



OFFICIAL OPENING: Premier Mandla Ndlovu and President Cyril Ramaphosa opened the plaque, while Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi looks on.



The Out Patient Department (OPD) at the new health facility.

1,6BN HOSPITAL TO SERVE THOUSANDS

Yoliswa Khumalo

MIDDELBURG - A new R1.6 billion hospital was officially opened on Tuesday, 4 August 2026, with President Cyril Ramaphosa hailing it as a boost for public healthcare and Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi revealing 11 more hospitals are in the pipeline.

The 220-bed district hospital will provide surgical, medical, paediatric, antenatal, post-natal, neonatal and gynaecology services. It also features three operating theatres, a fully equipped outpatient department, an Accident and

Emergency unit, maternity, kangaroo mother care and high care services.

Named in honour of King Nyabela of the Ndzundza-Ndebele people, the new hospital stands as a lasting investment in public healthcare and will support the delivery of comprehensive medical services for the people of the province.

The facility is intended to expand access to quality healthcare for communities in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality and surrounding areas, while strengthening the province's preparations for NHI.

Minister Motsoaledi described the hospital as state-of-the-art and challenged

perceptions about public healthcare.

"Those who believe they can only get treatment in private hospitals because you are not overcrowded in the wards, just come and try here and see if there's any difference," he said.

He said population growth was outpacing health infrastructure.

"The truth of the matter is that in our country, our communities are growing faster than our facilities. So we wish to pull up our socks to make sure that our facilities catch up with the population

Continues on page 2

President Cyril Ramaphosa.

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The newly built King Nyabela Hospital.

President officially opens King Nyabela Hospital

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growth. That is why we are opening new hospitals."

The minister also announced that government, with the assistance of the Presidency, had submitted a list of 11 hospitals to National Treasury, which has already established a unit to begin work.

"Through your help, we submitted a list of 11 hospitals to National Treasury. Out of those 11, two will be for Mpumalanga. This is not the end. It's the beginning," he said.

He highlighted two major gaps the list seeks to address. Mpumalanga is currently the only province without a mental hospital.

"All people who have got mental problems in Mpumalanga are all over the country looking for healthcare. We don't enjoy that. And we don't want that to happen."

He added that Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West and Northern Cape do not have academic hospitals.

"For this reason, the list that was submitted to Treasury includes an academic hospital for Mpumalanga."

Other facilities mentioned include Thsedimotso Hospital in Sekhukhune District, Limpopo, and Mapulaneng Hospital in Mpumalanga.

Motsoaledi said the state-of-the-art Limpopo Academic Hospital should be ready for opening within three years.

The minister dedicated a portion of his remarks to defending NHI, which he said was being "ravaged" in the media.

"The people called 'experts' in health in the media are those who oppose NHI or Universal Health Coverage," he said. "The real experts who drew up the programme gave it to WHO and the UN."

Turning to hospital management, Motsoaledi called on the CEO, clinical manager and nursing manager to take ownership of the facility.

"As we leave here, we've done our job. We've put up a facility for you. The ball is in your court."

Citing Health Ombud reports, he said complaints often related to management, maintenance and cleanliness.

"Every day we visit this hospital, I want to see myself in the floor. The floor must be like a new mirror. It doesn't need a lot of money. It just needs your will and your heart."

President Ramaphosa said the project created over 1 100 work opportunities, including more than 520 for women. He warned that acts of intimidation and violence relating to the construction of public infrastructure will not be tolerated and called on communities to safeguard the hospital for future generations.



One of the wards at the new hospital.

Lusanda Mathabela case stalled

MBOMBELA – After months of delays caused by outstanding forensic evidence and further investigations, the murder case of 20-year-old Lusanda Mathabela has moved a step closer to the High Court, despite being postponed once again.

The Nelspruit Magistrate's Court on Tuesday, July 28, granted the State a further postponement to allow prosecutors time to finalise the indictment against Katlego Mokoena (19) and Lungelo Sithole (19), who are accused of Mathabela's murder. State prosecutor Ntando Sihlangu told the court that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) had reviewed the police docket and was satisfied that the investigation had been completed.

"The instructions that I hold are to request a postponement for the indictment. It means the DPP advocate has gone through the docket and is satisfied with the investigations," Sihlangu told the court. She explained that the DPP requires at least three weeks to prepare the indictment before the matter can be enrolled in the High Court.

"Three weeks will be the minimum. It might be more or it might be less, but we are hopeful that by then the indictment will be ready," she said, adding that the matter should not be marked as final because the DPP is now ready to prosecute.

During proceedings, Advocate Patt Sekatane, representing Sithole, sought clarity on whether the outstanding DNA results and two witness statements that had led to the previous postponement had since been obtained. "On the last occasion, we were told that the DNA was outstanding and two statements were outstanding. I just want to find out from my learned colleague whether the DNA results and the two statements have been secured," he said.

At the previous court appearance, the State informed the court that the DPP had decided the matter should proceed to the



High Court but requested a postponement while awaiting DNA results linked to a possible sexual assault investigation, as well as two outstanding witness statements.

The state Prosecutor said the forensic evidence would determine whether additional charges should be included before the indictment was finalised. The matter took a significant step forward after the State confirmed that the DPP is satisfied with the investigation.

The only remaining step before the case can be transferred to the High Court is the completion of the indictment. The Mathabela family welcomed the court's decision to postpone the matter, saying they are willing to wait if it means the accused will face every charge arising from the investigation.

"We are okay with the postponement because of the indictment. We will wait patiently until this matter is finalised. These boys need to face all the charges," said family spokesperson Ally Sibiya.

Mokoena and Sithole have remained in custody since their arrest in connection with Mathabela's death. The 20-year-old was allegedly stabbed to death at her home in Mataffin in November last year. The matter was postponed to August 17 for the State to finalise the indictment before the case is transferred to the High Court.



The accused, Katlego Mokoena and Lungelo Sithole.

