ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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

28 April 2026 [Issue 458]

MAYORS UNITE TO DELIVER WORLD-CLASS 2027 CRICKET WORLD CUP

WITH just 15 months remaining before South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe host the 2027 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba convened a high-level meeting of metro mayors from the host cities. The meeting aimed to strengthen coordination and accelerate preparations for the global spectacle.

The strategic briefing, led by Local Organising Committee (LOC) CEO, Qondisa Ngwenya, provided a comprehensive overview of expectations, timelines, and critical deliverables required to ensure the successful hosting of one of the world's most prestigious sporting events.

In his address, Mayor Xaba underscored the importance of leveraging the Cricket World Cup as a platform to showcase South Africa's rich cultural diversity, vibrant cities, and renowned hospitality. He said the tournament presents a unique opportunity to drive inclusive economic growth.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba convened a high-level meeting with with mayors of metropolitan municipalities that will be hosting the 2027 Cricket World Cup.

The LOC outlined strict benchmarks aligned with International Cricket Council requirements, emphasising the need for host cities to meet global standards across all operational aspects.

There was a unanimous agreement among the mayors to adopt a collaborative, whole-of-government approach, working closely with Cricket South Africa, the LOC, and stakeholders to ensure seamless planning and execution. This includes ongoing coordination across government structures.

INVOICES PROCESSED UNDER NEW ONLINE PAYMENT SYSTEM

ETHEKWINI Municipality has processed over 5 000 invoices through its newly introduced online invoice payment system, with a further 2 982 invoices approved for payment, demonstrating early progress in enhancing efficiency and service delivery.

The introduction of the online invoice system forms part of the Municipality's broader efforts to enhance efficiency, transparency, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing financial management.

Benefits of the Online Invoice System

The new system introduces several key benefits aimed at improving the overall experience for service providers and strengthening financial governance:

- Improved turnaround times through automated workflows and reduced manual processing
- Enhanced transparency, allowing service providers to track the status of their invoices
- Greater accuracy by minimising human error associated with manual submissions
- Strengthened compliance with financial regulations and audit requirements
- Better record management, with all invoices securely stored and easily accessible.

Service providers are reminded of the importance of submitting invoices timeously. This will assist the City to meet its commitment to process payments within 14 days for small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises and within 30 days for all other service providers, in line with regulatory requirements.

Service providers are encouraged to utilise the system by uploading their invoices directly onto the platform. For those experiencing difficulties or lacking access to computers, assistance is available at the relevant line directorates.

From 4 May, service providers can also visit Sizakala Centres for support with uploading invoices to their profiles on the portal.

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ASIMILE SIYAQHUBA: ETHEKWINI DRIVES SMME DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

ETHEKWINI Municipality's Small, Medium, and Micro-sized Enterprise (SMME) Development Division, which falls under the Economic Development Directorate, creates an enabling environment for small businesses. This is achieved through targeted financial and non-financial support, technical skills development, mentorship, and access to finance, among other initiatives. The gains made in this sector are highlighted through the City's five-year service delivery milestones campaign being rolled out under the theme: Asimile Siyaqhuba: Resilience Through Adversity. This week the focus is on SMME support.

The SMME Helpdesk, established in 2021, has become a critical intervention for businesses experiencing delayed municipal payments. Through structured engagements, it has resolved more than R10 million in unpaid invoices. The Helpdesk has hosted 16 regional roadshows, reaching over 500 SMMEs, while more than 1 000 enterprises have benefited from compliance workshops and procurement support.

The Tourism Enterprise Development Programme strengthens the City's tourism value chain through tour guide training, awareness campaigns, eco-tourism feasibility studies, and route promotion. Its flagship Durban Souvenir Shop at North Beach provides market access to over 50 tourism SMMEs.

Through the Contractor Development Programme at the INK Construction Incubator, over 250 underperforming contractors received training and structured support, with several improving their Construction Industry Development Board gradings. The Westown Mall development created more than 1 000 jobs, while over 50 contractors graduated from the National Construction Incubator Programme.

The City champions the success of small, medium, and micro-sized enterprise growth through the Lion's Den Business Plan Competition, Fashion Development Programme, Durban Business Fair, souvenir shop, and impactful Helpdesk roadshows to unlock market access, mentorship, and funding support to advance inclusive economic growth.

The Lion's Den Business Plan Competition provides a pitching platform, mentorship, and market exposure.

The Art and Craft Programme has trained 340 beneficiaries in product-based skills.

Strategic partnerships contributed to the retention of 610 SMME jobs over five years. Investments include R550 000 through the Enterprise and Supplier Development Programme, R630 000 in accredited tuition support and R1 million in asset funding for 40 SMMEs.

Business Licensing processed over 12 000 applications, granted more than 8 000 licences, conducted 60 000 inspections, executed 600 joint operations and issued over 4 000 fines, supported by an e-services platform to improve efficiency.

