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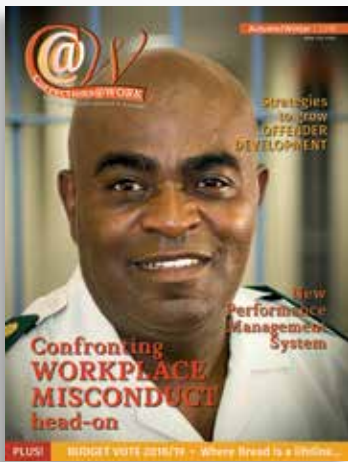
**Strategies  
to grow  
OFFENDER  
DEVELOPMENT**

**New  
Performance  
Management  
System**

**Confronting  
WORKPLACE  
MISCONDUCT  
head-on**

**PLUS!**

**BUDGET VOTE 2018/19 • Where Bread is a lifeline...**



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**correctional services**

Department:  
Correctional Services  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





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## EDITORIAL

# Your work matters

When people feel that their work matters, they are more ready to embrace accountability for what they do or omit to do.

**H**owever, in many organisations that are strictly hierarchical, accountability is enforced through various means.



Accountability often conjures a negative connotation in our minds, and while that's truly unfortunate, it's understandable, writes George Dickson.

There are three ways people approach their relationship with accountability.

- Being held to accountability
- Accepting accountability
- Embracing accountability

#### Locus of control

"If you have an internal locus of control, you think you're in charge of your life. If you succeed, you take the credit and if you fail, you blame yourself. If you define yourself with an external locus of control, however, you believe other people, your environment or a higher power controls what happens..." - Ethan Hale "How Your Locus of Control Impacts Business Success"

#### What does it mean to be held to accountability?

Being held to accountability is the least desirable relationship a person can have with accountability. It implies that a person has not naturally accepted or embraced it and

therefore requires some external force to "hold" them accountable.

#### What does it mean to accept accountability?

Accepting accountability is a personal choice and requires less pressure by external forces. When someone accepts accountability, they're often doing so not through their own intrinsic desire, but through a combination of internal and external pressure.

#### What does it mean to embrace accountability?

If personal accountability was shaped like a pyramid, embracing accountability would sit at the top. Anyone can be held to accountability by others. A smaller number of people will accept accountability, and even fewer will embrace it — but when somebody does approach their relationship with accountability from this perspective, it can have a transformative effect on their work life.

Instead of being pushed by a supervisor or internal guilt, a person who embraces accountability sees the task at hand, recognizes their own aptitude and is intrinsically motivated to finish it. There's no need for external forces, or even themselves to hold them to this goal because completing it is a welcome and foregone conclusion.

By its very nature, embracing accountability isn't something you can ask, require, or coerce someone to do — but an organisation can inspire this behaviour by fostering a culture of accountability that supports and rewards it. 📌

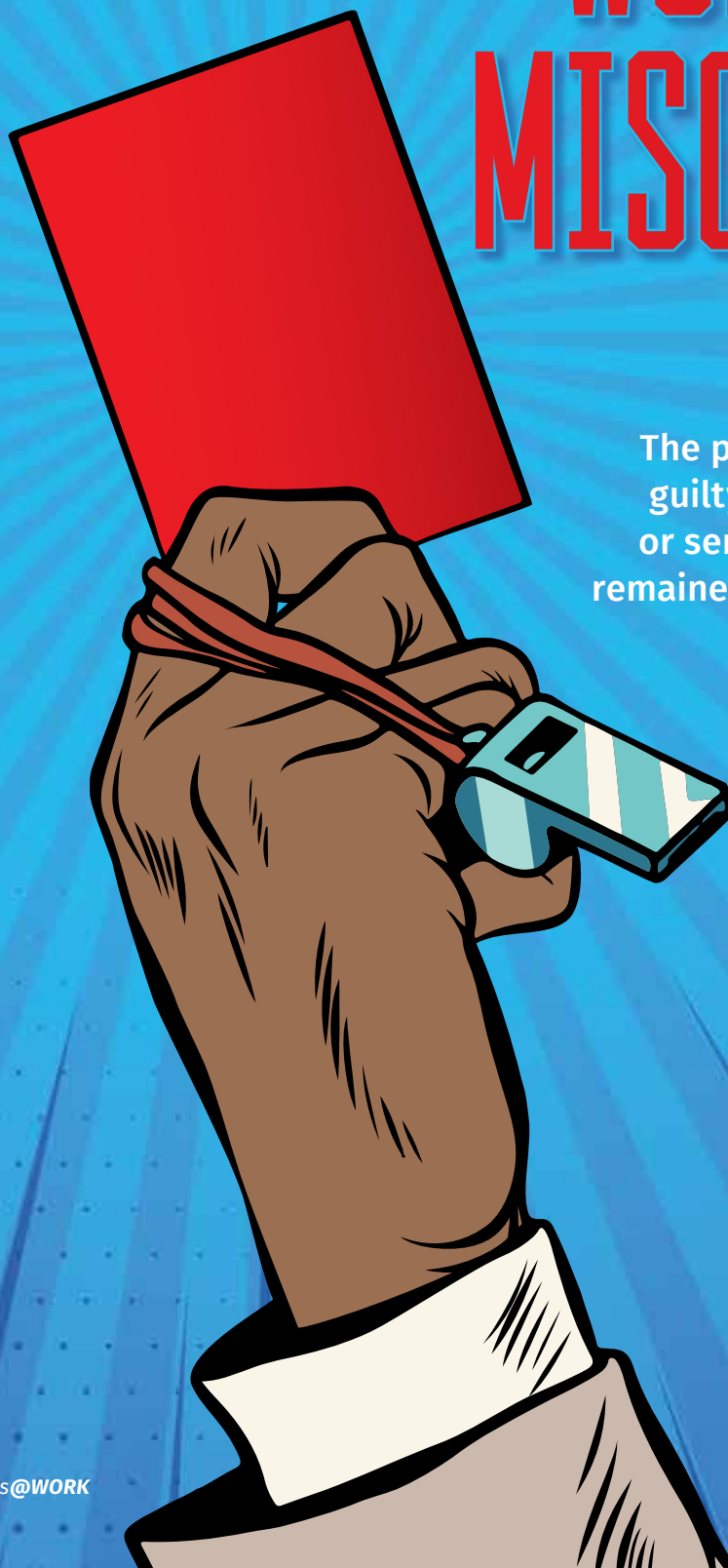
Information derived from <https://blog.bonus.ly/reframing-accountability-in-the-workplace>

*Estelle Coetzee*

# Confronting WORKPLACE MISCONDUCT head-on

BY TIYANI SAMBO

The percentage of officials found guilty of either fraud, corruption or serious maladministration has remained steady over the last three years.





Area Commissioner of Thohoyandou Management Area Takalani Mashamba

**T**he department has consistently registered a high average success rate (over 90%) in disciplinary hearings during the last three years. This trend reflects the quality of investigators, initiators and chairpersons of disciplinary hearings as well as deliberate and proactive steps taken by the department to stem out misconduct by officials.

DCS has intensified its anti-corruption work by conducting workshops as part of its awareness drive to prevent fraud and corruption. During the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years, 76 workshops were conducted on ethics, fraud prevention and anti-corruption, including whistle blowing. The fight against misconduct is also demonstrated by improving its investigative and prosecutorial capacity, which has resulted in higher conviction rates.

In the 2016/17 financial year, 37 officials were found guilty of misconduct. Nineteen of those were dismissed from service.

### Stuff of legends

Thohoyandou Area Commissioner, Takalani Mashamba is one of DCS's highly capable disciplinary hearing chairpersons. His 30 years of experience in the South African penal system, which pre-dates the country's democratic dispensation, has

no doubt earned him his stripes. Mashamba belongs to a select crop of officials who have experienced the department's transition from the "prison" days where "lock up and throw away the keys" was the mantra, to the modern-day system in which correctional centres are professed to be places of new beginnings.

A skilled investigator of note, Mashamba underwent formal training on ethics and corruption, and he is competent to investigate, initiate and preside over disciplinary hearings. To further hone his skills, he underwent formal training on investigations and report writing.

His unquenchable drive to combat fraud, corruption and maladministration has been acknowledged. Mashamba has earned the reputation as one of the most revered crime busters in the department. "You will be called names, labelled as the hangman or hanging judge, but for as long as you do your work properly, based on facts at your disposal and not go on witch-hunts, people may say whatever they want. We cannot just go with the flow. Two wrongs will not make a right," he said emphatically.

He acknowledged that chairing disciplinary hearings of officials is challenging, and definitely not for the faint-hearted. The nature of the job automatically makes one an enemy of those facing prosecution. But he has come to terms with the dangers of being an investigator, initiator and chairperson of disciplinary hearings. "I have been threatened many times, but all that did not and will not stop me from standing for what is right," he said.

Mashamba's vast knowledge and experience has seen him preside over highly complex cases. He finds cases involving community members more difficult to preside over because they are often reluctant to testify in hearings out of fear of retribution. Witnesses may have reservations about giving testimony in disciplinary hearings because they do not want to feel responsible for an official losing

*He said officials have an obligation to do the right thing by helping the department to root out rogue elements.*

their source of income.

He said officials have an obligation to do the right thing by helping the department to root out rogue elements. "For as long as officials see and watch corrupt activities and not report it, corruption will take place. Some people are reluctant to give statements or to assist with information that may assist an investigation," bemoaned Mashamba. He was encouraged by the fact that even in such instances, there are mechanisms to subpoena witnesses, access valuable information, and seize any relevant documents.

Mashamba said he remained undeterred in carrying out this important work because he stands on the side of the truth, and is spurred on to continue on this path, driven by the commitment to realise a DCS that is free of fraud, corruption and maladministration.

He encouraged reporting of illegal practices, and expressed hope that the department would win the fight against corruption.

He encouraged whistleblowing and said officials who worry about their safety can report anonymously.

He enjoined officials to exhibit ethical behaviour, moral standards, and to display exemplary conduct in order to inspire public confidence. "As officials, one of our core responsibilities is to rehabilitate offenders, which requires that we must be the ideal correctional officials advocated in the White Paper on Corrections," he concluded. ■





# BUDGET VOTE 2018/19

BY TIYANI SAMBO

**Minister Michael Masutha tabled a balanced budget on 17 May 2018, outlining the department's targets that must be achieved with limited resources.**

**T**he minister unveiled a comprehensive and futuristic plan aimed at ensuring that the department delivers on its constitutional mandate to provide a correctional system that is designed to ensure safe and humane custody of all offenders and remand detainees under its care.

He said 2018 marks the centenary birthday celebrations of two giant South African liberation struggle icons, Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu. In honour of the former statesman, the Minister said the country will officially launch the Nelson Mandela Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners in July. The rules, which were approved by Cabinet in March, are a set of minimum standards for the treatment of inmates,

and are universally recognised by the United Nations member states.

## Medium-term budget allocation

Minister Masutha said the department has been allocated R23 848 billion for the 2018/19 financial year which will increase to R25 487 billion in 2019/20 and R27 251 billion in 2020/21. Despite an average upward adjustment of 6.1 percent in the medium-term, he made parliament aware that the department's budget has been reduced by R1 982 billion as a result of austerity measures in government. The department has therefore reprioritised funding allocations in order to execute its mandate. Its incarceration and administration programmes will have to make do with less in order to aug-

ment the budget for rehabilitation, which will increase by 6.4 percent over the medium-term.

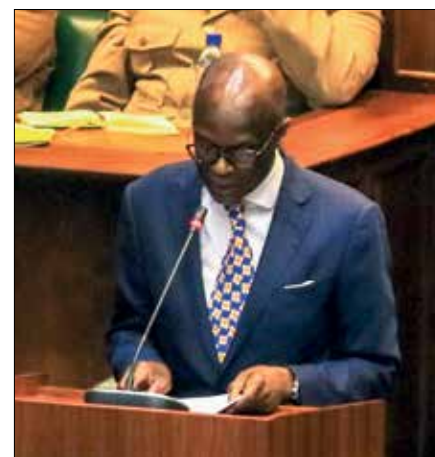
## Safety and Security in correctional centres

Minister Masutha commended the department for its uncompromising and decisive stance in dealing with security lapses, and warned of dire consequences for rogue officials who wilfully contribute to security breaches. "The department has suspended officials implicated in all cases of recent escapes in our correctional facilities," he added. He reported that seven of the 16 inmates who recently escaped from Johannesburg Correctional Centre have been apprehended, two were fatally wounded during a shootout with the police in KwaZulu-Natal. He said the search is continuing for the remaining seven who are still on the run.

## Evolution from prisons to corrections

The Minister explained that the Constitution enjoins the department to treat inmates with human dignity and respect and to accord them the right to health care and education. In this regard, the department has an obligation to transform its facilities from prisons to places of rehabilitation.