Mpumalanga Mirror

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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

2027/28 COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (CASP) AND 2026/27 BRIDGE FUND (BLENDED FINANCE) SUPPORT

The Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) hereby invites applications from qualifying farmers and agricultural enterprises requiring support through the **Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP)** and the **Mpumalanga Bridge Fund (Blended Finance)**. The Department seeks to support agricultural enterprises operating within Livestock, Grains (Highveld), Horticulture (Lowveld), Aquaculture, Agro-processing Value Chains.

Applicants will be considered for one of the following support mechanisms, subject to the applicable qualifying criteria and availability of funds:

A. Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP)

CASP Support is aimed at farmers and agricultural enterprises with an annual turnover of less than R1 000 000, who demonstrate the potential for commercialization, sustainable job creation and positive economic impact.

B. Mpumalanga Bridge Fund (Blended Finance)

Applicants who demonstrate commercial potential but require additional support to transition into sustainable commercial farming may be considered for the Mpumalanga Bridge Fund.

Minimum Requirements

Applications must comply with the following requirements:

1. South African certified ID copy, not older than 3 months.
2. Must be 18 years or older; and already farming.
3. Signed and fully completed application form.
4. A comprehensive business plan demonstrating a viable business model, sound management capacity and positive projected returns.
5. Proof to access markets.
6. Agro-processing proposals must demonstrate sustainable access to adequate raw material.
7. Valid proof of land tenure or ownership for agricultural purposes, including Title Deed; Lease Agreement (minimum of 10 years); Permission to Occupy (PTO); or Any other acceptable proof of land rights.
8. Legislative approvals, where applicable, including Zoning Certificate; Environmental Authorisation (EIA); Water Use Licence; Borehole Registration and Water Quality Results; Soil Test Results; SABS approvals; and Any other statutory approvals relevant to the proposed enterprise.
9. Applicants must be Historically Disadvantaged Individuals (HDIs).
10. A farming operation should be able to create permanent and/or seasonal jobs.
11. Government and parastatals employees or political office bearers are not eligible to apply.

Application Process

- Application forms are available from all DARDLEA District and Local Offices.
- Completed application forms, together with all required supporting documentation, must be submitted to the nearest DARDLEA District Office or DARDLEA Local Office.
- Applications submitted after the closing date, or by fax or email, will not be considered.

Important Information

- Submission of an application does not constitute approval for funding.
- Applications will undergo administrative screening, technical assessment and evaluation in accordance with the CASP Framework and the Department's approved qualifying criteria.
- Applicants may be recommended for either **CASP grant funding** or the **Mpumalanga Bridge Fund (Blended Finance)**, depending on their developmental needs, commercial readiness and compliance with the applicable qualifying criteria.
- Only successful applicants will be contacted. If you have not received any communication within **three (3) months** after the closing date, please consider your application unsuccessful.

Disclaimer: The number of projects to be supported will be determined by the available funds.

For more information:

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CLOSING DATE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2026



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President Cyril Ramaphosa praised Mpumalanga for escalating from coal power to wind power in an effort to ensuring electric power.



Wind turbines producing electricity.

Mpumalanga moves beyond coal power

Yoliswa Khumalo

BETHAL - Mpumalanga took a major step beyond coal last Friday with the official launch of the 155MW Ummbila Emoyeni Wind Farm.

The 25-turbine, 155MW project by Seriti Green is the first wind farm in Mpumalanga. It was officially opened alongside President Cyril Ramaphosa,

Premier Mandla Ndlovu and Seriti Group CEO, Mike Teke.

"Mpumalanga has powered South Africa for generations and now it is paving the way to a new future," Ramaphosa said.

"With load shedding behind us, we are encouraged that measures to end load reduction are bearing fruit."

The President said more than 1 000 jobs have been created at the project, with

about half going to people living within 10km. Over 18 500 people have registered on the Seriti Green Skills Hub, with more than 50% being women.

He also announced that government has completed the first phase of Eskom's restructuring with a plan for a new independent Transmission System Operator.

Premier Mandla Ndlovu said the project brings hope to Gert Sibande.

"I saw hope in the eyes of the people of this community, hope for jobs, hope for development, and hope for a better future," he said.

Ndlovu praised Seriti for investing in Bethal after studies showed the area has wind resources "even better than coastal winds".

He said the province remains committed to leading in both coal and renewables.

"Mpumalanga is not prepared to surrender its crown as the country's energy hub," the Premier said.

Seriti Chief Executive Officer, Mike Teke, said the company is moving beyond coal.

"Seriti is not a coal miner. We are an energy business," Teke said.

"We were told we were greenwashing. Today you can see 25 turbines delivering power."

Teke said Seriti used profits from coal to fund renewables and will continue investing in wind, solar and batteries in towns like Morgenzon, Davel and Middelburg.

"The just energy transition is not on paper. It is real. We are going to build the



Premier Mandla Ndlovu.

future of this country in energy, and nothing is going to stop us."

Seriti has pledged R14.5 billion to renewable projects. The company also donated vehicles to police stations and an ambulance to the Department of Health.



The Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Ms Makhosazane Masilela, will host the 2026 Women's Parliament in honor of the women of the province. The aim of the event is to present a platform for women of Mpumalanga to deliberate on issues affecting them and make their contribution in shaping the policies that promotes the empowerment of women. The event is scheduled to take place during a Sitting scheduled as follows:



Friday,
21 August
2026



10:00



Miriam Mogakane Hall
Bushbuckridge
Local Municipality,
Ehlanzeni District

The Women's Parliament will be celebrated under the theme:
"Following up on government commitments, for a better life".

The thematic areas to be discussed during the Women's Parliament are:

- Follow up on implementation of 2025 Women Parliament resolutions.
- Local Government Elections 2026: Youth abstention



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Ribbon cutting by Premier Mandla Ndlovu and Seriti Group CEO, Mike Teke.



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ADVERTORIAL



MEC for Culture, Sports and Recreation, Leah Mabuza showcased her dance skills during the celebration with the women, of course!



Health MEC, Sasekani Manzini.



Ingrid Khoza.



