

STATE OF THE CAPITAL ADDRESS 2023

Delivered by the Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Cllr Cilliers Brink

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Chief Kekana and his entourage
Honourable Chief Mahlangu and his entourage
Chief Whip of Council
Members of the Mayoral Committee
Leaders of all political parties represented in Council
Honourable aldermen and councillors
Distinguished guests
The City Manager
Officials and top management of the City of Tshwane
Members of the media
And, most importantly, our Tshwane residents

A very good morning to you all, *goeie môre, sanibonani, dumelang!*

The City of Tshwane's adverse audit for the 2021/22 financial year came as a shock and wake-up call. But for many residents, the audit finding confirmed their own experience of deteriorating service delivery and a sense that, like the country, the capital city was failing.

The response by the City's multiparty coalition government has not been to paper over the cracks or to deny the problem, but to face it head-on. Even as this has contributed to political instability in the City, it has also given us the chance for a clean-out and a restart.

Since my election on 28 March 2023, I have set out to assess the level of service delivery, the state of infrastructure, our financial situation, the organisational culture that pervades the municipal administration and the capabilities of management.

While my Mayoral Committee and I have prepared an adjustment budget, a review of the Integrated Development Plan, the draft budget for the next financial year, conducted public participation and held internal management meetings, we have also tried to visit as many communities as possible.

While I have only been able to meet a handful of our City's 107 ward councillors and more than 19 000 employees, these interactions have shown me the difficult conditions in which they have to work.

To you, councillors and employees alike, I can say I am committed to working with you to build a capital city that works for all of its people.

Turning to the business of our meeting, I cannot in good conscience present a rose-tinted state of the City. There are also people who are bound to be disappointed by the promises that I will not make, or issues that I do not touch on.

I will also not be reading off a long list of achievements, although I will touch on the progress the City is making and the people we have to celebrate.

My approach today will be to look reality in the face, make a full disclosure to the people of Tshwane on the state of financial and institutional dysfunction in the City, and be clear about the steps that need to be taken in order to secure the City's long-term financial sustainability.

Our focus must return to the basics of local government, in short water, electricity, waste collection, sewage, roads, public lighting and safety, and finding sustainable ways of delivering these services and securing the infrastructure through which they are provided.

Dreaming big and imagining a better future does not start with delusion, it starts with honesty. Even optimism depends on honesty, because if you are not willing to peer into the dark and confront what is really going on, you will not have the confidence to step forward.

If we want to build a capital city that works for all its people, one where no one is left behind, then we must first get real.

We must get real about our finances, our infrastructure, the state of basic service delivery, the insecurity of our assets and the performance of our staff.

For metros like the City of Tshwane to deliver a basic level of service to residents and to maintain our economic position, we must take every policy measure to buck the national trend of decline.

We have to leverage our financial and intellectual resources to protect communities against the devastation of load-shedding, more than a decade of slow to no economic growth and the legacy of state capture.

This is our ambition for the City of Tshwane.

We are, after all, the capital city of the most advanced economy on the African continent, the seat of national government, home to the University of Pretoria, University of South Africa and institutions like the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, and several embassies and international development agencies.

We are uniquely placed to source developmental finance for sustainable energy provision, water provision and waste collection.

We are in many ways a place that represents the promise of our constitutional order, a mix of people and institutions that can keep the promise of 1993 and 1996, and show the naysayers and the doubters that South Africa can work.

But we are also at risk of being sucked into the vortex of state failure, and losing the argument about the future of the City and the country, as well as the prospects of coalitions to fix what has been broken.

Every day, rolling blackouts make us poorer, degrade our infrastructure and chip away at the funding model of local government, which has thus far depended on the electricity distribution business.

The excessive wear and tear caused by load-shedding damages our infrastructure, depletes our repairs and maintenance budgets, and creates proactive opportunities for criminals to attack and strip our electricity installations.

