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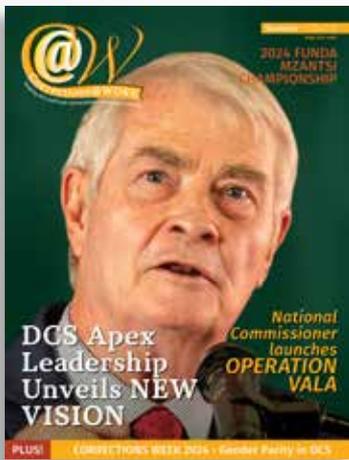
2024 FUNDA
MZANTSI
CHAMPIONSHIP

DCS Apex
Leadership
Unveils NEW
VISION

National
Commissioner
launches
**OPERATION
VALA**

PLUS!

CORRECTIONS WEEK 2024 • Gender Parity in DCS



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correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



EDITORIAL

Correctional officials are society's last bastion of hope

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has a rich history that dates back more than a century since the Prisons and Reformatories Act of 1911.

Corrections@WORK is the national magazine of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), Republic of South Africa

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However, its roots go even deeper with the first prison in Pretoria reportedly being built in 1865.

As South Africa celebrates 30 years of freedom and democracy, DCS has undergone significant transformation from its early days as a colonial prison to its current role in rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders into society.

In this new era for Corrections, DCS officials play a pivotal role in building safer communities while also providing opportunities for offenders to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society.

This summer 2024 edition of *Corrections@Work* highlights innovative programmes and initiatives that are transforming the corrections landscape. From integrated employee health and wellness to unconventional rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, our staff are working tirelessly to ensure that offenders are equipped with the skills and support they need to lead law-abiding lives. You will read stories of dedicated correctional officials who go beyond the call of duty, and redemption of offenders who have turned their lives around and are now making positive contributions to society.

Correctional officials are society's last bastion of hope, and, therefore, you cannot fail in the execution of your duties. You are the guardians of courage, the catalysts of change and the architects of emancipation. Your work is not just about enforcing

You are the guardians of courage, the catalysts of change and the architects of emancipation.

ing rules or maintaining order; it's about transforming lives, restoring dignity and rebuilding communities. As you go about your daily work, remember that every interaction, every conversation, and every decision has the power to shape the future. Your job matters, and your dedication inspires. Thank you for your tireless efforts, your unwavering commitment and your unshakable optimism.

As we enter 2025, as DCS, let us rise to the challenge. Let us be the change we want to see. Let us create a society where every individual has the opportunity to heal, to grow and to thrive.

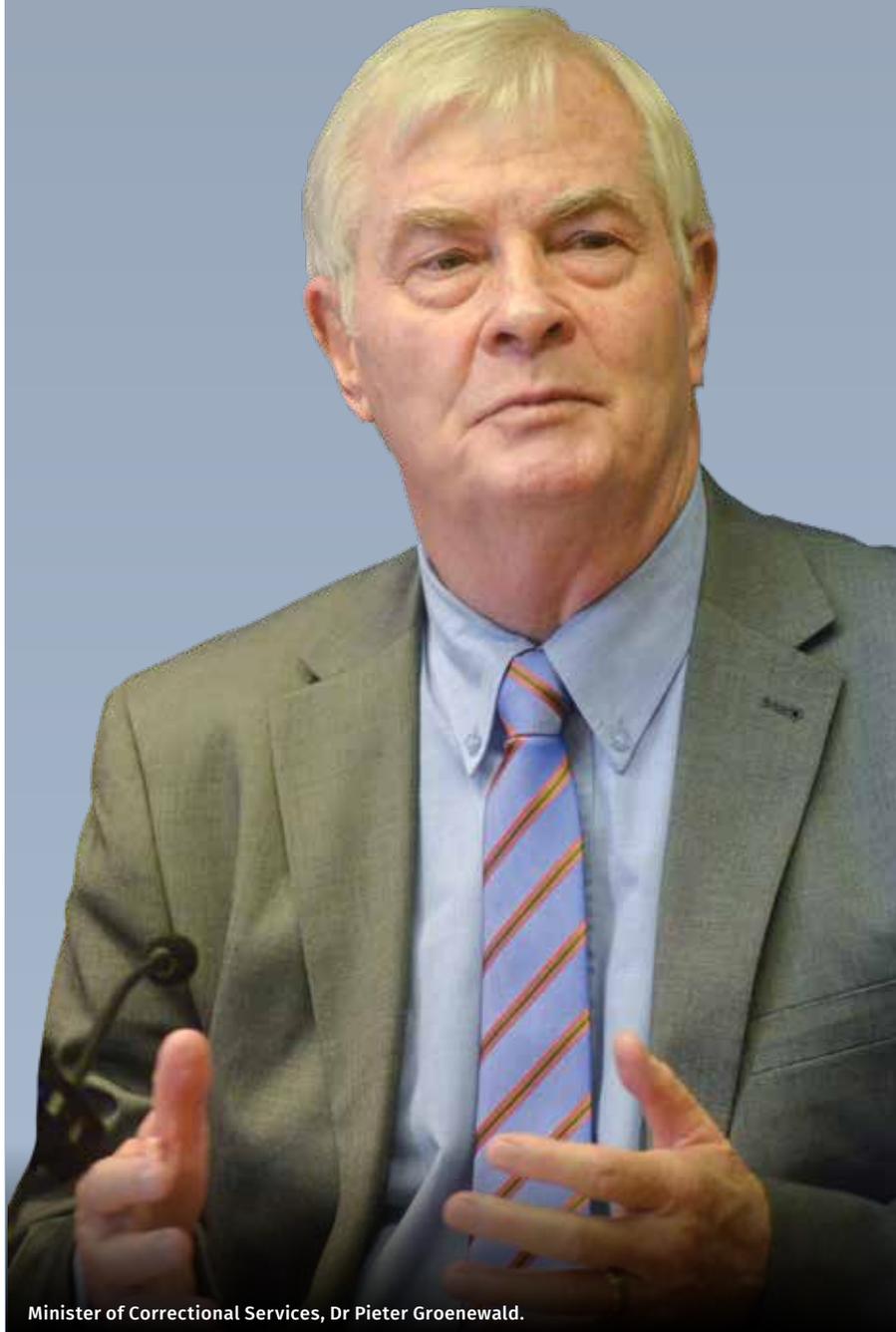
Together, we can create a brighter future for our great nation South Africa!

Happy reading,

*Logan Maistry
Editor in Chief*

DCS Apex Leadership Unveils A New Vision for the Department

By Kabelo Selebogo



Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald.

The Government of National Unity (GNU), which is the 7th administration of South Africa's democratic dispensation, has ushered a rebirth of a stand-alone Ministry of Correctional Services following a decade-long amalgamation with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Development.

Under the steady hand and visionary leadership of Dr Pieter Groenewald, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) is undergoing a paradigm shift in pursuit of ambitious goals to reshape the future of corrections in South Africa, and to be a benchmark for the African continent and the broader global community.

Upon assuming office, Dr Groenewald laid his vision for the Department, underpinned by concrete and implementable plans to set the Department on a developmental and pioneering trajectory to make an indelible mark through meaningful contribution in building a safer South Africa, and bringing change to the lives of ordinary citizens.

Minister Groenewald has assured the nation that departmental officials and management will work as a collective to provide the general public with improved services. "I look forward to working with Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintsali, National Commissioner Makgothi Thobakgale, his executive and each and every DCS official in ensuring quality service delivery and a safer South Africa," said Minister Groenewald.

He stated that DCS leaders, managers and officials have been afforded a rare opportunity to bring about real change to the lives of ordinary South

Africans. “We have been afforded the opportunity to restore and build, to fix what is broken and to render hope for a safe, peaceful and prosperous future,” he added.

In respect to the filling of vacancies, job creation and equipping young people with relevant skills, Minister Groenewald mentioned that the Department will pay more attention to the type of investments made in training and developing staff members.

“A well trained and motivated staff is essential for creating a rehabilitative environment and getting rid of crime in our correctional facilities. The Correctional Services Youth Programme aims to place young people in suitable positions within the Department through the normal recruitment processes, learnerships, internships as well as experiential learning,” he expounded.

Minister Groenewald urged all officials to serve with pride and integrity. He is adamant that the Department will adopt a zero-tolerance approach in dealing with rogue elements which he characterised as “klein jakkalsies wat die wingerde verniel”, loosely translated to mean “small mistakes which cause big troubles.”

To this end, he has urged management to be firm in implementing consequence management to deal with the bad apples that are spoiling the good name of the Department.

He acknowledged a number of challenges encountered by the Department, including inefficiency in the departmental operations, cuts in budget, corruption, ill-discipline, overcrowding, dilapidated infrastructure, ever-increasing population of remand detainees, staff shortages, crime syndicates and gangs operating in correctional facilities as well as new crime patterns.

Dr Groenewald outlined the imperative for offenders’ rehabilitation, aptly dubbed the Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability Strategic Framework (SSSF), which empowers offenders with various skills encompassing bakery, woodwork, steel workshops, textile, shoe factory, key manufacturing, agricultural production, chicken-broilers, red meat abattoirs to mention a few.

On the perennial challenge of overpopulated correctional centres, Minister Groenewald emphasised the



Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Ms Lindiwe Ntshalintshali.

urgent need to reduce overcrowding through a coordinated approach and effective functioning of all departments in the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster.

“An Overcrowding Reduction Strategy is being implemented, yet for it to succeed requires all entities in the criminal justice system to work in unison. DCS cannot refuse to admit any person referred by the court regardless of its occupancy level,” concluded Dr Groenewald.

Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintshali echoed the Minister’ sentiments as she indicated that the Department will spare neither effort nor resources to deliver on its constitutional mandate.

Notwithstanding budgetary constraints, Deputy Minister Ntshalintshali said the Department will continue to pay close attention to a variety of critical service delivery areas including safety, security, provision of primary health care and the essential role of community corrections.

“Effective security measures have seen the Department record a reduction in escapes, assaults and unnatural deaths. Availability and access to medicine is critical in ensuring the provision of comprehensive primary health care services to the inmate

“We have been afforded the opportunity to restore and build; to fix what is broken; and to render hope for a safe, peaceful and prosperous future.”

- Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald

population. Correctional Services has a total of 243 correctional centres across the country, which have clinics that cater for the health needs of all inmates,” she said.

The Deputy Minister added that there are 218 community corrections offices serving parolees, probationers and Awaiting Trial Persons (ATPs) for effective monitoring and supervision. She highlighted that the reintegration of offenders under the system of community corrections provides offenders with an opportunity to lead a socially responsible and crime-free life within their communities. ●



Minister Groenewald asking pertinent questions during his site visit to Mangaung.

Minister Groenewald visits Mangaung and Grootvlei Correctional Centres

By Josial Ramakoena

In line with his publicly stated intention to appraise himself with operational work at different correctional centres, the Minister of Correctional Services, Pieter Groenewald, flanked by National Commissioner Makgothi Thobakgale, visited the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mangaung Correctional Centre (MCC) and Grootvlei Correctional Centre in the Free State and Northern Cape Region.

The visit on 14 October 2024 saw detailed presentations being made by both centres to take the Minister through the nuts and bolts of operations and what they are mandated to do and achieve. Mangaung was represented

by Mr Papi Mokoena, who gave a comprehensive overview of the centre, the historical context which brought about its existence, as well as circumstances surrounding the 2023 infamous and daring escape of offender Thabo Bester.

“The Thabo Bester fiasco is a

disgrace for all of us. We take full responsibility for what has happened because it was under our watch, but we also remain committed to ensuring that we never see the recurrence of such an incident. We are quite sorry for what has happened,” he said.