A youngster performing.



Education MEC, Lindi Masina.

Province celebrates women

Yoliswa Khumalo

AGINCOURT - Women from across the province gathered on Sunday, 9 August 2026, to commemorate the Provincial Women's Day under the theme: "Empowered Women Empower the Nation", with calls for greater economic participation, leadership opportunities, and support for women in rural and urban communities.

2026 marks 72 years since the adoption of the Women's Charter of 1954.

Addressing attendees, MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation, Leah Mabuza said the decision to hold the event in the area was necessary, stating that rural communities must benefit from government transformation and that systems must be modernised to deliver services.

"We acknowledge the 9th of August as a day to celebrate women, reflect on women's struggles and to highlight victories and contributions to the struggle for equal rights for all citizens of this country," Mabuza said.

The event placed strong emphasis on women's economic empowerment, with speakers noting that many women are still waiting to benefit from changes in government and parliament.

The MEC said systems must be modernised to ensure women in both rural and urban areas of Mpumalanga can access opportunities.

She stressed that the fight against gender-based

violence must be continuous.

"We are not only doing this on Women's Day. It's 365 days a year because every day we are dealing with perpetrators of violence against women," Mabuza said. The focus, she added, is on supporting victims and ensuring perpetrators are arrested speedily.

Concern was also raised about criminal groups operating in villages, including those posing as forums or business structures and engaging in extortion. Several members of such groups have already been arrested as part of ongoing operations.

Bushbuckridge was highlighted as one of the areas facing high levels of criminal activity.

Mabuza said progress is being made through daily arrests and targeted operations, including against individuals who flee from other provinces to hide in Mpumalanga.

"We are arresting on a daily basis those who think Mpumalanga does not have the capacity. We will continue to root them out," she said.

The event ended with a call for continued collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector to advance the rights and wellbeing of women in Mpumalanga.

Leaders reiterated that the province remains committed to creating real opportunities for women in business, agriculture, education, and leadership, while intensifying efforts to protect them from violence.

"Our responsibility does not end with commemorations. We must ensure that every woman in Mpumalanga feels safe, supported, empowered - not just today, but every day," Mabuza concluded.



Some of the women that attended the celebration.



Hosting executive mayor of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, Cllr Lydia Moerane welcomed the women Bushbuckridge.



Female exhibitors.



Officials handing over gifts.

Women celebrated through songs and dancing on the day.



ANC takes campaign to Nkomazi

Jabulane Khumalo

DRIEKOPPIES – With the final voter registration weekend behind them and the local government elections just two months away, the ruling party in Mpumalanga, the African National Congress (ANC), has intensified its campaign to secure support ahead of November 4.

The party hosted a door-to-door campaign in Schoemansdal on Monday, August 10, in Ehlanzeni, the province's largest region. The campaign was led by ANC provincial chairperson Mandla Ndlovu, accompanied by regional chairperson Jackie Macie, regional secretary, Folas Sibuyi and other leaders.

In an exclusive interview with Mpumalanga Mirror, Ndlovu said communities were pleased to see the ANC and recognised it as the governing party in Mpumalanga.

"They are raising issues about service delivery, and we are intervening on that front. Our people are happy with the level of intervention that the ANC is making, and they are confident that they will vote for the ANC.

"We have finalised the nomination process at the local level. We now have potential candidates whom the ANC, the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) and the National Executive Committee (NEC) will finalise in line with our guidelines. We expect to have confirmed candidates by August 18," he said.

Ndlovu added that the party would encourage voters to support ANC candidates endorsed by communities through the organisation's selection process.

"When we campaign, we will tell people to vote for ANC candidates who were endorsed by the masses and communities that participated in our selection process. As an organisation, we are satisfied with the progress made so far. What we hear in offices or from other



Senior citizens gifted with goodies.



ANC Provincial Chairperson, Mandla Ndlovu.

areas, is often not what is happening on the ground," said Ndlovu.

He noted that residents want the party to focus on improving service delivery and fixing local government. Although the ANC has yet to officially launch its manifesto, Ndlovu said it had already been finalised.

"Our manifesto is a very good one. There was a writer who compared the manifestos of political parties in South Africa in 2009 and concluded that the ANC's manifesto was the best. We are not moving away from the content of the ANC manifesto.

"We begin by telling people about the achievements of this administration because a good story must be told. Sometimes we fail to focus on the current administration and the progress that has been made since the dawn of democracy. We also acknowledge areas where we did not meet our targets and then present our programmes for the next five years," he said.

Ndlovu insisted that the ANC in Mpumalanga is election-ready.

"Our structures are ready, and we are going to put up a strong fight. We are going to win. We are not only going to finish the race; we are going to win it.

"We are going to fix local government, not only because of these elections, but because it has always been the programme of the ANC to strengthen institutions so that they can deliver services to our people," he said.

He acknowledged that the Nkomazi Local Municipality faces budgetary challenges, with 54% of its budget spent on salaries, leaving limited resources for service delivery. However, he said the ANC would work closely with the municipality, councillors, community structures and labour unions to address the challenges.

"We will prioritise the needs of the people. We have also agreed with the municipality that interventions are needed because some contractors have failed to complete projects on time.

"I am pleased with the intervention from the Department of Water and Sanitation, which terminated one contract and appointed a new contractor. This project is linked to many others in Nkomazi. If we fix the bulk water scheme, more than 80% of the people in Nkomazi will have access to water," he said.

Ndlovu said the project would be completed and commissioned in September.

"There is also a bridge not far from here, the Driekoppies Bridge, where the contractor is already on site. We have also completed the designs for a road project, and we are now finalising the budget for implementation. We have built many schools, demonstrating that when we engage with communities and listen to their concerns, we take action," he said.

According to Ndlovu, residents consistently raise the need for another school in Anevi whenever government officials visit the area.

He said government had accepted the request and was planning to build four additional schools in the province, beyond those already planned for the current financial year.

