ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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By 2030 eThekwini will be Africa's most caring and liveable City

23 June 2026 [Issue 466]

FREEDOM OF THE CITY HONOUR BESTOWED ON SA NAVY

ETHEKWINI Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba bestowed the South African Navy with the Freedom of the City honour, a significant occasion that coincided with the commemoration of World Hydrography Day on 21 June.

The ceremonial honour, also known as the Right of Entry Parade, took place on Dr Pixley KaSeme Street.

The event formed part of a three-day programme aimed at raising awareness of hydrography and strengthening the long-standing maritime partnership between the City and the armed forces.

Addressing attendees during the parade, Mayor Xaba commended the South African Navy for its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the nation and protecting its territorial integrity.

The Freedom of the City parade symbolised unity and mutual trust between the Municipality and the armed forces. Through this honour, the Mayor granted sailors permission to march through the City with swords drawn, colours flying, drums beating, and bands playing, transforming the inner city.

EThekwini came alive with pride as eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba officially bestowed the Freedom of the City honour to Chief of the South African Navy, Vice Admiral Monde Lobese during a ceremonial parade through the streets of Durban.

UPDATE ON REPATRIATION AND DEPORTATION OF MALAWIAN NATIONALS

ETHEKWINI Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba said the South African government, working with the Malawian High Commission, is making significant progress in ensuring that displaced Malawian nationals are repatriated and deported in a orderly and humane manner.

"We previously announced that we had secured the Drive-In site to serve as a temporary staging area to help fast-track the deportation and repatriation process," said Mayor Xaba. "One of the advantages of the Drive-In site is that access can be controlled to help minimise the movement of people and enable us to conduct an accurate headcount of those requiring assistance."

He thanked the Ward 26 community, including both residents and businesses, for their co-operation in establishing this site.

Mayor Xaba reiterated that this is not intended to be a permanent facility. "The City assures investor partners that the Drive-In site is being used temporarily as a staging and processing facility and will not compromise the site's long-term development. Current operations form part of a short-term, co-ordinated intervention and are expected to conclude on 30 June. This will enable the City to continue advancing transformative investment opportunities on the site, including the proposed amusement park development."

Mayor Xaba said to date, close to 4 000 people have been deported or repatriated.

"On 19 June we were able to dispatch eight buses carrying 784 people returning to Malawi. To speed up the process, we have now migrated from deportation to repatriation which has several advantages."

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ASIMILE SIYAQHUBA: EMPOWERING THE YOUTH AS THE NATION'S FUTURE LEADERS

ETHEKWINI Municipality has made youth development a strategic priority through the work of its Youth Development Office, which operates within the Mayoral Parlour.

Highlighting the gains made to empower young people in the City is the Five-Year Service Delivery Milestones campaign being rolled out under the theme Asimile Siyaqhuba: Resilience Through Adversity.

The campaign highlights transformative efforts that have shaped service delivery during the 2021 to 2026 term of office.

The Youth Development Office continues to play a pivotal role in empowering young people socially, academically, and economically. Through a range of targeted interventions, the office is helping to build a generation of confident, skilled, and self-reliant young residents.

HONOURING TOP MATRIC LEARNERS

One of the office's most celebrated initiatives is the annual Matric Awards Ceremony, held at the beginning of each year. The event recognises academic excellence among matric learners across eThekwini.

The programme honours the Top 20 matric achievers, comprising the Top 10 overall best-performing learners in the metro and an additional Top 10 learners from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

Each of the Top 20 achievers receives a full bursary to pursue studies at a South African university of their choice, in any field of study. Many beneficiaries go on to enrol in scarce and critical skills programmes, contributing to the country's future workforce needs. The Municipality invests close to R1 million annually to support students throughout their tertiary education journey.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPORT

Through its Back-to-School Programme, the Youth Development Office assists learners from disadvantaged communities by providing essential educational resources.

The programme supplies learners with calculators, mathematical sets, school shoes, dignity packs, toiletries, and sanitary products for female learners. During the 2025/26 financial year alone, more than 1 500 learners from 30 schools around the Municipality benefited from the initiative.

