

Waste Skips tackle Illegal Dumping

As part of its commitment to keeping George clean and free from illegal dumping, the George Municipality has officially launched a citywide rollout of waste skips across various wards. The launch, held in March, marked the installation of three skips at New Dawn Park Primary School (Ward 16), Main Road in Rosedale (Ward 14) and Chrystal Avenue, Blanco (Ward 1). This initiative follows the successful Illegal Dumping Awareness Campaign in February 2025, during which the municipality declared the month as Illegal Dumping Awareness Month.

The launch was attended by Executive Mayor Ald. Jackie von Brandis, along with MMC for Refuse, Environmental and Parks, Cllr Monique Simmers, and three ward councillors: Cllr Therasa Jeyi (Ward 16 & Chief Whip of Council, Cllr Melvin Roelfse (Ward 14 & MMC for Community Services) and Cllr Jean Safers (Ward 1 & MMC for Human Settlements).

Mayor von Brandis commended the Community Services team for their efforts in maintaining a cleaner city. She announced that 29 skips are currently being deployed across George, with plans to install additional skips in the next financial year.

She also acknowledged the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA)—a national government entity under the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)—for contributing five (5) of the 29 skips. MISA plays a critical role in enhancing municipal infrastructure for improved service delivery as part of the Back-to-Basics Strategy.

In her opening address, Chief Whip Cllr Jeyi expressed her excitement about the initiative: "I'm delighted to see this project come to life.

Attending the Ward 14 Skip installation at the Main Road in Rosedale are Cllr Melvin Roelfse (Ward 14, MMC Social Development, Sport, Libraries & Customer Care), Cllr Monique Simmers (MMC Refuse, Environmental and Parks), Executive Mayor Jackie von Brandis, Cllr Therasa Jeyi (Ward 16, Chief Whip), Dawie Adonis (Director of Community Services), Sivuyile Mtila (Senior Manager for Environmental Services) and Karen Stoffels, Cleansing together with other Community Services officials.



"These skips will provide a legal and accessible way for residents to dispose of waste, keeping our wards clean and free of illegal dumping."

MMC Monique Simmers emphasised the community's role in maintaining the cleanliness of their surroundings: "These skips are in the communities for the benefit of the communities. We urge all residents to use them responsibly," she said.

About the Waste Skips

Refuse skips—also known as skip bins or waste compactors—are large containers

designed for temporary waste storage and efficient removal of various types of waste, including household waste, construction debris and commercial refuse

The Director of Community Services at George Municipality, Dawie Adonis, provided insight into the skip project, emphasizing its role in promoting responsible waste disposal and maintaining cleaner neighbourhoods.

He highlighted that the placement of skips in strategic locations would offer residents a convenient and legal alternative to illegal dumping, ultimately improving

the overall hygiene and aesthetics of the city.

Mayor von Brandis urged residents to take care of the skips: "We request the community to make proper use of these skips by disposing of waste inside them, not outside—to ensure their effectiveness in keeping our city clean."

This initiative forms part of the municipality's ongoing efforts to improve waste management and maintain a clean, healthy environment for all residents. exceptional lifestyle that the area has to offer.



4 in a row!

"Clean Audit" for George

Defined as an unqualified audit opinion with no material findings on the performance report and no material findings on any compliance matters.

#Committment#Teamwork#Collaboration

"The commitment and teamwork displayed by everyone involved, exemplify the spirit of collaboration that drives our Municipality forward." – Executive Mayor Jackie von Brandis

George Fire Department Honoured at National Fire Indaba

Neels Barnard, George Fire Chief and Disaster Manager for George Municipality, received a Certificate of Recognition on Friday, 6 December 2024, at the National Fire Indaba on behalf of the department.

The certificate was presented by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Velenkosini Hlabisa, alongside Mayor Jackie von Brandis who commended the George Fire Services in her opening speech, saying: "Your dedication to safeguarding lives and property stands as a beacon of hope and strength for our community. You are the unsung heroes who step forward when others must step back, and we are deeply proud of your service."

This accolade honours the George Fire Brigade's outstanding hands-on commitment and service in humanitarian efforts, including search, rescue, and recovery operations for the victims of the "Victoria Street Building Collapse" in George in May 2024. Several stakeholders who assisted during the building collapse event were also recognised at the ceremony, which concluded the successful two-day



Seen at the event are Neels Barnard, George Fire Chief; Ald Jackie von Brandis; Dawie Adonis, Community Services Director; and Santa Sternsdorff, George Station Commander. **Photograph by Deidre Cloete.**

Indaba hosted in George.

In addition, Santa Sternsdorff, Station Commander, delivered a sterling presentation at the National Fire Indaba, detailing the department's rescue and recovery efforts during the Victoria Street Building Collapse. Her insights highlighted the team's technical expertise, coordination, and resilience in managing one of the most challenging disasters the municipality has faced. She received a standing ovation following her presentation on 5 December 2024.



Santa Sternsdorff, Station Commander, presenting the George Fire Department's rescue and recovery efforts during the Victoria Street Building Collapse.



Executive Mayor Jackie von Brandis and Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Velenkosini Hlabisa, presenting George Fire Chief Neels Barnard with a Certificate of Recognition.



The teams gathered in Sweetpea Street, Protea Park before moving out to cleaning different dump sites and cleaning the Meulen River.

National Water Week cleanup a success

The Cleansing and Environmental Health team of George Municipality, in collaboration with the Garden Route District Municipality (GRDM) and the Breede-Olifants Catchment Management Agency (BOCMA), conducted a successful cleanup campaign in March this year.

This initiative formed part of National Water Week, observed from 20 to 26 March 2025, aimed at raising awareness about water conservation and environmental responsibility.

The campaign kicked off on 20 March with an educational and awareness programme in partnership with Garden Route District Municipality's Environmental

Health Practitioners. This initiative focused on educating communities about the importance of protecting water resources and maintaining a clean environment.

On 26 March, the campaign culminated in a physical cleanup operation, targeting key areas such as Protea Park and Rosemoor. During the cleanup, a total of 58 brown bags of waste were removed from the river. Additionally, approximately 60 cubic metres of illegally dumped waste were cleared from areas near the river.

The cleanup efforts were supported by Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers, who played a crucial role in removing debris from the river. The

Parks and Recreation team also assisted by clearing overgrown bushes to improve access to the site.

The George Municipality remains committed to promoting environmental sustainability and tackling pollution through collaborative efforts with stakeholders and the community. Initiatives like these highlight the importance of collective action in preserving our natural resources.

■ Please spread the news in your community that dumping waste is dangerous and a health hazard. Waste should be collected in refuse bags and

placed for collection on waste removal days. Builders' rubble and waste not suitable for bags must be dropped at the municipal refuse site on the R102 (airport road).

■ If you can provide names, vehicle registration details or addresses of alleged perpetrators and are willing to make a statement in this regard, please report it to Law Enforcement at 044 801 6350 or gmun@george.gov.za. You don't need a photograph of the perpetrator, but it will strengthen the case for a warning or fine to be issued.

■ If you notice dumped waste, please report for collection to 044 802 2900.

Heropening van die Ou Klipgebou in Pacaltsdorp

Die Uitvoerende Burgemeester van George, Rdd. Jackie von Brandis, het die begin van 2025 die historiese Ou Klipgebou in Missionweg, Pacaltsdorp tydens 'n seremonie amptelik heropen vir die gebruik van die bejaardes van Pacaltsdorp, die plaaslike sakevereniging en die Creative Community Development Project (CCDP).

Met die opening het Von Brandis benadruk hoe belangrik dit is om gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid te bevorder. Sy het simbolies 'n groen uitrusting gedra, en die ruikers by die seremonie het haar herinner aan stingels wat blomme ondersteun – 'n metafoor vir 'n sterk regering wat sy mense dra.

Sy het die rol van die plaaslike raadslede uitgelig en beklemtoon hoe hulle haar vroeër versoek het om 'n oplossing te vind vir die benutting van die Ou Klipgebou, wat nou terugbesorg is aan die bejaardes van Pacaltsdorp.

Die George Munisipaliteit



het besluit om die gebou vir 'n periode van 9 jaar en 11 maande beskikbaar te stel aan die bejaardes onder leiding van Maria Kissen, voorsitter van die CCPD. Die Pacaltsdorp Community Business Association (PCBA), onder leiding van Luwayda Trantraal, sal ook die fasiliteit benut.

Von Brandis het in haar toespraak die munisipale amptenare geloof vir hul harde werk en die gemeenskap bedank vir hul insette.

"Dankie aan al die senior burgers wat saam met ons hande vat. Julle kennis en geskiedenis is van onskatbare waarde, en ek hoop dit word oorgedra na

die volgende generasies," het sy gesê. Sy het die gemeenskap ook aangemoedig om rentmeesterskap van die gebou te neem en dit te beskerm.

Die Ou Klipgebou is geleë op Erf 8536 Pacaltsdorp, 'n eiendom met 'n ryk geskiedenis.

Die gebou is in die vroeë 1980's opgerig en het gedien

as 'n inligtingskantoor. Later is dit verhuur aan die Pacaltsdorp Dienssentrum vir Bejaarde Persone, maar na die Covid-19-pandemie in 2020 moes die sentrum sy deure sluit. Sedertdien het die gebou leeg gestaan totdat die huidige besluit geneem is om dit vir gemeenskapsgebruik te heropen.

Garden Route Global Entrepreneurship Week – A Resounding Success

The George Municipality proudly hosted the second annual Garden Route Global Entrepreneurship Week (GR-GEW) in November 2024 at the George Civic Centre. Building on the success of its inaugural event in 2023, which drew over 200 SMMEs from across the Garden Route, the 2024 event showcased the region's vibrant entrepreneurial spirit.

