

**2026 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HIS WORSHIP THE EXECUTIVE
MAYOR OF POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY, CLLR MAKORO JOHN MPE**

Friday, 08 May 2026 | Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane

THEME: Visible Progress. Tangible Delivery.

Speaker of Council, Cllr Kobela Welhemina Modiba;

Whip of Council, Cllr Phetola Adolph Rapetswa;

Members of the Executive Council present;

Honourable Speaker of Legislature, Dr Makoma Makhurupetje;

Chief Whip of the majority party in the Legislature, Honourable Essop Mokgonyane;

The Executive Mayor of our District, Cllr Mamedupi Teffo, and all Mayors representing our sister municipalities, Cllr Masilo Paya representing Molemole, Cllr Maria Thamaga from Blouberg and Cllr Meriam Molala for Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality;

Speakers and Chief Whips of our municipalities;

His Grace, Bishop Dr BE Lekganyane of the Zion Christian Church;

His Grace, Bishop Dr E Lekganyane of the St Engenas Zion Christian Church;

The Leadership of the South African Council of Churches and all other leaders of faith-based formations;

Beng Mabu, Maaparankwe, Batho ba ka mafateng a matelele, e lego Magoshi a rena;

- Bahlaloga ba Moletji ka fase ga boetapele bjwa Mohlomphegi Kgoshi KS Moloto III, (Mokwena wo mogolo)
- Bakone ba Dikgale, ka fase ga pusho taolo yeo e eteletswego pele ke Mohlomphegi kgoshi MS Dikgale, (Morare)
- Ditlou ba ga Molepo, bao ba eteletswego pele ke Mohlomphegi Kgoshi SM Molepo, (Maremo)

- Ditlou ba ga Ledwaba bao ba eteletswego pele ke Mohlomphegi kgoshi SM Ledwaba, (Tloutona)
- Ditlou ba ga Makgoba, bao ba buswago ke Mohlomphegi, Kgoshi MG Makgoba, (Tloutona)
- Ditlou ba ga Mashashane ka fase ga pusho ya kgoshi Mashashane II, (Tloutona)
- Ditlou ba ga Maraba, ka fase ga pusho taolo yeo e eteletswego pele ke, Mohlomphegi Kgoshi MB Maraba, (Tloutona).
- Bakone ba Mothiba bao ba eteletswego pele, ke kgoshi yaka, Mohlomphegi kgoshi Mothiba PP, (Mokone wo mogolo)
- Dikolobe ba Bjatladi ka moka bao ba eteletswego pele ke bogoshi bjwa ga Mamabolo.
- Dikolobe ba Bjatladi ka fase ga pusho taolo yeo e eteletswego pele ke mmago rena, Mohlomphegi Mmagokgoshi Mamabolo, (Thokwadi)
- Bakone ba Matlala a Thaba, ka fase ga pusho taolo yeo e eteletswego pele ke mmago rena, Mohlomphegi Kgoshigadi MRL Matlala, (Ngwato a mosadi)
- Bakgaga ba Mothapo, ka fase ga pusho taolo ya mmago rena, Mohlomphegi Kgoshigadi Moremadi Mothapo (Moremadi a Hlabirwa).
- Ditlou machidi ba ga Tshwene bao ba emetsego moshate wa gabo rena wa Ditlou- machidi, bana ba rakgolo ba Mohlomphegi, kgoshi Mamokgalake Tshwene.

We take this moment to pay our respect to Babina Phuti ba ga Maja, who lost their leader Kgoshi DC Maja, (Napenyane), during this term of Council.

Judge President of the Limpopo Division of the High Court, Judge George Phatudi;

The SAPS Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Thembi Hadebe;

The Provincial Head of the IEC, Ms Nkaro Mateta;

Representatives from the Office of the Public Protector and SA Human Rights Commission;

The Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Limpopo, Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele;

The Leadership of the governing party, the African National Congress represented by Provincial Secretary Cde Vhamusanda Madadzhe and Regional Secretary Cde Lesiba Matsemela plus all REC Members, Leagues and Alliance partners;

Chairperson of Chairpersons, Cllr Rufus Muthabine, and all Chairpersons of Council Committees;

Members of the Mayoral Committee;

The Leadership of the official opposition, the EFF, and all Political Parties represented in Council;

All my Fellow Councillors;

The City Manager, Ms Thuso Nemugumoni, your management team and hardworking officials;

The Leadership of our Unions, SAMWU and IMATU;

Representatives of various government departments and entities;

The representatives of Kaizer Chiefs FC, Mr Kaizer Motaung Junior, Kemiso Motaung, Vina Maphosa and Jabulani Mbanjani;

The Chairman of Magesi FC, Mr Solly Makhubela;

The Chairman of Polokwane City, Mr Johnny Mogaladi;

And Mr Simon Malatji who is the Sekhukhune United FC Chairman;

Representatives of the business community, with special mention of Mr Oom Janie Moolman and representatives of Networth Group;

The Mpe, Molepo, Thosago and Sefara families, including all my relatives present;

Professor Ngoasheng, who narrated my late father's life very well during his send-off. I must confess, I am still trying to establish whether "Professor" is a title officially conferred by an institution of higher learning or one he confidently

awarded himself after years of giving wisdom freely to society. Professor, re a leboga.

