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WAARHEID!

GOOD

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Letter from the Leader

AUNTY PAT SÊ: ALL SOUTH AFRICANS ARE SALESMEN AND WOMEN FOR DESTINATION SA

It's that time of the year when just about everyone is contemplating putting their feet up, for at least a day or two – besides those who are fortunate enough to work in the tourism industry.

Their jobs are much bigger than serving tables, guiding tour groups or tidying hotel rooms. Through their friendliness and competence, they are at the frontline of selling destination South Africa to the world.

They earn wages for themselves and their families, and also for our country – for our economy in critical need of a break.

For those who work in the hospitality sector, we thank you!

We acknowledge your sacrifice over the holiday season, spending time away from your friends and loved ones.

But it is not just workers in the tourist sector who contribute to creating an environment that travellers want to visit; every single one of us has a role to play in making visitors feel so welcome that when they return home they encourage their friends and family to visit next year.

A few months ago, US-based payment company, Remitly, conducted a global survey that ranked South Africa as the friendliest country in the world, followed by Greece, Croatia, Mexico and Sweden.

According to participants South Africans are happy to socialise and show off their good sense of humour, and it is not uncommon to be greeted by polite strangers in the street.

"Residents are known for being warm and welcoming, making it easy for travellers and visitors alike to feel at ease around them," Remitly said.

I know there are many communities in our country, riddled with poverty, crime and under-development – that tourists don't generally visit - who don't experience the streets as particularly "warm" or "welcoming".

That doesn't however exclude them from contributing to the general mood of the country, be it through a friendly greeting at a mall, taking the time to give visitors directions, or starting a chat while queuing to get into the stadium for the big game…

Good news seldom makes the news; it lacks bad news' drama. We don't read stories about good drivers, for example, whereas the deathly consequences of bad drivers often dominate the Festive Season news cycle.

Being nice to others, and yourself, doesn't get the acknowledgement it deserves. Although it is a foundational value of most of our religions – do unto others… - it remains tragically under-valued.

While you may not get paid directly for being nice, you are contributing to growing the economy.

I wish everyone a safe, friendly and loving Festive Season. Safe on the road, friendly on the streets, and loving at home.

Patricia de Lille

POVERTY, FOOD-BORNE ILLNESSES & XENOPHOBIA: A PERFECT STORM



Ten million tons of good food goes to waste in South Africa each year, a third of the country's total food production.

Yet millions of South Africans, who can't afford to pay commercial prices, subsist on poor quality food from small suppliers, who stock the cheapest available products, sometimes past their expiry date, and lack the resources to manage the cold chain requirements of perishable goods.

Most of these small suppliers are based in townships and informal settlements, and many of them are immigrants who have been coming under regular attack from xenophobes in these communities for the past decade or so.

Adding to the problem is that due to poverty at home, many South African children rely on the nutrition they receive at school. The quality of some of this food, though made with love, is unregulated and can be dire.

Over the past few months, at least 22 children have died of food-borne illnesses, and scores more have been hospitalised.

These circumstances, taken together, demand a thoughtful and sustainable response from government, not reactionary knee-jerking such as the patently ridiculous order to regulate the hitherto totally unregulated spaza shop industry within 21 days.

While the government's intentions may be good, it has opened up a Pandora's Box of chaos.

The order to formalise the industry within 21-days was never going to work. Instead, in its rush to be seen to be doing something, government has opened the door for fraud and corruption to flourish (as noted in a NATJOINT briefing declaring foodborne illnesses a national disaster).

There are reports of fronting, South Africans accused of assisting illegal foreign nationals to fraudulently comply with the requirements for registration, and of corrupt government officials willing to "assist" with the registration process for a fee.

In Johannesburg, members of Operation Dudula, blocked foreign nationals from participating in the process.

Fears of raids and inspections have sparked large-scale dumping of potentially contaminated foodstuffs, the lack of proper disposal opened vulnerable communities up to potential further harm.

And, by Governments own admission, it does not have the number of environmental health inspectors needed for the project.

No one can deny that the informal retailing of food bears health risks. But Spaza shops and informal food retailers play an important role in papering over the country's food security crisis.

Our food security crisis, or hunger, is not because we don't produce enough food but because food is inaccessible and unaffordable.