Organised in collaboration with Suff Academy, George Municipality (LED), Garden Route District Municipality, University of South Africa (Unisa), National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), National Development Agency (NDA),

Government Information Communication Systems (GCIS), and the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT), the week-long event aimed to inspire innovation, support small businesses, and catalyse economic growth in the region.

The Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) operates programs in over 200 countries to simplify the process of starting and scaling businesses. Through cross-border collaboration among entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, policymakers, and support organizations, GEN fosters ecosystems that create jobs,

accelerate innovation, and strengthen economies.

With its comprehensive global reach and tailored programs, GEN offers unparalleled access to knowledge, networks, and resources, ensuring alignment with the size, maturity, and uniqueness of each economy.

The objectives of GR-GEW 2024 are to inspire and empower entrepreneurs in the Garden Route region, strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem by promoting synergy among stakeholders, provide a platform for networking and collaboration between entrepreneurs, investors, and key

players, showcase innovative ideas that drive regional economic development, and facilitate knowledge exchange through workshops, panel discussions, and keynote sessions.

The GR-GEW 2024 reaffirmed its commitment to organising the entrepreneurial ecosystem and fostering partnerships across the public and private sectors.

The George Municipality invites all stakeholders to join future initiatives, ensuring continued support for entrepreneurs and unlocking economic opportunities in the region.

GEORGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY COUNCILLORS

							
Ald Jackie von Brandis, Executive Mayor, Ward 26 (DA)	Cllr Browen Johnson: Executive Deputy Mayor & EPWP, Ward 23 (DA)	Cllr Sean Snyman, Speaker, Ward 28 (DA)	Cllr Theresa Jeyi, Whip of Council, Ward 16 (DA)	Cllr Brendon Adams, MMC Community Safety & Mobility, Ward 17 (DA)	Cllr Johan Du Toit, MMC Corporate Services, PR (ACDP)	Cllr Donovan Gultig, MMC Electro-Technical Services, Ward 18 (DA)	Cllr Marchell Kleynhans, MMC Civil Engineering Services, Ward 27 (DA)
							
Ald Iona Kritzinger, MMC Financial & Strategic Services (IDP, Performance Management, Economic Development & Tourism), Ward 19 (DA)	Cllr Chantelle Kyd, MMC Planning & Development (Planning, Building Control, Property and Agriculture), PR (GOOD)	Cllr Nosicelo Mbete, MMC Human Resources, PR (DA)	Cllr Melvin Roelfse, MMC Social Development (Libraries, Sport & Customer Care), Ward 14 (DA)	Cllr Jean Safers, MMC Human Settlements, Ward 1 (DA)	Cllr Monique Simmers, MMC Community Services (Refuse, Environment & Parks), Ward 5 (DA)	Cllr Daniel Cronje, Ward 2 (DA)	Cllr Erika Brown, Ward 3 (DA)
							
Cllr Marlene Barnardt, Ward 4 (DA)	Cllr Jayzee Jantjies, Ward 6 (DA)	Cllr Vulindlela Mruqhli, Ward 7 (ANC)	Cllr Samuel Vorster, Ward 8 (PA)	Cllr Thembinkosi Lento, Ward 9 (ANC)	Cllr Zukile Gom, Ward 10 (ANC)	Cllr Sifiso Ntondini, Ward 11 (ANC)	Cllr Eric Mdaka, Ward 12 (ANC)
							
Cllr Simphiwe Toto, Ward 13 (ANC)	Cllr Bonisile Hani, Ward 15 (ANC)	Cllr Rita Gregory, Ward 20 (PA)	Cllr Siphelo Manxele, Ward 21 (ANC)	Cllr Marais Kruger, Ward 22 (DA)	Cllr Justin Fry, Chairperson GIPTN S79, Ward 24 (DA)	Cllr Jarques Esau, Ward 25 (ANC)	Cllr Ebrahim America, PR (DA)
							
Cllr Edmund Bussack, PR (PBI)	Cllr Desmond Carolus, PR (PBI)	Cllr Charlotte Clarke, PR (DA)	Cllr Darryl Coeries, PR (PBI)	Cllr Enrico Figland, PR (VF+)	Cllr Raybin Figland, PR (DA)	Cllr Jacobus Gertse, PR (PBI)	Cllr Maria Greeff, PR (PBI)
							
Cllr Marelna Gultig, PR (DA)	Cllr Deon Leminie, PR (EFF)	Cllr Khayaletu Lose, PR (DA)	Cllr Rosa Louw, Chairperson MPAC S79, PR (GOOD)	Cllr Given Masase, PR (DA)	Cllr Faith Mdaka, PR (ANC)	Cllr Christiaan Neethling, PR (VF+)	Cllr Gert Niehaus, PR (VF+)
							
Cllr Pheliswa Qampi, PR (EFF)	Cllr Thandiswa Qatana, PR (DA)	Cllr Sedric Smart, PR (PA)	Cllr Johan Stander, PR (DA)	Ald Gert Van Niekerk, PR (VF+)	Cllr Roxaan Vorster, PR (GOOD)	Cllr Regina Windwaai, PR (DA)	



Oversight Visits Highlight Progress on Bulk Water and Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades in George

George Municipality has hosted several high-profile oversight visits in recent months, showcasing significant progress on its bulk water and sewer infrastructure upgrades. These visits included Western Cape Minister of Finance Deirdre Baartman in November 2024, Western Cape MEC for Infrastructure Tertuis Simmers in January 2025, the Deputy Director-General (DDG) of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) National, the Head of DWS Western Cape, as well as representatives from DWS and municipalities in Mpumalanga in February 2025.

Most recently, a delegation from National Treasury visited at the end of February 2025 for a mid-year budget and performance assessment. The visit included an extensive review of municipal services, covering financials, electricity, waste management, water, and sanitation services.

The delegation conducted site visits to key infrastructure projects, including the existing 20 Ml/d Water Treatment Works in Denneoord, which has undergone significant upgrades, along with the construction of a new 20 Ml/d module, a residual handling facility, and an upgraded clear water rising main.

The Thembaletu East Reservoir, Tower, and Pump Station, a crucial component in ensuring reliable water supply to the growing community and the Glenwood Power Sub-station, which is part of George’s broader energy infrastructure improvement strategy, were also visited.

The R1.115 billion Budget Facility for Infrastructure Funding (BFI) grant—along with a R300 million municipal contribution—continues to drive major upgrades to George’s bulk water and sewer systems. Secured from National Treasury in 2021/22, the project remains on track for completion by December 2025. The project consists of 12 components, many of which are being implemented in multiple phases to ensure long-term service sustainability. These upgrades will strengthen potable water security, support economic and social growth, and reduce pollution in critical water sources.

Component 1 and 2

The 20 Mℓ/day (20 million litres per day) extension to the New Water Treatment Works (New WTW) and the new WTW Residuals Treatment facility will significantly enhance the purified water treatment capacity of the Municipality to a total daily production capacity of 60 Mℓ/d.

Status: The civil engineering works contract, valued at R284 million, is scheduled for completion by May 2025. The construction and installation of the mechanical, electrical, and instrumentation (MEI) works, valued at R217 million, is 90% complete and scheduled for completion by May 2025. Pre-commissioning testing is underway through trial operational sessions to ensure purified water meets required standards before supply to residents.

Component 3

The upgrade of three sewer pumpstations—Eden, Meul, and



From the left, Executive Mayor Jackie von Brandis, MEC for Infrastructure Tertius Simmers and then MMC for Civil Engineering Services and now Deputy Mayor, Brown Johnson, visiting the Thembaletu West Reservoir and Tower upgrade.



National Treasury delegation visiting Thembaletu East Reservoir.

Schaapkop—will improve the long-term capacity and reliability of the aged pump stations.

Status: The first phase of construction has been completed at the Meul and Eden Pump Stations. The sewer pipeline construction for Phase 2 at the Meul Pumpstation has been completed. The contractor responsible for the Mechanical and Electrical works is finalizing workshop drawings and manufacturing equipment. At the Eden Pumpstation, bulk earthworks and emergency tank concrete works are under construction, and the Mechanical and Electrical works contract has been awarded. At the Schaapkop Pumpstation, bulk earthworks and retaining walls are progressing well, and a pipe bridge across the river is under construction.

Component 4

The upgrading of the Garden Route Dam Outlet and Supply project includes replacing the existing 600 mm diameter raw water pipeline with an 800 mm diameter stainless steel pipeline and a 900 mm diameter HDPE pipe, ensuring a higher flowrate for future raw water needs.

It also includes upgrading a section of the pump pipeline to improve flow and reduce the risk of failures.

Status: The new supply pipe has been in full operation since November 2024. The estimated completion date for the entire project is May 2025.

Component 5 – COMPLETED

Two 1250 kVA generators have been installed at the Garden Route Dam raw water pumpstation.

Component 6

An additional 40 million litre (40 Mℓ) raw water storage and balancing dam is under construction, along with a 340m-long 800mm diameter raw water outlet pipeline and a 1000mm diameter raw water pump main extension.

Status: Construction began in May 2024 after all statutory approvals. Progress is currently at 55%, with final excavation, shaping, and pipe laying underway. Completion is expected by October 2025.

Component 7 – COMPLETED

The refurbishment of the Old Water Treatment Works at 9th Avenue Denneoord has been completed.

Component 8 - COMPLETED

The refurbishment of the Kaaimans River Pumpstation included installing six new robust pumps, a strainer system, and electrical control equipment.

Component 9

The new 14.5 Mℓ Pacaltsdorp West Reservoir and Pumpstation will address emergency and balancing potable water storage needs.

Status: Construction is 50% complete, with estimated completion in November 2025.