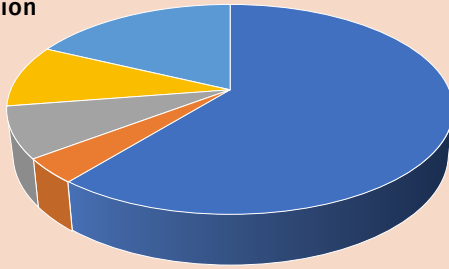
Altogether 78 953 offenders completed correctional programmes in 2017/18. This target has been revised upwards, from 76 percent in 2017/18 to 80 percent in 2018/19. He added that the department's rehabilitation



Deputy Minister Thabang Makwetla informed Parliament that DCS battles with a 37% overcrowding rate on average.

The 2018/19 allocations per budget programme are as follows:

- Incarceration – R14.529 billion
- Social reintegration – R898 million
- Rehabilitation – R1.861 billion
- Healthcare – R2.275 billion
- Administration – R4.284 billion



programmes are yielding tangible results, and cited examples of people who entered DCS facilities with primary school education but leave as qualified artisans.

Nearly 2 000 parolees participated in community development projects in 2017/18, compared to 1 238 recorded the previous year. He reported that 334 schools benefited from the Back-to-School campaign in which offenders and parolees helped to clean, renovate and refurbish schools across the country.

#### Addressing overcrowding

Minister Masutha said as of April 2018, the department's 243 correctional centres accommodated 163 114 inmates. Of these, 117 820 were sentenced offenders and 45 294 remand detainees. The department has a bed capacity of 119 000, which means it is 37% overcrowded.

A task team is developing a comprehensive infrastructure plan to respond to ageing infrastructure and lack of bed capacity. He reported that 939 additional bed spaces will become available through the construction and expansion of facilities in Tzaneen, Standerton, Estcourt and C-Max in Pretoria.

#### Deputy Minister Makwetla endorses budget

Deputy Minister Thabang Makwetla called for an independent and vibrant Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (JICS). He commended them for attending to incidences of violence on inmates by officials in centres such as Brandvlei, Tswelopele, St Albans and Thohoyandou. Mr Makwetla added that the inspectorate still has

inadequate resources pertaining to personnel and infrastructure. Due to their capacity constraints they can only complete a full round of inspections to each of the 243 correctional centres every three years. He said JICS received R71.2 million for the 2018/19 financial year, which represents an increase of only R2.5 million.

#### Deputy Minister weighs in on overcrowding

Deputy Minister Makwetla said bail was a factor in overcrowding of remand detention facilities. Only 10 percent of remand detainees are eligible for bail, and the majority do not qualify due to the seriousness of their alleged crimes. Most of those who qualify for bail are unable to pay because they are unemployed and do not enjoy support from their families. He said this matter was receiving attention by the National Efficiency Enhancement Committee (NEEC) and other structures of the criminal justice system.

#### Partnerships

Makwetla mentioned that parolees and ex-offenders are currently participating in a 12-months learner-ship programme in agricultural skills at Zonderwater Management Area. The programme started in November 2017 and the parolees and ex-offenders receive a monthly stipend.

The department is continuing with its wheelchair collaboration project and has distributed 620 wheelchairs to handicapped citizens in the last financial year. Altogether 3 000 wheelchairs have been distributed since the inception of the project in 2014. 🗨️



National Commissioner Arthur Fraser engages with Luyanda Mboniswa of the Group of Hope offender project that makes beaded jewellery from paper.

## New National Commissioner

Mr Arthur Fraser was appointed as the National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) on 17 April 2018. Prior to this, Mr Fraser was Director-General of the State Security Agency (SSA), a position he held since September 2016.

He was actively involved in student politics and joined the ANC underground structures early in his life. Upon his return to South Africa, Mr Fraser joined the newly-formed National Intelligence Agency (NIA). During his tenure at NIA he was seconded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as an investigator, which accorded him insight into the operations of the apartheid security apparatus.

Mr Fraser has served the intelligence community in various capacities. After NIA, he was transferred to the Department of Home Affairs where he served as Deputy Director-General of the National Immigration Branch. He was later re-appointed to NIA as Deputy Director-General in charge of offensive and counter-intelligence operations, a position he held for five years.

In addition to holding a BA (Hons) degree in Film and Video Production from London University, Mr Fraser completed several training courses, including an executive management course in the United Kingdom. 🗨️



SPECIAL REPORT

# FACILITIES MANAGEMENT:

cornerstone of safe and  
humane incarceration,  
and occupational health  
and safety

BY ESTELLE COETZEE

Emergency Support Team member Albert Radebe and Ms Zandile Radebe on an early morning perimeter patrol around the new Standerton facility.



## The department's Draft Infrastructure Plan for 2018-2022 is a 77-page document that is a comprehensive and detailed blueprint of everything that is facilities-related.

**N**ot only does it provide insight into the recent history of infrastructure development in DCS but it also directs and costs the short term and medium term plans to establish new centres and maintain or upgrade existing ones. The draft plan is still to be presented to the National Management Committee for approval.

Facilities management challenges are not few and they range from damage caused by offenders, accelerated wear and tear caused by overcrowding, serious financial constraints and lack of control over external contracts managed by the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Independent Development Trust (IDT).

The department is mindful that it cannot build itself out of overcrowding and at the same time recognizes the need for more bed spaces to ease overcrowding. According to the infrastructure plan, several non-used centres are prioritised for repair and upgrade in 2019/20, in order to regain lost bed spaces. These include Zonderwater, Geluk, Glencoe and Brandvlei.

Correctional centres in or near the country's biggest cities are the worst overcrowded. The plan states that it wants to create 18 000 additional bed spaces in the major metropolitan areas within the next decade.

For many years the department has borne the brunt of construction companies going belly up due to their own inadequacies, poor performance or investigations. In some cases it resulted in a complete standstill of a construction project for years. Examples are:

Centre	Number of additional bed spaces	Causes of delays in finalising	Start date (year) of initial construction contract and envisaged date (year) of completion
Tzaneen	435	Original contractor liquidated	Beginning date: December 2009 End date: August 2018
Ceres	282	Original contractor liquidated	Beginning date: 2007 End date: 2015
Pretoria C-Max	12	Original contractor liquidated	Beginning date: September 2008 End date: December 2018



### On the up and up

The department has employed 25 build environment professionals, consisting of engineers, architects, quantity surveyors and construction project managers during the 2017/2018 financial year, on national and regional levels. The appointments were made to beef up in-house capacity and to assist the various implementing agents.

Although the department was unable to create any additional bed spaces in 2017/18, it plans to establish 1 537 new bed spaces in 2018/19 by completing the upgrades and new construction projects at C-Max (12), Tzaneen (435), Estcourt (309) and Standerton (781). Estcourt (KwaZulu-Natal) and Standerton (Mpumalanga) were initially scheduled for occupation in 2017/18.

The creation of 311 new bed spaces at Burgersdorp Correctional Centre is currently under planning and sketch-plan approval stage.

If all goes according to plan, Cradock Correctional Centre in the Eastern Cape will be lucky to boast a new school during 2018/19. This project has reached practical completion, with minor outstanding works.

The department is delighted to announce that the renovation of the kitchen at Springbok Correctional Centre was completed in April 2018. The kitchen was damaged during a fire in 2014.

Contractors were appointed in the 2017/18 financial year to regain the 284 bed spaces at Emthonjeni Youth Centre, Baviaanspoort and to repair and upgrade its security systems. The project is on track and is scheduled for completion in April 2020.

The department aligned and corrected its figures for approved bed spaces and unused bed spaces across the regions in an audit during 2017. The audit outcome will improve planning and reporting. >

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF CENTRES	APPROVED MALE BED SPACES	APPROVED FEMALE BED SPACES	APPROVED FEMALE HOSPITAL BEDS	APPROVED MALE HOSPITAL BEDS	APPROVED TOTAL
Free State	36	13 761	247	21	382	14 411
Northern Cape	12	5 702	208	7	214	6 131
Mpumalanga	17	6 755	206	11	255	7 227
Limpopo	8	5 146	161	12	61	5 380
North West	14	5 869	58	25	172	6 124
KwaZulu-Natal	42	18 846	741	30	1 131	20 748
Eastern Cape	45	12 108	394	34	605	13 141
Western Cape	43	19 621	556	24	481	20 682
Gauteng	26	23 171	916	51	762	24 900
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>110 979</b>	<b>3 487</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>4 063</b>	<b>118 744</b>

\* The additional bed spaces for the centres under construction: Estcourt, C-Max, Standerton and Tzaneen were not included in the audit figures.



In many older facilities offenders receive food from a central area but they eat in their cells. Having a dining room, as most new generation facilities have, is more hygienic.



Stores manager Mr Banie Steyn keeps a tidy and clean store room stocked with offender uniform and cleaning materials.

Nine new correctional centres were built since 1994, which created 14 736 new bed spaces. However, it is disconcerting that the last new centre was completed six years ago, and during the last four to five years overcrowding became unbearable in many centres.

What is more encouraging is that 80 centres have been upgraded or refurbished since 1994. Eight of these were in Gauteng, 14 in KZN, 14 in Western Cape, 18 in Eastern Cape, 13 in Free State/Northern Cape and 13 in Limpopo/Mpumalanga/North West region. This demonstrates that although the wheel of infrastructure development seems to turn slowly, there are achievements along the way.



According to Facilities Management, there are 11 centres that do not meet the minimum security standards for incarceration because they are zinc or asbestos structures. The centres are Glencoe (KZN), Atteridgeville and Leeuwkop Juvenile (Gauteng), Zeerust and Lichtenburg (North West), Makhado and Tzaneen (Limpopo), Groenpunt Medium (Free State), and Voorberg, Brandvlei and Pollsmoor Medium C (Western Cape). The new Tzaneen centre is near completion and Brandvlei, Lichtenburg and Zeerust are in the planning stages. It is not known when there will be progress on replacing the other zinc structures.

Of the department's 243 correctional centres, eight are not functional due to repairs, upgrading or were decommissioned because they are unsafe.

#### Tools and systems exist, but short of implementation

Facilities Management is utilising Treasury's business model, the Infrastructure Delivery Management System (IDMS), to develop a blueprint for DCS's infrastructure development projects. Government has a further tool that departments must follow in order to manage its

immovable assets. It is the Government Immovable Asset Management Act (GIAMA), which has been in place since 2007 already. However, it seems that some of the legislation's key concepts are not well understood. Regardless, DCS did manage to present a Schedule of Accommodation Requirements per Budget Programme in its Draft Infrastructure Plan for 2018-2022.



Case Intervention Officer Ms Glenda Makhubo presents a substance abuse programme at the new Standerton facility.

#### Money makes the world go round

For the 2018/19 financial year, nearly R513 million is earmarked for capital projects; nearly R169 million for maintenance and repairs; close to R98 million for lease of buildings; close to R1 billion for municipal services and R1.1 billion for accommodation charges. R193 million was reduced from the capital projects portion and reallocated towards municipal charges to foot the department's enormous municipal costs.

Examples of costs under the budget item 'Accommo-



dation Charges' are quarterly payments towards the DPW for state-owned properties that DCS occupies, and upgrading or maintenance projects that DPW oversees.

Municipal services and Accommodation Charges, both paid through DPW, have become unaffordable and therefore DCS is exploring different strategies to mitigate costs. A major drawback is that DPW does not provide itemised billing for Accommodation Charges and does not verify municipal charges.

One cost saving project that has already gained traction is paying some municipalities directly. During 2017/18 it saved DCS nearly R2 million in management fees that would otherwise have gone to DPW. This project will be phased in over three financial years.

The acting Deputy Commissioner Facilities, Riaan Botha, said the budget portion for capital projects was not sufficient to achieve the department's infrastructure development objectives. Due to budget cuts, upgrades and additions at Parys, Grootvlei, Pietermaritzburg, Burgersdorp and Ingwavuma were put on hold. For the same reason, the replacement of kitchen equipment, overhead security mesh installation and installation of standby generators are delayed.

The infrastructure plan indicates that the department is considering the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) funding model as it seeks to accelerate the construction of four major centres to reduce overcrowding.

With the current economic outlook, this approach will assist the department to utilise external funding. Once feasibility studies are concluded, comprehensive business case proposals will be presented to National Treasury to support the funding mechanism of these new projects.

### Future of Own Resources Projects

In 2016, Minister Michael Masutha expressed his wish that offenders must more consistently be utilised in maintenance projects. Area Commissioners are responsible for these maintenance projects, called Own Resources Projects, costing R100 000 or less per project.