Government has to ensure that township economies function given their significant contribution to the national economy and role in ensuring the basic survival of millions of people without a job in the formal economy.

Taking a sledgehammer to this sector, while xenophobes hang in the shadows, is a recipe for further disaster.

The new township economies legislation gazetted by the Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs – that seeks to balance the rights of citizens to conduct business with the rights of consumers to safety and security – is a step in the right direction – but it needs more than 21 days to work.

Making it work needs sustained commitment from municipalities.

Rushing through new rules in order to be seen to be doing something is doomed to failure.

THE URGENT NEED FOR SAFE SANITATION AND PRIORITIZING INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN CAPE TOWN'S BUDGET



As the world observed World Toilet Day in November, we were reminded of a critical issue that demands our attention: the lack of safe and dignified sanitation for residents in Cape Town's informal settlements.

In 2016, the brutal rape and murder of Sinoxolo Mafevuka in a communal toilet, 200 meters away from her home, in an informal settlement in Khayelitsha brought the world's attention to the safety risks faced by many living in these conditions in Cape Town, particularly women and girls who use shared or public toilets.

Her tragic death was not an isolated incident; it is a stark reminder that the inadequate sanitation infrastructure in informal settlements is not just a public health and safety issue, but also a grave human rights issue.

8 Years later, the situation remains unchanged.

All across Cape Town, informal settlements are plagued by overcrowded, unsafe, and poorly maintained communal toilets.



These facilities often lack privacy and lighting, posing a serious safety risk.

Many residents, particularly women and children, face threats of violence simply for using public toilets.

These conditions violate the basic human rights of dignity and safety that every person deserves.

It is unacceptable that in one of South Africa's wealthiest cities, so many of our fellow residents still do not have access to clean, safe, and private toilets. We must change this reality, and we must do so now.

The GOOD Party's Spatial Justice Plan, as outlined in its 2021 manifesto, calls for urgent action to correct the spatial and social inequities that continue to affect our city's most vulnerable communities.

The GOOD Party advocates for addressing the deeply entrenched inequalities in access to services, infrastructure, and basic rights for those living in informal settlements.

The Party's vision of a just, inclusive Cape Town is one where every resident, regardless of where they live, has access to dignified sanitation, clean water, and safe living conditions.

In line with this vision, we call on Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis and the City of Cape Town to:

1. Prioritize Informal Settlements in the Budget: The City's budget must reflect a commitment to ensuring that informal settlements have the same access to essential services as wealthier areas of the city. This includes allocating adequate resources for safe, clean, and well-maintained toilets in these communities, along with investments in waste management, clean water, and other essential infrastructure.

2. Promote Safety and Gender Equity: Women and children are most at risk, they must be at the centre of the City's planning and development. Safe sanitation should be a priority in areas where gender-based violence is a daily threat. Communal toilets must be equipped with locks, adequate lighting, and proper security to ensure that women and girls can access these facilities without fear for their safety.

3. Implement Long-Term Solutions for Safe Sanitation: The GOOD Party's Spatial Justice Plan speaks to the need for sustainable, equitable solutions. Building toilets is not enough if those toilets are not safe, well-maintained, and accessible. We need a commitment to long-term planning for sanitation that addresses the underlying issues of overcrowding and resource allocation in informal settlements.

4. Engage Communities in Planning: True spatial justice can only be achieved when communities themselves are involved in planning the solutions. The City must consult with informal settlement residents, especially women and marginalized groups, to ensure that sanitation services meet their specific needs and are tailored to their realities.

We Must Act Now!

Safe, clean, and dignified sanitation is not a luxury; it is a basic human right.

CRIME STATS: WOMEN AND CHILDREN REMAIN UNDER ATTACK

As the country marks 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, the crime stats highlight the shocking state of violence experienced by our women and children.

On average, 10 women and 3 children are killed daily across South Africa.

It was widely celebrated that the national figure for contact crime decreased by 3%, during the 3 months of July to end September 2024.

And while murder saw a decrease of 5.8% nationally, the number of women and children murdered was up year on year.

Murders against women saw an 8.6% increase, with a 3.5% increase in attempted murder.

