



“Strengthening social maturity by advancing social cohesion in pursuit of a prosperous city – and therefore a liveable city”

State of the City Address

26 March 2014
Germiston Civic Centre



Executive Mayor,
Cllr Mondli Gungubele



City of
Ekurhuleni

THE STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS BY CLLR MONDLI GUNGUBELE, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE EKURHULENI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, 26 MARCH 2014, GERMISTON

Theme:

Strengthening Social Maturity by Advancing Social Cohesion in Pursuit of a Prosperous and, therefore, Livable City

Madam Speaker, Cllr Patricia Kumalo

Chief Whip of Council, Cllr Robert Mashego

Fellow Councillors

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Leaders of Opposition Parties in Council

The City Manager, Mr Khaya Ngema and our Senior Management

The Leadership of SALGA

Colleagues from other Municipalities

Leaders of Labour, Business and Civil Society

Members of the Media

Fellow Residents of Ekurhuleni

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It was the English physicist and mathematician, Sir Isaac Newton, who once said: "If I have seen far, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants". South Africa has produced and continues to produce its own giants – in the areas of science, sports, the arts, law, medicine, technology and politics, amongst others. Many of these we have gone on to bequeath to the whole world.

In an ode to Newton, and as a tribute to those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land, I today dedicate our State of the City Address to the heroes and heroines of the struggle that gave birth to what we now share - our united, democratic, non-racial and nonsexist South Africa, of which we are all proud.

The theme under which we are making this third State of the City of Ekurhuleni Address of the current term of office is "**Strengthening Social Maturity by Advancing Social Cohesion in Pursuit of a Prosperous and, therefore, Livable City**". This is the same theme under which we made this Address last year, because we remain convinced of its continued relevance.

We are a socially mature city because our residents have internalized the wisdom of our beloved, and now dearly departed Nelson Mandela, when he said "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than the opposite".

After three centuries of institutionalized racism, our society is no longer defined by negative notions of diversity. On the contrary, we celebrate diversity, and find unity in it. Amongst the international community of nations, South Africa is no longer a pariah. And, as its children, we are now able to boast a shared destination, that of a society in which all live in peace and prosperity.

As explained last year, our case for social maturity also derives from the location of Ekurhuleni as an arrival city and meeting point of South Africans and Africans and indeed citizens of the world from all walks of life, across class, race, gender and religion. On a daily basis, new and established, young and old, male and female, black and white, Christian, Muslim and Jewish, interact with one another on our streets.

EKURHULENI IS A BETTER PLACE TODAY THAN IT WAS IN 1994

Madame Speaker and Fellow Councillors;

Ekurhuleni is home to just over a quarter of the twelve million inhabitants of Gauteng. The socioeconomic profile of our City mirrors that of the Gauteng Province. Between 1999 and 2012, the country's population grew by 1.5% per annum. During the same period, the City's population grew by 2.5% per annum, which testifies to the high levels of in-migration.

We estimate the Gross Geographic Product of Ekurhuleni to be R204 billion, or 6.4% of national GDP. This amounts to an average growth rate of 10.5% from 2002, when our GGP was estimated at R74 billion. The 10.5% average growth since 2002 is slightly higher than the national average of 10.4%. In the same period our unemployment rate was on a steady decline, from 35% in 2002 to 28.1% in 2012.

In 2012, the regional economy grew by 3.4%, compared to the national average of 2.5%. Recent statistics show that on average, the GGP growth rate for Ekurhuleni will be as high as 3.69% year on year over the medium term.

Since 1994, we have facilitated and approved public and private investments with a market valuation of approximately R75 billion. Amongst these are notable developments such as Carnival City Casino and Mall in Brakpan; Emperors Palace and Birchwood in Boksburg; upmarket Golf Estates such as Glendower, Ebotse and Serengeti; Toyota Parts Centre on Atlas Road; expansion of Unilever Homecare in Boksburg; expansion of the Nampak Glass plant in Roodekop, expansion of OR Tambo International Airport; and the Consol Glass plant in Nigel.

These statistics continue to reaffirm our resolve that the economic policy pursuits of the democratic government have and are producing the desired results and impact. However, this is not to say that we are content with the current economic performance, especially in relation to employment creation given the prevailing high levels of poverty.

In this regard, we are confident that the Aerotropolis programme that we have adopted as our key economic growth trajectory continues to gain momentum by strengthening our Metro's value proposition to investors. This programme itself integrates a range of other flagship interventions, such as the revitalization of the manufacturing sector, the regeneration of CBDs and townships and their respective local economies, the revitalization and harnessing of open spaces and precincts around lakes and wetlands, the building of connectivity of the City through an integrated rapid transit system, and the building of a smart city through investing in digital infrastructure for both municipal and citizen use.

At the centre of the Aerotropolis development programme, lays our ability to attract greenfield and brownfield investments. In this regard, our strategic land parcels programme presents enormous potential to crowd-in and channel investments in strategic areas of the city. I am grateful to this Council for having granted permission to activate this land release programme by targeting the first 41 strategic land parcels.

Given all of these interventions, we are confident that the City has all the ingredients to realize an average growth rate of between 6% and 8% year on year over the medium term.

As we have already alluded, the broad official unemployment remains stubbornly and unacceptably high, at 38%. Even more worrying is our figure for youth unemployment, which stands at a worrying 36.4%. This then explains the interventions we will allude to later that target youth skills development, job opportunities and various other measures to improve the transition of youth from school to work.

Regardless of all these factors and challenges, our above average population growth indicates that we remain an attractive and preferred destination for people to live, work, play and trade – given that the principal driver of this growth is in-migration.

When President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma reported in the State of the Nation Address that approximately 13 million tourists had visited South Africa in 2012 alone, we could easily identify with that as residents of Ekurhuleni, because a huge percentage of those would have touched down on South African soil via the OR Tambo International Airport – right here in our award-winning city.

Some of the key awards we received in recent years include the Platinum Blue Drop – which recognizes us as the water authority with the best quality water, as well as a city that has the best managed water reticulation processes. Another, more recent award is one for being the greenest metro in the country, as judged by the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs.

Service delivery twenty year highlights

Madame Speaker;

These are humble steps to account on our efforts to reinforce, entrench and consolidate conditions of perpetual social maturation since it is the only way our dream of a common destination as South African Humanity can be realized. This is the cause for which great men and women of our country regardless of colour or creed made sacrifice. This is the cause for which our generation cannot afford to fail.

On a daily basis, ordinary Ekurhuleni citizens testify through their everyday activities to the improvements effected in the past twenty years of democracy.

Come with me please, as we eavesdrop on a not-so-private conversation between two lovers, **Joe Citizen** and **Tshidi Citizen**. Joe is a white Afrikaner male, and Tshidi a black Motswana lady. Tshidi was born and bred in Katlehong, and Joe not far from there, in Alberton. Whereas they went to two different primary schools, their first meeting was when they were both doing Grade 8 at the same former Model C secondary school. This happened two years after Nelson Mandela came out of jail and anti-apartheid political parties were unbanned. They have been lovers since.

On this particular Sunday afternoon, they are sunbathing and relaxed on the lawns of our very own Germiston Lake, reminiscing about our country's foray into democracy, twenty years down the line.

This is how part of their conversation goes like:

Joe: Baby, I am really enjoying the ambiance that is provided by this lake. Have you ever wondered what quality of life we could have had if laws still existed that prohibited the beautiful love that we share? Years back, you would not have been allowed to set foot here, because world-class facilities like this one were reserved for use by whites only.