Component 10

The new 3 Mℓ Pacaltsdorp East Reservoir, 300 kl Tower, and Pumpstation will improve potable water storage in Pacaltsdorp East.

Status: Construction is 56% complete, with an estimated completion date of July 2025.

Component 11

A new pumpstation and control valves at Thembaletu West Reservoir and Tower, along with an upgraded bulk supply pipeline, will enhance potable water security.

Status: Construction progress is at 82% and 99% for respective contracts, with full completion expected in June 2025.

Component 12

A new 8 Mℓ Thembaletu East Reservoir, 1000 kl Tower, and Pumpstation will be constructed to enhance potable water supply security.

Status: Construction is 55% complete, with an estimated completion date in September 2025.

George Municipality remains committed to sustainable infrastructure development, transparent governance, and fiscal responsibility. With over 294,942 residents from 85,931 households across 28 wards, including key coastal areas such as Kleinkrantz, Wilderness, Victoria Bay, Herold’s Bay, and Gwaing (according to STATSSA 2022 data), the municipality continues to prioritize long-term planning and investment in critical engineering resources.

Illegal Dumping Campaign: A Resounding Success

George Municipality’s Illegal Dumping Campaign, officially concluded following a successful month of intensive clean-up operations, community education, and law enforcement.

The campaign, launched as part of the municipality’s broader strategy to combat illegal dumping, has delivered significant results and strengthened the city’s commitment to a cleaner, more sustainable environment.

Launched in December 2024, the campaign was designed to address the root causes of illegal dumping through a comprehensive strategy focused on education, enforcement, and continuous clean-up efforts. With particular emphasis on informal settlements where illegal dumping is most prevalent, the initiative aimed to change waste disposal behaviours and foster a culture of accountability.

The Municipality’s plan prioritized long-term, sustainable interventions over reactive clean-up efforts. Central to the strategy was the deployment of 310 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers and 14 coordinators across 12 municipal blocks. These workers performed daily refuse removal, street sweeping, and the clearance of bulky

“The campaign, launched as part of the municipality’s broader strategy to combat illegal dumping, has delivered significant results and strengthened the city’s commitment to a cleaner, more sustainable environment.”

waste from open areas. Workers also received targeted training to enhance service delivery standards.

Infrastructure and Community Support

To improve waste disposal accessibility, skips were placed in critical wards starting in March 2025, and each household received a quarterly supply of green refuse bags to encourage responsible waste practices. The Municipality also invested in yellow plant machinery, including tipper trucks and TLBs, to support bulk waste removal such as builders’ rubble and garden refuse.

A key innovation was the integration of waste pickers into formal recycling systems. In partnership with organisations such as Polycy and Ewasa, the Municipality began exploring the establishment of buy-back centres and provided trolleys and protective equipment to support informal recyclers—ensuring the campaign not only improved environmental outcomes but also promoted livelihoods and inclusivity.

The campaign was supported by a budget of R16.34 million, funding operations including street cleansing, refuse removal, waste education, and the hiring of ward-based coordinators.

20,000 Bags of Waste Removed

The campaign culminated with a major success: over 20,000 bags of illegally dumped waste were collected in February alone, amounting to more than 115 cubic tons—equivalent to 385 tipper truckloads. In total, municipal vehicles moved 1,315 cubic meters of waste from public spaces to the municipal site.

The campaign’s official closing event was held in Blanco on 26 February 2025, where Executive Mayor Alderman Jackie von Brandis personally thanked the municipal teams, EPWP workers, and community volunteers for their dedication.

“Your hard work has been noticed,” said Mayor von Brandis. “Residents are telling us they see the difference—George is looking cleaner, and that’s thanks to your efforts. This campaign reflects what we can

achieve when we work together.”

The campaign also included a law enforcement crackdown, with officers issuing 56 fines for illegal dumping in February, amounting to R56,000 in penalties. Mayor von Brandis praised this effort, stating, “Illegal dumping has consequences. If you dump illegally, we will hold you responsible.”

Education and Public Awareness

The Environmental Services team led widespread educational campaigns to inform the public about the dangers and health risks of illegal dumping. Mascot Rocky the Recycling Rooster, provided by the Garden Route District Municipality, visited key hotspots and helped engage children and residents in learning about proper waste disposal and recycling practices.

Report Illegal Dumping

Residents are urged to play their part in maintaining clean and safe communities by reporting illegal dumping:

- Community Services Directorate (for site clearance): 044 802 2900
- Law Enforcement: 044 801 6350 or email sprins@george.gov.za



Seen in December 2025 at the campaign launch were 100 EPWP workers alongside key municipal leaders, including Municipal Official Gavin Esau, Executive Mayor Jackie von Brandis, Chief Whip Teresa Jeyi, MMCs Marchell Kleynhans and Melvin Roelfse, Speaker Sean Snyman, Community Services Director Dawie Adonis, Municipal Manager Godfrey Louw, Senior Manager Environmental Services Sivuyile Mtila, and Community Services Official Karen Stoffels.

Communication Team Wins SALGA Award for Social Media Excellence



Proudly displaying the trophy and award are from left seated, Ald Jackie von Brandis, Municipal Manager Godfrey Louw. Standing from left Manager Communications Chantèl Edwards, Social Media Communications Official Nadine May, Communications Official Debra Sauer and Senior Communications Official, Ntobeko Mangqwengqwe.

The George Municipality Communication Team has been recognized as the most active local municipality on social media in South Africa, receiving an award at the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) National Communicators’ Awards.

The award was accepted by George Municipality’s Senior Communications Officer, Ntobeko Mangqwengqwe, at a ceremony in Jeffrey’s Bay in February this year.

This achievement highlights the municipality’s commitment to keeping the community informed and engaged through effective communication strategies. The team’s approach to digital engagement ensures timely and transparent communication on key municipal matters.

The Executive Mayor of George, Ald Jackie von Brandis, congratulated the George Municipality’s Communication Team for this achievement: "This is great servanthood from our team.

"Digital and social media are among the most effective communication tools today, allowing for fast message delivery and two-way engagement with communities.

Excelling in this communication technique contributes greatly to the excellent service delivery that the George Municipality strives for. We are proud of our Communication Team—well done!"

Mangqwengqwe also delivered a presentation on crisis communication, sharing lessons from the municipality’s handling of major incidents, including the Victoria Street building collapse in 2024. He emphasized the importance of collaboration with the private sector, media, and key stakeholders in managing crises.

Additionally, Mangqwengqwe participated in a panel discussion on strengthening crisis communications and building resilience in disaster management. His contributions provided insights into the role of local government in ensuring clear and accurate information flow during emergencies.

George Municipality remains committed to high communication standards and will continue using digital platforms to serve residents efficiently. This award recognizes the team’s efforts in engaging the public and improving service delivery through transparent communication.



Various exhibitors on the GR&KK stand at WTMA 2025 along with the Garden Route District Mayor.

World Travel Market Africa 2025

George, Wilderness and Uniondale Tourism, the official tourism bureau of George Municipality, proudly showcased the region at World Travel Market (WTM) Africa 2025, held from 9–11 April at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

Exhibiting under the Garden Route and Klein Karoo stand, the team joined neighbouring towns to promote the region’s unique tourism offerings. WTM Africa is a

premier international travel trade event that connects global buyers and sellers. The local team engaged in over 30 meetings with buyers from countries including the UK, Germany, Netherlands, USA, Nigeria, and Brazil.

“WTM Africa gives us valuable insight into global travel trends and connects us with key partners,” said Sharon House, Senior Tourism Officer. “It’s a prime platform to showcase our region and support buyers

with quality content.”

In line with the destination’s refreshed brand, “George, naturally,” curated gift bags, maps and brochures were distributed. The show also helped strengthen ties with partners who had attended past FAM trips.

George, Wilderness and Uniondale Tourism remains committed to positioning the region as a leading travel destination, with WTM Africa playing a central role in global marketing efforts.



George Wilderness and Uniondale Tourism representative Sharon House running through the destination overview with a buyer.



World TB Day

Community Health Workers from Bethesda Clinic play a vital role on the frontlines of TB care, supporting patients with treatment adherence, education, and outreach. Their dedication was recognised during the World TB Day event at Rosemoor Sport Stadium, where George Municipality and the Department of Health reaffirmed their commitment to equitable, accessible TB services that leave no one behind.



Career Guidance Survey Supports Youth in Remote Communities

George Municipality’s Youth Office conducted a Career Guidance Survey in February in Nature’s Valley, Kleinkrantz, aimed at helping young people explore career paths and access essential support services.

The survey identifies individual strengths, interests, and career options, while also highlighting support needs such as psychosocial assistance, Home Affairs services, career guidance, or entrepreneurial help.

It connects participants with relevant

service providers to ensure that critical services reach remote communities.

Due to transport challenges in these areas, offering localised, need-driven support is vital. The Municipality is addressing this by providing free, targeted training and expanding the initiative to more rural communities.

Service providers interested in partnering can contact Career Guidance Officer Robyn Parks at 044 802 2000 or visit the Community Development Office at St. John’s and Varing Avenue.

George Library hosts braille training

George recently hosted its first Braille training workshop, marking a major step toward greater inclusion and accessibility for visually impaired residents.

Held over five days at the Premier Express Inn Hotel, the workshop was attended by visually impaired patrons of George libraries. It was led by Nomsa Mukwevho, a Braille quality control officer from the South African Library for the Blind. Nomsa, who is visually impaired and currently pursuing a Master’s in library and information science at UWC, is fluent in Braille across all South African languages.

She was supported by Patricia Magabie, workshop coordinator Thembelani Dzedze, and assistant coordinator Angelica Zass—all from the South African Library for the Blind. George Libraries Manager Rachel Williams also attended.

