

BFI Projects Successfully Delivering Bulk Water and Sanitation Services

George Municipality's ongoing investment in bulk water infrastructure was recently highlighted during the official handover of new facilities in Thembaletu, where national and provincial stakeholders underscored the project's importance for long-term water security and community development. The state-of-the-art reservoir, pump station and reservoir tower-delivered as part of Phase 12 of the Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI) programme form part of a broader R1.4 billion investment aimed at ensuring a reliable and sustainable supply of potable water to meet both current demand and future growth.

The handover, led by the Department of Water and Sanitation, emphasised not only the technical advancements achieved, but also the socio-economic benefits of the project, including local job creation, skills development and improved service delivery.

A significant portion of the investment has been directed towards Thembaletu, with upgrades to bulk pipelines, storage capacity and treatment systems contributing to improved water quality, reduced pollution risks and enhanced resilience of the municipal water network.

George Municipality achieved a



Thembaletu East Water 1ML Tower, 8ML reservoir and Pumpstation.

significant milestone by spending 100% of the R1,115 billion Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI) grant by end June 2025 and to date has spent 73% of the Municipality's contribution of R300 million.

The projects are successfully delivering bulk water and sanitation services to the residents of George, with only minor final finishing works remaining and scheduled to be completed by June 2026. Improving

the security of George's current and future water and sanitation needs, the R1,415 billion investment has been channelled into 12 major components of bulk water and sewer infrastructure, many implemented in phases to ensure long-term sustainability.

These upgrades are strengthening potable water security, reducing pollution risks, and supporting continued social and economic growth in George.

Key progress includes:

- **New Water Treatment Works:** Civil works have been completed and the mechanical, electrical and instrumentation works are 99% complete, with only final finishing outstanding. Purified water from the new 20 Mℓ per day modules has been supplying residents since May 2025. Maintenance and upgrades have also been completed on the existing modules and the Old Water Treatment Works. The Residuals Treatment Works is currently being commissioned. This expansion increases the Municipality's total treatment capacity to 60 Mℓ/day.
- **Raw Water Balancing Dam (40 Mℓ):** Now operational, this additional storage facility - together with associated pipelines - is 99% complete. Combined with the two existing 30 Mℓ dams, total raw water storage now stands at 100 Mℓ,

significantly improving supply security to the treatment works.

- **Sewer Pumpstation Upgrades:** Upgrades to the Eden, Meul, and Schaapkop pumpstations are already improving reliability and reducing the risk of sewage spillages. Final work at Schaapkop is expected within the next four months.
- **Garden Route Dam Outlet and Supply Upgrade:** Completed in June 2025, increasing flow capacity and reducing system risks through upgraded pipelines.
- **Pacaltsdorp Reservoirs:** The West Reservoir (14.5 Mℓ) and pumpstation are fully operational, while the East Reservoir is 90% complete with final mechanical and electrical work outstanding.
- **Thembaletu Reservoirs:** The newly commissioned Thembaletu East 8 Mℓ reservoir, 1 Mℓ tower and pumpstation have been delivering potable water since February 2026. The West Reservoir system is currently in final commissioning.
- **Other Completed Projects:** Include the Garden Route Dam generators, refurbishment of the Old Water Treatment Works at 9th Avenue, and the Kaaimans River pumpstation.

Serving more than 294,942 residents across 85,931 households in 28 wards, George Municipality remains committed to sustainable infrastructure, transparent governance, and future-focused planning. Achieving 100% expenditure on such a significant grant demonstrates the Municipality's ability to manage major projects responsibly while securing essential services for generations to come.

What this means for George residents:

- **Stronger potable water security:** The new Water Treatment Works has been delivering clean drinking water since May 2025.
- **Improved sanitation:** Upgraded sewer pumpstations are reducing pollution risks and protecting community health.
- **Increased storage capacity:** New reservoirs in Pacaltsdorp and Thembaletu enhance resilience during outages.
- **Future-proof infrastructure:** Expanded raw water storage and upgraded pipelines ensure long-term supply reliability.



Pacaltsdorp West 14.5 ML Reservoir and Pumpstation.

George Tourism at World Travel Market 2026

World Travel Market (WTM) Africa kicked off with a bang in Cape Town, in the Cape Town International Convention Centre on 13 April 2026. George Tourism's Joan Shaw and Marketer Sharon House, on a platform with other towns and products from the Garden Route, joined the ranks of almost 800 exhibitors at WTM, hosting pre-arranged appointments with trade professionals from more than 100 countries. The meetings present a significant opportunity for tourism marketing and industry relationship building.

In addition to the meetings

and networking, both delegates attended interesting industry talks on subjects such as Film & Tourism, being found on AI, Sports Tourism, destination greening and more. These talks assist in keeping up with trends and easy ways to slot into existing programmes to reach destination objectives. It also assists in finding interesting topics and speakers for George Tourism's stakeholder conference in May 2026.

The Garden Route and Klein Karoo district continues to be well represented, not just on the GR&KK stand, but there are also

many individual products from the area, flying the flag of the area, and attracting new and return trade to grow the economy.

Tourism Manager, Joan Shaw said "Domestic Trade shows are one of the most cost-effective ways to catch up with both the local and international trade, by bringing together almost 10 000 industry professionals under one roof for 3 days.

"The interesting programme also assists us to keep abreast of trends and technology, so that we can adapt our destination strategies accordingly."



Sharon House, George Tourism Marketing Official and Joan Shaw, Tourism Manager at WTM 2026 in CTICC.

Successful Mini Career Expo at Franken Primary

The George Municipality Youth Office recently hosted a successful Mini Career Expo at Franken Primary School in Herold as part of its continued commitment to youth development and empowerment.

The initiative formed part of the Municipality's broader strategy to equip young people with the knowledge and exposure needed to make informed decisions about their future careers. The event was organised in collaboration with municipal officials and several community stakeholders who volunteered their time and expertise.

A total of 129 learners from Grades 7 to 9 participated in the engaging and interactive expo. The learners were given the opportunity to connect directly with professionals from a variety of sectors, providing valuable insight into career opportunities available within their local community.

Stakeholders who participated included representatives from South Cape Nursing College, George Traffic Services, the George Fire Department, George Law Enforcement, the Department of Agriculture, the South African Police Service and its K9 Unit, South Cape Recruitment, and Africa Skills. Their involvement ensured that learners were exposed to a wide range of professions spanning healthcare, public safety, agriculture, recruitment and



Stakeholders from various sectors who participated in the Mini Career Expo at Franken Primary School.

skills development. Through a structured rotational format, learners visited the various exhibition stations where professionals shared information about their fields, answered questions, and explained the study pathways and skills required for their respective careers. This interactive approach enabled learners to explore potential interests while gaining a clearer understanding of possible future study and career opportunities.

Career Guidance Officer Robyn Parks said the initiative achieved its intended impact.

"The Expo achieved its goal of opening young minds to possibilities they may not have otherwise considered. It also strengthened our collective mission to support youth in navigating their future pathways," she said.

The event also strengthened collaboration between the Municipality and community

partners, highlighting a shared commitment to investing in the growth and future success of young people in the region.

