informed choices; that pregnant girls receive care and counselling; and that they are given the support they need to finish their schooling.

Nogoduka explains that the LPPMP aims to reduce the incidence of learner pregnancy through the provision of quality, comprehensive sexuality education and access to adolescent and youth-friendly sexual reproductive health services.

"The policy aims to lessen the impact of learner pregnancy by making allowances for reasonable absences due to pregnancy

and promoting the earliest return to school."

The policy also makes it compulsory for schools to report pregnancies to the South African Police Service if the girl is under the age of 16.

If her partner is over 16, civil or criminal proceedings could be started.

According to the Department of Social Development, the age of consent to sex is 16, however if children engaging in sexual acts together are aged between 12 and 16, they will not be criminally charged, provided the age difference between them is two years or less.

Children under the age of 12 years cannot legally con-

sent to sexual intercourse, therefore it will always be rape.

Nogoduka says if the biological father is a learner, he too will be 'counselled and guided to assume and sustain his rights and responsibilities'.

Teen pregnancy sensitive and complex

Teen pregnancy is a sensitive and complex issue, says Nogoduka.

A young girl who finds herself pregnant will have to decide who she is most comfortable speaking to.

"Advocacy is conducted at all levels, including school management teams, educators, school-based support

teams, school governing bodies and parents, to ensure that support is provided by all in the sector," she says.

The DBE says the school principal and educators are responsible for referring a pregnant learner to a health facility and ensuring that she receives support from school-based support teams.

Nogoduka adds that teen pregnancies, gender-based violence and unsafe sex are nationwide problems and combatting them requires partnerships between all those who have the best interests of South Africa's children at heart.

Education key to unintended pregnancies

The DBE emphasises that education is one of the answers to preventing unintended teenage pregnancies in South Africa, and the DBE is determined that healthy, age-appropriate conversations about sex happen in schools and communities.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga says that should school-going children fall pregnant, they must be supported so that they are able to finish their schooling.

She says gone are the days when pregnant schoolchildren were shunned and kicked out of schools.

"Early unwanted pregnancy perpetuates poverty and disrupts the growth and development of our young people. It also contributes to the worrying drop-out rate that we are fighting so hard to reduce," she adds.

Did you know?

The latest figures from Statistics South Africa show that in 2020, there were 33 899 teenage and younger mothers. Of these, over 600 were children aged between 10 and 13.

Parents, educators and learners who need assistance can call the Gender-based Violence Command Centre: 0800 428 428, use the USSD 'please call me' facility *120*7867#, or SMS 'help' to 31531 Childline (toll-free): 116.



Crazy about chicken gizzards

Ursula Graaff

With failure not an option, Luxolo Xengana (27) started an agro-processing business three years ago, selling chicken products at a competitive price to people in low-income communities.

Xengana, who grew up in Ennerdale, south of Johannesburg, says because he understands the struggles faced by vulnerable communities, he wants to make food affordable to all.

"My goal is affordable quality," he says.

Xengana's business, Luxolo Agri Processing (Pty) Ltd, provides solutions to emerging farmers and low-income households.

Initially, he sold pre-



Luxolo Xengana is an entrepreneur cashing in on South Africa's love of chicken.

packed chicken livers, feet, hearts, gizzards and necks, which he sourced from poultry abattoirs, but he

has since expanded to sell chicken pieces, which are sourced from local farmers.

His target market is small

communities, which he reaches through partnerships with local tuckshops. He also sells his products at market stalls. He currently services Ennerdale, Lawley, Finetown, Vlakfontein and Lehae.

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) provided financial assistance to help Xengana start his business.

"I received a business plan voucher, which I used to get assistance to develop a business plan. I also received financial funding, which I used to buy stock and purchase a freezer," says Xengana.

He found out about the NYDA through an internet search and visited its Johannesburg branch.

Xengana says he has faced many difficulties but that his passion for the industry kept him motivated. "We started selling door-to-door, but I had to restructure my business and build partnerships to sustain it in the long run."

The business currently employs four full-time and

two part-time employees.

The entrepreneur believes the poultry industry is important to South Africa because chicken is an affordable source of protein and is widely consumed by many South Africans.

