



THE **GOOD** WAY FORWARD

**NELSON MANDELA BAY,
A CITY WORTHY OF THE NAME**



THE GOOD PARTY MANIFESTO:

**2026 NELSON MANDELA BAY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

GOOD

A CITY NAMED AFTER A PROMISE

Nelson Mandela Bay carries the name of a man who spent his life proving that dignity is not negotiable. Every day this city fails to deliver clean water, a driveable road, or a government that can stay in office long enough to keep a promise, it spends down the moral credit of that name a little further.

This was once the industrial heartbeat of South Africa, assembly lines, engine plants, a working city built by people who made things with their hands. It earned the name "the Detroit of Africa," and, like Detroit, it has spent a generation watching jobs and confidence drain out of it, an economy hollowed out one plant closure and one missed investment decision at a time, while the political class that could have stopped it was busy fighting itself for the mayoral chair.

Since the metro was formed, Nelson Mandela Bay has burned through more mayors than most cities see in a lifetime, coalitions built to win a motion of no confidence, not to run a municipality, each one collapsing before the last pothole from the one before it was patched. Meanwhile the dams have run dangerously low, the rivers and beaches carry the city's own sewage back to the people who live beside them, and a resident can wait months for a streetlight that a functioning government would fix in days.

None of this is a mystery. It is what happens when the metro's top job is treated as a prize to be captured rather than a duty to be discharged. It is what happens when "coalition government" becomes a polite word for a permanent vacancy at the top, and when almost every party that has held power here has, at one point or another, been part of the collapse.

Government should not be something residents wait out. It should be something they can rely on.

This manifesto is GOOD's answer. Six pledges: a Trusted City, a Functional City, a Clean City, a Working City, a Safe City, an Affordable City. Each one names the failure plainly, says what we'll do about it, and says how, because a city that has been promised things before does not need more promises. It needs a mechanism.

None of this is abstract. It's a coalition that finishes its term instead of collapsing in year two. It's a tap that runs, a pothole fixed on a published timeline, and a beach a family can swim at without getting sick. It's a metro that makes things again, and a government stable enough to make sure the people who make them can get to work.

This is the GOOD way forward, for Nelson Mandela Bay, in every ward, on the same standard. No exceptions.



1.

A TRUSTED CITY

Residents did not lose faith in this council over one bad decision. They lost it watching the same chair change hands again and again, watching councillors trade committee positions and mayoral votes like currency while the basics of running a city went unattended. A motion of no confidence has become the most reliable service this metro delivers.

Every collapse costs more than the news cycle it dominates. Contracts stall mid-signature. Capital budgets go unspent and get surrendered back to National Treasury. Staff appointments freeze while an acting-this and an acting-that hold the fort. The people who pay for that instability are never the councillors who caused it, they are the residents waiting for the water main to be fixed while the council chamber is consumed by a leadership fight that has nothing to do with them.

A trusted city is not built by asking residents to have more faith in the system. It is built by making the system something worth having faith in, coalitions that are bound to govern, not just to win a vote, and a council that residents can actually see and check.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **A binding coalition charter:**

Any coalition GOOD enters or supports is governed by a public cooperation agreement, setting out a shared programme, dispute-resolution steps, and expulsion terms for a partner that breaks it.

- **Raise the cost of collapse:**

Push for a stability convention among governing parties committing to serve out the term, and support council rule reforms that require a motion of no confidence to name a viable, seconded replacement government before it can be tabled, so the city is never left leaderless while politicians regroup.

- **Open the rooms where decisions get made:**

Put Municipal Public Accounts Committee and Bid Adjudication Committee proceedings in front of the

public, not behind it, sunlight remains the cheapest anti-corruption tool available.

- **Publish consequence management:**

Every forensic report, disciplinary finding and irregular-expenditure case gets a public tracker showing what was found and what actually happened to the people responsible, not a report that disappears into a council resolution and is never mentioned again.