In 2017/18, offenders completed 15 Own Resources projects, under the guidance of qualified artisans. These included renovating the dairy at Baviaanspoort, building dog kennels for the dog unit at Boksborg, converting a redundant building into a day parole centre at Boksborg, erecting car ports at various facilities, and refurbishing Willowvale correctional centre. Eighteen projects are planned for 2018/19. 📌



1. Entry to and exit from Standerton new generation facility is managed from a central control room, through a Sally Port.

2. Divisional Head of Health Services at Standerton Correctional Centre, Ms Jay Wahab demonstrates the storage and labelling of medicine in the dispensary.

3. An example of a neat communal cell in a new generation facility.

4. Laundry manager Mr Freddy Motaung explains to an offender at new Standerton how the laundry machines are programmed.

# NEW REHABILITATION PROGRAMME for sex offenders makes waves

BY NELISWA MZIMBA

The Directorate Social Work Services is facilitating training on the reviewed Sexual Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP) for all the department's social workers.

The training aims to equip them to teach offenders to control a chain of behaviour that leads to sexual offences. This is a revised programme that is based on empirical research findings.

The department commissioned a research study in 2016 to evaluate the existing SOTP, and develop a scientifically research-based treatment programme. Director Social Work Services Dorothy Makhuzha said it became necessary to review the programme. "We realised that it had many gaps that needed to be addressed," she said. Its review was also partly in response to public concerns over the high incidence of sexual violence in South Africa.

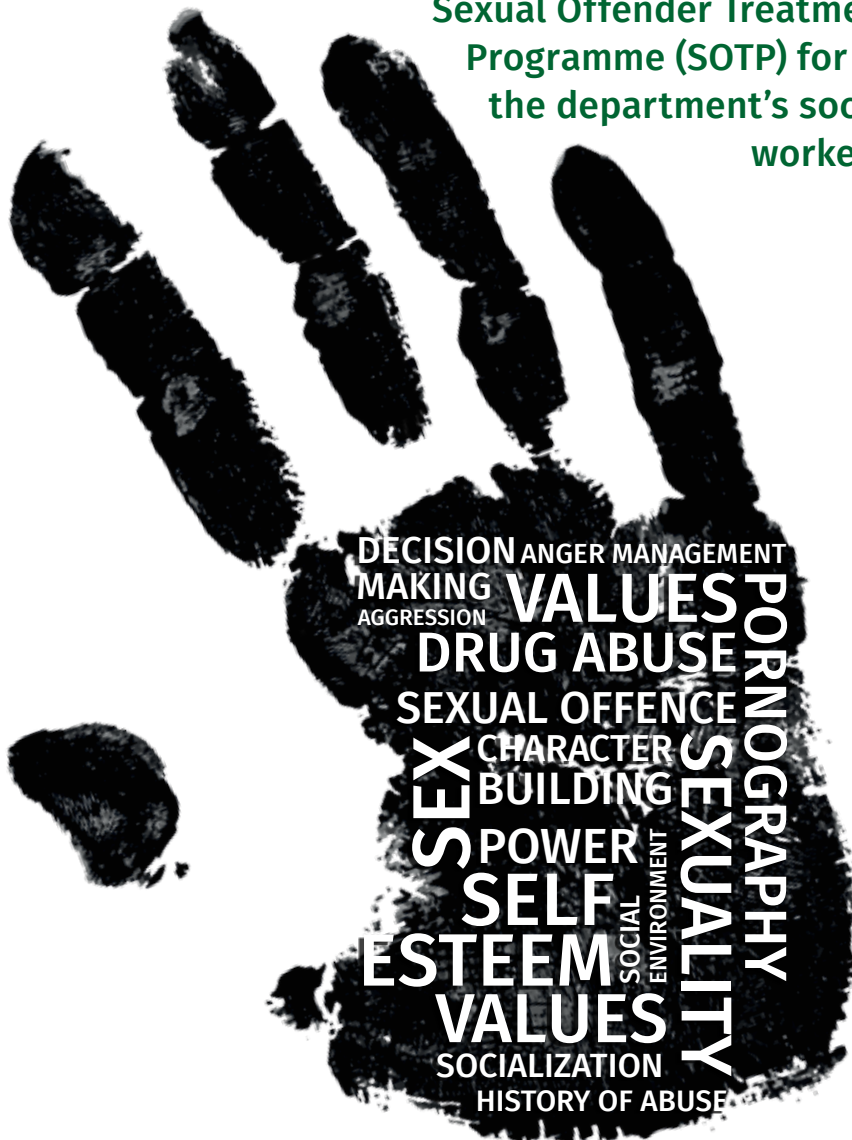
Dr Zodwa Mosoma, the Manager Social Work Policy who is responsible for social work research and programme design, said the previous sexual offender treatment programme was generic and based on desktop literature research.



Director Social Work Services Dorothy Makhuzha said her directorate is looking forward to positive outcomes following the training sessions.

"Throughout the years, different programmes to treat sexual offenders were implemented in the department, but none of them were localised at centre or management area level. It was therefore time for refinement and better coordination," she said.

The new programme has interventions and approaches that have







1. Dr Zodwa Mosoma is confident that the new programme's interventions and approaches have been proven to be effective and impactful.
2. Welma De Jager, a social worker at Krugersdorp Management Area was impressed with the department's move towards research-based solutions.
3. Sbongile Maseko, a social worker at Boksburg Management Area said the training was effective and her confidence has been enhanced because she has gained more insight.

been proven through research to be effective and impactful. The research was conducted among 18 social workers and 18 psychologists across the six regions, and 392 sexual offenders were interviewed.

The SOTP focuses on the main category of perpetrators who sexually violate victims that they know. The research found that most sexual offences are committed by perpetrators that the victims know.

The programme consists of six modules aimed at building a positive character in sexual offenders. It offers tools to help social workers measure the efficiency of the programme and monitor its implementation.

Although the SOTP does not offer a cure for sexual offending, it provides research-based interventions to rehabilitate offenders and reduce their chances of reoffending. It equips offenders with the skills to exercise self-control over their behaviour.

The research study, on which the

programme is based, revealed that 17.6% of the offenders interviewed had previous convictions for sex offences, while 41.1% were previously convicted for non-sexual offences. Repeat sexual offending is a reflection of both an individual's recurrent failure to resist temptation to abide by the accepted societal rules and the failure of the criminal justice system to correct individuals' law-breaking behaviour.

Dr Mosoma explained that the training would provide social workers with a better understanding of the theory of change, as well as techniques and approaches that are recommended in the programme. They would also be able to use tools that will measure the efficiency and the effectiveness of their implementation methods, and at the end contribute to the rehabilitation of sexual offenders. She said the interventions should continue even after offenders are released from correctional facilities.

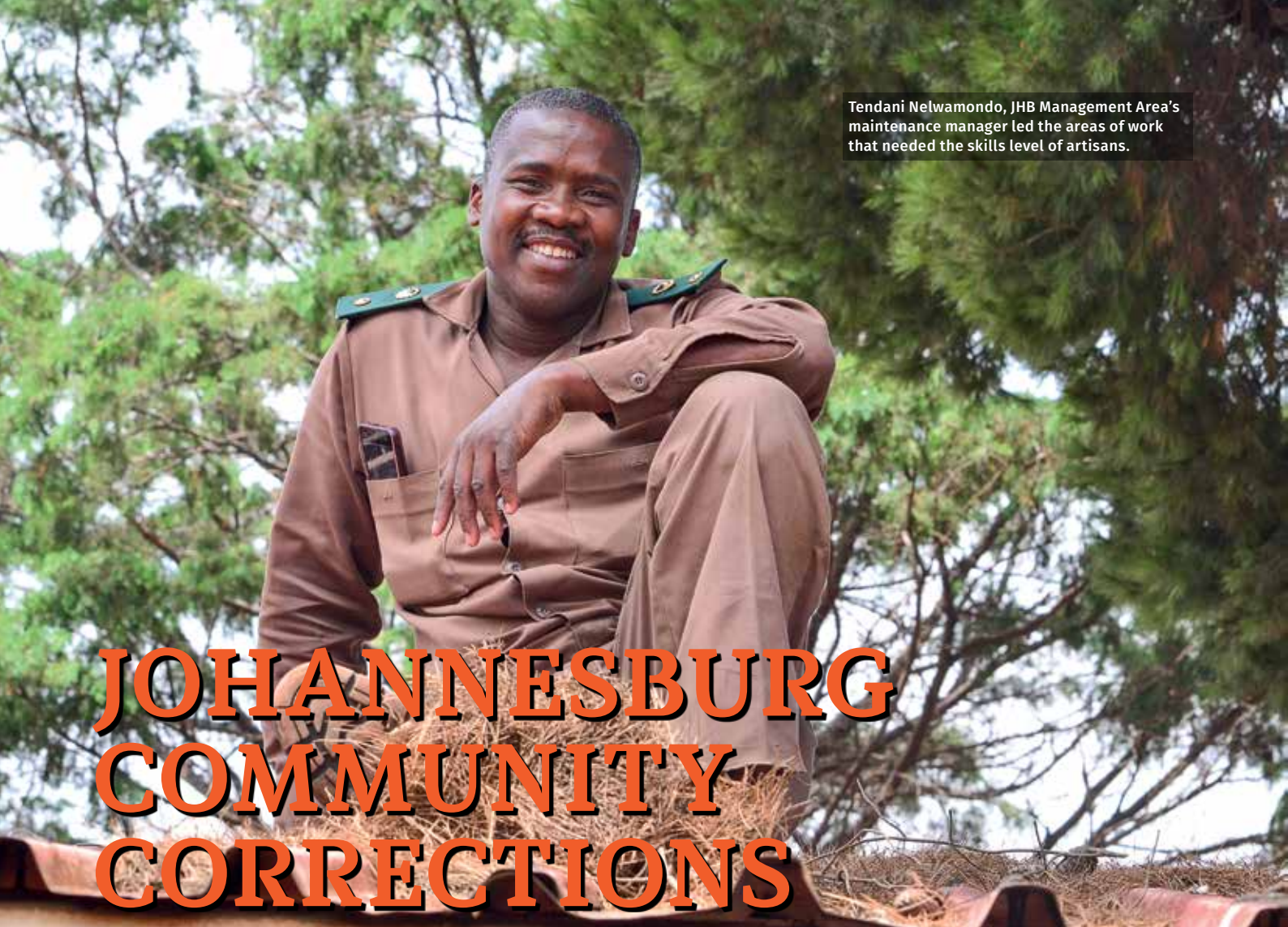
Welma De Jager, a social worker from Krugersdorp Management Area said she was glad that the department was moving towards research-based services. "With the help of research, we are able to make proper recommendations," she said.

Director Makhuzza said the training could not accommodate all social workers in the regions because of limited funds. The social workers who attended the training would be required to train others before the programme is fully implemented.

Sexual offences are a global problem, and affect all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. A scientifically researched treatment programme for sexual offenders would result in standardised methods that can be applied anywhere and will assist in evaluating how successful the department is in treating sexual offending behaviour.

Training is expected to be completed by June 2018. 📌



A man in a brown uniform is sitting on a roof, smiling. He is surrounded by trees and foliage. The background is a lush green forest.

Tendani Nelwamondo, JHB Management Area's maintenance manager led the areas of work that needed the skills level of artisans.

# JOHANNESBURG COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

## help Soweto's autistic learners

By Samantha Ramsewaki

**In South Africa, every 45 minutes a child is born on the Autism Disorder Spectrum (ASD), according to Autism South Africa. Autism is a neuro-developmental disorder and affects a growing number of children in different ways.**

**T**he disorder is characterised by speech and language delays. A child with a language delay might pronounce words well but only be able to put two words together. A child with a speech delay might use words and phrases to express ideas but be difficult to understand.

Children with autism usually need a highly structured learning environment, which helps them to understand the world around them. Without this structure, most autistic learners are unable to process information in a way that makes learning possible.

Intervention programmes for

children in Soweto with autism are scarce and the nearest school in Naledi for such learners used to be about 30 kilometres away. Other services were few and unaffordable for the parents of affected children. The Department of Education (DoE) identified the dilapidated Mohato school in Naledi for possible conversion into a school for learners with autism. The DoE was able to provide materials necessary for refurbishment but had no means to secure labour.

Hope seemed far off until they came knocking on the door of acting Area Commissioner of Johannesburg Management Area, Luckyboy Mathiba. He mobilised a team from the maintenance workshops and Community Corrections to assist. Community Corrections in turn sourced willing parolees from Naledi to provide much of the labour. Together they worked to restore and adapt the physical structures of Mohato to suit



special learning needs.

Many South Africans think autism is the fruit of witchcraft. Autistic children and their families often face rejection, and derogatory comments that indicate just how much of a stigma the disorder carries with it. To avoid stigmatisation, families tend to hide their affected children from society. This practice has often led to late presentation and diagnosis of the disorder amongst South African children.