The demand for chickens is higher than the supply, which leaves a gap for new entrants to the industry, he says.

Xengana says it is important for the youth to get involved in the poultry industry because their creativity is needed to grow the sector.

His advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is that they should do thorough research on the industry they want to get involved in.

His dream is to grow his business to include chicken farming, slaughtering, packing and distribution.

For more information about the NYDA, contact **087 158 4742** or visit www.nyda.gov.za.

Female farmer praises government for support

Kgaogelo Letsebe

Louisa Maloka-Mogotsi (64), a trained social worker turned farmer, is one of the success stories to come from the stakeholder engagements held recently in the Bojanala District in the North West by the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Desbo Mohono.

Maloka-Mogotsi is a citrus farmer from Mooinooi who received assistance from the department in 2016 to acquire a 66-hectare farm. Today, she exports her produce – several orange varieties and Lisbon lemons – to the Middle East and Russia.

She says much of her success is thanks to MEC,



Louisa Maloka-Mogotsi has entered the international citrus farming market thanks to government support.

who has made funding and upskilling female farmers a priority. This has enabled them to diversify and collaborate with other female farmers to increase their production, she adds.

Maloka-Mogotsi also

received a grant from the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for a tractor, a slasher and a boom sprayer. "Through the grant, I was also able to pay my workers for one year, without the

initial teething pressures, and was also able to work successfully. I appreciate that with the intervention the government gave us, I can steer the business in the right direction."

She says the informative sessions held by the provincial government convinced her that she needed to export her produce to make her farm commercially viable. They empowered her to rehabilitate her farm and reskill her employees to produce export-quality citrus. Her surplus produce is sold to a fruit juice manufacturer.

Challenges and triumphs

Maloka-Mogotsi says the COVID-19 pandemic almost destroyed the region's farms, but again the department showed immense support. "We appreciate that the department saw it fit to give us post-COVID-19 business input vouchers, which helped a great deal."

In her latest engagement

in May, MEC Mohono encouraged farmers to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the government.

"I am encouraging youth and female farmers to take heed of the opportunities presented to them by the government. They should not underestimate their potential with the belief that agriculture is a male-dominated industry. The department is committed to providing quality services and support to emerging farmers," said MEC Mohono.

For opportunities from the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, visit www.dard.nwpg.gov.za or call:
Agricultural Support Services: **018 389 5724**
Agricultural Economics: **018 389 5300**
Rural Development: **018 389 5432**

Responsive communication key to changing the world



■ Minister in the Presidency Mondli Gungubele, highlighted in his Budget Vote speech that Government Communication and Information System was key to ensuring that flood victims had access to information. GCIS had a responsibility of informing flood victims about access to basic services and updates on restoration.



Minister in the Presidency, Mondli Gungubele, says government must ensure that it adopts new ways of communicating with citizens.

He said this when he tabled the Budget Vote for the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) during a mini-plenary of the National Assembly held recently.

"I believe our key task in this period is to ensure that no South African is left behind, in line with the President's call to action in this year's State of the Nation Address."

"Our communication must touch and change lives, while also being relevant and easily understood."

"We dare not rest on our laurels by believing that what worked today will still be relevant tomorrow," he said.

The GCIS has been allocated R719.9 million for the 2022/23 financial year. The GCIS's spending plan amounts to R2.182 billion over the next three years.

The funding provided to the GCIS over the three-year Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period (2022/23 to 2024/25) will allow the department to carry out the

"Our communication must touch and change lives, while also being relevant and easily understood."

constitutionally mandated task of ensuring that all citizens and communities have access to information.

"We cannot allow a new divide to be created between those with access to resources and technology and those without," he said.

Minister Gungubele said government communication must be a mixture of the old and the new.

"We must blend the best of both worlds and find ways to reach people where they live, in a language or medium they understand."

"We will deploy our tried, trusted and necessary direct engagement methods of imbizo, activations, outreach activities, community dialogues and loud hailing," he said.

Supporting vaccination drive

Minister Gungubele said in the coming period, GCIS will continue to actively build on its many partnerships and collaborations to support the country's efforts to vaccinate over 70% of the target population.