Tshidi: (giggles) Shoo Baby, nna I would have defied them. No amount of legislation would have stood on the way of me seeing you. Seriously though, I remember overhearing my mom and granny relate stories of deprivation and brutality at the hands of the police, which they had to endure. It is really amazing how things have changed. Today, South Africans of all races and cultures are free to enjoy the benefits that accrue from use of these facilities without any fear. Imagine if we were restricted as to which shopping malls we could visit, when we now have so many spread across the entire Ekurhuleni: East Rand, Eastgate, Carnival, Benoni Lake ... and if you prefer not to leave the township, virtually all the major townships have got malls of their own. And then, of course, there are such leisure places as Emperors Palace and Carnival City.

[These are but the tip of the iceberg in terms of the world-class facilities for which our City has facilitated development since the dawn of democracy. Of course, what Tshidi is not mentioning is the enabling environment due to the facilitation role of the EMM, which is estimated in the region of R75 billion over twenty years.]

Shopping malls are not the only massive infrastructure projects that give the Ekurhuleni of today its distinct character. There are golf estates, an expansive roads infrastructure, OR Tambo International Airport as well as industrial sites such as those for Nampak, Consol Glass, Unilever and Toyota Parts.]

Joe: I remember that every time my father had to drop off our gardener in Tsakane, he would always return complaining. Not that he hated visiting the townships. On the contrary, he adored them, but his gripe had to do with the roads infrastructure, or lack thereof. Week in and week out he would have to replace his tyres due to the gravel roads there. Today when I come to fetch you, that is the least of my worries because virtually every road I have to drive on is tarred. Even when it is night, I don't have safety concerns unique to the townships. This is because there are high mast lights, and you don't have to drive long before you can see either an EMPD or SAPS vehicle.

Tshidi: The issue of electrification has really made our lives easier. When I was still in primary school, I used to visit my grandmother a lot, and where she lived, in Etwatwa, there was no electricity. As such, we were limited in terms of what we could do after hours. My friends' parents would fetch them as soon as the sun set; and trying to read using candle light was one of the most strenuous endeavours. The TV set she had was operated through the use of generators, which exercise was expensive because each time it had to be operated she had to fill it with petrol.

[Since 2005 we have spent in excess of R1.1 billion in the renewal of our electricity infrastructure as we continue with our efforts to become a reliable, dependable livable municipality.

89 864 houses have been built since 1994 in Ekurhuleni alone. About R75 000 of these were built since the formation of the Metro in 2001. As of 2011, 57% of Ekurhuleni households had access and use of piped water inside their dwellings.

EMPD has been in existence since 2002, and to date it services nearly 2000 square kilometres of the area that is Ekurhuleni. It has 2121 members, spread across eighteen precinct stations. In the next three years, the number of precinct stations would have been increased to twenty-one, and the EMPD headquarters would have been moved closer to the OR Tambo International Airport, within the broader context of the City's plans for the Aerotropolis.]

Joe: Talking of the massive electrification programme, have you noticed how even the informal settlements are well lit. The other day I got lost on my way from Busy Corner in Ebony Park, and found myself driving through Winnie Mandela Park. Visibility was not compromised at all, and I was able to find my way out in no time. To think that it was even raining torrentially that evening!

[On this particular occasion, Joe had been a beneficiary of the high mast light installation programme of the City, coupled with the solar lighting and retrofitting plans in informal settlements.

The roads are as accessible as they are because the City has constructed approximately 500km of roads since 1994, and even more roads were maintained and patched. To manage the issue of flooding, the City has maintained kilometres of stormwater systems.]

Tshidi: The issue of accessibility helps a lot even in emergencies, where ambulances and police vehicles have to reach people most in need. Other than these access roads, I am also impressed by the rollout of such basic services as running water, mobile toilets and solar water heaters to residents of informal settlements.

[What Tshidi is referring to is a bouquet of services that the City provides to all informal settlements, as contained in the Informal Settlements Management Programme.]

Madam Speaker

Indeed we have a good story to tell.

It is clear from the above conversation between Joe and Tshidi that even though there remain some challenges in certain areas of service delivery, this democracy has indeed helped us build a united country, free from the racism, sexism, tribalism and religious bigotry that characterized our nation 20 years ago.

Allow me then to reflect on some of the key achievements of the past twenty years, albeit briefly.

Fellow Residents of Ekurhuleni;

In terms of housing provision, working together with the Gauteng Provincial Government, we have constructed approximately 90 000 houses, and in addition serviced nearly 120 000 stands across between 1994 and June 2013.

This work has not been in vain because the average household size in Ekurhuleni has been going down - from 3.7 people in 1996 to 3.2 people in 2001, and three people as of 2011. This clearly shows the reduction in overcrowding within especially poor formal households. That in itself accounts for the improved livability our residents are always craving for.

The figure for households in informal dwellings has been going down, albeit steadily. The figure was 29.1 percent in 1996, which then went down just a bit to 28.6 percent in 2001, and then even more significantly to 21.5 per cent in 2011. This achievement is even more remarkable when you take into account the context within which it was achieved - that of very high in-migration, much of which tends to settle within informal settlements.

In order to understand this phenomenon, this august House needs to be reminded that the number of informal settlements within our jurisdiction had increased significantly for some time, and then stabilized at 119. Since then, the growth has largely been concentrated on densities within the settlements themselves, as against the number of settlements.

Fellow Councillors;

Our disaster and emergency management services expertise have seen our members save many lives and property, to the benefit of local and international communities.

Historically our previously disadvantaged communities used to have poor or no emergency services facilities at all. The negative impact hereof was most pronounced in the event of domestic and health emergencies and natural and man-made disasters.

In response, in the past twenty years, we have established disaster and emergency management service facilities in areas where these had not existed. These include fire stations in Tembisa, Etwatwa, Daveyton and Tsakane, as well as disaster management satellite offices in Tsakane, Katlehong and Tembisa.

We have also replenished our fleet of specialized vehicles to cover previously under-served areas, and replaced those that had gone beyond the recommended mileage due to issues of reliability and effectiveness. Since 2006, we spent in excess of R120 million in the replacement of 76 fire engines, thereby improving fleet availability and response times significantly.

Our efforts to save lives continue to improve drastically. Just recently we took delivery of a new fleet of ambulances. This move has tremendously improved the number of ambulances on our roads at any given time, from between 28 and 30 a day before, to 65 at present. Since we took delivery of these vehicles late last year, we have hardly received any complaint about our response times from the public when in the past we would receive a number of such per day.

The communities of Ekurhuleni will be relieved to know that our call centre, which has hitherto been a source of worry for the city and many of our residents, has actually been receiving attention. It has already undergone upgrading to the tune of about R7 million, and right now the municipality is in the process of recruiting 258 new call centre agents, who will be employed there. This will improve the turnaround times to life threatening and services emergencies.

Furthermore, we have trained more than 200 students in terms of the Emergency Services Learnership Programme. This training enables successful candidates to be marketable in this highly specialised field.

Following the 2008 xenophobic violence, and in collaboration with the GPG and other stakeholders, we managed to use our expertise in handling tense and disastrous situations by successfully re-integrating many of the displaced persons; as well as providing basic humanitarian relief wherever it was needed.

As testimony to the professionalism and experience of our DEMS team members, we have been called upon to assist in disaster and emergency relief missions across the globe, including in such countries as Turkey, India, Pakistan, Algeria, Japan and the Philippines.

2014 marks the twelfth anniversary of our Ekurhuleni Metro Police Department, one of the more respected forces of its kind in the country. In that period, and after overcoming some teething problems especially at its formative stage, the EMPD has achieved a lot. Working in collaboration with the SAPS, EMPD has contributed to the arrest and conviction of many wanted and dangerous, local and international criminals, especially those involved in cash-in-transit heists, ATM bombings, as well as in business and house robberies.