If only that was the full extent of the problem, but it is not. As a City, we buy electricity from Eskom at peak demand tariffs so that we can supply our communities with electricity at peak demand.

But when Stage 5 and 6 load-shedding is decreed at a moment's notice, there is no peak supply, only bulk expenses that we cannot recoup.

We are meant to make a surplus on the sale of electricity, not just for stable cash flow, but to invest in the maintenance of our electricity network.

Back-to-back Stage 5 and 6 load-shedding makes that very difficult. Municipalities across the country, including our own, face a harrowing winter. We will pay double tariffs and load-shedding will do double the damage to our infrastructure.

As can be expected, the on-again, off-again effect of load-shedding is most devastating when lines, transformers and substations run cold. When the system of government and services start failing in this way, conditions are created for disorder and criminality.

That is what happened in Soshanguve Block KK last year, when out of frustration at prolonged electricity outages a group of people attacked the customer care centre, smashing windows and doors, and rendering the facility temporarily unusable.

This anger has also been misdirected at City technicians who simply seek to do their work. It continuously highlights to us how load-shedding and our dependence on Eskom has revealed just how fragile we are as an institution.

At present, there is no equitable relief to municipalities for the damage and loss wrought by load-shedding. As we face an 18% increase in bulk electricity approved by NERSA, we will only be able to recoup a portion of that due to electricity losses, including the theft of electricity.

The City of Tshwane is paying the price today for the lack of investment in infrastructure in the first decade of the municipality's existence.

And so, water and sewage systems have been degraded, leading to sewage spills in communities like Winterveld, Mabopane and Chantelle. In the past few weeks, I have visited many of these communities and spoken to the ward councillors about the extent of the problem.

The Rooiwal Waste Water Treatment Plant is biologically and mechanically overloaded, and requires R2,5 billion in upgrades, yet serious questions remain about the integrity and effectiveness of the City's supply chain management system to ensure that we get the right contractors for the job.

Just like electricity, we are meant to sell water at a surplus to invest in the long-term sustainability of our infrastructure. These are the kind of circumstances that require excellent performance and the highest level of productivity from the City's personnel.

We now need extraordinary vim and vigour in the collection of revenue, which in turn requires scrupulous efficiency in preparing and dispatching bills to consumers, followed by undeterred credit control measures in response to consumers who fail or refuse to pay their bills.

But it is clear that the Revenue Management Division of the City needs drastic changes in order to fulfil its function.

Continuous declines in revenue collection seem to confirm the numerous allegations that I have heard of revenue agents and credit control contractors demanding bribes for illegal connections and reconnections.

This is part of a criminal economy that operates in our City and has the same devastating effect on value for money and service delivery as at other organs of state, like Eskom. And I refer to this as an economy because it has reached that level of sophistication.

Part of creating a city that works is ensuring that it is clean and cared for, that people drive and walk through the streets and see an environment which is being looked after, where the City feels present.

However, we all have a collective responsibility to keep Tshwane clean and therefore we must inculcate a culture of being environmentally conscious in our homes and communities.

Every year, the City is forced to clear tonnes of waste from illegal dumping sites, costing us millions of rand in resource mobilisation. These are funds that could be redirected to essential basic services.

We are also gradually running out of landfill space as new licences are not being issued from the national government. This we will have to engage on through an intergovernmental process because we must secure additional landfill space.

However, we will also look at all available options that can drive recycling and use modern infrastructure like waste-to-energy installations to reduce our waste footprint. We will also engage on our waste management service delivery model and the high level of dependency that we have on contractors.

In the face of all these challenges, what do we have as the City of Tshwane? What confidence can we convey to residents, councillors and ordinary employees that we have the competence to handle the situation and make the decisions that will help us achieve financial sustainability and, over time, institutional excellence?

We have a multiparty coalition that is united in our values and that represents the shared interest of the people of our city across the divides of race, place and class.

We have the policies and the people to overcome small differences in that coalition so that we can accomplish big things.