"We will also continue to drive the message that vaccines are effective in preventing serious illness, hospitalisation and death, and they remain our quickest path to normality."

"GCIS will also continue to play a pivotal role in proactive campaigns such as KeReady and Vooma Vaccination Weekends, which have succeeded in driving higher vaccination numbers, especially amongst younger people."

Healing through communication

Minister Gungubele also highlighted that communication can be key in bringing about healing psychological and physical scars following the devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal that caused infrastructure damage and led to a loss of lives.

"The disaster in KwaZulu-Natal reminds us that the effective dissemination of information based on engagement with communities and social partners is a key contribution towards healing psychosocial and physical scars, and restoring

a decimated landscape," he said.

He added that the floods of destruction in KwaZulu-Natal followed waves of COVID-19 infections that claimed many lives and livelihoods but which also fostered resilience, compliance and creativity in our nation.

He added that flood victims were left with many questions about how people could access relief and support services; where people could report missing persons; how affected family members could find out who was searching for their relatives; how they could find out if missing people were found; who could help them with food or accommodation; If government would provide assistance with funerals and if other schools would take in learners from schools that were damaged.

"These basic questions of survival and the necessities of life brought into sharp focus the responsibility that rests on the Government Communication and Information System as the centre of public communications in government."

"This is also a collective responsibility that is shared by all clusters, departments

and entities that make up the government communication system," he said.

Tackling corruption

Minister Gungubele said many of the worrying revelations at the Zondo Commission of Inquiry were only brought to light because citizens stepped forward and told their stories.

"As government, we know that there have been many occasions where we have fallen short. Public trust has been eroded and people are rightly sceptical at times."

He said corruption threatens South Africa's young democracy.

"It is therefore heartening that government has made huge strides with a number of successful investigations by the SIU [Special Investigating Unity], as well as the forfeiture of assets."

Minister Gungubele added that GCIS supported the anti-corruption drive by profiling various anti-corruption initiatives and programmes through different media platforms such as social media, public engagements, comprehensive messaging. – **SAnews.gov.za**

GCIS brings Budget Vote to the public



Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) visited the community of Hammanskraal and Pretoria Bosman station to inform citizens about the GCIS Budget Vote that took place recently. Here are some highlights of the GCIS communication machinery at work.



More departmental budgets announced



Government departments continued to table their 2022/23 financial year budget votes recently, Vuk'uzenzele shares some highlights.

Social development

Of the Department of Social Development's R257 billion budget, R248 billion will be spent on over 18 million social grants, said Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu.

In addition, R44 billion has been allocated for the extension of the Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant for one year ending in March 2023.

The department will continue to play an important role in the implementation of Pillar 4 of the National Strategic Plan on gender-based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). Minister Zulu said society's success in undoing the scourge of GBVF rests on the pursuit of comprehensive and targeted partnerships across different sectors.

The department has already trained and deployed GBVF Ambassadors to work closely with local community organisations and partnered



with community-based civil society organisations, through the National Development Agency (NDA), to ensure its services are accessible to GBV survivors.

The department has allocated R7.499 billion to the South African Social Security Agency's operations and grant payment fees, which will enable it to continue to meaningfully contribute to reducing poverty.

"SASSA will continue to provide temporary reprieve to individuals and families who are experiencing temporary distress – such as those they assisted during the recent floods in the Kwa-Zulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces – in order

to meet their basic needs whilst they are addressing their temporary challenges," said Minister Zulu.

In support of the department's commitment to finding a comprehensive legal solution to foster care challenges, R687 million (2023/24) and R871 million (2024/25) have been allocated for the implementation of the long-awaited Extended Child Support Grant.

Of the department's R944 million operational budget, R309 million will be spent on Welfare Services Policy Development programmes.

Justice and constitutional development

The Minister of Justice

and Constitutional Development, Ronald Lamola, said the department's budget is R22.4 billion, an increase of approximately R515 million.

The budget includes the allocation for the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), Public Protector and South African Human Rights Commission.

The NPA has been allocated R4.910 billion and the Investigating Directorate has been allocated R243.6 million. "In the 2022/23 period, we will continue to focus on restoring the NPA's credibility through addressing corruption," said Minister Lamola.

