

# WALKERVILLE & SAVANNA CITY TIMES



END JULY 2024 | Tel: 011 850 1160 | Email: savannacitytimes1@gmail.com | Website: walkervilleandsavannacitytimes.co.za

## Midvaal reshuffles Mayoral Committee



Executive Mayor  
Alderman Peter Teixeira



Cllr Mokete  
Motsamai,  
MMC for  
Corporate  
Services



Cllr Mary-Ann  
Myburgh,  
MMC for  
Community  
Safety



Ald Patricia  
Hutcheson,  
MMC for  
Finance



Cllr Reginald  
Hubbard,  
MMC for  
Engineering  
Services



Cllr Thembi  
Modiba,  
MMC for  
Development  
and Planning



Cllr  
Chantal  
Gomes, MMC  
for Public  
Roads and  
Safety

*In a strategic move to enhance service delivery, Midvaal Local Municipality's Executive Mayor, Peter Teixeira, has announced a reshuffle of his Mayoral Committee.*  
The changes include the following assignments:  
• Mokete Motsamai, previously serving as MMC for Development and Planning, will now take on the role of MMC for Corporate Services.  
• Chantel Gomes, formerly MMC for Corporate Services, is appointed as the MMC for Public Safety and Roads, taking over from Councillor Gerrit Viljoen.

• Thembi Modiba, the previous MMC for Community Services, will now serve as MMC for Development and Planning.  
• Mary-Anne Myburg is the newest member of the committee, stepping into the position of MMC for Community Services.  
• Councillor Reginald Hubbard continues in his role as MMC for Engineering Services.  
• Patricia Hutcheson remains the MMC for Financial Services.  
Mayor Teixeira emphasized that these changes are aimed at optimizing the municipality's operations and ensuring that the needs of Midvaal's residents are met more effectively.

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**GDE opens 2025 Online Admissions for Grade 1 and 8 learners until 12 August**

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has announced the opening of the 2025 online admissions application process for Grade 1 and Grade 8 learners. The application period begins on Thursday, 11 July, at 8am and closes on Monday, 12 August 2024, at midnight. The GDE Online Admissions System, which was introduced in 2015, continues to provide an efficient and transparent platform for parents and guardians to secure school placements for their children. The system has achieved a 100% placement rate for complete applications, successfully placing approximately 400,000 learners ahead of the 2024 academic year.

**Key features of the online system include:**

**Ease of Access:** Parents and guardians can submit applications from home, offices or Decentralised Admissions Walk-in Centres across Gauteng. **Accurate Planning:** The system provides immediate access to data and statistics, facilitating better planning and reporting. **Queue Elimination:** The online system removes the need for long queues at schools during application periods. **Timely Placement:** All learners are placed within specific timeframes, ensuring a streamlined admissions process. To apply, parents and guardians must first register on the GDE admissions website, which will go live on 11 July 2024. Previous login details will not be valid, so all applicants must create new login credentials. The application process involves a five-step process: Register parent/guardian. Home address, register learner details. Apply to a maximum of five schools upload or submit documents. Parents are encouraged to complete all five steps to ensure their applications are considered for placement. Additionally, providing a



**Matome Chiloane, Gauteng MEC of Education, Sports Arts, Culture and Recreation**

reliable cellphone number is crucial for receiving SMS notifications about the application status and reminders.

The system also emphasizes the importance of selecting schools within feeder zones to increase the chances of placement and advises against submitting fraudulent documents. The GDE will verify all documents, and submitting false information may result in non-placement.

For parents without internet access, the GDE has set up 80 Decentralised Walk-In Centres across 15 education districts, where officials will assist with applications. Libraries, head offices, district offices, and schools will also serve as walk-in centres.

For more information, parents can contact the GDE through various channels, including a toll-free number, WhatsApp, email and social media platforms.

**Secure your child's spot in a Gauteng public school for the 2025 academic year by applying online today!** For more details, visit the GDE admissions website at [www.gdeadmissions.gov.za](http://www.gdeadmissions.gov.za).

**Bolognaise cottage pie**

Tasty Family Dinner. An easy family meal!