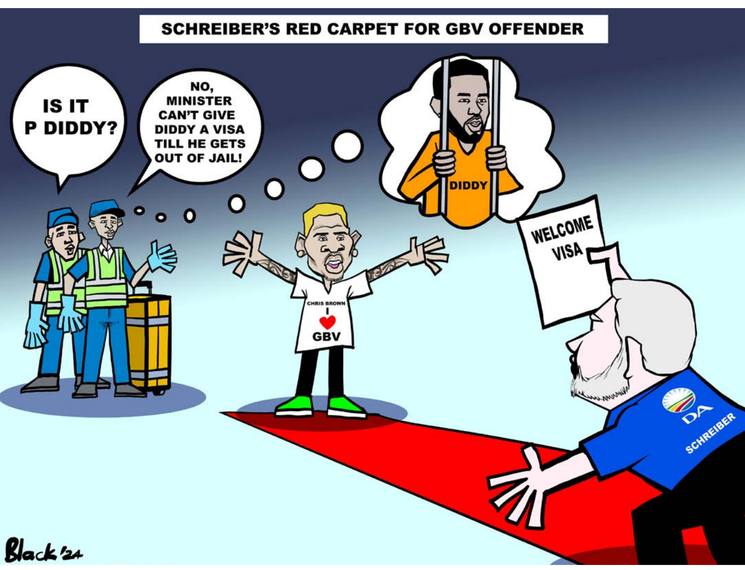
Children (boys and girls) saw a 7.5 % point increase in murders and a 35.7% increase in attempted murders.

The level of GBVF in South Africa is a consequence of a toxic cocktail of inherited gender prejudices and inequalities.

To address the scourge of GBVF in the country we first need to address the conditions that make crime prevalent in South Africa: poverty and inequality.

It is obvious that we need better policing, but we also need to address the socio-economic conditions that so many of our citizens face daily.

As South Africans, we all need to stand up and say “Zero Tolerance”.



CAPE TOWN CRIME STATS: A LEAP IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

MURDER STATISTICS TOP 30 STATIONS

RSA Position	Prov Position	Station	District	Province
1	1	Inanda	eThekwini District	KwaZulu-Natal
2	1	Philippi East	City of Cape Town District	Western Cape
3	1	Kwazakhele	Nelson Mandela District	Eastern Cape
4	2	Delft	City of Cape Town District	Western Cape
5	3	Nyanga	City of Cape Town District	Western Cape
6	4	Mfuleni	City of Cape Town District	Western Cape
7	2	Lusikisiki	OR Tambo District	Eastern Cape
8	5	Gugulethu	City of Cape Town District	Western Cape
9	3	New Brighton	Nelson Mandela District	Eastern Cape
10	1	Jeppe	Johannesburg District	Gauteng

The City of Cape Town has an army of Law Enforcement Advancement Plan (LEAP) officers, managed by Cape Town Mayco member JP Smith, who styles himself the Sheriff of Cape Town.

And although the LEAP officers make for excellent PR opportunities for the politicians, in their shiny boots, what is clear is that they have very little impact on quarterly crime statistics.

In the crime stats released for the period between July to end September 2024, Cape Town still has 5 of the 10 police stations that recorded the most contact crimes in the country. Khayelitsha saw the highest spike in the country, with an additional 109 crimes reported, a total of 820 crimes reported at the station in 3 months.

Cape Town also makes up 5 of the top 10 police stations that recorded the most murders. The Cape Town stations that feature, account for a combined 319 murders in just 3 months.

And although compared to the same period last year, there has been marginal decreases in murders in Delft, Nyanga, Mfuleni and Gugulethu, Phillip East saw an increase of 60.9 % points.

People in the Cape Flats live in constant fear because of Gang Violence.

Out of the 221 gang-related murders reported nationally in 3 months, 177 occurred in the Western Cape.

Clearly the number of boots on the ground is not having the desired impact on crime in the city

Yes, we need efficient law enforcement but we also need to address the root cause of crime.

The GOOD Party calls on the City of Cape Town to publicly review its LEAP programme, it needs to undertake an honest cost-benefit analysis.

KNYSNA MUNICIPALITY CHAOS: A POLITICAL BATTLEGROUND



(Courtesy: Western Cape Provincial Parliament)

The GOOD Party stands with the people of Knysna as they call for better leadership.

As GOOD, we are confident their wealth of On Thursday 21st November, Minister Bredell stated that the Western Cape Government would not dissolve the Knysna Municipality, and opposed the application to the High Court made by the community organisation, The Accountability Group (TAG).