In order to realize these achievements, we have had to increase the logistics and capacity of the EMPD. As a result, its person power has gone up from approximately seven hundred members at establishment to 2121 today, servicing eighteen precinct stations and a population of more than three million within an area of 1975 square kilometers. In the next two years, the number of precinct stations will increase by three, namely Daveyton / Etwatwa, Zonkizizwe and Thokoza.

Madame Speaker;

In line with our Aerotropolis plans, we will be relocating the EMPD headquarters to Kempton Park. Among others this does assist to enhance the world-class service we continue to render at the national key point – the OR Tambo International Airport.

As we speak, the EMPD has its own accredited training academy, where its members undergo regular relevant skilling. In the period since establishment, the EMPD has developed its specialized units capacity, such as the K9 and SWAT, speed and Equestrian units, thereby improving safety within our borders.

Following a period of low morale and poor disciplinary records, the EMPD recently approved and implemented a Turnaround Strategy. This is beginning to bear fruit, hence as the City's administration we remain confident that the department will continue making us proud.

As is always the case on occasions such as this one, I wish to take this opportunity to salute all uniformed members of the metro - be they metro police, disaster management or emergency services - for the bravery and sacrifices displayed in the performance of their duties. I wish further to pay homage to those who have suffered harm or injury in the course of duty, and above all to salute those who perished while serving the people of Ekurhuleni. On behalf of the City Administration, I wish to assure their families, friends and loved ones that their bravery and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Madame Speaker;

When we turn to the work done in respect of health and social development, we find that nine of our clinics now operate for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. These are Phola Park, Ramokonopi, Jabulane Dumane, Daveyton Main, Mary Moodley, Philip Moyo, Nokuthela Ngwenya, KwaThema and Sangweni Clinics.

In our drive to continue broadening access to primary health care, I can confirm with pride that we have in place 98 health care facilities of various kinds and levels across the Metro, which we have built since the dawn of democracy in 1994.

Twenty-five of our clinics provide extended hours services, meaning they are closed only on Sundays. The ones that are neither open for 24/7 or during extended hours, remain open until 16h30 on weekdays.

In terms of our day-to-day work, once again we have surpassed the national rate for TB treatment and cure, which is 85%. We achieved a rate of 87%.

When it comes to our contribution to the national programme for the management of HIV and AIDS, we have placed approximately 35 000 patients on anti-retroviral therapy and treatment.

With regard to Primary Health Care provision, we have attended to at least six million patients at our various clinics since the start of the current financial year.

All the hospitals within the jurisdiction of our vast metro, plus six of our own clinics, administer Medical Male Circumcision services. The clinics that provide this service are the Katlehong North, Daveyton Main, Winnie Mandela, Spartan, Tsakane and Nokuthula Ngwenya.

We have further procured an additional seven mobile clinics, which we use to support implementation of the City's Informal Settlement Management Plan, thereby extending access to health services to those who live in informal settlements.

We are happy that the doors to the new Natalspruit Hospital will be opened as of July this year – as this will further extend our health services even further, especially at the high level of care. This adds on the provincial government's recent intervention of upgrading the Bertha Gxowa Hospital – making it more user-friendly for our people.

The Metro has built several ECD centres and numerous daycare centres for the elderly across the City. An old age home has also been constructed in Tembisa.

ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2011

Madame Speaker and Fellow Councillors;

When we took office in 2011, we did so on the back of priorities and commitments contained in the elections manifesto of the ruling African National Congress, which directed us to:

build local economies to create more employment and sustainable livelihoods;
improve local public services and broaden access to them;
build united, non-racial and integrated safer communities;
promote community participation in local government; and
build a more effective, accountable and clean local government that works closely with provincial and national government.

In pursuit of these election priorities, we worked with various sectors, stakeholders and constituencies to revise and come up with an inclusive and broad-based Growth and Development Strategy (GDS 2055), which is anchored on five strategic imperatives, namely:

Re-Urbanise – to achieve sustainable urban integration;
Re-Industrialise – to achieve job-creating economic growth;
Re-Generate – to achieve environmental well-being;
Re-Mobilise – to achieve social empowerment; and
Re-Govern – to achieve effective co-operative governance.

Effective implementation of these strategic imperatives, we submit, should result in a future that can be defined in three inter-connected ways. These are:

- A Delivering City – envisaged to take route between 2012 and 2020, the form of which will be a well-managed, resourced and financially sustainable city;
- A Capable City – between 2020 and 2030, characterised by an inclusive industrial economy and meaningful reduction in unemployment and poverty; and
- A Sustainable City – between 2030 and 2055, where we shall have a clean, green and sustainable African manufacturing and logistics complex in a liveable and dynamic city, highly integrated in its city region - Gauteng.

Fellow Residents of the City of Ekurhuleni;

During the 2013 State of the City Address, we made a number of commitments. Which is why we have convened you again today, so that we can report back to you on performance and progress made in implementing those priorities.

INITIATIVES TO RE-INDUSTRIALISE EKURHULENI

Distinguished Leaders of Commerce and Industry;

Our re-industrialization programme, which is anchored on thirteen pillars, focuses on these four main tenets: (i) creation of a conducive environment for new inward investments and for existing businesses to thrive and expand; (ii) investment in critical economic infrastructure that drives efficiencies and competitiveness; (iii) reduction in the cost of doing business through a revised external engineering services funding structure and bulk contributions policy; and (iv) investment in the development of industrial clusters in Aviation, Rail, Logistics and Automotive, and related sectors through progressive implementation of the Investment and Development Facilitation Strategic Framework.

The essence of the Investment and Development Facilitation Strategic Framework is to create an investor-friendly environment in Ekurhuleni, by relaxing development application processes and requirements to unlock public and private sector investments into strategic, affluent, underdeveloped and marginalized areas of the city.

Even as we make these commitments, I am pleased to confirm that since 1994, the various infrastructure departments have been involved in enabling and facilitating investment in the city. For instance, in Energy alone, we have spent in excess of R1.1 billion in terms of security of supply and refurbishment of infrastructure. We acknowledge that more could still be done to make it more conducive for businesses to establish and expand in Ekurhuleni.

On the 31st of January 2014, we unveiled an Ekurhuleni Investment Centre, established at a cost of R11 million. The EIC serves as a facility for purposes of handholding potential investors who would otherwise find the bureaucracy, red tape and/or legislative environment in South Africa a bit tedious to maneuver.

During the period under review, we have managed to facilitate over R3.9 billion worth of industrial investment. We expect this figure to increase significantly due to the initiatives we have in the pipeline. These include the release of the first ten strategic land parcels by September this year, as well as operationalization of the Roads Bulk Infrastructure policy, which is aimed at providing incentives to those willing to effect developments in Ekurhuleni. We are reviewing other related external engineering services and bulk contribution policies towards finalization of a more composite policy framework that enhances the competitiveness of the city.

It is a source of immense pride for us that we have been chosen as the location to host the R51 billion PRASA-GIBELA train manufacturing plant in Dunnotar, Springs. The sod turning ceremony is planned to take place in April 2014, after which it is estimated that it will take three years for the plant to become fully operational.

The PRASA-GIBELA project is expected to create around 8 300 direct and sustainable jobs. In addition, it is estimated that a further 22 000 indirect jobs will be created during the 15 years contract. A third factor to keep in mind is that small businesses will have the opportunity to be mainstreamed and empowered through the supplier park development programme, which will be established as part of the investment package.