**Ingredients**

- 2 Tbsp (30ml) oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 500g PNP lean beef mince
- ½ cup (125ml) All Gold Tomato Sauce
- 70g All Gold Original Tomato Paste
- 1 x 400g can All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix
- 1 cup (250ml) beef stock
- 2 Tbsp (30ml) chopped fresh basil
- Salt and pepper for seasoning
- PnP All Purpose potatoes 2kg, peeled and quartered
- ½ cup (125ml) milk
- 50g butter
- 1 large egg, beaten

**Method**

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the onion and mince and fry until the mince is cooked through and lightly browned.

2. Add the All Gold Tomato Sauce, All Gold Original Tomato Paste and All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix, mix well.
3. Then stir in the stock and simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Remove from the heat and add the fresh basil and season to taste.
5. Place the potatoes in cold water and bring to the boil. Boil for 20 – 30 minutes or until cooked through and soft.
6. Drain off the liquid and mash.
7. Whisk in the milk and butter until smooth.
8. Season with salt and pepper to taste
9. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
10. Pour the bolognaise into an ovenproof dish and top with creamy mash.
11. Spread it evenly with a fork and using a pastry brush, brush with egg, bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown on top.

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# EXPANSION OF MIDVAAL'S FLEET TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY



Executive Mayor, Alderman Peter Teixeira and Chantal Gomes - MMC for Public Roads and Safety are joined by Midvaal Search and Rescue members as well as other stakeholders at the announcement of these new safety fleets

**Midvaal Local Municipality is proud to announce its fleet expansion with state-of-the-art safety vehicles and equipment to ensure the safety and security of all residents and visitors.**

In line with our key mayoral commitment to making the community safer, we have added two high-performance Ford Raptors to start our new law enforcement task team. These vehicles are equipped with state-of-

the-art technology, including number plate recognition cameras connected to our control room and linked to the SAPS database. This will significantly aid in identifying vehicles implicated in crimes.

The vehicles are also equipped with drones for aerial surveillance and will be an armed response unit, enhancing our capability to respond swiftly and effectively to any incidents. The municipality has also invested

in the procurement of a cutting-edge boat, Marine 1, for Vaal Marina. This boat, locally manufactured by Sensation Boats and the first of its kind to be used inland on dams, is equipped with radar and sonar technology, night vision cameras, and will work exclusively on the Vaal Dam in cooperation with the NSRI and SAPS Water Wing. This investment will make Vaal Marina a safer and more attractive tourist destination,

especially during the holiday season. The fleet will be operational once all the relevant licenses are in place and operational requirements such as hiring safety officers are met. We pride ourselves on spending money where our residents feel the most benefit, and these expansions will ensure that they feel safe. We remain dedicated to investing in the safety and security of all people in Midvaal.

## Progress in addressing the state of the Vaal River Barrage

**The current coverage of the Vaal Barrage by invasive plant species namely; water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) and water hyacinth (*Pontederia crassipes*) in the Vaal River Barrage Reservoir has markedly dropped from 395 ha in April 2024 to 100 ha currently.**

To date the community have rallied together and worked with the Rand Water (RW) and the authorities to use their own resources and funding to assist in removing the alien invasive species. To date the community has spent approximately R10-million over 6 months on the Vaal Barrage Reservoir.

"There are a few unsung heroes who tirelessly and very generously put their hands in their pockets to provide not only funds, but significant resources and their time to lead the way, motivating all of us in this war against water lettuce. Without them, we would not be winning the invasive aquatic weed war," said FEDHASA national chairperson Rosemary Anderson. Mbuyiswa Makhubela General, Manager Corporate Services added: "We are also most appreciative to Omnia, who have donated funds for the removal of over 7km of aquatic alien invasive weed from the Taaibos." The Department of Water Sanitation has appointed Rand Water (RW) as the official Implementing Agent for 3 years, to control and eradicate the alien invasive weeds in the Vaal River Barrage Reservoir. In collaboration with the Department of Environment Forestry and