The George Municipality Youth Office extends its sincere gratitude to all participating stakeholders whose contributions ensured a successful and impactful event that positively influenced the personal development and career aspirations of the learners who attended.



Sr. Crowther from South Cape Nursing College explaining the different study options available in nursing.



Jade Lourens, Sgt. McCombi, Warrant Officer Schoeman, Warrant Officer Malherbe and Henronique Petersen at the event.

Celebrating World Book & Copyright Day with young readers

George Library marked World Book and Copyright Day in April by hosting learners from Edu Blocks Daycare for an engaging and educational morning programme focused on promoting a love for reading.

The children participated in interactive storytelling and singing sessions, through which they learned the importance of caring for books. The activities were designed to introduce young learners to the value of reading in a fun and accessible way. Library official Anne-Marie Afrika also distributed colouring-in sheets for the children to enjoy at home or at their crèche, further encouraging creativity and

continued engagement with books beyond the library environment.

World Book & Copyright Day is commemorated annually on 23 April as an international initiative to promote reading, publishing and the protection of intellectual property through copyright. The day highlights the role of books in education and development, while encouraging a culture of reading for enjoyment.

Activities associated with the day often include storytelling sessions, read-aloud programmes, book sharing and initiatives aimed at increasing access to reading materials.



Anne-Marie Afrika and Janine Pierre-Carolus of George Library with the teacher and learners from Edu Blocks Daycare during the World Book & Copyright Day programme.



No to Gender-Based Violence!

The George Municipality, through its Gender & Disability Subsection, successfully implemented the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign under the theme, "Say No to Gender-Based Violence." The campaign focused on raising awareness, mobilising communities, and strengthening the prevention of and response to gender-based violence (GBV) across the municipal area.

The initiative was led by Ejustley Boshoff and Nozipho Stone in partnership with key stakeholders, including the Department of Social Development, South African Police Service, schools, NGOs, church groups, and community organisations.

Activities began on 25 November 2025 with a public picketing programme in

the George CBD and included memorial services, community marches, school awareness sessions, victim empowerment programmes for women, a GBV awareness roadblock in Blanco, and a closing prevention session for young adults.

A Thanksgiving and awareness service in Herold was attended by approximately 350 community members.

The campaign contributed to increased awareness of GBV, improved knowledge of support services, stronger partnerships, and the empowerment of women, learners, and young people.

George Municipality remains committed to ongoing education, awareness, and collaboration to help build safer and healthier communities throughout the year.

GEORGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY COUNCILLORS



Ald Brown Johnson,
Executive Mayor
Ward 23 (DA)

Ald Gert Van Niekerk,
Executive Deputy
Mayor, PR (VF+)

Cllr Sean Snyman,
Speaker, Ward 28 (DA)

**Ald Jackie von
Brandis, Whip of
Council, Ward 26 (DA)**

**Cllr Erika Brown, MMC
Community Services
(Refuse, Environment
and Parks) Ward 3 (DA)**

**Cllr Daniel Cronje,
MMC Community
Safety and Mobility,
Ward 2 (DA)**

**Cllr Johan Du Toit,
MMC Corporate
Services, PR (ACDP)**

**Cllr Donovan Gultig,
MMC Civil Engineering
Services, Ward 18 (DA)**



**Cllr Iona Kritzinger,
MMC Financial and
Strategic Services
(IDP, Performance
Management,
Economic Develop-
ment & Tourism),
Ward 19 (DA)**

**Cllr Gert Niehaus,
MMC Planning
and Development
(Planning, Building
Control, Property and
Agriculture),
PR (VF+)**

**Cllr Jayzee Jantjies
MMC Human
Resources,
Ward 6 (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 Electrical
Engineering Services,
Ward 5 (DA)**

**Cllr Marlene Barnardt,
Ward 4 (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 Naewolline Esau,
Ward 16 (PA)**



**Cllr Raphael Goieman,
Ward 17 (PA)**

**Cllr Rita Gregory,
Ward 20 (PA)**

**Cllr Siphelo Manxele,
Ward 21 (ANC)**

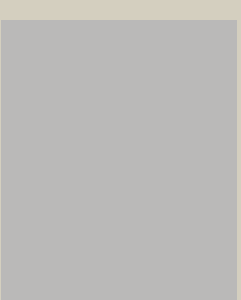
**Ald Marais Kruger,
Ward 22 (DA)**

**Cllr Justin Fry, Ward 24
(DA)**

**Cllr Jarques Esau,
Ward 25 (DA)**

**Cllr Marchell Kleynhans,
Ward 27 (PA)**

**Cllr Ebrahim America,
PR (DA)**



**Cllr Edmund Bussack,
PR (PBI)**

**Cllr Druzelda Jantjies,
PR (PBI)**

**Cllr Charlotte Clarke,
PR (DA)**

**Cllr Darryl Coeries,
PR (PBI)**

**Cllr Nathaniel Edwards,
PR (DA)**

**Cllr Enrico Figland,
PR (VF+)**

**Cllr Raybin Figland,
PR (DA)**

**Cllr Jacobus Gertse,
PR (PBI)**



**Cllr Maria Greeff,
PR (PBI)**

**Cllr Marelina Gultig,
PR (DA)**

**Cllr Franselin Kaptein,
(PA) PR**

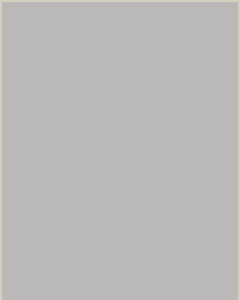
**Cllr Chantell Kyd,
(GOOD) PR**

**Cllr Deon Leminie,
PR (EFF)**

**Cllr Khayaletu Lose,
PR (DA)**

**Cllr Rosa Louw,
PR (GOOD)**

**Cllr Given Masase,
Chairperson GIPTN S79,
PR (DA)**



**Cllr Faith Mdaka,
PR (ANC)**

**Cllr Christiaan
Neethling, Chairperson
MPAC S79 PR (VF+)**

**Cllr Nomawethu
Lugodlo, PR (EFF)**

**Cllr Thandiswa Qatana,
PR (DA)**

**Cllr Johan Stander,
PR (DA)**

**Cllr Roxaan Vorster,
PR (GOOD)**

**Cllr Regina Windwaai,
PR (DA)**

Ranking second nationally in Green Drop awards

George Municipality is proud to announce that it has been ranked the second-best performing Water Services Authority (WSA) for Wastewater Services in South Africa in the 2025 Green Drop National Report, achieving an overall score of 84%. The Municipality also received an official award in recognition of this achievement.

The Green Drop Programme, managed by the Department of Water and Sanitation, assesses how well municipalities treat and manage wastewater (used water) to protect public health and the environment.

The awards ceremony was hosted by the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Pemmy Majodina, recently at the Banquet Hall of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

George Municipality was rated the top performing Water Services Authority for Wastewater Services in the Western Cape, outperforming 24 other municipalities. A Water Services Authority is the institution responsible for providing water and sanitation services to residents.

