

Mabuyane set to become new Eastern Cape premier

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Eastern Cape ANC provincial chairperson Oscar Mabuyane is in pole position to become the Eastern Cape's new premier, having been endorsed on Monday by the ANC national executive committee (NEC).

The NEC was deciding who would be the party's premier candidates in the eight provinces it won in the elections.

Monday's meeting of the ANC top brass considered three names submitted by the top five officials of each province.

The Eastern Cape PEC short-listed Mabuyane, outgoing OR Tambo mayor Nomakhosazana

Meth and SACP provincial secretary Xolile Nqatha for the hot seat. The NEC opted for Mabuyane, who is the party's provincial chairperson and a strong supporter of President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The Eastern Cape was the first province to declare its support for Ramaphosa to succeed Jacob Zuma as ANC president ahead of the ANC's elective conference in Nasrec in December 2017.

The NEC had to juggle provincial preferences with the challenge of meeting the party's required 50/50 gender balance for premiers-elect, as men topped the shortlist for Gauteng, the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Limpopo, Free State

and KwaZulu-Natal. ANC Women's League secretary-general Meokgo Matuba announced a few weeks ago the league would do everything in its power to ensure more women were nominated as premiers.

The Free State and Mpumalanga reportedly were likely to retain their current premiers, Sisi Ntombela and Refilwe Mtsweni respectively, while there was talk of appointing a female premier in the North West, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape.

In KZN, Nomusa Dube-Ncube is understood to have been touted as a possible premier over provincial chairperson Sihle Zikalala as part of the



OSCAR MABUYANE:
Eastern Cape ANC
provincial chairperson

gender mix, while in the Northern Cape, chairperson Zamani Saul, might not be deployed as a premier for the same reason.

David Mataboge was reportedly favoured for the position in North West unless the ANC



XOLILE NQATHA: SA
Communist Party's
provincial secretary

opted to appoint a woman.

In Gauteng, premier and ANC provincial chairperson David Makhura is expected to retain his seat despite some lobbying for his deputy, Panyaza Lesufi, to take over. Phophi Ramathuba might be the premier-elect



NOMAKHOSAZANA
METH: Outgoing OR
Tambo mayor

for Limpopo.

ANC secretary-general Ace Magashule on Monday confirmed that the only positions being discussed in the NEC meeting were those of the eight premier candidates and the leader of the opposition in the

Western Cape. However, he could not comment if the discussion was based on a 50/50 male-female split.

Meanwhile there is also speculation that the Eastern Cape might see two of its current MECs – Dr Pumza Dyantyi (health) and Pemmy Madjodina (public works) – move to the national parliament, while provincial Speaker Noxolo Kiviet and outgoing premier Phumulo Masualle also made it onto the national list.

Addressing ANC supporters in front of Luthuli House on Sunday, Ramaphosa appealed to ANC members to accept the names of preferred premier candidates once finalised.

“We are going to appoint our premiers and we are saying once the NEC has decided, let us rally behind the NEC and support the premiers that we are going to appoint throughout the country,” said Ramaphosa.

Stellenbosch University's political science professor Amanda Gouws said she hoped the ANC would stick to its election promise of proper gender representation. “It will be great news if the ANC sticks to this commitment as this was vacated during the presidency of Jacob Zuma.

“Ramaphosa must also have the same 50/50 ratio in his cabinet,” Gouws said. – *Additional reporting by Times Select*