The reason for the opposition was that the application was "legally flawed", stating that incorrect legislation was referenced.

However, the application was rooted in legitimate grievances: poor leadership, financial instability, inadequate service delivery, and a laundry list of other problems, therefore the merit of the argument must still prevail.

The fact that Knysna has cycled through thirteen municipal managers since 2020 reflects a glaring lack of leadership continuity, leading to frequent protests over deteriorating living conditions and service delivery.

Minister Bredell stated that "Our responsibility is to help the municipality".

It is GOOD's view that their responsibility should be to help the people, and in this case it means dissolving the municipality and taking more decisive action.

As leaders, it is imperative to recognise that governance is not merely about policy but about serving the communities we are entrusted to protect.

MATZIKAMA MUNICIPALITY PLUNGED INTO CHAOS

The GOOD Party calls on MEC for Local Government, Anton Bredell to urgently intervene in the Matzikama Municipality and force the council to implement the findings of a forensic investigation.

The investigation revealed that Deputy Mayor Amelia Job, Speaker- Andreas Sinyamba and Municipal Manager Lionell Phillips were guilty of gross "Unlawful, irregular and fraudulent conduct and Maladministration practices" with the appointment of the Deputy Mayor's son, Almar Heinrich Koopman.

The report recommended disciplinary action against implicated officials and a re-evaluation of the municipality's hiring practices to prevent further incidents of alleged nepotism and procedural violations.

The investigation was initiated by MEC Bredell after the Speaker, Andreas Sinyamba failed to act on the allegations for over 18 months.

And once again the Speaker is failing to put the people of Matzikama first.

The report advised the Council should implement the recommendations before the 31st October.

But the Speaker has prevented an adequate council meeting from being held to discuss and implement these recommendations.

As Opposition councillors, we are yet to receive the full report from the Speaker, rather relying on media reports and leaked extracts.

November's Council meeting once again descended into chaos after the Speaker chose to preside over the section where he, himself was implicated.

We appeal to MEC Bredell to act in the spirit of good governance, ethical leadership and transparency.

GOOD believes those implicated should be removed from their positions immediately.

We need to restore stability and trust in the council.



GUGULETHU RESIDENTS SET TO RECEIVE ELECTRICITY AFTER 30 YEAR WAIT

For years the residents of Lady's Park Informal Settlement in Gugulethu have been fighting for basic service delivery.

They have been deprived of electricity, water, sanitation, and waste management—services that are fundamental human rights enshrined in our Constitution.

As GOOD, we are pleased to report that planning has begun for the electrification of Lady's Park Informal Settlement.

While this marks a significant milestone, the process will still take 8-12 months before physical work begins on-site.

This development comes after years of advocacy and community engagement by GOOD councillor, Siyabulela Mamkeli.

It reflects a persistent and relentless effort to redress apartheid's spatial injustices.

As GOOD, we will continue to monitor the progress of the project until completion.

However, we have a long way to go to get true justice for the community.

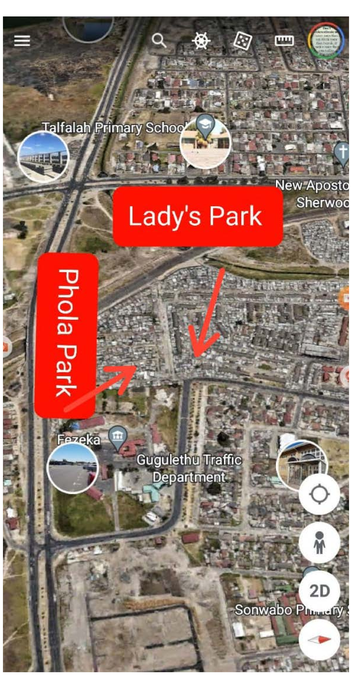
The Water and Sanitation Department and Urban Waste Management Department have yet to make any formal commitments to providing water, sanitation, and waste collection services to this community.

The lack of these services continues to undermine the dignity of the residents and poses severe health risks.

It is unacceptable that in 2024, any community should be left behind without access to such essentials.

The disparity between rich and poor is stronger than ever in the City of Cape Town.

GOOD is committed to ensuring that all residents of Cape Town, including those in informal settlements, are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.