Fisheries the Department of Water and Sanitation's focus is not only on the invasive species but more importantly the water quality and pollution of this critical water resource. Former Minister of Water and Sanitation Senzo Mchunu in the April 2024 workshop with municipalities in the catchment announced the establishment of an anti-pollution forum for the Vaal catchment and approved the chairperson of the forum which will start its work in July 2024. The Department is also finalising its criteria for the publication of the polluters list announced at the same workshop whilst continuing with the enforcement action against transgression polluters including municipal wastewater treatment works. The reduction in the invasive plant species is the culmination of a close working relationship since early this year between the Vaal River community, Dr Leslie Hoy from Rand Water, Chief Director of Water Use Compliance at the Dept of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Mrs Anet Muir, Prof Julie Coetzee and Dr Kelby English from Rhodes University (CBC), Afriforum, Omnia and SAVE (Save the Vaal Environment). Albeit evidence of water lettuce in the Vaal River as far back as 2021- the floods of 2021 and 2022, discouraged the aquatic invasive species from settling. However, with the lower rainfall in the summer of 2023 and the continued high levels of nutrients in the river mainly from sewerage, the aquatic weed grew exponentially and

totally out of control. Rand Water (RW) continues with the implementation of the control plan under the authorisations issued by both the former mentioned Departments, which includes an integrated approach of physical extraction, curtaining, biocontrol and use of herbicide to halt the out-of-control growth. "The significant contribution of the Vaal Barrage Reservoir community and positive approach in working closely with all parties, definitely needs to be acknowledged and applauded. I look forward to continuing this positive working relationship going forward with Government taking appropriate accountability by committing significant resources to enable sustained control over these alien invasive aquatic weeds and improvement of water quality that will ensure communities livelihoods are not threatened again," said Anet Muir, Chief Director Water Compliance at DWS. During this period, Rhodes University Centre for Biocontrol Control, have assisted with various aspects such as mapping, biocontrol agents and a range of

technical support to assist with introducing weevils and hoppers to assist in controlling these invasive alien plants. Rand Water has just awarded an order for the physical removal of 60 hectares of alien invasive plants. Along with the order, Omnia's contribution and the communities own continued self-funded efforts - there should be little to no more aquatic weed in the Vaal River Barrage by the end of July 2024. "This has definitely been a group success story, where working closely with all parties and meeting regularly between all of us, has resulted in the success we see today. We have not won the war yet since we are not sure what this coming summer will bring, but we are in a far better position to be ahead of the game and control the alien invasive aquatic weed narrative than we were before," said Dr Leslie Hoy of Rand Water.

# Mayor Teixeira and MMCs celebrate Mandela Day with community upliftment initiatives



Executive Mayor, Alderman Peter Teixeira, along with Members of the Mayoral committee, engage in various life-changing activities to empower the community



*In a heartfelt tribute to Nelson Mandela's legacy of peace, freedom and service, Executive Mayor Alderman Peter Teixeira, alongside Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMCs), dedicated 67 minutes to various community upliftment initiatives on Mandela Day.*

The day's activities were a testament to the Midvaal Municipality's commitment to service excellence and community support, reflecting Mandela's vision for a united and caring society.

The event commenced with a Midvaal Cares Donation Drive at the park next to Midvaal Local Municipality. At 9am, Mayor Teixeira and the MMCs supported various NPCs and NGOs, showcasing the municipality's dedication to aiding those in need.

Following this, the team visited Els Medsorg Old Age Home at 10am. Here, they provided donations to the residents, bringing smiles and relief to the elderly community members.

The third stop was at Weeds and Seeds at 12:00, where Mayor Teixeira and the MMCs engaged in planting and weeding activities. This initiative, in collaboration with Lynca Meats, supports a food garden that nourishes over 45 families, emphasizing the importance of sustainable food sources and community cooperation. The final visit of the day was to Kotulong Community Centre at 2pm. The Mayor and MMCs participated in meal preparation, engaging sports activities and exciting games with the children. This visit highlighted the municipality's focus on fostering a nurturing and supportive environment for the younger generation. Mayor Teixeira expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve the community in such a meaningful way, stating, "Mandela Day is a reminder of the impact we can make when we come together to support and uplift one another. It is an honour to continue Madiba's legacy through these initiatives."

The day's events were well-attended, with members of the media capturing the spirit of service and dedication displayed by the Mayor and MMCs.

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## Police bust drug lab in De Deur, seize R2.3 million in equipment and materials



On Tuesday, 9 July, the South African Police Service (SAPS) successfully dismantled a drug lab in De Deur during an intelligence-driven operation. The police seized equipment and materials valued at approximately R2.3-million, including drug manufacturing equipment and mandrax drugs. Four suspects, aged between 37 and 56, including the property owner, were arrested. Well done to law enforcement in the country.



