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Editor’s Note

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“Surround yourself with people who have dreams, desire and ambition; they will help you push for and realise your own”

Bulelwa Mbali-Khoele
Editor
On Thursday, 27 August, the Chairperson of the Board, Jane Thupana officially handed over the first batch of delimited wards to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) at a media briefing session held at the MDB offices in Centurion.

The event was attended by senior officials from the IEC including the Vice-Chairperson, Terry Tselane, Commissioners Glen Mashinini, Rev Bongani Finca and Judge Thami Makhanya as well as CEO, Mosotho Moepya, various media representatives and members of staff from the MDB.

This truly momentous occasion came as a great relief for the Board whose work and mandate often came with many external and internal challenges. The most significant being the request received by the Board at the beginning of the year from the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Pravin Gordhan, requesting the Board to consider the determination and re-determination of boundaries of certain municipalities.

The purpose for the Minister’s request was to make the affected municipalities more sustainable and financially viable, since the gap existed between those that were coping and those municipalities which were struggling. The proposals from the Minister constituted 34 cases affecting 90 municipalities throughout the country, with the exception of the Western Cape.

However, the request came at a time when the Board had already began its work in the ward delimitation process through the mapping of the first draft of ward boundaries in 2014. These were drafted after several technical sessions with GIS officials and technical staff from all the municipalities with the know-how of municipal layouts.

The MDB held numerous public consultations from January – March 2015 across the country, which allowed the public to actively take part in the ward delimitation process by engaging and influencing the process prior to the Board making any decisions or determinations.

A total of 224 public consultation meetings were scheduled across the country, however, as a consequence of the Minister’s Section 22 request, not all meetings took place. During the consultation process, communities were given information on what the proposed wards would look like and the reasons for the proposed changes, which gave them the opportunity to have robust
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A total of 224 public consultation meetings were scheduled across the country, however, as a consequence of the Minister’s Section 22 request, not all meetings took place. During the consultation process, communities were given information on what the proposed wards would look like and the reasons for the proposed changes, which gave them the opportunity to have robust discussions with the Board and come up with alternatives. Having considered all objections in accordance in with Schedule 1 of the Municipal Structures Act, the board handed over a total of 2951 wards constituting over 60% of the total number to be finally handed to the IEC.

“It is now up to the IEC and MECs responsible for local government to perform their functions in terms of Section 23 of the Demarcation Act and Sections 12 and 18 of the Municipal Structures Act. The IEC will divide the national common voter’s roll in municipal segments for the new municipalities, while MECs will gazette to establish them as well as determine the number of councilors, before the MDB would initiate ward delimitations.” Said Jane Thupana, Chairperson of MDB.

“It has indeed been a journey characterized by challenges, anxieties and a lot of lessons learned as the Board got to participate at even closer range with communities. Many proposals received in terms of the wards reflected a growing understanding of the delimitation criteria by the public, hence the Board varied a number of its initial delimitation to accommodate the clearly articulated objections with alternative proposals that conformed to the criteria.” Thupana added.

However, the work is not complete, it is the intention of the Board to conclude any outstanding matters with the view to hand over the final batch of wards to the IEC by no later than 30 November 2015.

“I would like to thank all stakeholders for their assistance and cooperation during both the ward delimitation and the boundary determination and re-determination processes. My special appreciation goes to the Board members and staff of the MDB who took up the challenge, despite very limited resources and successfully ran the parallel processes of ward and boundary delimitation.” Thupana concluded.
A formidable force

The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) is a constitutional institution whose responsibilities and powers are governed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Section 155 (3) (b), the Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act of 1998. The Board is accountable for the determination and re-determination of municipal boundaries, delimitation of wards and capacity assessment of municipalities. In fulfilling its mandate, the Board’s functions primarily aim to continue being the leading demarcation and spatial knowledge hub, committed to placing society at the heart of its work.

Through this vision, the Board makes a major contribution in the transformation of the local government sector by crafting municipalities that are able to fulfill their constitutional obligations which include the provision of democratic and accountable local government and effective, efficient and sustainable service delivery.

At the face of this institution hails the first female Chairperson, Jane Thupana, who was appointed in February 2014. This appointment, along with four other women, is a milestone as it is the first time since the inception of the MDB that women (who make up the nine member board) are in the majority.

“My fellow board members and I are honoured and humbled to have been appointed by the President of the Republic of South Africa, who entrusted us with the responsibility to lead in spatial transformation of the local government sector.”