STELLENBOSCH PROPERTY VALUATIONS WILL FURTHER STRETCH STRUGGLING RESIDENTS

The GOOD Party in Stellenbosch calls for a public debate on the latest general valuation roll for the upcoming financial years,1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029.

The Party is advocating for a reconsideration of the sharp increases in the valuation of residential properties, which we believe will place an undue burden on homeowners and residents.

Residents across Stellenbosch have raised concerns over the new property valuations received from the municipality.

The increases will lead to higher property taxes and will exclude previously qualifying homes from receiving the Life Line electricity tariff.

The Indigent Grant provided by the Stellenbosch Municipality is also linked to property value (residents who qualify for the grant receive a 100% rebate on property rates where the valuation of the property is less than R250,000).

Without adjusting the baseline for the Life Line tariff and the Indigent Grant, the most vulnerable members of our community will become overburdened with financial pressure.

In a formal request to the Stellenbosch Municipal Manager, we have emphasised the importance of transparency, public participation, and community engagement in decisions that directly affect property owners.

Individuals have until the 17th of January to lodge their complaints, but there has been no public campaign to alert property owners to the looming deadline.

‘SAVE THE BELLVILLE VELODROME AND STADIUM’

For decades, the Bellville Velodrome and Stadium has been more than just a venue; it’s a cornerstone of our vibrant sporting and cultural identity in Cape Town and the Western Cape. From hosting iconic school athletics events to showcasing a diverse range of sporting codes, this historic institution has united communities, inspired young athletes, and celebrated excellence.

Its removal would leave an irreplaceable void, not just in Cape Town but across the Western Cape, robbing future generations of a space that has shaped countless memories and legacies.

Join GOOD in preserving this treasure of our sporting heritage.

Sign the petition today!







ICC WARRANTS OF ARREST: SYMBOLIC RIPOSTE TO IMPUNITY

GOOD welcomes the decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas military commander Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri, aka Mohammed Deif.

While the Netanyahu and Gallant warrants will likely not lead to their arrests, or an immediate ceasefire, the fact they've been issued is important for two reasons:

1. They represent an important riposte to the impunity with which Israel has been carrying out its genocide under cover of US protection at the United Nations (according to Israel, Deif is already dead); and
2. They will force the suppliers of arms to Israel that have been used to carry out the genocide, principally the US and Germany, to confront the immorality of arming a nation which according to the ICC is led by a war criminal.

The warrants are also of symbolic importance to the ICC, itself, as it is the first time the court has acted against alleged war criminals that the West regards as friends.

We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire, and for sovereignty for the State of Palestine.

GARY VAN NIEKERK: GOOD PARTY WELCOMES HAWKS INVESTIGATION

The GOOD Party in Nelson Mandela Bay welcomes the decisions by the HAWKS to summon Gary Van Niekerk to court to face charges of fraud.

The charges relate to 2022. He had internal problems with his party, the Northern Alliance, which resulted in him not attending council for almost 6 months.

During his absence from council, Van Niekerk irregularly and directly sought a legal opinion despite being informed not to do so by the Acting Municipal Manager.
The Municipality was billed for the work and has been in a dispute for 2 years to recover the money.

A multi-party committee has already investigated the issue and found Gary Van Niekerk unanimously guilty of breaching the code of conduct.

The committee recommended Van Niekerk be removed or suspended from office; be issued a fine and reimburse money spent

We are optimistic the HAWKS investigation will finally bring closure to the issue.



WOODSTOCK HOSPITAL: EXTENSION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WON'T ADDRESS KEY ISSUE

The GOOD Party is concerned that the extension of the public participation process regarding the sale of the Woodstock Hospital will be pointless as the City of Cape Town is unable to address the key questions that have been on the table for months.

- What will happen to the current occupants of Woodstock hospital?
- And where will they be evicted to?

GOOD believes the current public participation process is just a tick box on the way to approval without any intent on engaging with communities.

Mayoral Committee Member for Human Settlements, Councillor Carl Pophaim, announced that the public participation period on the Woodstock Hospital site has been extended to 31 January 2025.

The on-again and off-again project was launched in 2017. The City announced affordable housing projects on 11 sites around Woodstock and Salt River, all within a 5km of the city centre and with good access to public transport.

