ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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

27 May 2025 [Issue 415]

DRAFT 2025/26 MEDIUM TERM REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FRAMEWORK TABLED

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba engaged in public consultations with various sectors to unpack the 2025/26 Draft Budget and Integrated Development Plan. The Draft Budget was tabled at a special Full Council meeting on 26 May. It will be tabled by Mayor Xaba for approval on 29 May.

ETHEKWINI Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba tabled the draft 2025/26 Medium Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework (MTREF) for consideration at a special meeting held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre on 26 May.

The budget prioritises infrastructure rehabilitation to accelerate service delivery as well as economic development.

The MTREF will be tabled by Mayor Xaba for approval by Council on Thursday, 29 May.

The MTREF comprises a total budget of R70.9 billion for the upcoming fiscal year. This includes a R63.6 billion operating budget and a R7.3 billion capital budget.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba reaffirmed the City's focus on accelerating services, improving resilient infrastructure, and ensuring economic growth that leaves no one behind.

The Municipality has revised several proposed tariff increases, following an extensive public participation process held from 22 April to 17 May.

For the 2025/26 MTREF, the Municipality will allocate R588 million to build bulk infrastructure for various catalytic projects.

This budget is expected to attract billions of rands of investment in development projects that will catapult the City into a new era of prosperity.

"Last year, when I assumed office, we indicated that our priorities will include among others, provision of uninterrupted water supply, improving customer care, and building an economically sustainable City. The budget emphasises turnaround strategies for trading services to enhance efficiency and improve the quality of life of residents," said Mayor Xaba.

"We have noted the water-related issues that were raised during the budget hearings. Despite these challenges, the Municipality is making significant strides in transforming our water and sanitation services," he said.

To provide a reliable and efficient water supply, the total operating budget for water is R11.3 billion which includes R5.3 billion for bulk water purchases and R1.9 billion for free basic water. The capital budget for this service in 2025/26 is R1.15 billion which will focus on the Water Loss Intervention Programme and the replacement of water pipes.

To continuously supply residents with electricity, the Municipality will allocate an operating budget of R23.6 billion, of which R18.7 billion (or over 80 percent of the budget) for bulk purchases from Eskom. R578 million will be spent on free basic electricity.

The capital budget for electricity is R859 million.

The focus of the 2025/26 electricity budget is on network refurbishment which includes planned maintenance, commissioning of 17 new substations, and the upgrade of a further 30 substations.

To ensure seamless provision of waste management services, the Municipality has set aside an operating budget of R1.9 billion which includes R454 million for community-based contractors and R85 million for refuse bags.

The capital budget for this service is R375.5 million.

GLOBAL WATER SUMMIT TO HELP TO ACCELERATE SERVICE DELIVERY IN ETHEKWINI

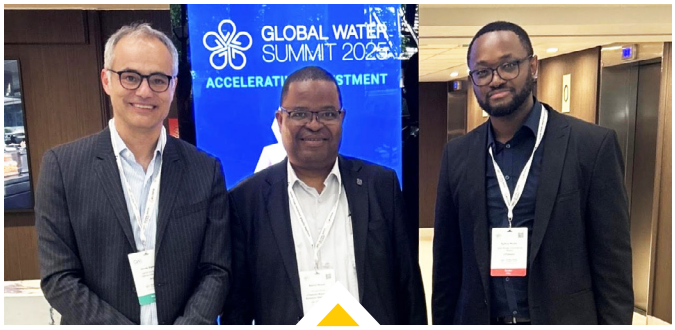
MANAGEMENT from the City's Water and Sanitation's Unit participated in the Global Water Summit that was recently held in Paris, France.

The event attracts water leaders from across the globe with the purpose of sharing ideas and experiences to accelerate water security.

Representing the City was Acting Executive Director For Trading Services Ednick Msweli and Senior Manager for the Commercial and Business Branch Sydney Masha.

During the engagement, the City had an opportunity to present its Water and Sanitation Turnaround Strategy which is currently being implemented. The strategy aims to reposition the City to be able to meet current and future water and sanitation demands.

Msweli described the summit as "insightful" adding that lessons learnt from the summit would be incorporated into some of the initiatives that the Water and Sanitation Unit is working on.



Management from the City's Water and Sanitation Unit during the Global Water Summit in Paris, France.

"We were part of a panel of dynamic utility leaders who spoke about successful examples of change management in their water utilities which is something we are implementing as part of the Turnaround Strategy. We learnt about various successful initiatives in performance-based non-revenue water, improving collections and billings, tariff reform, municipal-to-industrial reuse, change management, customer service, workforce/recruitment, and connecting the unconnected," he said.

Msweli said other key engagements of the Municipality was on alternative water sources, desalination, and water reuse projects.

The City is exploring alternative water sources to supplement ground water which is currently not sufficient to meet the growing demand.

"The aim of the summit was to gather water leaders from across the globe to find solutions to water scarcity and ensure that people have access to water and sanitation services by 2030. It is an official pledge to the UN Water Action Agenda," he said.