We have a clear agenda with the framework of our coalition agreement. Our immediate priorities are to –

- get control of the City's finances by devising and implementing a bold recovery plan that focuses on the core functions of the municipality;
- reduce the number of unscheduled water and electricity outages, invest in our core infrastructure and mitigate the effects of load-shedding by producing and procuring energy independent of Eskom;
- improve basic services pertaining to pothole repairs, street light maintenance, grass cutting and public cleaning;
- secure infrastructure assets, main roads and business nodes against criminals by improving the focus and functioning of the Tshwane Metro Police Department (TMPD); and
- instil high levels of productivity and professionalism in City officials through appropriate performance management systems.

We also have a competent, hard-working City Manager. Johann Mettler has an impeccable record of turning around institutions in distress, standing up to corruption, and recruiting and empowering management teams. In applying these skills in the City of Tshwane, Johann will have the full backing of the Mayoral Committee.

The advertisement of all the senior management positions in the City gives us a chance to change the organisational culture. A change of culture always starts with a change of leadership, and so this municipal Council will have the chance to appoint a group of apolitical professionals to undertake this epoch-making task.

And, finally, we have many resourceful and innovative people who want us to succeed. This includes the National Treasury and institutions inside and outside this country that share our agenda for building capable and sustainable institutions. In policy and planning, we are determined to create in the City of Tshwane the opportunities to advance this shared agenda.

In this respect, our Climate Action Plan, our relationship with C40 and our relationship with international partners will be crucial. But so will our relationship with civil society organisations, business organisations, neighbourhood watches, ratepayers' associations and non-governmental organisations that represent the will of ordinary people to take ownership of the communities they serve.

Getting control of the City's finances

None of our ambitions for the City will succeed if we do not get control of its finances. Having passed an adjustment budget and having prepared a medium-term revenue and expenditure framework that proposes to reduce the City's expenses by up to 30%, we have to aggressively ramp up revenue collection.

Our financial year ends in June and, before then, the City will have to settle its overdraft facility. This will cause short-term pain as our cashflow will be placed under even more pressure.

But we are committed to meeting this obligation, because our creditworthiness and our long-term ability to source project and operational funding depends on it.

I have also made it clear to the City Manager that we cannot plod along with arrear payments owed to Eskom and Rand Water. We can argue about load-shedding and terms of payment. But we have to pay for our obligations, and so drastic measures will be taken in the coming weeks to turn our own arrear debtors into cash.

To achieve a revenue collection rate of at least 93%, we will need to perform at least 1 000 credit control disconnections every week and take measures to prevent illegal reconnections.

To achieve this level of performance, the City Manager will drive a series of changes in systems and personnel in the Revenue Management Division.

But there will also be a change in the determination with which the municipality collects what is owed by residents and consumers. We ask the support of councillors to encourage consumers to pay, and we ask that officials and councillors lead by example by making sure that their own accounts are paid up.

Aggressive revenue collection is not about getting money for the municipality or paying salaries; it is about ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of our City.

Taking these measures is not just about good financial management, it is an obligation the City owes to the hundreds of thousands of consumers who do pay their bills on time.

Tshwane Ya Tima is being reinstated, not as a campaign, but as a standard operating procedure. Last year, Tshwane Ya Tima generated R800 million in arrear payments, but we also know that the campaign was undermined by illegal reconnections. We have learnt from this and adapted.

At the same time, I have asked the City Manager and the MMC for Finance to take every possible step to make it easier for residents to pay their municipal accounts or to make payment arrangements. This will include the use of technology, including virtual meetings, improving the conditions in customer care centres and the rigorous reconciliation of accounts.

While in general the City has been trying to control cash flow by restricting the employment of new personnel, the City Manager has asked senior managers to identify the positions which, if filled, would help the City increase revenue. These positions will then be advertised and filled. It does not help being cent-wise but rand-foolish.

