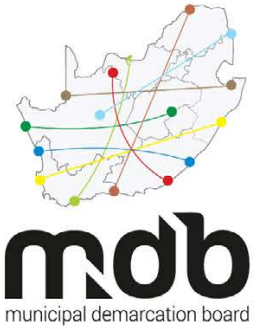


DEMARCATIION BULLETIN

ISSUE 19 | DECEMBER 2025



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Gov Exhibition Day - MDB in Northern Cape!

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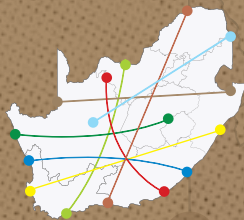


MDB Know Your Wards App

The interactive web map application to help you navigate around the new wards for the 2026 Local Government Elections.

This is the first version (Version 1), and municipalities which are not included in this version, will be...

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Barileng Dichabe | Aluwani Ramagadza | Dimakatso Makhetha



Thabo Manyoni
Chairperson of the MDB

CHAIRPERSON'S VIEWS

Happy Holidays

As the festive season approaches, we thank members of the public for their support and active participation during the ward delimitation process for the 2026 local government elections.

The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) wishes you and your families a happy and restful holiday. To those celebrating Christmas, we wish you a joyful festive season.

We wish everyone a safe, prosperous, and successful New Year in 2026. Please travel safely during the holidays.

See you in the New Year!

#StaySafe



Office closure during the holidays

Please note that the MDB offices will be closed from 17 December 2025 and open on 06 January 2026



MDB Hands Over Final Electoral Wards to IEC in Preparation for the 2026/27 Local Government Elections

The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) officially handed over the revised ward boundaries to the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) on 10 December 2025, following the successful completion of the 2024/25 ward delimitation process. This milestone marks a critical step in preparations for the 2026/27 Local Government Elections.

The handover ceremony was a joint and inclusive event attended by a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, persons with disabilities, community members (Virtual), political parties (Virtual), traditional leaders, government representatives, and municipal officials.

The Honourable Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa, delivered the keynote address. He described the handover as a pivotal constitutional moment and a practical milestone.

“Today’s ceremony marks the conclusion of the 2024/25 ward delimitation cycle and the commencement of the IEC’s detailed operational preparations for the next local government elections,” said Minister Hlabisa.

Ward Delimitation Process

The MDB conducts ward delimitation in terms of Schedule 1 of the Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 (MSA). Wards are reviewed and delimited every five years prior to the general elections of municipal councils. The last Local Government Elections (LGE) were held in 2021, while the next elections must take place between 2 November 2026 and 31 January 2027.

Over the years, increases in the number of registered voters have resulted in proportional changes to the number and configuration of wards across municipalities. Population dynamics, including inward and outward migration, also contribute to changes in ward boundaries.

Ward Numbers for the 2026/27 Elections

For the 2026/27 Local Government Elections, there has been a marginal increase in the overall number of wards nationally, with variations across provinces. In 2021, the MDB delimited 4,468 wards. For 2026, the total number of wards is projected to increase to 4,488 – an increase of 20 wards, the majority of which are located in KwaZulu-Natal.

Comparison of Wards per Province (2016–2026)

| Municipality | Local Government Elections | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|
| | 2016 | 2021 | 2026 |
| Eastern Cape | 705 | 710 | 703 |
| Free State | 309 | 319 | 311 |
| Gauteng | 529 | 529 | 526 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 870 | 901 | 921 |
| Limpopo | 566 | 568 | 568 |
| Mpumalanga | 400 | 400 | 408 |
| North West | 407 | 403 | 402 |
| Northern Cape | 204 | 232 | 233 |
| Western Cape | 402 | 406 | 416 |
| Total Number of wards | 4 392 | 4 468 | 4 488 |
| Number of registered voters | 25 383 361 | 26 749 806 | 27 723 675 |



The number of registered voters has also steadily increased, from 25,383,361 in 2016 to 27,723,675 in 2026.

At municipal level, marginal increases and decreases in ward numbers were observed, reflecting local population trends and voter registration patterns.

Public Participation and Awareness

With ward boundaries now configured, community members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with their newly established wards and understand how these changes may affect their representation and voting stations ahead of the 2026/27 municipal elections.

