

WOMEN WHO BUILD SA

— Celebrating Women Shaping South Africa's Infrastructure —

AUGUST 2026



Editor's Note



DPWI WOMEN RECOGNISED AND CELEBRATED

As we wrap up the Women's Month commemorations, we reflect on the progress, achievements and setbacks in the Department's ongoing journey to increase the representation of women in senior leadership positions.

It has been a roller-coaster journey, characterised by periods of growth as well as declines in the number of women occupying senior positions. Resignations, promotions, retirements and, in particular, early retirement has somehow contributed to fluctuations in these numbers. While there is certainly nothing wrong with choosing early retirement, it has, at times, affected the gains made in advancing women into higher levels of leadership - dragging numbers into stagnation.

The Director-General has reaffirmed his commitment to accelerating the Department's transformation agenda. This includes exploring deliberate interventions, such as ring-fencing certain senior positions for women, followed by persons with disabilities, while ensuring that opportunities remain open to all eligible candidates.

The statistics shared by the DG during the Women in Senior Management Services (SMS) engagement recently demonstrate the scale of the challenge. Women currently account for 66 of DPWI's 175 SMS members, representing 37.69%, while women constitute 56% of the department's overall workforce. As the saying goes, "Numbers are universal; they don't lie." These figures remind us that there is still considerable work to be done. However, numbers tell only part of the story.

The DG also recognised the significant progress being made in bringing more women into traditionally male-dominated technical and professional positions. This edition profiles some of these remarkable women, their career journeys and achievements, with more inspiring stories to follow in future publications.

We will also celebrate their academic and professional accomplishments—a powerful testament to the fact that women have always been ready, capable and qualified to occupy positions of leadership and influence.

As we celebrate the women who are breaking barriers, rising through the ranks and paving the way for those who come after them, let us also acknowledge the work that remains.

The journey continues. Sit back, relax and enjoy the reading.



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FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Dear DPWI Family,

As we conclude Women's Month 2026, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to every member of the Department for your contributions, particularly the women within DPWI whose work, leadership and commitment continue to strengthen our institution.

The journey toward greater representation and meaningful participation of women in leadership and technical roles has not been easy. However, as Madiba once said, "It always seems impossible until it's done."

When I joined the Department, I made a commitment supported by my Executive (political principals) to help transform the recruitment patterns to reflect the demographics of society within DPWI.

I am pleased to report that we are steadily making progress in fulfilling this undertaking, guided by our strong democratic principles and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Our current recruitment drive has resulted in the appointment of more women to senior positions, marking what may prove to be one of the most significant shifts in the history of the Department. I do not intend to blow my own trumpet these outcomes will speak for themselves. The changing faces in the upper echelons of DPWI are already becoming evident.

Among the appointments that reflect this shift are Ms Mameetse Masemola, appointed as Head of Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), Ms Ayanda Kafile, appointed Deputy Director-General responsible for Construction Project Management (CPM) and others who will join our department in future.

These roles require high levels of experience, deep knowledge, technical competence and proven leadership. As a highly technical Department, we are placing women in these positions not as a matter of comparison or compromise, but on the basis of merit, capability and proven performance. Each appointment demonstrates clearly and unequivocally that women have the expertise and leadership required to serve at the highest levels of DPWI.



I was equally impressed by the speed, professionalism, commitment and dedication shown by a young group of women artisans who played a key role in renovating the Bridgette Mabandla Justice College, where the Madlanga Commission is currently sitting. Their work is a powerful demonstration of what becomes possible when women are given genuine opportunities to participate in and excel in technical fields traditionally dominated by men.

This is the impact that confirms we are moving in the right direction. However, our work is far from complete. I remain committed to ensuring that we continue to level the playing field and create meaningful opportunities for more women to join DPWI and progress within the Department. We will be deliberate in this regard, including through the ring-fencing of certain positions for women, where appropriate and within the framework of our laws and policies.

This publication offers clear evidence of the progress we are making. It highlights women occupying Senior Management Service (SMS) positions, newly appointed women in leadership roles, and women working in technical fields across the Department. It is a record of our transformation journey, our achievements and the growing contribution of women to the work of DPWI.

We will continue to showcase this important aspect of our transformation efforts. More importantly, we will continue working toward a Department where women have equal opportunities to lead, contribute and excel.

Enjoy the reading.

Sifiso Mdakane
Director-General
Department of Public Works and Infrastructure



DPWI ADVANCES GENDER EQUITY THROUGH WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) Director-General, Mr Sifiso Mdakane, hosted a Women in Senior Management (SMS) workshop at the State Theatre in Pretoria today as part of Public Service Women Management Week.

The annual engagement, attended both physically and virtually, provided an opportunity to reflect on the Department's progress in advancing gender equity, women's empowerment and transformation. The programme was opened by the Acting Deputy Director-General: Professional Services, Ms Naledi Stemela.

Mr Mdakane highlighted that 66 of the Department's 175 SMS members are women, representing 37.69% female representation at senior management level. He congratulated women who were promoted during the current financial year, as well as those who have completed or registered for Master's and Doctoral studies and professional council registrations.

The Director-General also highlighted the Department's continued investment in women's development through its bursary programme, including the training of female engineers.