"We will be adding four schools, and one of them will be in Anevi. We do not make commitments on projects that have not been budgeted for. Therefore, when I speak about this plan, it is because funding has already been allocated.

"As for Anevi, people should not expect immediate construction. The process will begin with the design phase, and the school will be advertised for construction in the next financial year," he said.

Nkomazi service delivery woes to be fixed

Carlifornia Dube

MAGOGENI – Longstanding infrastructure and service delivery challenges took centre stage here on Friday, August 7, as residents called on the Mpumalanga Provincial Government to intervene.

The concerns were raised before Acting Premier and MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Speedy Mashilo, during the Provincial Executive Council (EXCO) Outreach Programme.

It was also officiated by provincial MECs, traditional leaders and other stakeholders who engaged directly with the community.

Residents used the platform to voice their frustrations over deteriorating public infrastructure and poor service delivery, saying persistent challenges continue to affect their daily lives.

The state of a local clinic also emerged as a major concern, with residents describing the facility as unsafe and in urgent need of repairs.

Community resident, Sandile Ntshangule told Mpumalanga Mirror that the clinic was facing several structural and health-related challenges.

"We have a serious situation at the clinic that requires urgent attention. The facility



COGHSTA MEC Speedy Mashilo addressing the community during the EXCO Outreach.

has several structural and health-related challenges, including cracked walls, deteriorating ceilings that are collapsing in some areas, a pit toilet that produces a strong and persistent smell throughout the clinic, and generally poor infrastructure," said Ntshangule.

Another resident, Abigail Nkuna, said damaged roads and the lack of bridges continue to put communities at risk during the rainy season. She said learners are often unable to get to school safely when rivers flood because there is no bridge to provide a safe crossing.

Nkuna urged the government to prioritise

the construction of a bridge to ensure learners and other community members can travel safely during periods of heavy rainfall. Responding to the concerns, Mashilo acknowledged the challenges facing the area and said the government would work with the Nkomazi Local Municipality and traditional leadership to accelerate service delivery interventions.

"We would like to thank the Nkomazi community for welcoming us and for raising issues that are important to them. The population in this area is growing rapidly, which is why it is essential that our projects deliver results. Through the

Department of Public Works, we have undertaken road infrastructure projects worth nearly R600 million in these areas," said Mashilo.

Nkomazi Local Municipality's MMC for Infrastructure Development, Cllr Thandeka Makamo, said the municipality was working with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport to improve damaged roads.

"We agree that our roads have been damaged, but the Department of Public Works has promised to assist us with a grader to repair some of the roads leading to schools, cemeteries and clinics. The Orlando Bridge will also be repaired before the rainy season so that learners can cross safely," she said.

Makamo also addressed the issue of illegal water connections, saying they continue to contribute to water shortages in parts of the municipality. She urged residents to work with the municipality by reporting illegal connections to help safeguard the area's water supply.

While the provincial government has committed to addressing the concerns raised, residents said they will be looking for tangible improvements in the months ahead to determine whether the promises made during the outreach programme translate into meaningful change.





Mpumalanga field rangers.

Manyeleti Nature Reserve field ranger Sonia Mogane.

Mpumalanga MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Khethiwe Moeketsi.



'We're at war' - MP rangers declare

California Dube

For Manyeleti Nature Reserve female field ranger, Sonia Mogane, protecting Mpumalanga's wildlife means fighting a battle few people ever see.

The ranger, who spends days away from her husband and children patrolling one of the province's poaching hotspots, says every shift comes with danger as rangers confront heavily armed criminals who are determined to kill some of Africa's most iconic animals.

"It's a war out there," Mogane told Mpumalanga Mirror during Mpumalanga's World Ranger Day commemoration at Songimvelo Nature Reserve in the Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality on Friday, July 31.

Mogane, who works in Manyeleti Nature Reserve, bordering the Kruger National Park, said poaching remains one of the greatest threats to conservation, with criminals relentlessly targeting the Big

Five.

"As a female ranger, we work in an area where poaching is very high. We have the Big Five that poachers are always targeting and where they constantly carry out illegal activities," she said.

She said the job demands far more than physical endurance. "It requires discipline, courage and the ability to keep sensitive information confidential because intelligence often determines the success of anti-poaching operations."

As a wife and mother, Mogane admitted that protecting wildlife comes at a personal cost. Rangers spend extended periods away from home, sleeping in the reserve and remaining on call, often missing important family moments.

"Sometimes you feel like you're sacrificing a lot because you love your job, but at the same time, you have your family. "Sometimes it feels like you're abandoning your children and your family in order to do what is required."

Despite the long days, dangerous

conditions and time away from loved ones, Mogane said every successful operation makes the sacrifice worthwhile. "When we apprehend poachers, we feel fulfilled because we know we've won one of the battles. At the end of the day, you feel your work has meaning."

The provincial World Ranger Day commemoration was hosted by the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) in partnership with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) and the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA).

Observed annually on July 31, World Ranger Day recognises the courage, commitment and sacrifice of rangers across the globe, while paying tribute to those who have lost their lives or suffered life-changing injuries in the line of duty.

Addressing the gathering, MEC for

DARDLEA, Khethiwe Moeketsi praised rangers for their resilience, courage and unwavering commitment to protecting the province's biodiversity.

"As we gather to commemorate World Ranger Day, we recognise that our field rangers are living examples of Madiba's values. "Through their dedication, resilience and willingness to place themselves in harm's way to protect our country's natural heritage, they demonstrate that true leadership is found in service to others," she said.

The event also honoured rangers who paid the ultimate price in the fight against wildlife crime, including former chief ranger, Mr Masinga, whose family received a R50 000 contribution in recognition of his service.

For Mogane and many of her colleagues, however, the battle continues long after the World Ranger Day celebrations end, as they return to the frontline in the ongoing fight to protect Mpumalanga's wildlife.



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Women's Month Celebrating Women in Tourism

Celebrating incredible women in tourism

Bongani Hlatshwayo is in conversation with female tourism practitioners, Mercy Ndlovu and Mmakgotso Mokuwane.