The Municipality's wastewater-treatment works (WWTW) - facilities where sewage is cleaned before being safely returned to the environment - performed well overall. The Outeniqua Wastewater Treatment Works achieved an impressive 91% score during its physical inspection. Assessors specifically noted the good upkeep of the plant.

George Municipality has significantly reduced its overall risk profile from 59% in 2023 to 45.1% in 2024, indicating improved management and reduced operational risks. Based on current performance, there is minimal risk anticipated for the next Green Drop assessment.

The Municipality has already



The local team that attended the event are from left: Ernest Claassen, Deputy Director: Sanitation Services, Civil Engineering Services, Cllr Donovan Gultig, MMC for Civil Engineering Services, Abraham Scheepers Superintendent: Wastewater Treatment and Johan Scheepers Senior Manager: Wastewater Treatment.

initiated several projects to strengthen performance and build on its strong Green Drop results. Improved stormwater management, and stormwater management planning at the WWTW facilities are also in progress to protect the sewer system during periods of heavy rain.

In terms of financial sustainability, the Municipality is refining how operational and maintenance expenditure is monitored. Energy efficiency initiatives are already bringing relieve to reduce electricity consumption and more energy saving is rolled out at process control level to reduce electricity consumption of major mechanical components, with further improvements through renewable energy installations. Asset management processes are also being strengthened to ensure infrastructure is effectively maintained and timeously replaced or upgraded.

Operational improvements include enhanced systems for the

management of treated wastewater (effluent) as well as the ongoing appointment of suitably qualified process controllers to ensure full compliance with national operational standards.

Due to increasing vandalism and theft incidents, security at wastewater treatment facilities has been improved through the installation of high-security fencing, with additional measures such as motion detection systems and smart camera technology being explored to further safeguard critical infrastructure.

George Municipality acknowledges that while strong progress has been made, continuous improvement is essential.

"The Green Drop results confirm that we are delivering high-quality wastewater treatment services. At the same time, we are actively addressing the remaining challenges to ensure even better performance in future," Ernest Claassen, Deputy Director: Sanitation Services of George Municipality said.



Cllr Erika Brown, MMC for Environmental Services, Sivuyile Mtila, Acting Director: Community Services, Mayor Brownen Johnson and Frank Tamboer, Manager: Refuse Removal, Collections & Minimization at the handover of the trucks.

New vehicles strengthen refuse collection fleet

George Municipality has officially taken delivery of two new refuse compactors and two cage trucks as part of its ongoing commitment to strengthen refuse collection services and ensure cleaner, healthier communities.

The handover took place during a recent visit to the Environmental Services department by Executive Mayor, Ald Brownen Johnson, accompanied by the Acting Director for Community Services, Sivuyile Mtila, and the MMC for Environmental Services, Cllr Erika Brown.

"As part of our Integrated Waste Management Plan and Integrated Development Plan, it is critical that the Municipality maintains a replacement plan for refuse collection vehicles,"

"As part of our Integrated Waste Management Plan and Integrated Development Plan, it is critical that the Municipality maintains a replacement plan for refuse collection vehicles," said Executive Mayor Ald Brownen Johnson. "Since 2022, we have been replacing two refuse compactors per year to ensure that this essential service is delivered consistently and efficiently."

For the 2025/2026 financial year, the Municipality invested

in two new refuse compactors at a cost of R2 745 000 per vehicle. According to the Executive Mayor, these vehicles will significantly strengthen the Municipality's refuse collection fleet.

"These new compactors will improve refuse collection across our municipal area and help us to ensure cleaner communities, while reducing service interruptions experienced by residents," Ald Johnson said.

In addition, the Municipality has procured two cage trucks specifically for the collection of green bags used for garden waste removal. Each cage truck was acquired at a cost of R1 532 144.

"The introduction of these cage trucks will greatly improve the efficiency of green bag collections and support our environmental management objectives," the Executive Mayor added.

Ald Johnson emphasised that the investment in new vehicles goes beyond fleet replacement. "Upgrading our fleet is not simply about replacing vehicles. It is about ensuring that we continue to serve every resident effectively, support environmental sustainability, and uphold our responsibility to deliver quality municipal services."

He further commended officials for their efforts, saying: "I want to acknowledge the Environmental Services teams for their hard work and commitment. Together, we are building a municipality that prioritises service delivery, environmental responsibility, and community well-being."



The brand new refuse compactor trucks and cage trucks delivered.



Mayor Brownen Johnson takes a group selfie with the officials at Environmental Services.



Representatives from iSprout and teachers from Isiseko Crèche.

Volunteering brings positive change to ECD centre

George Municipality Community Development welcomes a recent volunteering initiative by iSprout, which made a meaningful contribution to one of the municipality's Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres.

A group from the Netherlands, representing iSprout, visited Isiseko Crèche in Thembaletu as part of a volunteer outreach programme. During their visit, the group spent the day painting a classroom as part of their team-building activities while giving back to the local community.

The newly painted classroom has created a brighter and more welcoming space for the children, contributing positively to their daily learning environment.

iSprout is an organisation that connects South African talent with international job opportunities, while also supporting community upliftment initiatives.

George Municipality extends its sincere

appreciation to Petria Winter, Kim Roehrig, and Nicole Steyn for their support in making this initiative possible.

The Municipality values partnerships that contribute to the development and well-being of young children in our communities.



Petria Winter (from left), Nicole Steyn, Lubambo Booi (Teacher at Isiseko Crèche), and Vuyelwa Mtuze (CEO at Isiseko Crèche) in discussion during the outreach.

George Naturally showcases destination at Africa's Travel Indaba 2026

George, Wilderness and Uniondale Tourism, joined forces with the Garden Route & Klein Karoo district and neighbouring town, Knysna, to represent the region at one of the continent's premier tourism trade exhibitions which took place at the Durban ICC from 12-14 May 2026.

As a key tourism hub in the Western Cape, George continues to strengthen its position as a leading destination for leisure, adventure, golf, nature-based tourism, business events and lifestyle travel. Participation at Africa's Travel Indaba provides an important platform to engage directly with travel trade partners, build strategic relationships and stimulate future visitor growth to the region.

Snr Tourism Marketer, Sharon House used the opportunity to showcase the destination's diverse offerings - from world-class golf courses and scenic mountain landscapes to beaches, forests, culinary experiences and outdoor adventure

activities - while reinforcing the area's reputation as the ideal gateway to the Garden Route.

"Africa's Travel Indaba remains one of the most significant tourism marketing platforms on the continent, and we are excited to position George, Wilderness and Uniondale prominently among Africa's leading destinations," said Joan Shaw, George's Tourism Manager. "The event allows us to strengthen valuable trade partnerships, increase destination visibility and contribute towards growing tourism opportunities and economic impact for our local communities."

This year's Indaba has placed strong emphasis on tourism's role in driving economic growth, investment and job creation across Africa, aligning closely with George, Wilderness and Uniondale Tourism's ongoing commitment to sustainable destination development and regional collaboration.



Denver Johnson (Garden Route District), Thozeka Sikali (Knysna) and Sharon House (George) enjoying support from the Western Cape MEC for Economic Opportunities and Tourism, Minister Ivan Meyer.