The workshop introduced participants to the history of Braille and taught them basic concepts such as the alphabet, numbers, punctuation, and sentence formation using the Perkins Brailier. Attendees also practiced tactile reading and learned to write their names in Braille.

Williams said the initiative is a vital step in making public library services more inclusive and accessible for all.



Joyce Oliphant with a braille book at the event.

Thanksgiving lunch for Soup Kitchen volunteers

George Municipality’s Community Development Department hosted its annual thanksgiving lunch to honour the dedication of soup kitchen volunteers. The event, held at the George Banquet Hall, welcomed 90 volunteers from across the bigger George area, while a separate celebration was organised for approximately 20 volunteers at the Lyonville Community Centre in Uniondale.

Volunteers from various areas, including farms, Noll, and Haarlem, were recognised for their selfless service to the community in Uniondale.

Cllr Melvin Roelfse, MMC for Community Development, delivered the keynote address in George. He expressed gratitude for the volunteers' hard work across the municipality's 116 nutritional centres. "I feel so privileged to host this well-

deserved annual thanksgiving lunch," Roelfse said, acknowledging their sacrifices. "You are shining lights in a dark and violent world, a beacon of hope."

He praised the volunteers for not only providing food to the most vulnerable but also offering emotional support through their smiles, hugs, and words of encouragement. "Apostle Charlotte Togba, the motivational speaker, saluted the "aunties and uncles" for their unwavering commitment, assuring them that their efforts would be blessed.

Woolworths, one of the event's sponsors, treated the volunteers to perfume testing and provided gifts for a lucky draw. The volunteers also enjoyed a warm meal and beverages as part of the celebration.

George Municipality currently

supports 116 fully functioning nutritional centres within its service area.

These centres, operated by volunteers, provide three meals per week to vulnerable groups, including children, the chronically ill, and the elderly. Each centre receives a monthly food hamper from the municipality, enabling the preparation of over 20,000 meals per month. Some centres serve over 300 beneficiaries daily. The centres also collaborate with local clinics to assist chronically ill adults, ensuring a holistic approach to care. Regular monitoring of the centres ensures the maintenance of quality service.

For any queries regarding the operation of the nutritional centres, the Community Development Office can be contacted at 044 802 2000.



Cllr Charlotte Clarke, Apostle Charlotte Togba (motivational speaker) and Veronique Ferndale at the event.



Dawn Folding from Woolworths at the Garden Route Mall hands over the first prize of the lucky draw to Anna Petersen from Protea Park. With them are Veronique Ferndale and Cllr Melvin Roelfse.

Volunteers of the Soup kitchens or Nutritional Centres in George and surrounds, officials, councillors and sponsors who attended the thanksgiving lunch for Soup Kitchen volunteers in George.



Mr Brian Oelf, a Military Veteran and Minister Tertius Simmers.

Housing Units for Persons with Disabilities and Military Veterans



Mayor Jackie von Brandis and Minister Tertius Simmers.

The Western Cape Minister for Infrastructure, Tertius Simmers, together with Executive Mayor Alderman Jackie von Brandis, officially conducted a sod-turning ceremony in March, at Erf 325 near Pacaltsdorp. This milestone marks the start of construction on 30 units for military veterans. The Western Cape Department of Infrastructure is overseeing the project and the event was attended by members of the Mayoral Committee, Municipal Manager Godfrey Louw, senior officials from both the Department of Infrastructure and George Municipality, as well as representatives of military veterans. This development highlights the commitment of both the municipality and the provincial government to providing inclusive housing solutions for vulnerable communities.

9 new homes handed over at Metrogrounds

A total of nine houses were handed over in November last year, bringing the total number of houses completed and occupied at Metrogrounds Housing Project to 89. This initiative is part of a broader effort to address housing shortages in the community.

Beneficiaries of the Metrogrounds Housing Project were selected based on criteria from the Housing Demand Database. Priority was given to those who have been on the waiting list the longest, as well as individuals aged 60 and older, persons with disabilities, farm workers, and residents of informal settlements and backyards.

Good progress has been made on the project and 347 houses are still to be handed over in the Metrogrounds development. Phase 2 of the project, which includes 200 housing opportunities, is advancing with 150 houses in the final stages of completion. Approval was also granted in October 2024 for the construction of 196 top structures for Phase 3, with processes for construction and subsidy administration is set to commence pending the completion of the necessary statutory documentation.



Mayor Jackie von Brandis handed the title deed of the home to Frederick Bruiners and Lena Alexander after receiving their new home at Metrogrounds. From left are Cllr Theresa Jeyi (Chief Whip of Council), Mayor Von Brandis, Alexander, Bruiners, Raylene Petrus and Vanessa Brandt from Human Settlements, George Municipality.



A proud Deborah Booyesen, a mother of four children, received her home keys from Mayor Jackie von Brandis. From left are Cllr Theresa Jeyi (Chief Whip of Council), Given Masase and Brumilda Kirchner (Official from the Human Settlements Department, George Municipality).

ISDG Interns Shine at National Treasury

George Municipality is proud to announce the exceptional achievements of its Infrastructure Skills Development Grant (ISDG) interns at a National Treasury workshop held in November last year. Hosted by Gert Sibande District Municipality at Gold Reef City in Johannesburg, the event brought together interns from 18 municipalities across South Africa to share knowledge and showcase their contributions to municipal projects.

The two-day workshop provided a platform for ISDG beneficiaries to present their innovative work in municipal infrastructure. Presentations were assessed by a panel of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Town Planning professionals, focusing on urban land-use demarcation, the implementation of urban functions using GIS and survey-based data, and collaborative GIS-based planning-support systems for sustainable development.

The George Municipality's Town Planning Department is proud to host four ISDG interns: Winsley Leighton Meyer, Mpilenhle Siyamthanda Ngcobo, Nangamso Mhobo, and Tandile Hlobo. Registered as candidate planners with the South African Council

for Planners (SACPLAN), these talented individuals represented George Municipality with distinction, presenting their progress and innovative approaches to sustainable development.

Their outstanding contributions were recognised during the workshop's awards ceremony, where George Municipality received the top accolade for its presentation demonstrating sustainable development within the categories of Town and Regional Planning, Geographic Information Systems and Land Survey. This recognition underscores the Municipality's commitment to fostering innovation and sustainable urban planning.

George Municipality remains dedicated to training and mentoring young professionals to equip them with the skills needed for sustainable urban development. The Municipality congratulates Winsley, Mpilenhle, Nangamso, Tandile, and their supervisors and mentors for their exceptional efforts and commitment to excellence. Their achievements reflect George Municipality's dedication to capacity building, innovation, and sustainable development for the benefit of the local community and beyond.



Naudica Swanepoel, George Municipal Senior Town Planner receiving the award on behalf of the George Municipality at the event hosted by Gert Sibande Municipality.



From left to right: Mpilenhle Siyamthanda Ngcobo, Winsley Leighton Meyer, Nangamso Mhobo, and Tandile Hlobo, on day one of the workshop at Gold Reef City.



From left to right: Naudica Swanepoel (Senior Town Planner and intern supervisor), Winsley Meyer (intern), Nangamso Mhobo (intern), Stéfán de Kock (Professional Town Planner and mentor), Tandile Hlobo (intern), Mpilenhle Ngcobo (intern), proudly showing off their well-deserved award for demonstrating sustainable development in the presentation within the categories of Town and Regional Planning, Geographic Information Systems and Land Survey.

George Municipality Wins Award for Most Engaging Presentation

The George Municipality received the award for Most Engaging Presentation at the ISDG Integrated Alignment Workshop held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) in September last year.

The Municipality's presentation focused on the refurbishment of the Kaaiman's River Pump Station, showcasing a pivotal infrastructure project that underscores its commitment to sustainable service delivery. Delivered by Candidate Technician Mzwabantu Mayekiso, the presentation highlighted the collaborative efforts of the Infrastructure Skills Development Grant (ISDG) team, comprised of Candidate Technicians and Technologists specializing in Electrical and Civil Engineering. The team's success reflects the importance of cross-disciplinary teamwork in achieving municipal objectives.

About the Kaaiman's River Pump Station Refurbishment

Originally constructed in 1972, the Kaaiman's River Pump Station had experienced significant deterioration due to environmental factors, leading to reduced operational capacity. The Municipality's Engineering Department spearheaded a comprehensive refurbishment project to restore the pump station to its original capacity of 230 litres per second (l/s).

Key highlights of the refurbishment included:

- Installation of New Pumps: Upgrading the pumping mechanisms to improve efficiency and reliability.
- Pipeline Repairs: Cleaning and replacing critical pipeline components to ensure optimal water flow.
- Electrical and Control System Enhancements: Modernizing the station's systems for improved performance and ease of operation.
- Structural and Safety Improvements: Constructing a new pump station shelter,

installing handrails and fencing, paving reinstatement, and reinforcing structures with gabions.

ISDG Training Program

The George Municipality currently hosts 10 graduates in the ISDG program, offering training in Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Town Planning. The award-winning presentation by the ISDG team serves as a testament to the program's success in preparing graduates for real-world challenges through hands-on projects.

The Municipality congratulates Mzwabantu Mayekiso and the entire ISDG team for their outstanding achievement and for representing George Municipality with excellence. Their work not only restored vital infrastructure but also demonstrated the value of collaboration and professional development in the municipal sector.



From left Wendy Hannes (George Municipal Acting Senior Manager: Administration & Support / ISDG Champion), Johan Gouws (Civil Engineering Services) and Sikelelwa Gaxa, Chief Clerk Electro-technical Services.