Mercy Ndlovu.

"Working hard towards one's goals pays off handsomely" - Mercy Ndlovu from Kwamhlanga

When and how did you embark on your tourism business - Nunuka Made? Share your experience with our readers.
"My business started when COVID hit. I was at my granny's during lock down and keeping myself busy with packing her things - I came across her cross needles and wool. These were the same needles she had taught me how to crochet with when I was still in primary school. I kept myself busy with them.

"It's then an idea crossed my mind and I started doing research on other things that I can do with crocheting. I turned a skill she had taught me, into a business.

"Five years later, I have attended so many markets and exhibitions and now I'm displaying at DECOREX."

How successful are you with your business and what business principles are you applying to make it work?

"Every year my business grows. It is still not where I want it to be, but it is growing from what it was. Nunuka Made has sold bags to international tourists from big events such as the World Travel

Market, Africa Travel Indaba, to now exhibiting alongside local and international businesses at the 2026 DECOREX. I do not have specific principles, but staying consistent and keeping up with the latest trends, has put Nunuka Made where it is now."

How tough is the competition and how do you overcome it based on the fact that you come from a previously disadvantaged community?

"My competitors have challenged me through access to platforms that are either expensive for us to reach or utilize such as website and being in store.

"I am still trying to overcome it through social media marketing as it is also a platform where more people can be reached and know about the products."

Are you into domestic or international tourism? Which countries and continents do you mostly attract?

"We are into both domestic and international tourism markets. I would like to tap into the European and African markets. This is because our products are not only colourful, but have a story of culture, roots and that we can teach others about our country, through our work."

Based on your experience, what is the future of tourism in Mpumalanga and the country as a whole?

"I am very happy and feel positive. There is so much we can achieve in welcoming tourists into our homes through crafting and culture. Tourism will always be there and it uplifts the communities and through exposure, more jobs are created."

Where do you place yourself in the next 10 years?

"With over 10 women working for me and a factory, I hope to have started a skills development program for school kids. I was taught this skill when I was in primary school and only used it to my fullest potential 20 years later. This has indicated to me that what we can teach kids at a young age, can enable them to do great things later or anytime in life."

What is your advice to up and coming females in the industry?

"The world we live in, doesn't favour anyone, but those who make a decision to take the first step, do get what they want. Working hard does pay off and you can not lose what is already yours."

CELEBRATING WOMEN IN TOURISM



Mmakgotso Mokuwane.



The Panorama Boutique Guesthouse.

Panorama Boutique Guesthouse is enigmatic

When and how did you embark on your tourism business?

"My story began with a simple love for food. That passion led me to study and qualify as a professional chef and that's where I discovered that great food and exceptional accommodations, go hand in hand.

"And that's, whereby, I decided that let me try and venture into accommodation because the two compliment each other - then that was late 2022 in December where we started trading as Panera Boutique Guesthouse."

How successful are you with your business and what business principles are you applying to make it work?

"A successful hospitality business is built on principles that guests feel valued and eager to return. Put guests first, deliver exceptional service, maintain consistent quality service, communicate effectively, empower your

employees and create a positive workplace culture, integrity and create memorable experience."

How tough is the competition and how do you overcome it based on the fact that you come from the previously disadvantaged community?

"The hospitality industry is highly competitive because guests have many accommodation options to choose from like your hotels, Guesthouses, Airbnb's so it's no longer about beautiful rooms only, but about creating memorable experience, maintaining high standards and adapting to changing customer expectations.

"But with regards to one of the challenges, it was building networks and exposure to different platforms. I overcame the challenges by focusing on quality, consistence and continuous learning.

"I invested on improving my skills,

building a strong team and embraced on marketing and partnership."

Are you into domestic or international tourism? Which countries and continents do you mostly attract?

"Yes, we are getting support from domestic and international tourism and we mostly attract the following: Germany, Spain, Nederland, United kingdom, Belgium, China, Eswatini and Mozambique."

Based on your experience, what is the future of tourism in mpumalanga and the country as a whole?

"The future is promising because Mpumalanga is one of the most iconic attractions, including the Panorama Route, Blyde River Canyon and the Kruger National Park.

"Across South Africa, tourism has the potential for expansion because our country offers incredible natural beauty, diverse culture, rich heritage, wildlife adventure.

"So, as a country, we need to invest in good infrastructure, safety of our tourists, digital marketing and sustainable tourism practice."

Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?

"I see myself expanding the business, creating employment, opportunities, especially young people and women by providing training and mentorship in the hospitality industry, positively contributing to the local economy and leaving a legacy of impact, excellence, empowerment and service."

Advise to up and coming females in the industry

"My advice for women entering this industry, is to believe in yourself and never allow your background to define you. There will be challenges, but every challenge is an opportunity to learn and grow. So, never be afraid to take calculated risks and stepping into leadership roles."



Hotel 247 beats the odds

Bongani Hlatshwayo

WHITE RIVER - This Woman's Month, we celebrate the boldness and creativity of one incredible woman: Khosi Mthlane whose business etiquette saw her undertake a huge task of reviving the renowned Hotel 247.

"My tourism journey began with a vision to contribute to the tourism industry in Mpumalanga and the whole world, while creating opportunities for my community. "In 2020, during one of the most challenging periods in history, we bought Hotel 247 from the Forever Group. We officially opened our doors in March 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the tourism industry had almost come to a standstill.

"Starting a tourism business during such uncertain times, was not easy. We faced many operational challenges: no occupancy at all and financial pressures. "However, I remained committed to the vision. Through resilience, continuous learning, strategic partnerships and adapting to changing market conditions, we have steadily grown our business. "Every challenge has strengthened my leadership and reinforced the importance of perseverance," she recounted her resilience which has paid dividends on her journey to success.

How does she measure her success and strength?

"I measure success not only by financial performance, but also by growth, sustainability, and the positive impact we make on our guests, employees and community.

"We have successfully established Hotel 247 as a recognized accommodation provider, serving both domestic and international visitors.