As a result of this escape, three (03) employees of Mangaung Correctional Centre have since been dismissed, with a further eight (08) having been investigated. This R300 million facility boasts state-of-the-art security features which have since been further upgraded post this unfortunate escape. It has a total of 504 employees, against a total of 2928 inmates with 1643 of these inmates sentenced to life. Other security measures implemented include shift changes, disallowing of private vehicles into the facility from 17h00, as well as the installation of five (05) additional standalone cameras, among others.

Minister Groenewald shared some of his personality traits which he believes should be emulated by



“I am very impressed with agriculture and the work being done here. We must continue working with pride as we head back to basics, and that can only happen if we work together.”

- Minister Groenewald

Not even books were spared as Minister Pieter Groenewald combed through files in the Grootvlei workshop to juxtapose utterances with source documents.

all. “I believe in honesty and I am a straight talker. I saw for myself that the Bester escape was well planned, and was a highly intelligent operation. I can agree that, overall, the facility is in good condition and I am happy with the upgrade of the security in the centre. I intend to revisit the centre, but let me take this opportunity to wish you well in your job and I must say we do not have easy clients as we house the most dangerous people in our centres,” he said.

The second phase of Minister Groenewald’s visit was at Grootvlei where formal proceedings saw yet another set of presentations being made. In welcoming Minister Groenewald to Grootvlei, National Commissioner Thobakgale indicated that this was a second visit by the Minister to a correctional centre since assuming office.

Grootvlei’s post establishment sits at 872 against a total of 2629 inmates with a bed space of 1478, thus translating to 77.76% overcrowding. Due to the negative snow-ball effects emanating from, among others, overcrowding, the centre has installed searching cubicles to curb the proliferation of contraband into the facility.

Both Mangaung and Grootvlei were also treated to a walk-about to identified areas of interest which

serve as anchors for effective implementation of the DCS mandate. For both centres, the Minister and his entourage were taken to the inmate cells, kitchens, hospitals, Mangaung’s CCTV room and Grootvlei’s Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability Framework (SSSF) projects. These SSSF projects included the under-construction chicken abattoir with four broiler facilities, vegetable gardens, dairy and the layers.

Minister Groenewald expressed his gratitude and high praises for the work Grootvlei is doing to ensure its self-sustenance. As a result of

the proficiency in production levels, Grootvlei is supplying some management areas within the Free State and Northern Cape Region with vegetables.

“I am very impressed with agriculture and the work being done here. We must continue working with pride as we head back to basics, and that can only happen if we work together. In the same breath, we must make sure that we get rid of rotten apples in the system to ensure we reach even greater heights in terms of our performance imperatives,” concluded Dr Groenewald. ☺



Correctional Services Minister, Dr Pieter Groenewald and a high-level delegation conducting a site inspection at a chicken abattoir and broiler construction site.

National Commissioner Thobakgale launches 'OPERATION VALA'

By Tiyani Sambo

The National Commissioner (NC) of the Department of Correctional Services, Makgothi Thobakgale has called on correctional officials to be a force multiplier and to be agile in complementing the work of other law enforcement organisations, as this time of the year demands heightened vigilance and proactive measures.

He sounded this clarion call during the launch of 'Operation Vala', the Department's flagship festive season security plan at Grootvlei Correctional Facility, under Free State and Northern Cape region, on 28 November 2024.

The start of 'Operation Vala' heralds a period of heightened vigilance, signaling the Department's state of readiness to detect, prevent and thwart security breaches in all its correctional facilities across the country. In a show of force and

demonstrating the power of collaboration in asserting state authority, the launch of 'Operation Vala' was attended by multidisciplinary teams of law enforcement organisations including the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the Free State Traffic Police.

NC Thobakgale said DCS will continue to work in tandem with sister departments in the criminal justice system, adding that this integrated approach will have a positive snowballing effect in preventing and combating crime beyond DCS walls



National Commissioner Makgothi Thobakgale has called on Correctional Officials to be vigilant at all times.



DCS security officials demonstrating their state of readiness for the festive season security campaign.



“Operation Vala is not merely an enforcement initiative, but a comprehensive strategy to ensure the stability and safety of our correctional facilities during this critical period.”

- National Commissioner Makgothi Thobakgale

Correctional Services has pledged to strengthen collaboration with other law enforcement agencies and communities to ensure a peaceful and safe festive season for all.

of confinement. “The Department of Correctional Services will work hand-in-hand with other law enforcement agencies and community leaders to address crime hotspots and deter potential criminal activities,” he said.

The NC emphasized the importance of strengthening security protocols to prevent incidents such as escapes, smuggling, and any form of violence that may arise. To this end, he indicated that routine and surprise inspections of cells and common areas will be conducted daily. “Operation Vala is not merely an enforcement

initiative, but a comprehensive strategy to ensure the stability and safety of our correctional facilities during this critical period,” he mentioned.

During this period, the Department will implement restrictive measures to avert security lapses whilst ensuring that inmates are kept engaged, thus avoiding idleness and frustration. “We also recognize the importance of addressing inmates’ mental well-being, to minimize disruptions. Therefore, structured programmes, including counselling by specialists and recreational activities, will be

intensified. Family visitations will be managed responsibly to ensure they continue without compromising security,” explained NC Thobakgale.

In the same token, he implored community members, civil society, faith-based organisations, and the private sector to join hands with DCS in this important crusade to create a safer South Africa where everyone can enjoy the festive season free from fear or harm. ☪



Minister Groenewald clears backlog on lifers parole applications

By Tiyani Sambo

In a bold statement of intent, the Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald, has moved swiftly to clear the inherited backlog of 495 parole applications for offenders serving life sentences.

By 03 October 2024, Minister Groenewald had meticulously ploughed through a mountain of parole applications and successfully cleared all of them, ahead of the self-imposed tight deadline of 15 October 2024, which will go down as one of the significant milestones achieved within the first 100 days of the Government of National Unity (GNU).

Minister Groenewald had set himself this lofty target, which he announced publicly during an appearance before Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services on 17 September 2024.

Minister Groenewald has also finalised 104 new applications that were submitted for consideration after he assumed office. As at 03 October 2024, he had considered 599 parole applications for lifers, approving 25 applications, granting one day parole, and three foreign nationals' parole were also approved subject to deportation. The latter relates to two Mozambican citizens and one Zimbabwean. Dr Groenewald referred back 570 applications for further profiling. In addition, Minister Groenewald considered five applications for medical parole of lifers, approving one and declining four.

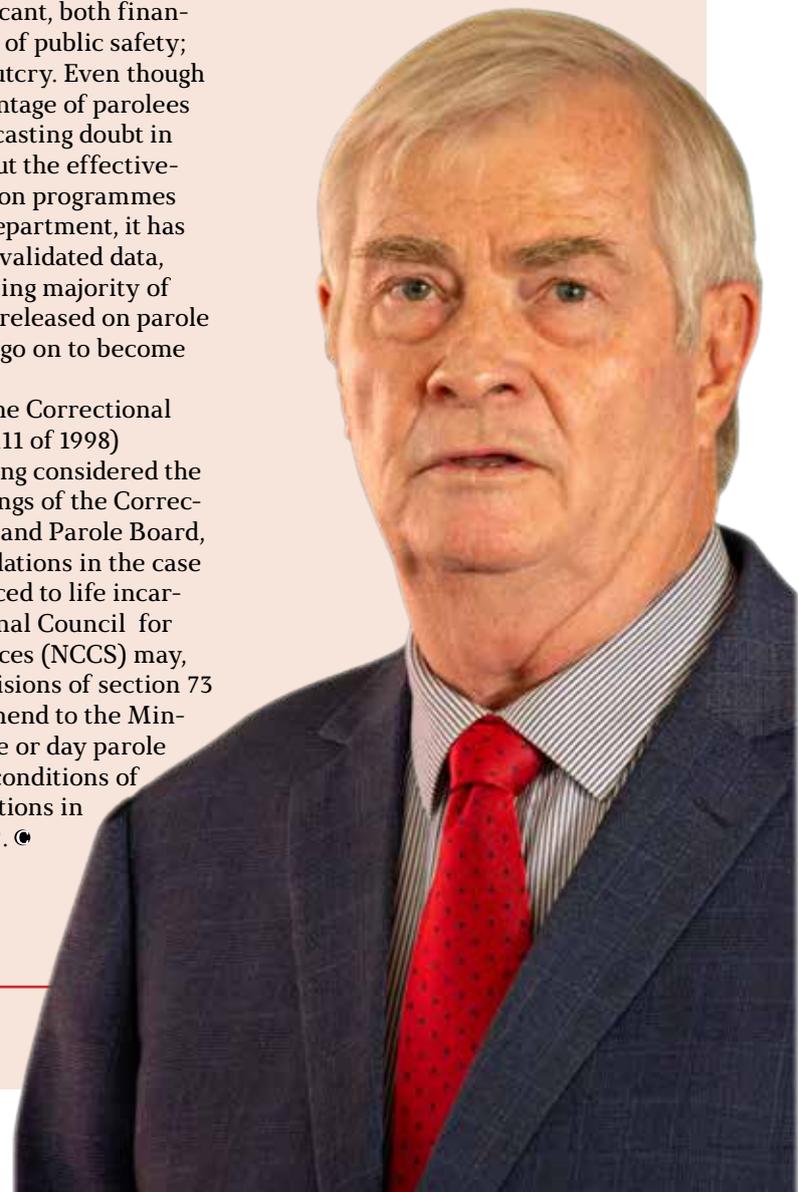
South Africa's parole regime has come into sharp focus and split public opinion in recent months follow-

ing sporadic reported incidents of parolees committing abominable criminal acts. The cost of reoffending to society is significant, both financially and in terms of public safety; hence the public outcry. Even though a very small percentage of parolees go on to reoffend, casting doubt in some quarters about the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes rendered by the Department, it has been proven, with validated data, that an overwhelming majority of offenders who are released on parole don't reoffend and go on to become model citizens.

Section 78(1) of the Correctional Services Act (Act 111 of 1998) stipulates that having considered the record of proceedings of the Correctional Supervision and Parole Board, and its recommendations in the case of a person sentenced to life incarceration, the National Council for Correctional Services (NCCS) may, subject to the provisions of section 73 (6) (b) (iv), recommend to the Minister to grant parole or day parole and prescribe the conditions of community corrections in terms of section 52. ●

Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald.

South Africa's parole regime has come into sharp focus and split public opinion in recent months following sporadic reported incidents of parolees committing abominable criminal acts.





Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintshali observes as one of the offenders performs his duties at the Workshop.



Inmates hard at work at the Witbank Production Workshop.



Workshop Manager, Nomvula Mthombeni explaining the production process to Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintshali.

Utilizing offender labour to ramp up mass production of officials and inmates uniform By Lleda Sekgobela

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) continues to make remarkable strides in addressing the chronic shortage of uniform for both officials and inmates.

Informed by the Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability Strategic Framework, DCS is evolving into an entrepreneurial outfit, through the establishment and revitalisation of enterprises, in order to become less dependent on the public purse.

One such thriving enterprise is the production workshop at Witbank Management Area, under Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West Region, which has been revitalised through investment in modern production equipment and human capital with the aim of ramping up production and meeting the growing demand for officials and inmates uniform.

