

Every bit as royal as an eagle

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Photo: Harol Gess

IN THIS EDITION



Mcebisi Pinyana was formally ordained, consecrated, and enthroned as the fifteenth Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Grahamstown. The ceremony was conducted by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba (page 11). *Grocott's Mail* will have an interview with Pinyana about his new role in next week's edition.

CORRECTION

Last week, we ran an incorrect picture of Jock McConnachie in the article titled 'Public Protector declines to investigate complaint'; the one we used was of his brother. The correct photo of Jock McConnachie appears below.



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China steps in after US pulled out

By Asemahle Vumsindo

The People's Republic of China has announced a major funding commitment to support South Africa's HIV response, pledging \$3.49 million (approximately R60 million) through a two-year partnership facilitated by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Jay Kruuse, director of the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM), welcomed the Chinese funding, noting it "will contribute somewhat towards addressing funding shortfalls to combat HIV in South Africa". Kruuse explained that the primary reason for the shortfall was a freeze and subsequent reduction in foreign aid, which stemmed from the foreign policy decisions of the incoming United States administration. He said that US decisions have had a global impact on patients, leading to reduced health research capacity and job losses.

The scale of the crisis

The US cuts have severely impacted South Africa's health budget. The National Department of Health (NDoH) used to receive about 17% of its HIV funding from the USA. Following the withdrawal of foreign funding, the NDoH had to request emergency funds from the National Treasury to cover the resulting gaps.

Using the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), PSAM requested access to correspondence between the NDoH and National Treasury, revealing the scale of the emergency intervention required:

- R590 407 000 in additional funding was provided under the Comprehensive HIV/Aids component for service delivery across provinces.
- R32 121 000 was allocated to the NDoH to support the Centralised Chronic Medicine Dispensing and Distribution (CCMDD) programme and pharmaceutical supply chain management.
- R132 000 000 will be transferred to the SA Medical Research Council to support health research.

National Treasury explained that these amounts "cover the most urgent needs and further allocations may be considered as part of the adjustments budget".

Two-year South-South collaboration

The new funding from China, sourced from the China Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, will directly address key gaps in prevention. The agreement follows a recent Memorandum of Understanding between UNAIDS and China's International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) to boost South-South collaboration.

According to UNAIDS, the two-year funded project has specific targets across the country:

- It will reach 54 000 adolescents and young people in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges across seven of the nine provinces.
- It will support 500 people who inject drugs through harm reduction and opioid agonist therapy programmes in Gauteng province.

Kruuse concluded that the shift in United States foreign policy has necessitated that South Africa make adjustments and alternative arrangements to combat its health challenges, and the funding support from China will contribute towards these revised arrangements.

ANC celebrates Ward 10 by-election victory

By Luvuyo Mjekula

The ANC has won the fiercely-contested Makana Ward 10 by-election to fill the vacancy left open after the passing of councillor Zodwa Cetu two months ago.

The results show the ANC had won the by-election by 49.76%, followed by the DA with just over 26% and the Makana Citizens Front (MCF) with 9.53%.



The ANC's Andile Mbeju – the winning candidate for Ward 10 by-election. The DA tally board (right) shows the results of the election as they were coming in. Photos: Supplied

Voting Station	DA	ANC	PA	MCF	EFF	SACP	PAC	Total
Nathaniel Nyaluza	53	156	9	4	17	11	-	250
	31.2%	62.4%	3.6%	1.6%	6.8%	4.4%		
AFM	186	179	44	83	20	8	-	520
	35.76%							
BB Zondani	96	297	24	34	30	19	-	500
	19.2%	59.4%	4.8%	6.8%	6%	3.8%		
Grand Total	335	632	73	121	67	38		1270
	26.38%	49.76%	5.74%	9.53%	5.28%	2.99%		

IEC provincial spokesperson, Sanda Nodada, said the final results will be made public on Monday. Said Nodada: "Final results are only released once the objection window period has expired."

The report also showed the ANC's performance in the 2021 elections, a resounding 67.34%. ANC Makana Sub-region leader and Council Speaker Mabhuti Matyumza confirmed to *Grocott's Mail* this morning that the ANC had won the ward "convincingly". The ANC caucus in the Makana Municipal Council reportedly celebrated the victory at an ordinary council meeting at the Settlers Monument yesterday .

Matyumza and mayor Yandiswa Vara updated profile images on their social media accounts to reflect the victory. Meanwhile, on its Facebook page, the Eastern Cape ANC posted a message titled: ANC Eastern Cape celebrates by-election victory in Makana Local Municipality.

"The African National Congress in the Eastern Cape warmly welcomes and celebrates the decisive victory secured in Ward 10, Makana Local Municipality following the by-election held on 26 November 2025.

"The ANC extends its heartfelt congratulations to Councillor Andile Arnold Mbeju on his resounding win in this by-election in Sarah Baartman Region. This success is more than a ballot result; it is a clear mandate from the residents of Ward 10 for progress, effective service delivery and agenda to liberate our people."

"These figures affirm that the electorate trusts the ANC to lead with humility and love, and to translate that trust into tangible improvements in daily life.

"The ANC is energised by this victory and stands ready to contest forthcoming by-elections with the same determination. We are confident that, guided by our members and supported by the community, we will secure further victories and triumph in the 2026 local-government elections."

Mbeju comes out on top

Six candidates – Andile Mbeju (ANC), Nomathamsanqa Mavikela (Patriotic Alliance), Chris Bodla (Democratic Alliance), Phaphama Nkontsa (Economic Freedom Fighters), Mncedisi Papu (South African Communist Party) as well as Thembinkosi Master Ngeleza (Makana Citizens Front) – contested the by-election.

The election was held at three voting stations

– Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) Church in Z Street, BB Zondani Hall in Victoria Road and Nathaniel Nyaluza High School in A Street. Ward 10 comprises mainly Fingo Village and Tanti Location in Makhandas Eastern side, Ward 10 and the area has abuzz with activity over the past few weeks as political parties hit the campaign trail on a daily basis.

Election without major incident

Other than a so-called demarcation problem, the Ward 10 by-election went on without major glitches, according to party leaders and agents. Speaking to *Grocott's Mail* during voting, DA caucus leader, Luvuyo Sizani said the election went on without major issues, parties have been tolerant of each other.

There were a few incidents at the BB Zondani voting station, but others were quiet. A party agent at the Nathaniel Nyaluza Secondary School in Fingo Village reported a low voter turnout. This was exacerbated by some voters being turned away because of the demarcation problem.

At the Nathaniel Nyaluza voting station, Patriotic Alliance voting district captain, Beauty Nyandeni, said between 40 and 45 voters were turned away. Trying to explain the problem, Nyandeni said some registered voters said when they had checked their registration statuses on the IEC app, they had received confusing feedback – their voting station needed to be verified. However, they had decided to go exercise their right to vote anyway, only to be told they could not vote.

Nyandeni attributed the problem to new demarcations. "So, I think they've used the new demarcation which I feel is not fair to the community because they should have at least educated the community." *Grocott's Mail* reported in May that during a meeting of the Municipal Demarcation Board in Makhandas, draft ward boundaries were presented to the local municipality and residents.

At the meeting, it was also announced that the municipality would lose a ward and a proportional representation (PR) council seat due to insufficient registration numbers. However, the provincial IEC explained on Thursday the reasons some voters were turned away. "Yes, there were people who were turned away because they don't belong to that ward – the addresses they had provided did not belong to that particular ward."

'Give the schools the money!'

Principals question the withheld R5 billion

Madeleine Schoeman and Priscilla Glover are two retired Makhanda principals who had a transformative impact on their schools. They are standing up to the Eastern Cape Department of Education in a historic lawsuit that could improve the educational outcomes of millions of learners in no-fee-paying schools.

Laney van Wyk and Rod Amner report.

Two of Makhanda's most successful school principals are key to a case against the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDOE), which is scheduled to be heard in the Makhanda High Court in March 2026.

Madeleine Schoeman (former principal of Ntsika Secondary) and Priscilla Glover (retired principal of Tanti Primary) are exposing how the department has systematically withheld almost R5 billion from the province's poorest schools since 2020.

From the start of Covid, both women noticed that their school budgets were decreasing. Every year, the Minister of Basic Education sets per-learner National Norms and Standards for School funding. In 2020/21, the amount was R1 390, but ECDOE budget allocations were slashed to 78% of the mandated amount. By 2021/22 and 2022/23, the allocations had plummeted to 50-53% of the set minimum.

When Glover and Schoeman discovered that for the 2023/24 financial year, the Department had budgeted just 38% of the required mandated amount they had had enough. They reported the situation to the Makhanda Circle of Unity, and in early 2023, the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) was called in to begin taking legal action against the ECDOE.

The ECDOE made a sudden about-turn and announced that it would release additional funds for the 2023/24 school budgets – but, this was still just 66.25% of the mandated amount.

The pattern was repeated in 2024/25, when an estimated R932 million was held back, ostensibly for "centralised procurement".

The applicants in the case, Ntsika Secondary, Tanti Primary and PJ Olivier High School governing bodies (SGBs), argue that the retention violates Section 29 of the Constitution, which guarantees an "immediately realisable" right to basic education, and the South African Schools Act, which requires complete transfers to SGBs.

Acting Head for the Department of Education, Sharon Ann Maasdorp, defended the retention, claiming economies of scale, cost savings, and better delivery. However, there's no evidence that these savings materialised, and the applicants maintain that the nearly R5 billion retained by the Department wasn't even spent on the centralised procurement she described in her affidavit. Where did this money go? What was procured exactly? From whom? Did it meet the learners' needs? are the questions they want answered.

Did the money go to ghosts?

The Eastern Cape isn't the only province to have held back funding from its poorest schools. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has failed to increase its



Former Ntsika High School principal Madeleine Schoeman. After the Eastern Cape Department of Education began withholding a substantial portion of her school budget, she and her husband funded everything from student meals to infrastructure improvements. Photo: Laney van Wyk

per-learner subsidy since 2015, thereby withholding an estimated R9.2 billion over the past nine financial years.

A recent audit in that province revealed thousands of "ghost employees" and "ghost learners". The head of education has committed to opening criminal charges against both ghost workers and the officials on the PERSAL (payroll) system who facilitated the fraudulent payments. KZN Finance MEC, Francois Adrianus Rodgers, said that removing ghost employees could save the department up to R1 billion a year, which could substantially close the school funding gap.

Following the KZN example, the ECDOE is now involved in the nationwide audit of "ghost workers/learners" being co-ordinated by the National Treasury and the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). Confirmed figures for the removal of ghost workers and the recovery of money are still pending.

Seven provinces allocate roughly the mandated amount to their schools as a matter of course. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are the only provinces with delinquent records.

Principals paid from their own pockets

Schoeman and Glover said they both subsidised their schools' operations with their own salaries and pensions. Schoeman and her husband became unofficial school sponsors during her 12-year tenure at Ntsika, funding everything from student meals to infrastructure improvements. Under her leadership, Ntsika's matric pass rate soared from a dismal 29% in 2012 to an extraordinary 87% by 2016, achieving results that matched those of fee-paying schools despite receiving only a fraction of the mandated funding.