Members of the entertainment industry including the family of Kharishma, King Monada, Natiey Lepaka, Hitboss, Janisto and CK, Kaycherlow, and Mvzzle;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Fellow residents of our beloved Polokwane;

Good morning, Kgotsong!

Madam Speaker,

On the 24th of June 2022, when we delivered our very first State of the City Address, we stood before our residents to make a solemn pledge — a pledge anchored on the over-arching theme of change, strengthened by collaboration and driven by a collective leadership equal to the task before us.

We committed ourselves to a decisive course of action: to embed consequence management as a standard and to adopt a zero-tolerance stance against fraud, corruption, maladministration and nepotism.

We made it clear then and we reaffirm it today that we are not in the business of rhetoric but of results. We are serious about building a clean, accountable and ethical municipality that earns and retains the trust of its people.

This State of the City Address is, therefore, a crucial platform for the Executive Mayor, on behalf of the entire municipality, to once again account to the whole community for the work entrusted to this administration. It is a moment of

reflection, accountability, gratitude and vision. Above all, it is an opportunity to tell the story of a city that refused to surrender to decline, a city that chose progress over paralysis and a city that continues to rise.

Let me express my gratitude to the **African National Congress** for its confidence and to the **residents of Polokwane** for their trust and continued belief in our commitment to building a better, service-oriented municipality. It is your support that casted away doubts that this son of the soil could never deliver on the desired expectations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to also honour and acknowledge the solid foundation laid by the leaders who came before us whose service and stewardship helped shape the developmental trajectory upon which we continue to build today.

We gather here today to account honestly and directly to the residents of Polokwane on the **visible progress** and **tangible delivery** our City has witnessed during the term of this Council.

Madam Speaker,

As we converge here, we are guided by the renewed mandate we received from our residents during the draft IDP and Budget public participation process. The overwhelming attendance during this process across all seven clusters demonstrated a vibrant democracy in action and reaffirmed the trust communities continue to place in this institution. For that, we are grateful.

Local government remains the closest sphere of government to our people, responsible for the provision of the most basic services. It is within this context that we are reminded of the wise articulation by **President Cyril Ramaphosa** during the extended Presidential Coordinating Council meeting seven days ago, who stated: *“In essence the architecture of our government is set up in a well-structured way where national government sets national policy while provincial governments coordinate the implementation of policy and local government delivers the execution of policy.”*

This intergovernmental framework is lived reality in Polokwane. It is precisely this alignment that enables us to translate policy into **visible progress** and **tangible delivery**.

We meet during the historic month of May — a month soaked in the sweat and sacrifices of workers who built this country with blistered hands and unbreakable hope. Just a few days ago, our city proudly hosted the national Workers’ Day celebrations here in Polokwane, on our own soil, in our own facilities. That moment was not accidental. It was a declaration to the nation that Polokwane has come of age.

We also gather during a period of significant global uncertainty. International conflicts, economic instability and geopolitical tensions continue to affect inflation, fuel prices, food security and the cost of electricity across the world. When there is no peace in the world, even local government feels the pressure. Municipalities are expected to deliver services in increasingly difficult economic conditions while communities face the harsh realities of the rising cost of living.

Yet despite these challenges, Polokwane has risen through visible progress and tangible delivery.

Our city continues to attract investment, tourism and major events. The expansion of major sporting programmes such as Polokwane City Marathon and the growing confidence from investors all point to a municipality that is steadily finding its place among the leading cities of our country.

In this regard, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the winners of the 2026 Polokwane City Marathon, particularly in the challenging **50-kilometre category, Remaketse Lekaka and Rosaline Isaiah** for their remarkable performances.

The ancient Greek philosopher **Plato** once said: *“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.”*

Therefore, allow me in the same vein before I proceed further, to also congratulate our home-grown stars who continue to raise the flag of Limpopo and Polokwane high across the country.

We congratulate our own daughter, **Kharishma**, together with **DJ Janisto**, for winning Best Lekompo at the Metro FM Awards with the hit song *Wa Inama*. **As we pray for her speedy recovery, may I ask that we give our Lekompo music sensation Kharishma a standing ovation for raising the Polokwane flag very high.**

We further congratulate Kharishma for winning Best New Artist, **Shandesh** for Best Female Artist and global sensation **Master KG** for winning Best Viral Challenge.