The workshop runs five production lines which require an average of 25 people to achieve the daily target of 80 shirts and 90 trousers. The workshop also produces overalls and skirts. First established in 1976, and identified in 2022 as a critical self-sufficiency and sustainability enterprise, the Witbank Production workshop was capacitated and now operates with a workforce of about 250 person-

nel, made up of 16 permanent DCS officials, 27 seamstresses appointed on contract and an average of 220 offenders, who are responsible for the shoe factory and clothes manufacturing projects. Section Head, Nomvula Mthombeni says that even though the priority is to produce uniform for officials, the workshop also caters for inmates clothing.

Unpacking the production process, Mthombeni says that they start by ordering material from internal supply chain, drawing up patterns according to size, laying of material on the cutting board, collecting of pattern pieces by line managers, manufacturing and cleaning of garments, ironing of garments, quality checking and control packaging.

Witbank acting Area Commissioner, Mandla Gwambe says that inmates gain valuable skills from the production workshop, which advance their employment prospects and opportunities to establish their own businesses upon release.

He says that Area Management has found a formula to avoid disruption

of operations at the workshop. Citing some of the challenges they have to contend with, he mentioned that they have implemented contingency measures to mitigate against unforeseen setbacks that may impact on overall production output. He mentioned that they ensure continuous training of offenders to replenish the workforce to prevent depletion occasioned by the transfer of offenders to other centres or their release to the outside world.

He added that among other interventions to curb wastage and loss, they continually engage in a process of identifying offenders with interest to work at the workshop, render continuous training to prevent poor quality, and ensure strict supervision of offenders during the manufacturing process.

Gwambe added that the skills development programme assists offenders to adjust and to make crime-free decisions about employability beyond incarceration.

“The Department endeavours to equip offenders with the necessary skills and educational opportunities, including placing them in production workshops. The drive behind the projects is to make a difference in the lives of the offenders by enhancing and developing their capacity,” he expounded. ●



Correctional Services Minister Pieter Groenewald, Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintshali and National Commissioner Makgothi Thobakgale taking part in mass prayer sessions held at various correctional facilities across the country.

CORRECTIONS WEEK 2024

Celebrating 30 years of freedom and democracy towards shaping the future of corrections

By Tlou Matjekana

Since the inception of South Africa's democracy in 1994, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has undergone significant transformation, shifting from a punitive approach to a correctional system centred on rehabilitation, social responsibility and human development.

This strategic shift aims to prevent re-offending and breaking the cycle of crime.

DCS annually hosts Corrections Week, a nationwide initiative, which is aimed at educating communities on the Department's vital role in ensuring a safer and more secure South Africa. Held

every year in September, this flagship public education campaign highlights the effectiveness of rehabilitation in correcting offending behaviour and emphasizes the importance of family, community, and societal involvement in the rehabilitative process. The observance of Corrections Week further strengthens DCS' commitment to working alongside community

organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and various stakeholders in building a better South Africa for all.

The 2024 Corrections Week took place from 15 to 21 September under the theme: "Celebrating 30 Years of Freedom and Democracy towards Shaping the Future of Corrections". It marked a significant milestone in fostering community engagements, encompassing various programmes in the core functions of the Department, including Remand Detention, Incarceration and Corrections as well as Community Corrections.

The 2024 Corrections Week kicked off at St Albans Management Area in the Eastern Cape Region, led by National Commissioner Makgothi Thobakgale where, among other activities, he led a raid at Medium B Correctional Centre in the Management Area and extended a helping hand to needy communities. National Commissioner Thobakgale also served food at a soup kitchen in Sisonke Sophumelela Centre, located in Zwide, Gqeberha. The soup kitchen was adopted by Port Elizabeth Community Corrections and serves about 300 community members of Zwide for three days every week. The St Albans Bakery also provides surplus bread to the soup kitchen.

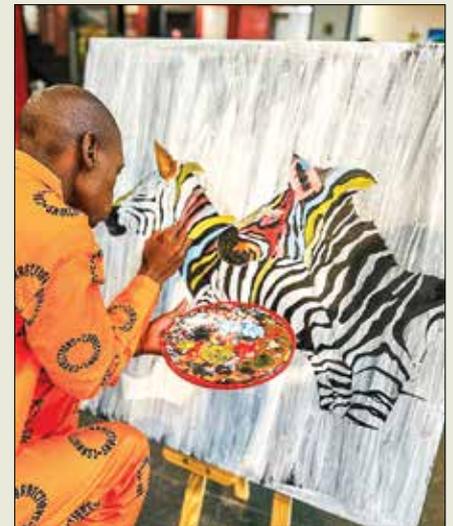
Corrections Week also highlights the rehabilitation programmes by show-



Correctional officials and members of the interfaith community came out in numbers to attend nationwide prayer sessions to mark the official closing of Corrections Week 2024.



National Commissioner, Makgothi Thobakgale serving soup with Major-General Nonhlanhla Zulu from the South African Police Service during the launch of Corrections Week.



Quality artwork produced by an inmate was on display at the Department of Correctional Services exhibition stall at eNCA studios in Hyde Park, Johannesburg.

casing offender artwork, with the aim of demonstrating their artistic talents and their potential growth as part of the Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability Framework. Artwork pieces produced by offenders were displayed at the eNCA studios at Hyde Park, in Johannesburg.

Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald and his Deputy, Ms Lindiwe Ntshalintshali, wrapped up Corrections Week with meaningful prayer sessions. The sessions were held simultaneously nationwide, with Minister Groenewald attending from

Klerksdorp Correctional Centre, while Deputy Minister Ntshalintshali participated in a similar ceremony at Witbank Correctional Centre. The events brought together correctional officials, interfaith leaders, and community members to promote healing, restoration, and unity.

In capturing the essence of Corrections Week, Minister Groenewald fittingly drew reference to the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. “The Constitution is an amplifier that, amongst others, unites us in our diversity. Today, I have

experienced quite a lot of diversity in the presentation of prayers made here,” he affirmed.

Dr Groenewald also acknowledged the grave dangers of the work done by correctional officials, and commended them for their selfless service to the country and humanity at large. “You work in an environment where brokenness, pain and suffering are your daily realities. DCS officials must work together, be supportive of each other and serve with pride to regain public confidence,” said Minister Groenewald. ☺

Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services hails Boksburg Correctional Centre as a benchmark for others to emulate

By Kopano Ramashala

As part of their oversight responsibility, Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services (PC) crisscrossed Gauteng Region from 8 - 11 October 2024 as they visited six management areas.

The management areas visited are Baviaanspoort (Emthonjeni Juvenile Correctional Centre), Leeuwkoop (farms and workshops), Kgoši Mampuru II

Management Area (C-Max, Unisa Hub, and the Atteridgeville Gender Responsive Centre for Women), Modderbee, Johannesburg (Remand Detention and Female Centre), and Boksburg, to gain a first-hand ac-

count of pockets of excellence as well as challenges experienced in the day-to-day operations at the coalface.

In the end, the visit induced mixed feelings among members of the Committee as they got to witness an example of an entrepreneurial and innovative state department through effective implementation of Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability Framework projects at various correctional facilities. In contrast, they also identified factors that hinder the effective administration of offender rehabilitation, especially arising from the perennial challenge of overcrowding which is putting immense pressure on infrastructure, budget and correctional officials.

During the unannounced visit to Boksburg, the Committee discovered that the Management Area was well run and systems were in place. The Portfolio Committee Chairper-



Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintshali and National Commissioner Makgothi Thobakgale inspecting the dairy farm at Leeuwkoop Correctional Centre.

son, Kgomotso Ramolobeng hailed the smooth operations and general management of the Management Area.

“As the Portfolio Committee, we are happy with what we discovered, more so because we arrived unannounced. We are cognizant of the challenges that the centre may be faced with, especially on overcrowding, but it’s a situation most of the centres do not have control over,” she said.

Boksburg Management Area is overcrowded by 58.62%, with foreign nationals accounting for a sizable chunk of the inmate population at 1149.

However, according to Ramolobeng, the challenge of oversaturation owing to foreign nationals is not unique to Boksburg Management Area. “All our correctional centres are accommodating high numbers of foreign nationals. We must engage our stakeholders to mitigate this situation,” she explained.

The Portfolio Committee asserted that Boksburg Management Area has turned its adversities into triumphs. “We need to give credit where it is due; the DCS systems are under strain but Boksburg seems to have figured a way of making the most of what is at their disposal. We heard about other centres going to Bangkok to benchmark on best practices; we say Boksburg Management Area is the ideal place for benchmarking,” Ramolobeng said.

Despite contending with various challenges, and bedevilled by a high level of overcrowding as well as dilapidated infrastructure, Johannesburg Management Area’s operations also impressed the Portfolio Committee. Notwithstanding the sewage odour in the centre’s recently renovated kitchen, the Committee was generally elated with the management and accountability of Johannesburg Correctional Centre managers. “The fact that the Auditor-General (AG) has been giving the Management Area clean audits is an indication of good governance systems and accountability,” said an upbeat Ramolobeng.

Despite an overall revamp of a



Portfolio Committee members taste bread baked by offenders at Boksburg Correctional Centre.

kitchen at Modderbee Management Area, the Portfolio Committee made unpalatable observations during the oversight visit. According to the Committee, the kitchen is not the only thing that needed revamping at Modderbee.

Ramolobeng highlighted a need to strengthen the management of the Area, and ensure that all skills facilitators are accredited.

Deputy Minister for Correctional Services, Lindiwe Ntshalintshali assured the Committee that corrective actions are being implemented to address the shortcomings.

The PC commended Leeuwkop Management Area for its well-run Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability Framework programmes which include animal farming, plant and workshop production. With an accredited abattoir on sight, Leeuwkop keeps a staggering 1647 pigs which supply other correctional centres. They also have 208 beef cows for Leeuwkop offender consumption.

The Committee also visited the Atteridgeville Gender Responsive Centre for women in conflict with the law, which falls under Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area. The centre currently houses a total of 162 female foreign nationals (85 remand detainees and 77 sentenced offenders). With 51 offenders participating in the daily offender labour team, the Atteridgeville Gender Responsive Centre for Women is

clean and neat.

Most of the Correctional Centres visited by the PC experienced overcrowding as a major impediment to the effective running of their centres.

Deputy Minister Ntshalitshali says overcrowding remains a thorny issue as centres continue to receive offenders every day. “The discussions with other sister departments on the transfer of foreign offenders to their countries of origin are ongoing and we are confident that this matter will be addressed accordingly by government,” she said. The Deputy Minister further reiterated the importance of collaboration and intergovernmental bilaterals especially amongst security cluster departments to address matters such as overcrowding.

DCS National Commissioner, Makgothi Thobakgale said that a permanent reduction of overcrowding solemnly rested in the eradication of crime. “As DCS, we are participating in crime prevention interventions. A lower inflow of inmates will lead to a steady reduction of overcrowding,” he said. He further committed to draw valuable lessons from the visit of the Portfolio Committee adding that matters raised by the committee will be adequately addressed by DCS.

Ramolobeng stated that formal recommendations emanating from the oversight visits will be shared with DCS management in November. ●



Implementing a holistic approach towards employee health and wellness

Kabelo Selebogo

Integrated Employee Health and Wellness (IEHW) remains the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) top priority and is the tonic required to maintain a fit and healthy workforce capable of coping with the strenuous demands of the job of being a correctional official.

Officials spend most of their time at work more than at home, and it has been scientifically proven that the environment in which individuals spend most of their time has a profound impact on their well-being. A conducive working environment creates a harmonious space for all employees to be more productive and stress-free. As officials encounter challenges from their daily routines, IEHW practitioners come to the rescue by offering a diverse bouquet of programmes and services tailored for officials, including Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD).