"How can you live with yourself?" Schoeman demands of ECDOE officials in her affidavit. "It really is unconscionable when you know there are children who didn't get food or proper education because of you."

Glover's testimony reveals a similar pattern of personal sacrifice at Tanti Primary. Along with other committed staff, she found herself buying basic supplies, subsidising substitute staff, extra food and transportation with her own income.

The funding crisis has created a culture of fear and caution among school leaders. "We are not allowed to strike or speak ill of the department because we are the representatives of it," Glover said. "We are scared to be on the wrong side of it – you can't complain a lot; at worst, you are at risk of losing your job. It would be so much more constructive to fully engage the most important role players in education, including principals, in decision-making."

The legal showdown

The principals' evidence in the case is particularly damning because it comes from successful principals who achieved excellence despite the system, not because of it. Schoeman's Ntsika achieved a 41% bachelor pass rate in 2022, equalling that of fee-paying Graeme College. Glover protected teaching time at Tanti despite resource constraints. "You can't budget for the next year with no idea of what you will be getting," Schoeman explains in her testimony, outlining how the unpredictable funding makes it impossible to run schools properly.

The case, represented by the LRC's Cecile van Schalkwyk, has a hearing set for March 2026.

'Give schools the money!'

"Give the schools the money!" Schoeman demands. "If the schools are not doing what they should be doing, then put them on the list of the ones who cannot get the full amount and do procurement for them. But for schools that are well run, give them the full amount of money."

Glover adds a democratic dimension: "Decentralise – give us the budget in money, and we will buy the books. Don't make decisions for us on how to run schools. We are audited every year anyway, so if there's funny business, it will be picked up."

What R5 billion could have bought

The principals' testimony reveal the opportunity cost of the retained funds.

The R5 billion could have:

- Established high-quality, multilingual classroom libraries with 100 books in all 16 950 foundation phase classrooms in the entire province (costing just R340 million or 7% of the retained R5 billion).
- Funded teacher support programmes across the province.
- Provided adequate stationery and learning materials for every child.

Schoeman places this crisis in historical context:



Retired Tanti Primary School principal Priscilla Glover. The Tanti School Governing Body together with the SGBs of Ntsika High School and PJ Olivier, is suing the Eastern Cape Department of Education for withholding a substantial portion of its school budget since 2020.

Photo: Laney van Wyk



The Legal Resource Centre's Cecile van Schalkwyk is representing the Makhanda Circle of Unity and three local school governing bodies in their challenge to the EC Department of Education's persistent underfunding of its fee-exempt schools. A hearing is set for March 2026.

Photo: Rod Amner

"In 1994, a white child in a Model C school was getting around R1 700 a year for education. So we needed to get everyone to the same level – I fully understand that. But what happens is that after all these years since 1994, we still haven't reached the level of a white child, and that is inadequate."

Adjusted for inflation, that R1 700 would be worth over R9 596 today. Eastern Cape school children currently receive around R1 000 per learner per year, which is just over one-tenth of what white learners received in 1994. **GM**

- This story was produced under the *Between the Lines* series with financial support from the Henry Nxumalo Foundation.



■ Remnants of the 6 SA Infantry Battalion base's dilapidated perimeter fence close to the Burnt Kraal. Photo: Lucas Nowicki

Unfenced army base claims another life

By Lucas Nowicki

A man believed to be a Makhanda scrap metal collector was killed in late September when unexploded ordnance detonated while he was trespassing at the 6 SA Infantry Battalion's training area.

Large sections of the base's perimeter fence are missing or in tatters, and at least six civilians, including children, have been killed or injured by military devices from the base since 1998. Three people were killed in 2005 when a mortar linked to the base detonated in Bowker Street.

The defence ministry has stated that a project to build a perimeter fence could not be implemented due to a lack of funds.

Located on the outskirts of Makhanda, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) uses the base's 7 000-hectare area for live-fire training exercises. Yet the area is easily accessible to the public, since large sections of the dilapidated perimeter fence have been removed over the years. The base adjoins Burnt Kraal, a popular hiking area. But, in addition to the perimeter fence in tatters, there are no clear warning signs. The danger is particularly great for residents of Nkanini, a relatively new informal settlement, whose proximity to the base makes it a convenient area for people to search for scrap metal and collect firewood.

When the military contacted the police to investigate the body of the man killed in late September, a bomb disposal team had to clear the area, according to Warrant Officer Majola Nkohli.

"The body was found with parts of mortar ... It was alleged that there was also a bag with explosive shells that was seized and cartridges found from the deceased's person's pants pockets," said Nkohli.

Casualties

In 1998, 12-year-old Siyabulela Ntamo, playing outside Nombulelo Secondary School with two friends, Xolani and Yolanda, found an unexploded grenade in a bush. Not realising the danger, they threw it against the pavement, and it exploded, killing Xolani and Yolanda. Ntamo was badly injured.

"I spent six months in Livingstone Hospital in Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), and two more in Settlers Hospital in Grahamstown (Makhanda)," Ntamo told GroundUp. "Even after that, I had to visit the clinic every week. I had a hole in my leg."

Ntamo, who works as a car guard, still has deep scars from the blast and lost the use of one eye. He suspects the grenade was left behind by local poachers who frequented the base.

On 27 June 2005, Justin Martin (52), Johannes Kortrooi (58), and five-year-old Leonardo Lottering were killed when a 60mm mortar detonated in Bowker Street, Ghost Town. The device had been picked up in the unfenced training ground.

Arnold Plaatjies, who lost an eye in the blast in front of his home, successfully sued the defence minister and was awarded R1,3-million in compensation in 2018.

In 2021, a scrap metal collector from Nkanini, Xolani



The 6 SA Infantry Battalion base is located on the outskirts of Makhanda, within walking distance of many residential areas.
Photos: Lucas Nowicki

Magaba, 33, was seriously injured after a hand grenade he had picked up from the base detonated at his home. He told News24 that he found a bag filled with grenades while trespassing on the base’s grounds looking for scrap metal. He took the bag of grenades home with him, hoping to sell them to a local dealer for a cash payment.

Stalled project

Despite the injuries and deaths linked to the base, efforts to repair or replace the perimeter fence have stalled.

In a 2021 response to a parliamentary question on why the military has not re-fenced the military base, then Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, replied that a “project was registered and sent out for tender via the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI)”. But “the process was placed on hold by DPWI due to insufficient funding”.

She also said the fence was “absent” because it had been stolen.

In another reply to a 2023 question from IFP MP Inkosi Cebekhulu on the status of the fence, Mapisa-Nqakula stated: “The Chief of Logistics registered and approved the project to build a perimeter fence around the training area because it falls under his responsibility.” But again, it was “unable to be executed due to lack of funding”.

In a report after an oversight visit to the base in 2023, the defence portfolio committee noted that “a large part of the perimeter fence at the 6 SAI training area has been stolen and the remainder is dilapidated”. It described this as a major challenge to the base’s operations and “the Department of Defence should consider types of fencing less susceptible to theft”.

Funding challenges

SANDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Junior Grade Prince Tshabalala said that, regarding the construction of a perimeter fence, “implementation has been delayed due to funding challenges”, and the army is “continuing to pursue the resources required to complete the fencing project at Makhanda”.



Siyabulela Ntamo was badly injured by a grenade in 1998 and lost the use of one eye. He believes the grenade was found and then discarded by poachers who often hunted buck on the military base. Photo: Lucas Nowicki

“The cost of constructing the fence is significant, and the project will proceed once resources are allocated,” Tshabalala said. “Despite these constraints, the army continues to prioritise safety and security measures at the base. Patrols by military guards remain in place to prevent trespassing and to safeguard the perimeter.

“While the absence of a completed fence presents challenges, the Army maintains a visible security presence to mitigate risks,” he said.

GM

Where's the water?

Uncovering the failures of a brittle system

By Asemahle Vumsindo

When Rhodes University's recent graduate Terri Harris set out to study Makhandá's water management system, she wasn't just conducting academic research; she was probing a question many in the small Eastern Cape town ask daily: why isn't the water coming?

Acknowledging the immense frustration felt by the community, she was motivated to understand the systemic reasons why access to a basic human right was failing.

Harris' master's thesis, "A constant state of failure: characterisation of the water management system of a small South African town", offers a revealing look into the complex reasons behind Makhandá's fragile water system. Harris, who studies Human Kinetics and Ergonomics (HKE), applied this discipline to understand the crisis.

Harris explained her approach: "Studying ergonomics means we look at people and their interactions with the environment and we look at how to improve their well-being." She said she applied this systemic knowledge to find the reasons for the water issues, adding that "the municipality was also willing to work with me in my research". This approach involved mapping how people and processes interact. Harris concluded that the system is currently experiencing a dangerous "drift toward failure".

Decades of decisions lead to collapse

Harris's research pins down decades of systemic issues that have caused the gradual decline in water supply, primarily driven by financial mismanagement and severe resource deficits. The analysis reveals that the lack of a dedicated infrastructure maintenance budget is central to the crisis. Harris found that when the municipality stopped allocating 10% of the budget to infrastructure maintenance in the late 1990s, the funds never returned.

As infrastructure began to age, it started to break down without the budget to fix it. "Now Makhandá sits in a situation where they have an overwhelming amount of system breakages and no financial resources to fix them," she noted.

The impact is immediately felt in communities like Joza. Harris said to properly serve high-need areas, "Upgrades are needed to get a higher capacity of water flowing to communities since areas like Joza are suffering from constant water outages."

Resource deficits in the trenches

The consequences of this financial collapse are felt most acutely by the municipal workers attempting to fix the system. Harris's findings detail critical weaknesses in operations:

- Lack of equipment: the municipality owns no TLBs (large scale machines that dig trenches), forcing staff to wait until a machine can be rented, costing time and money. Alternatively, workers must manually dig through tar and rock to reach burst pipes, severely delaying repairs.
- Transport failure: a critical lack of vehicles means plumbing teams are often unable to reach



Rhodes University's recent Masters graduate Terri Harris.
Photo: Supplied

system breakdowns in town or at the distant James Kleynhans Water Treatment Facility quickly.

- Vacancies and overload: multiple system vacancies lead to employees being "severely over-worked, over-stretched, and over-stressed".

Resilience and acts of ingenuity

Despite the overwhelming system failures, the research also highlights the extraordinary resilience of ground-level staff, who often keep the brittle system operational against all odds. She found that despite system mismanagement and shortages of resources, there are people in the system that try their best with the little they have to keep the system operational.

Operators show resourcefulness by making their own tools, such as nets to clean settling tanks out of old poles and netting. Employees demonstrate ingenuity by creating their own office furniture out of old car seats and metal cages. Workers often purchase their own stationery for paper-based reports, or dig trenches with their bare hands when tools are missing.