As part of the Women's Month closure, the Department reflected on progress against the Eight Principles for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equity. Key achievements include the approval of the Gender, Youth and Persons with Disabilities Strategy, the establishment of a Disability Advisory Framework, mentoring and coaching initiatives for women, and continued efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming.

The Department is also working to create a more enabling and family-friendly workplace through accessibility audits, consideration of childcare and aftercare facilities, and the development of policies that

respond to employees' diverse needs.

The Chief Director: Human Resource Management, Mr Chance Zaba, provided an update on efforts to increase women's representation in SMS of 20 positions recently interviewed, 13 women were recommended, while the Department continues to explore measures such as ring-fencing selected positions to improve female representation.

The workshop also addressed the Department's role in combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Dr Mveleli Gqwede, Chief Director: Gender, highlighted the appointment of GBV champions in the regions and DPWI's contribution to providing shelter support to other government departments.

The workshop reaffirmed DPWI's commitment to advancing women's leadership, gender equity and an inclusive workplace across the Department. ■





MAMEETSE MASEMOLA: SHAPING SOUTH AFRICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE FUTURE

At the helm of Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), Mameetse Masemola carries the responsibility of helping shape the country's infrastructure future. As Head of ISA, she leads South Africa's infrastructure strategy and oversees the implementation of the National Infrastructure Plan 2050, positioning infrastructure as a key driver of inclusive economic growth and long-term national development.

Her role is centred on turning infrastructure ambitions into projects that can attract investment and deliver meaningful impact. She leads efforts to develop a bankable pipeline of nationally strategic projects, while also advancing the policy and regulatory frameworks needed to support their implementation. A critical part of her work is strengthening coordination between government, state-owned entities and the private sector to unlock infrastructure investment and accelerate delivery.

Mameetse brings to the role a wealth of experience in public investment, infrastructure planning and economic development. Before assuming her current position, she served as Deputy Director-General for Infrastructure Investment Planning and Oversight, where she played a significant role in shaping the strategic approach to infrastructure investment and delivery.

Her leadership journey has also extended beyond infrastructure. She has held senior positions in the ICT and trade development sectors, including serving as Government Convener for the Trade and Industry Chamber at NEDLAC. These experiences have given her a broad understanding of the

relationship between government policy, investment, economic development and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

A recognised thought leader in infrastructure and public investment, Mameetse's career reflects a commitment to using infrastructure not simply as a means of building physical assets, but as a catalyst for economic opportunity, inclusion and sustainable development.

Her academic journey is equally extensive. She holds an Honours Degree in Economics from the University of the Western Cape, which included studies at the University of Missouri in the United States, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Public and Development Management from the University of the Witwatersrand. She also holds an MBA from Henley Business School at the University of Reading and has further strengthened her leadership expertise through executive programmes at Harvard University and the University of Cape Town.

As she leads Infrastructure South Africa, Mameetse continues to play an important role in shaping the systems, partnerships and investment pipeline required to realise South Africa's long-term infrastructure ambitions. Her journey is a reflection of strategic leadership, collaboration and a clear understanding that infrastructure development has the power to transform communities, grow the economy and create opportunities for generations to come. ■

GRACE RAPHOLO: LEADING WITH EVIDENCE, INNOVATION AND PURPOSE

Grace Rapholo was appointed Chief Director for Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Monitoring and Evaluation on 1 April 2026, she brought with her more than three decades of experience spanning research, strategy, evaluation and organisational development.

In her current role, Grace oversees national systems that measure the impact of the EPWP across its four sectors. Her responsibilities include strengthening the use of evaluation findings in programme design and ensuring accountability in grant management. It is a role that draws on the wealth of experience she has accumulated throughout a career dedicated to improving development outcomes through research, innovation and evidence-based decision-making.

Grace's professional journey began in applied research, where she headed the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE). During this time, she led national studies and helped position the organisation as a respected voice in evidence-based policy and development.

Her career later took her to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), where she managed strategic units and contributed to the development of corporate policy frameworks. She also played a pioneering role in advancing knowledge management, including through initiatives such as Knowledge Management Africa and Knowledge Weeks, which promoted institutional learning and knowledge-sharing across the continent.

At the Independent Development Trust (IDT), Grace continued to build on her experience as a strategist and innovator. Serving in various leadership roles, including as General Manager for