DCS, through the IEHW Chief Directorate, continues to make concerted efforts to promote the general health and wellness of of-

officials through a broad assortment of programmes and initiatives, ranging from health campaigns, Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP), physical activities including 26 recognised sporting codes, recreational club facilities such as guest houses, swimming pools, gymnasiums, petrol stations and study loans amongst others. The Chief Directorate also facilitates regular Wellness Days by bringing specialists who offer a variety of healthcare and financial services wherein officials undergo health screening, learn more about adopting healthy lifestyles, and receive expert advice to help them make sound financial decisions.

IEHW programmes have rapidly transformed the nature of holistic support provided to employees in the workplace, thus mitigating against po-

tential risks and promoting occupational health, safety, productivity and wellness of employees which has an inevitable knock-on effect on their families and the broader society.

Four Functional Pillars, namely HIV/AIDS, TB and STI Management, Health and Productivity Management, Wellness Management and Safety, Health, Environment, Risk, Quality (SHERQ) Management prescribe the minimum standards and focus areas that must be covered in rendering effective IEHW services.

The broad scope of IEHW also include the important work of the Directorate Facilities Fund, which encompasses a Sports Fund which supports formal sports as well as recreational activities and provides financial support for officials participating in various sporting codes through their general clubs, development, national departmental championships as well as officials participating at provincial, national and international level. Other benefits that accrue to members include financial aid through interest-free study loans as well as discounted packages at Karridene Holiday Resort, timeshares and the Widow and Orphans Fund.

The newly appointed Deputy Commissioner (DC) for IEHW, Cornea Mandeane-Strydom, has lauded this initiative and encouraged officials who have not taken up membership of the Fund to do so. The aim of the General Club is to provide recreational facilities to personnel so that

they may participate in organised activities of sport clubs and enjoy leisure time with their families, friends and colleagues.

“With just R17.80 monthly contributions, made up of R11 for membership, VAT R1.80 and R5 for Sports Fund (R2 regional sports fund, R1 national sports fund, R1 development fund, R1 membership), fund members get to benefit from massive leisure time at over 80 guest houses, hotel and caravan parks, and interest-free study loans which includes tuition and books. The fund covers more than 26 sporting codes,” she said

DC Mandeau-Strydom further explained that DCS organises a number of national championships and also participates in South African mainstream sporting events such as the Comrades Marathon, Two Oceans, Freedom Race, Big Walk, Sanlam Cape Town Marathon as well as the Soweto Marathon.

As part of promoting physical activities, reducing obesity and promoting fitness, DCS has a total of 29 gymnasiums and runs regular programmes such as the National Weight Loss Challenge.

“As a security cluster Department, physical fitness is imperative to remain active. IEHW is planning on improving the current state of workplace gymnasiums, focusing on infrastructure and equipment upgrades. We also plan to expand on the number of DCS internal gyms. For centres and regions that do not have gyms, the idea is to negotiate with service providers to secure membership discounts for officials at more affordable rates. We need to champion the change of mindset when it comes to the Weight Loss Challenge because it promotes a healthy lifestyle beyond the competition. Longevity is essential, and through frequent exercises, developing healthy eating habits and getting adequate rest, it can be achieved,” postulated DC Mandeau-Strydom.

She added that low employee morale leads to increased absenteeism, lack of productivity, over-utilization of sick leave and negative attitude leading to workplace conflicts, hence the importance of prioritising official’s overall or holistic wellbeing,

cannot be emphasized enough.

“IEHW advocates for a harmonious work environment. A number of programmes have been tailored to assist individual staff members including financial literacy to avoid unnecessary debts, inability to come to work due to shortage of funds, anxiety and stress, as well as smuggling contraband. Programmes such as supervisory training, motivational talks, utilization of brand ambassadors (DCS officials representing Sports Federations) and our partnering with Spiritual Care Services were introduced to boost the morale of officials. It is crucial for employees to feel comfortable in the workplace because that is where they spend most of their time. Officials must make use of the services offered to address their concerns and seek for help at an early stage,” she said. Supervisors are also encouraged to identify troubled employees as early as possible to enable them to undergo intervention programmes aimed at preventing minor issues from escalating into severe problems.

DC Mandeau-Strydom also stressed the importance of the EAP, which provides counselling for officials with personal challenges that affect their work performance and personal life. “Employees can access a professional assistant through EAP service for workplace conflict and personal challenges,” she explained.

Every organisation wants an environment that is incident and injury free in line with SHERQ as well as the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA). DC Mandeau-Strydom said various mechanisms have been put in place to comply with Occupational Health and Safety protocols.

“We ensure that workplace injuries are limited by having monthly OHS inspections to identify hazards or safety risks or other issues that might result in non-compliance with the OHS Act. Injuries are reported and necessary support is provided to those who sustain injuries such as transporting injured officials to attend to medical appointments or facilities, facilitating home visits to injured officials, offering support for post-traumatic stress disorder



1. Deputy Commissioner: Integrated Employee Health and Wellness, Cornea Mandeau-Strydom.
2. & 3. DCS officials being screened during a wellness session.

or psychotherapy and monitoring of treatment plans to ensure that the re-integration process back into the workplace is smooth as well as timeous payment of medical accounts,” she said.

She encourages officials to take full advantage of the approved two hours allocated per week to participate in sports and recreational activities in order to improve their health and general wellbeing. ●

A mark of academic excellence as correctional officials are conferred doctoral degrees

By Sachiel Nemafohoni, Matlhatse Nchabeleng & Phineas Tlhaku

The White Paper on Corrections lists special characteristics that an ideal correctional official should embody, which are essential in developing a dynamic and capable workforce that can match up to the demands of the job, the 4th industrial revolution, and be at the forefront in the professionalisation and modernisation of the correctional environment.

To realise its objectives, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has placed a high premium on attracting and retaining the best talented officials, who will serve as change and transformation agents, for the positioning of corrections as a profession and DCS as an employer of choice.

To this end, DCS is a chief proponent of self-development and encourages officials to take the initiative to acquire new knowledge and skills that can put them in good stead to make a meaningful contribution in the national task of shaping the future of corrections in South Africa.

It is said that the roots of education are bitter, but the fruits are sweet. This has proven to be true for two distinguished correctional officials from Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West (LMN) Region, Dr Peter Matsaung and Dr Emmanuel Mahlobogwane, who slogged it out until they reached the pinnacle of academic achievement, culminat-

ing in their recent conferral with doctoral degrees by the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), respectively.

Dr Peter Matsaung is reaping the fruits of his sweat after attaining his PhD in Criminal Justice from UNISA, while Dr Emmanuel Mahlobogwane graduated from TUT following a remarkable journey towards obtaining his PhD in Policing, specializing in Digital Forensic Technology.

Extending his congratulatory message, LMN Regional Commissioner, Tlabo Thokolo said, "I am absolutely delighted to celebrate the significant achievements of my two colleagues, who have deservedly earned their doctoral degrees. Their accomplishment not only brings personal fulfilment but also serves as a powerful inspiration to the entire LMN Region workforce. It demonstrates that we can strive for excellence regardless of age, and that pursuing one's dreams has no age limit".



Mr Tlabo Thokolo, LMN Regional Commissioner.

"Their accomplishment not only brings personal fulfilment but also serves as a powerful inspiration to the entire LMN Region workforce. It demonstrates that we can strive for excellence regardless of age, and that pursuing one's dreams has no age limit".

*- LMN Regional Commissioner,
Tlabo Thokolo*

Dr Peter Matsaung

The 41-year old Matsaung currently works as a Reception Clerk at Tzaneen Correctional Centre under Polokwane Management Area, responsible for admission and release of offenders.

He permanently joined DCS in 2017 after completing an internship programme at Boksburg Correctional Centre, under Corrections. Sending a message to colleagues who wish to walk a similar journey, he says, "nothing is impossible. Education is the passport to the future, but tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. Start now without hesitation because procrastination is the thief of time," said Dr Matsaung.

He advises officials, particularly the youth, to study while they are still young. He says it was not an easy journey but through dedication and hardwork, he managed to complete his doctoral degree and was thankful for the support from his colleagues and family.

His research topic was about "The Use of Intelligence-led policing to combat cybercrime in South Africa". Dr Matsaung says his findings can help the Department to identify and prevent crime before it occurs. He also gives advice on measures that can be adopted to tighten cybersecurity.

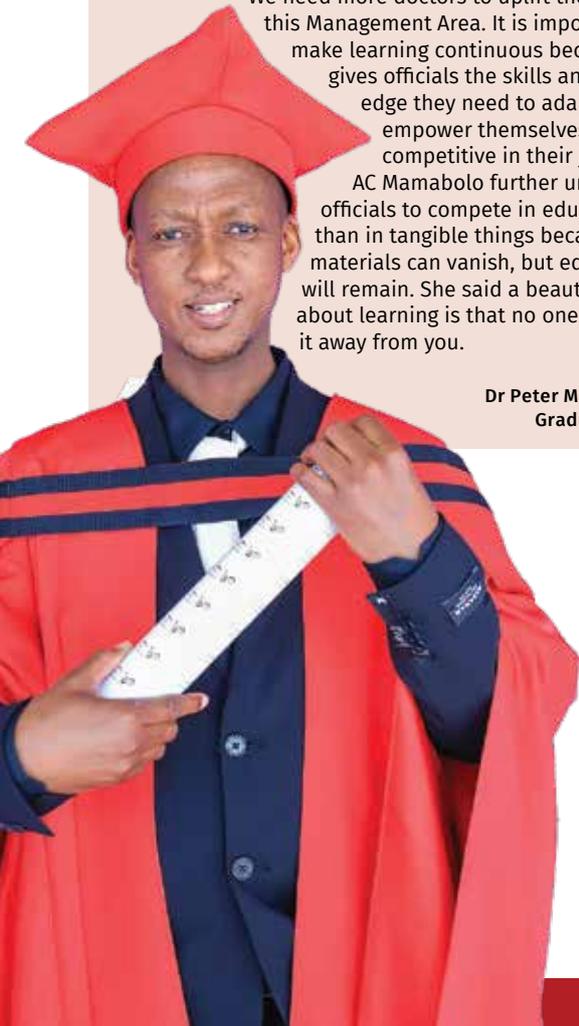
Dr Matsaung already published three articles and aims to write articles about combating smuggling and corruption at correctional facilities.

Polokwane Management Area Commissioner (AC), Lydia Mamabolo congratulated Dr Matsaung for his dedication and proving to everyone that it is possible. "I like his humbleness, he is someone who will help you with a smile. He is a down to earth somebody and if you do not hear from other people, you will never realize that he is a Doctor. This is a challenge to all officials to emulate him.

We need more doctors to uplift the spirit of this Management Area. It is important to make learning continuous because it gives officials the skills and knowledge they need to adapt and empower themselves to stay competitive in their jobs".

AC Mamabolo further urged officials to compete in education than in tangible things because materials can vanish, but education will remain. She said a beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.

Dr Peter Matsaung on Graduation Day.



Dr Emmanuel Mahlobogwane

Years of toil and sleepless nights culminated in Dr Emmanuel Mahlobogwane graduating with a PhD in Policing, specializing in Digital Forensic Technology during a Tshwane University of Technology graduation ceremony on 08 October 2024.

Dr Mahlobogwane is LMN Regional Coordinator Security and is also currently appointed as the acting Regional Head Corrections for the Region.

He recounts how after completing matric, his mother gave him a meagre R800 and encouraged him to make the most of it.

"This amount was barely enough for one module, as my field of interest, Diploma Uris in Law, required a total of 12 modules. Faced with this reality, I sought employment to support my educational aspirations. On 21 July 1995, I secured a position as a Prison Warder at Zonderwater Correctional Centre in the Gauteng Region," explained Dr Mahlobogwane. Despite facing numerous challenges, primarily due to financial constraints, time limitations, and family commitments, Dr Mahlobogwane persevered.