Harris noted, however, that often the failures of a brittle system outweigh the best intentions of resilient staff. This human resilience extends to working vast amounts of unpaid overtime due to transport issues, and answering breakdown calls at all hours from 7am to 4am to keep the water flowing for the community, including for their own families.

From blame culture to belonging

Another dangerous fracture in the water management system is a severe lack of vertical integration which shows itself in a lack of communication and trust between leadership and ground workers. The research captured the deep psychological fracture among workers, who felt

management did not know them or hear their concerns. This lack of communication creates a culture of fear, where employees are scared of repercussions for making or reporting mistakes, which can lead to larger problems being hidden.

To address this systemic conflict, Harris provides actionable recommendations that the municipality can action immediately:

- Improve vertical integration: hold frequent meetings for all employees to discuss operations and concerns. Leadership must promote reliable reporting without resorting to a blame culture.
- Enforce accountability: enforce consequences for non-performing municipal officials and those who mismanage finances to set a necessary precedent.
- Leverage strengths: formally recognise and reward the “resourcefulness, innovation, and collaboration” of existing employees. This recognition is key to boosting morale and restoring trust.
- Financial restructuring: immediately seek money to re-create a dedicated infrastructure maintenance budget.

Harris concludes that her findings echo far beyond Makhanda’s borders, reminding residents and officials alike that in every broken system, the human spirit continues to strive to make it work.

GM | Photo: Lucas Nowicki



Makana overtime dispute halts services

By Asemahle Vumsindo

Makhanda residents are facing long waiting periods to fix disruptions to essential services, more especially water and electricity outages, as Makana Municipality workers engage in what has been described as a “go-slow” protest. The workers are refusing to work overtime hours due to a breakdown in trust, following a history of delayed payments for previously worked overtime.

Defining overtime

In a typical workplace, overtime is defined as the time an employee works beyond their normal contracted hours. In the context of the municipality’s essential services, this typically includes after-hours (before 8am and after 4.30pm), weekends, and public holidays where the work required is for urgent repairs and maintenance.

The root of the refusal

The primary cause of the refusal to work overtime stems from a history of delayed payments. According to Democratic Alliance (DA) Councillor Luvuyo Sizani, workers were refusing overtime due to “past experiences of non-payment” of worked hours. Sizani said that affected departments typically include water, electricity, sanitation, and parks.

Sizani indicated that, to his understanding, all arrear overtime has been paid following consultations with the Human Resources (HR) department. Fellow DA Councillor Geoff Embling maintains that the dispute is an ongoing issue, clarifying that municipal

workers are still refusing to work overtime based on their negative past experiences.

Embling highlighted the severity of the situation, referencing a strike last September where workers did not pump water in the mornings. He said that the electricity department appears to be the worst affected, with outages lingering over weekends and after hours because staff continue to refuse to fix faults during overtime periods.

Notes from the Infrastructure Portfolio Meeting held on Wednesday, 7 May 2025, which were provided by Embling, shed further light on the situation. The notes confirm that the overtime payments owed to workers from as far back as September 2024 were finally released in March 2025, with the finance department said to be the source of the delays.

The meeting notes also raised concerns about senior management’s failure to discipline staff. A transition in mid-2024 from a system allowing “excessive overtime” to a “malfunctioning shift system” has complicated matters. Alarming, fixing critical electrical faults after hours and on weekends is currently not classified as “essential” work by senior management, according to the notes.

This lack of planning and management failure has a direct negative impact on service delivery in Makhanda, delaying urgent repairs and exacerbating the existing infrastructure challenges and cable theft crisis.

The Makana Municipality was approached for official comment on the current status of the overtime dispute and service disruptions and has not responded.

GM

Council tackles landfill crisis and animal control by-laws

By Gcina Ntsaluba

The Makana Local Municipality held an ordinary council meeting on Thursday where councillors addressed pressing waste management concerns and approved new by-laws for stray animal control. The meeting, held at the Monument due to ongoing City Hall renovations, saw the council grappling with the lifespan of the existing landfill site and progress on identifying a new location.

Reducing the burden on the landfill

The Director of Public Safety and Community Services presented a comprehensive report on the current landfill site's remaining capacity and efforts to extend its operational life. The municipality has implemented several interventions to prolong the site's lifespan, including entering into a memorandum of understanding with a waste management partner to divert waste from the facility.

According to the director's presentation, the municipality has received waste separation equipment and is developing a distribution plan to ensure recycling happens outside the landfill site. A local company has also approached the municipality about recycling garden refuse to create compost, further reducing the burden on the existing facility.

The council heard that an environmental impact assessment (EIA) for a new landfill site has been conducted, though councillors raised concerns about whether previous EIA reports had expired and requested updated, comprehensive documentation.

Executive Mayor Yandiswa Vara acknowledged the partnership approach: "We accept the contents and we accept the partnership that is here... In principle, we fully support the alternative in terms of the landfill site."

The mayoral committee was tasked with developing a comprehensive business plan to secure funding for a new landfill site.

Animal control by-laws approved

In a significant development, the council approved draft by-laws for the control of stray animals, with provisions for public participation and community engagement before final implementation. The by-laws will establish a temporary animal pound facility at the municipality's commonage farm. The Portfolio Councillor for Community and Social Services will lead site inspections to ensure the facility meets requirements.

Councillors emphasised the importance of implementing a by-law rollout program quickly to avoid legal complications in enforcement. The Speaker stressed the need to gazette the by-laws with the provincial government once approved, noting past challenges where enforcement was hampered by regulations that were never formally gazetted.

"First, you must accept the by-law," the Speaker explained. "Then, once you agree on the by-law, you can accept it. When we check whether they are gazetted or



The municipality has implemented several plans to prolong the lifespan of the Makanda landfill, while funding for a new landfill site is being sought. Photo: Supplied

not, they are not," the Speaker warned, "and then when they go to court, we have no leg to stand on."

Council administration updates

The Speaker announced that the council is in the process of filling a vacant seat, with provisional results awaiting certification by the Independent Electoral Commission.

Several councillors were noted as absent, with concerns raised about consistent absences from both special and ordinary council meetings. The Speaker indicated this matter would be addressed through proper channels.

The council also received and approved minutes from multiple previous meetings, including ordinary and special council sessions held between July and October 2025, as well as mayoral committee meeting minutes.

Looking ahead

The municipality faces ongoing challenges in waste management and service delivery, issues that have historically plagued the municipality. The council's focus on both immediate interventions at the existing landfill site and long-term planning for a new facility demonstrates an effort to address these concerns systematically.

The animal control by-laws represent another step toward improving municipal services, with the emphasis on community engagement reflecting lessons learned from previous policy implementations.

Council members expressed appreciation for the collaborative approach taken on these matters, with the Executive Mayor noting the importance of partnership in finding solutions to the municipality's service delivery challenges.



Anglican Bishops from different Dioceses in South Africa gathered in support of the installation of Bishop Mcebisi Pinyana. At centre is Archbishop Thabo Makgoba and to his left is the new bishop of the Grahamstown Diocese, Bishop Mcebisi Pinyana. Photo: Chalotte Mokonyane

Makhanda welcomes new Bishop

By Chalotte Mokonyane

Under the joyous gaze of a packed Cathedral of St Michael and St George in Makhanda, the Venerable Mcebisi Pinyana was formally ordained, consecrated, and enthroned as the Fifteenth Bishop of the Diocese.

The ceremony, held on the Feast of St Cecilia, was a colourful spectacle blending deep Anglican tradition with the vibrant culture of the Eastern Cape. The ceremony was presided over by Reverend Dr Thabo Cecil Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA), signalling the dawn of a new chapter for one of the region's oldest and most historically significant dioceses.

The solemnity of consecration

The day's Order of Service detailed the solemn proceedings, which began at 10am. Archbishop Makgoba, along with a host of other bishops, clergy, and dignitaries from across the Province, all attended the occasion. The service followed the ancient pattern of episcopal ordination and consecration, where the Bishop-Elect publicly declares his allegiance to the faith and promises to uphold the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

The highlight of the service was the enthronement,

where Bishop Pinyana formally took his seat on the episcopal cathedra (throne). This act confirms his spiritual authority and pastoral responsibility as the chief shepherd of the Diocese of Grahamstown. The atmosphere inside the Cathedral was one of deep reverence, celebration, and hopeful expectation for the leadership that would follow the period of vacancy.

A seasoned minister

Pinyana steps into the role with a decades-long record of dedicated service. The official biography in the Order of Service highlights him as a "seasoned minister of the Gospel with over 20 years of ordained ministry experience".

A charge for justice, unity, and love

Assuming the mantle as the 15th Bishop, Pinyana will now shepherd the Diocese of Grahamstown, a geographically vast and socially diverse region of the Eastern Cape.

The closing blessing of the service, an ancient liturgical prayer, captured the mission ahead for the new Bishop and his Diocese. It invoked a plea for God's blessing upon the city of Makhanda and the entire Diocese, praying for a spirit that would "bring us to that justice and truth, that unity and love, for which he teaches our hearts to yearn". **GM**

Facebook helps nab suspect in rape case

A South African Police Service (Saps) detective this week narrated how he used Facebook to trace and arrest a man accused of raping a 22-year-old Rhodes University student last year.

By Luvuyo Mjekula

Constable Akhona Hlwithana of the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) unit, based in Makhanda testified in the Makhanda High Court this week in the trial of two men charged with the student's rape near the Settlers Monument on 16 March 2024.

The two – 19-year-old Zephanic Lushaan Martins from Kirkwood and 21-year-old Antonio Angelo Rudman from Gqeberha – had appeared to rescue the student from a robber after she lost contact with her friends, only to drive her to a remote area near Settlers Monument where they are accused of taking turns raping her.

Hlwithana, the investigating officer, told the court he had spotted the would-be suspects on CCTV footage from the Rhodes University Campus Protection Unit (CPU), but struggled to locate either one.

Two visits to the incident scene with the complainant yielded no leads. However, with the help of a cousin of Rudman's, who had seen him on the footage, the police confirmed his identity.

Hlwithana decided to try a profile search on Facebook. "Luckily, in his profile picture, he wore the same outfit he had on in the CCTV footage," the detective testified. He immediately made a print-out of the profile photograph, and after gathering more information, including the fact that at the time of the incident, he had been "squatting" at a warden's residence on Rhodes campus, but had vanished on the morning after the incident, the investigation intensified.

Hlwithana said he sent Rudman a message on Facebook, to which he replied he was in Gqeberha and did not have money to travel to Makhanda. He did not respond to requests for his address or offers to provide him with transport.

Then, 25 days after the alleged rape, Hlwithana made a significant breakthrough while walking near Spar supermarket in Makhanda on 8 April 2024. He spotted the same white vehicle he had seen on CCTV footage leaving Rhodes campus after the driver dropped off the complainant and a man in the early hours of 17 March 2024. He had tried to follow the car, to no avail.

The vehicle turned out to belong to Martin's (accused one) girlfriend. Hlwithana visited her flat on 10 April and found and arrested Martins on a rape charge. Thirteen days later, Rudman handed himself over to the police and was also arrested.