STUDENT RELIEF FUND

The office also has a Student Relief Fund that assists deserving students with registration and admission-related costs, including upfront fees required by tertiary institutions.

During the 2025/26 financial year, approximately R1.3 million was allocated towards this programme, helping young people take their first steps towards obtaining qualifications and securing better opportunities for the future.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Every June, as part of Youth Month celebrations, the Youth Development Office hosts a Business Challenge aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs whose businesses have been operating for more than a year. The Municipality, along with its partners, provide practical business resource vouchers that contribute directly to business growth and sustainability.

Under the programme, the top three entrepreneurs receive business support resources valued at approximately R70 000 collectively, while a further 17 participants share resources worth around R170 000.

YOUTH TALENT SHOW

The Youth Talent Show is an annual programme that creates opportunities for young people to showcase their creative abilities. Previous winners have gone on to make a name for themselves in the creative space.

Furthermore, throughout the year, the Youth Development Office delivers a variety of projects and empowerment initiatives, including sports tournaments, career expos, leadership development programmes, skills development workshops, and community-based interventions designed to equip young people with the tools needed to succeed.

CITY AWARDS 20 YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

THE City's Youth Development Office awarded business support resources to 20 young entrepreneurs who successfully participated in the Mayoral Youth in Business Challenge.

Through the programme, the top three participants received business resources valued at R30 000, R20 000, and R10 000 respectively, while the remaining beneficiaries each received resources to support the growth and sustainability of their businesses.

Siyabonga Mngadi of Izipho Zokuphila (Pty) Ltd secured first place. His business specialises in tracking devices. Mngadi expressed his appreciation for the programme and the support received.

"The challenge has been very beneficial to my business. The resources awarded through the programme will assist me in sustaining and growing my enterprise," said Mngadi.

Second place was awarded to Olwethu Radebe of Recycling Animal Waste (Pty) Ltd, while third place went to Nosihle Mthembu of Plumbing Construction.

The 20 beneficiaries represent a diverse range of sectors, including skills development, technology, cleaning services, construction, digital and film production, plumbing, manufacturing, catering, and agriculture.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Chairperson of the Governance and Human Resources Committee, Councillor Nkosenhle Madlala, said the initiative demonstrates the City's ongoing commitment to empowering young people and supporting entrepreneurship.

"The initiative targets those already operating businesses but facing challenges that may hinder their growth and development. By supporting these entrepreneurs, we are investing in the future of our local economy and creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods," said Councillor Madlala. In further good news, he also announced that the Municipality has partnered with Gagasi FM to provide advertising airtime to the top three winners, giving them valuable exposure and expanded marketing support.

In partnership with the City's Business Support Directorate, beneficiaries will be monitored and evaluated to ensure the effective implementation of the programme.

EThekwini Municipality continues to champion youth empowerment and economic participation through meaningful investment in young entrepreneurs.

PEWG PARTNERSHIP ACCELERATES ECONOMIC GROWTH

THE Presidential eThekwini Working Group (PeWG) partnership between government and the private sector is entering a new phase aimed at accelerating economic growth, following a period of stabilisation.

At a high-level meeting on 18 June, representatives from the Presidency, private sector, and all spheres of government aligned on targeted interventions to unlock investment in eThekwini. Central to this phase is the introduction of Focused Intervention Teams (FITs), tasked with addressing structural barriers to economic expansion. The FITs will prioritise manufacturing and industrial zones, infrastructure partnerships, development planning and charges, and the rehabilitation of problem buildings. These interventions aim to improve the investment climate, strengthen service delivery, and enhance economic competitiveness.

A key proposal includes enhancing the One Stop Shop for investors by creating a single-entry point with delegated decision-making authority. EThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele highlighted that the partnership's initial phase successfully stabilised the local economy and strengthened collaboration.

He noted strong tourism performance as a key outcome and indicated that the next phase will expand into additional sectors to sustain growth and drive job creation.

Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Palesa Phili welcomed the extension of PeWG.