The Special Investigation Unit marks its 25th anniversary this year

with an allocation of R452 million. In the past financial year, it achieved significant recoveries through combining quality investigations with civil litigation, the Minister said.

He added that the courts continued to put special emphasis on convictions in sexual offences cases to combat GBVF.

Basic education

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said the department's overall budget is R29.6 billion, an increase of 4.9%.

Of this, R535 million has been allocated for administration; R3.3 billion for curriculum support and monitoring; R1.5 billion for teacher education, human resources and institutional development; R15.4 billion for planning, information and assessments; and R8.8 billion for educational enrichment services.

Minister Motshekga said the overall allocation for conditional grants is R23 billion; while the amount for maths, science and technology is R424.8 million.

For HIV/Aids, whose purpose is to support the HIV and TB prevention strategy, the department's allocation is R242.2 million; while the National School Nutrition Programme has been allocated R8.5 billion.

The sector has also been allocated R255.5 million for learners with severe and profound intellectual disabilities; and R2.9 billion for transfers to different agencies, Minister Motshekga said.

One of the department's priorities this year is to eliminate pit toilets from at least 1 000 public schools across the country, said Deputy Minister of Basic Education Dr Reginah Mhaule.

As part of addressing unemployment, Minister Motshekga said the department has created almost 596 job opportunities for young people in the sector. 

Mpumalanga residents assured that government will act

President Cyril Ramaphosa has assured the communities of the Gert Sibande District Municipality in Mpumalanga that all three spheres of government are hard at work to resolve their challenges and issues.

He was speaking during the Presidential Imbizo held in the town recently which was preceded by an engagement with business people.

The imbizo is a platform for community members to raise all of their challenges to government leaders including ministers, deputy ministers, provincial leaders and local government leaders led by the president.

Major challenges raised by community members at the Presidential Imbizo include the delivery of basic services, challenges in farming, bad road maintenance, land ownership issues, gender-based violence and femicide



President Cyril Ramaphosa speaking to the Gert Sibande District Municipality in Mpumalanga during a Presidential Imbizo held recently.

and youth unemployment.

"The issue of job opportunities is one that we are working on day and night and we are doing so at a heightened level as we seek to implement our economic recovery and reconstruction plan which we are working through as we continue to promote investment in our economy and as we continue to make our country more investment attractive.

"One of the things we

should be doing is to give [the youth] skills so that... they should be able to create their own jobs," the President said.

President Ramaphosa highlighted that the Imbizo – which have also been held in the North West and Free State – are invaluable for helping government to zero in on the area specific and general problems municipalities are facing.

"This Imbizo programme

is...a very meaningful process that allows our people to be able to talk to government and because we are a government that listens, as you talk, as you put your views across, we are able to take those issues that you are raising and address them. And as you have heard, various departments are going to come back and the rest of the province to address the various challenges that our people are facing."

The President acknowledged that the country has been facing several problems over the past two years which have caused setbacks.

"Our challenges are many as a nation and as a country. Just as we thought we would be able to address the many challenges that we face, COVID-19 descended on us. As we tried to see how best we can navigate our way

through COVID-19...it had a negative impact and we lost two million jobs in one year.

"As we began to see our economy [begin to re-emerge], and then the unrest in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng and that had a huge impact on our GDP. As we were trying to come to terms with that...then the floods in KZN, Eastern Cape and to a lesser extent North West, also descended," he said.

President Ramaphosa expressed belief that the country is resilient enough to overcome these challenges.

"We are South Africans we are made of stellar stuff, we will be able to find our feet beyond all these challenges. Our government... is busy on a continuous basis addressing the challenges and difficulties our people are facing," he said.

– Snews.gov.za

iSinkwe app makes reading easy

CHILDREN WHO struggle to read will soon get a helping hand from Bushbaby – a clever app that will assist learners with special needs.

Kgaogelo Letsebe

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Western Cape Education Department have partnered to launch a user-friendly application that will make learning to read easier for learners in the province.

Called iSinkwe, the app translates text into audio in any of the 11 official languages of South Africa.