They both appeared in the Makhanda Magistrate's Court and were granted R1 000 bail each. The two have pleaded not guilty to raping the student, citing consensual sex. However, the state says they acted in the furtherance of a common purpose or conspiracy.

According to the indictment, the student, who may not be named, had gone out with her friends on the night of 16 March 2024, but had become separated from them and started walking alone towards campus.

Testifying in court earlier in the trial, the student said a man in a car guard vest took her phone and wallet, claiming he would keep them safe for her. She said two men then came in a car. The passenger (Rudman) recovered her belongings and offered her a ride. He sat in the back with her as the car drove off.

She asked to be dropped off at the Steve Biko residence on Rhodes campus but they drove her to a secluded area where they raped her. They then drove her toward campus, where Rudman tried to persuade her to go with him to his place, she testified, but she refused and walked away from him. She later collapsed and was spotted by passersby.

Defence advocate Marius van Zyl said according to his client, Martins, the complainant had voluntarily engaged in sexual activity, including instructing Rudman to perform sexual acts. The complainant denied these claims. She testified that the accused touched her without her consent.

The state has called several other witnesses including Settlers Hospital medical doctor, Thembile Zintonga, whose testimony centered around inconclusive forensic evidence. Zintonga told the court no DNA evidence could be found from swabs extracted from the complainant's underwear and body.

Despite the defence's attempts to use this to exclude the two accused from the case, state advocate Jan Engelbrecht objected. "There is no report that says DNA does not belong to the two accused. The test results say no DNA was found," Engelbrecht argued.

Zintonga said the inconclusive outcome could be attributed to an incorrect swabbing technique used, or the fluid extracted could belong to a different person, an indication the complainant could have been with someone else before the incident, possibly her boyfriend. However, the doctor explained that this was unlikely considering the complainant said she had last had consensual intimacy with her boyfriend about seven days before the incident.

A controversial moment ensued in court when judge Sunil Rugunanan scolded defence advocate Chris Mzamo for insinuating that he had appeared to align himself with the state on the matter. "I will hold you in contempt of court if you don't retract your statement," Rugunanan fumed.

Rhodes' CPU manager Percy Mabotja and shift supervisor George Goliath, have also taken the stand.

The trial continues.

GM



Participants in the national 15-minute silent lie down outside Rhodes University's library on 21 November for the G20 Women's Shutdown. Photo: Supplied by Rhodes University

'Choose your words with care'

An open letter for the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence

An open letter to government, international NGOs, academics, media professionals and civil society.

This 16 Days, Quote This Woman+, an African feminist non-profit working for a gender-just media, calls on all thought-leaders and writers to exercise responsibility for the words, phrases, and acronyms they choose in this conversation. We refer in particular to the easy euphemisms and acronyms that dominate discourse which often replace, rather than refer back to, the full gamut of violences perpetrated.

GBV, meaning Gender-Based Violence, VAWG, meaning Violence Against Women and Girls, and IPV, Intimate Partner Violence, are to be used as full identifiers, rather than abbreviations, in text, headlines, and captions. They're the accepted names of working groups, policies, and action plans.

Why this concern?

Linguistics tells us that the more effort we put into thinking about things, the more careful and clear the language we use when we describe those things. Similarly, the clearer and more careful our thinking, the more precise

our language. And the inverse is true too: as language degrades – in this case, by defaulting to acronyms and euphemisms – so does critical thinking.

It is easy to understand why we unthinkingly default to euphemisms, especially in a trauma-filled world. Whether we lead the conversation, or are the audiences,

we find it deeply uncomfortable to look squarely at that which rightly is taboo in our society, like acts of gendered violence. We unconsciously seek the words that diminish those feelings of discomfort, that "dance with light feet around difficult truths".

Acronyms become the euphemisms that dilute the severity of the acts

they describe. And if 16 Days of Activism are intended to propel change, there needs to be complete clarity about what it is that needs to change, what it is that needs to be exposed, dishonoured, and altered. By that we mean the perpetrators of rape, femicide, incest, beatings, trolling, doxing, and intimidation and the culpable institutions of the state, the economy, education, society and culture that – consciously or unconsciously – enable violent behaviour.

Acronyms become the euphemisms that dilute the severity of the acts they describe.

Who benefits when language and thinking degrades

Quote This Woman+ believes that the language we currently use reflects and reinforces the agenda of those who both overtly and covertly resist this change, on an individual and an institutional level. The focus on those who suffer is crucially important. But it conveniently deflects our gaze from those who perpetrate.

It reinforces the myth that what is up for debate is the behaviour of women, rather than of systems, and men. Our language is degrading how we and our audiences understand the dissonance of power, and consequently, our ability to change it.

Name it to tame it

To clarify thinking about this matter, Quote This Woman+ spoke to two trauma psychologists. They explained that when violences are named, we're triggered at gut-level. At best we feel unease, and at worst horror, terror, anger, or shame. Very often, this is followed by avoidance, as we try to bury negative feelings.

This is why trauma isolates. It keeps its secrets; hides its shame. But these psychologists agree that when we name what we hold as unthinkable, a space appears for something transformative to take place. We stop being fully inside the experience, and become its external observer. That which was overwhelming and amorphous becomes specific and manageable. Our nervous systems regulate, there is a space in which to heal.

With careful thought, everyone in this conversation can find the ability to use language that shines the light into the shadows while still evidencing compassion. And without sanitising acts of violence, and without degrading how we think.

Be the change

This open letter is a call to every person whose language touches on gender violence, to do the following:

1. Think before defaulting to acronyms. Ask: whose interests am I serving when I box the full extent of this violence into a few initials?
2. Be conscious as a gatekeeper. When narratives focus overwhelmingly on those who have suffered, there is no space to expose, dishonour and hold to account those who perpetrate, and those who enable.
3. Use curiosity and compassion to get clarity. Be curious when you notice your own instincts to bleach difficult truths. Allow self compassion: acknowledge how hard this is. Remember that it is a fallacy to think that euphemisms protect ourselves or others from harm, and allow this resolve to guide language clarity.
4. Centre the systems at fault. Interrogate that which allows violence to thrive, be they churches, schools, police stations, hospitals, community leaders/structures, parties in power, or the style guides of international NGOs, universities, and media houses. These structures belong at the centre of the story, not the margins, because violence is not random, it is produced by the system that needs changing.
5. Platform complexity and context. Violence happens in rural villages, in townships, in city flats, in refugee settlements. In each of those places, different causes



We know that language alone cannot end the violences of patriarchy and gendered power. But the words we choose shape what society is willing to see, and what we demand by way of change.

Kath Magrobi

and effects are at play. Avoid flattening these realities. Resist the narrative that gender violence is a single national tragedy, when it is specific acts, in specific places, shaped by specific failures.

6. Edit with intention. In an attention-scarce world, victim-shaming and voyeurism become easy frames. Cutting for impact is a shortcut for erasing accountability. Editing is an ethical act, and an act of courage. If the truth makes you uncomfortable, ask whether the discomfort comes from the language, or the underlying reality.

If we want a different world, we must start by refusing the soft language that keeps this one intact. So, this 16 Days, we ask you to choose words that honour truth. Name the violence. Name the systems that uphold it. Centre the problem itself. We know that language alone cannot end the violences of patriarchy and gendered power. But the words we choose shape what society is willing to see, and what we demand by way of change.

- Kath Magrobi, executive director, Quote This Woman+
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When the quest for justice moves online

Social media has emerged as a new form of activism against gender-based violence, with TikTok, Facebook and Instagram becoming platforms where survivors are breaking their silence, sharing their stories, and publicly naming their abusers. This powerful movement to the online environment needs careful examination. Although social media offers survivors a voice when traditional systems have lost their trust, it also raises critical questions about justice, due process, and the potential for harm. An anonymous Instagram account, @justiceforme_ru, was created last Sunday, which prompted Grocott's Mail to investigate this phenomenon.

The account, @justiceforme_ru, was created at approximately 8pm on Sunday night. By the next day, it had already published 58 submissions accusing people of rape, sexual assault, coercion, stalking and physical abuse. The account was deactivated on Monday morning, and a new one, @ru_referencelist, popped up. However, that account disappeared after two hours, and the @justiceforme_ru account was restored, retaining all its past submissions as well as new ones. By Monday 4pm, the account had gained more than 3 600 followers, and it was sitting on over 5 000 followers on Tuesday afternoon before it disappeared on Wednesday.

The story behind the account

The creator of the account, who refused to be named, said the page was born out of her own trauma. "I was raped by a senior lecturer. I can't report him, he threatened me, and he's made my life a living hell," she told *Grocott's Mail*. "I realised that if I can't help myself, then I can help others. That's why I started the page.

"Reading the stories makes you realise how much we are suffering. We can't be aided because the people we run to don't take our issues seriously."

She said she was inspired by a former student, Simbongile Dlala, who recently shared her own assault online. However, the rapid traction the page gained left her overwhelmed.

When asked about potential legal consequences from those named as abusers she was defiant. "It's not defamation when there is proof," she said. "I'm doing the same thing that happened [with] the RU reference list, but it's got more advanced now. I can't predict what's gonna happen, but I just know it won't be without me fighting back."

On the long-term future of the account, she was uncertain. "I intend to keep it long term, but I'm risking being excluded [from Rhodes University], so I really don't know how that will play out."

She says she wants Rhodes University in particular

to start protecting victims and not perpetrators. "I've lost all hope in our institution; there's not much they'll do, obviously."

She also believes that the South African Police Service is of little help: "The law will not take its course for very obvious reasons. The same cops that are meant to protect are also abusing and raping. So many people have confirmed that when they go to the police station, they are simply dismissed."

The co-administrator question

Grocott's Mail interviewed Simbongile Dlala, who initially refuted allegations that she was the admin of @justiceforme_ru but expressed complete solidarity with the account. However, recent Instagram story posts contradict this statement, showing screenshots that prove she was a co-admin.

When asked for clarity, Dlala said, "I was the co-admin, I did not create the account, I was added to it." Dlala told *Grocott's* that she received threats once the posts

started appearing, her address was doxed and her family members were threatened.

Dlala is also publicly accusing a fellow student of rape. "I filed a formal report to Rhodes [University], so my case with him begins next year since Rhodes is now on vac. I will also go through the court route," she said. Dlala has also petitioned for his removal from Rhodes University on Change.org. By Thursday afternoon, the petition had 3 665 signatures.

The counter account

A counter account, @men_fightback_ru, was created on Monday afternoon. The anonymous administrator whose identity was later revealed on Facebook, told *Grocott's Mail* the purpose was to allow men to "fight back" against what they believe is an unfair and incomplete public narrative.

"I post every reliable story. This page is contrary to the

first one [justiceforme], where males are shamed without even clearly stating the scenario," he said. "There are some women who have real cases. Also, there are some who are trying to sabotage others because they dislike them."

He described Rhodes as "toxic for men" and said he was "convinced that only men with proof can fight back and tell the real story."