From left Jesse America (Electrical Engineering Graduate), Johan Gouws (Civil Engineering Services Mentor), Simphiwe Lwangaye (Electrical Graduate), Sikelelwa Gaxa, Chief Clerk Electro-technical Services, Mzoxolo Ntabeni (Civil Engineering Graduate), Rual Jacobs (Electrical Graduate), Wendy Hannes (George Municipal Acting Senior Manager: Administration & Support / ISDG Champion) and Amos Mangqwambi (Electrical Graduate) and Mzwabantu Mayekiso (Civil Engineering Graduate).



The larger buses can “kneel” to meet the elevated bus stop to accommodate passengers using mobility devices or who cannot comfortably step up to the bus entrance.



The minibus has been equipped with a hydraulic hoist giving access to passengers with mobility impairment.

DISABILITY RIGHTS AWARENESS MONTH: What is universal access?

“Universal access” (UA) is a familiar term in the sphere of disability and certainly a buzzword in the public transport industry, including the GO GEORGE bus service. If you don’t move in these circles, you might think that it refers to access to anywhere in the universe.

It is, however, important that every citizen should understand the term and how it fits into the picture and expectations for society to create and provide “universal access”.

Equal opportunity

Universal access refers to the ability of all people to have equal opportunity and access to a service or product from which they can benefit, regardless of their social class, ethnicity, ancestry as well as their age, gender and whether or not they have a disability. In this framework, the universal accessibility of public transport can be critical for different purposes such as commuting to work, joining in entertainment activities, or buying products and services.

Under South African law and in terms of international commitments that have been made, passengers with different ways of moving (children, young people, the elderly, people with disabilities, people carrying babies or shopping,

pregnant women, etc.) must be able to use public transport services in comfort, safety, speed and capacity; in other words, with dignity.

How is GO GEORGE implementing UA?

According to Morné Lakay, GO GEORGE Manager, being universally accessible is about much more than being able to get on the bus. He explains:

"Most people know that we provide accessible boarding through the ramps and hoists on our buses and that priority seats are reserved for passengers with special needs. However, we also need to consider the condition of the sidewalks that people have to use to get to the bus, the placing of shelters on narrow sidewalks and the space left for people using mobility devices.

"We have to consider the legibility of the bus stop sign and as a matter of fact, all our communication products, such as the font types, colour contrasts and descriptors of visual material on our website. Tactile paving with specific patterns at the bus stop communicates to passengers who are blind where to wait, at the same time not causing obstruction.

"We have to consider the proximity of bus stops to pedestrian crossings,

and in the future, we must look at the planning of our city to make sure people can easily access their destinations. We have to consider making public space safe, easy and pleasant to use, including contrasting colours on what we call 'street furniture' and wayfinding signage, to maximise visibility.

"Finally, we have to sensitise our service providers to be responsive and considerate. We have a very committed driver and customer care team due to an innovative training approach. Passengers must be able to experience improvements in the service and know that we will respond where we got it wrong. Behind the scenes, we are continually striving to adapt the way professional teams deliver services so that they implement improvements in a coordinated fashion, using universal design.

"Universal access is more complex than many people think, but it is a challenge that GO GEORGE gladly accepts and tackles with enthusiasm," Lakay says.

Anyone interested to know more about universal access and how it is applied within the public transport industry, is welcome to contact GO GEORGE by phoning the Call Centre on 0800 044 044 or sending an email to info@gogearge.org.za.



Robin Mouton is a blind passenger who uses the bus service with ease. Here, he navigates the tactile paving to board the bus.

George Municipality Promotes Inclusion During Disability Rights Awareness Month

In celebration of Disability Rights Awareness Month (3 November – 3 December), George Municipality’s Community Services Gender and Disability Department hosted a buddy day at the Association for the Physically

Disabled (APD) in Pacaltsdorp. Learners from Kretzenshoop Primary School were invited to spend the day with individuals living with disabilities, fostering understanding, inclusion, and friendship. The visit included interactive sessions

where learners were quizzed on their knowledge of disabilities and attended a presentation about the work done at the APD. The centre currently supports 70 individuals—50 children and 20 adults—

with physical and mental disabilities, teaching them valuable life skills and offering daily support. The initiative is part of the municipality’s ongoing efforts to promote awareness and build a more inclusive society.



Staff of the APD, officials from George Municipality, learners and teachers from Kretzenshoop Primary School, and children from the APD during the buddy day at the APD.



Sharoezade Daniels, a staff member from the APD, works with Jackie Kietas and demonstrates to children and teachers from Kretzenshoop Primary how she conducts exercises and physiotherapy with Jackie.



All the learners that participated in the George Scholar Patrol Championship, teachers and judges after a successful day.

Scholar Patrol Championship – Joint Winners

The George Traffic Department proudly hosted the scholar patrol competition at the George Junior Traffic Training and Road Safety Centre, highlighting the vital importance of child pedestrian safety during Transport Month 2024. The event was marked by spirited competition, with Pacaltsdorp Primary School and Parkdene Primary School both clinching the coveted first prize.

The competition drew participants from six primary schools within the George Municipal area, including the winners, Parkdene and Pacaltsdorp Primary Schools. Heidedal Primary School, New Dawn Park Primary School, Mzoxolo Primary School in Lawaaiikamp and Hoekwil Primary School.

The day began with a thorough squad inspection, where judges assessed teams on their uniforms and whistles before teams showcased their skills in a practical test. The fierce competition culminated in a tie, with both Pacaltsdorp Primary and Parkdene Primary sharing the title of joint winners. Heidedal Primary School earned the silver medal for second place, while New Dawn Park Primary School secured the bronze.

George Traffic Chief, Janine Wells,

Senior Traffic Officer Edwin Felix, as well as Lulamile Lakata and Nina September from the Western Cape Department of Mobility and other officials from George Traffic formed part of the championship and attended the prize-giving ceremony, celebrating the commitment of students and educators alike.

Medals were awarded by George Traffic Chief Janine Wells and Nina September from the Mobility Department of the Western Cape. Wells said George Traffic Services in conjunction with Mobility Department (road safety) wishes to thank all the schools that participated in the annual Scholar patrol championship as well as those who were unable to attend by contributing to road safety in their respective communities.

September, who also formed part of the panel of judges, said the scholar patrol programme, one of the oldest Road Safety Projects, clear aim is road safety for children. She said scholar patrols play a very important role in controlling traffic and safeguarding pedestrians, including learners who travel to and from school almost 200 times per year.



A practical test in progress at the George Scholar Patrol Championship.



The Municipality and Henque Waste handed over trollies to waste pickers during the launch.

Waste Picker Integration Programme Launched in George

The George Municipality, in collaboration with Henque Waste, EWASA, Polyco, and the Department of Environmental Affairs, officially launched the Waste Picker Integration Programme in October last year.

This initiative aims to formalise the role of waste pickers in George by transitioning them from informal waste collection to a structured and sustainable programme. To mark this milestone in South Africa's waste industry, the

Municipality and Henque Waste handed over fifteen trollies to waste pickers during the launch.

Waste pickers, also referred to as reclaimers, earn their living by collecting recyclable materials from waste and selling them into the recycling value chain.

They also salvage reusable items for personal use or resale, contributing to the circular economy.

For generations, informal waste pickers

have been crucial to South Africa's waste management efforts. These individuals, locally known as reclaimers or "bag scratchers," collect, sort, and sell recyclables, removing tonnes of waste from urban streets and diverting it from municipal landfills.

Douw Bezuidenhout of Henque Waste highlighted the impact of waste pickers, stating, "We purchase nearly 82 tonnes of recyclables monthly from waste pickers. The war on waste is larger than any of

us can imagine, but together, we are stronger, and we can work towards a cleaner, more sustainable future."

The municipality invites all waste pickers who are interested in joining the programme to register on the official database. To register, please visit the George Municipality's Community Services at 82 Meade Street and contact Yolanda Malithe programme's registration coordinator at 044 802 2900.

George LGBTQI Forum Officially Established

George Municipality is pleased to announce the successful establishment of the George LGBTQI Forum, following a stakeholder meeting held in February.

The session, organised by the Community Development division in partnership with Human Rights Implement partners, brought together key role-players from various government departments, NGOs, civil society, and the private sector.

The purpose of the forum is to promote inclusivity, protect LGBTQI rights, and

strengthen partnerships that drive positive change across the region.

The LGBTQI Forum will focus on policy review, raising awareness around inclusivity, and fostering a culture of acceptance and tolerance within the broader George community.

It will work closely with the LGBTQI Help Desk to strengthen collaboration between stakeholders and drive initiatives that uphold and safeguard the rights of LGBTQI individuals.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the Department of Correctional Services, Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Employment and Labour, Nelson Mandela University (George Campus), Nedbank LTD, S.H.E. (Social, Health and Empowerment Feminist Collective of Transgender Women of Africa), Legally You, and George Municipality.