### A commitment to community

And so it came about that discussions between Mr Mathiba and the DoE's Soweto district office in mid-2017 led to a project that would convert an existing primary school in Naledi into a school for autistic learners.

Mohato Primary was closed at the time and was therefore the ideal place where the community and DCS could create a better future for learners with autism.

The DoE secured building materials for around R90 000 whilst the DCS team offered artisans and parolees who gave 196 hours in labour. Work done by the artisans and community corrections officials was not remunerated outside normal hours even though they worked over weekends. In the construction market, such labour costs around R84 per hour.

Mohato School for Autism opened its doors to its first 50 learners in roughly two months after the project started. Mr Oupa Nkuna, a Reintegration Case Management Supervisor (RCMS), secured 16 parolees to provide labour. They volunteered their services even though their required hours of community service were long completed. Their labour was central to getting the project completed.

Johannesburg Community Corrections renders correctional supervision services to just fewer than 600 parolees and probationers in the Naledi, Emndeni, Tladi and Moletane areas.

Mr Kgathi Mabuya is Mohato's principal. The school currently has 53 learners aged between three and 12. Classes are kept small to accommodate their learning needs. "The

*"The officials and parolees are part of the Mohato family. We know them each by name. The children too have warmed up to them."*

- Mr Kgathi Mabuya

officials and parolees are part of the Mohato family. We know them each by name. The children too have warmed up to them. The artisans and community corrections officials have given new hope to the learners and secured a conducive environment for learning. Mohato will be forever indebted," she said.

Each level on the autism spectrum presents different challenges. The ability to communicate is one of the most important skills a person needs in life. Makaton is a language programme utilised at the school that uses signs and symbols to help the children and staff communicate with each other. It is designed to support spoken language with signs and symbols.

Nkuna, the case officer, has since committed the parolees to cleaning the school monthly and providing maintenance services. Johannesburg Community Corrections also utilise the premises as a satellite office for parole administration and reporting.

The past three years has seen a solid relationship grow between Johannesburg Community Corrections and the Soweto district office for Education. Scores of schools have benefited from general maintenance through the weekend allocation of community service by parolees and probationers.

The district office is a service point where parolees can adhere to their parole conditions through easier access to projects that need community services.

Labour is a commodity that is widely available within DCS, both during incarceration and the correctional supervision process. By creatively applying community service, mountains can be moved. 📍



Seven artisans and 16 parolees worked side by side for two months to renovate Mohato Primary School.



A sombre mood suddenly engulfed the room as Deputy President David Mabuza, Solomon Mahlangu's family and other guests imagine the agonising pain Solomon endured in the last moments of his life.

# 39 Years since SOLOMON MAHLANGU'S Passing

BY TIYANI SAMBO

Before he met his brutal demise in the early morning of 06 April 1979, Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu defiantly proclaimed: "My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the struggle".

**T**hese words are etched in the hearts and minds of those who saw and still live to recount the callous atrocities of the apartheid regime. Even against the chilling prospect of his inevitable death at the hands of

the apartheid hangmen, Mahlangu remained unshaken. The events of that fateful day still serve as a source of inspiration to others. Mahlangu's undying spirit continues to echo from the belly of the earth, and true to his prophetic dying wish, it came to pass

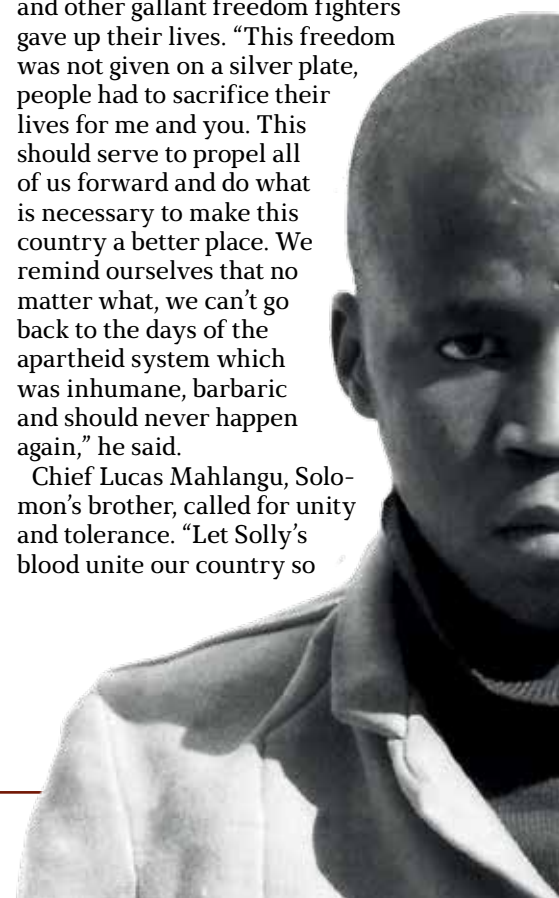
in 1994, albeit 15 years after his death.

Government, Mahlangu's family and his political organisation, the African National Congress (ANC) held a commemoration ceremony on 6 April 2018 at Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area to acknowledge and remember Mahlangu's indelible contribution in the fight for freedom. The commemoration marked 39 years since his death. The government delegation was led by Deputy President David Mabuza, Minister Michael Masutha, Deputy Minister Thabang Makwetla, other members of the Executive as well as struggle luminaries.

The delegation toured the infamous gallows where Mahlangu drew his last breath. Emotions ran high as Mr Abram Rahlogo, a correctional official stationed at Kgoši Mampuru II, explained the hanging process. The guests solemnly walked up the 52 steps to the gallows - following in the footsteps of the 134 political prisoners executed at then Pretoria prison during apartheid.

Deputy President David Mabuza recounted South Africa's painful past and the selfless sacrifices made by struggle fighters like Solomon Mahlangu. He enjoined South Africans to continue on the path to a free, peaceful, non-racial, non-sexist country - an ideal for which Mahlangu and other gallant freedom fighters gave up their lives. "This freedom was not given on a silver plate, people had to sacrifice their lives for me and you. This should serve to propel all of us forward and do what is necessary to make this country a better place. We remind ourselves that no matter what, we can't go back to the days of the apartheid system which was inhumane, barbaric and should never happen again," he said.

Chief Lucas Mahlangu, Solomon's brother, called for unity and tolerance. "Let Solly's blood unite our country so





*“This freedom was not given on a silver plate, people had to sacrifice their lives for me and you. This should serve to propel all of us forward and do what is necessary to make this country a better place.”*

**- Deputy President David Mabuza**

that we can march out of this house of bondage in peace. By uniting, we will help our government to grease the door hinges of the house of bondage, so that everybody can march out peacefully and live in harmony,” he said.

Mabuza said the commemoration was not only in honour of Solomon Mahlangu, but all those who perished at the apartheid gallows. He also paid tribute to Monty Motlouteng who was arrested with Solomon Mahlangu and who was brutally tortured to the extent that he sustained severe brain damage, and was declared unfit to stand trial. Mabuza requested that the DCS record everything related to all prisoners of conscience who perished in apartheid jails, either by torture or execution, and make this historical information available to our institutions of learning, the media and the general public.

Minister Masutha paid homage to Mahlangu’s contribution and his resilient spirit. He characterised his short but impactful time on earth as “a life well-lived”. Deputy Minister Makwetla said the gathering was a way of recollecting

just how bitter the struggle was to end white minority rule in the country.

Retired army general and former Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe, Siphile Nyanda gave a moving tribute to Mahlangu. He gave an account of the encounter he had with Mahlangu in May 1977, when they were both exiled in Mozambique. General Nyanda said he was tasked to send two units to Pretoria and Soweto as part of the first commemoration of the June 16 uprisings. Mahlangu’s unit was destined for Pretoria and their mission was to engage the enemy in surprise armed action.

He recalled that Mahlangu was hesitant to be deployed on the mission with his childhood friends, preferring instead to be deployed with Monty Motlouteng and George Mahlangu whom he had met in exile. “Solomon understood that the struggle came first, family and friends next,” said Nyanda. He said Solomon Mahlangu’s death by execution solicited worldwide condemnation of the apartheid regime, and caused grief and anger among freedom fighters and among the people. “We in Umkhonto we Sizwe grieved, we were angry too, but we were also inspired and motivated. Solomon Mahlangu had charged us to fight on,” he remarked.

Mahlangu was born in Pretoria on 10 July 1956. He was the second son of a domestic worker, Martha Mahlangu. He was in grade eight at Mamelodi High School when he was recruited by Thomas Masuku to participate in the 1976 June uprisings in protest against Bantu Education. He left the country thereafter to join the ANC, and was trained as an Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) cadre. He was arrested on 13 June 1977 in Goch Street, Johannesburg following a shoot-out with the police. He was found guilty on two counts of murder and three charges under the Terrorism Act. It is recorded that Solomon’s mother burst into tears when she and his brother visited him before he was hanged, but Solomon implored her not to cry. “I don’t care what they do to me. And if they spill my blood, maybe it will give birth to other Solomons,” he retorted. He was sentenced to death by hanging on 2 March 1978. His appeal was denied, and he was incarcerated at the then Pretoria Central Prison until his hanging on 06 April 1979 at the tender age of 22. ☐



1. DEEP REFLECTION: Solomon Mahlangu's family is seated at the chapel where family members held their last prayer before their loved ones were executed.

2. Mr Abram Rahlogo holds the noose of a rope with a metal piece similar to those used to hang Solomon Mahlangu and others at the gallows.

3. Deputy President David Mabuza with members of the Mahlangu family, Deputy Minister Thabang Makwetla and Minister Michael Masutha during the solemn occasion that marked the 39th anniversary since Solomon Mahlangu's passing.



# Where Bread is a lifeline...

BY ESTELLE COETZEE

**PROUD BAKERS:** From left are Messrs Kelebogile Molate, Philip Snyman, Willem Ludeke, Mitchell Bron and Jacob Mashego.

**No matter what the season, it is dark at three o'clock in the morning. In the winter it would either be very chilly or freezing cold. But it is the time when Messrs Willem Ludeke and Philip Snyman start their work at the Kgosi Mampuru II bakery.**

**T**hey are accustomed to getting up very early and so are many other officials and offenders who work in the department's eight bakeries.

Willem Ludeke, who is the bakery manager at Kgosi Mampuru, has followed this rhythm for the past 26 years, since the bakery opened in 1992. It is the oldest bakery in the department, and like the seven others, it produces hundreds, if not thousands of 700 gram brown bread loaves every day before most people have wiped the sleep from their eyes.

In 2017/18, the department's eight bakeries produced about 3.5 million breads. Imagine that volume! The bakery at Barberton Management Area led the pack last year with 708 300 breads and on its heels was

Tswelopele Correctional Centre with 635 243 breads. The daily offender lock-up totals determine the number of breads that will be baked on a day and the bakeries receive these from the kitchens as a written order. The bakeries and kitchens therefore function separately in respect of their staffing and budget.

## **Costing model**

Each bakery's input costs are calculated meticulously according to a costing model that literally considers all costs, says Deputy Director Mitchell Bron. These include ingredients, salaries of officials working in the bakery, stipends of the offender bakers, annual depreciation costs of the ovens and other machinery, vehicle and fuel costs to deliver the bread, and building rent per square metre. The input costs to produce

one loaf of bread in a metropolitan area could therefore be considerably lower than that in a rural area. Some bakeries supply correctional centres in surrounding areas and therefore have higher transport costs. Barberton is such a centre and in 2017/18 its input costs per bread loaf was R7,31 in comparison to Kgosi Mampuru's R4,53.

The department furthermore complies with the Preferential Procurement Act of 2017 and procures ingredients and equipment from Black equity companies that are sometimes small enterprises who don't keep stock and they procure stock from manufacturers of baking ingredients, explains Bron.

## **Functions of officials working in the bakeries are:**

- Ensure that the quantities ordered by the correctional centre kitchens are baked and delivered daily.
- Provide in-service training to the offenders working in the bakery
- Ensure that the offenders are productive
- Ensure the correct handling of



- equipment in the bakery
- Ensure that the inventory controllers check the inventory on a monthly basis
- Ensure that the correct stock and ingredients are timeously procured
- Ensure that occupational health and safety regulations are implemented.

Ten bakers (officials) recently attended a short course in bread crafting, and pizza and pie baking. At least one official from the department's eight bakeries attended the course. The certificate course was presented by the South African Chefs Association, School of Tourism and Hospitality.



Mr Mitchell Bron in discussion with Messrs Willem Ludeke and Philip Snyman. Bron assists with managing the department's production workshops and agricultural enterprises towards self-sufficiency.

### The officials gained knowledge on the following:

- Costing and financial control in the bakery industry
- Food handling and general bakery hygiene
- Safe working processes and Occupational Health Standards.