The Rhodes Response

The Director in the Office of the Vice Chancellor continues to work tirelessly to defend and support the victims of GBV, said Caroline Rowland, Rhodes University Interim Director of Communications. Students found guilty of rape are permanently excluded from the university and their academic transcripts are endorsed as 'conduct unsatisfactory' she said. It is, however, impossible for Rhodes to take a matter forward if an allegation of GBV is not formally reported to the university through the well-established and widely-publicised processes. "Given that South Africa is a Constitutional Democracy, the kind of social media activity we have witnessed in recent days, may unfortunately result in criminal proceedings against the accuser, far outside the jurisdiction of the university".

The legal minefield

All these social media accounts and public outings have left *Grocott's Mail* with many questions about the legal implications of social media as a platform to seek justice. We consulted two experts to understand the implications of doing this.

Taryn de Vega, a media law and ethics lecturer at Rhodes University, was blunt about the risks. "If somebody names another person on social media with the aim of hurting their reputation in the eyes of society, it's seen as a gross overreach of freedom of expression," she said. "The burden of proof to verify the claim, if it is defamation of character, will rest on the person making the claim."

We also had a conversation with social media legal expert Rorke Wilson, who works for the Digital Law Company. Wilson explained that simply labelling posts as "alleged" offers no legal protection. "The administrator of the page is as responsible as the people who make the submissions," he said. "They are equally responsible in the eyes of the law because of the editorial power that they hold."

The risks are threefold: criminal injury to dignity charges, protection orders that could lead to arrest, and civil defamation claims. Even those who submit stories anonymously aren't safe – administrators can be compelled to reveal their identities.

However, Wilson said survivors do have a defence as

they have a right to share their stories, if they can prove their claims are true and in the public interest, and in the light of gender based violence being a national disaster, they have a strong argument. "If you have evidence that will hold up in court, then you will benefit from the defence of truth and public interest." But therein lies the problem: sexual assault rarely leaves the kind of evidence that satisfies a courtroom.

Those who share or amplify the posts face risks too. Wilson pointed to a UK case where Lord McAlpine sued approximately a thousand people for defamation after they repeated claims about sexual misconduct investigations. "I don't want people to assume that just because everyone's posting, they're immune," Wilson said.

'Symptom of the failures of the justice system'

Both experts acknowledged the failures that drive survivors to

social media in the first place. De Vega cited statistics showing that roughly 70 percent of South African women don't report rape or abuse to police. "Our policing system is brutal in how women are treated," she said. "Victims are pulled through a court of public opinion almost, and they have to relive the story. It's challenging. Our legal system is slow."

She noted that movements like #MeToo and #AmINext allowed victims of violence and sexual coercion to tell their stories online. "For a lot of women, finding solace in online communities where they can share their story has become a regular occurrence."

Wilson was equally critical of formal systems. "I'm not at all surprised at people's lack of faith in the justice system," he said. "We very rarely will even advise our clients to go to the police unless we know they've got sound evidence, because the police are very unwilling to help. There's a lot of victim blaming that can go on."

He sees social media callouts as "a symptom of the failing of our justice system, something we want to fix, because things do go better when we follow the right processes".

The danger, he said, is that when allegations go viral without verification, the impact of getting it wrong is massive. "People have agency over their own story, but that shouldn't be the solution we're gunning for, because then we just open our victims up to more chances to be further traumatised."

De Vega described the new reality: "Social media has changed this environment rapidly. People are sharing their stories and because everyone is a journalist, everyone is a storyteller, the old rules of who is allowed to tell the story and when and within the confines of the law really no longer exist."

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Entangeni girls on stage before their drama piece performance. Photo: 'Maleruo Leponesa

Entangeni: protected, informed and confident

By 'Maleruo Leponesa

Tuesday marked the first day of the 16 days of activism for no violence against women and children campaign. This year, the Entangeni Adolescent Girls Movement launched a drama piece about sexual and reproductive health and rights for adolescent girls.

Hosted at Amazwi Museum, this event marked the first day of this year's campaign.

Various stakeholders were present, including teachers and principals from the participating schools, parents, GBVF Response Fund project manager Dr Tirhani Manganyi, Chairperson of the Eugenia Nothemba Gxowa Foundation, Nomkitha Gysman, as well as Executive Mayor Yandiswa Vara, who gave a word of welcome.

Vara's speech was directed to the Entangeni girls, "You must know and understand your body so that you are proud of it," she said. She educated the girls about the importance of understanding their puberty stages, as it would help them understand their growth. She emphasised that no one has the right to touch their body parts, regardless of who they are.

Tirhani also delivered a speech aimed at creating awareness on gender-based violence. She commended those behind the Entangeni Adolescent Girls Movement for the outstanding work that they do. She, however, indicated that there was still a lot of work ahead of us regarding GBV. She expressed the amount of economic loss that the country faces as a result of GBV. "In the play that we just watched, we saw this girl who had to be hospitalised and underwent surgery to remove her destroyed womb. There are many cases that cost the government a significant amount of money. This could be avoided if we continue to include all different members of our society," Manganyi said. She also pointed out that even in the recently signed G20 document, GBV has been identified as a social pandemic that requires more attention.

She highlighted that if youth are included in movements aimed at reducing GBV, there is a high potential for success. She suggested that boys should also form a bigger part of the movement against GBV. "I wish this play could also be taken to our communities for traditional leaders to watch, as some of our traditional practices stimulate GBV. For example, the girls in the play got drunk from the umqombothi, which they drank at Umkiti, which is a tradition where children in the family can also drink this traditional beer."

Gysman expressed gratitude on behalf of Entangeni to the principals who worked in collaboration with the Girls Movement. She thanked, among other schools, TEM. Mrwetyana for accommodating them when they did not have their own space. Nonetheless, she mentioned that they would be grateful if they could one day have their own space. "We want these girls to know that even on weekends they can safely say they are going to spend their time at Entangeni where there will be a shelter which is a safe space for them." She also pointed out that they are working on integrating with other organisations in the Eastern Cape to allow for exposure and further growth.

Background

Founded to empower vulnerable girls in Makhanda, the Entangeni Adolescent Girls Movement creates spaces where young women learn, speak out and act against GBV. What began as a small empowerment initiative has evolved into a platform that uses storytelling, mentorship, and education to challenge harmful norms. As reflected in the drama performance and the messages from the leaders, Entangeni remains a vital voice in the fight against violence. It's a call for a permanent safe space that shows the organisation's long-term vision: to build a community where girls are protected, informed and confident enough to reclaim their futures.

The disabled community faces a stark reality

By **Gcina Ntsaluba**

With Disability Rights Awareness Month ending on Wednesday 3 December, a local social worker is calling attention to the stark realities facing Makhandá's disabled community, where crumbling infrastructure, absent educational facilities, and economic hardship create daily obstacles.

The Association for Persons with Physical Disabilities (APD) is one lifeline for disabled residents across Makana municipality. Operating with just two staff members, the organisation provides home-based care to clients who often cannot access town due to mobility challenges.

"Most of the time, we visit people because people with disabilities struggle to get to town. We see them at their homes," explains Francine Mwepu, who has worked as a social worker with APD since 2010.

Transportation and accessibility barriers

Getting around Makhandá presents formidable challenges. Many disabled residents lack wheelchairs or crutches, while those who do have mobility equipment face resistance from taxi operators. "Sometimes they charge them double. Sometimes they don't want to transport them because they take time to get into a taxi and then to get out of a taxi," Mwepu said.

Even when wheelchairs are available, Makhandá's deteriorating roads quickly damage the equipment. Potholes and gravel roads can destroy wheelchairs within months. As Mwepu noted, "The roads are not good, and the wheelchair gets damaged quickly."

Long waiting periods for replacement wheelchairs exacerbate the problem, leaving residents stranded for lengths of time.

Children left behind

The absence of specialised educational facilities is one of Makhandá's most pressing failures for its disabled population. Unlike larger South African cities, where daily transport, therapy sessions, and educational activities are standard, Makhandá offers no day centres for children with severe mental, physical, or intellectual disabilities.

Without these services, disabled children remain home with their mothers, missing out on crucial developmental support and leaving caregivers without respite. "Children stay at home with their mothers. It's a big problem," Mwepu said.

Economic struggles

In a city where unemployment already runs high among able-bodied residents, employment prospects for disabled adults in Makhandá remain dismal. Many households depend entirely on disability grants of just over R2 000 monthly – often stretched across families of five or six people.

"They sit at home, doing nothing. They only rely on a small disability grant," Mwepu said. "So it's difficult."

This economic vulnerability makes APD's psychosocial support services crucial. Through their home visits, the organisation provides counselling, encouragement, and connections to resources, taking a holistic approach that considers family environment, education levels, and



Francine Mwepu, a social worker with the Association for Persons with Physical Disabilities. Photo: Gcina Ntsaluba

individual circumstances.

Financial constraints limit services

However, APD operates on a shoestring budget. Government funding covers only staff salaries for Mwepu and an auxiliary social worker, leaving operational costs – such as electricity, internet access, and vehicle fuel for home visits – to be met through fundraising and donations.

The organisation's main annual fundraiser, Casual Day in September, has not fully recovered from Covid-19's impact. This year's event sold 2 000 stickers of the 3 000 ordered, with some revenue lost to retail competition.

Building partnerships

Despite resource limitations, APD has cultivated valuable community partnerships. Kingswood College conducts annual fundraising to purchase wheelchairs for clients, while strong relationships with the Department of Health's Allied Health Workers ensure physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and audiologists remain accessible.

"Without them, we cannot do our jobs," Mwepu said. "Whenever there's a case, we refer to them, and they attend to the clients."

The organisation also facilitates monthly support group meetings where parents can share concerns and receive guidance from visiting professionals, including physiotherapists and faith leaders.

A call for community action

As Disability Rights Awareness Month approaches its end, Mwepu issued a direct appeal to Makhandá's residents and businesses. "We need support," she said. "We need support with regard to finance because we are an NPO." She welcomes donations of any kind. Financial contributions, equipment or other resources that could ease the burden on disabled residents struggling in a city ill-equipped to meet their needs, would all be put to good use.

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- To learn about donation opportunities, contact APD via Facebook or their office in Cobden Street or on 046 622 5359.

Nurturing every single connection

Mandisa Hani, owner of Pem-Sun Cleaning Services. Cyanotype by Dideka Njemla

PERSON OF INTEREST: MANDISA HANI

Occupation: Owner of Pem-Sun Cleaning Services

Workspace: On-site

Human of Makhandla: 4

By Dideka Njemla

In a world where business revolves around profits, Pem-Sun Cleaning Services values trust and genuine relationships with clients. During a discussion with the company owner, Mandisa Hani, it was clear that her aim extends beyond merely doing a thorough job in the homes and workplaces of those who welcome her for services. For her, it is about appreciating each person's presence and fostering trust. "I am very content with the way my business is now. I've known some of my clients for years, and nothing brings me more joy than that. It shows that we have become family."