Senior CSIR researcher Dr Georg Schlünz says the app will aid school learners facing reading barriers due to early literacy difficulties,



problems with their eyes, dyslexia and other special educational needs.

"iSinkwe is the isiZulu word for a bushbaby. A bushbaby is an easy way to remember how iSinkwe works. The big ears of the bushbaby represent how learners can listen to the audio that is added to their textbooks and other documents. The big eyes represent how learners can follow the text being

highlighted as the audio is played," he says.

According to Schlünz, iSinkwe was tested at three special needs schools in the province – Jan Kriel, Langerug and Tafelberg – between April 2019 and March 2022.

"The schools where iSinkwe was tested are part of a bigger project by the Western Cape Education Department to roll out assistive technology that

supports the local South African languages.

"There were broad smiles from the learners and nods of approval from the teachers. They were very excited and grateful for reading assistance in their mother tongue. We often see solutions making their way into the country, yet only catering for global languages like English and neglecting our other local languages," he says.

Schlünz says once the app has been downloaded, learners and teachers can upload their documents and match them with their audio and language preferences. He added that

said schools that intend on using the app will need to pay a subscription fee of between R100 and R200 per month.

The app in its current form is ready to be licensed by interested resellers. They can contact CSIR Commercialisation Manager Minal Soni at msoni1@csir.co.za.

Schools, publishers and others can visit www.isinkwe.com or contact the iSinkwe team at info@isinkwe.com for more information.

Corrupt government officials behind bars



Government has welcomed the lengthy prison sentences handed to two former City of Ekurhuleni employees, who were involved in a corrupt Information Technology tender.

Nilesh Singh and Andrew Mphusomadi, along with businessman Veloro Davids, were recently

sentenced by the Pretoria Commercial Crime Court.

Davids and Singh were each handed 10 years for fraud and 15 years for corruption, respectively. Mphusomadi, former IT senior manager at Ekurhuleni, will serve a 10-year prison sentence, of which four were suspended, for money laundering.



Minister in The Presidency, Mondli Gungubele, said the ruling served as a deterrent to any persons involved in any form of corruption.

"The sentencing is a testament to President Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address, which emphasised that government, guided by the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS), will take decisive steps to expose and punish corrupt activities, and reform institutions to make them stronger and more transparent.

"Fighting corruption and promoting good governance is a fundamental priority of this administration."

Gungubele said public servants must be resolute in stamping out corruption, and in creating a culture of service delivery and excellence.

"There is a lot of work being done by government and its partners to fight this scourge, and we are confident that we will see more convictions in corruption related cases. We applaud the Special Investigative Unit (SIU)

and the judicial system for their sterling work," said the Minister.

He added that government will not be deterred in its effort to break the cycle of corruption and build a better tomorrow, as it is one of the greatest impediments to the country's growth and development.

"As a society, we must not allow corruption to take place. It is up to each one of us to act with integrity at all times, and to be responsible and honest. We are making progress in addressing corruption in the country. By working together, we can ensure that those who are corrupt have no place to hide," Minister Gungubele said. **V**

The public can report fraud and corruption activities to the SIU on the hotline: 0800 037 774 or email siu@hotline.co.za. – SAnews.gov.za

Minister Zulu champions SheDecides

Social Development Minister, Lindiwe Zulu, has been appointed as a champion for a global and diverse movement driving change to ensure that every woman, girl and young person has the right to make decisions concerning their bodies, lives and future.

The SheDecides movement brings together government, civil society, media and donors to stand up and to speak out for bodily autonomy, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

"I welcome the opportunity to join forces with other SheDecides champions across the globe to advance an agenda that promotes and protects girls and women's right to make their own choices, including exercising



the right to gender identity without any fear of violence," Minister Zulu said.

As a SheDecides champion, Minister Zulu is

expected to advocate for political action that advances the fundamental right of girls and women everywhere to enjoy their bodies, to make their own

choices, to have access to comprehensive sexuality education. This includes the full range of quality care associated with sexual and reproductive life and health.

Accepting the position, Minister Zulu said she looks forward to working with all other like-minded champions and partners across the globe. She said she stands ready to speak out for policies and programmes that are responsive to women and girls' lived experiences.