The Durban Business Fair recorded approximately 2 000 exhibitors, attracted 94 091 visitors supporting the buy local initiative, and generated nearly R2 million in exhibition revenue over five years.

In addition, the Furniture Manufacturing Skills Development Programme trained 145 participants in 12 furniture-making skills, with 70 percent now running their own businesses. Under the Durban Fashion Fair (DFF) Mentorship Programme over 150 designers were trained in five years with access to the DFF Emporium and annual shows. The 2024 showcase attracted over 8 000 attendees, generated R21 million in direct economic spend, and created more than 180 jobs.

MAJOR ECONOMIC BOOST FOR CITY FROM HOSTING METRO FM AWARDS

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba presented an award for Best Artist of the Year together with Tbo Touch at the Metro FM Music Awards which took place in the City on 25 April.

THE successful hosting of the Metro FM Music Awards this past weekend has positioned Durban as a leading destination for major cultural and entertainment events. It delivered both immediate economic benefits and long-term brand value for the City.

Leading up to the awards, Durban saw a noticeable surge in visitor arrivals, with hotels reporting high occupancy levels. The influx of artists, industry professionals, media personnel, and fans translated into increased spending in the hospitality, transport, dining, and entertainment sectors. Popular attractions such as uShaka Marine World and the City's beachfront also saw heightened activity, reinforcing Durban's appeal as a leisure destination beyond the awards.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba said the City demonstrated its capability to host world-class events with excellence. He said the three-year partnership with Metro FM to host the awards until 2028 further cements Durban's reputation as a home of culture, creativity, and unforgettable experiences.

"Durban's investment in infrastructure, partnerships, and cultural experiences continues to position the City as a leading hub for music and major events. Congratulations to all the winners and participants who lit up the stage with their talent and creativity," said Mayor Xaba.

Beyond the main event, the awards weekend stimulated a chain reaction of economic activity. Pre-parties, after-parties, and other lifestyle events created opportunities for local venues, event organisers, caterers, and informal traders. From fashion designers styling celebrities to small businesses supplying services, the Metro FM Music Awards was a catalyst for inclusive economic participation also requiring extensive logistical support.

SMME GROWTH TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT DURBAN BUSINESS FAIR

POWERFUL and impactful masterclasses, designed to deliver high-level, inspirational learning from world-renowned experts and industry leaders, will take centre stage at the 28th Durban Business Fair taking place at the Durban Exhibition Centre from 29 April to 2 May.

Among the highlights is a dynamic masterclass by the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority, an organisation committed to advancing skills development within South Africa's wholesale and retail sector.

Taking place on 1 May at the Coast of Dreams at the Durban Exhibition Centre, this session will equip small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises with practical, actionable tools to grow and sustain their businesses.

The programme will cover key areas such as business scaling, formalisation and compliance, digitisation, access to markets, digital marketing, and kasi logistics solutions. Attendance is free, and interested participants can secure their spot by emailing admin@lomes.co.za

In addition, a Supply Chain Management masterclass will be held on 2 May at the same venue, unpacking the newly refined procurement system. Topics will include vendor portal registration, supplier self-service compliance and acquisition, online invoicing, and general enquiries.

On 30 April at the same venue, the Intellectual Property masterclass themed 'Building protected businesses that sell' will provide valuable insights into safeguarding and commercialising business ideas. The session will feature leading voices in the field, including an Education Specialist in Intellectual Property, the Training Manager for Keyline Digital Design College, and a Sales and Account Manager from Takealot Marketplace.

Beyond the masterclasses, the fair will showcase over 500 businesses and their products, while driving empowerment through pitching sessions, bursaries, and international linkages. The International Pavilion will host countries such as France, Ivory Coast, India, and Belgium, creating a platform for trade exchange, investment, and tourism opportunities. The Durban Business Fair continues to position itself as a catalyst for growth, innovation, and meaningful economic participation.

35 ENTREPRENEURS AFFORDED OPPORTUNITY TO PITCH FOR PROJECT 10X

Thirty-five emerging small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises had the opportunity to pitch their vision for Project 10X. The initiative is by eThekwini Municipality, KZN EDTEA, and KZN Oils and aims to give entrepreneurs direct access to world-class technical expertise.

THIRTY-FIVE finalists from the KZN Oils ESD Project 10X Unicorn Programme delivered high-stakes pitches to a specialised jury. The session marked a critical milestone in a collaborative effort to transition local small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises from the margins into the mainstream economy.

The initiative is powered by a strategic public-private partnership between eThekwini Municipality, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), and KZN Oils. Together, these entities are committed to empowering township and peri-urban talent by providing the technical "know-how" and resources necessary to scale their businesses. Throughout the day, finalists presented diverse business models focused on technical viability and long-term scalability. As a cornerstone of the Enterprise and Supplier Development initiative, the 10X Unicorn Programme aims to fast-track these businesses into the KZN Oils Group value chain.