Throughout his academic journey, he discovered that a solid foundation in digital forensics was essential for effective investigations, which is key in his field of specialisation. He says that it is critical to stay abreast of emerging trends in Correctional Services and cybercrime, further highlighting that his studies focuses on real-world impact of cybercrime in the security sector, thus ensuring that findings inform evidence-based policies and practices.

His dissertation, presented to the South African Police Service (SAPS), highlighted the urgent need for specialized training in handling cybercrime.

Additionally, his research addressed social media investigations and the complexities of managing personal information within the Department of Correctional Services. Working with the Special Project Unit within DCS, Dr Mahlobogwane leveraged his expertise to track down cybercriminals operating within the correctional system.

He also hopes that his research will significantly enhance the capabilities of law enforcement in South Africa, ultimately fostering a safer and more informed society.

Dr Mahlobogwane further expressed his delight in achieving this milestone and said that he feels ready to fully participate in the development of our country in the investigation of cyber and computer related crimes.

Regional Coordinator Security and acting Regional Head Corrections, Dr Emmanuel Mahlobogwane flanked by his colleagues as they congratulate him on his monumental achievement.



DCS makes strides towards GENDER PARITY as more females take up key strategic positions

By Kabelo Selebogo

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has progressively made significant progress in closing the gap in terms of gender representation at the highest echelons of the organisation, thus placing it as one of the leading proponents of redress and transformation.

Previously, DCS mirrored a picture of masculinity due to overrepresentation of males across different occupational levels. However, the Department has over the years adopted a bold and deliberate posture to affirm women by appointing them into critical roles that were historically occupied by men. This paradigm shift has been vindicated as DCS women in brown have undeniably demonstrated that, like their male counterparts, they are equally as resilient and highly capable of achieving excellence when entrusted with responsibilities that were historically reserved for men.

As at September 2024, the Department was just over 4% shy of achieving its target of 50% female representation at Senior Management Service (SMS). Of the 148 SMS posts in DCS, 67 (45.27%) are occupied by women.

In an effort to meet the prescribed Employment Equity target, DCS has developed and adopted a four-year plan, ending in 2027, which seeks to achieve equity in the workplace by promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination. The plan is accompanied by Affirmative Action measures to redress the disadvantages experienced by designated groups in employment, in order to ensure equitable representation across all occupational levels of the workforce.

Upward mobility in the workplace gives officials a chance to grow within the organisation by advancing into new roles, better compensation as well as fulfilling their career aspirations thus avoiding stagnation.

As the Department continues to strive towards complying with set EE targets by recruiting appropri-

MS JABULISILE CHARITY CHONCO who has a combined service of 23 years in DCS, was recently appointed as the Deputy Regional Commissioner (DRC) of KwaZulu-Natal Region. She began her professional career as a Social Worker at the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (SANCA) in Durban, KwaZulu Natal in 1997.

DRC Chonco first joined DCS in 2001 as a Senior Correctional Officer responsible for the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) at the Western Cape Regional Office and Goodwood Management Area. She rose through the ranks and served the Department in various capacities, including:

- Regional Head: Development and Care, KwaZulu-Natal Regional Office from 2014 until she was promoted to her current position;
- Area Coordinator Development and Care at Goodwood Man-

ate, qualified officials with relevant qualifications, a number of women at SMS level are also leaving the organisation for greener pastures or due to retirement, thus impacting on the goal to achieve gender parity.

In terms of the plan, DCS intends to work steadfastly towards bridging the gap by recruiting and affirming more women in various specialised professional occupations such as artisans, educationists, legal practitioners, engineers, social workers, pharmacists, psychologists, medical officers, and professional nurses amongst others.

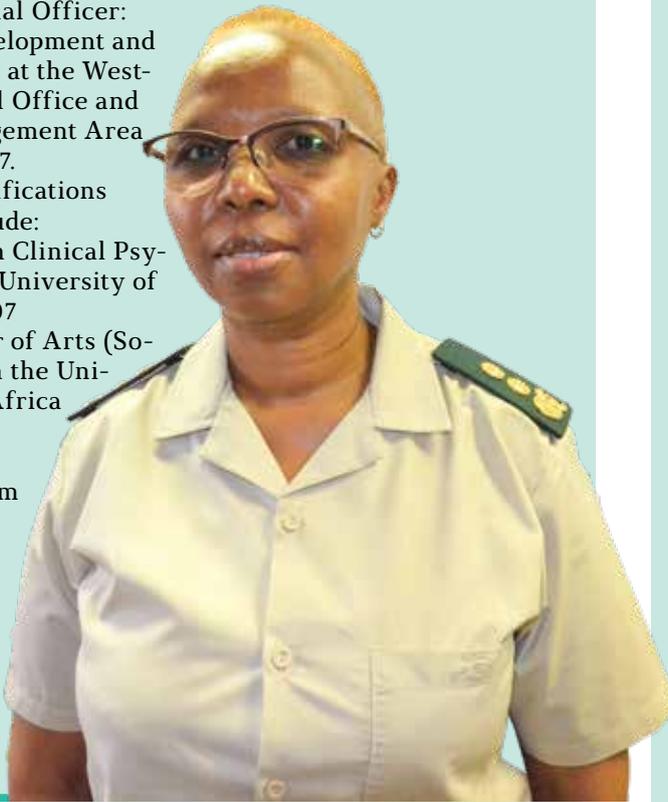
To demonstrate Management's commitment to achieve gender parity, the Department recently appointed the following three women as Deputy Regional Commissioners (DRCs), which are key senior management positions that are core to the effective execution of the departmental mandate.

agement Area, Western Cape Region from 2007 to 2014;

- Senior Correctional Officer: Correctional Development and Care Programmes at the Western Cape Regional Office and Goodwood Management Area from 2006 to 2007.

Her academic qualifications amongst others include:

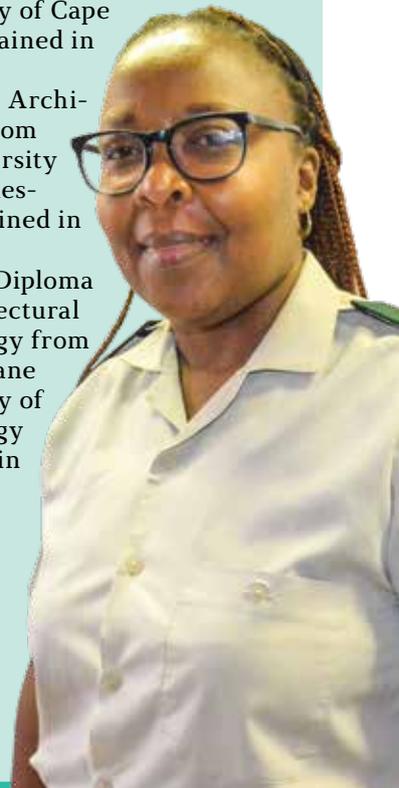
- Masters of Arts in Clinical Psychology from the University of Cape Town in 2007
- Honours Bachelor of Arts (Social Science) from the University of South Africa in 2001
- Sports Management Diploma from London Business and Management School in 1999
- Bachelor of Arts Social Work from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 1997.



MS MONICA MAKHANI, was appointed as the Deputy Regional Commissioner of Gauteng Region. Prior to her promotion, Ms Makhani held the position of Director: Facilities in the same Region from August 2016. She started her career as a Building Inspector at Madibeng Local Municipality from November 2001 and later moved to the City of Tshwane as a Plans Examiner in March 2003. She then had a brief stint from July 2005 to December of the same year as Works Manager in the Department of Public Works, which was followed by another short spell as Assistant Director from January to July 2006 in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). Thereafter, she was promoted to the post of Chief Construction Project Manager in the Limpopo Department of Public Works, a position she held until July 2016.

DRC Makhani holds the following qualifications:

- Masters in Conversation of the Built Environment from the University of Cape Town obtained in 2022
- B-Tech in Architecture from the University of Johannesburg obtained in 2012
- National Diploma in Architectural Technology from the Tshwane University of Technology obtained in 1998.



MS NONHLANHLA MABUSELA was confirmed as Deputy Regional Commissioner for the Eastern Cape Region. She first joined the Department in January 2017, as Director: Finance Analyst at National Head Office. In September 2020, she was transferred to the Gauteng Region to take up the position of Director: Finance and Supply Chain Management.

She also had intermittent stints as acting Area Commissioner of Johannesburg Management Area. Prior to her joining DCS, Ms Mabusela worked for various organisations in the following capacities:

- Group IT Finance Manager at MMI Holdings Ltd from January 2013 to December 2016
- Risk and Finance Manager: Statutory Reporting at Liberty Group from January 2008 to December 2012
- Internal Auditing and Compliance Monitoring Specialist at Liberty Group from November 2000 to December 2007

DRC Mabusela holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting from Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) obtained in 2005 and Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Accounting from Unisa, obtained in 2014.



REMAND DETENTION

an initial point of entry into the correctional system

By Tlou Matjekana

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has Remand Detention facilities that serve as the initial entry point into the correctional system for individuals awaiting trial or those granted bail but unable to afford it.

These facilities house individuals undergoing court proceedings. According to the Correctional Services Act, (Act No.111 of 1998), a court-issued Warrant for Detention, also known as the J7 form, is mandatory for admission into remand detention. According to DCS 2023/24 Annual Report, the remand detainee population increased from 50 931 during 2022/23 to 55 776 during the 2023/24 financial year, with stays ranging from 1 day to several months and beyond 5 years in some cases, due to ongoing investigations by the South African Police Service.

Mr Jackson Nkambule from Branch Remand Detention, working under Case Flow Management and Administration Unit, highlights the strict adherence to a policy of not admitting remand detainees without a valid J7/Warrant of Detention, as mandated by the Criminal Procedure Act and Correctional Services Act. The J7/Warrant of Detention contains essential information that includes alleged offence(s) committed by the suspect and the scheduled next court appearance date. This document serves as a critical legal requirement, ensuring lawful detention.

He also indicates the number of role-players within the Criminal Justice System (CJS), who are involved in the management of arrested, accused and detained persons. The CJS consists of the following five core departments and institutions:

- South African Police Service (SAPS);
- Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJCD);
- National Prosecuting Authority (NPA);
- Department of Correctional Services (DCS); and
- Department of Social Development (DSD).

Upon admission to remand facilities, awaiting trial detainees undergo the following comprehensive intake process:

REGISTRATION AND VERIFICATION

Personal information is collected, verified, and registered in the Case Flow Management System. This electronic system tracks and updates case progress, ensuring seamless communication with the courts.

SECURITY SCREENING

A thorough search of the detainee is conducted to prevent entry of contraband into DCS Facilities. This measure ensures facility security and maintains a safe environment. This rigorous intake process guarantees efficient data management and maintains the integrity of correctional facilities.



Awaiting-trial detainees arriving at Kgoši Mampuru II Remand Facility, escorted by a South African Police Service officer with their Warrant of Detention/ J7 forms from the court for admission. They will then be issued with a "blue card" that serves as a unique identifier, tracking the detainee's progress throughout their stay.

The admission process also includes health screening, alleged offence classification, uniform and hygiene products distribution and cell allocation, to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all detainees.



Awaiting-trial detainee undergoing health screening prior to admission into a remand facility.



Remand Detainee receiving uniform and primary healthcare products during admission.