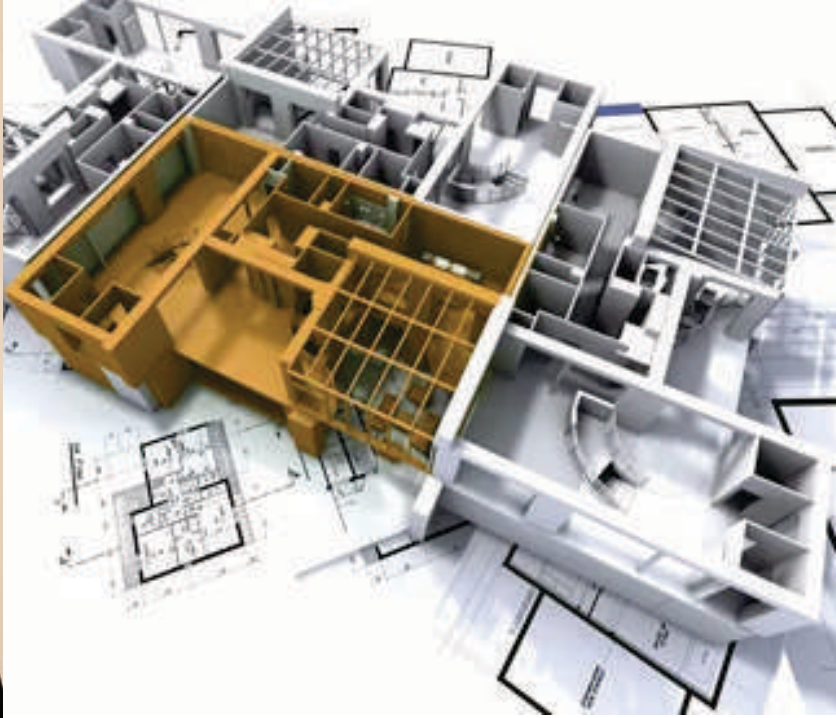
Learning and Innovation, Gauteng Regional Office, and Stakeholder Management, she focused on strengthening organisational performance, documenting lessons and ensuring that knowledge gained through implementation could inform future programmes and policy.

These experiences have shaped Grace into a leader with a strong appreciation for the connection between research, evaluation and performance. Her approach recognises that successful development programmes should not only be implemented, but should also be continuously assessed, strengthened and improved to ensure meaningful and sustainable impact.

Her academic background includes a Master of Social Science in Clinical Psychology, complemented by advanced executive management training from the University of Michigan and the University of Pretoria.

Now leading EPWP Monitoring and Evaluation, Grace brings this extensive experience into a role that is central to understanding the impact of one of government's key employment and development programmes. Her journey reflects the value of evidence, continuous learning and innovation in shaping effective public service and sustainable developmental outcomes. ■





ALIUSKA SANTOS: THE ARCHITECT BEHIND THE DRAWINGS

For Aliuska Santos, architecture has always been about more than drawings and buildings. It is about understanding people, responding to their needs and creating spaces that are functional, meaningful and built to last.

A registered Professional Architect with the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP), Ms Santos joined the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) in February 2025 as a Production Architect at the Kimberley Regional Office. Her appointment marks another chapter in a career shaped by international education, diverse professional experience and a particular passion for the conservation of heritage.

Ms Santos began her architectural journey in Cuba, where she completed a Bachelor of Architecture in Physical Planning and Construction at the University of Camagüey in 1997. Her interest in the relationship between architecture, history and the preservation of the built environment led her to pursue further studies, culminating in a Master's Degree in Conservation and Rehabilitation of Heritage Buildings from the same university in 2005.

Over the years, her professional experience has taken her across a diverse range of projects, including residential, retail, educational, healthcare and heritage developments. Having worked in both private practice and as a freelance architect, she has gained exposure to virtually every stage of the architectural process—from understanding client requirements and developing concepts to producing detailed designs, technical documentation and construction drawings.

Her experience extends beyond the design process. Ms Santos has been involved in 3D visualisation, specifications, tender documentation, municipal submissions, construction documentation, site inspections, contract administration, project reporting and as-built drawings. She has also worked closely with relevant authorities and other professionals to ensure that projects progress effectively from design to implementation.

Her special interest in heritage conservation remains an important part of her professional identity. Her postgraduate studies have been complemented by practical experience in preparing heritage reports and applications relating to buildings more than 60 years old. This combination of academic knowledge and practical experience has given her a particular appreciation for protecting the architectural character and historical value of the built environment while responding to contemporary needs.

Joining DPWI introduced Ms Santos to a new dimension of her profession: public infrastructure. Working in the public sector provides an opportunity to apply her architectural knowledge to projects that have a direct impact on communities and the delivery of government services.

For Ms Santos, this environment also offers the opportunity to collaborate with professionals from different disciplines, exchange knowledge and contribute to infrastructure projects where design, functionality, technical excellence and responsible use of public resources must work together. ■



DUDUZILE MASEKO: BREAKING BARRIERS AND BUILDING A FUTURE

For Duduzile Maseko, the construction industry has been a place not only to build structures, but also to challenge perceptions about the role of women in the built environment. Ms Maseko assumed the position of Chief Construction Project Manager on 1 June 2026, marking a significant milestone in a career that began just eight years earlier as an intern at the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI).

Her journey with the Department started on 1 February 2018, when she joined as an Intern Construction Project Manager. The experience provided her with an opportunity to develop her technical and project management skills while gaining practical experience in the public-sector construction environment.

In 2019, she progressed to the position of Candidate Construction Project Manager, continuing to build her expertise and take on greater responsibility. Her career advanced further on 1 April 2025 when she was appointed Construction Project Manager at the Cape Town Regional Office. Just over a year later, she reached another significant milestone with her promotion to Chief Construction Project Manager.

Her progression reflects a career built on professional development, dedication and a willingness to take on new challenges. Ms Maseko is a Registered Professional Construction Project Manager with the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP), reflecting her professional standing within the industry.