The establishment of the George LGBTQI

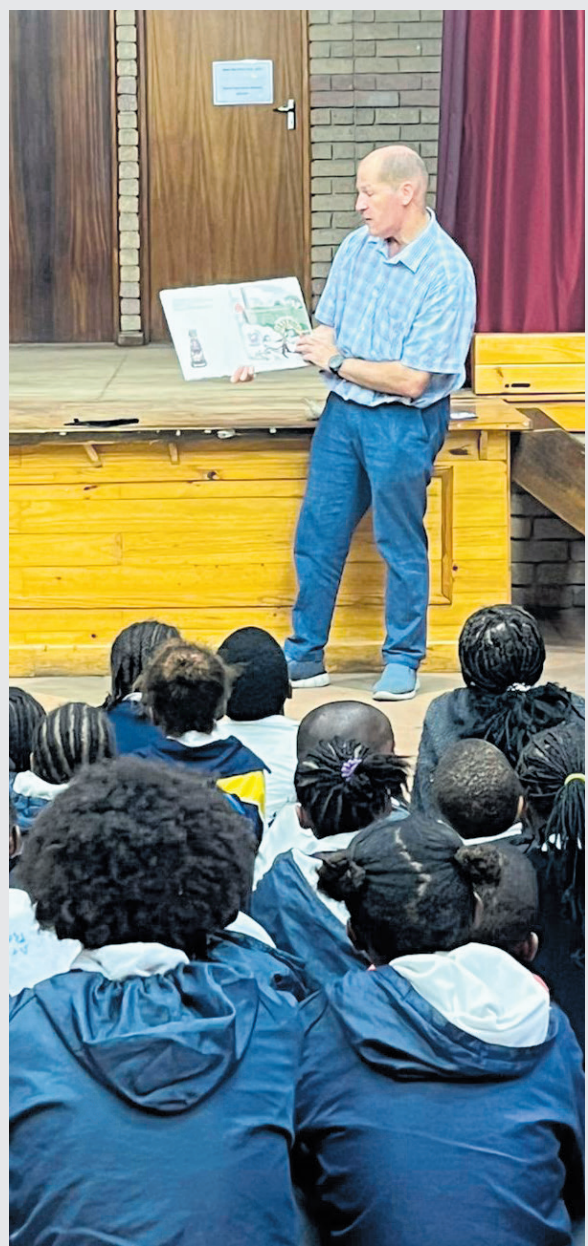
Forum marks a significant step forward in the municipality's commitment to building a more inclusive society.

Through continued engagement and action, the forum will play a key role in ensuring sustainable progress for LGBTQI advocacy in George.

For further information, please contact: Khanyisile Fortuin, LGBTQI Help Desk Coordinator - George Municipality & District Sector Leader LGBTQI Sector.



From left back Vincent Muller (Department Correctional Services), Nina Abrahams (DCS), Melany Martuinis and Wilhelmina Fortuin (DOH), Carin-Leigh Stoffels (SHE), Smamkele Pindani (NMU), Zinzi Simawuse (EPWP Intern), Thandabantu Ndamase (WCED), Sulette Cronje (DEL), Ayanda Mjoubana (Nedbank LTD).



Inspiring Young Minds on World Read-Aloud Day

Hundreds of children across George were captivated by stories as library staff visited schools and crèches to celebrate World Read-Aloud Day 2025. James De Waal from George Library seen here reading to Waboomskraal Primary School in partnership with Nal'ibali, the initiative promoted literacy, cultural appreciation, and the joy of storytelling. The day concluded with a special book donation to Phambili Women's Shelter reinforcing the municipality's commitment to education and community upliftment.

Rosemoor Tartan Track Complete

George Municipality is proud to announce the completion of the brand-new Rosemoor Synthetic Athletics Track. Funded through the Integrated Urban Development Grant (IUDG), this R40.59 million project has been delivered on time and within budget—marking a major milestone for sports development in the region.

Construction began in May 2024, and the track reached practical completion in January 2025. Final touches, including crowd control

fencing, steel pavilions, and minor masonry work, are wrapping up ahead of the official site handover in March 2025.

The Municipality, in collaboration with Athletics SWD, will soon announce the official opening date for this world-class facility. Plans are underway for a grand launch event that celebrates this historic achievement with the community and key stakeholders. The new track is a Class 2 facility under World Athletics standards, meaning it is certified

for official competitions and athlete recognition.

Once fully completed, the upgraded Rosemoor Stadium will be capable of hosting regional and national events—boosting local athletics, supporting talent development, and contributing to George's growing profile as a sports tourism destination.

This investment underscores George Municipality's commitment to building inclusive, high-quality public infrastructure that uplifts communities and inspires excellence.



Rosemoor Stadium Tartan Track - a community sports hub will be fully equipped to host major athletics events and transform it into a world-class venue.



Ingrid Buys, Ejostley Boshoff (Gender and Disability Coordinator at George Municipality), Elsie Pieterse, Hendrina Terblanche and Nozipho Stone (Gender and Disability, George Municipality) with fresh produce the ladies sell as a business.



Cllr Melvin Roelfse, MMC of Community Development hands over a certificate of appreciation to Debrah Mukuku, Director of Gender Links, Southern Africa Regional Hub and Naledi Masepu, South African Manager: Gender Links.

16 Days of Activism focuses on Women’s Empowerment

George Municipality, in collaboration with other municipalities across South Africa and advocacy organisation Gender Links, officially launched the 2024 16 Days of Activism campaign at the Oubaai Hotel and Resort. The event highlighted the transformative power of economic empowerment in combating gender-based violence (GBV), with a special focus on women entrepreneurs supported through the Gender Links Sunrise Campaign.

The campaign celebrated women who have turned their lives around through entrepreneurship and skills development. Naledi Masipa, spokesperson for Gender Links, praised the resilience of participants, noting, “This initiative is about celebrating the strength and potential of women who refuse to let their circumstances define them.”

The Sunrise Campaign, a partnership between the Irene M. Staehelin (IMS) Foundation, Gender Links, and municipalities like George and Knysna, equips GBV survivors with life skills and business training to build independent, sustainable futures. During the launch event, 20 emerging women entrepreneurs showcased

their products and shared their personal journeys with IMS board members, highlighting the campaign’s lasting impact.

Ejostley Boshoff, Gender Focal Person for George Municipality, and other officials were instrumental in organising the event. Representing the Executive Mayor, Cllr Melvin Roelfse, Member of the Mayoral Committee for Community Development, emphasised the need for collective action. “We must work together to stop GBV and empower women—not just with skills, but with hope,” he said.

Roelfse also reaffirmed the municipality’s continued support through counselling services and justice partnerships, while calling for greater resources, especially to support survivors with disabilities.

The event concluded with a call for unity and action from all sectors of society. George Municipality reaffirmed its commitment to building safe, inclusive communities where every individual can thrive.

The 16 Days of Activism campaign ran from 25 November to 10 December, reinforcing the global call to end violence against women and children.

“Cllr Melvin Roelfse, Member of the Mayoral Committee for Community Development, emphasised the need for collective action. “We must work together to stop GBV and empower women—not just with skills, but with hope.”



Bevan Ellman, Director: Corporate Services, George Municipality, with some of the ladies that have businesses in hairdressing, takeaways and selling fresh produce. From left next to Ellman are Adele Louw, Shuriska Stuurman, who does events planning, Sophia Fanelo, Manager: Community Development: George Municipality and Abigail Veldman.



World Homeless Day

George Municipality’s Community Development section hosted a vibrant World Homeless Day event at the George Museum, commemorating 15 years of global advocacy for people experiencing homelessness. Celebrated in over 100 countries, the day raises awareness and encourages dialogue around homelessness.

The event welcomed 115 individuals affected by homelessness and seven key partners, including GREMHOG, the Department of Social Development, SAHARA, the

Department of Education, Stop Trafficking, the George Museum, and the Department of Justice.

Highlights included a powerful talk by Zelda Barnard from Stop Trafficking on human trafficking, an art showcase by Anthony Noble, and an inspiring testimony from motivational speaker Megan Kiewiets, who shared her journey from life on the streets to reintegration.

The event reflected George Municipality’s commitment to inclusion, support, and amplifying the voices of vulnerable residents.

Anthony Noble, local artist and Estelle Fredericks, Auxiliary Social Worker at George Municipality and Coordinator of Project Hope that aims to get homeless people off the Streets, with a painting Noble did at the event.

Proactive Approach to River Management

The George Municipality is taking proactive steps to protect its watercourses and critical infrastructure through the development of River Management Plans (RMPs). The RMPs are being developed to guide the Municipality’s actions to ensure the sustainable management of its most vulnerable river systems.

- The RMPs have two objectives:**
1. To facilitate efficient maintenance of existing infrastructure along the watercourses; and
 2. To improve the ecological functioning of the watercourses and enhance the ecosystem services benefits that the watercourses provide through targeted interventions.

The RMPs are being developed for the Gwaing, Schaapkop and Meulen Rivers, with plans to expand to other rivers in the future. An important component of the RMPs is the Maintenance Management Plan (MMP), which is a regulatory document established to comply with Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations of 2014, as amended. The MMPs document the actions the George Municipality will adhere to when undertaking maintenance of existing infrastructure in the watercourses to mitigate negative environmental impacts.

Acting Director of Human Settlements, Planning and Development in the George Municipality, Delia Power, highlighted the importance of these plans in managing municipal infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and stormwater systems, which are located within these watercourses.

"The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations require extensive assessments, which can be time-consuming and costly and can delay the maintenance and replacement of municipal infrastructure in these watercourses. The RMPs provide a structured framework that allows the municipality to undertake specific maintenance activities without the need for a full EIA in respect of applicable listed activities," said Power.

She further explained that holistic RMMPs will help maintain and improve the condition of the subject rivers by reducing negative environmental impacts, preserving ecosystem services, and preventing further degradation.



Schaapkop River



Gwaing River

“The RMPs are being developed for the Gwaing, Schaapkop and Meulen Rivers, with plans to expand to other rivers in the future.”

Infrastructure and Implementation

The successful implementation of the RMPs will require interdepartmental collaboration within the Municipality.

The following responsibilities have been identified for each Directorate:

- Civil Engineering Services: Planning and maintenance of municipal infrastructure within the watercourses.
- Human Settlements, Planning and Development: Provide support to technical departments to ensure compliance to the MMPs. Undertake project preparation and implementation of river health improvement projects. Secure river buffer zones from

incompatible development and act on transgressions.

- Community Services: Implement invasive species management. Maintain open spaces and support ecosystem restoration efforts.