**Khanyisa Mhlongo**

**Walkerville resident Khanyisa Mhlongo couldn't contain her excitement after being selected as a recipient of a Miss South Africa coding scholarship from HyperionDev and ASUS.**

Earlier this year, Miss South Africa's Natasha Joubert partnered with HyperionDev, Southern Africa's leading tech education provider and ASUS to offer coding scholarships through her "Natasha Joubert Collective" initiative. The programme aims to support skills development and expand

educational opportunities in South Africa. Mhlongo, a 27-year-old Public Relations student in her final year at the University of South Africa, will be taking advantage of the scholarship through HyperionDev's online platform this year.

Mhlongo, a self-described entrepreneur, juggles multiple roles. In addition to her studies, she works as a freelance social media manager, artist manager, events coordinator, and game developer. She is also the founder of Sirius Dreams, a company

# Walkerville resident awarded coding scholarship as part of Miss South Africa's initiative

focused on gaming development. An inspiration to many, Mhlongo is the first in her family to pursue a tech qualification. Her journey is one of resilience and determination, mirroring that of her parents who overcame challenging backgrounds to achieve success. Her father, Jonas, began his career as a security guard and has since climbed the ranks to leadership positions. Her mother, Violet, transitioned from a caregiver to a qualified nurse. Mhlongo's twin brother is focused on Human Resources, while her younger sister is pursuing a career in nursing.

Despite limited resources at her high school, Sheikh Anta Diop High School in Yeoville, Mhlongo never let her dream of working in tech fade. While her initial goal was to study science, her performance in math and physical sciences suffered. Undeterred, Mhlongo found inspiration elsewhere. Her parents are her biggest supporters, but she also credits a network of mentors including Sis Zandi Radebe, Dr. Baba Buntu, Miss Jay, Ntombezinhle Modiselle, and her partner Mangala Mangala.

Mhlongo's passion for technology is fueled by its potential to bridge gaps and create opportunities. This is a driving force behind her decision to participate in the coding boot camp. The program will equip her with the

skills to not only expand her career options but also contribute to innovative projects like her game "NTU Utopia Builder," which focuses on active citizenship.

The scholarship is more than just financial support for Mhlongo. It validates her hard work and opens doors to new possibilities in the tech industry. She sees it as a gateway to empowerment and advancement. Mhlongo believes her dedication to education, diverse skill set, and potential to make a positive impact in tech and public relations resonated with Miss Joubert. Her passion for technology, coupled with her commitment to social good through projects like her game, might have been a factor in her selection. Looking towards the future, Mhlongo envisions herself as a successful tech professional in 10 years. She aspires to lead Sirius Dreams or collaborate on cutting-edge projects. Honing her skills as a coder and game developer while inspiring young women to pursue their tech dreams remains a priority. Mentorship and giving back to her community will also continue to be important aspects of her future.

Mhlongo's passion for technology extends beyond the classroom. She is currently developing "NTU Utopia Builder," a game that combines strategic city planning with civic engagement and cultural exploration.

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# SAPS destroys 14,595 firearms and parts in Vanderbijlpark



Illegal firearms seized during policing operations like Operation Shanela were destroyed in the fight against crime

**The South African Police Service (SAPS) remains relentless in its efforts to detect and permanently remove illegal firearms and ammunition in circulation.**

Earlier this month, 14 595 firearms and firearm parts were destroyed during a destruction process in Vanderbijlpark; 11 421 of those destroyed are handguns while 1 708 are rifles, 1 205 shotguns and 28 combination firearms. SAPS has destroyed over 263,000 firearms in five years. These firearms, firearm parts and ammunition were seized during policing

operations such as Operation Shanela and subsequently forfeited to the State. Destroyed firearms also included those that have been surrendered voluntarily and those that were handed in during the Amnesty period.