Speaking of artists and legends, protocol allows us to warmly acknowledge **Mr Putla Sehlapelo**, beloved by millions as Meneer Alfred Magongwa on Skeem Saam — a television educator so convincing that even adults straighten their posture when he appears on screen — as well as the iconic **Mr Seputla Sebogodi**, famously known as Nkwisheng on Bophelo ke Semphego and Kenneth Mashaba on Generations.

Indeed, through their music, performances and artistic excellence, our artists continue to give life to our communities, hope to young dreamers and pride to the nation.

Madam Speaker,

When this administration assumed office in 2021, we encountered service delivery backlogs, governance weaknesses, ageing infrastructure, declining public confidence and financial pressure. Communities were frustrated by water interruptions, deteriorating roads and growing concerns regarding municipal performance.

To address these challenges, we were informed by the wise words of **Albert Einstein** when he said, *“we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking that was used when they were created”*.

We, therefore, understood from the beginning that leadership is not about occupying office. Leadership is about confronting challenges directly and accounting honestly to the people.

Today, we return to account.

Where progress has been made, we shall say so with humility. Where challenges remain, we shall confront them honestly. And where wrongdoing occurred, consequence management will always be implemented.

This administration took difficult decisions and had to part ways with certain individuals where accountability and governance demanded decisive intervention. Because public office must never become a shelter for misconduct and laziness.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, REVENUE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker,

As the late Auditor General **Kimi Makwetu** once reminded the nation, *“Impunity cannot coexist with accountability.”*

It is a principle that this administration embraced from the very beginning of its term. One of the commitments we made to the people of Polokwane in 2021 was that we would restore financial stability, institutional credibility and clean governance.

Today, I am proud to report that this administration succeeded in moving the municipality from **a qualified audit opinion** to **four consecutive unqualified audit outcomes** — four consecutive years achieved through discipline, accountability and ethical leadership.

This administration reduced audit findings significantly through the implementation of a robust Audit Action Plan led by management. **Audit findings** were reduced dramatically from **162 findings** in the **2020/21 financial year** to only **73 findings** in the **2024/25 financial year**.

This happened because this administration took governance seriously and understood that strong financial management is the foundation of sustainable service delivery.

Madam Speaker,

Revenue is the financial oxygen that enables municipalities to function, while economic development is the deliberate creation of opportunities that improve the quality of life of our people through investment, infrastructure development, enterprise growth and sustainable employment.

Without revenue, municipalities cannot deliver services. Without economic development, communities cannot prosper.

Revenue is about water flowing from taps, roads being tarred, refuse being collected, streetlights functioning and communities experiencing dignified service delivery.

Madam Speaker,

We continue to maintain **zero tolerance** against corruption, meter tampering, illegal connections and all forms of revenue sabotage that rob our people of development. Those who steal electricity are stealing from the poor. Those who tamper with meters are sabotaging service delivery. Those who illegally connect water are undermining the sustainability of the entire system.

This administration will continue acting decisively against any conduct that weakens municipal finances and compromises development.

Madam Speaker, over the last five years, we improved and retained the municipality's grading from **Grade 5** to **Grade 6** which put Polokwane in same grading as metro municipalities. This reflects growing institutional capacity, improved revenue collection, and the growth of our local economy.

Since 2021/22 fiscal year, we have also increase our overall budget from **R4.8 billion** to the **R7.4 billion** budget which we will adopt for the 2026/27 financial year.

The municipality's revenue collection also improved from **R2 billion** in 2021/22 to **R2.8 billion** in 2024/25.

Fellow residents,

The return of funds to the National Treasury has robbed many of our residents of the service delivery they rightfully deserve and slowed the development trajectory of the city.

Thus, this administration confronted one of the biggest weaknesses that had previously undermined service delivery — the challenge of **unspent conditional grants**.

I am proud to report that Polokwane has dramatically reduced unspent conditional grants from **R155.8 million** in the 2021/22 financial year to **ZERO** in 2024/25. This achievement is reflected in the visible service delivery progress taking place on the ground across our communities.

For the first time in years, Polokwane is demonstrating the institutional ability to plan, spend and implement projects effectively.

Madam Speaker and the house,

It is important to announce that Polokwane also ensured that **100%** of creditor invoices, including **Eskom** and **Lepelle Northern Water**, were paid within 30 days throughout this Council term. Unlike other municipalities, we do not owe Lepelle Northern Water and Eskom a cent.