RELEASE OF REMAND DETAINEES FOR COURT APPEARANCES

DCS security officials at remand detention facilities follow the Warrant of Detention (J7) to track court appearance dates, identify court names and coordinate detainees' transportation in cooperation with SAPS before releasing remand detainees for court appearances. They also verify inmate personal details, return personal belongings kept in secure storage whilst detained, including money, cellphones and any other material items. This meticulous process ensures accurate and secure detainee management.

“Delays in finalizing remand detainees’ cases by the courts, that are primarily due to ongoing SAPS investigations, are a significant contributor to long detention periods, resulting in overcrowding.”

- Mr Jackson Nkambule



DCS Officials facilitating accurate and secure release procedures for inmates attending court appearances, including:

- verification: confirm inmate identity and court details;
- validation: cross-check warrants and court orders; and
- release: escort verified inmates to court with SAPS.

Possible court outcomes may include bail grant constituting a temporary release pending trial, or acquittal to release an inmate due to lack of evidence or other reasons granted by the court, or in other instances a remand order for continued detention for further court appearances.

“DCS faces numerous challenges in managing the overcrowding of remand detainees. Delays in finalizing remand detainees’ cases by the courts, that are primarily due to ongoing SAPS investigations, are a significant contributor to long detention periods, resulting in overcrowding. According to the Correctional Services Act, remand detainees should not be held for more than two years. However, as part of efforts to mitigate against this challenge, Heads of Remand Detention Facilities can apply to invoke Section 49 of the Act, which allows them to submit applications for consideration to relevant courts to determine whether further detention is necessary or a release under specific conditions is warranted per case,” said Nkambule.

DCS also provides behavioural modification courses and support services to remand detainees during their stay at remand facilities, ensuring a humane and rehabilitative approach through life skills programmes and counselling initiatives. ●



A shared responsibility for all across the DCS value-chain

By Tlou Matjekana

By design DCS is a complex and high-risk security organisation that is entrusted with the arduous, yet hugely rewarding responsibility to reform the lives of people who offended society.

Inevitably, the complex operations come with inherent risks that require strong security systems and vigilance by all officials across the departmental value-chain when executing their functions.

As part of significant measures taken to ensure safety, security, and efficient operations, DCS has intensified its commitment to implement risk management strategies with a renewed focus on identifying, assessing, and addressing

potential challenges. The Department aims to enhance its ability to effectively manage uncertainties and ensure the well-being of both officials and inmates.

Risk Management is not only the responsibility of senior management and risk management officials, but all DCS officials have a role to play in identifying and managing risks in their respective areas of work. Developing a risk-aware culture is one of the important factors for consideration from

the perspective of implementing and maintaining an effective Risk Management Programme.

DCS recognizes the dynamic nature of its operations and the potential risks associated with managing correctional facilities. This is done through a particular process of strategic risk identification and analysis whereby potential threats are identified and categorized. This proactive approach allows the Department to better understand and prepare for various scenarios, ensuring that comprehensive plans are in place to address risks as they arise.

Risk awareness may also be defined as a capability of the organization to recognize risks before they occur, mitigate them when they arise, and recover from the resultant damage. Creating a risk-aware culture suggests that the capability is present throughout the organisation and it is merged into the normal routines, formal procedures, and behaviours of all those involved.

Every Executive, Branch Head, Regional Commissioner, Area Commissioner, and Head of Centre strive to ensure that their areas of oversight are always alert to risks and can be resilient when hit with disaster, but with the speed and aggressiveness of risks ever-increasing, this is not always possible. In an age where it only takes one employee, inmate or stakeholder or one social media post to smear the reputation of the Department, efficient and effective



Director responsible for Risk Management
Matthews Taukobong.

risk responses are vital. Ultimately, in today's dynamic risk environment, DCS needs to be proactive in anticipating and preventing both known and unknown risks.

"To mitigate risks effectively, DCS has implemented multi-faceted strategies that encompass both preventative measures and responsive actions. These strategies include regular staff training to handle emergency situations, the development of contingency plans for various types of incidents, and continuous improvement initiatives based on lessons learnt from past incidents. By fostering a culture of preparedness and vigilance, the Department aims to minimize the impact of risks and swiftly respond to any unforeseen events," Director Risk Management, Matthews Taukobong says.

Furthermore, DCS actively engages with relevant partners, including other law enforcement agencies, local communities, and other government entities, to share information and coordinate efforts. This collaborative approach not only enhances the Department's ability to anticipate and address risks, but also contributes to building a more secure correctional system.

The National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services, as the Accounting Officer

of the department, is the Chief Risk Officer of the institution and is accountable for the institution's overall governance of risk. Other officials are responsible for integrating Risk Management into their day-to-day activities. High level responsibilities of officials should include:

- applying the risk management processes in their respective functions;
- implementing the delegated action plans to address the identified risks;
- informing their supervisors and/or the Risk Management Unit of new risks and significant changes in known risks; and
- co-operating with other role players in the Risk Management process and providing information as required.

As South Africa's correctional system strives to maintain security

To mitigate risks effectively, DCS has implemented multi-faceted strategies that encompass both preventative measures and responsive actions.

and uphold human rights, the role of risk management stands as an essential pillar in achieving these goals. By fostering a culture of preparedness, collaboration, and innovation, DCS is setting a commendable example for other institutions to follow, demonstrating that a well-executed risk management strategy is not just a safeguard, but a fundamental part of effective and responsible governance. ☉

Eight steps for an effective Risk Management processes.



PAROLE: Enhancing reintegration through education and skills development

By Lleda Sekgobela and Bernicca Tauatsoala

Since 1994, the Department of Correctional Services, (DCS) has evolved from a punitive to a rehabilitative approach, prioritizing offender rehabilitation, community reintegration and embracing a more holistic approach, including community corrections.

Since then, community corrections was introduced as a systemic approach to reintegrate offenders into society. This framework emphasizes rehabilitation, reintegration and restorative justice through community involvement programmes such as Victim Offender Dialogues (VODs) amongst others.

The VOD provides an opportunity to the victims of crime and offenders to engage face-to-face and testify about the ordeal of the crime committed and the impact thereof as well as identifying harms and needs through accepting responsibilities and fostering reconciliation.

Parole, an internationally recognized practice, allows for the conditional release of offenders from correctional centres before completing their full sentence. This process promotes rehabilitation through education and skills development programmes during incarceration.

DCS has Correctional Supervision and Parole Boards (CSPBs), appointed by the Minister of Correctional Services, and bestowed the authority to approve or not approve the parole placement for offenders serving sentences of more than 24 months.

Eligibility of parole placement considers the minimum detention period served (varies by offence category), which also takes account of the demonstrated rehabilitation

and behavioural change, registered by the Case Management Committee (CMC), per offender with specific parole conditions to ensure reduction of recidivism, enhancement of community safety and promotion of support for offender reintegration.

The following parole conditions may be set by the CSPB where placement on parole is approved, depending on the circumstances of each offender:

- Placement under house detention;
- Refraining from committing criminal offence;
- Refraining from visiting a particular place;
- House detention (curfew or confinement);
- Geographic restrictions (avoiding specific locations);
- Association restrictions (limiting contact with individuals);
- Reporting requirements (regular check-ins with parole officer);
- Employment or education requirements; and
- Counselling or treatment programmes.

DCS parole oversight covers a wide spectrum of focus areas including ensuring effective control and monitoring of offenders on different parole conditions through regular supervision, monitoring of compliance with parole conditions, implementing consequences for non-compliance, and revocation of parole

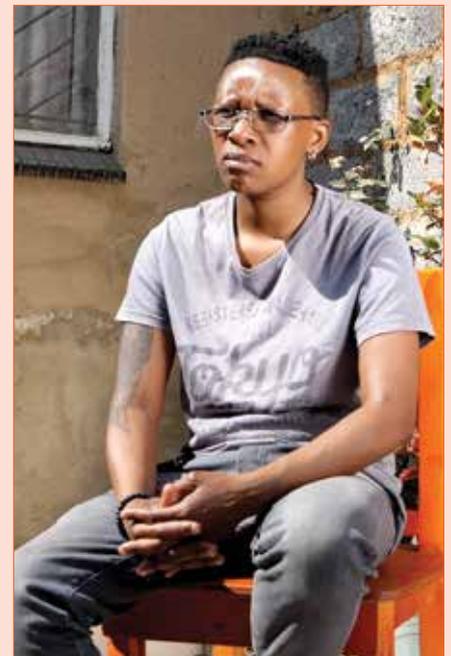
for failure to meet parole conditions, thereby returning the absconder into a correctional centre to serve the remainder of their sentence.

DCS also provides comprehensive rehabilitation programmes to foster good behaviour, self-development, impart educational skills, in order to prepare inmates for life after incarceration. This is to inspire other incarcerated offenders to change their lives for the better and have sustainable livelihoods post incarceration. ●

TESTIMONIAL

Despite facing financial and health pressures, Mhlongo found solace in education, graduating with a Bachelor of Business Administration in 2006. While incarcerated, she pursued her passion in writing, drama, and music. "I identified that I can continue writing and release a music album after a few months," she shared.

Mhlongo's story demonstrates the power of rehabilitation and giving people a second chance to redeem themselves. Her story also demonstrates that with determination, support and guidance, offenders can transform their lives to become productive citizens.



Ms Hlengiwe Mhlongo, an ex-offender who turned her life around after serving seven years of her 10-year sentence for bank fraud.

The sky is the limit for parolee, Matome Ramaotse

By Tshifhiwa Magadani

Rehabilitation is the result of a process that combines the correction of offending behaviour, human development, social responsibility and values.

Rehabilitation should not be viewed merely as a strategy to prevent re-offending, but rather as a holistic phenomenon incorporating both social justice and social responsibility.

Social reintegration is the cornerstone that plays a magnificent role in the process of healing for both perpetrators, victims of crime and their families. Subsequent to offender's completion of sentence and rehabilitation programmes, he or she needs to go back to the community, in some instances, to the very same community that they wronged. It is during this period that enabling a smooth social reintegration of offenders becomes vital.

Growing up in Botlokwa on the outskirts of Polokwane, in Limpopo, Matome Ramaotse never thought that he would one day find himself on the wrong side of the law and spend time behind bars. However, it was his bad choice of friends that ultimately resulted in him being handed a 10-year imprisonment sentence for house breaking.

After honing his skills in welding at Kutama Sinthumule Correctional Centre, 38-year old Ramaotse, never looked back after his release in 2018. He found a small piece of land in Atteridgeville, West of Pretoria, where he is specialising in manufacturing gates, window burglar bars, burglar doors, roof tops and wood-work. To their credit, community members around Atteridgeville supported Ramaotse by placing orders, making it possible for him to employ four people.

When asked about rehabilitation programmes that are being offered by the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), Ramaotse had this to



Parolee, Matome Ramaotse is seen doing welding work at the Wonderboom train station in Annlin West, North of Pretoria.

say, "rehabilitation played a pivotal role for me to be where I am. However, rehabilitation must start with me, it must start from within. I must first acknowledge and accept that indeed I have done wrong and forgive myself before I extend my apology to the victims that I offended".

The remorseful looking Ramaotse further indicated that he wishes he could turn back the hands of time after wasting many years behind bars. He further explains that, even though his business is thriving, the perception from some members of the public that he is an ex-offender, does not go away. He says he is working very hard to do away with the stigma that the public has towards ex-offenders.



Matome Ramaotse demonstrates that rehabilitation is possible as he showcases one of his completed structures at the Wonderboom train station.

His message to young people is that crime does not pay and they must concentrate on their studies and avoid taking shortcuts, lest they find themselves behind bars. He also reserved special praises to correctional officials, saying that they are doing marvellous work in rehabilitating offenders.