Born and bred in Port Alfred. Hani moved to Makhandla in 1998 after her mother took a job opportunity as a domestic worker. Simultaneously, Hani, who was also a domestic worker, left with her employers when they moved to Durban. "Umamam moved to eRhini nabantwana bam and then ngo 2000 ndabuya." Hani says she returned to Makhandla to be closer to her daughter as she entered her teenage years. After nearly 15 years of working with her previous employers, Hani found her first job in Makhandla through her mother's workplace. "Baye bandifunela umsebenzi kwi housemaster yase St Andrews and then nda clean-a indlu yakhe."



Mandisa Hani, owner of Pem-Sun Cleaning Services.
Photo: Dideka Njemla

An everlasting impact

Reflecting on her luck in meeting the monks, Hani says that they were a blessing as they continuously supported her and her family. She said, "Abantwana bam also bafundiswa ngabo. Mna, I never paid a cent e-university. They paid for everything for all three of my children." She said that she was grateful that her children seized this opportunity and did not let this opportunity go to waste. "Ndaba xeleva ba fundani. Ndathi maba funde ingathi bayi nja yemiduka. Nifunde because asoze niyifumane le chance," she said.

Following Hani's success in her education and driver's license, the three brothers continued to guide her and found her a job at Sunshine Cleaning Company, run by Anne Curnow. Hani said many of Curnow's employees feared her, but she [Hani] was the only one who dared to challenge her and address issues, especially when Curnow was at fault. "I was always fair because bekukho nama xesha where ndandihlala phantsi ne colleagues zam and tell them they were wrong. If Anne was at fault, then ndandiye ndihlale naye phantsi, whether she wanted to hear it or not," said Hani.

Mandisa recalled a moment when she and Curnow

"I am very content with the way my business is now. I've known some of my clients for years, and nothing brings me more joy than that. It shows that we have become family"

Mandisa Hani

A transformative experience

Hani's life began to change after she met three brothers who were monks at a church she visited with a friend. "Ukudibana kwam nabo eza monks after church, they were so interested in me. Baye bandibuza okuba, what work do I do?" Hani says that the monks assumed that she was a teacher, but she explained that she had left school just before she could matriculate. "I told them my story. Ndaba xeleva indlela endandikhule ngayo ne ndlela endaba pregnant ngayo at an early age."

The monks encouraged Hani to return to school, and she enrolled in grade 10 through night school. After three years of dedication, Mandisa said she completed her matric with good results at Nombulelo High School. "Baye ba buza ba andifuni uqhubeka na and maybe go to university, and that's when I said no because I still had to work for my children." Hani says the encouragement from the monks continued as they advised her to get a driver's license. "Ndayenza nayo, and I passed on my first attempt."

"I was always fair because bekukho nama xesha where ndandihlala phantsi ne colleagues zam and tell them they were wrong. If Anne was at fault, then ndandiye ndihlale naye phantsi, whether she wanted to hear it or not"

Mandisa Hani

got into a physical altercation. "I told her to acknowledge her wrongs. Ngalo mini I told that kuba uzomane esenza lento atshintsha tsintshe i-staff then awuzo banazo ne customers instead uzo fumana abantu aba bayo." Hani said that there were many moments when she and Curnow would seek help at the Department of Labour.

"Watho wobona okuba naye ndiyamthethela xaye right kwaye nabanye ndibaya thethela waqala ke undithemba. Saphela sivana," she said. Having shared a working environment for 14 years, the two had moved beyond their conflicts, and Curnow began to rely on Hani, especially because clients were fond of her.

Hani says that she recalls a time she received a phone call from Curnow on a Thursday morning, requesting that she come in to see her. "Ndathi kwi colleagues zam angandibiza uAnne, ikhona lento i-wrongo yenzekileyo kengoku," she said. After the call, Hani said she sat her colleagues down and spoke to them to find out if anything she wasn't aware of had happened. According to Hani, she grew more nervous on arrival after Curnow had offered her coffee. "Ndathi mna, no, I don't want coffee. I just want to know what's wrong. Talk," she said.

Hani said Curnow assured her that nothing was wrong, and she had wanted to inform her that they were moving and had sold their house. Hani said Curnow's words were, "My mom and I are moving to Durban, and I am giving you my company for being loyal to me." Hani said that she was too shocked and needed time to process this news. Curnow further informed her that she would also get the company car and all the equipment. Hani said the transition was easy because clients were already familiar and she knew each client's preferences.

Cultivating a culture of kindness

Hani sustains her company's success by nurturing every single connection with her clients. Her journey highlights the significant impact that those we meet can have on our lives. Hani says the encounters she has had have encouraged her to make a difference in other people's lives. According to Hani, her story embodies the true spirit of ubuntu, which she is committed to sharing with the rest of the world.

GM



Mandisa Hani, owner of Pem-Sun Cleaning Services.
Digital art by Dideka Njemla



'Dream About You' performed by Kuhle Sinama, Isabella Mutsaerts, Isabella Tladi, Mbalentle Quntu, Sihlomlele Khetani and Mhlali Ngqinzi. Photo: Chalotte Mokonyane

Unique, kinetic narratives

COMPOSITION

Review

By Benevolence Mazhinji

The Prestige School of Dance presented a delightful and technically ambitious show, *Composition*, at the Monument last Friday. The show was an impressive display of the school's diverse curriculum and highlighted the creative contributions of its young and emerging choreographers. The programme was thematically structured around four distinct dance styles: classical, soul, country and pop jazz, with each section offering its own unique kinetic narrative.

The classical section primarily featured various groups of young ballet dancers, showcasing their growing confidence and excellent poise. Their dances flowed with gentle turns and graceful, unhurried movements that highlighted their composure on stage. Accompanied by soothing, melodic music, this segment created an atmosphere of elegance and gentle refinement.

The soul segment included a stunning performance by Kuhle Sinama, who danced to Vusi Nova's heartbreaking song, *Thandiwe*. It's a song about fighting for love and staying together despite the challenges. Sinama's performance flawlessly translated the song's themes of longing and devotion, bringing its emotional plea to life on stage. She was fully alive to the emotion of the music, and her visceral facial expressions gave the song a raw, heartfelt intensity.

The country section introduced a lively shift in tone and a burst of spirited energy to the theatre. The different groups of dancers entered in Western-style costumes, some with matching cowboy hats. With this, the genre was immediately clear, and the stage took on a cheerful, theatrical charm. This segment also featured a tap dance solo by Nicole Joka, who added a layer of percussive excitement. Altogether, this genre delivered exactly what audiences would expect: rhythmic dances, clean group formations and a sense of collective fun.



Luminjalo Dom, one of the younger dancers in the show. Photo: Chalotte Mokonyane

Pop jazz was the last dance genre of the show, and it was a visual spectacle of mostly synchronised dance moves. The dancers performed with charismatic energy and flair. The audience was also treated to an exceptional tap trio by Mbalentle Quntu, Mhlali Ngqinzi and Nicole Joka. Their performance was an electrifying blend of sparkle and skill.

The final act was a vocal performance of ABBA's *Thank You for the Music* by Mila McConnachie, Isabella Tladi and Isabella Mutsaerts. The singers' clear, melodic tones, supported by gentle harmonies, delivered the song with sincerity, allowing the audience to focus on the lyrics' message. This choice of song was an ideal emotional crescendo. It was a graceful bow that beautifully tied the programme together and concluded the evening on a note of shared appreciation between performers and audience.



■ Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*) at Vulpro, Shamwari.

Giving vultures a second chance

*Misunderstood, feared, and persecuted, vultures worldwide are in decline. Vulpro is working to reverse that trend in Southern Africa. Pictures and story by **Harold Gess**.*

South Africa is home to nine species of vulture but many of these have experienced a dramatic fall in numbers to the point where three of them are listed on the IUCN Red List as critically endangered, two as endangered, and one as vulnerable.

According to Birdlife South Africa, the causes of the decline in vulture populations are numerous. Poachers kill large numbers of vultures using poison-laced carcasses, and many more are killed through secondary poisoning, while collisions with electrical infrastructure such as distribution lines are also an important factor. Habitat loss and food shortages have also directly affected population numbers. Use of vulture parts in traditional medicine often drives the deliberate poisoning of vultures. More recently turbine blades on the wind farms now springing up all over the country have become a major threat to vultures.

In the face of the growing vulnerability of vulture populations, the then 28-year-old conservationist Kerri Wolter founded Vulpro, a non-profit organisation, in 2007 with a dedicated focus on vulture conservation. Wolter recognised that “everything is interconnected. Every species deserves to be loved just as every person deserves to be loved, no matter their appearance”.

Vulpro has a four-pronged strategy: rehabilitation and release; captive breeding for release; scientific research and monitoring; and community engagement through partnerships and education.

Initially based at Hartbeespoort in the North West



■ White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*).



■ Cape Vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*) juvenile in the nest at Vulpro, Shamwari.

Province, the organisation opened a second facility in the Eastern Cape in 2024 at Shamwari Private Game Reserve 65km south of Makhanda.

The facility at Shamwari is home to around 200 Cape, White-backed, Lappet-faced, Egyptian, and White-headed vultures. Breeding successes among the Cape and White-backed vulture populations have been good this year with 25 Cape and four White-backed Vultures currently being prepared for soft release back into the wild.

The first Lappet-faced vulture chick hatched in September this year, bringing with it hope that the tide can be turned on the decline of this critically-endangered species. There are believed to be only 180 breeding pairs remaining in the wild.

Turning around the fortunes of vultures is also about changing public perception

Wolter underscores that community engagement and education are key to the long-term sustainability of vultures. “No-one will work to save a species or care about its future if they are not emotionally moved by it.”

When we look for a pejorative name to attach to journalists, lawyers, or tow-truck drivers we refer to them as vultures, but this is not right!

In reality, vultures are an important part of our ecosystems, responsible in the wild for rapidly disposing of decaying carcasses. This serves to limit the spread of diseases to other wildlife, livestock and people as well as recycling nutrients back into the ecosystem.

Visiting Vulpro one is struck by how magnificent and clean the vultures really are. Walking among them there is no smell of decay. The image of a scavenger bird living with blood all over its neck and head doesn't ring true as one watches them clean themselves fastidiously after eating.

Spending time with vultures, their true identity as powerful raptors is apparent. These are big birds. The Lappet-faced vulture is the biggest raptor in Africa.

Vultures belong with eagles in the 'royalty' of bird species.



■ Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*) at Vulpro.



■ Nesting Cape Vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*) at Vulpro.



■ Nesting Cape Vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*) at Vulpro.

Rugby star urges youth to choose discipline

By Chris Totobela

From the dusty streets of Tanti in Makhanda to big cities, not just in the country, but abroad as well. Simamkele Yafele grew up in O Street and played rugby on the streets with his peers before he was recruited by his uncle Mpumelelo "Small" Mthetho, a teacher at Archie Mboleka Higher Primary School, to join Old Collegians where he got the foundation for his rugby career.