Despite many municipalities owing utilities in South Africa, it is important to note that Polokwane is among the few that are not owing utilities as required by the MFMA. This is an important contributor to stimulate small businesses and grow our local economy.

When municipalities fail to pay creditors on time, it is often small enterprises and their workers who bear the brunt, affecting salaries, sustainability and local economic circulation. Therefore, consistent and timeous payment is a deliberate

developmental tool to stimulate growth, sustain livelihoods and strengthen the local economy.

We also wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all residents, businesses and stakeholders who continue to pay the municipality on time.

Your commitment and partnership have contributed significantly towards strengthening the municipality's liquidity position and restoring financial stability. As a result, Polokwane has successfully moved from being classified as financially distressed to being recognised as a financially sound municipality.

Madam Speaker,

Consequence management became unavoidable in our quest to build an ethical municipality. This Council had to institute a forensic investigation based on issues flagged by the Auditor General which revealed that excessive overtime expenditure placed negative pressure on municipal finances.

The alarming findings and recommendations of the investigation required prompt action by the municipality. Since the municipality started implementing the AG recommendations, we have now reduced **overtime expenditure** from R113.6 million in 2021/22 to R68.2 million in 2024/25. Part of recommendations of the AG and the investigation include corrective measures through consequence management.

Part of the consequence management include the municipality recovering funds from those who were overpaid as well as final written warnings.

Financial discipline within Polokwane Municipality is becoming the institutional culture.

THE BUDGET AND COST OF LIVING

Madam Speaker,

The budget that we will adopt for the coming financial year as alluded earlier is a development instrument aimed at improving lives, expanding infrastructure, strengthening service delivery and positioning Polokwane for long-term growth.

It is worth mentioning that **this Council has never had adopted an unfunded budget.**

A significant portion of the capital budget continues to prioritise water infrastructure because we understand the urgency of water security. Roads, electricity, transportation, community services and local economic development also remain critical investment areas.

In order to mitigate against high cost of living, the municipality has aligned its tariff increases to the ones imposed by Lepelle Northern Water and Eskom.

We have set aside **R157 million** to cushion our indigent residents against the rising cost of living, ensuring that vulnerable households are supported and protected through targeted relief measures that uphold dignity and social equity.

We do share the concerns of our residents over the increases that are consistently approved for both Eskom and Lepelle Northern Water because we understand the daily realities confronting our people.

WATER AND SANITATION

Madam Speaker,

Water remains the number one priority of this administration because water is life while sanitation is dignity.

From the onset of this administration, we understood that no city can grow economically while communities struggle to access reliable water supply. We therefore adopted a structured intervention programme focused on infrastructure refurbishment, borehole augmentation, reservoir upgrades, pressure management, pipeline replacement and improved coordination with all relevant stakeholders.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to both the Minister of Water and Sanitation, **Ms Pemmy Majodina** and Deputy Minister **Mr David Mahlobo**, together with our Premier **Dr Phophi Ramathuba** and all stakeholders who partnered with us in confronting water challenges affecting our municipality.

One of the most important interventions undertaken by this administration is the Seshego Water Treatment Plant. This facility now has the capacity to bring between eight and ten megalitres of water into the municipal system daily. This intervention is bringing much-needed relief to the entire water network and

stabilising supply to several communities that historically experienced persistent interruptions.

Seshego Water Treatment Plant represents dignity for households, stability for businesses and relief for communities that waited for too long.

Madam Speaker,

Over this administration, 46 water and sanitation projects valued at R907 million were completed across the municipality. 300 kilometres of pipelines were installed, while thousands of standpipes and yard connections were delivered to communities. Further, 25 905 households benefited from water and sanitation interventions aimed at restoring dignity to our people.

In this financial year alone, 14 water projects valued at R228.9 million were completed together with two emergency refurbishment projects.

We are not claiming perfection. Challenges still exist. Pipe bursts still occur. Illegal connections continue placing pressure on the system. Demand for water continues to grow as our city expands. But unlike before, this municipality now has a structured programme to confront these challenges both in the short-term, medium to long-term.

As part of our effort to improve sanitation, **R2,1 billion** was made available by National Treasury, as announced by Minister **Enoch Godongwana** during the 2026 Budget Speech, to improve Regional Waste Water project over the next three years.

The 2026/27 budget will allocate **R981 million** towards water and sanitation infrastructure because this administration understands that the future of Polokwane depends on water security.

ROADS AND STORMWATER

Madam Speaker,

A city that invests in roads is a city that invests in its economy, because roads are economic arteries through which trade, mobility and opportunity flow.

From the outset of this administration, we made a conscious and strategic decision to shift away from reactive maintenance and episodic interventions, towards structured, planned and impact-driven road infrastructure development.