MDB Chairperson, Mr Thabo Manyoni, emphasised the importance of public participation:

“This event marks the culmination of an extensive and rigorous process that required patience, cooperation, and an unwavering commitment from all stakeholders. Every ward. Every voice. Every voter counts.”

Access to Ward Information

Members of the public and stakeholders are encouraged to look out for Provincial Gazettes once published. These will be available from the Government Printing Works website at www.gpwonline.gov.za and on the MDB website (www.demarcation.org.za). The MDB’s communication programme will continue into the new year through advertisements across various media platforms.



IEC Acceptance of the Handover

Accepting the handover report, IEC Chairperson Mr Mosotho Moepya described the event as a key step towards delivering credible elections in 2026/27.

“This handover represents the bedrock upon which meaningful local representation is built. It ensures that communities are accurately and fairly represented and that the constitutional principle of equal representation is upheld.”

Mr Moepya thanked the MDB for its work and commended South Africans for their active participation through community consultations and submissions, which contributed to shaping credible and representative ward boundaries.

Outstanding Wards Due to Litigation

- A total of 4,305 wards (95 percent) out of 4,488 have been finalised.
- 183 wards (5 percent) remain outstanding due to ongoing litigation.
- Outstanding wards are located in four municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal:
 - o Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality
 - o Alfred Duma Local Municipality
 - o eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality
 - o Mkhambathini Local Municipality
- The MDB is ready to finalise these wards as soon as the court processes are concluded.

Call to Action

The MDB and IEC jointly call on all eligible voters to register and actively participate in the democratic process. This collaboration reflects the shared commitment of both institutions to strengthen local democracy and promote meaningful civic participation across the country.





SALGA NATIONAL MEMBERS ASSEMBLY 2025

This year staff members as well as principals of the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) attended the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) held its annual National Members Assembly (NMA) at Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre under the theme “Empowering Municipalities to Drive South Africa’s Growth Agenda through Economic Resilience and Sustainable Service Delivery”.

The purpose of the NMA was to provide the local government sector with an opportunity to evaluate the impact made since the Local Government Elections of 2021, reflect on the challenges faced by the sector and plan the next steps as this term of governance is in its final stages as we approach 2026.

The event was attended by delegates across the country from all nine (9) provinces. The list comprised of but not limited to Cabinet Ministers, Executive Mayors, Speakers, MMCs, Chief Whips, Councillors, Municipal Managers and Chief Financial Officers. To make the event more vibrant and valuable for delegates, SALGA had invited exhibitors to participate for the duration of the event and MDB was proudly one of the participants in this section as well.

The MDB exhibitor stand was occupied by its officials and sometimes if you were lucky enough you would find the principals at the stand; namely the Chairperson-Mr Thabo Manyoni and the Acting CEO, Mr Aluwani Ramagadza who were enthusiastic about providing information to delegates as they visit the stand. Much hype was built around the completion of the Ward Delimitation Process. The MDB had kick started with technical sessions which commenced in 2024, proceeded to launch the public consultation sessions in April 2025. Members were informed that the wards will be completed and handed over to the IEC in preparation for the 2026 LGE during the Official Wards Handover Ceremony which is set to take place on 10 December 2025.





GOV EXHIBITION DAY

MDB in Northern Cape

On 14 November 2025, the MDB participated at the #GovExhibitionDay at Postmasburg, Tsantsabane Municipality, in ZF Mgcawu District. A place known as a mining town for manganese and iron ore, with a history of diamond rushes leading to an open-cast mine that became a flooded “Big Hole”.

The purpose of the event was to

- To promote an Integrated “one stop” platform for Government information and service offering by Departments which are making use of mobile services to reach out to the communities i.e. Labour, Home Affairs, Health, Education, SASSA etc.

- To interphase with the public on Government programmes and activities

Members of the community were informed about the MDB Ward Delimitation process as well as other business opportunities aimed at people with disabilities and women. Members were encouraged to make use of the business opportunities and also contact the MDB offices for any clarity in the MDB supply chain management processes.