He made a surprise move when he joined their biggest rivals Lily White and he explained the move. "My father was at Lily White, and at the age of 20, without asking, he told me that I have to come and play for his team and I had to obey his instruction as my father, and that is how I joined Lily White even though my heart was at Old Collegians."

Yafele decided to leave Makhanda for Gqeberha after spending a few seasons with the "Blues" and he says this was also not an easy decision to make. "I could see that if I stay in Makhanda for long, my career would end before time as there was a lot of alcohol abuse at the time and there were several well-known taverns and young people were drowning themselves in alcohol, and as painful as it was, I had to leave and start afresh in Gqeberha where I stayed with my granny. I sacrificed staying with my family and friends in Makhanda in order for me to become the person that I am today and to achieve what I have achieved in rugby."

Yafele played his rugby in Gqeberha for a while before hanging up his boots to take up coaching where he also excelled. He is now the head coach of the top South African rugby 7s academy, SA All Stars, in Pretoria.

His coaching career took off very well and he has achieved a lot within a short space of time and has travelled the world with this team. He had a decorated playing career, taking part in the Namibia International 7s in Windhoek, Kenya Safari International 7s in Nairobi, Bundesliga in Germany and HBSC World Series Sevens in Dubai. He also played in the Currie Cup first division. Highlights of his coaching career include winning the Botswana International 7s in Gaborone, Klerksdorp International 7s, one of the biggest 7s tournaments in South Africa, and the Willem Strauss International Tournament and he won all these this year and this week he flew with his team to Dubai where he will be testing his u19 boys on the world stage.

Yafele has not forgotten where his rugby roots are and has ploughed back several times into his community, donating rugby boots to Old Collegians Rugby Club where he started his career and also donated school shoes to Tanti Primary School.

He says he enjoys coaching more than playing. "As much as I have played at the highest level, I think



Simamkele Soyeye with his SA All Stars 7s rugby academy players.
Photo: Chris Totobela

coaching is closer to my heart. Every time when I go back home I get so emotional to see the high crime rate and seeing less young kids playing rugby."

He believes he has a duty to try and rescue one or two youngsters from Makhanda and give them the platform to shine. "I'm not here to boast about my achievements, but to encourage them to work hard and become what they wish to become irrespective of their background."

"Growing up in a very small town like ours doesn't mean you are not good enough to realise your dreams." He shared a message with the young people of Makhanda. "Discipline will take you very far in life. It is not wrong to be different from your circle of friends. You don't have to use drugs and alcohol just because you want to fit in. Take a ball and go and practise when your friends go out to drink."

"It is very sad but true that every time when I go back home, I have to watch my back because there are so many amaphara in my own neighbourhood and these are young boys that are supposed to be playing sport and protecting their families and that is not the case."

GM



The Grahamstown Primary School team that was declared the winners of The Young Warriors Cricket Programme 2025 last Saturday.

Shaping future cricketers

Story and photos by Chris Totobela

The Young Warriors Cricket Programme closed the 2025 season with a successful tournament last Saturday. The programme is made up of young boys and girls from local primary schools – George Dickerson, Grahamstown Primary and St Mary’s. It entails physical training that helps young cricketers cope with the demands of the game.

The end-of-the-year tournament was held at Graeme College from 9am until 4pm, with St Mary’s coming to this year’s event as defending champions after winning the inaugural event last year. Each team played two round-robin games and all three teams finished on two points each as each team won one game and lost one. The net run rate had to be considered in order to decide the finalists this year. In a surprise turn, the defending champions were eliminated and that set up a great final showdown between Grahamstown Primary and George Dickerson. Grahamstown Primary were crowned the 2025 champions after a hard-fought encounter.

Event co-ordinator Noel Reddy was pleased with the success of the event “This was a great day of fun for all participants, parents and spectators and the boys delivered a spectacle.” Reddy paid homage to coaches who work tirelessly to prepare the children. “These boys are talented and this tournament will help them grow.” Individual players received accolades for their excellence. There were trophies for best batsman, bowler and outstanding player of the tournament. “This was a great and successful event that provided entertainment for the whole family and next year’s edition promises to be bigger and better.”



Participants in the Young Warriors tournament last Saturday.



The coaching team of the Young Warriors.

GM

Maru FC tastes first ABC Motsepe league defeat

By Chris Totobela

Top local football side and ABC Motsepe League participants Maru FC suffered their first defeat last Saturday. The home side took on Komani FC in a very tough and entertaining encounter in front of a decent crowd. The visitors made their intentions very clear from the first whistle and forced the opposition goalkeeper to come up with good saves early on. Komani FC's high-press tactic worked well for them as Maru FC likes to build from the back, but were forced to use long balls at times. The home side also had a few chances to take the lead in the early stages of the game but failed to convert. The visitors took the lead after Maru's defence failed to deal with a long throw that was flicked home, over the unsighted goalkeeper at the far post. The home side was stunned into action by the goal and went forward in search of the equaliser, but the halftime break whistle halted their efforts.

In the second half, Komani FC tried to dominate the midfield battle, stringing together neat passes and tried to find cracks in the Maru defence. Maru's players seemed shaken and were forced to abandon their game plan by the opposition's high-press strategy. The local champions struggled to find rhythm. And despite making personnel changes in midfield and showing glimpses of the well-known, creative Maru FC, the visitors doubled their lead. A Komani FC attacker got in-between the centre backs to head home a pin-point cross from the right wing after the home side's defence was stretched. Maru FC kept on



Makhanda's hope in the ABC Motsepe League, Maru FC, tasted defeat for the first time this past weekend.
Photo: Chris Totobela

knocking and the door was nearly opened for them when their reliable goal poacher Vuyani "Sniper" Skeyi failed to tap in a cross, ballooning it over the crossbar instead. The home side tightened the screws in the last quarter of the game but it wasn't to be as the referee blew his final whistle.

It is hoped this is a minor setback for the home side as they started the season well. Local followers are confident the team can make amends as it possesses a good squad capable of bouncing back.

GM

Makana sports teams gear up

By Asemahle Vumsindo

Local soccer, rugby, and netball teams in Makana Municipality received a major boost following a sports equipment and attire handover on Tuesday.

The initiative, from the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), saw ministry representatives Chade Kramer, admin secretary in the minister's office, and Gareth Brown, private and appointed secretary to the minister, distribute much-needed resources directly to grassroots beneficiaries.

The event, focused on strengthening local participation and development in key sporting codes. Kramer and Brown handed over comprehensive sports kits, high-quality training balls, and durable gym bags, directly addressing the common challenge that local clubs face in maintaining adequate and safe equipment.

Chade Kramer explained the broad scope of the initiative. "We are doing this for the entire Eastern Cape," he said. This push aims to ensure that geographical location does not remain a barrier to sporting ambition.

GM



Chade Kramer (left) handing over rugby balls and kit to local teams. Photo: Asemahle Vumsindo



I Makana Tigers FC chairman Thandisizwe "Tebi" Matebese. Photo: Chris Totobela

'Come out and save our football'

By Chris Totobela

Makana Tigers FC chairman Thandisizwe "Tebi" Matebese was in the hotseat this week for Grocott's Mail's Chairman's Corner's feature.

GM: Welcome to our Chairman's Corner and please tell us about Makana Tigers.

TM: Thank you for this opportunity. I established this club in 2019, which was the best thing to do after hanging up my boots long before that. After coaching teams around Makhanda I decided to form my own club. There is a very high rate of alcohol and drug abuse among our youth, and I felt like doing something.

GM: How has the club grown since then?

TM: The club has grown rapidly since then and we now have an u13, u15, 7u18 and a senior team and we also have a netball team and all these teams are doing very well in their respective divisions.

GM: What are your achievements at the club?

TM: We have finished in the top four in the Makana Premier League since our establishment. We finished third and won bronze medals in the first edition of the Superbowl Easter Tournament behind Makhanda's football giants Maru FC and XI Attackers FC. We controversially lost to the eventual winners in the semi-final of last year's New Year's Cup and the list is long.

GM: Are there any challenges that you have faced since you started the club?

TM: Parents don't want to support their children when it comes to sport, and as coaches and managers, we are forced to pull all the stops to make sure that these children have everything they need. They don't even come to the field to watch their own children. As clubs we are competing against taverns and drugs; at every corner you turn, you see a tavern or shebeen, but very few playing fields.

GM: What do you think of the current state of football in Makhanda?

TM: Except the recent success of Maru FC, our local football is a mess. When last have you seen our premier league clubs play? No one is telling us what is going on and we don't even know when the new season will start and our players are going back to the same crime, alcohol and drug abuse we were trying to save them from. In the past, we used to have tournaments throughout the year to keep our clubs active because we were led by people who knew what they were doing and who were passionate about football.

To be honest with you, I don't have a clue of what is happening in our football and all I know is that we are always paying huge sums of money to play in sponsored tournaments and we don't even know where that money is going to. Just go and look at the state of the field we are using – torn nets, no lines and the less I talk about the officiating the better, and the officials don't come and explain to us, they just run to social media and not come to us as their affiliates. I call upon all football loving people to come out and save our football before it is too late.

GM: Your last word to the Makana Tigers faithful?

TM: I would like to thank them for following this club and I promise them that we will try and push for promotion when the new season starts. It is one of my wishes to see this club playing in the regional league and to move away from this stress of local football. We will continue to produce young talented players.

GM: Thank you for your time and we wish you all the best with your club.

TM: You are welcome and thank you for always giving us a chance to express our frustrations. Lastly, when we criticise the way our football is run, it is nothing personal as football belongs to all of us. No individual is bigger than football. Thank you to you and your team for the great work you are doing for our sport in Makhanda.

GM

In loving memory of the late

Smiki Mali

Born: 29 December 1963
Died: 22 November 2025
Service: 29 November 2025
Venue: 8360 Transit Camp, Joza Loc
Time: 09:00

Siyakubonga
Funeral Services
Let us take you under our wings



In loving memory of the late

Mzwandile Boma

Born: 08 July 1954
Died: 18 November 2025
Service: 29 November 2025
Venue: 56 "K" Street, Tanti Loc
Time: 09:00

Siyakubonga
Funeral Services
Let us take you under our wings



In loving memory of the late

Simo Mdini

Born: 06 September 1978
Died: 23 November 2025
Service: 29 November 2025
Venue: Bell Location, Peddie
Time: 09:00

Siyakubonga
Funeral Services
Let us take you under our wings



In loving memory of the late

Lungisile Valuvalu

Born: 23 October 1972
Died: 22 November 2025
Service: 29 November 2025
Venue: 103 New Rest, Port Alfred
Time: 09:00

Siyakubonga
Funeral Services
Let us take you under our wings



WHAT'S ON IN MAKHANDA

THIS WEEK

FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER

Grahamstown Christmas Market

Join us at our festive market and discover a wonderland of various gifts, beautiful decorations and delightful treats.