She holds a National Diploma in Building Engineering and a Bachelor's Degree in Construction Management from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), providing a strong academic foundation for her career in construction project management.

Working in an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated, Ms Maseko is passionate about challenging barriers and demonstrating that women have an important role to play in the construction and built environment sectors. For her, leadership is not only about delivering successful projects, but also about creating visibility and opportunities for the women who will follow.

Her journey from intern to Chief Construction Project Manager within eight years is a powerful example of what can be achieved through commitment, professional growth and determination.

“Breaking barriers, building excellence, and paving the way for women in construction” is more than a statement for Ms Maseko—it reflects the career she is building and the example she hopes to set for young women considering careers in construction, engineering and the broader built environment. As she takes on her new leadership role, Ms Maseko is not only helping to build South Africa's infrastructure; she is also helping to build a stronger place for women within the industry.



SIPOKAZI NGAMLANA: DRIVING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

With more than 25 years of experience in public sector financial management, Sipokazi Ngamlana brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her role as Chief Director: Revenue and Debt Management at the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI).

Ms Ngamlana assumed the position on 1 August 2026, marking another significant milestone in a career dedicated to strengthening financial management, revenue generation and accountability within the public sector.

Her journey with the Department began in 2009 when she joined as Director: Customer Billing. Over the years, she has played an important role in advancing initiatives aimed at strengthening revenue management and improving the Department's ability to manage and recover debt. Before joining DPWI, she served at the Department of Water and Sanitation's Water Trading Entity, where she gained valuable experience in revenue management, budgeting and financial sustainability.

Throughout her career, Ms Ngamlana has been involved in a number of key financial sustainability initiatives. Her areas of expertise include revenue enhancement, debt recovery, tariff determination and strategic financial management. She has also contributed to the implementation of itemised billing within the Property Management Trading Entity (PMTE), an important step towards improving transparency and accountability in the management of revenue.

Her experience extends across financial governance, risk and compliance, financial reporting in accordance with Generally

Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP), as well as stakeholder management. These skills have positioned her as a seasoned financial management professional with a strong understanding of the systems and processes required to promote sound governance and long-term financial sustainability.

Ms Ngamlana holds a BCom Honours degree in Financial Management from the University of South Africa, a BTech in Cost and Management Accounting from Tshwane University of Technology, and a National Diploma in Cost and Management Accounting from the former Eastern Cape Technikon, now part of Walter Sisulu University.

Committed to continuous learning and the advancement of women in leadership, Ms Ngamlana is currently enrolled in the Women Leadership Development Programme, jointly facilitated by the Auditor-General of South Africa and the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority. The programme is aimed at equipping women leaders with advanced leadership competencies, strategic insight and the skills required to thrive in senior management positions and contribute to organisational transformation.

Known for her professionalism and collaborative leadership style, Ms Ngamlana is passionate about strengthening financial governance and creating value within the public sector. As she takes on her new role as Chief Director: Revenue and Debt Management, she remains committed to driving innovation, accountability and effective service delivery while contributing to the Department's broader objectives of financial sustainability and good governance. ■



TLANGELANI NGOBENI: BRINGING PROPERTY EXPERTISE AND INNOVATION TO PUBLIC ASSET MANAGEMENT

For Tlangelani Ngobeni, a career in the property sector has been built on a combination of technical expertise, professional excellence and a commitment to continuous learning. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) welcomed Ms Ngobeni as the Director: Real Estate Management Services (REMS), Johannesburg Regional Office, on 1 August 2025. She brings extensive knowledge and experience across the property industry, supported by a diverse portfolio of professional qualifications and specialised expertise.

Her professional credentials reflect the breadth of her experience in the property sector. Ms Ngobeni is a Certified Property Manager with the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM), a Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA) Accredited Professional, a Professional Valuer registered with the South African Council for the Property Valuers Profession (SACPVP), and a Master Practitioner in Real Estate with the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA).

Her career in the public sector spans several institutions and areas of responsibility. Her professional journey includes experience at Tshwane University of Technology, formerly Technikon Northern Gauteng, as well as work within The Presidency and the former Department of Water Affairs. She joined the Department of Public Works in January 2011, where she continued to build her expertise in property management and valuation.

Before her appointment as Director: REMS Johannesburg Regional Office, Ms Ngobeni served as a Deputy Director in the UDM: Department of Correctional Services Finance and Administration Cluster and worked as a Property Valuer within the Valuations Unit. These roles provided her with valuable experience in both the technical and administrative dimensions of public-sector property management.



Her commitment to professional development is equally notable. Ms Ngobeni holds a Master of Science in Real Estate from the University of Pretoria, alongside qualifications in financial management, business management, project management, risk management and management assistance.

Her academic achievements include a Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Management and a BCom Honours in Business Management from the University of South Africa, a BTech in Project Management from Tshwane University of Technology, a Bcom in Risk Management from UNISA and a National Diploma in Management Assistance from Technikon Northern Gauteng. Her pursuit of knowledge continues, with Ms Ngobeni currently registered for a PhD in Real Estate at the University of Pretoria.