However, these projects were all blocked by the Democratic Alliance and never saw the light of day.

Fast forward to 2022, the same plan was once again announced by Cape Town Mayor, Geordin Hill-Lewis.

However, in the 5 years of the project being abandoned, the Woodstock hospital has become home to over 800 occupants, known as 'Cissie Gool House'.

In August, the motion for the sale of the site for private development of affordable housing was tabled in council, as GOOD we raised concerns that there is no plan to address what will happen to the current occupants.

We are opposed to any sale of land that will lead to more homelessness and landlessness and that will violently displace people and relegate them to the peripheries of our City.

Just this month, we witnessed the Castle of Good Hope evictions.

These evictions, while technically legal, represent the latest assault on the dignity of the vulnerable in our city.

The sale of public land in Cape Town perpetuates the violence of spatial Apartheid.
Where people live matters.

Councillor Pophaim makes the claim, that "The illegal occupation of the Woodstock Hospital site has been the single biggest delay to this development."

The DA has governed Cape Town since 2006. 18 years later, not one single social housing unit has been built in the inner city of Cape Town.

The GOOD Party suggests that the DA is the biggest delay to affordable inner-city housing.

The majority of those who currently occupy Cissie Gool House are Black and Coloured, long-term residents of Woodstock, who faced evictions or had been evicted as a result of the gentrification in Cape Town.

Instead of blaming poor and working-class people who have made a home for themselves due to government failures, and criminalising them, Councillor Pophaim, Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis and the City of Cape Town have an opportunity to show that the City of Cape Town cares, particularly for the homeless and landless majority of this City.

So far this has all been rhetoric with no results.

We call on all the people of Cape Town, to stand with us against spatial apartheid and stop the suffering in Cape Town.

Public land must be used for public good!



(Courtesy: X: @CityofCT)

CAPE TOWN'S FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES LEFT INCAPACITATED

As we approach the fire season, Cape Town is teetering on the edge of a potential catastrophe. Our Fire and Rescue Services are alarmingly understaffed, under-equipped, and unprepared to face imminent threats.

While Cape Town is rightly proud of extraordinary firefighters like Baigum Abrahams, recently crowned the toughest woman firefighter in the country, they cannot shoulder this burden alone. They need the full support and resources of the City of Cape Town. Without adequate support from the City, these firefighters are left to face mounting risks alone.

According to whistleblowers within the Fire and Rescue Services, more than 100 firefighters have left the service for better opportunities or retirement. Some say that this figure is closer to 200.

Not only is Cape Town's Fire and Rescue Department understaffed, but it is also under-equipped. Of the four new ladder trucks purchased by the City, each costing around R20 million, only one is operational at any given time. The City lacks both the expertise and the manpower to run all four simultaneously.

Meanwhile, three out of four fire engines procured two years ago, each costing R6.5 million, stand unmanned at the training centre. This represents a significant waste of resources and a missed opportunity to bolster our firefighting capacity.

We cannot afford to wait until a disaster strikes to realize the gravity of the situation. The looming fire season, exacerbated by climate change, waits for no one. The longer we delay, the greater the risk to lives and property across Cape Town.



CAPE TOWN'S DANGEROUS SEWAGE GAMBLE

The GOOD Party strongly condemns the dangerous gamble undertaken by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment Minister and the City of Cape Town to raise the sea sewage dumping levels.

Minister Dion George granted the City an interim decision to suspend the effluent quantity Discharge Permits.

A minister, that by his own admission "had never heard of COP" (the largest environmental global summit), before taking office as the country's Environmental Minister.

Green Point, Camps Bay, and Hout Bay have previously been allowed to pump a combined 41 millions litres of sewage into the sea per day, with the only treatment being the sieving out of solids.

Lobby groups have already been appealing the alarming high levels of discharge before the limits were suspended.

The City's argument has always been there is no alternative option due to the increasingly growing population size.

This response reeks of ineptitude and failure in long-term planning resulting in the environment bearing the brunt of the burden.

The limit suspension comes at a time when the city is already experiencing concerning breakdowns at multiple sanitation and sewerage sites throughout the city.

Earlier this year, GOOD reported the City's Water and Sanitation treatment plants and pump stations received Contravention Notices for various infractions including unqualified senior engineering managers being appointed to oversee these critical operations.