#GovExhibitionDayNC





The impact of amalgamations on municipal service delivery: The case of Rand West City Local Municipality

1. Introduction

The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB), established under South Africa's Constitution and the Municipal Demarcation Act of 1998, plays an important role in shaping the country's local governance landscape by determining and redetermining municipal boundaries. Since its formation in 1999, the MDB has redetermined several municipal boundaries, reducing municipalities from 284 to 257 to strengthen local government functionality and service delivery. Rooted in the ideals of a developmental state, these boundary changes are premised on the belief that merging municipalities can address deep-seated capacity and governance challenges. Yet, much of the discourse and research on amalgamations – both in South Africa and abroad – has fixated on financial outcomes, leaving their social and service delivery implications underexplored. This report sought to fill that gap by examining the lived realities and developmental consequences of municipal amalgamations, focusing on the 2016 merger that created Rand West City Local Municipality through the merger of Randfontein and Westonaria. In doing so, it built on earlier studies to offer a more grounded understanding of how institutional restructuring intersected with local development and everyday governance.

Study objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- a) Investigate the impact of amalgamations on service delivery and the performance of local government powers and functions in selected amalgamated municipalities.
- b) Establish whether the amalgamation of municipalities has yielded the envisaged results.
- c) Ascertain the level of financial (e.g. transitional grant) and administrative support provided to amalgamated municipalities by the provincial and national government.
- d) Establish what the successes or failures of amalgamations can be attributed to.

2. Methods and data collection

The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining secondary data analysis with interviews from seven key stakeholders to assess changes in service delivery before and after the municipal merger. It examined financial performance, staffing levels, and the provision of water, sanitation, electricity and waste services using census data, municipal reports and Statistics South Africa's Non-Financial Census for post-merger insights. The analysis also considered transitional financial and institutional challenges that shaped the merger process. The study offers an in-depth look at the dynamics of amalgamation in an urban context.

3. Findings of the study

In Gauteng, the merger of financially distressed Westonaria and Randfontein municipalities to form Rand West City Local Municipality in 2016 did not yield the intended improvements in governance or service delivery. Both municipalities already faced severe service delivery backlogs, especially in water provision, and the post-merger period saw a further deterioration in financial performance and community satisfaction. Expenditure levels and municipal deficits increased after 2017, largely due to higher employee and transitional costs, while poor management of the transition, incomplete integration of systems, and unresolved human resource issues negatively affected operations. Although National Treasury allocated a limited transitional grant, it was insufficient to cover integration and human resource costs, leaving the post-merger municipality fiscally constrained from the outset.

Governance weaknesses, including poorly qualified councillors and a lack of political accountability, further undermined the municipality's functionality. Many councillors were unable to exercise effective oversight, and funds were often prioritised for salaries rather than the repair and maintenance of ageing infrastructure. Overall, the Rand West case demonstrates that merging two struggling municipalities only compounded existing challenges, highlighting the need for more strategic merger partner selection, stronger transitional planning and better pre-merger financial assessments.

4. Recommendations

- a) Analyse the impact of all boundary redeterminations since 2000 on service delivery and financial sustainability. A comprehensive analysis of all municipal boundary redeterminations since 2000 is needed to assess their impact on service delivery and financial sustainability, as emerging evidence suggests amalgamations have largely failed in these areas, despite methodological challenges such as timing and attribution which could be mitigated through combined methods and post-2021 Census data.
- b) Moratorium on major boundary redeterminations. Until the research on the impact of amalgamations on service delivery and financial sustainability is completed, there is a need to have a moratorium on all new amalgamations.
- c) Minimum education for councillors. Legislative changes to mandate minimum education requirements for councillors are essential, as the lack of basic literacy among many undermines initiatives like the District Development Model and Back-to-Basics, contributing to persistent municipal dysfunction.
- d) Thorough investigation reports. There is a need for more thorough investigative reports that include financial modelling and projections. The MDB cannot be expected to assess all the issues (e.g. financial modelling) which will have to be undertaken either by the National Treasury or the provincial governments making the demarcation requests.
- e) Transitional arrangements. The current transitional process needs a complete overhaul. There is a need to have transitional boards with real authority that are made up of senior officials who will oversee the process over a period of five years. It should be possible, during this transitional period, to postpone the merger date if conditions so dictate. This is an issue that may require changes to the current legislation (e.g. on such things as the effective date for the merger).



