



BOOST TO EMPLOYMENT

R240m PSYCH HOSPITAL FOR S COAST

THOBEKA NGEMA
thobeka.ngema@inl.co.za

A NEW 28-bed mental health inpatient and outpatient state-of-the-art psychiatric hospital in the pipeline for Port Shepstone on KwaZulu-Natal's South Coast, will not only be a boost for healthcare in the region, it also promises economic growth and jobs.

The project, which will be undertaken by the KZN Departments of Health and Public Works and Infrastructure, is expected to cost R240 million.

The facility is designed to address a critical service delivery gap and promises to provide much-needed specialised care for mental health users.

KZN Public Works and Infrastructure's (DPWI) Infrastructure Maintenance and Technical Support chief director, Nokwanda Gcaba, confirmed the new 28-bed facility.

"The value of the project is R240 million. These are only construction fees," Gcaba said.

She said the project team includes GVK-Siya Zama, a Grade 9 contractor, as the successful bidder, a project manager, safety officer, Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) officer, architects, quantity surveyors, electrical engineer, mechanical engineer, civil engineer, structural engineer, and the Operational Health and Safety (OHS) agent that have been appointed.

"In terms of the project team... we want you to be comfortable that we've dealt with the social facilitation, which we believe is very critical for the successful implementation of this project," Gcaba said.

She said the team includes Public Works (head office and regional office), Department of Health (infrastructure), Port Shepstone Hospital management, Ray Nkonyeni Local Municipality, Ugu District Municipality, project steering committee, GVK-Siya Zama and local business.

"We will be building a 28-bedded unit. In terms of outpatient, we will also do the admission area."

"There is a male ward which will accommodate 13 beds. We also have a female ward, which will accommodate seven beds," Gcaba said.

"We have clinical support areas;

we'll also build staff parking, erect fencing, (install a) backup generator, we obviously understand that the hospital cannot function without electricity. There is a lot of demolishing that will be happening because we'll be taking down the old infrastructure and rebuilding it."

Gcaba highlighted that the project was expected to take 30 months to complete.

"As part of the scope and the size of the project, including the value and the period that we're going to spend on this site, the Department of Labour expected us to apply for work permits. We did, and it was then approved," Gcaba said.

She said that in terms of work opportunities, they were targeting 228 (jobs) strictly for Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers, but will create more jobs for skilled labour.

"We'll be looking at the demographics in line with phase five, which targets 60% for women, youth 55% and 3% in terms of people with disabilities," Gcaba said.

She said the project will also allow for local contract participation goals and the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Build programme.

"In terms of the CIDB Build, we've set aside 5%, which equates to R1.2 million. In this R1.2 million, we are strictly dedicating it to students from higher institutions that are looking for in-service training, students that are coming from TVET colleges."

"We will be engaging with the municipality, as well as the TVET colleges surrounding the Port Shepstone area," Gcaba said.

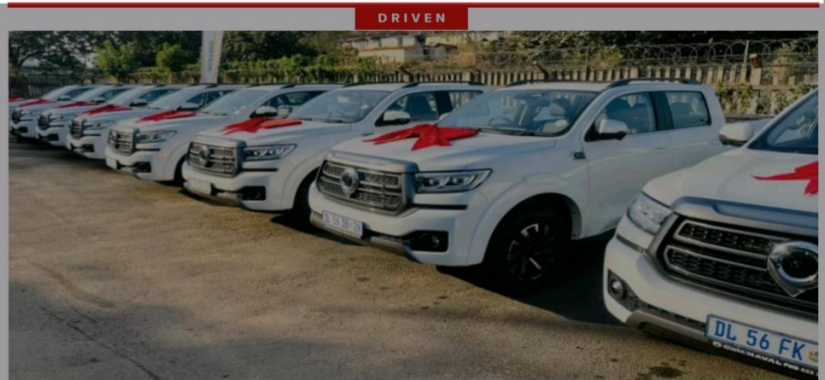
KZN Public Works and Infrastructure MEC Martin Meyer said: "At over R240 million, this is the first big new project we will undertake as the new DPWI. This is where we will prove to people that we deliver quality infrastructure, on time and on budget."

"We are also bringing hope to this community in the fight against unemployment: over 100 jobs will be created on the building project, along with 228 EPWP opportunities."

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AN ARTIST'S impression of the psychiatric hospital, designed to provide specialised care for mental health users in the Ugu District. | Supplied



KWAZULU-NATAL'S CoGTA MEC, Thulasizwe Buthelezi, recently donated these 35 bakkies to the province's amakhosi as tools of trade, but the donation has drawn mixed reactions. | KZN CoGTA

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CITY POLITICS

Race for mayor heats up

WILLEM PHUNGULA
willem.phungula@inl.co.za

ETHEKWINI Municipality mayor Cyril Xaba and Speaker Thabani Nyawose are among the contenders for the lucrative mayoral position.

Sources close to both of the officials and Luthuli House said their names were among those currently being assessed by the ANC panel for the position. During a media briefing last week, the party's Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula confirmed that the interviews for metros and strategic municipalities were underway.

The informants said that some of the names got to Luthuli House through recommendations by provincial and regional structures while others were asked by Luthuli House to apply. The source said Nyawose's name was proposed by the provincial task team alongside Xaba's name. Other names that were mentioned were former Arts and Culture MEC Ntombikayise Sibhidla and current eThekweni task team member Mina Lesoma.

"We do not know who Luthuli will choose, but Xaba and Nyawose are among the contenders," said the source.

"I heard that Sibhidla and Lesoma are also in the running, however, it



ETHEKWINI Speaker Thabani Nyawose, left, and mayor Cyril Xaba lead the charge for the ANC. | DOCTOR NGCOBO ANA Studio

looks like the mayor will come from Xaba and Nyawose," said the source.

Nyawose has been a Speaker since 2021 local government elections while Xaba joined the City in July 2024 replacing Mxolisi Kaunda who was moved to Parliament after May 2024 general elections. Although Xaba holds no political power within the ANC, the party is believed to be happy with his administrative skills and the work he has done in eThekweni since his arrival.

However, the source noted that Nyawose had a slight advantage over the other contenders due to his combination of political and administrative skills, which would be crucial for man-

aging opposition parties if the ANC retained the majority in KwaZulu-Natal's only metro.

Xaba spokesperson Mluleki Mntungwa refused to be drawn into speculation about his boss's future, referring the queries to the ANC. Nyawose confirmed that he was made aware that his name was proposed, however, he has not been called for the interview yet.

"I am aware that my name was proposed but I'm still waiting to be called for an interview, that's all I can say for now," said Nyawose.

Attempts to reach Lesoma and Sibhidla were unsuccessful.

The ANC's KZN spokesperson Sifiso Sonjica said that since interviews for mayors were conducted by the national leadership, the provincial structures do not get involved and were not aware who the contenders were.

"I think we will all know when the national head office is done with interviews. Appointment of mayors is no longer in the hands of the provincial leadership. You can try the national leadership but don't think that they will entertain questions at this stage," Sonjica said.

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