Minister accepted the responsibility to be part of the global movement because its strategic focus complements ongoing initiatives by government

to address key population and development challenges.

These include the unacceptably high level of teenage pregnancies, gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), forced child marriages in some parts of South Africa, and hate crimes against members of the LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer) communities.

Minister Zulu is currently a member of the High-Level Commission on the Nairobi Summit on International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). – **SAnews.gov.za. V**

She Decides.



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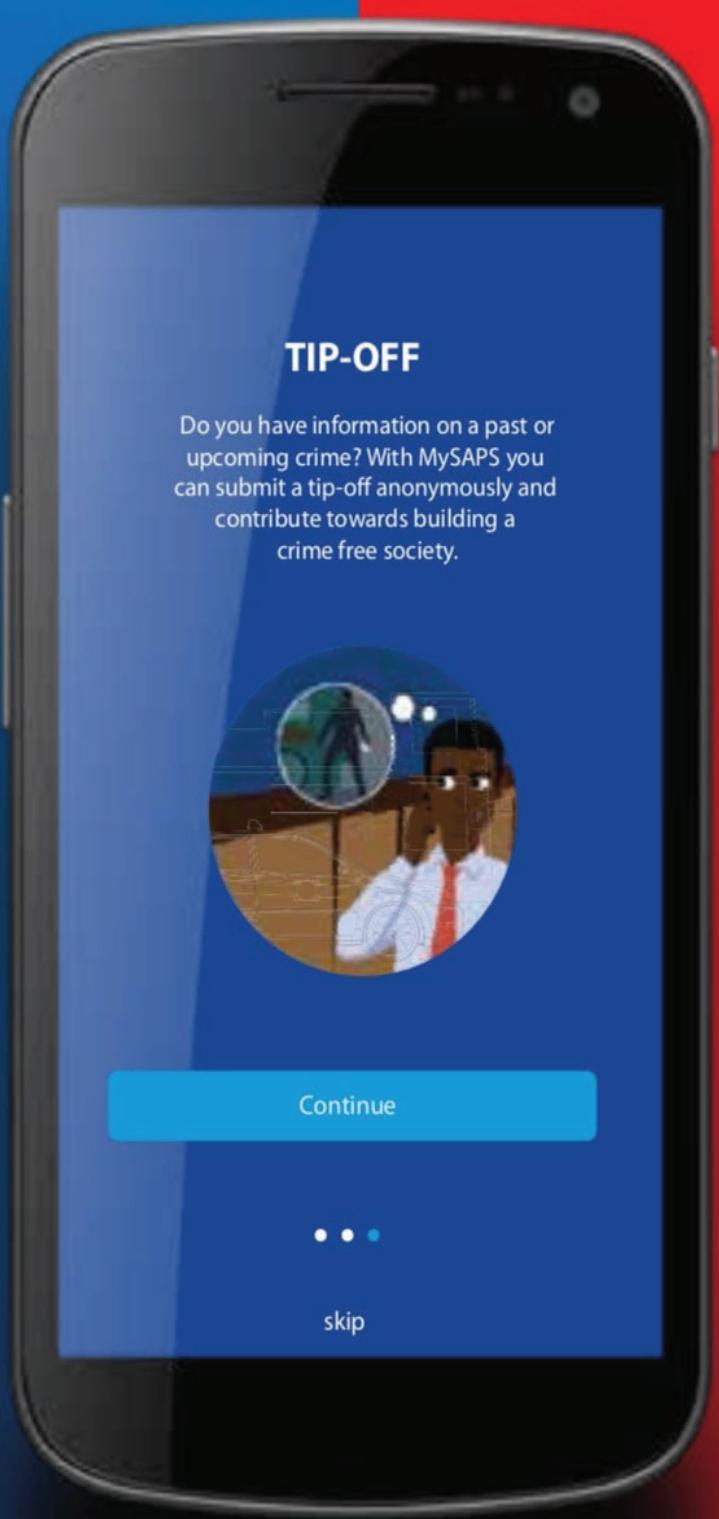
Select the Submit Tip-Off icon

3

Select the type of incident
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NDA grant boosts local company

Kgaogelo Letsebe

Silokotho Primary Co-operative in Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal, is one of the successful entities that used its National Development Agency (NDA) grant to grow its business.