Planning and Partnership Ensure Safe Festive Season in George

Extensive planning, strong inter-agency cooperation and coordinated internal operations contributed to a safe and successful 2025/26 festive season in George, with municipal services responding effectively to high visitor numbers and peak holiday activity. The George Municipality once again worked closely with Provincial Traffic, NSRI, SAPS, Community Policing Forums and forensic services, while internal directorates operated in a coordinated manner throughout the festive period to ensure public safety, coastal management, traffic control and emergency response readiness.

Acting Municipal Manager, Mr Godfrey Louw, thanked all officials and partners for their dedication "The success of the festive season reflects solid planning, teamwork and the commitment shown by municipal staff and our partners under demanding conditions."

The Executive Mayor praised the collective effort saying, "Despite exceptionally busy periods, the 2025/26 festive season was managed with minimal incidents. This is a clear reflection of effective planning, collaboration and responsible behaviour by both residents and visitors. We extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed to making this a successful festive season for George."

Reporting period:
1 December 2025 – 5 January 2026

BEACHES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

Blue Flag Beaches

George's internationally recognised Blue Flag beaches, including Wilderness Beach, Herold's Bay Beach and Victoria Bay, Leentjiesklip Beach (pilot blue flag beach) and Gwaing River Mouth and Beach (Green Coast), operated under heightened safety, environmental and operational standards throughout the festive period,

supported by lifeguards and emergency services.

Beachgoers (including SANParks Lagoon, Wilderness Main, Leentjiesklip, Herold's Bay, Victoria Bay, Gwaing River Mouth and Beach, Conville Public Swimming Pool and Gwaing Day Camp Swimming Pool) - Total Visitor Volumes

Total recorded beachgoers (13 December 2025 – 5 January 2026): ±214 407 visitors
Figures reflect monitored beaches and facilities only.

Visitor numbers for early December are not included, and actual festive-period totals are therefore higher.

PEAK DAY COMPARISONS

Date	24 Visitors	25 Visitors
25 December	26 592	18 139
26 December	25 878	14 218
29 December	24 390	11 889

New Year's Day peak:

- 1 January 2025: 42 578
- 1 January 2026: 29 049



NSRI BEACH ACTIVITIES

Beach Visitors per day	±720 - 800
Swimmers per day	± 240 - 320
Average Preventions	± 28 per day

(including rip current warnings, hazard prevention and water safety guidance)

- Total Operational Incidents: 42
- First Aid / Minor Medical: 29
- Non-Fatal Rescues/ Swim Assists: 9
- Medical Escalations: 3
- Non -Fatal Drowning-related: 1

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire, Rescue & Medical Response

Incident Type	Count
Fire incidents (all categories)	167
Motor vehicle accidents	44

- Rescue operations (water & confined space): 5
- Aquatic operations: 1
- Hazmat (environmental): 1
- Miscellaneous: 5





Mission Street.



Tabata Street stabilization.



PW Botha Boulevard, Asphalt paving.



Rose Street, Culvert.

City-wide road and transport upgrades benefiting all road

George Municipality continues to invest in safer, more efficient and accessible transport infrastructure that benefits all road users, including motorists, public transport commuters, cyclists and pedestrians. Through the Public Transport Network Grant (PTNG) administered by the National Department of Transport, approximately R571 million was allocated during the 2024/25 financial year.

This investment was utilized to improve traffic flow, rehabilitating ageing roads, upgrading sidewalks and intersections, enhancing pedestrian safety, and expanding universal accessibility infrastructure to better accommodate persons with disabilities special needs, elderly residents and parents with prams. The programme also supports the continued expansion of the GO GEORGE bus service through the construction of transfer locations and associated public transport infrastructure, contributing to a smarter, more connected and commuter-friendly city.

ROAD REHABILITATION PROJECTS – PROGRESS UPDATES

George Municipality remains committed to keeping residents informed through regular progress updates on infrastructure upgrades taking place across the city.

Pacaltsdorp

The following projects have been completed in Pacaltsdorp:

- Mission Street
- Protea Street (Phases 1-4)
- Beach/Panther Transfer Location

Beukes Street is 86% complete with the final asphalt overlay outstanding and finishing off the road reserve as well as completing the UA infrastructure.

Heather, Haydn and Rose Streets is 89% complete with roadworks still taking place in Rose Street and remedial works taking place in Heather Street.

Genesis Street: construction is estimated to commence on 20 May 2026 with an expected construction duration of four months, leading to a completion date of end of September 2026.

Thembaletu

The following projects have been completed in Thembaletu:

- Ngcakani and Ncamanza Streets
- Tabata and 26th Streets (Phase 3)
- Tabata Street (Phase 4)
- Jonga Street Transfer Location (Phase 1)
- 26th Street Transfer Location (Phase 1)

The remaining phases of the Jonga Street Transfer Location and 26th Transfer Location are planned to be completed by end of June 2026.

George Industria

• PW Botha Boulevard is 84% complete with major roadworks taking place between Rand and Ossie Urban Street. Other outstanding works include final asphalt overlay on numerous phases of the project, completion of sidewalks, completion of UA infrastructure, completion of road markings, finishing up the road reserve, etc. Completion is expected at the end of August 2026.

Rosemoor

• Beer and Woltemade Streets (Phases 1 & 2). Minor defects are still being investigated attended to, before the project can be regarded as completed.

• O'Connell Street. Minor defects are still being investigated attended to, before the project can be regarded as completed.

• Beer Street (Phase 3) is 90% complete with minor roadworks that still need to be completed as well as finishing up the road reserve as well as UA infrastructure. Completion is scheduled for the end of May 2026.

Heather Park

The following projects have been completed in Heather Park:

- Airway Street
- Pine Street
- Plattner Boulevard (Phase 1) is 66% complete with major roadworks still taking place between Barkhuizen and Airway Street. Completion is scheduled for the end of August 2026.

Bo Dorp

• The Wellington Street intersection and sidewalk project has been completed.

George Central

• Cradock Street is 45% complete with major roadworks taking place between Hibernia and Market Street. Outstanding work includes completion of roadworks, sidewalks, shelters, UA infrastructure, etc. The completion of the project is scheduled for end of August 2026. Traffic flow is permanently one lane from north to south.



Ngcakani Street.



Cradock Street.

IMPACT OF ONGOING CONSTRUCTION

George Municipality acknowledges the impact of ongoing construction on bus operations and general traffic flow, particularly in Pacaltsdorp and surrounding areas. GO GEORGE is monitoring the situation closely and implementing mitigation measures, including temporary route adjustments and the deployment of additional buses where possible.

2025 Scholar Patrol Championship

The George Traffic Department, in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Mobility (Road Safety Management), proudly hosted the Scholar Patrol Championship at the George Junior Traffic Training and Road Safety Centre in October 2025 as part of Transport Month.

The annual event offers learners participating in the Scholar Patrol Programme an opportunity to showcase their knowledge and skills in road safety. It also highlights the importance of road safety education and the vital role of scholar patrols in safeguarding young pedestrians.

The 2025 championship saw enthusiastic participation from several primary schools within the George municipal area, namely Hoekwil Primary School, Conville Primary School, Life Academy Primary School, Heidedal Primary School, MM Mateza Primary School, Mzoxolo Primary School, and Pacaltsdorp Primary School.