We prioritised the upgrading of gravel roads to tar, the rehabilitation of key arterial routes, and the strengthening of internal township roads in order to restore dignity, improve accessibility and unlock economic participation in both urban and rural areas.

Madam Speaker,

Since the beginning of this term, the municipality has successfully tarred and rehabilitated over **90,69 kilometres** of roads across all clusters, supported by the construction of **42 low-level bridges** and extensive stormwater infrastructure interventions aimed at reducing flooding and protecting road assets.

We deliberately prioritised paving and tarring over regravelling in key strategic corridors because we understood that temporary fixes cannot support long-term economic growth. Gravel roads deteriorate quickly, increase maintenance costs and limit mobility, especially in high-density and high-growth areas. Tarred roads, on the other hand, provide durability, efficiency and economic certainty.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have rehabilitated critical routes such as Nelson Mandela Drive from Rissik to Sand River Bridge, which are vital connectors within our urban economy.

We have transformed internal mobility through the systematic paving of Seshego Zones 1 to 6, the construction of the Nelson Mandela Bo-okelo and Ditlou Crossing, as well as the implementation of major stormwater canal systems to protect infrastructure from recurring water damage.

In our rural clusters, we have paved internal roads in Mountain View, Mankgaile, Ga-Mokoatedi, Ga-Rachidi and Solomondale to D3997 and Ga-Makgoba improving connectivity between villages, schools, clinics and economic nodes.

We are also expanding the road linking University of Limpopo and Paledi Mall along the R71 corridor — a transformative project that will introduce sidewalks, street lighting and safer pedestrian infrastructure, particularly improving safety and accessibility for students and surrounding communities.

Madam Speaker,

The municipality's **war on potholes** programme is making a significant impact to address the challenges of potholes in the City. The recent persistent and heavy

rainfalls continue to pose a challenge for us to intensify the programme. As a lasting solution, we are continuing with rehabilitation projects where roads have reached the end of their lifespan. To assist with war on potholes, we will be procuring a jet-patcher which uses technology to patch potholes faster and in a more effective way.

Stormwater management remains an equally critical component of road infrastructure. It is for this reason that this administration has secured R30 million specifically for stormwater upgrades in flood-prone and high-risk areas, ensuring that our roads are not only built, but protected and sustained.

We are also strengthening internal capacity through the acquisition of **new yellow fleet machinery**, including graders and service vehicles, to ensure that we reduce dependency on outsourced interventions and build a self-reliant infrastructure delivery system.

Madam Speaker,

Road infrastructure is not just about connectivity. It is about economic inclusion, it is about safety, and it is about unlocking the full potential of a growing city.

A road that is properly built does not only move vehicles — it moves an economy forward.

TRANSPORTATION

Madam Speaker,

An effective transport system remains essential for economic growth and social inclusion.

Leeto La Polokwane continues transforming public transport into a dignified, integrated and modern system. Since the start of this Council term, we have transformed Leeto la Polokwane from around **8495** to more than **100 000** passengers who utilise Leeto services monthly while the Thabo Mbeki Bus Station has become a major transport hub improving accessibility and safety.

Several strategic infrastructure projects are currently under construction, including the development of a modern Transit Mall, designed as a pedestrian-focused corridor linking mobility with local economic activity and urban regeneration.

As committed in previous addresses, we have cleared the Flora Park and Westernburg corridors for the expansion of Leeto la Polokwane.

The introduction of QR code ticketing has modernised convenience for commuters while additional route expansion remains underway. Leeto la Polokwane is an economic inclusion on wheels.

ENERGY SERVICES AND ELECTRICITY

Madam Speaker, ladies and gentlemen,

Electricity is the lifeblood of economic activity, the enabler of industrial growth, the foundation of modern households and the backbone of a functioning city.

Without reliable energy supply, no economy can grow, no business can thrive, and no municipality can confidently speak of development.

We are moving decisively away from the outsourcing of streetlight maintenance, strengthening internal capacity to ensure faster response times, improved accountability and more efficient service delivery for the residents of Polokwane.

Since the start of this Council, we have expanded electrification to **8,929 new households**. We are also rolling out the solar home system to households that are not yet connected to the grid due to Eskom capacity constraints.

However, we must also confront a harsh reality. Our municipality, like many across the country, is increasingly affected by deliberate acts of vandalism, theft of electrical infrastructure, and illegal connections. These criminal activities do not only disrupt supply; they weaken our financial sustainability and compromise the safety of our communities.

It is for this reason that we have taken a firm and decisive position. We will no longer allow a cycle where infrastructure is repeatedly vandalised and repaired at unsustainable cost without long-term protection measures. We are therefore shifting towards more resilient, future-focused solutions.