Beyond her academic and professional achievements, she is a member of the South African Institute of Valuers (SAIV) and the South African Institute of Black Property Practitioners (SAIBPP), reflecting her continued engagement with the broader property profession.

In her new role, Ms Ngobeni brings together years of experience in property valuation, real estate management, risk, finance and project management. Her multidisciplinary background positions her to contribute to the effective management of the State's property portfolio while supporting DPWI's broader mandate.

Her journey is a testament to the value of continuous learning and professional growth. With expertise spanning multiple disciplines within the property sector and a continued commitment to academic advancement, Ms Ngobeni represents the kind of multifaceted leadership needed to manage public assets effectively and unlock greater value from South Africa's property portfolio. ■

VIOLET NONYANE: FROM SYSTEMS SUPPORT TO EPWP MONITORING LEADERSHIP

For Violet Nonyane, a 16-year journey working with the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) has provided an in-depth understanding of the systems, information and monitoring processes that support one of government's key public employment programmes.

Ms Nonyane assumed the position of Deputy Director: EPWP Monitoring on 1 June 2026, bringing with her extensive experience in EPWP reporting systems, information technology and data management.

Her career began on 1 August 2009 when she joined the Independent Development Trust (IDT) as an Information Technology and Communications intern. The opportunity marked the beginning of a professional journey that would eventually see her develop specialised expertise in the technology and information systems supporting EPWP implementation and reporting.

A year later, on 1 August 2010, Ms Nonyane was appointed as a System Support Specialist for the EPWP Reporting System on a fixed-term contract. She remained in this role until 31 May 2026, gaining 16 years of hands-on experience in supporting the systems used to capture, manage and report EPWP information.

Her extensive experience in EPWP reporting has given her a strong appreciation of the importance of reliable data and effective monitoring in ensuring that public programmes achieve their intended outcomes. Her transition into a Deputy Director role represents a natural progression from technical systems support into leadership in monitoring and oversight.



Ms Nonyane's academic background reflects her multidisciplinary approach. She holds an Honours Degree in Development Studies and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of South Africa. She has further strengthened her technical capabilities through additional training and certifications in data analysis, monitoring and evaluation, cybersecurity and information technology, including a Diploma in IT.

Her combination of development knowledge and technical expertise provides her with a unique perspective on public-sector monitoring. It enables her to understand not only the importance of accurate systems and data, but also the broader developmental purpose behind the programmes being monitored.

As Deputy Director: EPWP Monitoring, Ms Nonyane now brings together more than a decade and a half of EPWP experience with her commitment to continuous professional development. Her journey from an intern in information technology and communications to a leadership position within EPWP is a testament to the value of experience, adaptability and lifelong learning in building a career in public service. ■





SITHABILE NENE: ENGINEERING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH LABOUR-INTENSIVE PUBLIC WORKS

For Sithabile Nene, a career in civil engineering has evolved into a broader commitment to using infrastructure and public works as a vehicle for skills development, job creation and community empowerment.

A Civil Engineering Technologist with more than 15 years of industry experience, Ms Nene has been appointed Deputy Director: EPWP Technical Support at the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI). She joins the national Department from the North West Provincial Department of Public Works and Roads, bringing extensive technical expertise, strategic leadership and experience in community-based infrastructure initiatives.

In her new role, Ms Nene provides technical leadership, strategic guidance and implementation support for the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) across public sector institutions. Her responsibilities include advancing Labour Intensive Construction (LIC) practices, supporting compliance with national technical standards, and strengthening sustainable enterprise development and job creation initiatives.

Her career began in 2011 at Naidu Consulting, where she developed her technical expertise and gained experience working on infrastructure projects. Over the years, she progressed into roles involving increasingly complex infrastructure portfolios at municipal and provincial government level, building a career that combines engineering knowledge with programme management and public-sector governance.

Ms Nene has been involved in several significant community development and contractor support initiatives, including the

Vuk'uphile Contractor Development Programme, the Itirele Road Maintenance Programme and the National Youth Service (NYS). Her work has also included providing technical advice and supporting data verification systems for municipal infrastructure projects.

One of the notable highlights of her career was her involvement in the eThekweni Zibambele Poverty Alleviation Programme, a community-based initiative that demonstrated how public infrastructure programmes can create opportunities and improve livelihoods. The programme's impact was recognised through SAICE National Awards for Best Community-Based Programme. Her academic and professional development has complemented her practical experience. Ms Nene holds a Bachelor of Technology (BTech) in Civil Engineering (Urban) from Durban University of Technology, a Diploma in Project Management from Varsity College, as well as specialised NQF Level 5 and Level 7 qualifications in Labour Intensive Construction Strategies.

Her move to the national Department represents another important step in a career built around technical excellence and meaningful public-sector delivery. With her experience spanning engineering, infrastructure management, community development and labour-intensive construction, Ms Nene is well positioned to contribute to the EPWP's role in creating work opportunities while building skills and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Her journey demonstrates how technical expertise can be harnessed to address some of the country's most pressing developmental challenges—and how infrastructure can become more than bricks, roads and structures by creating pathways to opportunity for the communities it serves. ■



NOZUKO NKEWUSE: ADVANCING INCLUSION, EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

For Nozuko Nkewuse, a career spanning more than 25 years has been defined by a commitment to human rights, human development and the advancement of equality and inclusion. Her professional journey has taken her across the public sector, civil society and entrepreneurship, equipping her with a wealth of experience in community development, gender mainstreaming, diversity management and women's empowerment.