After a day of spirited competition, New Dawn Park Primary School emerged as the overall winner, followed by Pacaltsdorp Primary School in second place and Conville Primary School in third.

The programme featured several speakers. Mr Lulamile Lakata, Assistant Director: Road Safety Management at the Western Cape Department of Mobility, welcomed the guests, while his colleague



Winners New Dawn Park Primary School with officials and adjudicators.

Ms Sewela Makgalo, Assistant Director, provided an overview of the project. Mr Fraklin Lamini, Coordinator: Safe Schools, addressed learners on the importance of discipline, teamwork, and safety awareness.

Following the speeches, teams participated in a practical assessment where judges evaluated squad discipline, signalling accuracy, teamwork, and adherence to road safety protocols. After an impressive display of skill and precision, New Dawn Park Primary was declared the 2025 champion.

Officials from the George Traffic Department and the Western Cape Department of Mobility jointly awarded gold, silver, and bronze medals to the winning schools. All other participating schools received certificates of appreciation for their dedication and contribution to road safety in their communities.

Mr Eddie Felix, a Traffic Officer responsible for Road Safety at the George Traffic Department, expressed pride in the success of the event: "The Scholar Patrol Programme remains one of the most impactful youth road safety initiatives. We

thank all schools for their participation and dedication. New Dawn Park Primary demonstrated great teamwork and discipline - qualities that make them true road safety ambassadors."

Ms Sewela Makgalo from the Department of Mobility echoed this sentiment, noting that the Scholar Patrol Programme remains a cornerstone of child pedestrian safety in the province.

"The knowledge and habits learned through this programme stay with children for life and contribute to safer communities," she said.



The winners, New Dawn Park, Pacaltsdorp and Conville Primary Schools.

George Municipality partnered with stakeholders in celebrating sign language

George Municipality partnered with stakeholders in celebrating sign language recognition.

George Municipality, in partnership with Sommer Net Ons (ATKV branch) and the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DEAFSA), hosted a programme to highlight the recognition of South African Sign Language as the twelfth official language of South Africa.

The event, held at the George NG Moederkerk, aimed to promote awareness and inclusivity among young people from various high schools regarding the rights and experiences of persons living with disabilities. Learners from Eden Technical High School, Heatherlands High School, Pacaltsdorp High School, and George High School, as well as representatives from the Junior City Council, attended the programme.

The initiative featured several speakers and participants living

with disabilities, including organiser Ruzanne van Beulen from Sommer Net Ons ATKV, and well-known disability advocate and landscape artist Marnitz Steyn. South African filmmaker, author, and former Miss Deaf SA, Vicky Fourie, also shared her inspiring journey.

Additional contributions came from representatives of Carpe Diem School and DEAFSA, who spoke about their experiences of working with and supporting persons with disabilities.

Entertainment included a moving singing performance by Petronel Baard and a vibrant cultural showcase by the Kranshoek Rieldancers, who captivated the audience with their traditional rieldans.

The programme was supported by the George Municipality's Gender and Disability subsection and the Youth Development Office within the Community Services Directorate.



Ejustley Boshoff (far left), Coordinator of the Gender and Disability subsection, and Jonel Kerspuy (second from right, in brown jacket), Coordinator of the Youth Development Office, with other stakeholders at the event.

Strengthening water-saving efforts



Esethu Nyamankulu, Senior Process Controller at George Municipality, is engaging with advanced water treatment and membrane filtration technology during the Young Engineers Changemakers Programme study tour in Singapore.

George Municipality is strengthening its approach to sustainable water and sanitation services through international collaboration and skills development, as the country marked National Water Week.

Esethu Nyamankulu, a Senior Process Controller at Water Treatment Works who is also a chemical engineering technologist by profession in the George Municipality's Civil Engineering Services Directorate, was selected as one of eight young municipal engineers from across South Africa to participate in the Young Engineers Changemakers Programme (YECP), facilitated by the Water Research Commission.

As part of the programme's international exchange phase, Nyamankulu participated in a study tour in Singapore from 16 to 20 March 2026, with engagements hosted by institutions including TÜV SÜD and the NUS Environmental Research Institute.

The programme is designed to build municipal capacity for innovation in the water sector, equipping engineers with the skills and knowledge required to support sustainable, resilient, and future-ready municipalities. Key focus areas included improving access to safe drinking water, reducing water losses, addressing ageing infrastructure, and advancing water and wastewater treatment and reuse technologies.

The international engagement also explored standards-driven approaches,

including ISO 30500, highlighting how innovation, technology, and data can support the implementation of safe and scalable sanitation systems.

Nyamankulu's selection followed a competitive process recognising innovation, teamwork, and technical excellence demonstrated throughout the programme.

Exposure to global best practices supports the Municipality's efforts to enhance efficiency, reduce water losses, and strengthen service delivery.

Reflecting on the experience, Nyamankulu said the exposure to global best practice offered valuable insights for local application: "The exposure to advanced membrane technologies and water reuse systems showed how municipalities can improve water security and sustainability. Singapore's ability to treat domestic wastewater to potable standards highlights the value of integrating technology with water conservation strategies," he said. "In George, this can support diversifying water sources beyond the Garden Route Dam and building on existing infrastructure like the UF plant at the Outeniqua Wastewater Treatment Works."

He added that exposure to circular economy practices further broadened the Municipality's approach to sustainability: "Exposure to circular economy practices and waste-to-resource technologies demonstrated how municipalities can address landfill constraints and improve resource recovery. Singapore's approach to converting municipal solid waste into reusable materials offers practical solutions to reduce landfill pressure. In George, this can support extending landfill lifespan while creating value from waste."

The knowledge gained through this engagement will contribute to George Municipality's ongoing water and sanitation initiatives, including its water campaign focused on responsible use, infrastructure reliability, and long-term sustainability. Exposure to global best practices supports the Municipality's efforts to enhance efficiency, reduce water losses, and strengthen service delivery.

Congratulating Nyamankulu, Director of Civil Engineering Services, Jannie Koegelenberg, said: "George Municipality congratulates Nyamankulu on this achievement and recognises the value of investing in technical expertise to benefit local communities. Further insights from the programme will be incorporated into municipal operations and planning processes."



South African municipal engineers participate in an interactive knowledge exchange on water sustainability, innovation, and resource management during the international programme in Singapore.



Delegates from the Water Research Commission Young Engineers Changemakers Programme during their visit to TÜV SÜD in Singapore.

GM partners with Kidstop to empower parents through training



George Municipality, in partnership with the organisation Kidstop, recently hosted a three-day Parent Training Programme aimed at empowering vulnerable parents currently living on the streets. A total of 15 participants attended the programme, which focused on strengthening parenting knowledge, building life skills and encouraging family unity.

The training covered a range of important topics including the rights and responsibilities of children and parents, budgeting and financial planning, different parenting styles, self-care, the role of fathers, and the impact of substance use on an unborn child.

The programme forms part of the Municipality's ongoing commitment to social development and community upliftment, particularly among vulnerable groups.