"The principles that guide my business include integrity, excellent customer service, continuous improvement, accountability, teamwork, innovation and investing in people," she recounted.

Taking into cognisance stakes are very high in the tourism industry, competing against giants, how has she been able to sail through?

"Coming from a previously disadvantaged community has presented additional challenges, including limited access to funding, networks and opportunities. Although, I have never allowed those challenges to define my future, instead I focus on delivering exceptional guest experiences, building strong relationships with clients and travel partners, embracing innovation and continuously improving our services," she recounted.

What's her focus in tourism: domestic or international tourism?

"Hotel 247 serves both domestic and international markets. Our domestic tourism



Khosi Mthlane.

includes government departments, corporate clients, schools and leisure travellers from across South Africa.

"Internationally, we mostly welcome Europeans and North America and neighbouring African countries. And most of our guests visit Mpumalanga because of the Kruger National Park, Panorama Route and our greenery land," she relates.

"Our Province has world-renowned attractions that continue to attract visitors from around the world.

"With continued investment in infrastructure, safety, skills development and digital marketing, Mpumalanga can

become one of Africa's leading tourism destinations."

Where does she see Hotel 24 in the next 10 years?

"In the next 10 years, I see myself leading a successful hospitality group that operates multiple accommodation establishments, while continuing to contribute to tourism development in South Africa.

"I also hope to mentor aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly young women and help create more opportunities within the tourism industry.

"I want to be recognised, not only as a successful businesswoman, but also as a leader who has positively influenced the growth of tourism and empowered others to achieve their dreams," she asserted.

How does she envision qualities of success?

"Believe in yourself, even when others doubt you. Success in business requires patience, resilience, discipline and continuous learning.

"Most importantly, stay true to your values and always deliver excellence. Challenges will come, but every obstacle is an opportunity to grow stronger.

"Tourism industry needs more women leaders and there is space for every woman who is willing to work hard and pursue her vision with courage," she concluded.

Oh, what an inspiration ladies, take the baton and go for it!

"Cancer took my jaw, but not my dream"- Artist finds hope!

California Dube

What started as a simple toothache, turned into a fight for his life for Mpumalanga-born artist, Senzo Hopewell Ndlovu, popularly known as Taken.

The 30-year-old Afro-soul artist, was pursuing his dream of making music when he was diagnosed with jaw cancer in September 2024.

Speaking to Mpumalanga Mirror, Ndlovu recalled how what he believed was an ordinary toothache, changed his life forever.

"It started more like a toothache. I went to the hospital to remove the tooth. After it was removed, a week later I had another toothache, so I went back to have another tooth removed.

"While removing it, the dentist realised the tooth came out too easily. It was almost floating. They also noticed a huge lump on my gums. I was sent for X-rays, and the scans showed that I had lost bone in my lower jaw."

They took tissue samples from the lump for laboratory testing. A week later, Ndlovu received devastating news. "I was told that I had jaw cancer and that I needed an operation to remove my lower jaw," he said.

On November 25, 2024, surgeons removed his lower jaw during a life-changing operation. He spent three weeks in hospital before being discharged towards the end of December.

Despite losing his jaw, Ndlovu said he was relieved when they confirmed that the surgery had removed the entire tumour.

"I was declared cancer-free after my first operation because the doctors removed the entire tumour. I was happy and excited because I thought my life would finally go back to normal," he said.

However, his recovery proved far more difficult than he had expected.

"The first week of January, I went back for a check-up because I was in a lot of pain. They told me that the plate inside my mouth, which was supporting my face because I no longer had a jaw, had become loose."

He underwent another operation in January 2025, but the same complication occurred again in March.

Determined to find a solution, Ndlovu sought treatment at a private medical facility in Pretoria after receiving financial assistance from members of the public.

"The operation went well, but the doctors told me I don't have enough tissue inside my mouth to cover the plate. I need to heal before more procedures can be done," he explained.

Although cancer was gone, its impact continued to affect nearly every aspect of his life.

"Losing my jaw affected me in many ways. I was a full-time musician before the operations, but afterwards I could no longer sing or perform. I was in constant pain, and that's still the case today."

The physical changes also took a heavy emotional toll. "My confidence dropped. At one point I wore a face mask all the time because I wanted to hide my face. I only recently stopped wearing it.

"I even stopped going out because I felt like I looked funny. People would talk about me behind my back and make jokes. It wasn't nice, so I isolated myself," he said.

Although grateful to have

beaten cancer, Ndlovu said his recovery remains an ongoing battle. "I'm still happy that I fought cancer and won, but healing has become my next battle. Even now I haven't healed, and it feels like I won't be going back to my old self anytime soon. My speech is still not good. I'm constantly in pain, and sometimes the swelling gets worse."

Living alone and without a stable income has made the journey even more difficult. "I rent a place and I'm unemployed. I can't do the things I used to do to make money, so I struggle with rent, food and even paying for my medical bills."

He still requires further reconstructive surgery, including bone grafting, but says financial constraints have brought his treatment to a standstill.

"I need more operations and procedures, but I simply don't have the money to pay for the medical bills," he said.

Although cancer threatened to take away the career he loved, music has become the very thing helping him heal emotionally. "I never thought I'd be able to go outside, smile or even laugh again. But music brought all of that back.

"Being in the studio and interacting with other artists helped me so much. Now I'm able to go out without worrying too much about how I look. I can even take pictures of myself again," he said.

Before his diagnosis, his single Emlanjeni reached number 76 on South Africa's most-played radio chart and was playlisted on

seven national radio stations.

His latest nine-track EP, Intandane, tells the story of his childhood and growing up as an orphan. He is now working on a deluxe edition, which will include songs inspired by his cancer journey and his faith.

Rather than relying solely on donations, Ndlovu hopes people will support his recovery by purchasing his music. "I felt it wasn't fair to always ask people for donations without giving something back. People can buy my music or donate towards my treatment. Every contribution will help me get the operations I still need," he said.