This is according to the Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu, who visited the co-operative recently.

"We are here as part of the mandate of the NDA to make sure that they support co-operatives to help eradicate poverty in South Africa. The NDA is helping us realise the objective of government to create sustainable jobs. We want our people to get support from government for them to create sustainable livelihoods and Silokotho is doing that," said Minister Zulu.



■ Work underway at Silokotho Primary Co-operative.

Silokotho is a black-owned co-operative that was established in 2011 by three women and two men who were responding to challenges facing their community, including unemployment and orphaned children because of the prevalence of HIV / Aids.

Its core business was

sewing clothes on a small-scale basis and using the profits to support its orphan care programme. Of late, it has been producing personal protective equipment and technical textile products.

The NDA grant of R479 836.50 enabled Silokotho to purchase the equipment and machinery needed to

expand.

Thandazile Gqwaru, one of the founding members, says that as a result, they have been able to attract the attention of companies such as Foschini and Toyota, which had expressed interest in working with them, provided they could increase production to meet demand.

Gqwaru says the co-operative has 38 employees, of which 21 are female, 17 male, 14 are youth and one is physically challenged.

The NDA was allocated R219 million in the 2022/2023 budget to ensure that civil society organisations, including co-operatives, are supported in their quest to enhance government's objective of poverty eradication.

Minister Zulu said the Umlazi co-op is helping to fulfil the NDA's mission of creating 3 000 work opportunities in the current

financial year.

Gqwaru encouraged other co-operatives to follow in Silokotho's footsteps. "They must believe in themselves; have a clear goal, protect it and also implement it. Along the way, there will be challenges, but they must know that from the challenges come opportunities."

For similar opportunities, contact the NDA by email at info@nda.org.za or call 011 018 5500.

Did you know?

The NDA is an agency of the Department of Social Development responsible for empowering the civil society sector.

New dialysis clinic to save lives in rural areas

Allison Cooper

As many as one in eight South Africans have some form of kidney disease, with potentially fatal kidney disorders occurring three to four times more often in the African population.

The Western Cape Vredenburg Provincial Hospital's new dialysis clinic is set to save many lives as the community and patients from surrounding areas no longer have to travel weekly to Groote Schuur Hospital to receive treatment for kidney disease.

Vredenburg Hospital's Medical Manager Dr Silvio Morales Perez says having a dialysis unit in the rural area means a lot.

"It takes us to another level of care, with high quality and better outcomes for our patients. For



■ Dr Silvio Morales-Perez, Manager: Medical Services at Vredenburg Hospital and Dr Saadiq Kariem at one of the Dialysis beds in the unit. (Photo by Fabian November).

our clients, a service that is close to their home means high satisfaction for them and their families, decreasing the anxiety of weekly travel and the financial burden," he adds.

The Western Cape's departments of Health and

Wellness and Transport and Public Works entered into a public-private partnership with National Renal Care to open the facility, which has 12 stations and will initially cater for 36 dialysis patients.

Protect your kidneys

Kidney diseases can be caused by various factors, including hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, inflammation of the kidney or a blockage (kidney stones).

It can also be caused or made worse by hereditary factors, such as kidney cancer, or trauma to the kidneys, such as an accident or injury, says the National Kidney Foundation of South Africa (Nkfsa).

It's important to get your kidney function checked if you have one or more of the high-risk factors for kidney disease. These include being overweight, a family history of kidney disease, hypertension or diabetes.

The Nkfsa says that while kidney damage can't be reversed, there are ways you can keep it from

getting worse, such as following a kidney-friendly eating plan, being active and not smoking.

Chronic kidney disease is a progressive loss in kidney function over months or years. When kidney function falls below a certain point, it is called kidney failure. Kidney failure affects your whole body and can make you feel very sick. If untreated, it can be life-threatening, says the Nkfsa.

Usually, kidney disease starts slowly, with no signs or symptoms, and progresses over several years.

Kidney disease can only be diagnosed by a qualified doctor. If you suspect any problems with your kidneys, visit your closest healthcare facility.