These officials will be better skilled to transfer the knowledge learned to offenders who work in the bakeries.

About 110 offenders work in the department's bakeries. It is not an environment that can absorb larger numbers of offenders as it requires a daily commitment such as willingness to get up very early every day, discipline to maintain productivity, working close to a heat source, following the routines of production diligently, relative good health and low security risk.

### Functions of offenders working in the bakeries are:

- Assist with mixing ingredients to prepare the dough

- Weighing and cutting the dough into  $\pm 700\text{g}$  pieces
- Placing the dough in the baking pans and into trolleys, which are then placed in the proofer for the dough to rise. Afterwards the offenders push the trolleys into the large ovens.
- After the bread has been baked, the offenders pack the loaves into bread crates for distribution to the centres.
- Offenders clean the baking area, baking equipment, utensils, storage areas and ablution facilities.

### Future plans

Three new bakeries are planned for Standerton, Potchefstroom and Tzaneen correctional centres. According to Bron, site inspections have been done and existing buildings have been identified. Feasibility studies are underway, which will be followed by business case development. The building plans for Potchefstroom is in the final process of approval.

A bakery at St Albans Management Area is near completion and is expected to open its doors this financial year. It will supply bread to the three centres of St Albans, the Port Elizabeth North End Centre and Patensie Correctional Centre, baking about 2 300 bread a day. Two staff members have been trained to manage the bakery and 12 offenders who were trained at Brandvlei bakery in 2017 will complete the labour component. The bakery was established at a cost of about R1.4 million.

The last new bakeries were established at Brandvlei and Drakenstein Correctional Centres in 2016. Brandvlei produced about 244 000 bread loaves in 2017/18 and Drakenstein about 448 000. The Boksburg and Goedemoed bakeries are being renovated. 📷



Weighing



Dough is sized for the bread pans



Dough rolled before going into pans



Hot from the oven



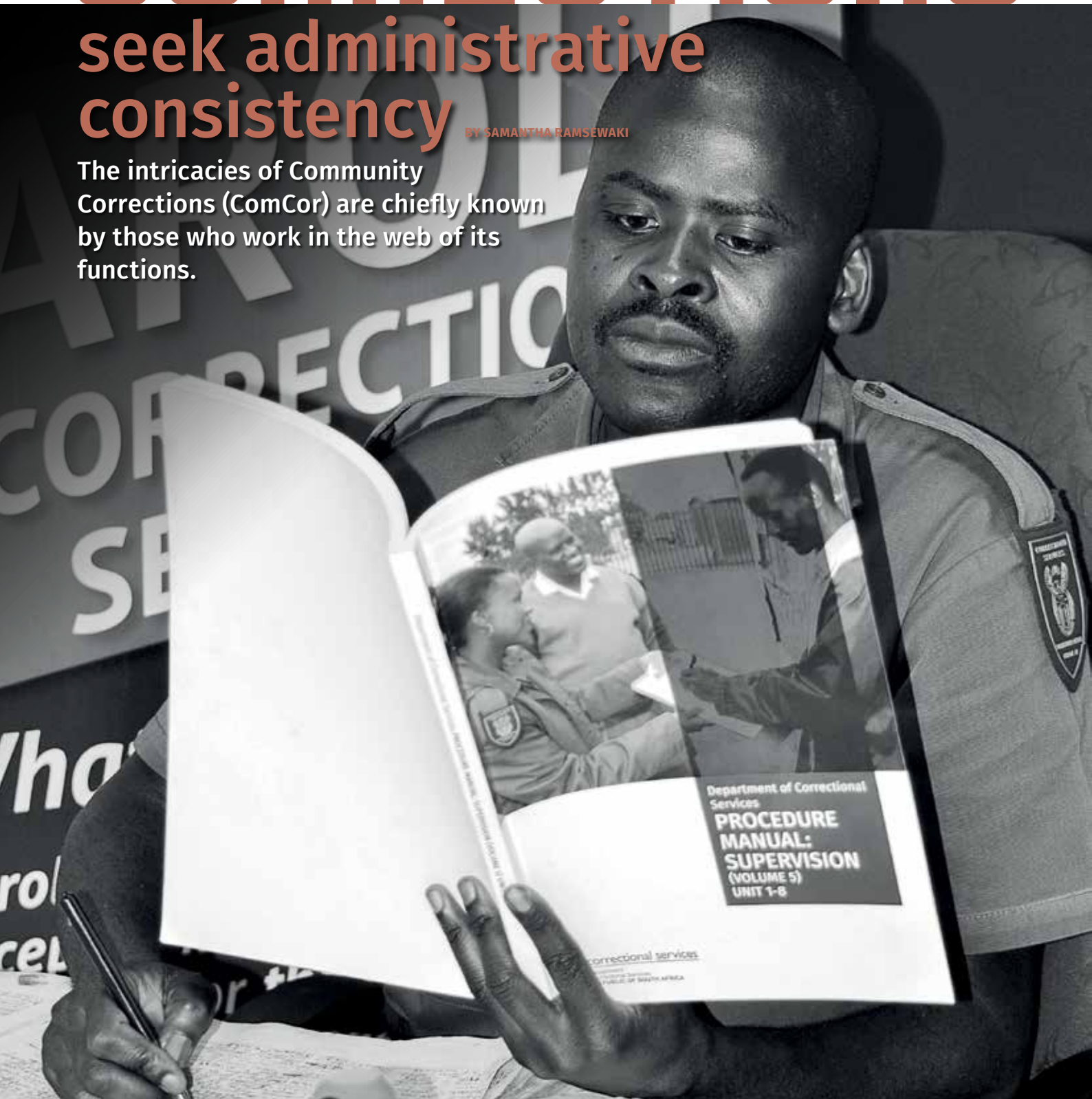
Bread packed in trays to be transported to users

# COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

## seek administrative consistency

BY SAMANTHA RAMSEWAKI

The intricacies of Community Corrections (ComCor) are chiefly known by those who work in the web of its functions.





**W**ith most of their offices situated away from management area offices, the saying, “out of sight, out of mind” often works to the detriment of the value chain of corrections.

Its frontline functions are critical to the department’s reputation of service delivery.

The branch Community Corrections revised its procedure manual for its operations during 2017 and had the revised manual (Procedure Manual on Community Corrections Volume 5 (Units 1-8) approved in July 2017. The older version of the procedure manual repealed and replaced the even older B-Order 4, Chapter 1 in 2013.

It then set out to promote uniform and consistent application of the procedures in a three-day train-the-trainer session at Krugersdorp, Gauteng during late 2017.

The training focused on supervision, community liaison, outreach, and risk profile management, among others.

Some of the specifics included:

- Inconsistent calculations related to Warrants of Arrests (G306) issued by Heads of ComCor for parole revocations
- Submitting weekly statistics from regions to the national office (timelines)
- Marketing non-custodial sentence options
- The proportion of arrest warrants to the total number of parole revocations
- Offender relapse and risk probability reports
- Consistency in parole decision making – a Parole Revocation report template is being developed to be used by Community Corrections, Case Management Committees (CMCs) and Correctional Supervision & Parole Boards (CSPBs) when parole revocation is considered.
- Parole Revocation Tool – usage of the tool is encouraged countrywide. In assessing the effectiveness of the tool, provide feedback to [piet.debruin@dcs.gov.za](mailto:piet.debruin@dcs.gov.za).
- Halfway houses and community



The revised Community Corrections Procedure Manual is better aligned to policy and is more user-friendly than the previous version. It makes mentoring of new officials to community corrections easier and helps officials to apply procedures correctly.

- profiling
- Development of official registers and forms for improved record keeping
- Decentralisation of the Community Corrections electronic system.

Acting Chief Deputy Commissioner Community Corrections, Veliswa Mvandaba spoke boldly about critical areas that hamper the effectiveness of Community Corrections. She requested that the auxiliary social workers who were contracted to trace victims for possible participating in Victim Offender Dialogues (VODs) be optimally utilised to generate wider interest in the department’s mediation and dialogue processes.

The branch received an unqualified audit report for the 2016/2017 financial year. Ms Mvandaba thanked officials for their role in obtaining a clean audit.

#### **Tightening administration on parole violations**

Section 7 of the revised manual provides clear guidance on how parole violations and violations of correctional supervision conditions should be dealt with and includes, for instance, details required in

the report to the respective CSPB for better decisions about parole revocation.

#### **Parole revocation figures for 2016/17**

Region	Parole Revoked
Eastern Cape	497
Free State & Northern Cape	698
Gauteng	1001
KwaZulu-Natal	201
LMN	707
Western Cape	1790

Community Corrections can be an indistinct contributor to overcrowding in correctional centres. A parole revocation tool now helps decision makers to weigh up all aspects before revoking someone’s parole. Reducing parole revocations responsibly is therefore a critical management tool as it has an effect on offender numbers and costs. Presently it costs the state an average of R29 per parolee/probationer per day and it costs about R366 per day for an incarcerated offender.

The Director Supervision Services, Josiah Maako said decisions in community corrections should be administratively fair. He advised >



1. Willie Pienaar: "Officials tend to observe the mannerism in which their predecessors handled situations and replicate those actions". The revised procedure manual brings about administrative consistency.

2. Subject experts of Community Corrections were trained during November 2017 as master trainers. Training on the revised procedure manual is set to happen in 2018 in all the regions.

that Area Commissioners be more closely involved in Community Corrections affairs to help avoid expensive court cases, especially relating to the revocation of parole.

Community Corrections also have frontline aspects to their work and officials who fulfil such functions must be aware that they influence the department's service delivery reputation. It is therefore disconcerting when Comcor Heads report that their offices occasionally become the dumping ground of officials who have sour working relationships at correctional centres.

"Transferring problematic officials to Community Corrections must be discouraged with the seriousness it deserves. Area Commissioners are advised to utilise the services of the Employee Assistance Programme to address the problems of officials," Mvandaba said.

At present, ComCor offices function with the number of posts approved in 2003. Since then caseloads have more than tripled. To demonstrate, the average caseload for a case officer at Johannesburg's ComCor is 1:100. It is similar elsewhere in the country. ComCor officials have been overstretched for a number of years yet they continue providing both administrative and operational support to parolees and probationers.

In an effort to document the story of Community Corrections, Willem (Willie) Pienaar, a Deputy Director in the Directorate Supervision was

consulted. He has 32 years of experience and the greater part of it has been in Community Corrections.

Pienaar said, "Officials fulfil their tasks in conditions where resources are seldom enough. Many do not have access to the procedure manual which could guide them in specific situations and then they rely on the advice of other officials who may not provide them with the correct information".

He felt that officials often replicate the way in which their predecessors handled situations, assuming that is procedurally correct. This time the directorate wants to ensure that all community corrections officials receive their own copy of the revised procedure manual.

The manual is the most credible source of reference in Community



The Director Supervision Services, Josiah Maako said decisions in Community Corrections should be administratively fair. He advised that Area Commissioners be closely involved in Community Corrections affairs as that would help avoid expensive court cases, especially relating to the revocation of parole.

*Community Corrections also have frontline aspects to their work and officials who fulfil such functions must be aware that they influence the department's service delivery reputation.*

Corrections and should be the ultimate tool consulted in every administrative decision made at operational level.

Did you know?

- There are 218 community corrections offices across DCS.
- About 1 900 officials oversee 71 000 parolees and probationers.
- Correctional Supervision was introduced in South Africa on 15 August 1991.
- Parole Supervision was introduced in South Africa on 1 March 1994.
- The only condition set prior 1994 to offenders released on parole was that they never commit crime again.
- It costs the department R29.48 per day to oversee a parolee or probationer. It costs R366.59 per day to accommodate and feed an incarcerated offender (2017/18 financial year). 📍





Brandvlei officials listen attentively as the new performance management system is explained.

## Compliance do's and don'ts of new performance management system

BY TIYANI SAMBO

**The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) published a new directive on the implementation of a revised Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) for employees below senior management level, which became effective from 1 April 2018.**

**T**he new performance management system is the outcome of a negotiated process between the employer and organised labour. Organised labour had for a long time expressed consternation about the cumbersome nature of the previous PMDS.

The revised PMDS is designed to make performance agreements and assessments less burdensome and encourage greater compliance by

employees. The Directorate Human Resource Support, working with PMDS Regional Coordinators, recently concluded orientation sessions on the revised system for employees below senior management.

Deputy Director Performance Assessments, Laurentia Hlophé urged employees to familiarise themselves with the changes, and comply with the new directives. The orientation sessions acquainted employees with the changes and guided them how to correctly compile their Key Responsibility Areas (KRAs) and assessment documents henceforth.

### What has changed?

The reviewed PMDS Booklet consists of five compulsory parts. The old booklet had ten parts.