As Executive Chairperson, serving the Board on a full time basis, her day to day responsibilities include offering support to the administrative arm of the organisation in executing the Board’s mandate. She has established strong relations between the executive management team and the board to ensure clarity of vision whilst building healthy connections between the organisation and its key stakeholders, including the public, who constitute the organization’s foremost client.

Having grown up at Ga-Mothiba, a rural village outside Polokwane, Jane comes from a humble background and understands poverty.

“In executing our mandate, we are not oblivious of the fact that most of the challenges the country is grappling with, mainly poverty, unemployment and inequality were spatially engineered. As a board we want to make sure that our democracy is deepened through public engagement as we join hands in building a better country through spatial transformation.”

Her professional experience spans over 20 years, first working as a lecturer at two teacher training colleges before occupying several positions in government over a 16 year period. During this time, she served as the Chief Planner and Deputy Director in the Department of Land Affairs, now known as the Department of Rural Development & Land Reform and continued on to be the Chief Director for Agrarian Reform, Farmer Settlement & Agri-business Development in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. Jane, a researcher who also publishes in professional journals, holds two Masters Degrees in Business Leadership and Public Administration, a Diploma in Development Studies as well as an Honours in Geography, amongst others. With such an impressive professional career, it is small wonder how she manages to juggle the demanding responsibilities of her professional and family life. “I am able to create a good balance in terms of my personal and professional life. I have a supportive husband and grown-up children and for me it is now about giving my all to the country I love so much.”

It is against the backdrop of giving much more to the country that, apart from working together with institutions such as the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC), the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) as well as the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Board has resolved to engage effectively with the public (beyond the minimum requirements of the law) and to ensure the public’s active involvement in the processes in order for the Board to better understand their needs.

“More efforts are being made even through soliciting of more resources to expand our outreach to both our clients in the most rural and remote villages as well as the most sophisticated who are available through social media.”

Thupana heads a team of fierce women who attribute their success to passion, hard work and the desire to improve circumstances in the country of their origin. Her message to women is:

“Always carry the torch for your country – the time is now and you are more than capable. Always work hard and plough back through your skills and capabilities.”
behind the MDB

As a married woman with two children, Professor Isobel Konyn is an Advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa, having previously worked for the University of Natal and the Department of Justice. She has served on several boards including the KwaZulu-Natal Gambling Board as well as the KwaZulu-Natal Rental Housing Tribunal. She admits that being a member of the MDB Board thus far has certainly taken her out of her comfort zone.

However, it is an opportunity that she has received with open arms and as a board member she oversees the Research and Policy Committee. She admits that every now and again she struggles with the traveling demands required by the job which take her away from her family. “It is not as easy at times but you need to focus on what the goal is at the end of the day”.

Dedication and determination are the two main attributes required to accomplish the work at the Board and the same applies to achieving one’s dreams in life.

“Her message to women is: “It is not as easy at times but you need to focus on what the goal is at the end of the day.””

Nompumelelo Mpolfu believes in aspiring for excellence in everything that one does. This is what motivates her to accomplish her duties as a board member at the MDB. Her responsibilities include exercising executive authority over the organisation’s demarcation processes amongst others. She also chairs the Remuneration and Human Capital Committee while providing support as a member of two other committees.

Mpumi holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Swaziland as well as two Postgraduate Degrees in the field of Urban and Regional Planning which she obtained at Coventry University in the United Kingdom. She hopes to grow further in her field of study once her five-year run at the Board has been completed.

Her experience includes having served as Director General of several national government departments and as Consultant & Ministerial Advisor, while she currently also serves as Chairperson of the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market.

The highly motivated woman has as her main goal to ultimately liberate South Africans from poverty. “My history is within the liberation struggle and I thrive on achieving my objective to liberate the poor and marginalised from their circumstances.”

Mpumi believes in inspiring women to go above and beyond the norm.

“My message to young women is to prove yourself and to give 100% of your commitment. Always be on top of your game.”
Shivon Wiggins is a mother of two and an experienced Executive Manager with specialist knowledge in property and development, land assembly, physical layout and planning and the acquisition of development rights, to mention a few. She is currently the Regional Director of Mvula Trust, a non-profit organisation in Mpumalanga.

Her responsibilities as a member of the MDB board include overseeing executive functions and decisions of the Board. “We delimit the ward boundaries in municipalities, which plays a pivotal role in the election process.”

Through her work at the Board, Wiggins believes she is able to be a positive driver of change, impacting positively in lives of communities. “I believe that only a person who has a great love for their country could be able to do the work that we do.”

Her message to young women is: “Empower each other and always be knowledgeable about what you do, do not be intimidated and make the change that you wish to see.”

