

## ABOUT US

The eZasegasini Metro is the official eThekweni Municipality publication through which ratepayers and residents are kept informed about news, entertainment and perspectives in the greater Durban region.

It is also a forum for readers' views.

It hits the streets fortnightly on a Friday, with 450 000 copies distributed throughout the region.

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**Street Light Faults:**

0800 331 022

**Robot Faults:**

0800 333 467

**Emergencies:**

031 361 0000

**Ambulance:** 101 77

**Revenue Billing:**

031 328 1200

**Metro Police**

Central: 031 300 3333

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Inner West: 031 709 0808

North: 031 561 1297

Outer West: 031 767 1222

South: 031 910 7321

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North: 031 561 1101

South: 031 311 5844

Umkomaas: 031 311 5407

Outer West: 031 311 2717

Inner West: 031 311 6118

**Overgrown verges**

**and trees:**

Central: 031 205 1418

Inner West: 031 311 6916

North: 031 566 3712

Outer West: 031 767 3908

South: 031 311 5733

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080 131 3013

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**Abandoned Vehicles:**

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# Tariff talks with street traders

DERRICK DLAMINI

ETHEKWINI'S Business Support Unit is meeting street traders to encourage them to pay the tariffs they owe to the city.

Tariffs were increased in February and many traders have been refusing to pay, saying they could not afford the hike and that they were not properly consulted.

Recently, a meeting was held at Isipingo, with a second series of meetings scheduled for 9 May in Pinetown's Civic Centre. More meetings will be held in other areas later.

The meetings were in a bid to allay traders fears and to reach a common understanding on the increase, said the unit's Acting Head, Philip Sithole.

This emerged in a report Sithole presented to a city council Economic Development and Planning committee meeting, held at the City Hall recently.

Some committee members had earlier raised concerns about the transparency of the consultation process between traders and the unit.

Sithole said the decision to increase the tariffs had been reached after research by the unit. This included visits to other major cities in the country, to learn what they were charging.

The service costs incurred by the municipality were also taken into consideration in setting the tariff, Sithole said.

"When one reviews the municipal costs involved in removing debris (created by traders), and providing business skills, training and safety to traders, surely the increase is far too little.

"The R420 for six months is

very low compared with other cities, which charge traders double this amount. In fact, traders without shelters were supposed to pay R250 a month, and those with shelters to pay more.

"But because we understand they are struggling financially, we opted to let traders with shelters pay only R420 for a six month-period and R35 a month for those without shelters," said Sithole.

However, Nomonde Ndlovu of the Simunye Women Traders Association believes the city's failure to consult properly has led traders to a state of uncertainty about the increase.

## Willing

"With an organ such as the eThekweni Informal Economy Forum, we are willing to discuss the matter at a high level and reach a compromise. As much as we'd like to co-operate with the city, we're not convinced we were properly consulted. We had hoped the resolutions taken during the 2006 Informal Trade Conference would be disseminated to all our structures so that we could have made an effective input," she said.

Sithole also expressed concern about street traders who fronted for bigger, established businesses.

"It's a sensitive issue that requires a holistic approach and we'd like to appeal to traders to come forward and expose those who continue to embark on these appalling acts."

He said fronting and "other pertinent matters" would be discussed in talks with traders representatives.

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# ID book help provided

KEN MCHUNU

ETHEKWINI residents were able to apply for identity documents and birth certificates last month simply by going to their nearest school or community hall.

Over the past three weeks, Home Affairs and the city's Community Participation department sent staff in a mobile station on a birth registration campaign. It toured 33 public venues across eThekweni, including Westville prison and the Magatsha Tribal Court.

Samuel Khwela, of Home Affairs, said the campaign, by the municipality and the provincial government, was aimed at helping people get



**Thabani Sikobe has his fingerprints taken for an ID. Helping him are officials Mandla Mngundu and Lucky Mandwe**  
Picture: SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

IDs and birth certificates, so they would be able to access government grants.

He said: "Scores of people in eThekweni's rural areas, townships and informal settlements are unemployed. "Most barely have appro-

# PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE



**JAILED at Suncoast Casino as part of the Cancer Association's Jail 'n' Bail fundraising drive are songbird Jae, Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo, and singer Verd. Jailbirds, including celebrities, business personalities and local movers and shakers were recently locked up for an hour or the day as they tried to raise money for this worthy charity**  
Picture: BONGA MSIMANG

# Language policy

THEMBA NYATHIKAZI

THE municipality's Language Policy was due to be signed into force today.

Council documents will now be available both in English and isiZulu, and in other official languages on request.

Correspondence will be replied to in the language of the letter received.

Cllr Zandile Gumede, Chairwoman of the council's Masakhane, Grants-in-Aid, Non Discrimination and Non Sexism committee, said: "This policy promotes equal access to municipal services and programmes by removing communication obstacles."

According to the results of the last census, the languages

spoken in KwaZulu-Natal are isiZulu (80.9%), English (13.6%), isiXhosa (2.3%) and Afrikaans (1.5%).

Statistics for eThekweni are thought to be similar.

The policy, which was adopted by the council in December last year, will promote the equitable use of isiZulu and English to facilitate access to government services and information, said Gumede.

Mayor Obed Mlaba was due to sign a scroll which was in support of the adoption of the language policy.

He said the municipality would ensure the equitable use of working languages and would redress past imbalances.

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# Support for small business

DERRICK DLAMINI

THE city's Business Support Unit recently hosted a meeting to present its programmes to empower the small business sector.

At the meeting, big businesses were urged to pledge support for emerging entrepreneurs – a plea which did not go unheard.

KZN Oils promised to donate R250 000 towards the city's SMME fairs over a five-year period.

The company's Chief Executive, Rajen Reddy, said: "As the product of SMME development programmes ourselves, it is appropriate for KZN Oils to express our support."

The company – which now has a turnover of about R700-million a year, and was looking at expanding – would be involved in mentoring and training programmes for SMMEs.

Also at the meeting, the unit's Acting Head, Philip Sithole, outlined a number of the city's development programmes that have helped transform the small business sector.

Russell Curtis, of the Durban Investment Promotion Agency, said linking big and small businesses would "bring in fresh ideas, new market access and technologies" to grow the SMME sector.

Bonke Dumisa, of the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said: "It is our wish to see SMMEs benefit from a variety of development programmes that the city has, especially in the fairs.

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could not bear the long queues experienced at any Home Affairs offices, as well as those who could not afford a bus trip to town to reach us.

"We intended to make up for the many repeated blunders that have earned our department a rather flawed reputation in recent years."

There have been many complaints from the public about bribery and preferential treatment at Home Affairs offices.

Incorrectly spelt names, wrong dates of birth, and the exclusion of certain names in IDs are also commonplace.

But Khwela said the department was cleaning up its act. "We want to show the community that, despite all the mistakes of the past, we are still committed to serving them. It is their needs we are most concerned about."

He said the response to the campaign had been overwhelming and Home Affairs was now looking at taking it beyond KwaZulu-Natal.

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