@ Hoërskool PJ Olivier
10:00 to 19:00

Live Music

With Acoustic Symphony
A smooth blend of Soul, R&B, Reggae & Pop, all performed on a acoustic guitar
@ Pothole & Donkey
18:00 to 21:00



Noctrix

With DJ Hollux
@ Slipstream Sports Bar
21:00 till late



SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER

Parkrun

5km run or walk. Family-friendly
Dogs on leads are welcome.
@ The Bot Gardens, Lucas Avenue
07:45 for 08:00
Register online: <https://www.parkrun.co.za/register/>

Brookshaw Home Fete.

@ Brookshaw Home Gardens.
09:00 to 13:00.
Baked goods, books, tea garden, plants, pancakes and much more.



Munchies Christmas Market.

Come along and sell your Christmas goodies.
R100 a spot. Jumping castle for the kids.
09:00 to 15:00
@ Munchies, Old Gaol, Somerset Street.
Contact Dean on 082 334 2698



Meet-up & Clean-up & survey of needs

Hosted by the Friends of Bots
A great activity for families.
Meeting point: Entrance of Bots
09:30



Fabian Juries Community Fun Day

@ Miki Yili Stadium & Joza Indoor Sports Centre

Grahamstown Christmas Market

Join us at our festive market and discover a wonderland of various gifts, beautiful decorations and delightful treats.
@ Hoërskool PJ Olivier
10:00 to 15:00

Grahamstown Christmas Market

Join us at our festive market and discover a wonderland of various gifts, beautiful decorations, and delightful treats.

26 - 29 NOVEMBER
HOËRSKOOL P.J. OLIVIER

Wed - Fri | 26 - 28 November: 10:00 - 19:00
Sat | 29 November: 09:00 - 15:00

KOFFIEKROEG
55+ exhibitors

Sip and Paint.
@ 17 Spencer Chapman Road.
12:30 to 15:30.
Price: R320 per person. Includes: One bisqued fire pottery item, paints, use of the equipment, glaze firing and a meal.
Please bring your own beverages.

HEART OF THE POTTER PRESENTS

SIP AND PAINT

JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS THEMED EVENT

Cost: R320.00 per person

WHEN: SATURDAY THE 29TH OF NOVEMBER AT 12.30-15.30

Where: 17 spencer chapman road Grahamstown

Includes: One bisqued pottery item, paints, use of the equipment, glaze firing and a meal.

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BEVERAGES

Catering by: On The Way Eatery
To book contact Curt: 063 920 6286

RUGBY & COCKTAILS
AT THE ALBANY SPORTS CLUB

SPRINGBOK

GAME STARTS AT 5:10PM

BURGERS AND BOEREWORS ROLLS ON SALE
BAR OPEN FROM 3PM

SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER

LIVE RUGBY

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY

Sat, 29 Nov 17:00
South Africa VS Wales

UNITED RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP

Sat, 29 Nov 14:00
Bulls VS Lions

Sat, 29 Nov 19:30
Munster VS Stormers

Sat, 29 Nov 21:30
Connacht VS Sharks

123 HIGH STREET, GRAHAMSTOWN, 6139
TEL: 046 622 2324

Catering by On The Way Eatery.
To book contact Curt on
063 920 6286

Karaoke Night
21:00
@ Slipstream Sports Bar
Free Entry

SUNDAY 30 NOVEMBER
Sunday Breakfast Special and Pre-booked Lunch Roast.
@ Red Café in the Albany Club, 114 High Street.
Breakfast from 09:00 to 11:00. Lunch 12:00 to 14:00.
Prebook for Lunch by last Sunday at 8am.
Live music by String Maestros 12:30 to 13:30.
Book with Lou at 083 295 1982

RED CAFE in the ALBANY CLUB

Sunday Breakfast Special and Pre-booked Roast Lunch

114 High Street
SUNDAY 30 NOVEMBER

BREAKFAST FROM OUR MENU AVAILABLE 09H00 UNTIL 11H30

LUNCH
12H00 TO 14H00
(Takeaway or sit-down) R120

PREBOOK LUNCH BY LATEST SUNDAY 08H00

KUDU LOIN, CHICKEN OR VEGAN ROAST
WITH ROAST POTATOES, RICE, CHEF'S VEG AND RED WINE GRAVY

DESSERT R60
-CHOCOLATE MOUSSE AND BERRY COMPOTE
-MORGAN'S TIRAMISU

LIVE MUSIC BY STRING MAESTROS 12h30 to 13h30
Performing a mix of well known oldies as well as European folk music, South American tangos, and much more on violin, vocals and guitar.
Donations are welcome!

BOOK WITH LOU AT: 083 295 1982

Hiking with Makhanda Wild Hikers Crew
Join us for a local hike in Makhanda, for a distance of 5km – 8km.
@ Drostdy Arch, Somerset Street (meeting point)
07:00
Contact Malwande on 074 733 7712
Free entry

TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER
Texas Holdem Poker
The only legal game in town
@ SSS, 19b High Street
17:30 for 18:00
R50 buy in / 1 x R50 top-up allowed.

Pub Quiz
Join us for a fun evening of trivia.
@ The Rat & Parrot, 59 New Street
19:00
Table bookings: 046 622 5002
R50 per person (Cash only)

WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER
Karaoke Night
Sing your heart out.
@ SSS, 19B New Street
20:30 for 21:00
Free entry

THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER
U3A
@ Grahamstown Bowling Club
10:00 to 11:00
R5 entry fee
All welcome

Grahamstown Bridge Club
@ Grahamstown Bowling Club, African Street
13:15 for 13:30
Contact Jenny Emslie: 083 226 0266
R10 for members and non-members

Thursday Pool Competition
@SSS Top Bar, 19B New Street
18:30 – 19:00
Contact: Mike Theron on 082 477 3689
Free entry
Thursday Karaoke Night
At Champs Action Bar hosted by Illy.
20:00-23:00
@ Champs Action Bar
Wine Special: R10

COMING SOON

Saturday 6 December: Colour Splash Family Fun Day. Food will be sold. Face painting, jumping castles, trampoline, fun activities and water games. Music by DJ Bigmitz, Vidge N and more. Tickets: Kids: R30, Under 3yrs: Free. Adults: R20. Tickets available at Computicket and Fab Fragrances (Opposite Choice Clothing). For food stalls contact Mr Cool on 060 288 9072. @ Miki Yili Stadium. 11:00 to 18:00.

Christ Church Stoep Sale.
Wors Rolls, Lovely Soups, Books Galore, Knick knacks, Christmas Trees. Outside Hoof N Hound.
09:00 to 13:00



Saturday 13 December:
Buhlebendalo and the Fam Band.
Presented by The Black Power
Station. Makube Chosi. Ticket Price:
Early Bird R200. General: R250. At
the Door: R300. Tickets available on
Quicket. Doors open at 18:00. Starts
at 19:00. @ The Black Power Station



BEHIND THE SCENES

EVERY TUESDAY

Craft Get Together

Bring your craft to Red Café at the
Albany Club.

Bring your: embroidery, knitting,
crocheting, writing, editing, camera,
sketch book, paints, scrapbooking or
any other craft you have been putting
off. Fee free to bring a flask and
snacks. Four hours of fun, productivi-
ty and awesomeness.

14:00 to 18:00

Contact Lou on 083 295 1982 for any
information. Entrance is free.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Nia – The Barefoot Art of Movement

Nia WiseMoves 9:45 to 10:20 (For
requiring a chair)

Nia (or Zumba) 17:15 to 18:00

Contact Liz Campbell 074 315 4232

Wednesday Zumba

@ Grahamstown Bowling Club, Afri-
can Street

17:15 to 18:00

Contact: Di Wilson 083 759 6590

Cost: Donation Based

Sip & Create

@ Red Café, Albany Club.

17:30 to 19:30

Bring along a creative activity: cro-
chet, sketching, stitching, doodling,
etc.

EVERY THURSDAY

Masithethe @Let's Talk

We invite FET learners, College and
University Students. The programme
addresses mental health, childhood
traumas, depression and anxiety
through the lens of God's Word.

@ Duna Library

16:00 to 17:00

EVERY SATURDAY

Grahamstown Feral Cat Project

We now have our bookshop where
you can browse a small but nice
selection of preloved books. All mon-
ies raised will go towards sterilizing
feral cats and the costs of rescuing
abandoned adults or kittens in foster
care. All donations will be gratefully
accepted and can be dropped at the
shop. @ CES Building, next door to
Nic's Nest @ 65 African Street

09:00 – 12:00

Bernadette Emslie (073 277 0577)

R10 upwards per book (Cash Only)

Nia – The Barefoot Art of Movement

A comprehensive, holistic, fun-fusion
experience to keep mind and body fit
@ Wellness Studio (next to Noom)

09:15 to 10:00

Contact Liz Campbell 074 315 4232

EVERY SUNDAY

Soulful Connection

Hosted by Admix and Friends

@ Rustic Route

Free entry and Free parking

Open till late

Orders in Makhanda:

On the Way Eatery. Please check out
the only ordering site at <https://sites.google.com/view/ordersinmakhanda/home>

Dance with Frankie

Partner dancing – Ballroom, Latin
American and Rhythm Dance lessons
(sokkie) & Wedding Dance Choreog-
raphy (In-person or online) offered
by Frankie. Contact 083 663 3070 or
dancewithdjfrank@gmail.com

DJ Frank:

is a mobile DJ, offering sound for
wedding ceremonies, receptions and
events. For more info email to dancewithdjfrank@gmail.com or whatsapp
on 083 663 3070

Grocott's Mail

Grocott's Mail Advertising Rates

Please note:

Prices listed below are per fixed advert size and **include** 15% VAT but **exclude** agency commission.

Display adverts (Inside pages. All ads are run from the bottom of the page)

Narrow strip	528px wide x 100px high	R1 000.00 per insertion
Medium strip	528px wide x 250px high	R1 250.00 per insertion
Half page	258px wide x 365px high	R2 500.00 per insertion
Full page	528px wide x 900px high	R5 000.00 per insertion
Legal Notice		R850.00 per insertion

Visual Classified adverts (Grouped in a Classified section at the end of each edition)

Fixed size adverts	258px wide x 290px high	R500.00 per insertion
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Design fees

Advert design	R500.00	Amendment fee	R150.00
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Discounts for repeat placements

4 placements: 5%	8 placements: 10%	12 placements: 15%
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The Grocott's Mail Team for 2025

Anthea Garman:

GM revitalisation strategy

Luvuyo Mjekula:

News and Sports Co-ordinator

Mbali Tanana:

Marketing, Events and
Community Engagement

Gillian Rennie:

People, Arts, Culture, Life

Rod Amner:

Education Ecosystem
Journalism

Phila-Nathi Mapisa:

Editorial Assistant

Harold Gess:

Photography

Valentine Ntusi:

Photographic Assistant

Designers:

Brian Garman

Katherine Elmer-English

Siya Khumalo

Tech:

Viwe Ngxulelo

Advertising:

Khanyiso Tose

Dideka Njemla

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The Grocott's Mail arts reporter Benevolence Mazhinji. Photo: Chalotte Mokonyane