- **A real petitions process:**

A functioning channel for residents to raise an issue directly with their ward councillor and have it recorded, tracked and answered, replacing the current arrangement where a complaint is only as good as who you happen to know.

- **Protect the administration from the politics:**

Senior appointments and the municipal manager's office are shielded from the reshuffle that follows every coalition collapse, so service delivery does not restart from zero every time the politics does.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

A coalition charter and a stability convention cost nothing to implement, they require political will and a signature, not a budget line, and can be in place before the first council sitting after the election.

Opening MPAC and Bid Adjudication Committee proceedings and standing up a petitions process are changes to council rules and standing orders, achievable within the first six months without new legislation.

The consequence-management tracker is built and published within the first year, starting with every open forensic and disciplinary matter already on the books, so residents can see on day one exactly what has been sitting unresolved - and for how long.

2.

A FUNCTIONAL CITY

In 2022, Nelson Mandela Bay came close enough to running out of water that residents started counting the days. Dam levels fell into single digits, taps ran dry on higher ground, and a city built around a coastline found itself queuing for drinking water. That crisis eased, but the underlying problem never did: this metro loses a vast share of the water it treats before it ever reaches a tap, through leaks and ageing pipes that have gone unrepaired for years, and it enters every dry season with less margin for error than the one before.

The same neglect runs through the streets. A pothole here is not a pothole, it is a wheel alignment, a delayed ambulance, a taxi that can't make the school run safely. Electricity outages unrelated to load shedding, stuttering refuse collection, and a maintenance backlog that keeps growing because the budget to shrink it keeps getting spent on the political crisis of the month instead.

A functional city is not a slogan. It is a tap that runs, a road that doesn't swallow a tyre, and a government that treats fixing what already exists as seriously as it treats announcing what's next.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **An emergency non-revenue water programme:**

A funded, phased plan to find and fix the leaks losing the city water before it reaches a household, prioritised by volume lost, not by ward convenience.

- **Drought-proof the supply:**

Complete and maintain the infrastructure needed to draw safely from dams at low levels and fast-track groundwater and reuse schemes so the next drought does not become the next crisis.

- **Binding, published repair timelines:**

Fixed turnaround times for potholes, streetlight outages, water leaks and electricity faults, measured and reported the same way in every ward - no more months-long waits in some areas while others wait days.

- **A public infrastructure asset register:**

An honest, published account of what the city owns, its condition, and the maintenance backlog attached to it, so budgets are set against real need instead of guesswork.

- **A reliable refuse standard:**

Fixed collection days that are actually kept, with a public reporting line and a published response time for missed collections.

- **A ward-level service dashboard:**

Residents can check, ward by ward, whether the published standard for water, roads, electricity and refuse is being met - not take the metro's word for it.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

The non-revenue water programme is funded first from the savings it generates, every leak fixed is treated water the city stops paying to lose, topped up by ring-fenced grant funding and blended finance with development finance institutions where bulk infrastructure work is required.

The asset register and service dashboard are published within the first year, giving residents and councillors alike a single, honest picture of the backlog for the first time.

Repair-timeline reform is sequenced with the Trusted City pledge: a maintenance budget only stays protected from political interference if the council itself is stable enough to stop raiding it every time a coalition needs to buy a vote.

3.

A CLEAN CITY

Nelson Mandela Bay is a coastal city that has, for years, been quietly poisoning its own coastline. Raw and partially treated sewage has spilled into the Baakens and Swartkops rivers and out onto beaches that families still swim at, pump stations fail faster than they are fixed, and the metro has lost Blue Flag status at beaches that used to anchor its tourism economy.

This is not only an environmental failure. It is a public health failure, and an economic one, a city that markets itself on its coastline cannot keep asking visitors and residents to swim at their own risk. Every closed beach and every sewage spill is a cost the city pays twice: once in the health of the people exposed to it, and again in the tourism and small-business income it drives away.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Emergency pump station and treatment works refurbishment:**

A funded, sequenced programme targeting the stations and works responsible for the most spills first, not the ones easiest to announce.