**A breakdown of the number of firearms destroyed this week per province is as follows:**

- Eastern Cape = 1 834
- Free State = 836
- Gauteng = 4 676

- Kwazulu-Natal = 1 600
- Limpopo = 989
- Mpumalanga = 664
- Northern Cape = 433
- North West = 446
- Western Cape = 3 117

In February this year, 18 077 firearms, AND firearm parts were also destroyed; since 2019 the SAPS has destroyed 263 545 firearms. All firearms with working mechanisms were subjected to IBIS testing to determine if they had been utilised in any

commission of a crime and amnesty firearms. The National Commissioner of SAPS, General Fannie Masemola says the SAPS will continue to intensify its operations to detect and remove illegal firearms and ammunition from the streets of South Africa, as they pose a threat to the safety and security of the inhabitants of this country. Firearms are the most preferred weapon of choice when crimes such as murders are committed and that is why it is pivotal that we double our efforts in removing those that are illegal out of circulation.

## Police investigate claim that suspects 'turned into cats' and escaped from cells



Two suspects, brothers Omari and Ali Mustafa, allegedly transformed into a cat and a rat to escape from police custody

**Police are investigating a strange case involving two suspects who allegedly shapeshifted and became cats in order to escape from the Meyerton Police Station holding cells on the morning of 16 July.**

The suspects, brothers Omari and Ali Mustafa, were among 11 suspects who were arrested for possession of hijacked good. Omari has since been rearrested, while his brother remains on the run.

In the summary of events given to Gauteng provincial commissioner Tommy Mthombeni, police say the two men allegedly disappeared while being processed in the holding cells.

**The statement reads:**

The cell commander, Warrant Officer Phakathi and Constable Mahloko were also in cells locked themselves in while the suspects were charged (sic). When it was a turn to charge this other (two) suspects, known as Mustafa Ali and Omari Mustafa, their names were called but they couldn't be found.

Among those suspects, there is a suspect known as Erick Tumbulu - who informed the police that he saw when these two suspects made a strange like owl bird noise, turned into cats and they escaped while the gate was still locked, he was prepared to even give a statement.

The officer who wrote the statement said on his arrival, he personally - together with Warrant Officer Maloka - went to the cells to take a headcount. The process entails physically counting the inmates one by one to ensure that the numbers tally.

**The officer wrote:**

"Voluntarily, this suspect explained what he saw when those suspects turned into cats and escaped. A docket of escape in lawful custody was opened, district duty officer and acting station commander Lieutenant Colonel Makhene was informed, including IPID (Independent Police Investigative Directorate) member (only identified as) Tinyiko was also informed.

"A senior police officer, on condition of anonymity, said it was very suspicious that the suspects waited to arrive at the police holdings cells before they could turn into cats.

**The officer said:**

That's if they even became cats, because I suspect someone was paid for their unlawful release. IPID has to start by ensuring that those on that shift are suspended and investigated for aiding criminals to escape. Gauteng police spokesperson Noxolo Kweza has confirmed that officers on duty during the escape are indeed being investigated and confirmed the rearrest of one of the escapees.

Kweza said: "Meyerton police have opened a disciplinary case against members following an escape from lawful custody. This follows an incident where two suspects, who were arrested for possession of hijacked goods, escaped from police custody. The circumstances of the escape will form part of the investigation." She also appealed to anyone who may have information regarding the incident to contact their local police or the police toll free number 08600 10111.

• Story source: City Press

## Skilled archer seeks community support for international tournament



Pari Patel seeks sponsorship to cover her trip to represent South Africa in Namibia

**Pari Patel, a talented Grade 9 learner at Besa Leadership Academy in Walkerville, has been selected to represent South Africa at the prestigious international archery tournament in Namibia, scheduled from 20 to 26 August.**

This remarkable young archer has been passionate about the sport since the age of six, consistently showcasing exceptional skill and dedication. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the cancellation of the 2020 world tournament and the absence of tournaments in 2021 and 2022, Pari has remained committed to her training. Financial constraints forced her to withdraw from the 2023 tournament, but her perseverance has paid off as she has re-qualified for the 2024 event, eager to compete on the international stage once again. The total cost of the trip, including travel expenses, SA archery kits, entry fees, accommodation, food and car hire, amounts to R50 000 00. Pari and her family are currently facing a shortfall of R34 000 00, which is preventing her from pursuing her passion and representing South Africa.

Pari's father, Jitesh Patel, is making a heartfelt appeal to the community for sponsorship to help cover the shortfall.