Despite everything he has endured, Ndlovu hopes his story will encourage others facing difficult battles to keep believing that there is hope beyond pain.

Those wishing to support his ongoing medical treatment, can contribute through his BackaBuddy campaign, Beyond the Jaw: <https://backabuddy.co.za/campaign/beyond-the-jaw>.

Donations can also be made via his Capitec account, while supporters can contact him through his social media platforms or WhatsApp.

Banking details:

Capitec Bank
Account number: 1412495480
Linked number: 066 074 5650
Account holder: SH Ndlovu

Connect with Taken

Facebook: Intandane Hopewell Titus
Instagram: @Takenrsa
X: @TakenRsa
TikTok: @Takenrsa1
Bookings: 067 499 1681
WhatsApp: 066 074 5650
Email: taken.rsa1@gmail.com





LUCKY DUBE'S MUSIC LEGACY RESTORED

A new generation of stars to be nurtured!

Bongani Hlatshwayo

ERMELO - As the echoes of Lucky Dube's timeless melodies continue to inspire the world, the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, led by the MEC for Education, Lindi Masina, accompanied by the MEC for public works and transport, Thulasizwe Thomo, Gert Sibande District executive mayor, Cllr W Mngomezulu, Msukaligwa executive mayor, Cllr SM Nkosi, proudly and officially handed over the Lucky Dube Secondary School of Performing Arts to the local community and the school's governing body and administrators led by the school principal.

It rightly took place on the birthday of the late Lucky Dube on 3 August, 2026. He was one of South Africa's greatest musical sons who conquered the reggae both at home and abroad.

Quite very interesting, is that the concept brought about by the provincial government to honour Lucky Dube with the Lucky Dube Secondary School, is that it majors in artistic subjects ranging from music to dramatic arts - a pointer that the deceased had inspired his own children not to enter music empty-headed, but insisted that they study music, his first born son, Thokozani Dube, very light in complexion, followed what his master's voice had insisted, hence after his demise, he held court and kept it alive.

"I'm exhilarated at the fact that the province decided to honour our father's legacy and went on to build this monumental school, whereby, music and the arts, in general, will be taught here under the banner of our father, Lucky Dube.

"We're so ecstatic as a family and four of us his children are fully involved in music and I have kept his original band since then and it will perform here at the occasion.

"As a family, we want to extend our deepest and sincere gratitude for this momentous gesture which will assist to always keep his legacy alive, this time, through education by teaching learners at the school the finer art of music and the arts, in general," said Thokozani Dube.

Speaking to MEC for Education,



Lindi Masina, was very inspiring in that exuded a dedication of developing the arts among the youth

through academic education in the different arts disciplines, commencing from secondary school up to tertiary level.

"We realised, as a department that many a youth, is interested in the arts and also a big percentage is in academics, yet their strength lies in the arts.

"So, why not nurture them whilst young so that they can ooze out their talent in the right direction and the arts will flourish in the province and spread countrywide and eventually, internationally.

"The likes of Lucky Dube, Ray Phiri who had started his own music institution, had embarked into music willingly and found fertile ground which nurtured them and they grew in stature.

"It's the very notion that this concept will be spread to other areas with artists of similar backgrounds and skills, that will enable us to introduce such programmes in other areas.

"We are glad as a province to have also celebrated his birthday posthumously and in a positive manner that will develop numerous learners whose future looks bright from the renditions we listened to of the school choir and different soloists - the future looks bright for our learners and as a caring government, we will ensure it develops further in all areas," concluded MEC Masina.

Yours truly was mesmerised by the quality of music rendered by the school choir, including the national anthem. Soloists excelled in their different renditions. And lo, the guests were taken aback by the performance of The Slaves, the late Lucky Dube's band - by the way they all originated from Ermelo, popularly known as "Emlomo."

A new generation of artists, storytellers, composers, dancers and performers will step onto a stage built with hope, vision and boundless opportunity.

Designed to nurture excellence in music, dance, drama and the performing arts, this state-of-the-art school boasts modern classrooms, a fully equipped administration block, a library, a computer centre, a kitchen block, quality ablution facilities, extensive external works, covered parking, walkways, paving, ramps and rails, water and two multi-purpose combo courts.

This is far more than a school, it is a grand stage where hidden talent will be discovered, nurtured and presented to the world to marvel.

It is a sanctuary where dreams find their voice, where melodies become movements, where stories become performances, and where creativity becomes a pathway to opportunity.

It is a living monument to the enduring legacy of the late international music icon, Lucky Dube—a legacy that reminds us that music has the power to unite nations, heal communities and change lives.

On the day a legend was born, the curtain rises on a new generation.

The music continues.

The dream lives on.

A Province at work for all!

#KubhunyaLuftuli

#BabizeBonke

#RhandzaXikoloXaWenaCampaign

*Going down memory-lane, Lucky Dube left his rural home in the mid-80s with producer, Richard Siluma - he happened to be his uncle when both ventured out to the City of Gold to seek fame in the star-studded Johannesburg.

At the time, yours truly was a Showbiz journalist for City Press and later Bona Magazine - with his God-given singing talent that had been influenced by his love for music, reggae music, in particular, and influenced by reggae maestros of the time the late Peter Tosh, Bob Marley and many others - he was perfect for Gallo Music stable with his rare reggae skill, whilst the rest were into what was then called: Bubblegum music.



The Lucky Dube Secondary School of Performing Arts is the first institution of its kind in the Place of the Rising Sun.

It stands as a powerful demonstration of a caring government in action, a government of the people by the people and for the people determined to open the doors of learning and culture for all.

It is using quality education as the greatest instrument to transform lives, restore dignity and unlock human potential.

This investment is a demonstration of a commitment of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government to build a province where every child, regardless of background, has the opportunity to discover their gift, refine their talent, realise their dreams and contribute meaningfully to the creative economy.

It is an investment that will uplift families, create sustainable livelihoods and inspire generations yet unborn.





Bajabulise Thela with her parents.