- **Real-time public water-quality reporting:**

Publish river and beach water-quality testing results as they come in, so residents - not press releases - decide whether it's safe to swim.

- **Separate stormwater from sewer where they still cross-contaminate:**

A targeted programme fixing the illegal and ageing connections that turn ordinary rainfall into a sewage spill.

- **Ring-fenced sanitation funding:**

Bulk infrastructure grants earmarked for wastewater are protected from reallocation to cover shortfalls elsewhere in the budget.

- **Restore Blue Flag status:**

A public, time-bound plan to bring key beaches back to the water-quality and facility standards Blue Flag certification requires.

- **Enforce against polluters:**

Publish penalties issued against industrial and illegal dumping into rivers and stormwater systems, so accountability doesn't stop at the municipality's own infrastructure.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Refurbishment is prioritised using existing spill and outage data, so the first year targets the handful of pump stations and works responsible for the majority of incidents, the most cost-effective place to start.

Water-quality reporting requires no new capital spend, only a commitment to publish results the city already collects, and can begin within the first six months.

Blue Flag restoration is sequenced alongside the pump station programme, with the worst-affected beaches targeted first and progress reported publicly every quarter.

4.

A WORKING CITY

Nelson Mandela Bay carries one of the highest unemployment rates of any metro in the country, in a city whose entire identity was built on making things - vehicles, engines, components, a manufacturing base that once gave this metro its nickname. That base has been shrinking for a generation, squeezed by global shifts in the auto industry and by a local government too consumed by its own instability to fight for the investment that could offset it.

Meanwhile the metro's own procurement and contracting habits do little to build the local economy they sit inside - outsourced municipal functions that compete on who can pay workers least, industrial land that sits vacant instead of anchoring new production, and small-scale traders who are met with enforcement instead of support.

A working city does not wait for one more investment summit. It builds the conditions for work with the tools already in its own hands: its own payroll, its own land, its own procurement budget.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Insource City jobs:**

Bring outsourced cleaning, security and maintenance functions back in-house with fair pay and proper labour protections, ending the practice of the city itself driving down local wages through its own contracts.

- **Unlock idle industrial land:**

Audit and publish an inventory of vacant City- and provincially-owned industrial land, and prioritise it for manufacturing, component supply and logistics use instead of leaving it to sit or be sold off piecemeal.

- **Back the automotive supply chain through its transition:**

Work with component manufacturers and organised labour on a local plan for the shift toward electric vehicles, so the city is a participant in that transition rather than a casualty of it.

- **Back cooperatives, not just corporates:**

Fast-track cooperative registration, connect cooperatives and small manufacturers to City tenders, and open access to start-up finance and mentorship.

- **Support, don't raid, small-scale and informal traders:**

Invest in public trading space and real partnership for survivalist businesses instead of enforcement action that shuts breadwinners down.

- **Local, worker-focused procurement:**

Set targets for hiring from surrounding communities and require fair wages on every contract that receives City money.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Insourcing is phased by function, starting with the largest and most precarious contracts within the first eighteen months, with savings from cutting contractor mark-ups redirected toward fair wage floors.

The industrial land audit runs alongside the infrastructure asset register under the Functional City pledge, so land-use and infrastructure decisions are made together, not pledge by pledge.

Cooperative fast-tracking and local procurement targets require an update to supply chain management policy, achievable within the first year without new legislation, and are largely self-funding since they redirect existing procurement spend.

5.

A SAFE CITY

For families in areas like Helenvale, KwaZakhele, Gqeberha's northern areas and Motherwell, safety is not a background condition of life, it is a daily calculation. Which route avoids a hotspot. Whether a child is home before dark. Gang violence in these communities is not a policing problem with a policing solution alone; it persists where housing is inadequate, recreational infrastructure has been left to decay, and a generation has been offered no credible alternative to what a gang offers.

