

# Fashion Week brings rich opportunities

**W**E HAVE come a long way to be where we are today. In the process, many things have happened. Fashions have come and gone.

Durban is a vibrant city that started as a small insignificant town but grew into a giant of a city.

In the process it has developed a diverse and culturally rich population with a beautiful kaleidoscope of talent.

The city is rich in sartorial talent and is home to a number of top fashion designers as well as fashion design institutions.

Durban Fashion Week provides a platform for our established designers.

It also helps unearth and nurture new talent.

The Fashion Week net has been cast wide to include students from fashion design schools – something which should be commended.

Ultimately this will develop the



**Obed Mlaba**  
eThekweni Mayor

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**The city is rich in sartorial talent and is home to a number of top fashion designers**

industry and encourage other young people to pursue a career in the fashion business.

That young designers are invited to Fashion Week and are able to rub shoulders with established designers is a victory on its own for these young people.

But a function of this nature requires that the organisers make sure there are business opportunities for those displaying their talents.

And rural people could make a positive contribution if they were invited to put their traditional

fashions on show.

To the organisers I say: Keep your great and I hope next time you will be able to invite some world-renowned designers to attend so that they can take some of the budding designers and mentor them. This is an industry that will live forever.

# We must find ways to integrate refugees

**A**NYONE older than 30 would contest very strongly that the recent thuggery and criminality rocking our country was simply about xenophobia.

I have no doubt we all harbour traces of prejudice, but the attacks required a catalyst. In this case it was groups of men with a clear mission in mind. What happened in our city, where foreigners were driven out of their homes was a spin-off from the unrest in Gauteng and was not directly fuelled by locally-based anger.

Hotspots in Durban included Albert Park, Dalton Road hostel, Cato Crest and the Road 1102 area in Chatsworth.

The reality is that many foreigners and South Africans were displaced and we were tested and in many cases found wanting.

It is clear that national, provincial and local government must work out clearly who takes the lead in such matters. While primarily a national and provincial responsibility, the reality is we are the first agencies to get called out.

We worked closely with NGOs, the Red Cross, faith-based organisations, SAPS and provincial government, but we must clarify roles and responsibilities and there must be resources backing up those responsibilities.

When the first incident occurred, and for all subsequent incidents, we dispatched officials to provide health, sanitation, waste management, environmental health, feeding, blankets and surveillance by Metro Police.

Additional nurses and mobile toilets and showers have been hired at all these sites to complement the facilities provided by churches and



**Michael Sutcliffe**  
eThekweni Manager

mosques.

In the current economic climate, with food prices going through the roof, it is understandable that scarcity of basic resources will bring about heightened

tension among people, especially those who are struggling to survive.

At the height of the tension, there were about 2 000 in need of emergency shelter. This number has been reduced, a positive sign that many of those chased out of their homes are returning.

We must always keep a balance between looking after the needs of those who had been displaced and and those who face poverty daily.

While NGOs and the public have assisted the city in alleviating their plight, we have to take care that we do not perpetuate the situation. A growing refugee problem is something we must try and avoid at all costs.

Our relationship with refugee communities is good and we must collectively work on ideas to tackle xenophobia and integration of refugees into our society.

Every year the city hosts World Refugee Day celebrations and works with the refugee community to explore ways of integrating refugees.

May I express our sincere gratitude to all faith-based organisations, NGOs and individuals who contributed to the plight of refugees.

We realise there is much room for improvement.

At the same time we must work together to remove criminals from our communities.

The situation has now stabilised and we must work towards a climate that promotes a society free of racism, xenophobia and poverty.

# HANGING AROUND



**A STEADY hand and a cool head for heights are essential qualities of a new breed of city centre window washers who'll go to great heights to get the job done.** ALAN COOPER snapped a team of them in action recently as they startled late risers at the Royal Hotel. Send your Durban photographs to **eZasegagasi Metro, PO Box 5588, Durban, 4001, or e-mail [naidoothrusha@durban.gov.za](mailto:naidoothrusha@durban.gov.za)** and we will publish the best high-resolution photos. Please provide your details and the names of any people in your picture

## LETTERS

# Share block pensioners lose out on rates rebate

I RECENTLY attended a joint rates association meeting, attended by a majority of old folk and pensioners.

It was sad to hear how they were struggling to make ends meet with inflation and the escalation in food, electricity, water and fuel prices, and now the real bone of contention in their lives, the new rates fiasco.

Most of those at the meeting were living in flats owned by share block companies. Because they do not own their properties directly, they are excluded from the individual pensioner's rebate of R120 000.

When their share block company representatives queried this with the Municipality, they were not told to switch to sectional titles – another expense and another income generator for the Municipality, no doubt.

Complaints came thick and fast from pensions who said they

simply could not afford the new rates and might be forced out of their homes.

This left me with a feeling that the new rates policy was unconstitutional because the Bill of Rights says that: "Everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing."

The new rates policy is clearly making living in their homes unaffordable and is doing old timers out of adequate housing.

I left the meeting with great empathy for the old folk and pensioners, who do not deserve this new burden.

I felt a deep resentment against the Municipality for forcing them from their homes when they should be cared for in the twilight of their lives.

The new rates policy clearly was not thought through carefully regarding share blocks, and is letting many old folk and pensioners down badly and

affecting their standard of living.

**TERRY HOLMES**  
Durban

*OWNERS of share blocks own shares in a company. They do not own the flat they occupy.*

*A company is not entitled to claim a pensioner's rebate.*

*But owners of share blocks do gain from tax benefits.*

*Our valuation is globally accepted as best practice. Accordingly, it is not unconstitutional.*

*While there have been fluctuations in rates, 70% to 80% of ratepayers have received a reduction in their rates – it has been beneficial to the majority.*

*There is an objection process, as well as an appeal process, in place to address any dissatisfaction regarding market values.*

**KRISH KUMAR**  
Deputy City Manager: Treasury

# Lock up Congella Park

REGARDING the deplorable state of Congella Park, this is what should be done:

This recently-fenced park should be locked up for several months. Keeping the public out will enable it to be restored from its present, degraded state.

Thereafter, the public should only be permitted entry on application at the park office on site. People should have to produce IDs and sign or make their thumb print on a register,

stating their reason for entry and time in and time out.

They should sign that they will adhere to simple, stated rules for use of the park. Those who do not adhere to the rules should be escorted off the premises and blacklisted.

Why should a place of peace and natural beauty in our bustling city be permitted to come to this?

**CLLR SUE BURROWS**  
Ward 33

# I still have hope

I HAVE the pleasure of watching our new soccer stadium become a reality as I drive home from work.

I cannot believe how much has been achieved thus far, and must commend the City for all its efforts. I wait in anticipation for the new hotels to spring up and the completion of the new flyover.

Despite all the bad, I still have hope for our beautiful city.

**D NAIDOO**  
Durban