As a highly motivated law graduate, researcher and lecturer in Constitutional Law with expertise in the role of traditional leadership and traditional communities as provided for in the constitution and Human Rights amongst others, Mmatsie Mooki is member of three committees, Policy and Research, Powers Boundaries and Functions as well as the Audit and Risk committee at the Board.

She says that being appointed as a board member gave her the opportunity to make a difference. “I have so much passion for what I do. Being able to translate theoretical constitutional principles and aspirations to real situations is a major contribution towards the development of society.”

A performance driven individual who demonstrates enthusiasm in whatever she does, Mmatsie believes in herself and determination has enabled her to accomplish many of her goals.

“My message to women is believe in yourself, work hard, and pursue your dreams. Lift as you climb so you can be lifted.”

Her future plans include completing her Phd, moving towards the SADC Gender Unit and to acquire a seat at the Constitutional Court of South Africa.
Celebrating Our Heritage

Shaka Day, a day that commemorated the famous Zulu King Shaka is celebrated in South Africa on 24 September each year. Just as King Shaka was instrumental in uniting Zulu clans into a cohesive nation, Heritage Day (appointed in place of King Shaka Day) encourages South Africans to come together to celebrate the rich cultural heritage.

Former South African President Nelson Mandela concisely explained it when he said the following in a Heritage Day speech: “When our first democratically-elected government decided to make Heritage Day one of our national days, we did so because we knew that our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our new nation."

Similarly on 23 September, in honour of Heritage Day, MDB staff came dressed in traditional attire representing the diverse cultures across our great nation. A wonderful array of traditional food was prepared and enjoyed by all, indicative of the love and appreciation of each other’s cultural traditions and beliefs that make up our rainbow nation.
Cancer Awareness

Cancer is one of the most serious diseases women face. It is important for women to know what is normal for their bodies, and to be aware of symptoms of cancer, as early detection improves treatment outcomes.

Cancer Association of South Africa (Cansa) is raising awareness in the months of September and October 2015 with its ‘Tell her, tell all’ Women’s Health Campaign. The focus is on education regarding cancers that affect women, including breast, cervical, ovarian and uterine.

‘Tell her, tell all’ campaign aims to educate women on the significance of knowing their body, and the importance of regular cancer screening. And to encourage all women to get to know the warning signs and what to do to reduce the cancer risk. It’s vital to educate oneself and to know the signs and symptoms of these cancers.

Women are urged to encourage one another to adopt a balanced lifestyle and to go for regular screenings in order to reduce their cancer risk or the recurrence of cancer & to detect cancer early.

Breast Cancer Warning Signs

- A puckering of the skin of the breast
- An unusual increase in the size of one breast
- A lump in the breast or armpit
- One breast unusually lower than the other, Nipples at different levels
- A change in the skin around the nipple or nipple discharge
- An enlargement of the glands
- Dimpling of the nipple or nipple retraction
- An unusual swelling in the armpit

Myth VS Fact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Fact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am too young to get breast cancer</td>
<td>Many woman who are under 40 are diagnosed with breast cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men can’t get breast cancer</td>
<td>1 in 1 249 men have a lifetime risk of breast cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol is not linked to breast cancer</td>
<td>Alcohol use increases the risk of breast cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only women with a family history of breast cancer are at risk</td>
<td>All women are at risk, but family history increases the risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never had children, so I can’t get breast cancer</td>
<td>Women who have never had children, or only had them after 30, have increased risk of breast cancer</td>
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Casual Day

On Friday, 04 September millions of South Africans across the country celebrated Casual Day under the theme Spring into Action. MDB staff joined in the action by wearing their stickers and used their imagination to put on their Casual Day masks for a little fun and braai at the Eco Origins premises.

The event is the flagship project of the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in SA (NCPPDSA) and at the core of the organisation is creating awareness of the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Casual Day supports many job creation initiatives all over the country and specifically the Ability Wear Job Creation Centre, which this year manufactured 15 000 Casual Day shirts and did all the silk screening on the shirts and caps. The centre, which is run by the Nelson Mandela Bay Association for Persons with Disabilities, provides income-generating opportunities for 100 persons with disabilities, as well as sewing and garment manufacturing skills.

This great initiative would not have been made possible without the donations received from individuals and companies alike. So the next time you buy your Casual Day sticker, t-shirt or cap, remember those who are benefiting from your generous gift of giving. Let us try to keep the magic of Casual Day alive throughout the year.

Thank you MDB staff!
OUR VISION

To be the leading demarcation and spatial knowledge hub