SEMINAR HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

A STRONG message of good governance and the importance of achieving a clean audit was highlighted at the eThekwini Municipality Audit and Risk Assurance Services Good Governance Seminar held at the Moses Mabhida Stadium on 19 June.

The seminar aimed to strengthen the understanding of the role of internal audit, promote accountability mechanisms, build institutional resilience and enhance public trust.

It also highlighted how to best leverage technology for service delivery and equipped leaders with actionable insights.

Held under the theme, 'Strengthening Municipal Accountability and Enhancing Public Value Through Good Governance,' eThekwini Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni said: "Good governance is a daily pledge that defines our sacred duty to the people of eThekwini."

She said that officials must implement audit action plans, improve contract management, and strengthen internal controls at all stages of the process, including holding any official accountable for any contraventions.

Acting City Manager, Lindo Mkhize, said every rand spent must translate to the needs of communities.

Chief Audit Executive, Mapule Radebe said the seminar provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on the importance of good governance, risk management, business continuity, and accountability.

HIGH-TECH FIRE VEHICLE TO BOOST EMERGENCY RESPONSE

THE CITY'S commitment to saving lives took centre stage as eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba unveiled a state-of-the-art R29 million Aerial Ladder Platform fire vehicle.

The investment marks a major step in strengthening public safety and enhancing the City's emergency response capability.

The addition comes as the City faces increasingly complex fire and rescue incidents, particularly in densely populated areas and high-rise buildings.

EThekwini Deputy Mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni said the unveiling signals a bold step towards stronger protection for communities.

A state-of-the-art R29 million Aerial Ladder Platform fire vehicle was unveiled to strengthen the City's emergency response across eThekwini.

"This investment ensures our firefighters respond faster, reach further, and save more lives," she said.

The advanced unit features a 44-metre ladder capable of reaching buildings up to 14 storeys, significantly improving firefighting and rescue operations.

The 35-tonne vehicle is designed for rapid deployment, enabling a quicker response during emergencies.

It is equipped with a hydraulic platform, rescue cage, and high-capacity water system, allowing firefighters to operate safely at height.

Advanced stabilisation technology of the vehicle also ensures safe and efficient operations during high-risk incidents.

CITY AWARDS FUNDING TO ARTS, CULTURE, AND FILM SECTOR BENEFICIARIES

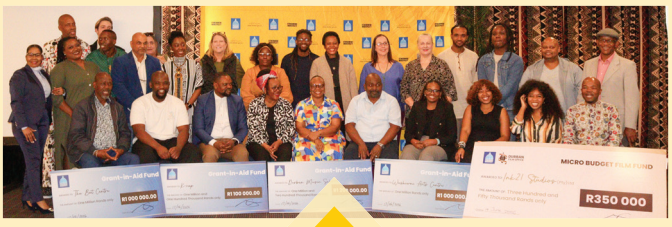
DURBAN'S arts, culture and film sectors received a major boost on 19 June when the Municipality awarded funding to 28 beneficiaries, reinforcing its commitment to nurturing creative talent, preserving cultural heritage and growing the City's creative economy.

The funding was awarded during a ceremony held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre through the Municipality's Arts and Culture Grant-in-Aid Programme, the Micro Budget Film Fund, and the Film Development Fund.

Funding allocations ranged from R100 000 to R1.2 million, depending on the scope, scale, and developmental impact of the approved projects.

The beneficiaries were selected through a rigorous adjudication process following a public call for applications.

Chairperson of the Community Services Committee, Councillor Zama Sokhabase, congratulated the beneficiaries, highlighting the vital role that the arts, culture, and film industries play in preserving heritage, promoting social cohesion, and creating employment opportunities.



EThekwini Municipality awarded funding to 28 arts, culture, film and television sector beneficiaries through its Grant-In-Aid and Film Development programmes.

ETHEKWINI TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT THE AFRICA DEBATE

Invest Durban's Russell Curtis delivered a compelling overview of South Africa's investment landscape at The Africa Debate held in London.