During the month of May 2014, we will be hosting the inaugural Manufacturing Indaba. This we are going to do in partnership with key stakeholders within the manufacturing and related industries. The essence of this is to mobilise stakeholders in the field of reviving and growing manufacturing in the region, while looking at developing the required skills that will drive innovation in the sector.

A month later, in June, we will host the 2nd Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis Business Consultative and Investment Conference. As with the first one, we will use this Conference to engage further with developers, investors, social partners and other stakeholders, especially on progress made towards implementation of the Aerotropolis programme and other related city development programmes. Madame Speaker;

As I turn to our Aerotropolis flagship project, I am happy to report that we successfully hosted the first ever Airport Cities Conference and Exhibition on African soil in April 2013. The event attracted over 600 domestic and international aviation and related practitioners. The event went further to cement our position as a key African anchor within the global network of airport cities.

We will be participating in ACE 2014, hosted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, next week, where we will share notes on progress and experiences with other industry stakeholders.

When it comes to implementation of our plans towards a fully-fledged Aerotropolis, we have since appointed a consortium of five domestic and international companies to help develop a 5-year Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis Strategic Implementation Plan and ultimately a 30-year Master Plan. The team also has the mandate to establish the Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis Development Agency in 2015. I am pleased to announce that the consortium has already delivered a 5 years Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis Strategic Implementation Plan, which elevates critical projects that should be implemented within the next five years in order to give the Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis the required traction.

We have finalized a Township Economies Development Strategy and Neighbourhood Development Project. As part of this intervention, eight (8) Township Business Hubs have been refurbished and are being operationalized at a cost of R50 million. We will be investing in the development of another five new Township Business Hubs and Informal Trading Markets per annum going forward.

Our business incubation programme has gained momentum over the past twelve months, wherein we are investing an additional R1 million in the Lepharo Base Metal Incubator in Springs and Ekurhuleni Jewellery Project in Germiston. We have also concluded agreements with the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) to establish a SEDA Ekurhuleni branch in Kempton Park, to provide business support services to SMMEs and Cooperatives. The SEDA Construction and Chemical incubators in Etwatwa and Thokoza, respectively, will be operational by July this year. Another chemical incubator is being planned for Tembisa.

Fellow Residents;

We continue with the programme of the twenty (20) Vukuphile Learner Contractors that were appointed and empowered since 2013 on a 3-year development contract. To this end, we have awarded them contracts to the value of over R70 million. In addition, they continue to receive developmental training, which has equipped them with skills to secure business from other clients beyond Ekurhuleni.

Furthermore, we are steaming right ahead with the programme of developing emerging contractors. The first phase of the programme saw 25 learner contractors and 50 learner supervisors being recruited, trained and developed. Nineteen of the contractors and 29 supervisors successfully completed the programme – which cost the municipality R57 million. We have since expanded the scope of work for the twenty learner contractors to undertake additional work for the Department of Transport to the contract value of R40 million and Department of Water and Sanitation to the contract value of R22 million.

Through the Community Retention Earnings programme, we have set aside at least 25% per each one of the twelve to fifteen service providers for road construction in order to spend in local communities as well as procure from local suppliers in communities where the project is taking place. In 2013/14, through the Community Retention Earnings programme, approximately R137 million was spent and a further R100 million has been injected thus far in favour of local communities and businesses where road development projects are being executed per annum.

This is our deliberate effort to encourage entrepreneurship, new venture creation and private sector participation in stimulating economic activity and innovation, particularly in townships.

Madame Speaker;

On the issue of jobs, I am happy to report that since the adoption by Council of the Ekurhuleni Jobs Programme in September 2012, we hosted the inaugural Job Summit and Career Expo wherein 11,000 CVs were registered on our database. It should be borne in mind that the Job Summit and Career Expo was primarily a vehicle to activate the implementation of the Job Creation Battle Plan. We endeavour to source the suitable candidates from this database as and when suitable positions become available as per our community work programme. I am happy to report that 1 100 have already been placed – 320 within the city and 780 with private companies.

When it comes to jobs and employment creation, we are poised to surpass the target of 15000 to 20000 work opportunities during the current financial year. Through the various initiatives by the Metro, the following full time equivalent (230 working days per annum) jobs have been created:

- 1100 young people were placed within EMM & external companies through the youth work readiness programme.
- 120 jobs were created in leak repairs to 2900 indigent households and twenty-one

- schools in Tsakane, Langaville and Geluksdal. It is envisaged that by December 2015,
- 43000 leaks to indigent properties in the same areas shall be repaired, resulting in the creation of an additional 250 jobs.
- 20 graduates were recruited to pilot e-Siyakhokha Collection programme by the
- Department of Finance. It is envisaged that the e-Siyakhokha team will be expanded in
- future to cover all areas of the city;
- 400 Environmental Health Practitioners were recruited by the Department of Health &
- Social Development
- 173 jobs were created through six refuse collection cooperatives in informal settlements.
- 400 Fire Brigade Reserve Force wherein 238 were appointed by permanently.
- 200 call centre agents were employed.
- 1010 Peace Corp Volunteers were recruited and appointed.
- 3095 people were employed as part of the Lungile Mtshali Community Development
- Programme.

In total,

- Expanded Public Works Programme – 12212
- Community Works Programme – 6750
- Graduate & Matriculant Placement – 1100
- Private sector Investment Projects – 500

We envisage that with the entire investment project being actualized, at least 5000 new jobs could be created.

We also envisage to create an additional 3 500 community work opportunities through Tree Planting, River Cleaning, Grass Cutting, Prevention of Land Invasion, Drainage Maintenance and Flood Management initiatives.

It is a key gap of major concern to us that there is no university located within our metro. In this regard, we are in full support of plans by the leadership of the Vaal University of Technology to relocate its Chloorkop operations to the former Vista University Campus in Daveyton, thereby establishing a fully-fledged VUT Ekurhuleni Campus with capacity for 5000 students instead of the current 1500.

Meanwhile, other work continues in terms of education and skills development. This includes that at least 1000 community members have been recruited and selected to undergo a Recognition of Prior Learning programme through the two FET colleges within our jurisdiction, as well as Indlela Trade Testing Centre. This will result in the development and accreditation of these beneficiaries in the 120 priority trades. The Metro has invested R6 million in this project.

Through the Community Bursary Scheme, 322 new bursaries were granted to young people to pursue university, technical and FET studies in science and engineering, economics, transport planning, law, health, ICT, finance and emergency services, thus bringing the total number of EMM bursary holders to 523 since 2010. Of this number, 96 bursary holders have gone on to attain their qualifications to date. Furthermore and in order to develop the capabilities of our youth, we have finalized a review of the Community Bursary Policy. This has result in a marked increase in the number of new tertiary bursaries to 500 per annum, as well as to issue 1000 high school bursaries which shall be streamlined with the Work Readiness programme.

We are piloting a training programme by providing 55 ex-combatants with artisan training at Ekurhuleni East FET College in the following trades: Electrical skills, Furniture making, Plumbing and ICT. It is our intention to upscale and consolidate this intervention towards creating a comprehensive training and job creation programme for ex-combatants.

INITIATIVES TO RE-URBANISE AND RE-MOBILISE TO ENSURE A LIVABLE EKURHULENI

Fellow Ratepayers;

Our efforts to fight water losses are steaming ahead, albeit not always smoothly, as we strive to collect all revenue due to the municipality. The programme includes initiatives such as metering all unmetered properties, water pressure management to reduce leaks, consolidation of meters on a property, metering of big pipes that supply many properties at once - like in the case of informal settlements - pipe replacement, as well as cathodic protection to reduce corrosion.