We know that the City's cash flow situation is not only, or even mainly, the result of ineffective revenue collection. In the draft budget for the next financial year we have also had to cut expenses by up to 30% as a necessary step to bring expenditure in line with what the municipality can realistically collect.

Work is being done to restore internal systems and controls in Group Financial Services. To assist the City with this work, two highly experienced financial managers have been seconded to the City from the National Treasury.

In the time it takes for this position to be filled, the City Manager has received the go-ahead from the municipal Council to approach other organs of state to secure the secondment of an acting Chief Financial Officer with the requisite skills and experience. In this regard, we hope to make a recommendation to the municipal Council in the coming month.

Work is also being done on a funding plan to ensure that in the next two years the City's revenue matches our budgeted expenditure. The funding plan, which will be presented to the municipal Council in the coming months, will include measures to –

- source special funding for targeted infrastructure investments aimed at reducing water and electricity losses;
- sweat the City's existing assets, which includes long-term leases as well as the sale of land and buildings not required for service delivery; and
- review the current model of delivering certain services, including the management of City resorts, Wonderboom National Airport and the Tshwane Fresh Produce Market.

We must be honest about the functions that the City no longer has the capacity to do that are not part of our constitutional mandate. While the national and provincial government receive the vast majority of funding, local government receives the smallest and yet our mandate continues to grow.

I have previously stated that the City's financial situation can be described as critical but recoverable, which is most certainly how I will be treating it. This is why partnerships of cooperation with civil society and the private sector to ensure the City's long-term financial sustainability and a gradual improvement in service delivery are critical.

In mentioning this, let me acknowledge organisations like the Hennops River Revival for their work in our rivers, Soulbent Project who helps us to clean Atteridgeville, Hollard for their support in fire hydrant management, and various other businesses and non-governmental organisations that support the City.

Undoubtedly, our most valued external partner is the Danish government who, through continuous collaboration on water security, recently unveiled R33 million to support us in enhancing water security through research and upgrades to our water infrastructure.

Responding to the findings of the Auditor-General

In responding to the findings of the Auditor-General, we have to be clear that the City is unlikely to move to a clean or even an unqualified audit for the present financial year. It is especially the Auditor-General's findings on the valuation and classification of the City's property, plant and equipment that will take more than one financial year to redress.

Last week, the City Manager, the MMC for Finance and I met with the Auditor-General's office to discuss what the City's administration and political leadership will do to ensure that we build the systems and controls to achieve at least an unqualified audit for the next financial year, that is the one that will start on 1 July 2023.

The adverse audit received for the 2021/22 financial year was the result of misrepresentations made by the former Chief Financial Officer of the City, but also an unjustified confidence placed in the then management of the City to provide clear, coherent and accurate information.

The Mayoral Committee and I are taking a far more rigorous approach, and so we have established an executive audit tracking committee to monitor the progress of the City's administration in responding to the Auditor-General's findings.

In turn, the City Manager has established work teams dedicated to solving the underlying problems in three fundamental areas, namely cash flow, trade receivables, and property, plant and equipment.

While the adverse audit finding was devastating for the City, in one sense it was perhaps exactly the medicine the City needed, compelling us to face truths and make bold decisions that have long been avoided.

The Mayoral Committee and I are fully committed to getting us out of an adverse audit opinion. But I also have to caution that doing so will take time, strong leadership, clear accountability and consequence management directed towards officials who fail to support us in this objective.

These two objectives will be top of mind into the new financial year: Ensuring financial sustainability and addressing our audit findings. In fact, these are related to each other. A stronger audit environment means better fiscal discipline and vice versa. With the right controls in place we can make significant progress towards both of these goals.

Reducing service outages and mitigating the effects of load-shedding

In the next three years, it is imperative that the City reduces its dependence on Eskom for the supply of our about 2 500 MW of electricity use. In the next three years, at least 1 000 MW must come from alternative sources, namely a combination of own generation and procurement from independent power producers.