As GOOD, we strongly condemn the precedent this decision sets.

There was no public participation process on the permit suspension, rather an authoritarian decision-making process.

GOOD also notes with great concern that a DA Minister has suspended the limits in a DA run city.

When his non-DA predecessor, Minister Barbara Creecy had conceded that "the discharge of sewage into the ocean can have significant impacts on the environment and public health".

By contrast Creecy forced the City of Cape Town to reopen their public participation process of the allowable limits at the time. And she allowed the current appeal process of the original permits.

These thresholds being increased are not only a direct threat to the delicate ecosystem but a direct attack on our constitutional right to a healthy environment.

These Marine outfalls are designed with a designated capacity in mind.

With the capacity assurance tossed away, we can cast aside any doubt that this dangerous gamble could lead to an environmental bust.

As we approach the Festive season, with the expected Summer boom of tourists, what will sea water contamination cost the City, the Province, the Country.

Let us learn from eThekweni who is still battling to regain Blue Flag status over their prolonged water quality issues.



WESTERN CAPE'S GAME WITH TEACHERS' JOBS CONTINUES

In her medium-term budget strategy tabled on Tuesday 26 November, the Western Cape MEC for Finance threw two lifelines to the provincial education department to save teachers' jobs, but it emerged that the Department of Education remains intent on getting rid of 2400 teachers.

Finance MEC Deidré Baartman announced that R600m earmarked for education infrastructure would be freed up to address the department's salary needs. She also announced an additional R250m injection to address the education department's immediate shortages.

Since the announcements, however, MEC for Education David Maynier has doubled down on his plan to scrap the teachers' posts.

All that was required for him to resolve the crisis was to address a formal request to the MEC for Finance to use the R600m to save the jobs. But Maynier's department has inexplicably failed to do so.

The money is available, but the Education MEC doesn't appear to want to use it.

Since the Education MEC announced in September that the province was forced to cull 2407 teacher posts due to budgetary constraints, it's been obvious that the intent was to manufacture a crisis.

In March 2024, the Education Department had tabled a balanced three-year budget, disclosing no shortfall, yet by September – despite no changes in funding allocations – the shortfall was so dramatic that the "only option" was to reduce the number of teachers.

Although all provinces are experiencing budgetary pressures, the Western Cape is the only one to respond by getting rid of teachers.

Who's fooling who?

If the Western Cape cared about teachers' jobs, or the quality of education, it would not have "siphoned" R8 Billion of the funds it receives from National Treasury for education over the next three years to discretionary projects which have nothing to do with education.

That's what created the crisis in the first place.

The department has the funds to save the jobs.

The Education MEC must please explain why he doesn't appear to want to.

BELA ACT: DA SIDE-HUSTLE WITH SOLIDARITY AND AFRIFORUM WILL TEST GNU

Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube's breathless announcement of having reached agreement with the Solidarity Movement on implementing the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act should be taken with a pinch of salt.

While Gwarube hailed her pact with Solidarity as demonstrating the power of cool heads, she appears to have overlooked the fact that it is the DA's coalition partners in the Government of National Unity she must convince on proposed changes to the law – not Afrikaner nationalist organisations outside of government.

A few weeks ago, while her party agreed to a BELA negotiations process under the auspices of the multi-party GNU clearing house, the DA signaled its contempt for this process by joining a group of like-minded organisations, Solidarity, Afriforum and the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie, among others, in a protest march against the Act in Tshwane.

The contentious clauses of the BELA Act relate to the powers of School Governing Bodies to determine language policy.