To date, sixty-nine bulk meters have been installed to informal settlements, in order to ensure that we can account for the water supplied to each settlement, and monitor and mitigate leakages and wastage in areas where these occur.

By June 2016 we would have installed more than 40 000 water meters in unmetered areas. Of these, 8 400 meters have already been installed in areas such as Chief Albert Luthuli, Mayfield, Winnie Mandela and KwaThema. In enhancing our programme to improve the accuracy and reliability of metering - which tends to deteriorate as meters get older - we have replaced just under 17 000 meters between July and December 2013. 90 000 more meters will be replaced in the next two years.

Part of our intervention is to repair leaks in indigent households, which account for a significant portion of the losses. In this regard we have already carried out leak repairs to 2900 indigent households and twenty-one schools in Tsakane, Langaville and Geluksdal. By 30 December 2015, we would have completed leak repairs to 43 000 indigent properties in the same areas.

Madame Speaker

As I have already announced, our City's water quality has consistently met the SANS 241 Standards, thereby maintaining the Platinum Blue Drop award status - which is indication that the Department of Water Affairs is satisfied with the quality of water, the risk management, the management commitment, asset management and the operations and management systems of our water and sanitation business. In the last year, Ekurhuleni in partnership with Rand Water achieved the highest rating in the Platinum Blue Drop Awards.

Like everyone else, we are waiting with bated breath for the release of the Green Drop results for the 2013 assessment by the national department. Upgrading and refurbishment of our wastewater treatment plants remains a priority as we keep working towards a Green Drop status for all our seventeen plants.

Fellow Residents;

You will be pleased to note that as part of our ongoing programme of enhancing livability in our informal settlements, 159 standpipes were installed to Comet Village, Vusumuzi, Tshwelopele, Mandela, Somalia, Marikana, Vlakplaas, Holomisa and Thulasizwe Informal Settlements. In response to the residential and commercial growth of the city, 797 water and sanitation connections were made to formal properties. The total budget to be spent on meter installations, repairs and replacement during the current financial year is R87.9 million.

Furthermore, 773 waterborne toilets were installed in Zonkezizwe. A further 833 such toilets will be completed by 30 May 2014. 25 ablution facilities will be completed in Mayfield Ext 6,9 and 12, Winnie Mandela and Delmore Informal Settlement by June 2015. The decision to introduce waterborne ablution facilities in informal settlements was not taken lightly, but as a deliberate move to engender in practice the philosophy that "water is life; sanitation is dignity". We expect this version of waterborne ablution facilities to replace the chemical toilets over time - in places where the conditions allow, given that they offer better hygienic outcomes. Over the medium to long term, they also offer a better return on investment.

Madame Speaker;

I am now turning to sport, heritage, recreation, arts, culture and library services (SHRAC), which constitute a critical area of work for the holistic development of our communities. As a Metro, we are now targeting *mass participation and development of our communities in sporting activities in the region*. To us SHRAC is about the wellness and cohesion of broader communities. Over and above this, we are inculcating a culture of reading through our library services, which creates an important foundation for our human development interventions.

As the National Development Plan has demonstrated, South Africa continues to grapple with the triple challenge of unemployment, inequality and poverty. The stratum that is affected the most in this regard is the youth, who constitute the majority of the unemployed. It is for these reasons that we are raising the potential and profile of our SHRAC initiatives in making our communities more sustainable.

We would like to break the vicious cycle where, on the one hand you have athletes and creative workers who struggle to make ends meet due to sporadic sources of income, while on the other there are those who do have the fortune of making it big but fail to sustain their success due to a lack of business acumen and poor life skills. In other words, we intend working with our sporting and creative heroes to stem the tendency of famous athletes and artists ending up as paupers, because that has a direct bearing on the attractiveness of the sector to most youths.

The sporting history of Ekurhuleni demonstrates we have never been lacking when it comes to the production of sports personalities. It is Ekurhuleni that has produced the likes of Teenage Dladla, Pollen Ndlanya, Jimmy Mahlangu, Phil 'Uyindoda' Venter, Tsipa Skosana, Terror Mathebula, Gerrie Coetzee, Harold Volbrecht and Silence Mabuza. However in recent years this has almost diminished. Yet we have plenty of talent in our communities. In addition, the range of sporting codes in which our youngsters can participate, has increased tremendously since the dawn of the democracy.

As we turn to achievements of the year under review, a total of 1441 children between the ages of seven and nine participated in our flagship ECD project, Learn-to-Swim. The purpose of the programme is that of conferring upon children a lifelong skill that will stand them in good stead as they go out into the world.

Our Kiddies Olympics programme has proceeded successfully for another year. Finals thereof will be held in May 2014.

Another major aspect of our sport and recreation work relates to infrastructure development and maintenance. To this end, six swimming pools were refurbished and re-opened for public use. Others are nearing completion, and will be handed over by the end of the current financial year, in June. The swimming pools that have been completed are in Alra Park, Vosloorus, Boksburg North, Benoni and Olympia Park.

We have completed construction work towards the renovation of four stadia across the metro area. These are Duduza, KwaThema, Wattville and Tsakane Stadiums. All four will be operational by the end of May 2014.

Fellow Councillors, Distinguished Guests;

One of our major aspirations is to become the preferred destination for world-class sport and cultural events. It is against this background that an Aerotropolis of our stature must have the necessary nightlife and lifestyle events for the benefit of our citizens, visitors and the local economy. One such event is the SA Open Golf Championship, which we hosted successfully in 2013 for the third year in a row. This 103rd edition of the Championship was at the Glendower Golf Club, a facility described by the SA Golf Association as the 'best golf course in Gauteng'.

While the tournament itself is one of the major events on the Sunshine Tour calendar, the most exciting part is the impact the SA Open has had on brand Ekurhuleni. The event's viewership almost doubled last year, in comparison to the year before – jumping from just over 200 million to 400 million viewers around the world. This meant that the City's branding went all over the world, and our media coverage was quite extensive. That exposure has done wonders to our character as an investment destination, if the many inquiries received ever since are anything to go by. This event is one of those that attract a very good spectrum of our diverse communities, where you see Ekurhuleni's diverse magnificence.

Also as a result of our hosting this tournament, many previously disadvantaged youngsters have become the envy of their peers, by virtue of their participation in the Gavinson Golf Academy, which helps them hone their skills.

When it comes to matters of heritage, I have to preface my input by placing a challenge to this House – that we strive to ensure that before the end of the current term of office, our name as the City of Ekurhuleni would have been proclaimed in the country's geographic names register. Our SHRAC department will lead in this regard.

Those of our residents who live in close proximity to the facility, will surely testify to the sheer beauty of the OR Tambo Narrative Centre in Wattville. Even more exciting will be news that the facility will be fully operational as from July this year.

Fellow Councillors;

I wish to conclude our report on efforts towards re-mobilisation of our citizens by reflecting on a meeting we had with over a thousand religious leaders on the 4th of December 2013. The main discussion was the issue of availability of land for worshipping purposes. The talks were robust, yet cordial. As a result, we have agreed on an approach of legality on their part, and responsiveness on the City's part. This is the approach we are busy rolling out.

And now I turn to the related issues of hygiene and city cleanliness. No city can be said to be livable unless it is kept clean and hygienic at all times. In this regard we are on course to create environmental consciousness in our communities while empowering residents to take ownership of waste management and refuse removal responsibilities in the neighbourhoods where they live.

Furthermore we have extended coverage of the daily collection service in informal settlements by appointing six refuse collection cooperatives to service them. As matters stand now, we provide a daily waste collection service in all our informal settlements.