Before the end of this financial year, the energy task team appointed by the Mayoral Committee will devise a request for proposals to the market for the use of the Rooiwal Power Station. Whatever proposal is eventually accepted, it must be sustainable and affordable.

The request for proposals will be followed by a public participation process and an agreement with private partners in the next year, which will unlock the electricity-generating capacity at Rooiwal and reduce the burden of load-shedding on our communities.

A similar approach, in line with the supply chain management laws and regulations that have bearing on the municipality, will be followed in procuring electricity from independent power producers. In the process we will learn from the progress already being made in cities like Cape Town and Ekurhuleni.

While improved revenue, expenditure management and cash flow is the most immediate priority for the City, mitigating and eventually ending load-shedding will be our most important priority.

At the same time, we have to do what we can to stabilise our own electricity distribution network to reduce the number of electricity and other service outages suffered by residents.

In the draft budget for the 2023/24 financial year, we propose to allocate **R1 billion** for electricity and water infrastructure. As we improve our long-term planning ability and our capacity to source capital funding, this allocation will gradually improve in the coming years.

The **R134 million** Wapadrand Refurbishment Project is currently underway and progress is 40% towards completion. The project is scheduled to be commissioned during the 2024/25 financial year.

On the refurbishment of Mooikloof Substation, the site was handed over in February 2023, with control panels being ordered and factory acceptance tests being scheduled for May 2023.

Work has begun at the Pyramid and Kentron Substations where we expect to complete both projects during the 2024/25 financial year. In Region 5, the City has also submitted an application to Eskom for the planned new Refilwe Substation, which will further build out supply in the area.

Some of the key work by our Energy and Electricity Department for the upcoming 2023/24 financial year also includes the following construction and refurbishment projects:

- The Rosslyn Substation 132/11 kV 140MVA Substation
- New 132 kV 300/150 MVA power lines in Soshanguve
- A 132/11 kV 40 MVA substation in Monavoni
- The new 250 MVA Wildebees Infeed Substation
- Modifying the existing 11 kV switchgear building at Prince's Park, as well as decommissioning and replacing one stage of existing 11 kV switchgear panels and decommissioning the old 132 kV incoming line feeder and transformer bays

The City has a number of serious, multibillion-rand infrastructure backlogs in water and waste water treatment. This week, I spent time in Cape Town with the mayors of other metropolitan cities, an engagement sponsored by the National Treasury.

What is clear to me is that we will have to radically reorient how we plan and fund capital projects. We need a far longer planning horizon, but also a more sophisticated approach in funding our plans. We also need far more effective partnerships, including with other spheres of government.

The Rooiwal Waste Water Treatment Plant requires special attention. It is an issue that is not only essential to the unity in the multiparty coalition government, but also to our reputation as a City that cares for its people, especially the most vulnerable. Let me be clear: Rooiwal is a stain on our conscience as a City, including successive administrations of several parties.

But Rooiwal is also a warning of what could happen in other communities unless we clean out our supply chain management system, which in this City is, quite frankly, a festering sore infecting the rest of the body.

Whether the cause of failure is corruption or inefficiency or a combination of both, we can no longer tolerate a system, including a management team, that produces one irregular tender after another.

This week, I met with the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Senzo Mchunu. We spoke about the long-standing issues at Rooiwal, going back to the 2000s. We also discussed the more recent tender irregularities and contractual malperformance that have led to delays on the upgrading of the plant.

Rooiwal Plant is organically and mechanically overloaded. The second phase and crucial upgrades at the plant will cost an estimated R2,5 billion.

That is the entire capital budget of the City in any given financial year. And so while we have to complete Phase 1 and 2 of the upgrades to the plant, we also have to admit that the City cannot solve this problem by ourselves in the time frame in which it must be solved.

We have run out of time and we have run out of people's patience. We cannot stick to the current timeline of trying to fix Rooiwal with our own limited resources. We desperately need help and as a Mayoral Committee we are humble enough to admit that fact.