Heavy-handed enforcement on its own was never going to fix what poverty, unemployment and neglected public space drive. Safety is built the same way it is broken: through what a young person, a woman, a neighbourhood is offered - or denied - before crisis arrives.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Sport and recreation as a gang exit strategy:**

A dedicated fund to refurbish and build sports fields, courts and multi-purpose recreation centres in the highest-risk areas, as core safety infrastructure, not an afterthought amenity.

- **Structured sport-and-mentorship programmes:**

Coaching paired with life-skills training, conflict mediation and job-readiness support, delivered through partnerships with community organisations and gang-exit NGOs already doing this work without adequate funding.

- **Reclaim public space and design for safety:**

Target crime hotspots near schools, clinics and transport routes with lighting, and open reclaimed spaces up for community use.

- **Prioritise GBV and femicide:**

Prompt investigation and survivor support, education programmes for young men, and more safe spaces for women and children.

- **Community-led violence interruption:**

Funding and formal standing for local peace-building and mediation structures already active in affected communities.

- **Professionalise law enforcement:**

Trained, community-centred policing focused on the areas and hours where violence is concentrated, rather than a citywide spread that under-resources the places that need it most.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Facility upgrades and reclaimed public space are funded through the existing budget, blended with partnerships with sports development bodies and NGOs already operating in these communities, prioritising the areas carrying the highest burden of violence first.

Implementation begins with a ward-level audit of existing but under-used sports infrastructure and crime hotspots within the first six months, followed by the first refurbishments and partnership agreements within the first year.

6.

AN AFFORDABLE CITY

Rates and tariffs in Nelson Mandela Bay are billed as though every household can absorb an increase without noticing, in a metro with some of the highest unemployment in the country. Billing errors take months to resolve, and by the time they are fixed, the debt has often already been handed to a debt collector, with interest and legal fees stacked on top of a mistake the resident didn't make.

A household should not have to choose between a water bill and groceries because a formula priced a property without ever asking what the family living in it actually earns.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Income-linked relief:**

Expand the indigent register and means-tested rebates so rates and tariffs track what a household can actually pay, with a simple, dignified application process.

- **Fix account errors quickly:**

Billing errors are corrected before, not after, they are handed to debt collectors.

- **Transparent tariff-setting:**

Tariff increases go through genuine public participation, published in plain language, before Council votes rather than after the fact.

- **Protect indigent households on electricity and water:**

Remove conditional tapering on lifeline tariffs and extend eligibility to backyarders and tenants, not only property owners.

- **A billing ombud:**

A dedicated function, reporting publicly on resolution times, giving residents a route to escalate errors that doesn't require a court case to be heard.

- **Plain-language billing:**

Redesign municipal accounts so a resident can read their own bill and understand exactly what they are being charged for and why.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

These reforms are largely budget-neutral: better billing accuracy reduces the cost of disputes, write-offs and litigation the City currently carries.

Billing system fixes and lifeline tariff reform are implemented in the first year, since they require no new legislation, followed by the full tariff-setting participation process ahead of the next budget cycle so residents see the new process before the next round of increases, not after.

**GOOD**

THE GOOD BAY, 2046

Nelson Mandela Bay, 2046. The taps run, every day, in every ward, because the leaks were fixed a generation ago and the dams were never allowed to run that low again. The roads are roads, not a patchwork of rubble and rumour about when the next repair crew is coming.

At Kings Beach, a family swims without a second thought, because the water is tested, published, and clean. Along the Baakens, people walk where the river used to carry the city's own waste back to it.

A council sits through its whole term. Not because politics stopped being difficult, but because the people elected

to it decided that finishing the job mattered more than winning the next internal vote. And in a workshop on the edge of town, someone is building something again, a job that exists because the city finally treated its own industrial base like it was worth fighting for.

What you are picturing is not a fantasy. It is what this city was always capable of being, under a government that showed up for the whole term, in every ward, for everyone who calls it home.



2046

**IS A NELSON MANDELA BAY BUILT BY
RESIDENTS, FOR RESIDENTS, AND FINALLY
WORTHY OF THE NAME IT CARRIES.**