In response, this administration has begun the systematic rollout of solar-powered streetlighting systems across key areas of the city. This intervention is not only about energy efficiency, but about building infrastructure that is

resistant to theft, less dependent on the national grid, and more sustainable in the long term.

This financial year alone, **260 solar streetlights** were installed in Seshego, Dendron Road and the Peter Mokaba precinct. Additionally, **37 solar high mast lights** have been installed across urban and rural clusters including parks and major roads.

Over the next few months the municipality will roll out **40 high solar mass lights** in all major intersections and **2500 solar street lights** to mitigate against criminal activities such as theft and vandalism and to protect our service infrastructure.

We are also modernising the electricity distribution environment through smart technologies that improve monitoring, reduce losses, and enhance revenue protection. Illegal connections and meter tampering are being aggressively addressed through targeted enforcement and data-driven detection systems.

Despite these challenges, we continue to expand access to electricity in underserved areas and improve the reliability of supply through ongoing infrastructure upgrades, transformer maintenance, and network strengthening initiatives.

This includes targeted interventions in high-growth areas, new developments, and previously underserved communities where electricity access is being improved as part of our broader spatial transformation agenda.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING

Madam Speaker,

Access to decent housing is about dignity, about restoring hope and about ensuring that every family can proudly say: “This is my home.”

The 1st of February 2024 marked a historic turning point for Polokwane Municipality when we officially received **Level 2 Housing Accreditation**, which empowers us to plan housing projects, budget independently, appoint implementing agents and manage housing delivery directly.

As part of the accreditation implementation programme, the municipality appointed 10 contractors to construct **404** housing units across urban and rural areas.

Further, approximately 150 housing units were delivered under Phase 3 of the Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme in Extensions 126 and 127. That is dignity delivered.

Looking ahead, the municipality has already been allocated 255 additional housing units for the 2026/27 financial year. Another development sits on the horizon at Extension 138 to be named under our struggle stalwart, **General Ike Maphoto**.

Land availability remains one of our biggest challenges. But we are responding through innovation and smarter urban planning. The Kingdom Park

development will pioneer walk-up RDP housing — a modern approach towards integrated human settlements and urban densification.

Access to decent housing remains central to restoring dignity and reversing historical inequalities.

Through **Polokwane Housing Association**, social housing stock has now grown to 1,195 units. During this Council, we have successfully completed Annadale Extension 2 with more than 290 out of 494 units tenanted in to date.

We have embarked on efforts to improve governance and rental collection at PHA with a turnaround plan to address financial management, improved accountability systems and a renewed culture of responsibility within our housing operations.

The municipality continues implementing housing delivery programmes, title deed distribution and asbestos roof replacement initiatives aimed at restoring dignity to communities.

CORPORATE SERVICES, ICT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker,

A municipality that seeks to transform society must equally transform its internal capacity to deliver.

Infrastructure alone cannot change communities without skilled hands, capable professionals and empowered young people driving implementation on the ground.

Therefore, in order to build a sustainable and capable administration, we have ensured that:

- 09 Executive Directors are appointed led by the City Manager;
- 142 positions are appointed at Technical fields to deal with Service Delivery Units;
- Of the 46 appointments made by this Council in the Budget and Treasury Office, 4 of them are Qualified Chartered Accountants.

Moreover, the implementation of the Performance Management System and quarterly recognition of achievements to various SBU's and individuals has seen an improvement and change in culture of doing things in the city.

Ladies and gentlemen, a capable and ethical state is built by capable people.

Through our prioritisation of the **Graduate Employment Programme**, we have created a total of 117 graduate employment opportunities without the requirement of experience on entry level positions.

Beyond graduates, we have facilitated the appointment of 186 young people into municipal-funded vacancies, expanded access to 187 bursaries, and created 495 learnership opportunities aimed at skills development and workplace readiness.

In total, **22640** Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) employment opportunities have been facilitated through municipal-funded projects and partnerships with various sector departments such as Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, ensuring that thousands of households receive income support while contributing to public service delivery.

Madam Speaker,

We are also strengthening the operational capacity of the municipality to deliver services effectively. In this regard, **116 municipal-owned fleet units** have been procured since 2021 to enhance service delivery across departments, with an additional 22 units expected before the end of June 2026 and a further 29 planned for the next financial year. This investment ensures that service delivery is not constrained by outdated or insufficient equipment.

In parallel, this administration has embraced innovation and digital transformation as a cornerstone of modern governance.

The launch of the MyPolokwane Citizen App, with **15300** subscribers currently, has brought municipal services directly into the hands of residents, improving accessibility, efficiency and responsiveness.