The primary aim of the training was to educate parents, raise awareness around responsible parenting, strengthen relationships and promote family unity within the community. George Municipality's Sivuyile Mtila, Acting Director of Community Services at the time, also engaged with participants during the programme, interacting with them and encouraging their continued commitment to building healthier family environments.



A proud fleet of minibuses against the scenic backdrop of the Outeniqua mountains.

GO GEORGE marks historic fleet handover

35 minibuses officially transferred to George Link - a breakthrough in empowerment and transformation

GO GEORGE is celebrating a significant milestone in its transformation journey with the official handover of 35 minibuses to George Link, the Vehicle Operating Company responsible for running the city's bus service. The ceremony took place on Saturday, 13 December 2025, marking a proud moment for both the municipality and the operator.

George Link, consisting entirely of individuals previously from the minibus taxi industry, has been at the heart of the GO GEORGE service since its inception 11 years ago. The transfer of ownership of the minibus fleet from George Municipality, the Contracting Authority and initial owner, represents a major step towards the empowerment and formalisation objectives set out

in the National Land Transport Act (NLTA).

"The handover is more than a transfer of vehicles – it is a transfer of trust and responsibility," said Morné Lakay, GO GEORGE Manager. "GO GEORGE was built on the principle of accessible, dignified transport, and today we celebrate the empowerment of George Link as custodians of that vision."

Executive Mayor, Alderman Browen Johnson, emphasised the broader impact: "The people of George can be proud of this milestone. It demonstrates how local government, working hand in hand with communities, can deliver transformation that is both practical and meaningful. The empowerment of George Link is a shining example of what partnership can achieve."

Western Cape Minister of Mobility, Isaac Sileku, highlighted the provincial significance:



A momentous, historic occasion: Western Cape Minister of Mobility, Isaac Sileku, and George Executive Mayor Browen Johnson (holding the key) officially handed over the 35 minibuses of the GO GEORGE fleet to the vehicle operating company, George Link. From left: Morné Lakay (GO GEORGE Manager), MEC Ricardo Mackenzie (Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, former Minister of Mobility), Duggie Cloete (George Link), John Heathcote (George Link Director), Mayor Johnson, Minister Sileku, MEC Tertuis Simmers (Western Cape Minister of Infrastructure), and Gene Jansen, Hannes Wannenburg, John Ndamani and Lionel Fortuin (all George Link Directors).

"The National Land Transport Act set out ambitious goals for transformation, and today we see

those goals realised in George. The handover of the fleet is a first of its kind, and it shows how

formalisation and empowerment can reshape public transport for the benefit of all."

Veldtog vir voetganger-veiligheid in die kol programme



Daantjie Kat en Georgie het 'n laaste draai gaan maak by passasiers by die Beach-bushaltes in Pacaltsdor. Links van Daantjie Kat is verkeersopvoedingsbeampte Sipehele Motsepe, aan Georgie se regterkant is GO GEORGE-passasiersdiensbeamptes Nomhle Msenge, Janel van Rooi en Bridgette Dietricks, en Tyron Jeyi, gemeenskapskakeelbeampte. Agter hulle is verkeersopvoedingsbeampte Eddie Felix.



Daantjie Kat maak 'n laaste draai by passasiers voor die voetgangerveiligheidsveldtog op die bus afgesluit is. Saam met hom is verkeersopvoedingsbeampte Sipehele Motsepe en GO GEORGE-passasiersdiensbeampte Bridgette Dietricks.



Georgie en Daantjie Kat het saam met Eddie Felix die passasiers aan boord verwelkom.

Die feesseisoen-voetgangerveiligheidsveldtog wat gesamentlik deur GO GEORGE en die Verkeersopvoedingseenheid van die George Verkeersopvoedingseenheid geloods is, het met groot sukses geëindig en baie meer passasiers bereik as wat verwag is.

Oor 'n tydperk van nege dae vanaf 2 Desember 2025 het drie verkeersopvoedingsbeamptes tydens die oggendspitstyd saamgery op busse en praktiese veiligheidswenke met passasiers gedeel. GO GEORGE-passasiersdiensbeamptes het die boodskap by besige oorklimpunte versterk.

Die inisiatief was daarop gemik om 2 000 passasiers op die bus te betrek, maar uiteindelik het 2 780 mense direkte veiligheidsboodskappe ontvang - 'n duidelike

aanduiding van die veldtog se impak.

Passasiers was bly om die beamptes op die busse te sien en het die wenke oor veilige oorsteeke van paaie rondom bushaltes wat in die rybaan stop, waardeer. Etlike passasiers het gevra dat hierdie soort veldtog gereeld herhaal moet word. Die gelukbringers, Daantjie Kat van Verkeer en GO GEORGE se Georgie, se speelse aanslag het heelwat passasiers gelok wat selfies wou neem en met die twee gewilde karakters wou gesels.

Verkeershoof Janine Wells het die samewerking geprys: "Ons is verheug oor die entoesiastiese reaksie van passasiers en die gladdespanwerk tussen ons eenheid en GO GEORGE. Die veldtog het nie net sy teiken oortref nie, maar het ook onvergeetlike, positiewe interaksies geskep wat help om veiligheidsboodskappe in alledaagse gedrag in te bou."

Volgens Morné Lakay, GO GEORGE-bestuurder, is hulle baie tevrede met die uitkoms van die samewerkende benadering. "Hierdie veldtog het 'n stewige grondslag gelê vir meer gereelde veldtogte in die komende jaar."

Gebaseer op hierdie momentum, sal die volgende gesamentlike inisiatief plaasvind wanneer skole ná die somervakansie weer open.

Leerders sal die fokus wees van 'n toegewyde voetgangerveiligheidsveldtog, wat verseker dat jong padgebruikers die jaar begin met praktiese kennis en bewustheid om hulle veilig te hou.

Route 11 Thembalethu launched

Thembalethu residents celebrated a long awaited milestone on Sunday, 17 May 2026, as GO GEORGE officially launched Route 11 Thembalethu - Garden Route Mall. As the third bus route to serve this community, it marks a major step forward in expanding public transport access.

At the Garden Route Mall terminus, GRDM Mayor Kruger officially declared the route operational and described the launch as an important moment for mobility and economic access for the residents of Thembalethu.

"Today is more than the launch of a new route - it is a step towards greater dignity, opportunity and connection for residents of Thembalethu.

"They have waited patiently for this direct route, and I am proud that the George Municipality together with the Western Cape Mobility Department can finally deliver this service," he said.

Reflecting on the milestone, Western Cape Minister of Mobility, MEC Isaac Sileku,

highlighted how Route 11 strengthens the province's commitment to accessible, resident centred mobility.

"The GO GEORGE network continues to demonstrate what can be achieved when government, operators and communities work together. Route 11 is another example of public transport development that responds directly to the needs of residents," he said.

"A direct route to the Mall opens doors - to a more dignified way to get to work, access services, and reach new opportunities. I look forward to meeting the commuters who will benefit from this new link. Their experiences guide our decisions, and their needs shape the future of mobility in George."