Some of the highlights in the summit included funding water projects and access to alternative project financing models, such as public-private partnerships.

Innovations into resilient infrastructure strategies mitigating the impact of climate change on water resources, breakthrough in water recycling and water conservation efforts that supports ecosystem and urban development were also discussed.

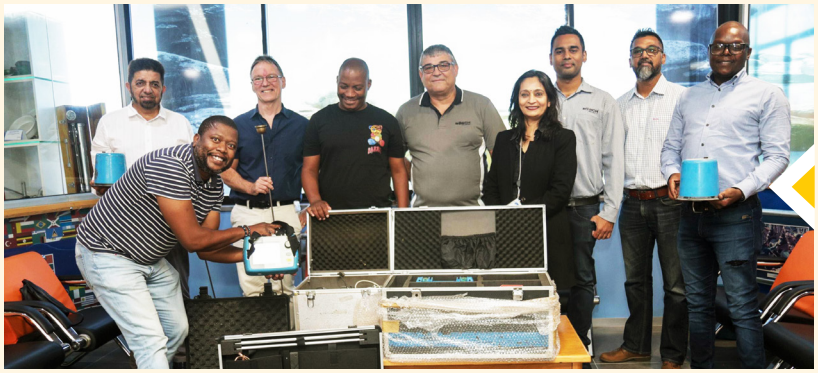
Non-revenue Branch receives donated underground leak detection equipment

REDUCING non-revenue water continues to be a key priority for the City. Bolstering these efforts was the recent donation of underground leak detection equipment from Bosch Holdings to the City's Water and Sanitation Unit (EWS).

EWS Deputy Director Simon Scruton said the donated technology equipment will supplement the City's interventions in water management and reducing water losses.

"This equipment will be used to find non-visible leaks; these are the leaks that have not come to the surface. There's a lot of work we are doing to reduce non-revenue water as this issue remains a concern for us," he said.

Parellin Naidoo from Bosch Holdings said: "We have been doing a lot of work for EWS the past few years, it's a proud moment for us to share this equipment with eThekwini to help them in their endeavours to reduce non-revenue water," he said.



The City's Non-Revenue Branch received a donation of underground leak detection equipment.

Other initiatives to reduce physical losses such as bursts and leaks in the distribution system, includes the creation and maintenance of new pressure managed zones, with a minimum and maximum operating pressure of 20-25m and 50m respectively. Pressure management contributes significantly to leakage reduction.

To enable accurate water usage tracking, efficient water use management and to provide equitable water billing, the City continues to install water meters in households that previously did not have meters. This includes replacement of meters older than 15 years. This project is faring well with 12 891 domestic metering installed as of March this year.

CALL FOR EVENT PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS WITH DURBAN TOURISM

DURBAN Tourism is inviting competent, experienced and tourism investor driven event organisers to submit high-impact destination promotion proposals for the 2025/26 Winter and Festive Season (July 2025 to January 2026) events calendar. Proposed events should offer strong destination marketing value, reflect the vibrancy and diversity of Durban, and possess the attributes to attract both domestic and international visitors.

This call is underpinned by eThekwini Municipality's objectives of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Plan 2, of Economic Development and Job Creation.

It aims to strategically position Durban as the preferred world-class premium leisure and business travel destination as well as sporting capital to attract visitors and investment.

This supports the strategic objectives of the Durban Visitor Marketing Strategy as approved by Council in October 2022,

to position Durban as Africa's playground.

The process of inviting destination promotion proposals from event organisers will enable Durban Tourism to implement the City's destination promotion and marketing through an advanced destination events calendar.

These events will be aligned to Durban's travel seasonal promotion and activations calendar.

The advanced composition of Durban travel packages in collaboration with tourism trade for the inclusion of events through visitor travel itinerary packages will also promote the City.

Successful applicants will enter into destination promotion partnership agreements with eThekwini Municipality for a stipulated period, tailored to the event's scale and strategic alignment.

Key objectives of partnership events are:

- To serve as a draw card to attract visitors to Durban.
- Enhance Durban's destination brand visibility across key markets.
- Stimulate economic activity and job creation within the tourism ecosystem.
- Increase occupancy rates across accommodation sectors.
- Extend visitor length of stay and expenditure through bundled experiences.
- Promote tourism dispersal into townships, rural areas, and tourism precincts.
- Leverage earned media coverage and PR to profile Durban globally.
- Secure long-term benefits for the City through trade exchange, tourism investment, legacy building.

Click here for full details of the call for proposals: https://visitdurban.travel/news/call-for-event-partnership-proposals-with-ethekwini-municipality.

R5M BOOST TO AIRLINE INVESTMENTS AND TOURISM EFFORTS

THE DUR-Direct Route Development Committee recently received funding to the value of R5 million from the Tourism Business Council of South Africa. This will be used to boost the collective work of securing more international flights to the City as well as promote investment and tourism to the KwaZulu-Natal region.