We have taken a decision to roll out 240-litre wheelie bins to all formal households throughout Ekurhuleni. The aim is to ensure that each household has adequate storage for its waste in between the waste collection cycle. This will not only keep people's properties and neighbourhoods clean and hygienic, but also deny pests and rodents the sustenance they need to multiply and terrorise our communities.

We have thus far rolled out 38 100 of these wheelie bins in the following areas: Actonville, Wattville, Geluksdal, Milnerton, Sunair Park, Sonneveld, Reiger Park, Dalpark, Leachville and KwaThema. This is a project that we plan to have completed by the year 2016.

Another way in which we are creating certainty and reliability of service to our residents is through standardization of our waste removal timetable. Since the beginning of this calendar year, we are keeping the days for the refuse removal service constant. This amounts to a phasing out of the previously ineffectual 'move on' system - one where every time there was a holiday, the refuse removal would be disrupted. The new system guarantees consistency of the refuse removal calendar regardless of holidays.

Our appeal to residents is that they play their part by taking out the refuse on the designated day as per the refuse removal schedule. We make the same appeal to residents on the issue of illegal dumping. No government can, on its own, tackle illegal dumping. We need each household and business to take responsibility for the neighbourhood as a whole. We must also collaborate to expose and penalize culprits of this criminal deed. ***Masibambisane!***

We call on all ward committees and councilors to work with us on this campaign.

Fellow Residents;

These are humble steps to account on our efforts to reinforce, entrench and consolidate conditions of perpetual social maturation since it is the only way our dream of a common destination as South African Humanity can be realized. This is the cause for which great men and women of our country regardless of colour or creed made sacrifice. This is the cause for which our generation cannot afford to fail.

Energy is one of the key interventions of this government. The programme has seen us work towards eradication of electricity backlogs, subject to limitations of available resources. To this end, more than 10 500 households that last year did not have electricity, have been electrified in Palm Ridge Phase 5, Mayfield Extension 6 and KwaThema Phase 3. Next in line to enjoy the benefits of electrification are the communities of Esselen Park Extension.

We are proud to announce that our efforts to ensure that we have a reliable and dependable energy system as a city are showing tremendous results. In 2005 we had a backlog of R1.7 billion in terms of the refurbishment and upgrading of our electricity infrastructure. However, by last year we had spent R1.1 billion in this regard and a further R317 million would have been spent by the end of June this year. The city will be providing an additional R459 million for this programme in the 2014/15 - as we work towards ensuring that such a backlog ceases to exist by the year 2016.

More good news is that we have also been attending to the livability needs of residents in informal settlement. In this regard we are busy rolling out solar lighting and high mast lighting around these settlements. A total of just over 23 000 units already have solar lighting panels and a further 7 000 will become beneficiaries of this intervention in Somalia and Goodhope informal settlements in the next financial year.

Madame Speaker;

I now turn to a report on our drive to facilitate a variety of housing settlements located in livable human settlements. This has four main components, namely provision of various forms of housing units, urban regeneration, land acquisition initiatives, as well as the informal settlements management programme. Our report touches on all four aspects.

Regarding direct housing provision in general, since the start of the current term office until June 2013, we have serviced 3271 stands and constructed 17 160 new houses. In line with our plan to offer various housing options and solutions to residents, we have also constructed 988 units for rental. Currently we have 41 active projects in various stages of implementation throughout the City.

Housing construction projects started during the current financial year will continue into the next 2014/15 financial year in Etwatwa Extension 35, Alra Park, Eden Park West and Extension One, Magagula Heights and Moleleki Extension One. These projects were amongst the first to be implemented in line with the accreditation programme roadmap agreed upon with the GPG. Once completed, the result will be 2 263 new houses for families that really need them.

During the period under review, we have undertaken refurbishment work of approximately 38 rental housing complexes, which we own. An additional R24 million will be made available in the 2014/15 financial year for further refurbishment of our rental complexes and hostels.

Fellow Councillors;

I now wish to deal with the issue of densification, which constitutes one of the major defining features of the 'Breaking New Ground' policy. This involves the creation of human settlements that are well located within the transport corridors, for easy movement between work and home, and to higher density housing to put more residents in locations where they have access to opportunities, networks, capabilities and facilities that can support various types of livelihoods.

In this regard, we have construction projects in Tembisa and Vosloorus that conform to the policy.

In Vosloorus, we are finalizing plans for the construction of an affordable, high quality medium density housing project in Extension 28. The project will ensure beneficiary communities live within a reasonable distance of a whole host of socio-economic amenities and opportunities, including the BRT route currently being rolled out by the city.

The informal settlement management programme is essentially aimed at ensuring improvements in the quality of life of households living in the 119 informal settlements spread across our vast metro. Measures in this regard include the provision of a basket of essential basic services, including water, sanitation, area lighting, grading of access roads, emergency services, refuse collection and removal, area grass cutting and maintenance.

When it comes to the issue of land acquisition, I must refer to a general shortage of suitable and well-located land within our metro area. Equally challenging is the tendency of speculators to get hold of suitable land for settlements and then seek to transfer it to government for highly inflated prices. That makes it even more challenging for us to accommodate our ever-growing population. In recent years, we have partnered with national and provincial government to purchase privately owned land, which we have gone on to utilize for the development of integrated human settlements. In this regard, some of the land purchased includes portions of the land on which the Winnie Mandela Park, Tsakane Extensions and Langaville Projects have since been established.

The land on which the current Chief Albert Luthuli and Extensions were developed, was purchased with the assistance of the National Department of Rural Development. When completed, the entire development will cater for approximately 6000 households.

Going forward, we expect our investment in the Leeuwpoot land to result in the progressive release and development of approximately 12 000 units within an approved integrated development plan. The focus of this development will be on working and middle-income households. This development will help weave together the communities of Boksburg, Germiston, Dawn Park and Vosloorus within a spatially organized development that includes a range of commercial and retail uses – thus making for a balanced human settlement. It is also in the proximity of the BRT where we expect this initiative to be one of our first developments within the strategic land parcels program. We will in the next three months be approaching Council regarding this development.

We have further purchased well-located land in the Germiston CBD, and this includes the land on which the current Ekurhuleni Development Company portfolio has been developed. In addition we are also planning to purchase the land in and around the Germiston Station, which we will then utilize for high density housing, to reinforce the investment that PRASA is making with regards to upgrading the Germiston Station.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Further in support of the social housing programme, we are working with the Provincial Department of Human Settlements to commence construction of 250 units in Delville and at the Fire Station at the tune of R51 million in the 2014/15 financial year. This will bring the number of social housing units in the city to 1 238.

Other urban regeneration projects that are still in the pipeline include concept designs for the Germiston Station, which we have completed. We have thus far concluded an MOU on making the Germiston station a world-class intermodal facility with PRASA and the Gauteng Provincial Government. The deal will also result in the upgrading of other key railway stations in Ekurhuleni.

Another exciting development in terms of the Urban Development Framework Plan for Germiston, will be the construction of a Theatre which is expected to get underway next month.

With regards to Tembisa, we have worked closely with National Treasury to complete several bankable plans, as a result of which National Treasury committed funds to the tune of R8 million in the current financial year, and a further R50 million in the coming financial year. The funds are for the implementation of catalytic projects in Tembisa. On our part as the City, we have already spent in excess of R20 million towards the urban renewal of Tembisa, undertaking projects that include link roads (portion of George Nyanga and Andrew Mapheto) in the vicinity of the Tembisa Civic Centre, which area has been earmarked as a future Central Business district (CBD) of Tembisa; and Winnie Mandela Square, which is a secondary node to service the Northern part of Tembisa.