Route 11 provides a seamless link between Thembalethu and the Garden Route Mall precinct, home to several major shopping centres and employment hubs. Until now, many residents relied on multi transfer journeys via the N2 bridge and Route 16. The new route eliminates that detour entirely.



All role-players were in high spirits as (from left) GO GEORGE Manager Morné Lakay, George Link Director John Heathcote, and Garden Route District Municipality's Executive Mayor, Alderman Marais Kruger, popped confetti cannons to celebrate the launch of Route 11 between Thembalethu and the Garden Route Mall. (The confetti was cleared away immediately afterwards.)



George - A Sponge City in the Making

How George Municipality is rethinking water in the face of climate change – with support from the International Climate Initiative.

The climate is already shifting beneath George's feet. Flooding events are growing more frequent and more intense. In 2021, 105mm of rain fell in just two hours, triggering flash floods that caused an estimated R750 million (about 39 million euros) in damage to municipal infrastructure alone. Four years on, the pendulum has swung: below-average rainfall has forced the city to impose water demand measures and raise tariffs, affecting every resident and business.

Water underpins everything George does. It sustains domestic use, commercial and industrial activity, tourism, and-critically-the municipality's agro-ecosystems. Commercial agriculture is a primary sector, with high-value farmland dominating the local land use. Managing water more efficiently, including capturing and using stormwater, is essential to maintaining socio-economic resilience.

This is the tension George is determined to resolve. To accommodate economic growth without sacrificing its environment, biodiversity, or water security in the face of climate change, the city has set its sights on becoming a Sponge City - a vision that reframes stormwater not merely as a threat to be drained away, but as a critical resource to be managed holistically. Realising it will require stakeholders within and beyond the municipality to play their part in an ambitious transformation.

The project Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Water and Wastewater Management (LCCR Water), which is supported by Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI), is helping turn that ambition into action.

Developing Stormwater Management Guidelines

With the IKI project's support, George has developed Stormwater Management Guidelines that embed Sponge City principles, like retaining and using rainwater on site and mimicking natural hydrology using permeable surfaces and green infrastructure, directly into planning and engineering processes across the entire municipality. The guidelines offer practical examples for municipal staff and private developers alike, showing how to weave green infrastructure solutions for stormwater management into their designs. Supporting policies and by-laws will provide the regulatory clarity needed for consistent application.

Feasibility Study on the Implementation of the Principles of the Sponge City

The Camphersdrift River illustrates the challenge - and the opportunity: It carries a high flood risk to residential properties and municipal infrastructure. During the 2021 floods, the river was subject to significant erosion with substantial costs incurred for the rehabilitation of its riverbank. To mitigate against similar damage occurring in future, and demonstrate a case for ecological infrastructure, the city has identified a site upstream to pilot the Camphersdrift Flood Attenuation Park.

The initiative is set to become the city's largest multi-purpose green infrastructure project to date. Commencing with a feasibility study financed by the IKI project, the park will serve as a pilot for testing how Sponge City principles

can be implemented at scale and across departments.

Nature-based solutions like the park complement conventional grey infrastructure (including conventional engineered systems like concrete pipes, channels and retention tanks) within the broader stormwater management system. Beyond reducing flood risk, they deliver co-benefits that pipes and channels cannot: recreation space for surrounding communities, biodiversity conservation, and urban heat reduction.

By weaving together spatial planning, infrastructure investment, and environmental management, George is positioning itself as a leader among South Africa's secondary cities:

"We are investing in a future that is safer, fairer, and more secure for everyone, exploring more sustainable ways to grow our city, manage water, and build resilience to climate change" says Delia Power, Deputy Director of Development and Environmental Planning at George Municipality.

Looking Ahead

The IKI project will also continue to contribute to this goal - through peer-learning with other cities in South Africa and by assisting George Municipality in identifying financing options for the implementation of the Sponge City transformation, e.g. through climate finance or payment for ecosystem-services.

Background Information

George Municipality stands at a

crossroads shared by cities across South Africa: how to advance economic development, protect ecosystems, and address persistent socio-economic inequality - all at once. These priorities sit at the heart of the country's National Development Plan 2030, which calls for inclusive growth, sustainable resource management, and improved urban resilience.

On paper, these objectives reinforce one another. In practice, they pull in different directions. Economic growth drives land development and infrastructure demand, placing pressure on environmental systems - particularly water and biodiversity. Social equity demands that the city's services, risk reduction, and opportunities reach all communities more fairly. And climate hazards hit hardest in vulnerable areas, deepening the very inequalities the city is working to close.

George's natural setting is both its greatest asset and its most pressing constraint. A network of rivers, wetlands, forests, and ecological corridors threads through the city, flanked by the Outeniqua Mountains to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. These systems perform critical functions: water provision, flood attenuation, and climate regulation.

About the Project

The project Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Water and Wastewater Management (LCCR Water) is funded by Germany's International Climate Initiative and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Article written by International Climate Initiative (IKI)



Senior management representatives of George Municipality engage with delegates from National Treasury, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), and the Western Cape Provincial Treasury at the George Municipal Council Chambers. The session formed part of the 2025/26 Mid-Year Budget and Performance Assessment programme focusing on municipal financial health, governance, infrastructure implementation, service delivery performance, and preparations for the 2026/27 municipal budget process.

Training session empowers reading facilitators and peer educators

George Municipality, together with the Somernnet Ons ATKV branch, hosted a hands-on training session at Eagle's Nest aimed at giving reading facilitators and peer educators practical workplace skills and inspiration for their professional journey. The session was led by André Hendricks from ATKV and Angeline Naidoo, a member of the Somernnet Ons branch.

Hendricks encouraged participants to take ownership of their work ethic under the theme Work Ethic: Show Up - Step Up - Own Up. He reminded the group that they can either "make

it happen or let it happen," sparking an energetic discussion about accountability and commitment.

Naidoo's session focused on building workplace skills aligned with Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) outcomes. She helped participants understand organisational policies, values, and expectations, giving them a solid starting point for future growth.

The training was coordinated by the Municipality's Youth Development Office with support from the EPWP Office as part of their mission to uplift the youth the area.



Jason Jansen (EPWP: George Municipality), Jonel Kerspuy (Youth Coordinator: Community Development, George Municipality), Siviwe Mdelo (EPWP Coordinator, George Municipality) and Andre Hendricks (ATKV Kopskuif).



Some of the youngsters and coordinators at the training sessions to give reading facilitators and peer educators practical workplace skills.

Minister MacKenzie besoek Uniondale Biblioteek wat vanjaar hul 130ste bestaansjaar vier



By die vieringe is Minister Ricardo MacKenzie met van links Jesnick Pieterse van EPWP, Precious Spengana, Senior biblioteekassistent, Andri Avontuur, Biblioteekassistent.

Die Uniondale Gemeenskapsbiblioteek vier vanjaar 'n merkwaardige mylpaal van 130 jaar as 'n sentrum van kennis, leer en gemeenskapsontwikkeling in die dorp en Minister Ricardo MacKenzie, Provinsiale Minister an Kultuursake en Sport het 'n hoflikheidsbesoek aan die biblioteek afgelê.

Die viering is onlangs by die biblioteek gehou waar die Minister die geleentheid bygewoon het en die belangrike rol van biblioteke in gemeenskappe beklemtoon het.