The new booklet has a four point rating scale for performance. The old booklet had a five point rating scale.

In the new booklet, KRAs are weighted to a total of 100 percent, and the weight of each KRA may not exceed 30 percent, or be less than 10 percent.

Generic Assessment Factors (GAFs) will no longer be weighted or assessed independently, but must be incorporated into each KRA and assessed within the KRAs.

During the final assessment, both Mid Term Review and Annual As-

essment performance scores will be combined and calculated using a simple formula to determine the final performance score and category.

Each employee must enter into a Performance Agreement that includes a Work Plan on or before 31 May of each financial year.

Performance agreements of employees at production levels (salary levels 2 to 7) must have four KRAs.

Employees at junior management levels (salary levels 8 to 10) and middle management (salary levels 11 to 12) must have a minimum of four KRAs and a maximum of six. All KRAs must be weighted to a total of 100 percent.

The number of KRAs for officials on Occupation Specific Dispensations (OSDs) is determined in line with the various OSD classifications.

All moderating committee members must have at least 12 months service in DCS. In the past, officials were required to have at least 24 months of service before they could serve in a moderating committee.

### What has stayed the same?

Only whole numbers may be used in scoring. The use of decimal numbers is not allowed.

An employee acting in a higher position shall be assessed at the level of their permanent post and not at the level of their acting post.

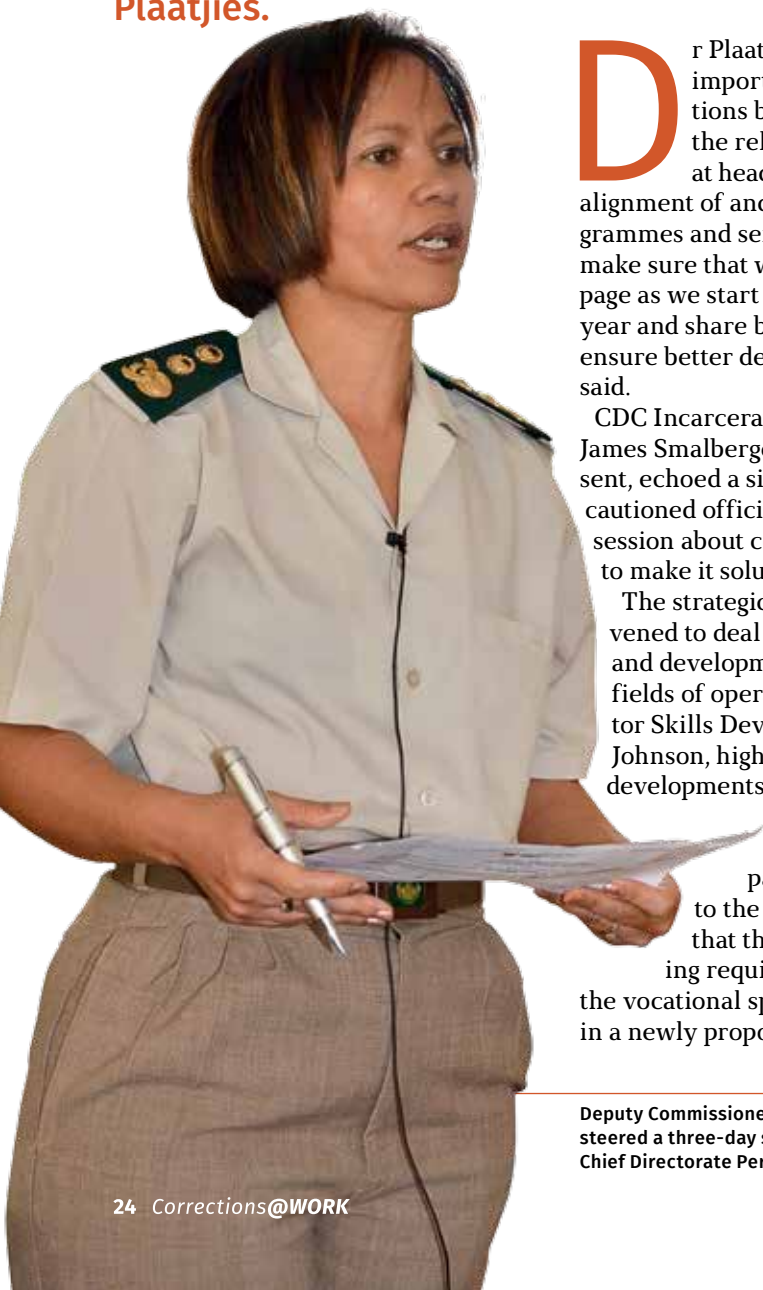
An employee who had been absent from work for a continuous period of three months or longer shall be deemed to have performed satisfactorily, provided s/he had permission or was on precautionary suspension for that period within the performance cycle. Periods of prolonged absence includes all types of approved leave.

No employee shall qualify for a performance reward, including pay progression if they do not sign a performance agreement within the stipulated timeframe. The Performance Agreement and Work Plan must be completed and signed by the supervisor and the job holder within two months of the start of a performance cycle for existing employees and within three months after a new appointment, a secondment or a transfer. ☐

# Strategies to grow OFFENDER DEVELOPMENT discussed

BY NELISWA MZIMBA

**The Chief Directorate Personal Development held a three day strategic session from 27 February to 1 March 2018 at Zonderwater Management area, which was steered by Deputy Commissioner Minette Plaatjies.**



**D**r Plaatjies outlined the importance of interactions between regions and the relevant functionaries at head office to ensure alignment of and planning for programmes and services. “We must make sure that we are on the same page as we start the new financial year and share best practices to ensure better decision making,” she said.

CDC Incarceration and Corrections, James Smalberger, who was also present, echoed a similar sentiment and cautioned officials not to make the session about complaints but rather to make it solution-driven.

The strategic session was convened to deal with new policies and developments in the various fields of operations. The Director Skills Development, Marion Johnson, highlighted legislative developments in skills development provisioning and how the department will respond to the changes. She said that the workplace learning requirement to qualify in the vocational sphere has resulted in a newly proposed skills develop-

ment model of accredited centres for specialisation. “We offer the same courses as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges at no cost to the offenders,” she said.

New developments around TVET colleges require that the department adjusts. “We are in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Higher Education and Training,” she said. She explained that the department’s fully equipped workshops be accredited as authentic workplaces that will offer the practical work hours necessary for learners to qualify in a trade.

TVET colleges are institutions that offer post school programmes that are quality assured by Umalusi, and aim to prepare students for the workplace or self-employment. Offender TVET programmes in DCS include engineering N1 – N6, Business Studies N4 – N6 and National Certificate L2 –L4.

The session gave regions opportunity to share best practices. KwaZulu-Natal, which is renowned for their high matric pass rate, place a high premium on stakeholder partnerships, encouraging parents’ involvement in offender education and sharing knowledge among teachers of difficult subjects such as Science and Mathematics.

The Eastern Cape shared their approach towards tackling the backlog of lifers. Based on their approach, a lifer’s task team in skills development review the sentence plans of lifers who are refused parole, and each lifer is attended to according to their individual needs. St Albans was identified as a good facility where the skills development of lifers are facilitated.

Acting Director Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture (SRAC), Baby Matsei, outlined the mandate of her directorate, which is to ensure that offenders benefit and enjoy participation in sports and cultural activities. She encouraged officials in sports to be creative despite the limited resources. She emphasised the importance of building relationships with external stakeholders to continue recreational activities for

**Deputy Commissioner, Dr Minette Plaatjies steered a three-day strategic session for the Chief Directorate Personal Development.**



*TVET colleges are institutions that offer post school programmes that are quality assured by Umalusi, and aim to prepare students for the workplace or self-employment.*

offenders, such as the 67 Blankets for Mandela Day project. She announced that SRAC is finalising a long mooted policy that will regulate the selling of offender art work.

Other matters that were discussed pertained to cost containment measures and maximising resources. The Director Production Workshops and Agriculture, Cynthia Lepule, said the department has the mandate to strive towards self-sufficiency with its food production. The directorate would like to increase the production of bread as a staple food in correctional centres. "We have started with the feasibility study in the Limpopo/Mpumalanga/North West region for at least three bakeries: Potchefstroom, Tzaneen and Standerton," she said. The opening of the St Albans bakery is expected towards the end of this year when renovations are completed.

Director Lepule was impressed with the overall discussions of the session and applauded the regions for their performance despite limited resources and the drought. Western Cape Regional Head Development and Care, Geraldine Pienaar, said they were able to perform quite well despite the crippling drought, thanks to the plans they had put in place as a region. 📍

1. Director Production Workshops & Agriculture, Cynthia Lepule said the department strives towards self-sufficiency in food production.

2. Education and Training Regional Coordinator from the Eastern Cape, Mkhululi Davashe was very impressed with how KZN approached the development of youth offenders by having full time schools.

3. KwaZulu-Natal Regional Head Development and Care, Jabu Chonco, and Regional Coordinator Production Workshops and Agriculture, Francois Botha, shared their best practices.





Director Training Standards Phineas Lambani said DCS has to find innovative ways to work around its financial constraints to meet the skills needs of the department.

# DCS addresses skills needs for 2018/19

BY NELISWA MZIMBA

**The department engages in continuous evaluation of its employees' skills base in order to identify and address skills gaps that hamper service delivery.**

**I**t is obliged to submit a Workplace Skills Plan annually to the Skills Education Training Authorities (SETA). This plan lays out the skills needs of an organisation, rates them according to priorities and describes the range of development interventions that it will use to address those needs.

About 30 skills needs have been registered in DCS but development interventions might be curtailed to a few due to limited financial resources. Remand detention and security related training needs will receive

priority in the current financial year.

The department works closely with the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA), and the Public Service Education and Training Authority (PSETA). SASSETA caters for the safety and security services of the department, whilst PSETA facilitates administration related skills. The ultimate aim in DCS is to support skills development at national level through these authorities as mandated in the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998.

Branches and regions submit their training needs based on the personal development plans of officials before the start of every financial year. Director Training Standards, Phineas Lambani explained that managers have to consider the development needs in core business areas when prioritising needs. He said it was vital that reports provided by external bodies such as the Auditor-General, Inspecting Judge and Portfolio Committee be considered when evaluating the weight of each need. "When we request branches and the regions to indicate their training needs, we also indicate that managers should take these reports into account and the Annual Performance Plan (APP) of the department," he said.

Remand detention has been placed as the top priority in the department's skills training plan. Officials will be equipped in remand detention management procedures, including disciplinary procedures, code of conduct, privilege system of remand detainees, administration of state patients and administration of the duration of detention.

Security is the second priority on the list, with special focus on maximum security centre management, riots, hostage negotiations, crowd and gang management, self-defence, conflict management, Emergency Security Team training, effective use of security equipment such as CCTV inmates tracking, advance driving, VIP protection, dog handling and more. Firearm training is also included but singled out as a separate priority because of a recent amendment of the Firearm Act, which requires the retraining of previously trained officials.

Other training priorities that are in core business include Community Corrections training, build environment artisan training, agriculture production and food services. Upskilling of heads of centres, heads of community corrections and their assistants was also ranked amongst the top priorities. The department continues to prepare female and disabled middle managers for senior posi-



tions and promotes gender equality in a sector that is still perceived as male dominated.

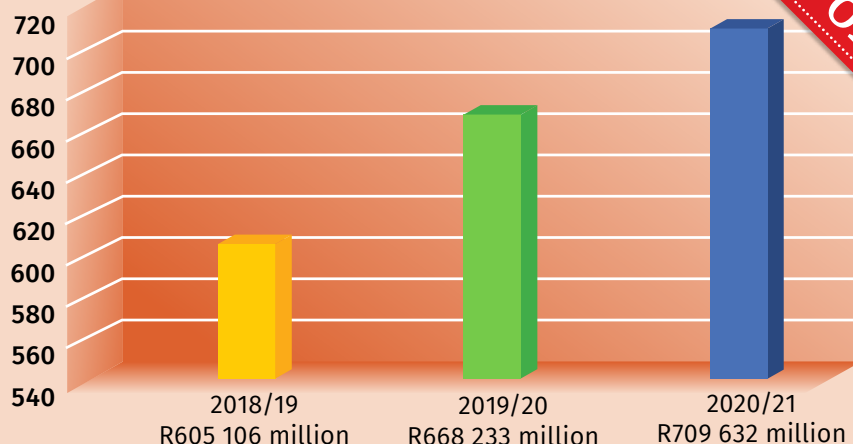
The National Learning Committee, which consists of senior managers in head office and regions deliberate and decide on training priorities for every new financial year.

A budget of R189 853 million has been allocated for skills development in the 2018/19 financial year. DCS has to find innovative ways to work around its financial constraints resulting from cost containment. DCS has accredited trainers for its training related to core business, while the National School of Government and SASSETA assist with management courses.