Apply for community media funding

More Matshediso

If you have a community media project that promotes media development and diversity, the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) is encouraging you to apply for grant funding.

The MDDA 2022/23 grant funding applications are open and will close on 1 July 2022. Community media projects including radio, television, print and digital publications, as well as small commercial print are invited to apply.

According to the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the agency, Mzuvukile Kashe, the grant funding is meant to ensure successful empowerment, sustainability and transformation of the community media sector.

"The grant funding aims to encourage media ownership, access and control, particularly by historically disadvantaged communities and diminished indigenous language and cultural groups," says Kashe.

He adds that the application process will follow compliant, cost-effective and



transparent selection procedures in-line with corporate governance principles and compliance with the agency's legislative framework.

To ensure that the opportunity is granted to the majority of citizens, Kashe says the MDDA will conduct a national outreach programme to raise awareness on media development and diversity; and assist interested parties with the completion of application forms.

Criteria for funding

The following criteria are taken into account when the MDDA Board adjudicates an application:

- The extent to which the project promotes media development and diversity.

- The likely impact of the project on historically disadvantaged communities and persons not adequately served by the media.
- The likely impact of the project on historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups.
- The extent to which the project encourages ownership, control, participation and access to media by historically disadvantaged communities and persons.

- The extent to which the project develops human resources, training and capacity building within the media industry, especially among historically disadvantaged individuals.

- The quality and innovation of the project.
- Whether the project is likely to promote literacy and a culture of reading.
- Compliance with media laws.
- The existing or potential financial sustainability of the project.
- The independence of the project from any commercial media entity, any political party or the Government.

Essential requirements

Community broadcast projects must be:

- Registered as a Section 21 company, NPO, NGO or CBO.
- Hold a valid Independent

Communications Authority of South Africa community broadcast licence.

- Hold a valid tax clearance certificate.

Community print/digital projects must be:

- Registered as a Section 21 company, NPO, NGO or CBO.
- Hold a valid tax clearance certificate.

Small commercial print/digital media projects must:

- Be registered as a sole proprietorship, close corporation or private company.
- Qualify as: Independent media enterprises or initiatives that are run for personal gain as micro, very small or small business as classified in the National Small Business Act, 1996."
- Hold a valid tax clearance certificate.

For more information, call 011 643 1100, fax 011 643 1126 or email info@mdda.org.za

Western Cape sport rallies behind 2023 Netball World Cup



The Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport has handed over a new netball court to the Eden District Sports Council in Knysna. This is part of the preparation phase for the Netball World Cup in 2023.

Kgaogelo Letsebe

The Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS) has handed over R2 975 000 to the Eden District Sports Council in Knysna to promote sports devel-

opments at a grassroots level in the area.

The council is tasked with promoting sports participation in the district and acting as a link between the various affiliated sports codes. It has 35 affiliated sports federations.

Each year, the DCAS

provides funding to qualifying federations across the province. This year, special focus is being given to netball, ahead of the Netball World Cup that will be hosted in Cape Town from 28 July to 6 August 2023. MEC for Cultural Affairs and Sport in the Western

Cape Anroux Marais says they will provide funding to municipalities across the province to upgrade their netball facilities. The refurbished facilities will be used during the tournament and will thereafter benefit communities for years to come.

Netball teams from 16 countries around the world will be participating in the 16th staging of the premier competition. According to Netball SA, about 60 games will be played.

The last Netball World Cup was held in Liverpool, England, in 2019.

Tania Colyn, Head of Communication for the DCAS, says they are honoured to host the event. "The department is excited for the upcoming 2023 Netball World Cup as it will bring

a boost to the economy through sports tourism and will also give greater exposure to netball in our country."

As part of the build-up programme, Marais opened a new netball court in Hartenbos earlier this month.

The department is committed to helping athletes across all sports codes reach their full potential, by doing what it can to ensure they have decent facilities and equipment.

"While the industry may take two to three years to recover, the DCAS Major Events Component will continue to create space for sports tourism throughout the province by assisting federations to host inter-district, inter-provincial and international events in the Western Cape," says Marais.