MacKenzie het gesê Uniondale Biblioteek is 'n baie belangrike gemeenskapsbate vir die mense van Uniondale.

Hy het verduidelik dat biblioteke steeds een van die belangrikste hulpmiddels is om gemeenskappe te help ontwikkel en geleenthede

te skep, veral in landelike gebiede. Volgens hom help biblioteke om kennis te versprei en mense toegang tot inligting en leergeleenthede te gee.

"Die Uniondale Biblioteek, wat reeds 130 jaar oud is, bly 'n bron van trots vir die gemeenskap. Die biblioteek beskik ook oor spesiale toerusting wat persone met siggestremdhede help om toegang tot boeke en leesmateriaal te kry. Ongeveer 15 siggestremde lede vorm deel van die biblioteek se klubgeskiedenis - 'n bewys dat die biblioteek 'n inklusiewe ruimte vir almal is, het MacKenzie beklemtoon.

Inwoners word aangemoedig om hul plaaslike biblioteke te besoek, 'n boek uit te neem en die waardevolle hulpbronne wat beskikbaar is, te benut.



Minister Ricardo MacKenzie gesels met een van die Uniondale biblioteek se lede.



Drone footage taken by Station Commander Santa Sternsdorff shows off the scale of the fire and aviation equipment available to the George Fire and Disaster Management Department.



Photographs: Dedrei Cloete.

2025/26 Fire Season launched with Strengthened Ground, Aerial and Water-Rescue Readiness

George Fire and Disaster Management Department officially launched the 2025/26 Fire Season on December 2025 at the Denneoord Air Base, highlighting the city's heightened state of readiness for protecting the region during the high-risk summer period. The demonstration of firefighting resources included the 35 000-litre water tanker, several fire engines, 4x4 skid units, two Jet-RIBs, and a rubber ducks, command vehicles and a Rescue vehicle, with the total fleet valued at approximately R60 million.

Kishugu Aviation, one of Southern Africa's leading providers of specialised aerial firefighting services, showcased their aerial fleet, including two Huey helicopters, a fixed-wing bomber, and two spotter planes. The impressive display brought together firefighters, aviation support crews, and disaster management officials committed to safeguarding the region.

Executive Mayor Ald Brown Johnson said that the start of fire season is a moment that demands both reflection and resolve. "Every summer, our firefighters stand on the frontline of danger. You are the men and women who stand between disaster and safety - between fear and calm, between loss and preservation. As we mark the readiness of our teams to face the season ahead, I want to acknowledge the incredible heroes among us. Because

of what you do - the risks you take and the skills you bring - we can face this season with confidence."

The Mayor thanked Kishugu Aviation for its longstanding partnership with George Municipality noting that the aerial firefighting capability stationed at Denneoord remains one of the municipality's most critical tools in rapid wildfire response.

"These aircraft, alongside our ground crews, make the difference between a small, controllable fire and a major disaster. George is fortunate to have some of the best-trained teams in the country."

MMC for Community Safety and Mobility, Ald Daniel Cronje emphasised that preventing fires is as important as fighting them. "Almost all major wildfires begin with human behaviour — whether accidental, careless, or deliberate. We urge residents to follow all fire restrictions, report smoke immediately, and avoid any open flames. With stricter water demand management measures in place and ongoing dry conditions, the margin for error is extremely small."

Alderman Cronje further thanked George Fire Services for their commitment to excellence, their passion for protecting others, and their determination to remain prepared for any eventuality. "This is what good governance looks like in action, and



Attending the Fire Season launch from left are Matthew Carter, Kishugu Aviation Chief Pilot, Station Commander Santa Sternsdorff, Chief Fire Officer Neels Barnard, Executive Mayor Ald Brown Johnson, Divisional Commander Johan Brand, Deputy Mayor Ald Gert Van Niekerk and MMC Community Safety and Mobility, Ald Daniel Cronje.

it is this level of preparedness that sets George apart as a leader in municipal safety and emergency response."

Chief Fire Officer Neels Barnard reassured the public that George Fire Services is fully prepared for emergencies on land or sea. The George Water Rescue Unit recently completed intensive beach-launch training with sea vessels at Wilderness Beach under the supervision of Fire Station Commander Johan Crouse. We now have 9 fully trained skippers ready to operate rescue vessels and provide essential support to the NSRI during sea rescue operations."



Annual Illegal Dumping Awareness Month Campaign

George Municipality officially launched its annual Illegal Dumping Awareness Month campaign in February this year, at Sierrissie Street in New Dawn Park (Pacaltsdorp area) and at Croton Valley in the same area. The launch took place at two identified illegal dumping hotspots, highlighting the Municipality's continued commitment to addressing illegal dumping across the city.

Executive Mayor Ald Brown Johnson led the launch and emphasised that illegal dumping remains a serious concern affecting communities, public health, and the environment.

"Illegal dumping affects all of us. It is a health risk, it endangers children who play in these areas, and it places a significant financial burden on the Municipality," said Mayor Johnson. "During the month of February, we called on communities not to support illegal dumping, to stop it, and to report it when it occurs."

Throughout February, the Community Services Directorate led a focused programme of clean-up and rehabilitation of illegal dumping sites, supported by health and

environmental education campaigns aimed at encouraging responsible waste disposal and long-term behavioural change.

Activities during Illegal Dumping Awareness Month included:

- 09 – 13 February: Clean-up activities and health education awareness
- 16 – 20 February: River clean-up operations at Blanco River and Kat River
- 23 – 27 February: Clean-up activities and health education awareness
- 27 February: Silent walk against illegal dumping in Thembaletu, starting at the Thembaletu Police Station

According to Sivuyile Mtila, Acting Director: Community Services, an amount of R16.34 million had been allocated to support the campaign for the year. "This funding covers street clean-sing, refuse removal, the appointment of ward-based coordinators, and the implementation of education and awareness initiatives. Our objective is to ensure sustainability by addressing both behavioural and systemic

causes of illegal dumping," said Mtila.

Mayor Johnson also visited another illegal dumping site in Sierrissie Street, New Dawn Park, where he highlighted that much of the waste being dumped illegally consisted of garden refuse.

"The Municipality provides green bags and collects them in this area. There is therefore no reason for garden waste to be dumped illegally," he said.

Residents were reminded that members of the public can report illegal dumping to the Municipality. On successful conviction, a reward of R2 500 may be paid to the whistleblower.

"This was Illegal Dumping Awareness Month, and we wanted the message to be loud and clear: stop illegal dumping. We urged the community of George to work with us to keep our city clean and green," said Mayor Johnson.

George Municipality encouraged all residents to play an active role in protecting their environment by disposing of waste responsibly and reporting illegal dumping incidents through the official municipal channels.



Mayor Brown Johnson, Cllr Erika Brown, MMC for Environmental Services, and Sivuyile Mtila, Acting Director: Community Services, at an illegal dumping site in Sierrissie Street, New Dawn Park.



Mayor Brown Johnson and Anneline April, Senior Supervisor: Street Cleansing, work together to clean up some of the garden refuse dumped in Sierrissie Street.