In the next two weeks, the Minister and I have agreed to meet with our respective technical teams to consider the full range of possibilities of upgrading Rooiwal as soon as possible, including partnerships with the private sector and national government water entities, such as Magalies Water and Rand Water.

In the meantime, I have asked the City Manager to take whatever measures can be taken to improve operations at Rooiwal, including the installation of two belt pressers that have already been procured. This will significantly improve the quality of the effluent, and therefore the water that is purified at Temba.

But improving Rooiwal's capacity is not enough. We also need to take a far closer look at the upstream pollution of the Apies River, including the possible release of industrial effluent into the river that can be traced to Rosslyn.

Through engagements with water experts from Israel and Denmark, it has become clear to us that rigorous environmental policing is an essential, and hitherto neglected, part of improving the quality of water of the people of Hammanskraal and Pretoria North.

I have already mentioned that reducing non-revenue water will be an essential part of the City's funding plan for the next financial year. We have entered into a partnership and collaboration with the City of Aarhus in Denmark as well as the Development Bank of Southern Africa on projects related to addressing this matter.

The Danish are providing R33 million in funding aimed at enhancing our internal capacity to reduce water losses, manage our waste water treatment works better, explore own resource opportunities and develop a water-security strategy.

Concrete examples of the outcomes from this support are standard operating procedures for our waste water treatment works, with Temba Waste Water Treatment Works as our pilot, and the development of an active leak management training programme. This will then inform what technology the City acquires in future, so that we do not waste money on untested initiatives.

Based on our Climate Action Plan, we will be exploring the full range of possibilities for sustainable water, electricity and waste disposal projects. We will depend on partnerships with the national government and international agencies.

Even though in some cases we are not in the financial position to fund these projects, we will incorporate them into our long-term plans so that we signal to potential investors what our policy and intentions are. Like the City of Cape Town, we have to start planning for the next decade, instead of simply for the next year.

However, we are also prioritising replacing aged water infrastructure as we have invested R165 million on water demand and water loss management projects with 12,4 km of old asbestos cement water pipes replaced to date in areas such as Mamelodi Ext 18, Clubview, Riamarpark, Sekampaneng, Mountain View, Constantia Park, Sinoville and Eersterust.

Furthermore, to address the challenges related to water shortages and water quality in Region 7, the City has prioritised the refurbishment and upgrading of the Bronkhorstspuit Water Treatment Plant so that the plant can operate optimally and according to the design capacity. A budget of R5 million has been allocated in the next financial year to commence with the planning process for the project.

Securing our communities and service infrastructure

With 4 000 officers, the City of Tshwane has the largest metropolitan police department in the country. That is an enormous investment in the safety of our residents, but unfortunately that investment has not been paying the expected returns.

The core mandate of the TMPD is by-law enforcement, visible policing and traffic control. But at the height of Stage 5 and 6 load-shedding, it seems that the City is almost completely dependent on OUTsurance pointsmen to direct traffic in the absence of traffic signals.

While I value our OUTsurance partnership and wish to build on that partnership in the years to come, it cannot be that this City has abdicated its responsibility of traffic control. We have highly trained, well-remunerated officers whose work can be organised to get things done, even if conditions and supplies are not perfect.

I emphasise this point of traffic control, a core function of the TMPD, simply to emphasise the point that we will have to take steps to ensure the productivity of City officials. This includes performance management, but it could also be as easy as making small changes to enable people to do the work they passionately want to do.

If we can get the TMPD to control traffic, I believe we can also enhance their other crucial functions, namely by-law enforcement and visible policing. The relentless criminal onslaught on our service infrastructure requires that we use all of the resources at our disposal, and so the TMPD has a crucial role in safeguarding areas where the City has service installations vulnerable to theft and vandalism.

I want to acknowledge the work already being done by TMPD officers in this regard and thank them, especially in the help they provide to City artisans who have to work under dangerous and volatile circumstances. I ask that residents treat these officers and the artisans who accompany them like heroes. Because they are heroes.