The department also offers a learnership programme for unemployed youth. Acting CDC Human Resources, Linda Bond said the department plans to enrol about 1000 students into the learnership programme this financial year. The previous intake was in March 2017.

According to Director Human Resource Administration and Utilization, Rhulani Ngwenya, 858 of the 974 learners of 2017 have been absorbed into permanent posts. The remaining learners may be absorbed when vacancies at entry level become available. ■

Acting Chief Deputy Commissioner Human Resources, Linda Bond said the department wants to enrol just over a thousand students into the DCS learnership programme this financial year.



DCS budget cuts by Treasury: 2018 to 2021

## Efficiency initiatives salvage millions

**S**trict cost containment and operations efficiency measures are being implemented in the department. Since 2016, DCS recovered over R100 million through various cost containment and efficiency measures. In the past financial year, there was a focus on down managing operational expenditure such as travel, accommodation and subsistence, which resulted in a 39% reduction in expenditure amounting to R66 million.

Additionally, contract negotiations have been implemented to curb costs of food for offenders that are procured externally. Since implementing these Supply Chain Management practices in 2016, savings of R42 million will be achieved in the medium term.

An Operations Efficiency Task Team's (OPETT) work with branches, the Budget and Compensation Committees, and others, has also shown dividends in that the department recovered R28 million from the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS). OPETT was established on request by Minister Michael Masutha in August 2016. Its key objective is to contain the department's expenditure and improve efficiency

in a time of ongoing cost cutting measures. Its members are cross functional and include representation from the office of the Minister.

Task team member, Director Financial Resources Analyst Ms Nonhlanhla Mabusela in the office of the Chief Financial Officer said the refund by GEMS resulted from an audit of officials who retired (including ill-health retirement) before November 2016. According to an agreement the department has to pay 100% of their medical aid. The ongoing audit authenticates the life status of these officials and removes those from the system who have since passed on. The audit has now been embedded as part of normal business operations in the branch Human Resources.

Mabusela said changes in the Supply Chain processes, such as price negotiations with suppliers have resulted in savings and are changing "our way of work through issuing contracts over two years at negotiated prices". Other projects in the pipeline are a decisive move towards utilising alternative energy in correctional centres and establishing a trading entity within the department that supplies goods such as farm produce. ■



Arina with Rudi van Heerden, Administrative Secretary of the Deputy Regional Commissioner. Rudi works closely with Arina on the regional quality assurance committee.

**T**his single mother of two is a prime example of what passion and hard work can achieve, even when the odds are stacked against you.

Studying and working at the same time is daunting, but when you are recovering from a near fatal cardiac episode, the challenges are greater. Arina was well on her way with her doctorate when disaster struck. In October 2016, she collapsed at home with sudden cardiac arrest and it crumpled her world. She literally died a few times and was shocked 82 times to get her heart started and keep her alive. When she regained consciousness, a few days later, she discovered she was in intensive care and learned there were more procedures and surgeries to follow. One of this was to implant a subcutaneous cardiac defibrillator (S-ICD). She was the second person and first woman in Africa to receive this device. The procedure had implications as recovery and adjustment was uncertain. Despite everything that she experienced, she survived and when she tells her story, it is hard to believe that she survived the ordeal. Even the medical staff could not understand how she can be alive. The fact that she is alive, can only be considered a miracle.

The aftermath of what she experienced was very difficult for her. She suffered severe post-traumatic stress disorder. She remembers sitting in hospital asking the doctor, "Where's my brain – I must have brain damage," because she had such difficulty to remember anything. Everyone discouraged her from continuing her studies.

All the post-operative complications made Arina doubt that she could complete her doctorate, but she told herself, "I have to do this, even if it's just for me". Her recovery is continuous and will take long, but she was back at work in less than three months, which was quite unbelievable because of the small percentage of people who survive sudden cardiac arrest. Many survivors are not able to work again or only return to work six

# NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE gives official new lease on life

BY CARLA LANGE

On 29 October 2016, Arina Wepener suffered sudden cardiac arrest and nobody thought she would survive, but less than 18 months later she graduated with a doctorate in Christian Counselling.



# “You need to make a difference where you find yourself.”

months later. She is thankful for a few close friends and colleagues who were tremendously supportive during this time.

Arina is the special categories coordinator in the Western Cape region and works within the development and care directorate. Special categories include incarcerated mothers with babies, females, the elderly, youth, children and offenders with disabilities. Her work is administrative in nature. She works with the regional quality assurance committee, interdepartmental forums regarding special categories, which has a monitoring role over special categories at correctional centres, and she is involved in celebrations and commemorative days for special category offenders. Arina also assists with arrangements for internal training of social workers in the region.

She comes from a background where both parents were educators. Their children were encouraged to study. The first degree Arina obtained was BA Law, but she soon realised law was not for her and she completed a B.Soc. Sci. Honours (Industrial Psychology) at the University of Free State.

In 1996 she was employed at DCS as a psychometrist in recruitment and a year-and-a-half later she resigned, only to return as an HR practitioner six years later. At that stage she was getting divorced and she became a single parent. This did not stop her from wanting to study further and she started looking at various institutions where she could do her masters, but nothing excited her. She knew she would have to be excited by her field of study because she could

foresee a difficult road ahead by juggling work, single-parenthood and part-time studies.

She heard about Therapiea College in Melkbosstrand where Christian counselling is offered and made enquiries. Arina could not do a masters as she had no theological background, so she opted for a post-graduate certificate in biblical counselling in 2012. Thereafter she continued with her masters.



**GRADUATION DAY:** Arina Wepener enjoys a proud moment with her sons Carus (left) and Joshua Hewitt.

Arina really enjoyed what she was doing and was excited to go to class, even though it was physically draining to work all day, organise the household and then commute all the way to Melkbosstrand. She completed her masters in 2014.

In January 2017, Arina returned to her work at the Western Cape regional office in Goodwood but it was hard to adjust. She felt that nobody understood what she had been through. People thought she was on her feet and good to go, but they did not grasp her difficulties. Working through the emotions of what had happened was a massive task.

Something that played a big role

in assisting her was the support groups she found online, and it appeared she was the only South African in the support groups who had suffered this condition and lived to tell the tale. The S-ICD device implanted was already used in other countries for many years and it assisted her to link to online support groups who could give advice and explain what to expect.

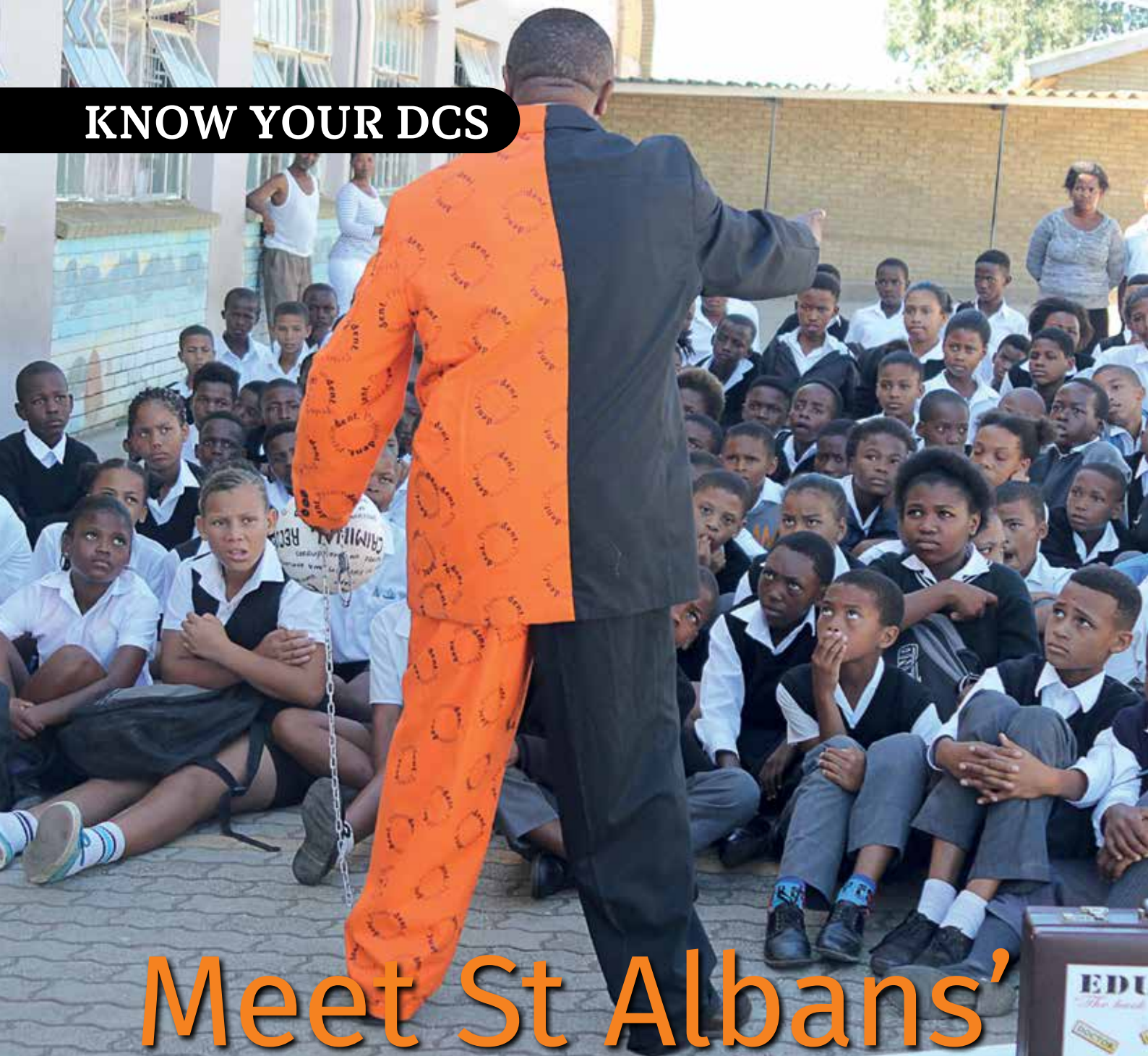
Arina doesn't think she was given a second chance to specifically finish her doctorate, but she was busy with it and wanted to complete it. She says people often think their goal should be to do something great, but that isn't true. "You need to make a difference where you find yourself. Just like someone made a difference in your life, that you remember for years to come, so you should realise that you too impact

the lives of others and you might not see it, but you have a purpose."

As part of her doctorate she developed a model and questionnaire within an ethical framework that can be used in Christian counselling. The model is based on the metaphor of a crime scene with the focus on the visual senses, although all senses are involved, but also strongly relying on narrative therapy, which is in essence storytelling.

Arina's advice to officials who are juggling the demands of work, family and studies is to have excellent time management and to always put the children first. "Your children cannot suffer because of the choices you made. Don't neglect your family because of the demands of your studies, or work." 📌

**KNOW YOUR DCS**



# Meet St Albans' 'PrisonDent'

BY NANDIPHA JAMES AND TIYANI SAMBO

Often we get inspired by extraordinary human virtues displayed by correctional officials who go beyond the call of duty, driven by a desire to positively impact the lives of others.





Mr Brian Davids in his 'PrisonDent' attire, which represents both the President of a country and an offender.

**T**he department is blessed with such ideal correctional officials in the mould of Mr Brian Davids from St Albans Management Area, for whom his job has become a calling to transform lives.

In the spirit of 'Thuma Mina', a call made by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the State of the Nation Address in February this year, Davids refused to stand by and watch the lives of the youth around Port Elizabeth go to waste largely due to social ills such as drug abuse and gangsterism.

During 2010, Davids conceived a crime awareness programme dubbed 'PrisonDent', because he was deeply concerned about the increasing levels of youth delinquency and school drop-outs in the area. The programme was targeted at school learners and was designed to create awareness about the dangers of drugs and engaging in gang-related activities.

It was not long before PrisonDent gained popularity among locals who saw it as an effective tool to confront the challenge of youth delinquent behaviour. Such is the impact of PrisonDent that Davids is constantly inundated with requests by local schools, churches and other community-based forma-

tions to present the programme. "The nature of the request or need determines how I adapt my presentation. Setting and audience vary, sometimes I present to parents and they use it to set better standards for their children," said Davids.

He would like to expose the programme to juvenile offenders because he believes that they can also benefit from his proactive programme, and that this would reduce the influx of youth into correctional centres. Davids said he receives good feedback from those who have been exposed to PrisonDent in the form of testimonies and letters.

Where possible, he ropes in members of the Emergency Support Team (EST) when he presents to school learners as a way to help the audience gain insight into life behind bars, which he hopes will serve as a deterrent and discourage delinquent behaviour before it occurs.

