

Tale of two mayors, one Tshwane

POLITICIANS in the city use the State of the Capital Address (Soca) to take shots at opposition parties, while outlining plans for the future and basking in their achievements. The 2018 Soca delivered by head of the DA-led coalition Solly Msimanga on Thursday was no exception.

His predecessor, the ANC's Kgosientso "Sputla" Ramokgopa, had a reputation of having a go at the then DA opposition and minority parties in his time at the helm of the capital city. More about him later.

Moments after opening the 2018 Soca by paying tribute to Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Msimanga reminded all that when his government assumed office in partnership with other political parties, there were sectors of the public who said they couldn't do it. Yet almost two years on, his government still stands and is making progress in the interest of the people who elected it.

In another shot at the ANC, he reiterated to the special council sitting that he inherited a cash-strapped city where not enough provision was made to address the service delivery backlog that threatens the dignity of the people.

Moments later, he delivered a left hook, saying he took over a city that had a "Hollywood" style of government, where all the senior officials were in an acting capacity and were unable to make crucial decisions.

He followed that with an uppercut by rubbing salt into the Peu electricity smart meters wound. The former ANC administration has been found to have contravened all the regulations when it entered into the deal.

Thereafter, he described the mayoral mansion he sold as "this double-storey four-bedroom house, which benefits only one family and is occasionally used for meetings with diplomats".

This was in reference to Sputla and his aunt, Dr Gwen Ramokgopa. The Health MEC was mayor of Tshwane before Sputla.

On the Olievenhoutbosch land grabs, he said these happened with the encouragement of a councillor in the area. The ward is controlled by the ANC.

Msimanga further bragged about job creation and work opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme called Gata le Nna, which replaced the ANC's Vat Alles.

He boasted about lottery-style recruit-



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Msimanga has 3 years of his term left to prove his aspirations and promises to improve services and create jobs in the city

ment processes and highlighted that Vat Alles was flooded by card-carrying ANC members.

While Msimanga's second Soca – his first will be remembered for the chaos caused by the ANC which decried the fact that it had taken place on the anniversary of the hanging of Solomon Mahlangu by the apartheid regime – the second was well organised and the speech nicely crafted.

Sputla on the other hand was a showman, dishing out colourful, heavy-worded speeches, and lambasting the opposition and an "anti-progress newspaper".

Like former president Jacob Zuma, who switches to Zulu when he delivers knockout blows, Sputla would use his mother tongue when "in the mood" for a fight. But when he stuck to the script, his wisdom came forth effortlessly.

However, the jury is still out on his grand plans. His planned development nodes in various parts of the city were yet to become true by the time he vacated office.

Msimanga has said there was nothing on paper with regards to West Capital, East Capital, Symbio City and other Sputla projects.

Ramokgopa nonetheless delivered on the A Re Yeng, Tshwane House and other promises; he once proclaimed during one of the "Sputla moments" that "when you are in power, you should use it to the fullest" and leave footprints.

His last two Soca editions sounded like ANC election campaigns ahead of the 2016 municipal polls. They were nonetheless still punctuated with updates of



Executive mayor of Tshwane Solly Msimanga sings at Tshwane House ahead of his State of the City Address. PICTURE: OUPA MOKOENA/AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA)

the massive developments he said would change the face of the city.

He was bullish in his bid to change the legendary Caledonian Stadium into a stylish park, a plan that has since been reversed by Msimanga. He had a vision, in a Sputla way, but the politics gods had other ideas.

Whether the ANC returns to power in the city and revives his plans should be left to political analysts and prophets, but its over to Msimanga, who still has three years to the end of the current

local government term.

When political parties debate his Soca in a few days' time, they will be out to impress their voters and attempt to discredit Msimanga as is the case with such occasions.

However, residents, including those in ANC wards, want the jobs the mayor promised, improved services, upgraded infrastructure and other plans he outlined at Tshwane House last Thursday. ● Mudzuli is Pretoria News assistant editor. He writes in a personal capacity.