We have digitised recruitment processes, automated proof of residence applications, just to mention a few. We have also implemented SD-WAN connectivity across 67 municipal sites and rolled out free community Wi-Fi in public libraries, bridging the digital divide and expanding access to information.

Furthermore, the introduction of the **AFLA Online GIS Portal** has transformed spatial planning and development applications, strengthening transparency, reducing delays and improving service efficiency.

Madam Speaker,

This is how we are building a modern municipality — one that empowers its youth, equips its workforce, and embraces technology to deliver services faster, smarter and more effectively.

Because a capable city is not only defined by what it builds, but also by how it works.

TRAFFIC, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SAFETY

Madam Speaker,

Law enforcement is fundamentally about protecting lives and creating safer communities.

The municipality has implemented smart traffic camera systems and integrated traffic management technologies across the city. These interventions are improving road safety, supporting law enforcement and changing driver behaviour.

This is not about punishment. It is about protecting communities.

More camera systems will continue being rolled out across strategic areas because safer roads create safer cities.

At the same time, we are strengthening security around critical municipal infrastructure through enhanced surveillance systems, alarm systems, armed rapid response mechanisms, and coordinated enforcement operations aimed at protecting municipal assets.

CATALYTIC PROJECTS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Madam Speaker,

Polokwane continues to assert itself as the economic heartbeat of Limpopo, a city whose performance has direct implications for the broader provincial economy.

In this regard, we are encouraged by the words of the **Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba** during the State of the Province Address, when she correctly observed:

“When Polokwane thrives, Limpopo thrives; and when Polokwane struggles, all of us feel the consequences – socially, economically and institutionally. That is why we raise this matter not to promote Polokwane at the expense of other areas, but because we understand its central role in the broader development of our province.”

These words are not merely symbolic. They reflect a developmental truth that places a responsibility on this municipality to lead with discipline, to deliver with consistency, and to grow with purpose. Polokwane is not developing in isolation; it is developing as a critical node in the provincial economy, and its stability is essential for the stability of Limpopo as a whole.

From the beginning of this administration, we deliberately prioritised catalytic projects capable of transforming the economic landscape of Polokwane.

Projects such as **The Greenery Shopping Centre** have already planted seeds of prosperity through the creation of **500 permanent jobs**, while **Netcare Akeso Psychiatric Hospital** opened doors for **472 temporary** and **120 permanent** employment opportunities.

Across the horizon of our transforming city, cranes and construction continue to sing the anthem of progress. The ambitious **Green Arch Precinct development** is set to create **3 000 jobs** during construction and an estimated 360 permanent jobs thereafter. The rising **Limpopo Provincial Arts Theatre** is also creating **350 temporary jobs** during construction and **50 permanent jobs** upon completion.

Meanwhile, the monumental **Limpopo Central Academic Hospital** is expected to generate **1 220 part-time jobs** during construction and create an estimated **2 461 full-time** equivalent jobs.

These developments are attracting investment, stimulating construction activity and positioning Polokwane as a leading economic hub in the province and beyond.

Investment is no longer something we are waiting for. Investment is already arriving.

WASTE AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Madam Speaker, ladies and gentlemen,

When the President of the Republic, His Excellency **President Cyril Ramaphosa**, visited our municipality last year, he described Polokwane as:

“A city of cleanliness”, a model for what is possible when local government and communities work together for a common good.

Those words were not merely a compliment but a challenge to continue building a city whose cleanliness reflects its discipline, whose order reflects its vision and whose environment reflects its respect for future generations.

Indeed, waste management is not simply about collecting refuse. It is about dignity. It is about public health. It is about environmental justice. It is about ensuring that no community — whether urban or rural — is forgotten.

Madam Speaker,

This administration remains fully aware of the waste collection backlogs that continue to affect sections of our rural communities. It is for this reason that the Integrated Waste Management Plan of the municipality has now been formally endorsed by the MEC for Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism.

This endorsement gives practical effect to our rural waste collection expansion programme.

I am pleased to announce that from July 2026, the municipality will implement a massive rural household kerbside waste collection programme — a decisive intervention aimed at restoring cleanliness and dignity in our villages.

Madam Speaker,

We have successfully completed both the Seshego and Westenburg Transfer Stations and they are now ready for official handover during the course of this month.

Furthermore, to confront rural waste challenges head-on, we are currently implementing three Rural Waste Transfer Stations in Ga-Maja, Ga-Chuene and Ga-Molepo.

These projects are currently at approximately 60% completion and will significantly improve waste management services in historically neglected communities.

The extension of the Weltevreden Landfill Site has already commenced with the construction of palisade concrete fencing as Phase One of the project. At the same time, planning for the rehabilitation and proper closure of the existing landfill site has been completed in line with environmental compliance requirements.