He added that even hardened criminals come back as better people, adding that Correctional Services has been a mainstay for many offenders, and that rehabilitation programmes have helped many offenders not to fall back into the life of crime, thus reducing recidivism. "I, for one can attest to that, hence I am rubbing my hands in glee for that," concludes the outspoken Ramaotse.

When asked if other parolees are following in Ramaotse footsteps, Mr Nkgathi Dzumba, Pretoria Community Corrections Liaison Officer, confirmed that there are scores of parolees who are reaping the rewards of rehabilitation programmes. He further indicated that it is through social reintegration that the stigma that some community members are still portraying towards ex-offenders can be broken. ●



Ms Toneka Ngwadla, an Auxiliary Social Worker and a close friend, supporting Moeketsi Booi to stay on track with his studies.

Ex-offender turns his life around to become a professional Social Worker

By Busisiwe Shibambo

Born and bred in Khuma township near Klerksdorp, ex-offender Moeketsi Booi decided that he had enough with a life of crime. Narrating his childhood upbringing, Booi said life was not easy as his parents separated while he was still very young.

The only way out for him was to pursue schooling so that he could live a better life. He aspired to become a pilot or locomotive driver. However, things took a different turn when he experienced bullying in secondary school, which led him to find solace in a street gang – a path that derailed his plans and threatened to dash his hopes of building a successful career.

At the age of 15, Booi grew more violent and aggressive as he started to participate in criminal activities such as stealing and robbing people.

One fateful night, Booi went looking for his friend at his home after they had a fight. On arrival, his friend was not home but he found his father with whom he quarrelled. The altercation resulted in him killing his friend's father.

Booi's chosen lifestyle meant that

he lived on the edge and often flirted with death. He recounts a series of incidents where he escaped death by a whisker. In the first incident, Booi almost lost his life after being shot in the mouth, followed by another incident where he was stabbed very close to his heart and neck. In the last incident, Booi sustained a gunshot wound to his right leg which has left him limping to this day. "I am lucky to be alive to tell the tale, I guess God still has other plans for my life," Booi reflected.

Booi encountered his 'Damas-cus' moment while serving a 15-year sentence for killing his friend's father. He credits this period for affording him an opportunity to have a sober

Booi Moeketsi proudly displays his degree in Social Work.

reflection about the path of his life. "I realised that I could not keep blaming my past for all my wrongdoings and decisions. I needed to man-up and take responsibility for my actions," he said.

He said when he was in one of the correctional facilities, he met a fellow offender named Stanley Louw, who showed him that there is more to life than a life of delinquency. That is when he grabbed the opportunity to turn his life around.

He then decided to register for his matric and later went on to enrol for a Bachelor of Social Work with the University of South Africa (UNISA), a degree that he completed while on parole.

He is now a qualified Social Worker although he cannot practice yet due to his criminal record. He says he has requested the Council of Social Workers to allow him to work under supervision while he applies for the expungement of his criminal record.

Booi credits Rorisang, a Non-Profit Organisation, for playing a pivotal role in ensuring that he does not lose hope in his new-found love for serving his community.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the NPO, Ms Mojabeng Mafohla spoke fondly about Booi's passion to serve the community. "It is such an honour to work with a rehabilitated person of the calibre of Booi. Our young people are now involved in

many social ills, but through Booi, we are able to reach out and save some of them," she explained. ●



Meet Tinyiko Khoza, a female inmate taking beading to new heights behind bars

By Kopano Ramashala

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) is, amongst others, mandated to rehabilitate those who are in conflict with the law through programmes while incarcerated.

The programmes are tailored for inmates with the purpose of enhancing their skills and preparing them for survival and self-sustenance when they are released back into society. Becoming aware of such programmes sounded like music to the ears of offender Tinyiko Khoza, who is currently serving a 10-year sentence, at Atteridgeville Gender Responsive Centre for Women, for murder.

Khoza holds a Bachelor of Technology (B-Tech) Degree in Fire Technology from Tshwane University of Technology, a qualification she obtained in 2015 before her incarceration. Born and bred in Limpopo, Khoza was raised by a single parent in Itieleng village in Sekgosesa.

“Like many, I am from a previously disadvantaged area with little, to no opportunities to partake in for self-empowerment. Growing up, I wanted to make my single mother proud by becoming a better person in society. After matric, I developed love for knitting but due to lack of resources, I could not pursue this interest further,” she explained.

Khoza recounts with great regret the events of one fateful day in December 2022 that ultimately confined her to a life behind bars. On that grievous day, a mob justice incident occurred where the victim sadly passed away, resulting in Khoza’s arrest, subsequent conviction and sentence for murder.

“I came into a correctional facility a broken woman, and saw myself as a failure who had disappointed my mom. However, the DCS programmes have changed my perspective of life.



Atteridgeville Gender Responsive Centre for Women inmate, Tinyiko Khoza.

I was introduced to various artistic programmes including beading. Participating in arts and craft has really given me hope,” she explained.

Khoza says since she started participating in beading, with her most memorable piece of craft being a Zulu headband piece that was sold for R150 at the DCS Art Gallery. “I am blessed to be given such skills. Beading resonates well with my upbringing because it has an element of knitting,” she added.

Casting her eye into the future beyond the confines of DCS walls, Khoza has no doubt that the skills she is acquiring in Correctional Services will be advantageous when she is released.

“I hope to put the newly acquired skills to good use to beat unemployment upon my release back into society,”

she says. Khoza says one of her goals is to impart knowledge to youngsters when she is released. “I hope to contribute to my community so that the generation that comes after me can learn about the detrimental effects of crime,” she hinted.

Over and above her current educational background, Tinyiko Khoza is studying towards an N6: Edu Care. She says she is looking forward to learning more, especially in the handcraft arts. According to Khoza, handcrafts seem to be more lucrative of all the artefacts. “I am inspired by Ndebele artist, Gogo Esther Mahlangu and I wish to meet her one day. The handcrafts and paintings are key drivers in fighting unemployment and that is what I hope to contribute,” she concluded.

The head of Atteridgeville Gender Responsive Centre for Women, Advocate Patricia Thobejane has commended the progress shown by Khoza.

“It’s an exciting experience to witness one of our many female offenders doing so much good. This is an indication that as a centre, we are progressive in what we are mandated to carry out,” she said.

Advocate Thobejane explained that Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture (SRAC), offers offenders a lifeline to make amends for their crimes.

“DCS has offender rehabilitation programmes and SRAC is but one of them, and to see offenders thrive in this programme

gives us joy and hope that they are on the right track to rehabilitation. Our vision as a centre is to cater

for specific needs for women in line with the Bangkok and Nelson Mandela Rules.

We try our best to equip women with skills for self-sufficiency to survive when they are reintegrated

back into society”, she concluded. ●



Head of Correctional Centre at Atteridgeville Gender Responsive Centre for Women, Advocate Patricia Thobejane.



Correctional Services Minister, Dr Pieter Groenewald addressing participants at the official opening of Funda Mzantsi Championship.



Correctional Services Deputy Minister, Ms Lindiwe Ntshalintshali delivering the keynote address at the Closing Ceremony of Funda Mzantsi Championship 2024.

Inmates and book lovers compete at FUNDA MZANTSI CHAMPIONSHIP

By Kabelo Selebogo

The crème de la crème bibliophiles from nine provinces of South Africa converged in George, Western Cape Region to showcase their prowess at the 14th edition of the National Funda Mzantsi Championship (FMC) from 23 to 27 September 2024.

This flagship event is a collaborative initiative between the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), National Library of South Africa (NLSA) and George Local Municipality to promote literacy skills. The Funda Mzantsi Championship is also an important intervention for the rehabilitation of offenders.

The 2024 instalment of this vibrant reading competition was graced by 297 inmates from all six regions of the Department, and hundreds of participants, attached to various book clubs from communities and academics institutions, who went toe-to-toe in debate, spelling bee, book reviews and reading in eleven official lan-

guages.

Anza Tshilidzi, a blind person from “Emang Mmogo” in the Northern Cape, became the first participant to read a book in Braille (patterns of raised dots that are felt with fingertips for blind and visually impaired people), marking a historic milestone.

Against all odds, Author of ‘Slegs ‘n enkele kans’, Sharon Eland-Lewis shared her mountain of hardships encountered in her life journey including abuse and homelessness. Her book formed part of this year’s competition in the Afrikaans category.

FMC plans to debut South African Sign Language (SASL) in the future following its declaration as South Africa’s 12th official language in 2023.

In his keynote address at the opening ceremony, Minister of Correctional Services, Pieter Groenewald reiterated the importance of reading, education and transformation. “This initiative is more than just a partnership, it is a beacon of hope, an opportunity for rehabilitation, education and meaningful connection. Every person, regardless of their circumstances has the capacity to learn, grow and change. In South Africa, the ability to read and understand is a gateway to opportunities. Funda Mzantsi is not just about testing reading ability, but more about breaking barriers of limited resources and access to books. The end goal is to make reading joyful, inclusive and a transformative activity for all,” he said.

Speaking during the closing ceremony, Correctional Services Deputy Minister, Ms Lindiwe Ntshalintshali said, “let us make sure we recognize the immense value of the literacy programmes that are provided at our correctional facilities and pay homage to correctional officials who are keeping the lights burning. This initiative is instrumental in restoring the dignity of offenders, bringing hope and a sense of purpose. Books offer inmates an opportunity to reflect on the past and to imagine the future.”

Deputy Minister Ntshalintshali fur-



Anza Tshilidzi debuts Braille reading at Funda Mzantsi Championship.

ther urged community members to welcome offenders with warm hands when they are placed on parole or after completing their sentences. “We must prepare a fertile ground so that when they land back home, there is something they can do so that they can feel part of the community again,” she added. She further highlighted the lucrative economic spin-offs for the local community of George, who benefit from the annual hosting of this highly-acclaimed reading competition.



Author of ‘Slegs ‘n enkele kans’, Sharon Eland-Lewis talks about her book.

Chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission, Chris Nissen said the captivating and quality debates at FMC resonate deeply, and challenge South Africans in their diversity to find harmony between their rich culture, heritage and universal principles of human rights. “The involvement of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) has further enriched the dialogue, demonstrating our collective commitment to ensure that cultural practices uphold the dignity and rights of every individual in this country,” he posited.

Kepi Madumo, Chief Executive Officer of NLSA remarked that one of



Participants from book clubs across the country, including inmates competing in book review, debate, spelling bee and reading.

the highlights of this year’s championship was the historic moment that saw contestants from the visually impaired community participating in book reading, spelling bee, book reviews and debates. Platforms like Funda Mzantsi empower young people to express their voices and sharpen their critical thinking skills to engage with the world around them.

Books enthusiasts have given this competition great reviews. Vuyiswa Ndoda, an author from Bahludi Book Club remarked that she believes in a reading culture. “This is a great

initiative that encourages people to read,” she added.

Offenders also spoke glowingly about the programme. “It is a privilege to be here. This is a celebration for book lovers, people who are critical thinkers and analytical,” said Muzi Nhlangulela.

“Reading teaches a lot. One is able to focus on the book, living the life of the author as well as putting themselves in the author’s shoes. It is quite amazing to be one of the participants and this platform offers opportunities for personal growth,” remarked Nwabisa Goci.