Madame Speaker;

I now wish to move logically to the next report, which addresses issues of transport and logistics. In this regard, I wish to preface my discussion with a quote:

“A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It is where the rich use public transport.”

Mayor of Bogota

The principal cause of the many transportation-related challenges we face emanate from the non-functional apartheid spatial form of the city. In addition to these, new challenges have emerged, which are largely due to local in-migration, continuous urban sprawl, including of informal settlements within the Gauteng City Region. This has led to growing dependence on private car use, which then leads to congestion, over-usage of our roads, as well as a fragmented public transport network, to name but a few.

As one of thirteen cities and towns in South Africa with the honour and responsibility to implement the BRT system, Ekurhuleni has been hard at work to roll this out. Phase 1 of the Plan starts from Tembisa to Vosloorus via Kempton Park and the OR Tambo International Airport. I am happy to report today that we have made tremendous progress.

Fellow Councillors;

I beg for your indulgence as I summarise progress made.

In order to roll out the BRT, we first have to rollout the enabling infrastructure on which the buses will run, as well as infrastructure that supports movement to and from the IRPTN network. We have thus far prepared the road designs for Phase 1. To this end, we have commenced with road construction along the Rev RTJ Namane Road in Tembisa, as well as Pretoria Road in Kempton Park, where we are implementing the feeder or complementary routes, pedestrian walkways as well as cyclist paths.

Construction of the feeder routes in Vosloorus is scheduled to start in April, whilst construction of the trunk route starting at the Tembisa Civic Centre towards Kempton Park will start in May 2014. What this means is that IRPTN construction work in Ekurhuleni will be in full swing by June 2014, where most of the road sections will be under construction.

As demonstrated by the construction of Non-Motorised Transport infrastructure such as pedestrian walkways on Pretoria Road in Kempton Park, Tembisa North, as well as Rondebult Road in Vosloorus, it is important to note that our IRPTN is not just about buses.

Over and above the IRPTN infrastructure, we are engaged in processes to ensure that all Public Transport Operators in Ekurhuleni are brought on board. We have already begun implementing provisions of the MOU signed with the representative structure of all in Ekurhuleni, including the taxi industry and bus operators. The MOU is further testimony to the firm view we hold, that Public Transport Operators in Ekurhuleni constitute an integral part of our IRPTN project.

As further proof of our bona fide belief in the consultative process, we have retained the services of a Technical Advisory team to assist the parties to the MOU in understanding the project's technical details. This has helped pave the way to healthy negotiations. We remain on course to operationalize the IRPTN by the year 2016. During May this year, we will officially launch and unveil the name by which our project will be known.

While the IRPTN constitutes the main game changer in as far as transport interventions are concerned, we are continuously employing other approaches to respond to the immediate transportation needs of our residents. In this regard, we have extended the operations of our municipal bus services as we strive to connect the city region.

Extension of bus services has resulted in use introducing six new bus routes, namely:

an inter-city route from Vosloorus to Braamfontein was introduced in September 2013.

This route has been well received by our commuters.

Two new routes, one from Meadowbrook to Johannesburg, as well as another from Meadowbrook to Germiston were introduced in the past financial year.

More recently, we introduced three new routes – one from Katlehong to Rhodesfield, another from Vosloorus to Rhodesfield, and a third one from Reiger Park to Rhodesfield. The effect of especially these last three new routes has been to link our municipal public transport provision to the Gautrain, thereby creating a seamless link between road, rail and air transport within the broader context of our Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis.

In order to operationalize this, we have gone on to recruit twenty-five new bus drivers to support the introduction of these new bus routes. I am sure it will please you to learn that we have several other new routes in the pipeline, which we will announce in due course, as route licensing processes by the province get finalised.

As we continue to make the mobility of our citizens easier, we have set aside a budget of R80 million over the next two years for the purchase of green buses that will service other parts of Ekurhuleni with little or no current public transport service.

As a polycentric city that is constituted of nine disconnected towns with most areas not having proper ranking facilities, Ekurhuleni has the challenge of ensuring that especially those taxi and bus ranks that are mere open spaces are turned into facilities of which our residents will be proud. To this end, we are rolling out several Public Transport facilities.

We will be constructing a thousand high quality and aesthetically pleasing bus shelters across the City over the next three years. The shelters will be safer as well as energy-efficient.

Turning to taxi ranks, the Ramaphosa Public Transport facility, which is currently under construction, is due for completion by the end of April 2014. Construction of the new Vosloorus Public Transport facility, situated next to the new hospital, has commenced. Construction of another facility, this time in Palmridge, is due to start in April 2014.

Fellow Councillors;

As we build the Aerotropolis it is not just the mobility of people that counts but also the mobility of cargo. To this end as a city we are interested in the linkages between our manufacturing hinterland and the airport in OR Tambo as well as the port in Durban. We have since signed an MOU with Transnet and the Gauteng Provincial Government, to facilitate the development of the R8,5 billion Tambo Springs Inland Port and the R11,8 billion Transnet' Super corridor at sentranderand, which will complement the currently over-extended City Deep Inland Port.

This new Tambo Springs Inland Port, which is a 15-year development, will create a seamless movement of goods along the freight corridor between Gauteng, the Free State and the Durban Port in KZN. It will among others account for a million containers of freight. In terms of the MOU, Transnet becomes the port authority, while Ekurhuleni is a strategic partner by virtue of the strategic location of the land within its jurisdiction. This project will create in the region of 9 000 permanent jobs and an additional 20 informal jobs.

Construction of this major development will get under way in 2017.

Madame Speaker;

With your continued indulgence I wish to reflect on work done with respect to our roads and stormwater infrastructure.

As of December 2013, we had constructed 63.5 km of new roads and 23 km of new stormwater systems. This adds to the 168 km of new roads constructed since 2011. In addition to these, we have further constructed 6.7 km of new pedestrian walkways, and graded 87.3 km of roads in informal settlements.

When it comes to roads maintenance, we did this to 81.6 km of roads as of the second quarter of the current financial year. During the same period, we managed to maintain 92.1 km of stormwater infrastructure.

Having pointed out the achievements in this area, I must say that we are very sensitive to the limitations of the drainage of the city that are a legacy of the manner in which the city was designed from inception. The problem is perpetuated by the tendency of some of our residents and business of dumping foreign objects in the system. When we deliver the budget speech we will come up with a proposal on how to deal with the impact of flooding in our city.

Let me also move to assure the residents of Ekurhuleni that after the recent heavy rains, which left a trail of destruction on our roads, we are paying special attention to the resulting potholes as well.

INITIATIVES TO RE-GENERATE EKURHULENI

Fellow Residents, Distinguished Guests;

Ekurhuleni is rich in wetlands, lakes and dams with two hundred and six already identified and mapped. These water bodies play a vital role in the national drainage system from the northern water system to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. As a consequence of this, we are required to keep this system ecologically sustainable. In addition, our programme for the beautification of these water bodies will help create an attractive, sustainable and aesthetically pleasing environment that contributes to the city being a preferred destination for recreation activities, aquatic sport, water economics and hospitality. This will create economic spinoffs and jobs for our people.

As part of the strategic land parcels programme, we will be putting some of these investment possibilities forward within the next eighteen months. The work in rehabilitating them, however, will continue for the benefit of communities around them.

Our first major project in this area was the revamping of the Germiston Lake, which we officially re-opened towards the end of last year. The venue is already attracting thousands of people and major events since its re-opening. We will continue to market it as one of the major leisure parks in the country with the capability to host some of the leading events in both the entertainment and sporting arenas. Already the facility has become the home of the Iron Man 5150 Triathlon Africa Championship. It has also hosted, amongst others, the first ever Ekurhuleni International Gospel Festival in December 2013.