THE global spotlight turned to London recently as investors, policymakers and corporate leaders gathered for The Africa Debate 2026, a prestigious event that attracted more than 800 high-level delegates from across the world. Among the distinguished participants was eThekwini Municipality-through its investment promotion arm, Invest Durban, who stood out as the only African city accorded a plenary "City Spotlight" platform.

Representing the City, was Invest Durban's Russell Curtis who delivered a compelling presentation that positioned Durban as a strategic investment destination within South Africa and the broader African continent. At the heart of the presentation was Durban's status as Sub-Saharan Africa's largest and busiest port. This critical infrastructure, Curtis explained, is being strengthened through a major public-private partnership expansion, designed to enhance efficiency and unlock new economic opportunities.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AT THE DURBAN TOURISM BUSINESS AWARDS

Durban's tourism sector celebrated excellence, innovation, and resilience at the 5th Durban Tourism Business Awards on 18 June.

DURBAN'S tourism industry gathered in celebration of achievement at the 5th Durban Tourism Business Awards. The awards paid tribute to entrepreneurs, tour operators, accommodation establishments, tour guides, event organisers, filmmakers and tourism pioneers.

Speaking at the awards, eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba highlighted the role tourism plays in driving economic development.

This year's category winners are as follows:

- Emerging Entrepreneur -Fresh Food with Thuladu
- Event Owners and Promoters- Hollywoodbets Durban July
- Green Tourism- Shongweni Farmers Market
- Accommodation Hotel- The Oyster Box
- Accommodation Non-Hotel- The View Boutique Hotel
- Meetings, Exhibitions and Special Events- The Oyster Box
- Tour Guides- Nikiwe Mchunu
- Tour Operators- Travel Bug Tours & Safaris
- Rickshaw Pullers- Maqhinga Nxumalo
- Crafters- Amabheshu Innovators
- Visitor Experience- Phezulu Safari Park

Film Makers- Trinity Pictures.

Exceptional Achievement Award Winners:

- Creative Industry- DJ Tira
- Hospitality- Zai Restaurant
- Investment- Devmco Group
- Rural Investment and Township Economy Development- Indlondlo Cultural Village
- Product Owners with Disabilities- Wheels of Waves – Reece Smith.

AWARD-WINNING CRAFTER PLANS BUSINESS EXPANSION

NKAZIMULO Ngidi demonstrated that tradition and innovation can go hand in hand. His company, Amabheshu Innovators, which produces traditional animal-skin attire and leather bags, won the Crafters Category at the 5th Durban Tourism Business Awards. He took home a R50 000 prize which he intends to reinvest into his business. He plans to purchase materials, expand production, create jobs, and transfer valuable skills with the prize money. His products, already popular among international visitors, continue to showcase Durban's rich cultural heritage globally.

His success follows of support from the City through business development programmes, infrastructure investment, and structured trading opportunities. Ngidi credits the Municipality for its continued support of micro, small, and medium enterprises, enabling businesses to grow and thrive.

Nkazimulo Ngidi, founder of Amabheshu Innovators, won the Crafters Category at the 5th Durban Tourism Business Awards.

PRAISING INNOVATION IN THE CLOTHING AND TEXTILE SECTOR

EThekwini Municipality was honoured with the Partnership of the Year Award at the KwaZulu-Natal Clothing and Textile Cluster annual general meeting.

THE KwaZulu-Natal Clothing and Textile Cluster (KZNCTC) on 17 June, celebrated a significant milestone, marking 20 years of industry impact during its annual general meeting. For two decades, the KZNCTC has played a pivotal role in strengthening the competitiveness, sustainability, and inclusivity of KwaZulu-Natal's clothing and textile sector through strategic collaboration, innovation, skills development and industry partnerships.

The occasion also featured the KZNCTC Awards, which honoured outstanding achievements and contributions across the clothing and textile value chain.

The City was honoured with the Partnership of the Year Award in recognition of its collaborative efforts and ongoing support for the sector.

The Mr Price Group received the Value Chain Development Champion Award, while Jockey (Ninian & Lester) was recognised as the Productivity Champion.

If you would like to submit feedback or contribute to eThekwini Weekly Bulletin

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