Madam Speaker,

Our Keep Polokwane Clean Campaign, supported through the Mayoral Greening and Cleaning Competition, has become more than a municipal programme but a civic movement.

SPORTS, TOURISM AND COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE

Madam Speaker,

Polokwane continues to affirm its standing as a preferred destination for sport and major events, a city where infrastructure, planning and hospitality converge to attract both national and international attention. This reputation is underpinned by our consistent investment in the internal maintenance and upgrading of sporting facilities.

In this regard, we are pleased to announce the completion of the new stadium in Extension 78, a modern facility that will stand as a lasting tribute to leadership and legacy through its naming in honour of the late former Executive Mayor **Thabo Makunyane**.

As a premier sporting destination, we have successfully hosted, among others, key sporting events such as international CAF games; the Carling Knockout Cup Final between Orlando Pirates and Marumo Gallants, the Nedbank Cup Final between TS Galaxy and Durban City, the Volleyball South Africa Zone 6 Championships and the Hollywoodbets COSAFA Senior Women's Championship.

We congratulate all athletes, sporting organisations and community leaders who continue raising the profile of our municipality.

In the true spirit of the City of Stars, we extend our best wishes to our Premier Soccer League clubs, with a sincere hope that Magesi FC successfully secures its

place in the top flight and avoids relegation, while Polokwane City FC and Sekhukhune United FC continue to rise and firmly establish themselves within the top eight rankings.

As Polokwane continues to host major sporting events that bring life, excitement and economic activity to our city, we look forward to the upcoming fixtures where Magesi FC will face Orlando Pirates tomorrow, while Sekhukhune United FC take on Kaizer Chiefs on Sunday.

Madam Speaker,

The municipality has also earned notable recognition over the years, including **the ZK Matthews Award, the Arbor City Awards, the Greenest Municipality Awards**, the distinction of being among the **most media-profiled municipalities**, as well as international recognition in **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**.

These achievements confirm that Polokwane continues emerging as one of South Africa's leading municipalities.

EDUCATION SUPPORT AND EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Madam Speaker,

This administration firmly believes that education remains the most powerful instrument of transformation, and that no young person should be deprived of opportunity due to circumstances beyond their control. It is for this reason that we have deliberately strengthened our support for academic excellence, particularly at matric level, where the future of our youth is defined.

In this regard, the municipality introduced **Matric Excellence Awards** as a targeted intervention to recognise, motivate and inspire top-performing matriculants across our city.

Through this programme, we have also provided them with practical support to succeed beyond matric. This includes the provision of learning tools, academic resources and financial assistance towards tuition fees, ensuring that excellence is not only celebrated, but sustained at tertiary level.

Madam Speaker,

Among the beneficiaries of this initiative are learners such as **Nthabiseng Lefophane from Bokamoso Senior Secondary School** and **Paballo Makokga from Hoërskool Noordeland**, whose academic achievements reflect the promise and potential of our young people.

These young leaders represent the future of Polokwane — a future built on education, ambition and opportunity.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker,

As this administration approaches the conclusion of its term, we stand before the people not claiming perfection, but presenting progress. There were challenges. There were setbacks. There were difficult decisions. But throughout it all, we remained focused on the people of Polokwane.

As **Martin Luther King Jr** once said: *“If you can’t fly, then run; if you can’t run, then walk; if you can’t walk, then crawl — but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.”*

And forward we moved. Today, Polokwane stands taller. More financially stable. More connected. More ambitious. More confident. This administration may not have solved every challenge, but we laid foundations that future generations will stand upon.

This City of Stars has risen and remains on track towards the achievement of the metro status in line with our Vision 2030.

Long after speeches are forgotten, roads will remain tarred, water infrastructure will continue serving communities, buses will continue moving and institutional reforms will continue strengthening this municipality. That is legacy.

To the residents of Polokwane, we thank you for your trust, your patience, your criticism and your partnership. This administration listened. And because we listened, we delivered. The journey of building Polokwane continues.

To my fellow councillors, I convey my special gratitude for the spirit we enjoyed of working together for the benefit of all our residents.

To our traditional leaders, business, and all stakeholders, we dearly thank for the collaboration we built for a better and more prosperous Polokwane.

To my party, the African National Congress, we are deeply grateful for the support we have received to deliver to the people.

And as I conclude, allow me to leave you with these words of **Charles Dickens** quoted from **A Tale of Two Cities**:

*“I see a beautiful city and a brilliant people
rising from this abyss.*

*I see the lives for which I lay down my life,
peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy.*

*I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts,
and in the hearts of their descendants,
generations hence.*

*It is a far, far better thing that I do,
than I have ever done;*

*it is a far, far better rest that I go to
than I have ever known.”*

I thank you.