As a result of the programme's success, PrisonDent was nominated in the Gabriel Golden Gospel Awards 2018 in the category for best Community Team Outreach Programme. ☐

*As a result of the programme's success, PrisonDent was nominated in the Gabriel Golden Gospel Awards 2018*



## Eastern Cape honours veterans

BY VUYOLWETHU GADU

**T**he Eastern Cape region held a long service awards ceremony on 11 May 2018 in East London to recognise over 150 officials who have been in DCS for 20, 30 and 40 years. Regional Commissioner Nkosinathi Breakfast thanked officials for their commitment to keep the country safe. "At times we are not always valued, appreciated or noticed for the work we do," he said.

The long service awards acknowledge and celebrate officials' selfless and loyal service to the department and the people of South Africa. Their years of service have advanced the vision of making a safer South Africa possible. ☐

## Bravery triumphed

BY BUSISIWE SHIBAMBO

**M**r Seth Rakoto of Klerksdorp Management Area risked his own life in 2017 when he saw three remand detainees running away from the South African Police Service (SAPS) at the court's basement.

Rakoto decided to run after the three offenders and he managed to catch two of them.

The third one handed himself over to SAPS a few days later.

Rakoto received a certificate for bravery from Deputy Regional Commissioner of Limpopo,

Mpumalanga and North

West, Kenneth Mthombeni as

a token that his effort did

not go unnoticed. Mr

Mthombeni said a man of

Rakoto's calibre is scarce. ☐



Zwelithini Molopyane, the choir conductor's passion for music is invigorating.

# OFFICIALS' CHOIR to compete on world stage

BY NELISWA MZIMBA

**The Kgoši Mampuru II choir is determined to give an exceptional performance at their debut on the world stage at the World Choir Games that will be held in Tshwane from 4 to 14 July 2018.**

**T**he competition represents a momentous achievement for the 55-member choir of correctional officials who had to raise a participation fee of R45 700. Formerly known as the Choir Olympics, this contest is the largest choral event in the world.

The choir, also known as Unitas, started their preparations in February this year. They will perform 13 songs during the competition. "We have daily rehearsals that focus on the elements of music in relation to the songs, physical exercises and team building games to encourage team spirit," said choir conductor, Zwelithini Molopyane.

Their daily rehearsals include assistance from well-known local music experts. Mr Keviet Pali, a lecturer,

singer and adjudicator for the Old Mutual National Choir competition, is one of the experts that will assist the choir with voice training. "Choirs have a tendency of focusing on songs and forgetting the most important instrument, which is their voices. My job is to empower the individual voices in order to enhance the ensemble. I will help them recognise their strengths, weaknesses and proper choral tone," he said.



The competition means everything to this choir: "we are going to be exposed to great music, great talent, great conductors and great music arrangers".

"We never thought that we will compete on an international stage, we are nervous about it but very excited to be part of making history," said Motshidisi Makamani who works at Kgoši Mampuru II production workshop as a personnel clerk. She is one of the oldest members of the choir, having joined it 20 years ago. Makamani is grateful to the choir's executive committee for



The Kgoši Mampuru II choir will compete at the World Choir Games, the biggest choral music competition in the world.

infusing fresh ideas that have opened this opportunity for them.

Although the choir appreciates the unwavering support from the management at Kgoši Mampuru II, individuals and companies who have offered sponsorship, not all is smooth sailing. The shift system and staff shortages in correctional centres make it difficult for members to attend all rehearsals. The choir still needs a helping hand to cover the costs of accommodation, uniform, catering and experts' fees. "We are humbly requesting individuals and companies to help us with sponsorship," said Patricia Mothapo, who is the choir's public relations officer.

Another member, Lekgwala Ngobeni, called for support from colleagues all over the country to get the word out. "Colleagues are welcome to attend our rehearsals, and they must come and watch our performances during the competition in support of a brand that we have built not only for Kgoši Mampuru II, but for the whole department," he said.

The choir is planning to have two concerts to raise funds. The first will be held in the management area during the first week of June and the second will be a send-off concert at Brythenburg theatre on 29 June, where the choir will perform their repertoire for the competition.

The competition is hosted every two years in a chosen city anywhere in the world. During the competition, choirs compete for gold, silver, bronze, or "Successful Participation" awards. The focus of the games is on participation above winning with the aim to inspire people to experience the strength of interaction through music. The games will be held for the first time on the African continent. 📍



# Roll-out of DCS ID cards nearing completion

BY TIYANI SAMBO

The Directorate Security Standards is nearing the final phase of the DCS identification cards roll-out, which commenced in 2013.

**T**he directorate ensures that officials follow the Minimum Security Standards for Correctional Centres and Standard Operating Procedures for Access Control at Correctional Centres.

The department made a decision to issue identification cards to its officials in 2007, which was followed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Government Printing Works (GPW) to the tune of about R2 million, for the procurement of ID card machines and printing of the cards. This project was underpinned by the urgency to comply with the DCS Identification Card Policy of 2003, which outlines measures to authenticate the identity of employees.

The ID cards will also help prevent escapes resulting from lack of identification measures. Deputy Director Security Standards,

Simon Sefodi said that the cards are a credible form of identification that is used by officials when they take offenders to hospitals. To date, over 37 000 officials have received their cards. A card is issued to all permanent employees.

Each card is embedded with security features to prevent fraudulent cards and is valid for 10 years. The cards can be replaced at no personal cost after 10 years. However, a worn out card can be replaced at an official's own cost of R120. Should an official lose their card they must report it at their nearest police station and thereafter to their Personnel Office, together with a SAPS-issued case number. A lost card will be replaced at the personal cost of R120 if the investigation reveals negligence by an official. Even when issued, the ID card remains the property of the department and must be returned when officials



Thabang Malapane of Johannesburg Management Area has his fingerprints taken for his DCS identity card.

terminate their service.

Mr Sefodi said officials from the directorate will visit all the regions to ensure that officials who could not be issued with an ID card earlier, are covered this time around. He said the project was a success even though it took longer than anticipated to complete due to officials' shift patterns and cost containment measures that are being implemented across the department. ©



Jimmy Mdluli from the Directorate Security Standards (centre) is flanked by excited officials of Johannesburg Community Corrections flashing their new identity cards.

# Yoga

## on the mat and into your life

BY SAMANTHA RAMSEWAKI

**Workout fads come and go but virtually no other exercise programme is as enduring as yoga. It has been around for centuries. Yoga is a combination of physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines which originated in ancient India.**

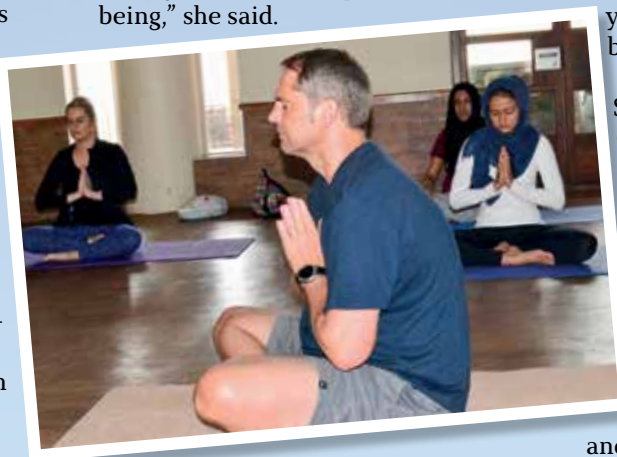
**A**t Johannesburg (JHB) Management Area, psychologist Bonny DiBlasio brought a different approach to help officials

release stress from their busy work week. Working at JHB is no walk in the park. Around 1 580 officials are overextended in ensuring the safe custody of about 8 500 offenders and 3 900 persons under the system of community corrections. DiBlasio established a yoga club in November 2016 and its membership has grown to over 50.

"I was fortunate to meet Jasmin Bremner (yoga instructor) after attending one of her private classes in 2016 and immediately experienced the benefits of her class. Yoga was then introduced to the rest of the psychology team at JHB who also recognised the benefits and we decided to introduce it to other officials," DiBlasio said.

Working in a correctional environment is considered one of the most stressful jobs possible, with high levels of depression, substance abuse and absenteeism. "The department recognises this and provides op-

portunities for officials to engage in sport and wellness programmes. Yoga has been established as a sport, but clearly also has an impact on well-being," she said.



**Yoga does not require equipment, only one's own body. It is a great choice for a person who wants a holistic approach to mind and body strength.**

### Myths about yoga

DiBlasio thinks there are misconceptions about yoga which prevent people from participating. "One participant thought it was a 'magical' or 'mystical' practice. I have heard people saying it is a religious practice. Yoga is primarily a physical activity involving various body exercises and

postures which improves strength and flexibility. It integrates the practice of meditation which in layman's terms has to do with focusing your attention and awareness on breath," she said.

There are many forms of yoga. Some are fast-paced and intense. Others are gentle and relaxing. People of all ages and fitness levels can do the most basic yoga poses and stretches. It can be done almost anywhere – indoors and outdoors.

Arend van der Merwe, a CO1 official gave up his gym contract after his wife's health took a dive. He joined the club and decided to stay. "Yoga made me aware of how to take care of my body and guided me on eating clean. I changed my perception towards life in a positive way and I see this change in my colleagues who are committed to yoga like I am," he shared.

In yoga, the spine is the structural and energy centre of the body. Our everyday habits of sitting, driving, working at computers and cellular phone use have resulted in poor posture. Spinal rigidity and misalign-



ment can have serious health implications. In yoga, the position of the spine in each pose is important both structurally and energetically.

Alicia Kamfer, secretary to the Area Commissioner said: "After practising yoga, I minimised consultations with my neuro-surgeon. My back is more flexible. Through meditation I'm truly aware of my wellness, physically, spiritually and mentally."

Letitia Thabethe is a correctional official at one of JHB's male maximum centres. "I participate in yoga because it is beneficial to me in many ways. It improves my flexibility and my eating habits. The meditation relaxes my mind," she said.

Yoga is an option for those who suffer from diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart disease. It is advisable to ask your doctor what you can do, should you suffer from any disease. You may need to avoid certain postures. A gentle programme of yoga, coupled with light aerobic activity like walk-

ing may be the best way to start.

According to Director Employee Wellness, Dr Pravesh Bhoodram, yoga, mindfulness training, meditation and art have several benefits for the correctional official. "The Directorate Employee Wellness has given workshops on the effects of lifestyle diseases on the body. Correctional officials have a high Body Mass Index (BMI) which contributes to increasing levels of hypertension (high blood pressure). Correctional officials also suffer from the highest levels of occupational stress than any other occupational group in South Africa," he said.

Yoga helps arthritis sufferers become more flexible without placing significant stress on the joints. It can assist pregnant women to relax, remain physically strong and keep in shape. It is however advisable to practise it under an instructor experienced in prenatal yoga.

Jessica Kaloo is the management area's compliance officer. "My health has improved since doing yoga. I feel more relaxed and it has helped me to become aware of my deepest nature," she said.

Yoga can help you get off the hamster wheel and gain perspective on what is really important – your well-being. ©



Unfortunately, many people experience stress, worry and anxiety, all of which have an adverse effect on health. Yoga is great for relieving stress and it quiets the mind. After just one yoga class, officials said they felt less tense and fatigued.



Even the sceptics ended up becoming sold yogi's (those who practise yoga) at the weekly class.





# Zonderwater shows off giant blanket of Madiba's portrait

BY NELISWA MZIMBA

**More than a thousand guests gathered at Zonderwater Management area on 24 April 2018 to witness the unveiling of a 7 956 square metre portrait blanket of the iconic anti-apartheid leader, Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.**

**T**he blanket, named the Massive Mandela Masterpiece (MMM) was a contribution by 67 Blankets for Mandela Day in collaboration with DCS to celebrate what would have been Madiba's 100th birthday this year.

The colourful portrait consists of more than 3 000 square blankets that were stitched together and laid

out on the Zonderwater sports field. The gigantic image, larger than the size of a rugby field, could not be comprehended from the ground. Guests viewed the breath-taking artwork on two big screens through the lens of a drone flown over it to capture the image from above.

"The collage of colour, beauty and artistic symbolism that this portrait displays speaks of a nation

seeking to repaint itself in the image of arguably one of the greatest icons ever known to humankind, Tata Madiba," said Minister Michael Masutha about the Massive Mandela Masterpiece.

Oupa Masita, an inmate, crocheted most blankets and has a trophy to prove it. "Knowing that my blankets are going to keep 67 underprivileged people warm this winter makes me very proud," Masita said.

Mrs Graça Machel echoed Madiba's words saying, "it seems impossible until it's done." She applauded Carolyn Steyn, the founder of 67 Blankets, for making a difference with a simple idea of knitting and keeping Madiba's legacy alive. ©