On 1 August 2026, Ms Nkewuse returned to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), taking up the position of Director: Gender Mainstreaming Monitoring and Evaluation. Her appointment marks a return to a Department where she previously built an important part of her career and contributed to advancing gender, disability and diversity initiatives.

Ms Nkewuse first joined the Department on 1 August 2007 as Assistant Director: Gender Monitoring and Evaluation. During her time at DPWI, she was involved in providing strategic support for community development programmes and initiatives aimed at advancing diversity and inclusion. Her work also included supporting disability management initiatives, including the establishment of the Department's Persons with Disabilities Advisory Council.

Her commitment to social justice and the protection of vulnerable groups has been a consistent thread throughout her career. She has extensive experience in the areas of gender-based violence and femicide, diversity management and empowerment programmes. Earlier in her career, she served as a Legal Advisor for People Opposing Women Abuse, an experience that exposed her to the realities faced by survivors of gender-based violence and allowed her to work alongside both local and international organisations in the sector.

After leaving the Department in 2021, Ms Nkewuse explored entrepreneurship while continuing her work in advancing the

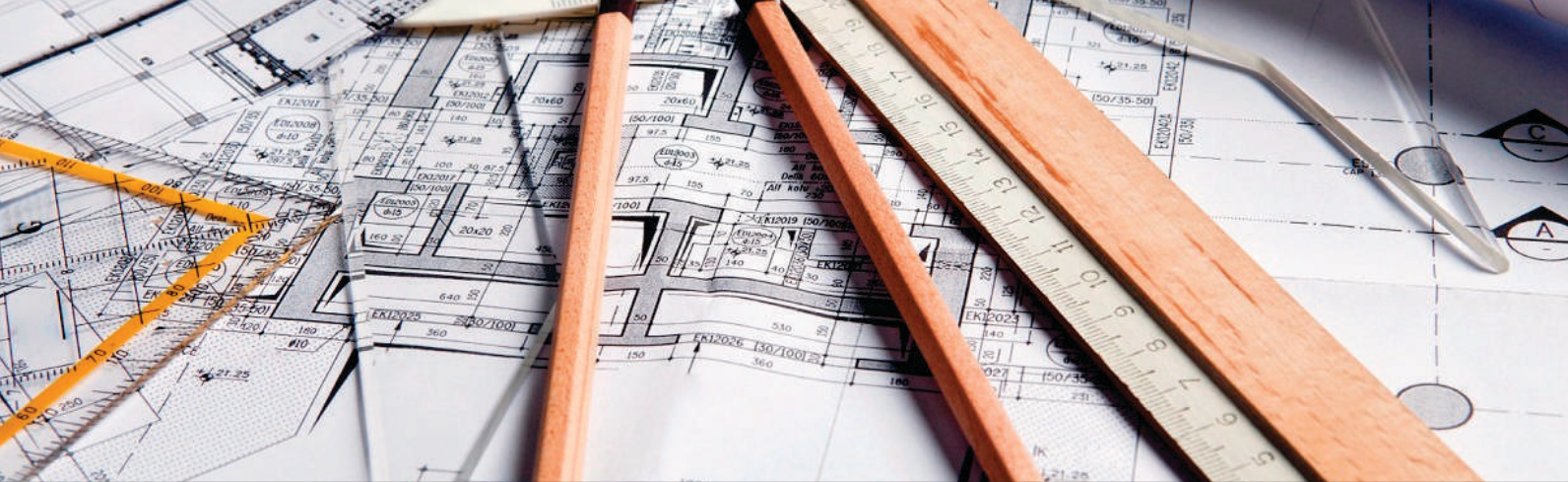
participation and empowerment of women. She joined Gauteng Women in Logistics and Transport South Africa (WILATZA), an organisation that supports women entrepreneurs in the logistics and transport sectors. Her leadership and commitment saw her elected as Deputy Secretary, while she also led the organisation's Research and Development initiatives.

Her leadership journey continued in 2025 when she was nominated to serve as part of the Secretariat for the G100 South African Mining Environmental, Social and Governance Advisory Council, further expanding her involvement in initiatives that promote women's leadership, entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

Ms Nkewuse's academic and professional background complements her extensive practical experience. She holds a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Fort Hare and a Master's degree in Public Management and Development from the University of the Witwatersrand.

She has also completed a number of professional management programmes in human rights and workplace issues, as well as public management and development. Her commitment to women's leadership was further recognised through her participation in the United States Women Leadership Scholarship Programme on Women and Law, supported by the United States Embassy in South Africa.

Now back at DPWI as Director: Gender Mainstreaming Monitoring and Evaluation, Ms Nkewuse brings together decades of experience, knowledge and a deep understanding of the importance of inclusion and empowerment. Her journey reflects a commitment to creating spaces where diversity is valued, equality is advanced and women and other marginalised groups are empowered to participate meaningfully in society and the economy. ■



NONTOKOZO MHLUNGU: BRINGING DESIGN EXCELLENCE TO PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE



For Nontokozi Mhlungu, architecture has been more than a profession—it has been a journey of continuous growth, from developing her craft in leading architectural practices to taking on the responsibility of shaping public infrastructure.