The DUR-Direct Route Committee is a collaborative initiative focused on developing and supporting direct air routes to Durban's King Shaka International Airport. It is comprised of representatives from Invest Durban, Dube Trade Port, Airports Company South Africa, Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal, and Durban Tourism. Other partners include the provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs, their

Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa from the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (third from the left) hands over the cheque to members of the DUR-Direct Route Development Committee which included Nhlakanipho Nkontwana from the provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs; Russell Curtis from Invest Durban; and Sihle Ngcamu from Trade and Investment KwaZulu Natal.

Tourism and Film Authority, and Ezemvelo Wildlife.

The purpose of the committee is to attract and support airlines in launching and maintaining direct international and domestic flights to Durban.

This is part of a broader strategy to boost and reposition Durban and KwaZulu-Natal as a prime tourism and business investment destination, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The initiative also links in with the work of the Presidential eThekwini Working Group 4 (PEWG) that focuses on Tourism. The PEWG is a public-private partnership led by the National Department of Tourism, the eThekwini Executive Director for Economic Development and Planning Cluster, and business leadership. This includes various chambers of commerce, the hospitality industry body FEDHASA, investment and tourism authorities together with other sector bodies at all spheres of government.

Russell Curtis from Invest Durban thanked the Tourism Business Council of South Africa Board and the CEO for continuing to expand their resourcing partnerships in Durban for the benefit of all.

"We know that this is just the start of more to come."

INNOVATION TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT JCI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

DURBAN has once again proven its place on the global stage as a hub for innovation, leadership, and economic collaboration. The recently concluded 2025 Junior Chamber International (JCI) Africa and the Middle East Conference brought together over 500 delegates from 35 countries, igniting powerful conversations and tangible action under the theme 'Cultivating Resilient and Innovative Leaders'. Hosted by JCI South Africa, the conference elevated the voices of young changemakers, entrepreneurs, and regional leaders in an unforgettable week of impact.

Held from 21 to 24 May, the conference was marked by a standout side event, the Learning Exchange Programme on innovating for impact: advancing the leather, footwear and textiles sectors through collaboration. This session was hailed as a milestone for sector transformation and regional cooperation. It featured a dynamic panel including the Durban Textile and Leather Incubator, which is the Municipality's collaborative initiative, together with the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency. Also included were industry leaders from the South African Footwear and Leather Export Council (SAFLEC), the Fibre Processing and Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority, and Innovate Durban. The programme tackled key issues such as export market access, small, medium and micro enterprise incubation, digitalisation, and innovation. Real-world entrepreneurial journeys were shared by local small, medium, and micro enterprises who were also exhibiting onsite, offering attendees authentic insight into their products, challenges and triumphs of starting and scaling businesses.

A local exhibitor showcased her impressive hand-craft at the Learning Exchange Programme held in Durban as part of the Junior Chamber International Africa and the Middle East Conference.

Nerisha Jairaj, Chief Executive Officer of SAFLEC, shared the model of understanding the market and global consumer behaviour, explaining export opportunities and how to enter new markets.

This conference laid a foundation for cross-regional investment, innovation, and youth empowerment, as it was revealed that R25 million is projected in economic investment for KwaZulu-Natal.

AUTOMOTIVE CLUSTER DRIVES GROWTH

THE new implications for the automotive sector, shifting geopolitics, and African Growth and Opportunity Act renewal were among the topics discussed by an expert panel at the Durban Automotive Cluster (DAC) annual general meeting which took place at the Toyota Wessels Institute of Manufacturing Studies in Kloof.

Officials from the City's Economic Development Unit attended the AGM where the panel unpacked what it means for local manufacturers and policymakers as well as South African trade with the imposed US tariffs.

The cluster's partnership with the City aims to stimulate employment and growth in the local automotive sector by addressing regional challenges. The cluster's key pillars include attracting investment, enabling infrastructure and technology, developing a talent pipeline, increasing competitiveness through innovation, research, and sustainable practices, and driving employee productivity through relevant training.

Officials from the City's Economic Development Unit attended the Durban Automotive Cluster annual general meeting.

CUSTOMER SERVICE SYMPOSIUM COMMITS TO A RESPONSIVE SERVICE CULTURE

THE importance of revamping customer service systems and embracing digital transformation took centre stage at the three-day Customer Service Symposium hosted at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre. It was led by two of the City's units namely the Municipal Institute of Learning and Sizakala Customer Service Unit.

The symposium brought together industry leaders, government representatives, and service delivery professionals to explore gaps, opportunities, and innovations that can improve the customer experience across various sectors.

Director of Sizakala Customer Services, Mavuso Tshabalala, emphasised the urgency of evolving Municipal services to meet modern customer expectations. "If we are serious about restoring public confidence, we must commit to a service culture that is responsive, digital, and inclusive. People don't just want service; they want to be heard, helped, and respected," said Tshabalala.

Throughout the symposium, speakers addressed the evolution of customer service in the digital era. Many called for the integration of Artificial Intelligence and streamlined systems that put the customer at the centre of operations.

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

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