"Your support would not only enable Pari to participate in the tournament but also bring her one step closer to pre-qualification for the 2025 tournament in Canada," Patel said. "Any contribution, no matter how small, would be greatly appreciated and would make a significant difference in Pari's journey." In return for the community's generous support, the Patel family is committed to acknowledging contributions through various channels, including social media, local press releases, and at fundraising events. They are also open to collaborating on fundraising activities to further promote sponsors' brands and support Pari's cause. Contributions can be made to the following account: **Nedbank, SavingsAccount, Account holder: Patel P, Account number: 2970797623, Branch code: 198765. Reference: Please use your name and cell number.** The Patel family extends their heartfelt thanks in advance for the community's consideration and support. Together, they believe Pari can achieve her dreams and continue to excel in the sport she loves.

**For further information, please contact Jitesh Patel on 082 890 5703 or jitspa@gmail.com**

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## Sedibeng District Cycle Tour Against Crime



From 15 to 19 July, stakeholders hosted a cycling tour to raise awareness in schools about GBV, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and gangsterism

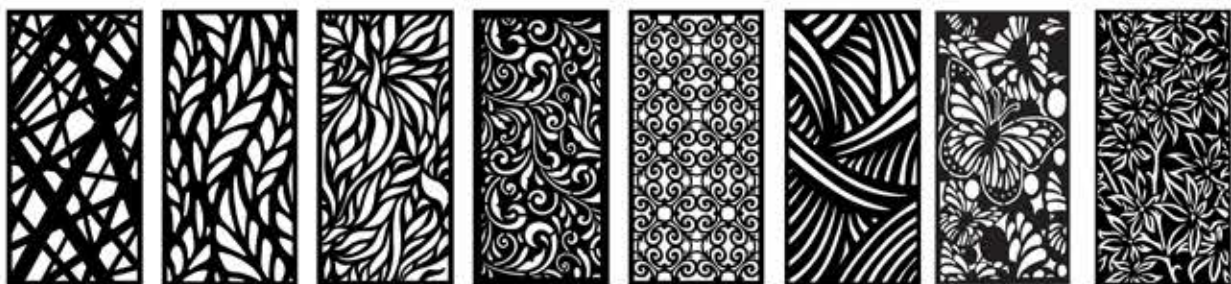
*In an effort to foster a safe learning environment in schools, the Sedibeng District Community Safety Forum, led by Peter Kele, initiated the Sedibeng District Cycle Tour Against Crime from 15 to 19 July.*

This educational cycle tour, themed 'DON'T BE A FOOL, CRIME IS NOT COOL,' targeted six schools in the Midvaal Local Municipality: Meyerton High School, Springfield Special School, Assemblies of God College, New Hope Secondary, Roshnee and Ruster-Vaal High School. The tour addressed issues such as GBVF, substance abuse, gangsterism, teenage pregnancy and other illegal activities prevalent in schools.

This initiative was launched on 15 July, at Mayoral Park and included key stakeholders such as SAPS; the Department of Education; Correctional Service; Health; Social Development; the Department of Sports; Arts and Culture; Gauteng Community Safety; Sedibeng Community Safety; Midvaal Local Municipality; Midvaal Traffic; Midvaal Fire Department; the Sedibeng District GBVF Rapid Response Team and various other district stakeholders including local Community Policing Forums; Community in Blue; Afriguard Security; COGTA; Deaf SA; Thuthuzela Centre; NYDA, GTW; Spiritual Crime Prevention; BeSure Foundation and

GBV Brigades. The event featured speeches from MMC Chantal Gomes, who officially opened the launch and welcomed attendees. They were: Acting Station Commander of Meyerton SAPS, Lieutenant Colonel Rashaad Dawood Makhene, who extended support for the tour within his jurisdiction; and MMC of Community Services, Mary Anne Myburgh, who delivered a keynote address. Representatives from various stakeholders and sponsors also conveyed their support, with Lieutenant Colonel De Winnaar concluding with a vote of thanks. The tour progressed to Meyerton High School, the first stop, where Deputy District

Commissioner Brigadier Nkhwashu led the programme. Brigadier Nkhwashu and the team engaged with learners, discussing critical issues such as substance abuse, gangsterism, bullying and teenage pregnancy. Over the span of five days, all six schools were visited, with positive reactions from students who were enthusiastic about the law enforcement officers participating in the cycle tour. On the final day, 19 July, Kele expressed gratitude to everyone who dedicated their time and efforts to this initiative, emphasizing the collective responsibility to safeguard children and the communal effort required to raise them.



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