



Issue no. 32: September 2025

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## PRIORITY 3: BUILD A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

### Empowering women in democracy – a step towards a brighter future

*By Tshidi Mokoka; GCIS, Gauteng*

The Government Communication and Information System, in collaboration with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and Zuurbekom Community Development Workers, hosted a workshop at the Zuurbekom Community Hall. The event held on 19 August 2025, aimed to educate and empower women on the importance of participating in democratic processes, particularly in registering to vote and encouraging others to do the same.

The workshop was part of Women's Month celebrations, advocating for women championing democracy. Officials from the Public Protector South Africa (PPSA) also attended the workshop and educated women about the services they render in communities. This initiative highlights the crucial role women play in shaping the future of their communities and the country at large.

As South Africa gears up for the upcoming 2026 Local Government Elections (LGEs), the role of women will be significant, as they can ensure that their voices are heard and their needs addressed by participating in ward leadership structures. LGEs have a direct impact on citizens' daily lives, determining service delivery and budget allocation in communities. Empowering women is vital for building a truly democratic society. Ms Ntombi Thakhuli from the IEC said, "By educating women about their democratic rights and encouraging them to participate in the electoral process, we can create a more inclusive and representative government."



Ms Thakhuli engaging with women from Zuurbekom about the importance of voting and participating in democratic processes.



Ms Maureen Mabasa and Mr Titus Sebesho from the PPSA providing onsite consultation with women who attended the programme.

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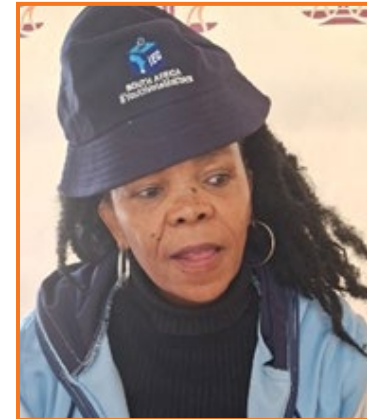
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#### Ms Diketso Ntsala said:

"It is very important as women that we take the lead in the communities we live in, to try to encourage others about the importance of voting. We are living in an era where young people do not see the need to go out and register to vote. Today I have learnt that as a woman and a mother, it is my responsibility to teach my children, who are eligible to vote, to go out and register."



#### Ms Gloria Malimakwe said:

"The presence of the PPSA in this workshop has helped us in knowing which channels to use when trying to lay complaints against those not doing enough to provide us with services. There are so many issues, especially those with Eskom, that we never knew how to address as a community. Today we have learnt a lot, and we will ensure correct procedures are followed."



**Ms Joalane Finger:**

"As a community member, I have learnt a lot on how to report GBVF."

### PRIORITY 3: BUILD A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

#### Matjhabeng Ward 12 hosts Women's Month prayer session

*By Ntombizodwa Mhlambi; GCIS, Free State*

Councillor of Matjhabeng Ward 12, Mr Sabata Mosoeu, joined by Ward Committee Members and Community Development Workers, hosted a prayer session to celebrate Women's Month. The session was held on 8 August 2025 at Jerusalem Park in Thabong, near Welkom.

The event took place at a time when the ward was experiencing high rates of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) cases. The speakers addressed various challenges affecting women in Ward 12 including the importance of wellness, with a special focus on cancer. Ms Sarah Lekale from the Goldfields

Organisation, spoke about the services they rendered to assist victims of GBVF.

The Government Communication and Information System also participated in the event by providing the community with information on the government's key messages for Women's Month. The local Community Police Forum spoke on how they worked with pastors, as some of the cases they dealt with needed spiritual intervention. The event closed with a prayer session led by pastors in the area.



Ms Lekale speaking about the services they offer to victims of GBVF.



Community members attending the Women's Month session.

## PRIORITY 3: BUILD A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

### Municipal oversight puts spotlight on accountability

By Sinobomi Mathombela; GCIS, Eastern Cape

On 6 August 2025, the Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Dr Dickson Masemola, led a high-level oversight and accountability engagement at the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM). He was accompanied by Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for CoGTA in the Eastern Cape (EC), Mr Zolile Williams. The engagement is part of a national programme called "Every Municipality Must Work".

The visit forms part of strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing governance, strengthening service delivery and promoting accountability across local government. It is implemented through the District Development Model, which advocates for integrated and coordinated planning across all spheres of government.

The municipality has been battling with administrative challenges, with the latest report stating that the metro had regressed to a qualified opinion with material findings. The Executive Mayor of BCMM, Cllr Princess Faku, presented a brief outline of the challenges that the municipality is facing and the type of support that would assist in addressing those challenges.

As part of measures to rescue the struggling Metro and revitalise the system to improve service delivery, strengthen financial management, bolster local economic development and enhance institutional performance, the Deputy Minister deployed 13 highly experienced engineers and financial experts from the national and provincial governments. This reinforcement team will be led by seasoned finance executive, Mr Simphiwe Dzwengwa, to stabilise the troubled municipality.

In his address to the leadership of BCMM, MEC Williams raised a critical concern regarding the detrimental effects of political interference in municipal administration.

He remarked, "When politicians interfere in administration, it creates confusion over roles and responsibilities. This lack of clarity fuels political instability, which continues to undermine the effective functioning of our municipalities."

The session was attended by key stakeholders, including officials from National Treasury, councillors from the municipality and other government representatives.



Deputy Minister of CoGTA, Dr Masemola, leads the oversight visit in the EC.



MEC Williams accompanied the Deputy Minister during oversight visit.



Cllr Faku delivered a presentation on challenges facing the municipality.



Key stakeholders that attended the session.

## PRIORITY 3: BUILD A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

### Mpumalanga Provincial Government commemorates Women's Day

*By Zwanga Matsila; GCIS, Mpumalanga*

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government commemorated Women's Day on 9 August 2025, under the theme "Building Resilient Economies for All". The event was held at the Sydney Choma Banquet Hall in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

Delivering the keynote address, Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Sport, Arts and Culture, Ms Leah Mabuza, paid tribute to the more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings in 1956 in protest against the then pass laws.

Urging community members to remain steadfast in the fight against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) and other social ills affecting the province, MEC Mabuza emphasised that the struggle must continue relentlessly, particularly in ensuring the empowerment of women. She highlighted the

Rapid Response Teams operating in municipalities across Mpumalanga, noting their critical role in providing swift support and ensuring justice for GBVF victims.

MEC Mabuza also addressed the ongoing challenges of poverty and unemployment among women, reaffirming the provincial government's commitment to uplifting women. As part of this commitment, she announced a target of 60% women's representation in job opportunities to be created within Mpumalanga.

This initiative aims to ensure that women are prioritised in economic development efforts, playing a vital role in building safer and more prosperous communities.



Women's Day celebration at Sydney Choma Banquet Hall in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.



**Ms Sasekani Manzini, MEC for Health in Mpumalanga:**

“We are here in Steve Tshwete as a province, and we appreciate that the provincial government not only celebrates this day but also builds programmes dedicated to women in areas such as economic empowerment, health and education. All departments have been able to showcase their contributions towards Women’s Day and Women’s Month. The government remains committed to eliminating GBVF through educational initiatives and community engagement including dialogues, awareness campaigns and prevention programmes that challenge harmful stereotypes while promoting gender equality and positive masculinity.”



**Ms Thembelihle Mathye:**

“Today is Women’s Day, and we are happy and grateful. We appreciate the good work you are doing by providing us empowering with information such as details on GBVF and available funding opportunities to support women’s empowerment.”