Not to be forgotten is the task we have as a city to keep the reliable schedule of grass cutting in place where it is our responsibility. We must admit to the inconsistencies on our part in various areas, but we have been attending to the main causal factors. Our grass management programme will not only be strengthened by having the right contractors in place all the time, but also by making sure the right type of grass is planted per type of area, including the indigenous savannah grasslands in some of the areas that are uninhabited. The overall objectives are the functionality, aesthetics and eco-system balance of the neighbourhood - plus reliability and consistency are key for this function.



INITIATIVES TO RE-GOVERN EKURHULENI

Madame Speaker and Fellow Councillors;

Initiatives to help us re-govern Ekurhuleni are largely our backroom operations, without which our customer-facing activities would be limited in scope and success rate.

All of what we seek to achieve requires a state machinery with the capabilities and talent to deliver. We are proud of the manner in which we have positioned Ekurhuleni as not only an employer of choice, but also as a nurturer and developer of the talent within. To this end, we have already submitted policy proposals in the areas of talent retention, scarce skills attraction, performance management and so forth. In the coming months, we shall be approaching Council regarding our intervention to consolidate and enhance the development of skills and the talent pipeline in the Metro, including through the envisaged Ekurhuleni Academy.

In line with the commitment made during SOCA 2013, the Institutional Review process is now nearing completion and will soon be tabled before council for approval. The design of all departmental structures has been finalized. All vacant HOD positions have now been filled. Of the 132 positions that constitute the Top Structure of EMM, ninety-six have already been filled. We are now in the process of recruiting for the remaining thirty-six.

Having completed the design process, the next phase we are in is that of ensuring that all our staff and labour partners are engaged and consulted with regard to our new organizational structure. To this end, we recently held a two-day information-sharing session with the LLF on 5 and 6 March 2014. This is being followed by more extensive LLF engagements. If all goes according to plan, we expect to be able to seek Council approval in the coming month.

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge our labour partners SAMWU and IMATU for the mature and professional manner in which we have worked together in a very effective Local Labour Forum. Indeed I can safely say that the relationship between the employer and employee continues to strengthen in this Metro.

Madame Speaker;

I now turn to the issue of finance, the most crucial central tenet of which is our assurance that we remain very much in control of our funding and revenue generation activities.

For the fourth consecutive year, we received an unqualified audit. We still aspire towards a clean audit during the 2013/2014 audit cycle. In addition, we have retained our credit rating, which rates us at the highest level of the metros in our country. We have every intention to retain and improve on this rating going forward.

Key to us achieving our strategic ambitions is to build and sustain our capacity to strategically invest in a disciplined way. It follows then that revenue protection and enhancement is a critical objective.

When it comes to collection rates, in the last financial year we achieved lower than was our target – 92% against a target of 93%. Among the key issues going forward is to address the efficiency of revenue billing and collection systems. It is critical to ensure that the ICT network that supports all revenue processes is stable at all times. The ICT department is attending to this, and is already improving our performance in this regard. Our intention is to have as many ratepayers as possible migrate to the e-Siyakhokha platform. This will have benefits for ratepayers in that they have convenient access to their bills, and equally convenient mechanisms to pay.

With some residents sometimes querying their accounts, you will be glad to know that as from June 2015, those who still have reason to doubt their accounts will be able to pursue their complaints with the soon to be established Municipal Ombudsman, who will be able to provide independent assessment and determination of the facts of their appeal.

For bulk users, the electronic metering in place system allows them to track their utilization throughout the month, thus allowing them to manage consumption according to their business requirements. This will be reinforced by the rollout of smart meters for both energy and water, which will improve the efficiency and convenience of metering and billing, including through enabling remote readings and automated real time readings. Equally important are measures to ensure accurate and complete ratepayer data and register across the Metro. As we improve the accuracy of our ratepayer data, we will also have a more accurate indigent register. We are pleased with the SALGA/Eskom Agreement in relation to cooperation regarding billing and collection in Eskom-supplied areas. This will be a very decisive

intervention in our city, given the very different payment rates between Eskom-supplied areas and city supplied areas. This efficient collection system, plus improved data, will be central to us managing down the debt book, which currently stands at R10 billion.

Fellow Councillors;

Key to the stability of the ICT network is to make sure that our fibre and wireless grid is properly connected and maintained. It is also important that it is monitored on a 24/7 basis. The metro is thus rolling out an ICT operations centre, as a custodian of the network. The same network over the next two years will be the basis of the City being able to provide Wi-Fi services not only for the City's employees, but also for the households and businesses by 2016. This tangibly puts us on a path to becoming a smart city.

To modernize our institution, we are also undertaking a process of digitizing our data through the master data management project and reengineering our business processes, and automating some of the key interface between the citizens and the city. All of this will be outlined in our Master Systems Plan that will be presented to Council in due course.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Fellow Residents of Ekurhuleni;

2014 is a historic and exciting year in more ways than one. The single most important reason of all is the fact that our democracy is coming of age. To this end, we will be going to the polls on 7 May to give a new mandate to our public representatives at both provincial and national spheres of government. It is our hope that especially the so-called born-free generation does take advantage of this hard won right, by showing up at the polls to vote.

As we have demonstrated through the example of Ekurhuleni, it is common course that the South Africa of today is a far better country to live in than the politically unstable, racially divided and economically depressed pariah state that we inherited on 27 April 1994. A lot more still needs to be done though, particularly to defeat the country's triple burden of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Similarly, we must wage a relentless battle to overcome our quadruple burden of disease.

In the State of the Nation Address and State of the Province Address, President Zuma and Premier Nomvula Mokonyane have respectively given highlights of some of the key achievements of the past twenty years. Beyond this, the Presidency has since published a Twenty Year Review report, which gives a comprehensive account of the road travelled since the ANC took power in 1994. I urge all members of this House, administrators, our residents, business, labour and civil society, to familiarize themselves with aspects of this wonderful democracy that we are all raving about.

GRATITUDE

These are humble steps to account on our efforts to reinforce, entrench and consolidate conditions of perpetual social maturation since it is the only way our dream of a common destination as South African Humanity can be realized. This is the cause for which great men and women of our country regardless of colour or creed made sacrifice. This is the cause for which our generation cannot afford to fail.

I wish to acknowledge my wife, children and the entire extended family, for the support they continue to give me amidst the challenges that come with the task we have been deployed to perform.

My friends, acquaintances, business and labour leaders never fail to honour our invitation to join us for this annual event. Many of them go on to keep us to our promise to perform in a particular way, and for that we are eternally grateful.

I thank you, members of this august Council, the various office-bearers as well as the City Management and Senior Management of our City. It is our common wish to see Ekurhuleni to see prosper that helps keep us all on our feet.

The job I do is done as a consequence of the confidence bestowed in me by the party that has been governing South Africa and this municipality since the dawn of democracy, the African National Congress. This is the party whose historic mission and fundamental goal will remain unfulfilled until such time that all South Africans live in harmony and prosperity, and every child goes to bed on a full stomach, is guaranteed an accessible and safe mode of transport in the morning as s/he makes their way to a school equipped with all the amenities for effective learning.

During the first twenty years of our democracy, we have sought to reverse the legacy of three hundred years of race-based discrimination and development. Our task is not yet done.

Let us go out and raise the flag for democracy. Let us go out and reaffirm the drive for a prosperous Ekurhuleni.

Ke a leboga. Hi khensile. Baie dankie.



**City of
Ekurhuleni**

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