I also want to be clear that the City will not tolerate criminal attacks on our staff, whether or not these attacks come in the guise of so-called community protests. That is not how anyone should treat the men and women who sacrifice their lives to restore services and maintain our infrastructure.

The MMC for Community Safety has a vision for how the TMPD can be made more productive and effective in the coming years, including the establishment of a command centre where information can be shared with various City departments in real time.

In safeguarding our city and services to the people, the City of Tshwane must follow a whole-of-society approach, which means embracing partnerships with non-governmental organisations, resident associations, neighbourhood watches and community policing forums. We also have to review by-laws and policies that prevent civil society organisations from helping the City to perform basic functions, like cleaning storm water drains.

As an example of an effective partnership, the Hatfield City Improvement District has proven to be exceptional in road policing, by-law enforcement and crime prevention in Hatfield. The Hatfield Satellite Station is a 24/7 TMPD service dedicated to the area with a client service centre, two marked motor vehicles and 20 bicycles. Daily, we have ten officers deployed per shift, with one supervisor, who ensure police visibility in the area.

Last month, I attended the launch of the Rosslyn Improvement District, which will see further active participation from local businesses and the TMPD in driving safety and combatting crime in the area, particularly around critical infrastructure that needs protection.

Technology is critical to us, which is why we are using data to better map out crime hotspots in Tshwane, particularly as it pertains to issues of cable theft, which allows us to respond more effectively.

I am pleased to announce that from July 2022 until March 2023, the TMPD Cable Theft Unit conducted **2 288** patrols with **132** incidents reported, which were prevalent in Regions 1, 3, 4 and 6. At least 65 incidents were prevented and ten arrests were made.

Aligned with our Smart City Programme, the TMPD is investigating the possibility of piloting handheld fine devices to reduce officer errors on notices and enable electronic communication on outstanding fines.

Moving to the Emergency Services Department, the department is strengthening its function with the delivery of five district command vehicles and one 18 000-litre water carrier for firefighting purposes.

Furthermore, in partnership with Hollard Insurance, 2 500 fire hydrants were inspected and repaired in a project that saw 15 young people gaining employment. This partnership will be continued in the new financial year. Furthermore, in another of the City's partnerships with Santam insurance, the department trained 145 youths as Community Emergency Response Teams.

During the 2020/21 State of the Capital Address, my predecessor, Ald Randall Williams, promised the finalisation of Mamelodi Fire Station. I am glad to report that the Fire Station is fully operational and was officially opened on 6 December 2022.

The fire station provides relief to the Mamelodi and Nellmapius communities, and surrounding areas. This fire station also serves as backup to Silverton Fire Station, which protects the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone.

Improving the performance of the City's workforce

In the City of Tshwane, we have approximately 19 500 full-time employees working across multiple departments to ensure that we deliver the best quality services to our residents.

However, for years in the City we have not had a system to ensure that we reward and acknowledge officials who are examples of professionalism, dedication and commitment to their work.

To move the City forward on each of the five mayoral priorities, I will be signing a set of performance charters with the City Manager that will detail outcomes, actions and timelines for each of the steps that need to be taken.

It will also form the basis for holding officials and MMCs to account, and to account to the people of Tshwane. As we undertake these steps, there will be hits and misses.

While officials who seek to enrich themselves at the expense of the people will have zero protection, those who make mistakes in a genuine attempt to get things done will be protected.

We have to give officials a parameter within which to take risks, otherwise we will simply be chasing compliance, instead of innovating and getting things done.

The MMCs and I will protect the honest, hard-working doers and risktakers, and distinguish their efforts from those of the self-serving and the corrupt.

We have also never had a robust performance management system that allows us to properly discipline officials who are not conducting their duties in line with what is required of them.

So, we are ready to implement two key policies that are going to assist us greatly in strengthening and developing a professionalised civil service for the future.