Environmental Officer Lauren Josias confirmed that applications for the adoption of RMMPs in the three watercourses have been submitted to the Competent Authority, with a public participation process set to begin soon.

"Internal workshops will also be conducted with key departments, and

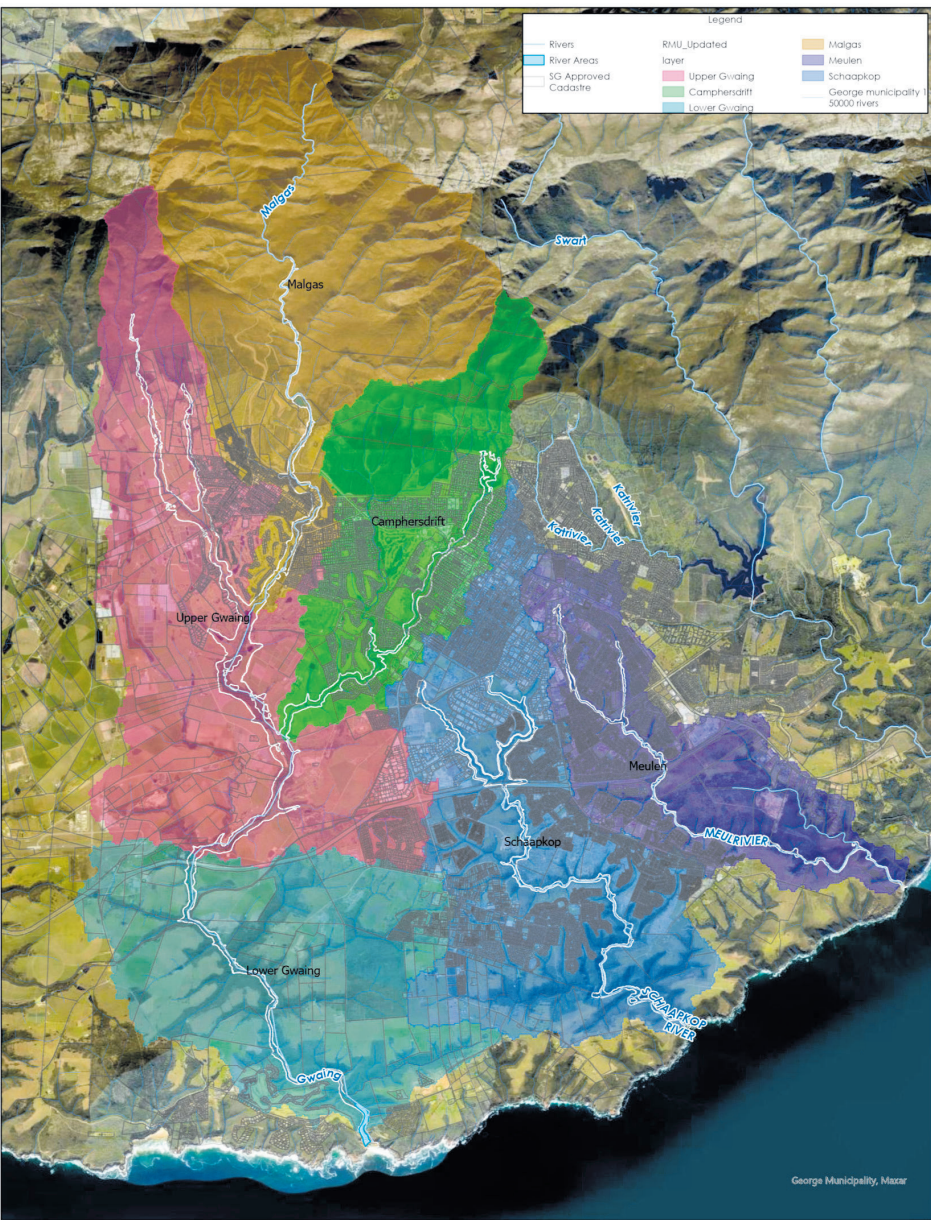
efforts are underway to coordinate responsibilities, identify priority areas, and explore potential funding sources for implementation," Josias said.

The George Municipality remains committed to proactively managing its watercourses while balancing infrastructure and environmental needs.

"The River Maintenance Management Plans will ensure that George remains proactive in protecting its rivers to ensure the continued and improved provision of ecosystem services in a changing landscape and climate," said Josias.



Meulen River



GEORGE MUNICIPALITY :
RIVER MANAGEMENT AREA AND FLOOD RISK LINES

Energy Efficiency enhanced with BESS

In a major step towards energy efficiency and sustainability, the George Municipality has deployed three Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) with a combined capacity of 3MWh to optimise energy consumption. The Municipality’s Electrotechnical Services Department announced this initiative as part of its ongoing efforts to integrate innovative energy solutions into the municipal grid.

According to Daniel Greeff, Deputy Director for Planning and Design in the Electrotechnical Services Department, the BESS units are designed to complement the existing grid-tied PV solar systems within the municipal network.

“These systems are strategically distributed based on local demand: a 1MWh BESS is integrated with a 400kWp PV solar system at Outeniqua WWTW, a 400kWh BESS with a 500kWp PV solar system at Gwaing WWTW, and a 1.6MWh BESS with a 300kWp PV solar system at the Municipal Main Offices near the Civic Centre,” Greeff explained.

The primary driver behind this project is the high cost of running diesel generators during loadshedding and unplanned outages.

“The Municipality did a feasibility study to determine a cost-saving model for the use of BESS as a primary source of energy during a power interruption, as they have a minimal to zero operational and

maintenance cost as compared to the use of diesel generators.”

Reducing Loadshedding Disruptions & Cutting Costs

Beyond mitigating operational disruptions during loadshedding, the BESS units are also configured for peak shaving—a process that reduces strain on the grid during high-demand periods. By storing energy during off-peak hours, when electricity rates are lower, and discharging it when demand spikes, the systems significantly lower operational costs for the Municipality.

“Two of the three BESS units are nearing completion and are scheduled for commissioning soon, with the Civic Centre system expected to be fully operational by April,” said Greeff.

The recent stage-4 loadshedding provided an early test of the system’s effectiveness, demonstrating its positive impact on energy efficiency. By ensuring stored energy is available for critical infrastructure, the Municipality can now smooth out fluctuations in power usage, prevent grid overloads, and reduce reliance on expensive diesel-generated electricity.

Financial & Environmental Benefits

While the financial investment in these BESS installations is significant, the



Gwaing Waste Water Treatment Works.

long-term savings on electricity costs are expected to be substantial. The ability to store off-peak energy for use during high-demand periods minimizes the need to purchase electricity at higher rates. This not only improves the Municipality’s bottom line but also offers greater flexibility and control over energy consumption.

Additionally, the integration of battery storage with PV solar systems supports cleaner, greener energy usage by maximizing renewable energy utilization. This strategic deployment marks a milestone in the Municipality’s energy resilience plan, setting a precedent for future energy storage and management solutions.

Second Glenwood Transformer Successfully Upgraded

George Municipality is proud to announce the successful completion of the second 20MVA 66/11kV transformer upgrade at Glenwood Substation. This forms part of a larger project to install three new transformers, boosting the substation’s firm supply capacity to 40MVA and strengthening power supply to the fast-growing eastern areas, including Kraaibosch.

During a recent visit by a National Treasury delegation, Daniel Greeff, Deputy Director for Planning and Design in the municipality’s Electrotechnical Services Department, provided an update on the project’s progress. "The second transformer at Glenwood has been delivered and cold-commissioned. This means we are nearing the point where it can be energised, ensuring that two of the three transformers at the Glenwood substation will be fully operational before works on the third transformer can

commence," said Greeff.

The visiting delegation included officials from the National Treasury, the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Presidency, and the Western Cape Provincial Treasury. As part of their oversight tour, they visited the Glenwood substation to assess the progress of key municipal infrastructure projects and their impact on service delivery.

The Executive Mayor of George, Ald Jackie von Brandis, said that these transformers reinforce the George Municipality’s commitment to expanding and modernising its electrical infrastructure to support the city’s continued growth and development. "We are continuously working to upgrade our substations, increase electricity capacity, and ensure our infrastructure meets the needs of George and its residents," Mayor von Brandis added.



Municipality pleased with the completion of the 20MVA 66/11kV Glenwood transformer upgrade.



Treasury visited the Glenwood substation to assess progress of key municipal infrastructure.



Minister Ricardo MacKenzie from the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport with a plaque for 12 newly constructed steel pavilions at the Blanco Sportsground and George Mayor, Ald Jackie von Brandis with George Municipal officials and councillors as well as representatives from various sporting bodies in the area.

New pavilions at Blanco Sportsground

In a major boost for local sport and community infrastructure, George Municipality, in collaboration with the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS), proudly unveiled 12 newly constructed steel pavilions at the Blanco Sportsground recently. This R750,000 investment, made possible through funding transferred by DCAS, is a significant step toward improving

local sports facilities and fostering greater community participation. The official handover ceremony was attended by the Executive Mayor of George, Ald Jackie von Brandis, Cllr Jean Safers, MMC for Social Development and Sport Cllr Melvin Roelfse, Chief Whip of Council Theresa Jeyi, and Minister Ricardo Mackenzie, who together celebrated this milestone with local sporting bodies and community stakeholders.