Know Your Wards 2026 Application

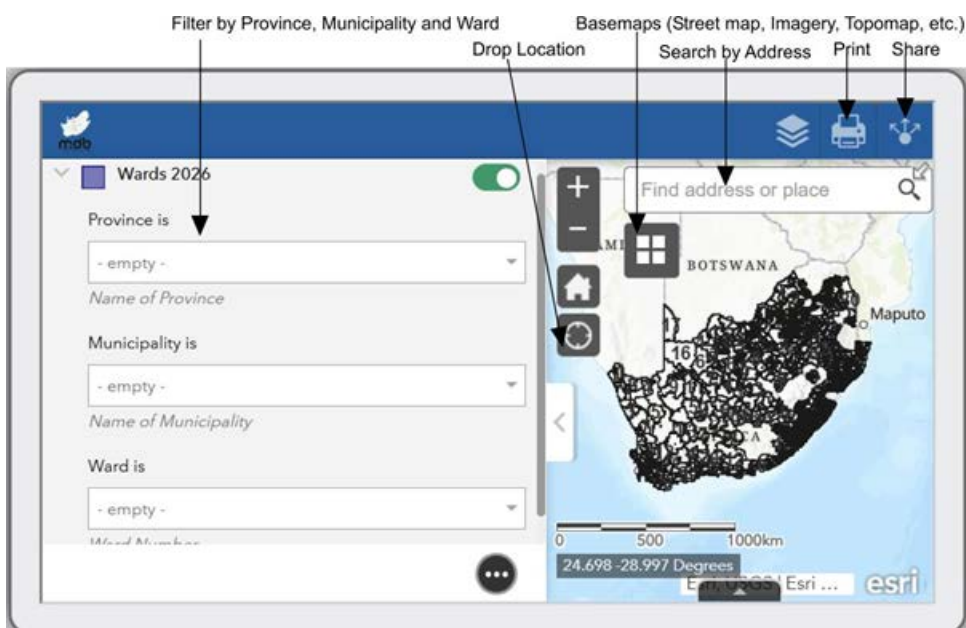
The interactive web map application to help you navigate around the new wards for the 2026 Local Government Elections.

This is the first version (Version 1), and municipalities which are not included in this version, will be available at a later stage in Version 2.

Kindly note that the municipalities which are not included in this version were delayed due to the deferment of the municipal boundary determination process. Keep checking the application and the MDB's website (www.demarcation.org.za) for updates as all the wards would be made available to the public.

How To Use the Know Your Wards 2026 Application

- Use the Filter by Province, Municipality and Ward to navigate to the Ward of your choice.
- Alternatively, use the Search bar to type an address to locate the ward in which it belongs.
- Use the Drop Location to immediately navigate to the ward in which you are situated.
- To Print a map, choose a Basemap (Street map, Topographic, Satellite Image, etc) as your backdrop, then filter to the ward, and set the paper size, format type (pdf, jpg, etc.), and print.
- Share the application with other members of the community.



Accessing the Know Your Wards Application

URL:
<https://arcg.is/jOKyf0>

QR Code:



For any queries or feedback on the Know Your Ward 2026 application, send an email to info@demarcation.org.za



Disability Awareness Month

MDB visits persons with disabilities



The country observed Disability Rights Awareness Month (DRAM) from November 3 to December 3, under the theme “Creating strategic multi-sectoral partnerships for a disability-inclusive society”.

This year the MDB visited the Dipontsho Disability Project, an NPO based in Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg.

The officials engaged community members on the work of the MDB, the opportunities that the organisation creates for persons with disabilities and most importantly expanded on how people can get involved and participate in the programs offered by the MDB.

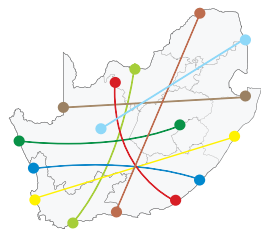




Youth Participation - MDB CampusTour

Braamfontein-University of the Witwatersrand





mb
municipal demarcation board

Physical Address:

Eco Origins - Block C1,
349 Witch-Hazel Street,
Centurion,
Pretoria, 0157,
South Africa

Postal Address:

Private Bag x123,
Centurion,
0046,
South Africa

Telephone:

+27 12 342 2481

WhatsApp:

+27 72 819 8220

Facsimile:

+27 12 342 2480

Website:

www.demarcation.org.za

Email:

info@demarcation.org.za



@MunicipalBoard



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