In this financial year, the City formally approved a performance management policy which is going to form the basis of evaluating the work of officials over the next few years.

The implementation of this policy is going to take effect from 1 July 2023 and it is going to cascade all the way down from top management to the most junior official, even that of a general worker, such that we are all treated equally and fairly within one performance evaluation system.

This is critically important if we are to enhance the quality of work that we provide to our residents. However, there is also a need to be able to ensure that we acknowledge and reward those who are shining examples of what can be achieved when you fully apply yourself to the work of the City.

This is why we are also in the process of concluding a talent management policy, which is going to assist in facilitating promotions of officials who are hard workers, perform well and demonstrate the kind of exemplary work ethic that we need in our City.

This policy will soon be coming to Council, and I hope that we will have the support of all the councillors who are present here in the Council Chamber because I believe it will be a critical tool towards unlocking the kind of professionalism we need in our City.

However, I do not need to wait for this policy in order to acknowledge some of the superstars who we have interacted with over the last few months and who have left a lasting impression on the residents whom they have assisted and the political leadership with whom they have worked.

Lazarus Moimane is the Deputy Director for Water in Region 1 of our city, an area which includes Soshanguve, Mabopane, Winterveld, Akasia and various other areas towards the northwest of the city.

When the City recently ran out of store supplies to do work that needed to be done, Lazarus did not complain about there being no supplies. He used his own money to

buy supplies. That is not what we can and should expect from our officials, but when it happens, we can only stand in applause.

Ella Pretorius Souer is responsible for inner-city clean-up, a job that has to be done entirely anew every day, and for which she and her team lack the necessary resources and equipment.

But Ella and her team are wonderworkers in urban and parks management. Judging by the work they are able to achieve with meagre resources, we can only imagine what can be done if they are given what they need to fully do the job.

Godfrey Mnguni is the Regional Head for Region 2. Councillors and fellow officials tell me that it is impossible to dislike Godfrey, simply because he is always ready to help.

He is a centre of excellence and, like Ella, his work will form part of the standard operating procedures and protocols that we will implement in other sections, divisions and departments of the City.

So, I can name many others: Nicolene le Roux, a leader in the field of city planning, and Phuti Moloto, the Engineer in charge of regional electricity and someone whose technical ability is only matched by his personal dedication.

To every Lazarus, Ella, Godfrey, Nicolene and Phuti, thank you, thank you, thank you. The City Manager, the Mayoral Committee and I have set out to create the kind of conditions in the City of Tshwane that will make the City an employer of choice for people like you. You prove that there is nothing wrong with the City that cannot be fixed with that which is right with the City.

Let us build the City of Tshwane together!

Honourable Speaker, I conclude with this section because nothing happens in the City without a motivated and dedicated team. While the City's finances are problematic and its infrastructure requires urgent attention, throughout all of this there is hope because there are dedicated officials that want to make this City work.

Everything that is broken in our City can be fixed and restored. I am convinced of it, and I will work tirelessly to demonstrate that it is possible.

In my time in office so far, I have had the opportunity to visit some of our communities and, through this, I have met some incredible people and civic organisations that are invested in this City and in their communities.

These organisations and residents take it upon themselves to lead clean-up operations and protect their neighbourhoods from crime.

We welcome these initiatives because we cannot do it alone as the City.

We have many dedicated officials working under incredibly difficult circumstances and yet they persevere, often in the face of intense criticism and frustration from local communities.

Over the last few weeks, we have been actively engaging with our communities, conducting public meetings across the city and receiving valuable feedback from our residents so that they directly inform our priorities.

We have also reached out to as many local media and radio stations as possible so that we can spread the word about our plans for the City and what we intend to do to be a beacon of hope and promise for the residents of Tshwane and for our country.

I have said this before and I will say it again: Tshwane is our capital city. If the City of Tshwane works, then South Africa can work as well.

And I am fully committed towards building a capital city that works for all its people.