"By witnessing these 35 entrepreneurs pitch, we are seeing the direct result of a partnership that moves local businesses into the heart of our operations," said Khungeka Gojo, Business Support Programme Manager.

The programme builds on a successful pilot phase where participants achieved significant gains in financial literacy and market readiness.

Under the current structure, KZN Oils serves as the programme custodian, while EDTEA has committed financial support of up to R250 000 for qualifying enterprises.

This support is bolstered by structured mentorship and incubation designed to ensure sustainable growth.

The goal of the partnership is to cultivate "unicorns" - resilient, high-growth businesses capable of driving employment and poverty reduction.

OUTGOING PEP WORKERS EMPOWERED WITH BUSINESS SKILLS

Outgoing Public Employment Programme workers were empowered with business skills and job search knowledge.

ETHEKWINI Municipality, in collaboration with various stakeholders, held an empowering session for outgoing Public Employment Programme (PEP) workers from the Supply Side and Area Based Operations Directorate South Durban.

The informative session empowered workers with the knowledge to create their own employment or find jobs with the skills they attained during their PEP contract.

South Durban Basin Area Based Management Coordinator Siyabonga Mpofana said: "Today's engagement aimed to empower workers on available opportunities within the City as well as externally.

The outgoing PEP workers were also capacitated with information required to start their own small businesses."

First National Bank Business Development Manager Lucas Khanyile provided information on financing a small business, managing money, and utilising available opportunities.

Southern Region Area Manager, Sibusiso Masuku, from the Economic Development Directorate said it was important to have a trading permit when operating any business."Officials will explain the necessary requirements and assist where needed. We also provide training on financial management, business management, and saving," said Masuku.

Ntombi Matshwathi from SA Youth shared tips on CV writing and interview techniques.

HAMMARSDALE TAXI RANK SET TO DRIVE LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

THE Hammarsdale area is undergoing a massive revitalisation, driven by a powerful synergy of public infrastructure investment and private sector confidence.

Positioned along the N3 Durban-to-Johannesburg corridor, Hammarsdale's transformation is anchored by the landmark R4 billion Keystone Park.

This 115-hectare modern logistics precinct is set to redefine the provincial economic landscape, creating approximately 5 000 permanent jobs and 3 500 construction roles. Built on green development principles, Keystone Park offers a clean, secure, and landscaped environment for businesses requiring immediate, serviced industrial land.

Construction continues to gain momentum at the new Hammarsdale Taxi Rank which, once complete, will be a gamechanger for local jobs and economic growth.

The City has bolstered this private investment with a committed phased infrastructure rollout. Significant work is already underway, including the upgrade of the Hammarsdale Wastewater Treatment Works and technical investigations to widen Main Road 385. These projects align with the City's broader Industrial Renewal Strategy, which has already delivered the Hammarsdale Junction shopping mall and public realm improvements, such as enhanced sidewalks and informal trading facilities.

Adding to this momentum, a budget of R54 million has been allocated for the Hammarsdale Transport and Traders Hub. The 18-month implementation of this project started in September last year.

Peter Gilmore from the Programme Co-ordination Directorate said: "With 151 hectares of serviced, industrial-zoned land available, it is the only area capable of absorbing the logistics demand triggered by the upcoming Durban dug-out port expansions."

STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE AT USHAKA DURING OFF-PEAK PERIOD

USHAKA Marine World has announced a planned programme of essential maintenance at its Wet 'n Wild waterpark as part of its ongoing commitment to asset integrity, safety standards, and long-term operational sustainability.

The maintenance, scheduled to commence on 4 May, will require the temporary closure of the Wet 'n Wild waterpark for approximately three weeks. Operations are expected to resume on 23 May 2026. The work was timed to align with the waterpark's low season trading period. The maintenance will prioritise high use and high value assets, including refurbishment of the park's three tallest slides, the popular fivelane racer, and the resurfacing of several pools. These upgrades form part of uShaka Marine World's proactive lifecycle maintenance strategy, aimed at extending infrastructure lifespan, enhancing guest experience, and ensuring compliance with international safety standards.

This temporary closure will not disrupt operations at uShaka Marine World. Sea World, Kids World, Sea Animal Encounters, and Dangerous Creatures will remain fully operational throughout the maintenance period, allowing the facility to continue generating visitor activity and commercial footfall.

Stakeholders, tour operators, and visitors are advised of the temporary closure of Wet 'n Wild. Management has indicated that the upgrades are expected to deliver a safer, more competitive, and refreshed waterpark offering ahead of the peak winter and school holiday season.

UShaka Marine World Marketing and Communications Executive Buhle Malunga said the theme park continues to be one of Durban's most celebrated tourism landmarks.

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

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