Ms Mhlungu assumed the position of Director: Architectural Services at the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) on 5 January 2026, bringing with her more than 16 years of experience in the built environment.

Her professional journey began in 2009 as an Architectural Technologist at Peter Rich Architects, the practice of renowned South African architect Peter Rich. It was here that she developed her design skills and gained valuable experience that would form the foundation of her career.

Her commitment to professional development saw her pursue a Master of Architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand,

which she completed in 2013. Armed with her advanced qualification, she progressed to the role of Project Architect at SVA International, where she led a diverse portfolio of projects and further developed her expertise in project delivery and architectural design.

She later joined IYER Urban Design Studio as an Associate Architect, taking on the leadership of large-scale commercial developments in the Sibaya Precinct and in Mauritius. These experiences broadened her understanding of complex developments and strengthened her ability to lead multidisciplinary projects in diverse environments.

In 2022, Ms Mhlungu made an important transition from private practice to the public sector when she joined the Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development (GDID) as Chief Architect at provincial level. The move brought a new dimension to her career, allowing her to apply her architectural expertise within the broader context of public infrastructure and service delivery.

Her appointment to DPWI in 2026 represents another significant step in that journey. As Director: Architectural Services, she now contributes her extensive technical and leadership experience to the management and delivery of government infrastructure.

Ms Mhlungu holds a Bachelor of Architectural Studies (BAS) and a Master of Architecture (M.Arch) from the University of the Witwatersrand. Her career reflects a combination of technical expertise, design excellence and progressive leadership across both the private and public sectors.

From the drawing board to senior leadership in government, Ms Mhlungu's journey demonstrates the important role that women professionals can play in shaping the built environment. Her experience across different sectors places her in a strong position to contribute to the delivery of quality, functional and sustainable public infrastructure that serves communities and supports the country's development. ■



LETHIWE MBATHA: BRINGING URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT INTO PUBLIC SERVICE

For Lethiwe Mbatha, the fields of urban planning and development have provided a foundation for a career that combines academia, public service and a passion for understanding how communities and cities evolve in an increasingly complex world.

Ms Mbatha assumed the position of Deputy Director: Ministry at the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) on 1 August 2024. She subsequently took on responsibilities within the Prestige Unit, where she performs the Presidency Key Account Management (KAM) functions, adding another dimension to her experience in government and strategic coordination.

Her professional journey began at local government level, where she worked as a Town Planner intern. This early experience gave her practical exposure to the challenges and opportunities involved in shaping communities and managing urban development.

Her career soon expanded into academia and international development. At Stellenbosch University, she served as a Project Coordinator, working on initiatives in East African countries, before taking up a position as a Junior Lecturer at the university. These experiences broadened her understanding of development beyond the local context and strengthened her interest in the relationship between planning, development and the changing needs of communities.

Ms Mbatha later transitioned into government leadership, serving as a Deputy Director within the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA). She subsequently moved to the Ministry of Police in the same capacity before joining DPWI in August 2024.

Her movement across different government portfolios has provided her with a broad understanding of public administration and the role of strategic coordination in supporting government priorities. At DPWI, her responsibilities within the Ministry and later the Prestige Unit have enabled her to apply this experience in an environment where infrastructure, development and government priorities intersect.

Ms Mbatha's academic journey has remained closely connected to her professional interests. She holds a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Stellenbosch University, where she also obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Development and Environment and Postgraduate Diploma in Commerce in Sustainable Development. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Development Studies.

Her continued academic work reflects a desire not only to contribute to development through her professional role, but also to interrogate and understand the changing dynamics that shape cities, regions and communities.

Passionate about urban planning and its evolving role in development, Ms Mbatha remains interested in exploring how planning can respond to the complexities of modern urban and regional environments. Her journey—from town planning and academia to senior roles across government—demonstrates the value of bringing different disciplines and experiences together in the pursuit of sustainable development.

As she continues to grow both as a public servant and an academic, Ms Mbatha represents a generation of women leaders who are bringing fresh perspectives, knowledge and expertise into the public sector and helping to shape the development conversations of the future. ■



TSHIAMO MATSHENG: PLANNING THE SPACES WHERE COMMUNITIES THRIVE

For Tshiamo Matsheng, town planning is about more than land and development approvals. It is about creating the conditions for well-planned, compliant and sustainable infrastructure that can serve communities effectively.

Ms Matsheng is a Professional Town Planner in the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), serving under the Directorate: Town Planning Services. A registered Professional Planner with the South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN), she brings more than seven years of public-sector experience to her role.

Her journey with DPWI began in February 2018 when she joined the Department as an Intern Town Planner. The opportunity marked the beginning of a professional path that would see her steadily develop her technical expertise and take on increasing responsibility within the town planning environment.

In March 2019, she progressed to the position of Candidate Town Planner. During this period, she gained extensive practical experience in land identification, feasibility studies, land acquisition, land-use applications and development compliance. This experience provided her with a strong understanding of the processes required to take government infrastructure projects from planning through to development.