Mayor Von Brandis said “we’re incredibly proud of the progress we’ve made in Blanco and look forward to continuing our mission of becoming the sports mecca of the region.” “I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to Minister Mackenzie and his department for their tireless efforts in supporting our infrastructure development initiatives. We remain committed to working collaboratively with

our department in the Western Cape Government to deliver top-notch facilities that benefit our residents and foster a thriving sports culture,” Mayor Von Brandis said. “These pavilions will significantly improve the spectator experience by offering ample, safe seating and enhancing the overall atmosphere during local sporting events,” said Granville Campher, Manager: Sport Development. “

The project – located on Erf 464 – involved the full construction of modern steel structure pavilions. Work began on 3 April 2024 and reached completion on 30 June 2024, with a total expenditure of R740,937.61. The project reflects George Municipality’s firm commitment to complying with SRSA norms and standards and the conditions of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG).



Ladies busy knitting and crocheting during the classes.

Innovation Centre Launched

The Pacaltsdorp Library is proud to announce the launch of its new Innovation Centre, a community-driven space designed to foster creativity, learning, and connection among residents.

According to Rachel Williams, Manager: George Libraries, as part of its exciting initiatives, the Innovation Centre is offering knitting and crocheting classes every Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 to 11:30. “These sessions, led by skilled women from the community, are open to anyone eager to learn or improve their craft. Participants will have the opportunity to create handmade items, which will be donated to a local old age home, ensuring that their work makes a meaningful impact,” Williams said. She said looking ahead, the Innovation Centre will introduce a reading programme for adults. This initiative aims to encourage literacy and lifelong learning within the community.



Some of the products that residents of Pacaltsdorp have finished at the Innovation Centre, Pacaltsdorp Library.

Residents of Pacaltsdorp are warmly invited to visit the Innovation Centre, get involved in these enriching programmes, and be part of a movement that strengthens community ties.

For more information, visit the Pacaltsdorp Library or contact 044 803 9340.

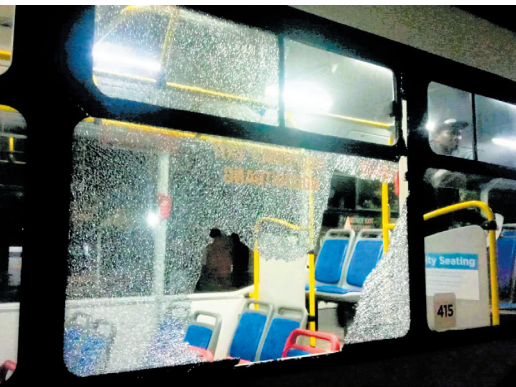
R698 200 bestee aan vervanging van busruite in een jaar

Die GO GEORGE-busdiens het verlede jaar 'n verbysterende 43 voorvalle van klipgooiery beleef. Hierdie sinnelose en kwaadwillige dade van vandalisme het die George Geïntegreerde Openbare Vervoernetwerk (GIPTN) altesaam R698 200 gekos om beskadigde slegs busruite te vervang.

"Vandalisme wat GO GEORGE-infrastruktuur en -busse teiken, is 'n ernstige bron van kommer," sê Morné Lakay, GO GEORGE-bestuurder. "Sulke voorvalle belemmer nie net die kwaliteit van diens vir ons passasiers nie, maar ontwig ook ons missie om 'n waardige en veilige openbare vervoerdiens te lewer. Elke beskadigde bus wat vir herstelwerk uit diens geneem word, plaas bykomende druk op die oorblywende vloot, wat moontlik vertragings kan veroorsaak en die hele skedule vir die dag ontwig."

Lakay beklemtoon dat hoewel sommige hierdie optrede as onskadelike poetse beskou, dit in werklikheid kriminele oortredings is. "Die beskadiging van openbare eiendom is 'n vervolgbare misdaad en kan tot 'n kriminele rekord lei. Om klippe na 'n bus te gooi is nie net vandalisme nie - dit is 'n roekelose daad wat die lewens van passasiers en personeel in gevaar stel, met die potensiaal om ernstige beserings te veroorsaak."

Die mees algemene teikens van hierdie vandale sluit in busruite, sitplekke en openbare infrastruktuur soos glaspanele en diensinligtingplakkers by bushalteskuilings. Altesaam 35 bussitplekke moes einde verlede jaar herstel word. Vervanging van die bekleedsel kos R820 per sitplek.



GO GEORGE doen 'n beroep op die gemeenskap om kollektiewe verantwoordelikheid te neem vir die beveiliging van busse en verwante fasiliteite. "Ons het die aktiewe betrokkenheid van ouers, onderwysers, jeugleiers, gemeenskapsbeïnvloeders en godsdienstige en sake-organisasies nodig om 'n gevoel van eienaarskap en trots te kweek en die regte waardes by ons jeug in te boesem," benadruk Lakay. "Dit is van kardinale belang

om jongmense op te voed oor die ernstige gevolge van hul optrede en 'n einde te maak aan hierdie sinnelose aanvalle op 'n diens wat aan die einde van die dag hul eie gemeenskap bevoordeel."

GO GEORGE doen 'n beroep op die publiek om vandalisme te help stop en enige sodanige aktiwiteite aan te meld deur die GO GEORGE-inbelsentrum by 0800 044 044 te kontak. As dit veilig is om dit te doen, kan die neem van foto's van diegene wat vandalisme pleeg, baie help om oortreders aanspreeklik te hou.

GO GEORGE celebrates a decade of moving the community forward

On 8 December last year, GO GEORGE reached a significant milestone – 10 years of serving the George community with safe, reliable, and affordable public transport. This decade of dedication, made possible through the support of the National Department of Transport, Western Cape Provincial Government and George Municipality, stands as a powerful example of what can be achieved when authorities and communities work together to improve lives.

Over the past ten years, GO GEORGE has become more than just a bus service – it has evolved into a vital connector for thousands of residents commuting daily to work, school, healthcare facilities, and more. Since its modest beginnings in 2014 with only three routes and 12 buses, the system has grown substantially, currently transporting close to 20 000 passengers per weekday across 33 routes spanning 465 km with a fleet of 133 buses.

A decade of progress and milestones

Throughout the years, GO GEORGE has achieved a number of milestones that have helped it become a model public transport system in South Africa. Key highlights over the past decade include:

- **Passenger-centred innovations:** GO GEORGE introduced accessible buses and infrastructure for people with disabilities, consistently improved its services based on community input, and implemented user-friendly trip-planning tools using modern technology.
- **Sustainability in motion:** The system prioritised environmental responsibility, introducing a modern fleet designed to reduce harmful emissions.
- **Economic development:** The service generated hundreds of job opportunities within the transport system and through



Jeanette Constance from Pacaltsdorp was on the right bus at the right moment to receive a GO GEORGE birthday goodie bag. She's been a passenger since the roll-out of the first routes.

associated infrastructure upgrades, while also indirectly boosting access to employment and education.

Overcoming adversity

GO GEORGE's journey was not without its challenges. Integrating informal operators into the system in the early years required extensive negotiation, collaboration and perseverance.

The service also played a critical role during crises, notably in 2017 and 2018, when GO GEORGE buses were deployed to assist with evacuations during the devastating fires in Knysna and George. Staff volunteered without hesitation, working day and night to support affected communities – some of the most memorable and rewarding moments in the service's history.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 posed yet another major challenge, requiring swift operational changes to protect public health while ensuring the continuity of essential services. Tragically, several team members were lost during this time –

dedicated individuals whose contributions will never be forgotten.

Other incidents, such as the petrol bomb attacks on a GO GEORGE bus in March 2023 that left passengers injured and traumatised, and the violent protest action in 2015 that resulted in five buses being destroyed, tested the resilience of the system. Yet GO GEORGE emerged stronger, thanks to the commitment of its staff, the trust of its passengers, and the support of key stakeholders.

Looking forward

As GO GEORGE moves into its second decade, its commitment remains unwavering: to improve mobility, expand its reach, embrace innovative technology, and promote environmentally sustainable practices.

"We are incredibly proud to have celebrated 10 years of service to this vibrant community," said Morné Lakay, GO GEORGE Manager. "This milestone belongs to every passenger, staff member, and partner who contributed to this journey.



Tshaka Thanduxolo was one of the drivers taking the buses to the streets of George on 8 December 2014. Tshaka was awarded the title of George Link Driver of the Year on Monday, after a challenging track competition between 99 participants last week. Tshaka is one of 19 drivers who has been with the company since the beginning.



Klaas Loff (78) from Pacaltsdorp has been using the GO GEORGE service from the very beginning. He was the lucky recipient of a GO GEORGE birthday goodie bag on one of the birthday buses on Monday.

Together, we have shown the impact a people-focused public transport system can make."

For more information, contact the GO GEORGE Call Centre on 0800 044 044, visit www.gogeorge.org.za, email info@gogeorge.org.za, or follow the GO GEORGE Facebook page.



Stakeholders pose together, proud to have contributed to the warm and festive Mayoral Roadblock initiative.

LEFT: "Georgie," the beloved GO GEORGE mascot, joins Mayor Jackie von Brandis to welcome Terence Tobin and his family from Fourways, Johannesburg.



Annual Festive Roadblock

In the first week of December last year, Mayor Jackie von Brandis, joined by councillors and representatives from law enforcement, traffic, community safety, and local tourism, hosted the Annual Festive Roadblock on CJ Langenhoven Road near the Outeniqua Pass. The cheerful event ran from 12:00 to 14:00 and warmly welcomed visitors with smiles, handshakes, and festive goody bags.

Holiday packs included water bottles, license disc holders, tourism maps, wildfire readiness tips, activity books, and the

George Herald Holiday Guide. GO GEORGE mascot "Georgie" added extra cheer for young travellers.

Mayor von Brandis said the initiative aimed to spread holiday spirit while promoting George as a safe, clean, and welcoming destination on the Garden Route. The event also highlighted the city's preparedness for the busy festive season.

The Mayor was accompanied by councillors, municipal officials, SAPS, Fire and Disaster Services, and key tourism stakeholders.