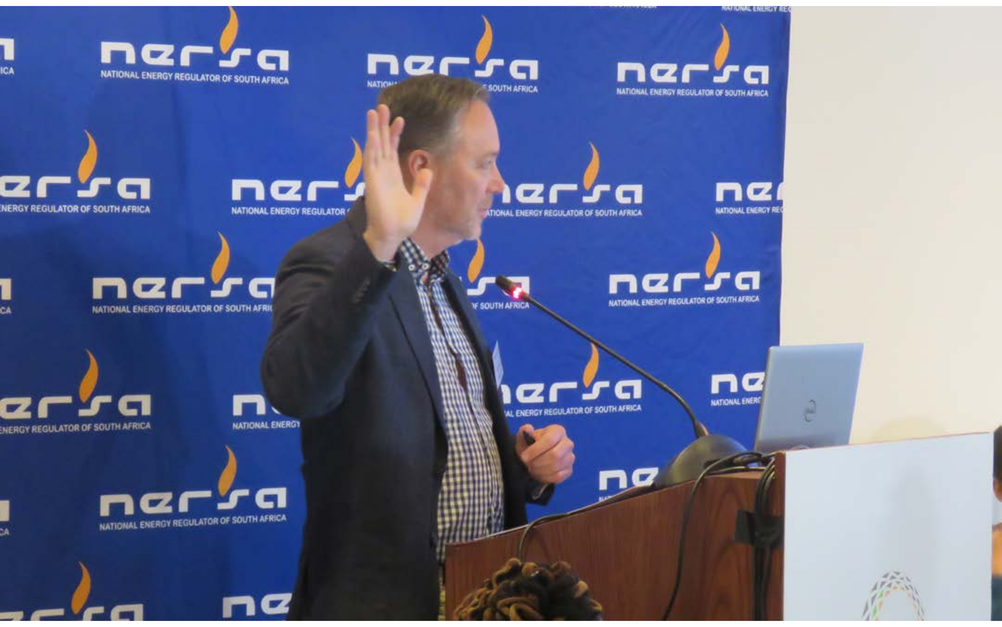
On the one hand, there's a strong feeling that School Governing Bodies have used language policy as a mechanism to maintain schools' historic demographics and block transformation. On the other hand, the Afrikaans community fears that introducing second languages at their schools will emasculate their language and culture.

The key clause in Gwarube's "breakthrough" announcement is that the interests of the community in the immediate vicinity of the public school must be taken into account.

While, on the face of it, that might appear reasonable, in fact, it is a mechanism to use the spatial injustice of the old Group Areas Act to continue to separate South Africans. It creates room for the same "not-in-my-backyard" attitude that the middle class has used to block the development of affordable housing in areas previously reserved for white citizens.

According to Gwarube's department, she's taking her "breakthrough" directly to the President, avoiding the necessity for further discussions with the GNU partners.

These tactics appear deliberately designed to weaken the concept of the multi-party GNU problem-solving mechanism, the so-called clearing house under the leadership of the Deputy President.



SNIPPETS FROM SPEECHES

"The proposed 36.15% tariff hike is nothing short of a financial assault on the people of South Africa. Consider the consequences:
The crushing impact on households and businesses. We are paying for failure.

As GOOD, we are confident their wealth of experience, as well as their commitment to service delivery and community development, will continue to serve the best interests of the residents.

Either ESKOM's failure to prudently manage its revenue, operations and expansion or NERSA's failure to help ESKOM achieve revenue requirements, over an expanded period of time, without the financial shock of a massive cost of purchase hike for consumers.

This raises a question of fairness.

South Africans already pay among the highest electricity prices in the world relative to income.
Is it fair to ask consumers to pay even more without addressing the entire system's inefficiencies?"

- Speech by GOOD Secretary-General, Brett Herron during NERSA's public hearings into Eskom's Multi-Year Price Determination 6 (MYPD6) application

JOBURG MPAC NEEDS TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

"GOOD supports the principle of accountability and the mandate of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC).
However, the terms of reference fail to address critical issues of transparency, public involvement, and accountability that are fundamental to effective governance.

Currently, MPAC's investigations and meetings are closed to the public, a practice that runs counter to the principles of transparency and accountability in the management of public funds.

MPAC was established to play an oversight role in ensuring the executive's responsible use of public resources.

This role mirrors the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) at the national and provincial levels, where all meetings and investigations are conducted in the open.

Ministers, Director Generals, and even the President are subjected to public scrutiny in SCOPA, airing matters of public interest in full view of the nation.

It is unacceptable that the City of Johannesburg insists on shielding its City Manager, Mayor, and executive from a similar level of oversight.

Residents have a right to know how investigations into unauthorized, irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditure are conducted, especially when these involve taxpayer money.

The lack of transparency in MPAC's operations undermines its credibility and raises questions about its effectiveness in holding the executive accountable."

- Speech by GOOD National Chairperson and City of Johannesburg Councillor, Matthew Cook during a Joburg council sitting