Her dedication and professional growth culminated in her appointment as a Professional Town Planner in March 2024. In her current role, Ms Matsheng continues to provide specialised town planning support to government development projects,

contributing to processes ranging from land identification and site clearance and validation to land acquisition and development approvals.

Her responsibilities also extend to spatial planning and stakeholder coordination, requiring her to work across different areas of government and with various stakeholders to help ensure that development projects are properly planned and aligned with relevant requirements.

Ms Matsheng holds a BSc and BSc Honours degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of the Witwatersrand. Her academic foundation, combined with her practical experience within DPWI, has equipped her with the knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities of public-sector development.

Her career progression—from intern, to candidate, and ultimately to a professionally registered town planner—reflects the value of dedication, professional development and perseverance.

Passionate about urban planning and development compliance, Ms Matsheng is committed to using her expertise to support the effective delivery of government infrastructure projects. Her journey demonstrates how women entering the built environment can grow into professionals who play an important role in shaping the spaces in which communities live, work and thrive. ■



VICTORIA SUKUMANI: THE TOWN PLANNER WHO BRINGS INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS



Ms Victoria Sukumani's career journey at the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) is a testament to the power of determination, continuous learning, and opportunities for professional growth.

Victoria joined the Department an internship program in 2006 and in 2007 moved to Directorate: Town Planning services working as an assistant admin officer. While serving as an Assistant Administrator, Victoria took the initiative to further her education. She enrolled at North-West University (formerly Potchefstroom University/Pukke) to study Bart et science in Town and Regional Planning.

She successfully completed her qualification and, in 2018, entered the Department's Candidate Town Planner Programme. Demonstrating exceptional commitment and

discipline, Victoria completed the candidate programme in record time, positioning herself for professional registration and further career advancement.

In 2023, she applied for a position as a Professional Town Planner and was successfully appointed. Since her appointment, she has continued to work diligently in support of the Department's mandate, providing professional town and regional planning services to client departments, including site clearance and other town planning-related activities.

For Victoria, her journey is not only about personal achievement—it is about creating opportunities for others. She hopes to see more young people, particularly women, receive opportunities to develop themselves and build meaningful careers.

Her story demonstrates that when an organisation provides opportunities for learning, training and professional development, employees can use those opportunities to transform their careers and contribute meaningfully to the organisation.

Victoria's ambition is to continue growing professionally and, one day mentor and train young people, helping them navigate their own career journeys and reach their full potential. Her message to young people is simple: embrace every opportunity, invest in yourself, remain committed to learning, and never underestimate where determination and hard work can take you. ■



NOMAWETHU SBUKWANA: A SEASONED COMMUNICATOR AND STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS SPECIALIST THAT PUTS THINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE



Nomawethu Sbukwana is an accomplished communications professional with extensive experience in political communications, government communications, media relations, and community outreach. She has spent the greater part of her career working in high-pressure political and public sector environments, where she has successfully developed and implemented communication strategies that strengthen stakeholder engagement and public participation.

Her experience includes serving as Provincial Spokesperson for

both the Democratic Alliance (DA) and ActionSA in the Free State, as well as Spokesperson to the Western Cape MEC for Health. In these roles, she managed media relations, shaped public messaging, and provided strategic communications support within dynamic political and government settings.

Nomawethu began her career as a Community Outreach Facilitator at the Office of the Public Protector, where she developed a strong foundation in community-centred service delivery, public engagement, and access to justice. She currently serves as a Community Outreach Officer in the DPWI Minister's Office, where she coordinates ministerial engagements and public participation programmes. Through this role, she facilitates meaningful engagement between government and communities, ensuring that citizens' voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

She is passionate about inclusive development and social justice, with a particular interest in advancing the mainstreaming of Gender, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities. Drawing on her extensive experience in community outreach and stakeholder engagement, she is committed to amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and promoting inclusive participation in governance and public affairs.

Core Expertise: Political Communications and Media Strategy Government and Ministerial Communications Media Relations and Spokesperson Functions Community Outreach and Public Participation Stakeholder Engagement and Public Affairs Strategic Communications Advocacy for Gender, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities Public Sector Communications and Engagement. ■

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Rev. Naledi Stemela



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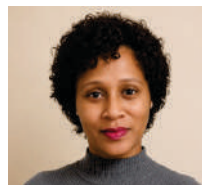
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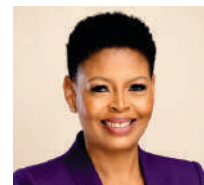
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Regional Manager: Bloemfontein
Thobile Zulu



Regional Manager: Mthatha
Nolizwi Hlengwa



Acting Regional Manager:
Johannesburg
Jabulile Mabaso



70 Years
1956 – 2026
COMMEMORATION

WOMEN'S DAY '26

EMPOWERED WOMEN EMPOWER NATIONS

The empowerment of women is key to our nation's advancement.

Government is committed to expanding economic opportunities for women through skills training, entrepreneurial support, access to funding and multi-sectoral partnerships to place women in key sectors of the economy.

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