Dream comes true for beauty queen

MBOMBELA – Miss African Beauty Universe South Africa, Bajabulise Thela touched down on home soil on Friday, July 31, following her crowning on July 18.

The Kanyamazane-born and former Miss Mpumalanga beauty queen was warmly welcomed by family, friends and members of the community during her homecoming celebration at Kruger

Mpumalanga International Airport, hosted by the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation. Thela described the occasion as a proud and emotional moment. She expressed gratitude to her parents for their unwavering support throughout her journey.

"My mom knows where this all started. She believed in me more than I believed in myself. She carried me throughout this journey. I remember when my dad used to tell me I was the most beautiful girl on earth. I've always been his princess. Even my siblings have been there for me. Their hearts have always been with me."

Thela said she is proud to be a kasi girl who rose from the dusty streets of Kanyamazane to the international stage. She emphasised that she is not ashamed of where she comes from and hopes her story will inspire other young girls.

"I want to show other girls that it's possible. Look at me — I'm here, and I never thought I would be. There's

so much I can say, and I'm overwhelmed with excitement. Thank you for the love you've shown me. That support kept me going throughout this journey. I'm ready to conquer the universe.

"When people genuinely support you, you never want to disappoint them. This crown is not mine alone; it belongs to all of you. You showed up in numbers, and although I was anxious, seeing all of you here means so much to me. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart."

She also expressed her joy that her parents are still alive to witness this milestone after the family had endured many trials and tribulations.

"I want to thank my mentor, Bokang. I'm looking forward to this journey. I'm ready to carry South Africa's flag with pride, and this is my time. I also want to thank the Almighty."

Former Miss South Africa, , was also present to support Thela as her mentor during the homecoming celebration.



Newly crowned Miss African Beauty Universe South Africa welcomed at the airport.



Get nelzified with DJ Nelz

Bongani Hlatshwayo

Do you wanna feel 'The Nelzified Experience' from DJ Nelz?

Have you ever experienced her combination of repertoires she mixes on the decks?

Well, her real name is Anele Shabangu who has intermixed style intermixing Ana piano, House, Afro Tech, R&B, Soul, Gqom, Deep House and Afro House rhythms into one formidable repertoire that's exclusively DJ NELZified Experience that will keep you on the dance floor throughout her performances that suits all occasions.

Well, DJ Nelz is said to be a rising and passionate DJ from Kwa-Thema, Springs based in the former East Rand on the far East of Johannesburg.

DJ Nelz has been steadily building her presence in the local music scene as she embarked on her musical journey wayback in 2019.

She's renowned for her energetic performances and deep love for music, whereby, she has developed a reputation for creating vibrant and engaging atmospheres wherever she performs.

Armed with a versatile and crowd-focused approach, she blends the multiple genres she's renowned for, whilst delivering sets that move seamlessly between soulful grooves and high-energy dance rhythms.

Her ability to read the crowd and curate the perfect musical experience keeps audiences engaged and on their feet.

DJ Nelz, has over the years performed at various venues and events, whereby, she garnered her musical experience and recognition for what most critics describe as her smooth mixing and strong stage presence.

Besides performing, she has been expanding her brand through music releases, in that she has released eight DJ mixes showcasing her revolving sound and creative musical direction.

Having been guided by mentorship and driven by a genuine passion for music, DJ Nelz is committed to growing her craft and establishing herself as a respected name within South Africa's DJ culture.

"Where are you destined to?" She aptly pronounces: "The sky is the limit!"

She Nelz is all yours for: The Right Vibes, The Right Energy and The Nelzified Experience!

She's yours for the taking. We'll be watching the space!

Interested in booking her anywhere in the country? Call 0832100827 - djnelz101@gmail.com; [@djnelz_sa](https://www.facebook.com/djnelz_sa); and Facebook: DJ Nelz.





Champions!



Players lift trophy.

WRC crowned champions

Jabulane Khumalo

White River Rugby Club have been crowned Mpumalanga Super League champions once again, completing a remarkable back-to-back title triumph after a season marked by determination, resilience and plenty of hardfought battles.

The champions overcame the physical demands of the season, enduring every tackle, try, setback and comeback on their way to retaining the provincial crown.

The final whistle sparked jubilant celebrations among the players, coaches and supporters as the club savoured another historic achievement.

The scenes were filled with smiles, hugs, emotion and a strong sense of brotherhood as the team celebrated the reward for months of hard work and commitment.

For White River Rugby Club, the consecutive championships represent more than just trophies. They are a testament to the strength, unity and

fighting spirit that have become synonymous with the club.

With the Mpumalanga Super League title secured for a second consecutive year, White River have once again underlined their status as one of the province's leading rugby clubs. Back-to-back champions — a team, a club and a family united in success.

Bella's Hosts Successful GBV Half Marathon

Bella's Athletics Club hosted its annual Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Half Marathon on Saturday, August 8. The 21km race started in White River and finished at Mbombela Stadium. Samukelo Ngobese was the first male athlete to cross the finish line, clocking 01:05:06. He was followed by Thabang Mashego in second place with a time of 01:06:43, while Sabelo Mathabatha finished third in 01:07:58.

In the women's category, Fikelephi Mdaka claimed victory with a time of 01:09:06. Bathabile Malope-Zitha finished second in 01:17:49, followed by Donne Green in third place with a time of 01:24:39.

In the junior category, Moses Schata took first place in 01:23:04, followed by

Antonietta Giuricich in 01:46:17. Kevin Forssman finished third with a time of 01:28:28.

In the 10km race, Mswawenkosi Buthelezi claimed top honours, crossing the finish line in 29:39.

Sizwe Ngobese followed closely in 29:59, while Tebogo Pulusa finished third in 30:15.

In the women's 10km category, Nomvula Sithole clocked 38:01 to secure first place. Roselina Nyawira finished second in 38:27, while Vanessa Mkhabela took third place in 39:00.

In the juniors' 10km category, Rico Coetzee crossed the finish line first in 31:29. Vanessa Mkhabela finished second, while Justin Mashego claimed third place with a time of 32:34.