Audited results are as follows:

Overall Position	Region	Position 1	Position 2	Position 3
1	Limpopo, Mpumalanga & North West	Siswati (Rivoningo) Tshivenda (Baobab) Sesotho (Dikakapa)	IsiNdebele (Rivoningo) Xitsonga (Baobab) Sepedi (Dikakapa)	IsiNdebele (Perperboom) Sepedi (Peperboom)
2	Gauteng	IsiNdebele (Positive Minds) IsiZulu (Positive Minds)	Siswati (Honey Bee)	Tshivenda (Honey Bee)
3	Free State & Northern Cape	IsiXhosa (Celtis Afrikaaner)	IsiXhosa (Literati) Setswana (Cheetahs)	IsiXhosa (Gemsbok) Sesotho (Gemsbok)
4	KwaZulu-Natal		English (Masifunde) IsiZulu (Mpumelelo)	English (Asithuthuke) IsiZulu (Asithuthuke)
5	Western Cape		Afrikaans (WC Stomers)	

Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintshali lauds FIFA TWINNING PROJECT

By Kopano Ramashala

Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Ms Lindiwe Ntshalintshali has praised the FIFA Twinning Project as one of the unique and innovative skills incubation initiatives that will contribute immensely in capacitating offenders.

On the backdrop of the second FIFA Twinning project at Johannesburg Management Area in September this year, a jubilant Deputy Minister Ntshalintshali said the FIFA Twinning Project offered offenders a fresh set of skills over and above the skills acquired through Department of Correctional Services (DCS) Programmes.

“We welcome the partnership with FIFA and Kaizer Chiefs Football Club. We appreciate the set of skills that will be shared with offenders through coaching clinics. As a Department, we have equipped offenders with skills that include those of a beauty technician, sewing, bricklaying, carpentry, farming, and many more but we have not given them the type of skills they are getting

from this partnership,” she stated.

The FIFA Twinning Project is a partnership between DCS and professional football clubs with the objective of twinning every Management Area with a local professional football club to train and empower offenders with football related knowledge. The partnership with Kaizer Chiefs Football Club will focus on female offenders at Johannesburg Correctional Centre and it is attuned towards the mandate of DCS where rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders is emphasised.

The first launch of the FIFA Twinning project was in March this year at Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area with Supersport United Football Club. The project involved 48 offenders. The main objective of the project is to improve the lives of offenders and their communities through football. Originating in the United Kingdom, the Twinning Project seeks to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders by providing football-based programmes and skills.

According to Chief Executive Officer of the Twinning Project, Hilton Freund, the Project has become one of the robust and innovative soccer



Johannesburg Management Area Female offenders going through their paces at the launch of the Twinning project.

interventions adopted by Corrections departments across the world. “The Twinning Project is now in four continents, including Africa. Of the United Kingdom’s 92 professional football clubs, 73 now deliver the very same Twinning Project course that inmates here in South Africa will benefit from. We now deliver our work in the United States of America, Australia, Italy and South Africa,” he explained.

Kaizer Chiefs Football Club Marketing Director, Jessica Motaung said being part of the FIFA Twinning Project will assist her club to identify talent critical for building a formidable Kaizer Chiefs Women Football team, and further contribute to its societal responsibilities.

“It’s true that corrections is a societal responsibility, and for us as a club, it’s a big moment to come and empower these individuals who are being rehabilitated and to form part of the FIFA Twinning Project, especially with female offenders involved. “With our partnership with DCS, we can contribute and plough back to society by giving these offenders hope,” she said.

Speaking on the sidelines of the launch, Supersport United Football Club Chief Executive Officer, Stanley Matthews said they welcomed the partnership when it was presented to the club as it resonates with their philosophy to impart skills and empower offenders. Matthews said as a football club, they are very proud to be associated with the development of offenders as this will smoothen their transition and reintegration into society.

His sentiments were further echoed by Deputy Minister Ntshalintshali who says that this philosophy is aligned to South Africa’s corrections paradigm. “As DCS, skills development of offenders is at the centre of our programmes. Capacitating offenders with the right set of skills will go a long way in their reintegration back into society. Through this partnership, offenders will access training, mentorship, and opportunities with the aim of fostering physical, emotional, and social growth,” she explained.

Ms Lindiwe Sigoxo, an offender in



1. SAFA 2nd Vice President, Linda Zwane; Chief Executive Officer of the Twinning Project, Hilton Freund; Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintshali; Kaizer Chiefs FC Marketing Director, Jessica Motaung; Banyana Banyana Coach, Desiree Ellis and National Commissioner Makgothi Thobakgale at the launch of the FIFA Twinning Project at Johannesburg Management Area.

2. Former Supersport United FC defender Ricardo Katza explains how football steered him away from the life of gangsterism.

Johannesburg Correctional Centre, appreciated the opportunity provided to inmates, adding that they were excited to be part of the Twinning Project.

“The community outside is looking at us with a negative eye; however, we are committed to transform our lives, and the skills that we will acquire through this project will enable us to contribute positively to society. We will use the acquired skills to encourage young people not to engage in criminal activities but live meaningful lives and build a better and prosperous South Africa,” said Sigoxo.

The Twinning Project is also sup-

ported by the South African Football Association (SAFA). Deputy President of SAFA, Linda Zwane joined the launch and said that the rehabilitation of offenders is not only the responsibility of DCS, but that of the broader community. He said football plays an important role in society adding that the skills acquired by inmates will have a positive impact on football development.

“We appreciate the work done by Supersport and Kaizer Chiefs football clubs working together with the Department of Correctional Services. It is through collaborations like these that we can take football to all corners of the country,” Zwane said. ●

Lerato Tlale wins big at Free State Sport Awards and gets elected to Free State Sport Confederation Executive

By Kabelo Selebogo

Lerato Tlale, a seasoned Sports Administrator and Department of Correctional Services' Assistant Director responsible, for Employee Sports and Recreation, clinched the coveted Sports Administrator of the Year award at the 2024 Free State Sport Awards in Mangaung, Bloemfontein on 21 September 2024.

This accolade is awarded to an individual who best exemplifies leadership, passion, willingness, and dedication to the operations and development of sports while adhering to all applicable ethical codes. Free State Sport Awards reward and honour sports enthusiasts and teams for their efforts in keeping the passion for sports alive on and off the field, ranging from local to international events.

Affectionately known as 'Cheese' in the sporting fraternity, Tlale advocates for women in sports with a specific focus on unemployed sports graduates. She offers them relevant corporate experience and exposure from local sporting activities, national tournaments to international competitions. This mentorship programme breaks barriers and affords young girls who are passionate about sports an opportunity to know how each sporting code operates by linking the theory learnt from academic institutions with practical experience.

She also plays a pivotal role in DCS Sports and Recreation. She was at the forefront of a successful collaboration dubbed 'Employer of Choice initiative' between DCS, Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC) and other stakeholders to revive school sports in numer-

ous schools in an effort to combat ill-discipline and deviant behaviour among learners. This initiative features parolees who also offer motivational talks and advice to learners to encourage them to shun delinquency which might ruin their future and result in them ending up behind bars. Through the Employer of Choice initiative, the Free State and Northern Cape region also partnered with the Free State High Performance Centre and Virgin Active to give officials health and wellness support in the absence of gym fitness equipment.

Tlale holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Education and National Diploma in Sports Management, both obtained from Central University of Technology (CUT). She is currently furthering her studies with Nelson Mandela University doing the MANDELA/FIFA/CIES International Programme in Sports Management and plans to enrol for Honours in Sports Management.

An all-rounder and a woman who wears many hats, she describes herself as an agent of change beyond sports, health and wellness. She works together with the South African Football Association (SAFA), Mangaung Metro and University of the Free State Ladies Hockey, where she serves as Team Manager, and is also part of the Free State Sports Confederation and DCS National



Sports Council Executive.

Her track record in hockey, spanning over 16 years, has earned her major roles varying from Hockey Coach, Hockey Team Manager for Schools, Provincial and South African Masters Ladies Hockey teams.

In her acceptance speech, Tlale expressed deep gratitude to everyone who supported her. "I am really proud to be one of the DCS officials running Sports and Recreation. Other departments and public entities applaud DCS for its sterling work in prioritising Integrated Employee Wellness. Our counterparts are impressed with the standard of excellence offered to internal staff and they are implementing our strategies. This recognition is not only a reflection of the hard work I have put into promoting and managing our beloved sports, but it is also a testament to the incredible community of athletes, coaches, parents, followers and supporters who surround me. I also extend my deepest thanks to my employer for the opportunities afforded to me," she proclaimed.

Prior to this recognition, she also scooped the Woman in Sport Award at the Thuba Pelo Mosadi of Worth Awards in June 2024. Tlale will be contesting with other winners from various provinces at the next edition of the SA Sport Award. ©



Glory beckons for DCS' Philani Mbambo in his quest to nourish the inner man through Gospel music

By Tiyani Sambo

Born and raised in a Christian family with rich music heritage from the bustling township of Umlazi, nestled in the south-west of Durban, Philani Mbambo, a Correctional Official working at Durban Correctional Facility, is on the cusp of a big breakthrough in his music career.

This follows his nomination in the 2024 Crown Gospel Music Awards. The Awards are a platform to celebrate and award excellence in the Gospel music fraternity. Imbued with extraordinary musical talent, Mbambo's debut gospel album titled 'Ihliziyo yami', consisting of 17 spirit charged songs which are bound to be a blessing to every hearing ear and longing heart, has been nominated in the Best New Comer category.

Retracing the genesis of his unquenchable desire to serve humanity through gospel music, Mbambo says:

"My passion for music and ministry merged, leading to the creation of inspiring and uplifting songs. I am dedicated to spreading the message of hope and redemption through music."

Mbambo, who works as Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture (SRAC) official in DCS, uses his musical talent to develop positive minds, by engaging offenders in positive programmes. He selflessly offers his learned craft and talent by imparting skills to offenders, particularly in the areas of art and music. He has expressed profound gratitude to DCS for granting him unlimited opportunities

to showcase his talent and to impart his musical skills to both inmates and officials.

The rising star says that music runs in the family bloodline, a discovery he made at a young age when he started to participate in the music department in his local church. "I was discovered by my grandfather when I was seven years old, and I grew up participating in a family group called 'Mbambos' that used to sing at our local church," he recounts.

Although 'Ihliziyo yami' is his first project, Mbambo has shared the stage with renowned gospel music ministers including Bebe Winans, Ntokozo Mbambo, Pastor Mthunzi Namba, Andile Mseleku, Bishop Benjamin Dube, Thina Zungu, Dr Tumi, Khaya Mthethwa.

His younger sibling, Ntokozo Mbambo featured him in the song 'Sizalelwe' in her album, 'The first Noel'. "The major highlights of my music career thus far are the live recording of my album as well as singing alongside Bebe Winans on stage in 2007," he recalls.

With a sense of contentment, Mbambo says his album is an honest expression and a testimony of the grace of God that has carried him through the years. Although he was at pains to pick his favourite songs from his album, Mbambo says that 'Ihliziyo yami', 'Ngifanele ukubonga', 'Mayenziwe Inthando yakho', 'Trenda Jesu' and 'Deserving will certainly strike a chord with most people. "Haibo! all the songs are my favourites, zimnandi!" he proclaimed. The album is available on all digital platforms such as Spotify, YouTube, and iTunes.

On his future plans, Mbambo says his goal is to teach music and share his musical experience with others. It goes without saying that he also harbours an ambition to win a prestigious music award. "I see myself winning a Grammy award, and being on the international stage with globally acclaimed gospel music ministers," he revealed. ☪

For bookings, contact Sne Mahlasela at 065 356 1127. You can also follow Mbambo on Facebook (Philani mbambo), Instagram (@mbambophilani), and TikTok (@philanimbambo19).

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