

MMILENG

Welcome to Our Road Network

BIG INTERVIEW

Planning and Contracts Committee: **Advocate Kgagudi Bernard Morota**

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

Dr Namane Dickson
Masemola - Public Administration in Focus

LIMPOPO INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

A Boost to the Economy
(Story Continued)

SIDO AND MANANA

A Road Paved with Business and Pleasure

LETSEMA DITSELENG

Roads Creating Job Opportunities

IT'S CLEAN AUDIT OR NOTHING

RAL'S AUDIT OUTCOME



Limpopo needs you.
DRIVE RESPONSIBLY.



INTRODUCING...

NEW RAL LOGO

RAL



1994
South Africa's First Democratic
Government (of National Unity)
Established

1999
Company
Established

2000
Company
Starts
Operations

2001
Company
First Logo
Adopted



IT'S HERE...

NEW RAL LOGO



2020
Company
Second Logo
Adopted



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A “SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT” RAL’S AUDIT OUTCOME

Well, well, well! Here we are with yet another intriguing read of your favourite *Mmileng* - the official quarterly corporate publication of Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL).

This edition is packed with more captivating news intended to give you a sense of the work that transpired in the 3rd quarter of the current financial year, 2021/22. It makes good sense to follow up from the cover of this edition and wave a hand to salute our political principal, the Limpopo government’s Shareholder representative responsible for RAL, Dr. Namane Dickson Masemola who also serves as the Honourable MEC for the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI). His PhD achievement confirms that age can never serve as deterrence to any person full of zeal and zest to succeed. You can enjoy his full story on page 40. Well done once more, Dr. Masemola!

Let us also commend the great efforts put in by the RAL family in securing yet another great audit outcome for the financial year 2020/21. Not only is the outcome great, it comes with some major improvement on areas which were flagged by the Auditor-General of South Africa during the financial year 2019/20. On page 10, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mr. Hobyane Magopa provides details of what went into this great achievement.

“LET US ALSO COMMEND THE GREAT EFFORTS PUT IN BY THE RAL FAMILY IN SECURING YET ANOTHER GREAT AUDIT OUTCOME FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21.”

Mmileng also cruises you through Letšema Ditseleng, launched earlier this year by the Honourable MEC for LDPWRI. Letšema Ditseleng is a labour-intensive roads revitalisation and job creation programme that benefits communities at large and Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs).

We also provide an update on the review of RAL’s



Dr. Maropeng Manyathela
RAL Head of Communications

marketing, communication, and public relations efforts. This is an exercise that is undertaken to evaluate the successes and weaknesses, with the view to improve. This exercise involved independent experts who offered advice to the RAL communications team.

Our stakeholder engagement remains at the centre of the RAL business and is driven by our political principal, Dr. Namane Masemola. This is a feature that offers our stakeholders an ear and allows them to engage RAL on issues of mutual interest. As you all know, RAL will not succeed without the involvement of all stakeholders.

It is through the solid relations with our stakeholders that we can report on the progressing Makuya-Masisi project which had stalled as a result of the community protests, among others.

Our usual personality feature blossoms with the duo (couple), Sido and Manana as they share their view about how well Limpopo is developing in terms of road infrastructure.

Let me thank you for your continued engagement and feedback on various mediums and social media channels. Page 28 gives us a glimpse of those engagements.

Just take a few minutes to enjoy your favourite read, *Mmileng*.



We Connect Limpopo...

Today, Limpopo boasts of a good road infrastructure because we are creating and designing modern bridges and roads, making transportation of people and goods reliable and opening access to the rest of Africa.

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RAL

ROADS AGENCY
LIMPOPO
TOGETHER FOR BETTER ROADS

RAL AIMS FOR A CLEAN AUDIT IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

The Agency obtained yet another unqualified audit opinion from the Auditor General of South Africa with a significantly reduced number of audit findings compared to the financial year 2019/20. Worth noting is the great improvement in the audit outcome of our performance information.

Whilst RAL welcomes this important milestone, it is important to note that the unqualified audit outcome fell short of management's expectations. Management had targeted a clean audit but some areas still require improvement. We can confirm that our target for a clean audit is within reach.

The management fully appreciates the centrality of an effective resource governance and management system to RAL's overall success. Whilst in 2020/21, RAL management worked tirelessly to stabilise RAL's financial management environment, the past financial year saw organisational energies being directed towards strengthening the Agency's control environment. Management is satisfied that a lot has been done to improve financial management prudence.

In 2020/21 financial year, RAL operated under one of the most difficult operating landscapes in history. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic put serious pressure on the planning, designing, construction, operation, management, control, maintenance, and rehabilitation of all provincial roads on the shoulders of RAL.

The Agency continued to enjoy the trust and goodwill of its strategic partners. Strategic partnerships are key to efforts by the Agency to improve its financial and operating leverage. The idea of strategic partnerships was mooted after realising that by its nature, road construction and maintenance is a capital-intensive enterprise. We are grateful to our partners in the mining and agricultural sector who continued to provide the much-needed financial support to RAL.

Our primary focus in the 2021/22 financial year is to strengthen human resource capacity in areas that are currently under capacitated to enhance organisational efficiency and effectiveness. This includes working tirelessly to improve the validity and coherence of



MR. GABRIEL MALULEKE
RAL Chief Executive Officer

performance information as directed by the AGSA's Report. We will also not lose sight of the importance of good governance, financial and supply chain management.

Let me take this opportunity to thank our shareholder representative, Dr. Namane Dickson Masemola, Honourable MEC for the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, whose unparalleled leadership and policy oversight experience continues to be cherished by

“THE MANAGEMENT FULLY APPRECIATES THE CENTRALITY OF AN EFFECTIVE RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO RAL'S OVERALL SUCCESS.”

the RAL family. My gratitude also goes to the Board of Directors, led by the Chairperson, Mr. Matome Ralebipi for the time and attention they devote to the Agency.

To our most valued assets, RAL employees, who are custodians of the Agency's reputation and performance: thank you for yet another great year. Well done! Once more, thank you for the unqualified audit outcome, and all the best for the clean audit in 2021/22 financial year.



Do not **DRINK** and **DRIVE**.

AUDIT OUTCOME: OILING THE RAL MACHINE TOWARDS A CLEAN AUDIT

Let us first congratulate the CEO of Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) and his Executive Management for working tirelessly and maintaining the Unqualified Audit Opinion and not regressing. This, in the view of the RAL Board of Directors, is a great achievement and must be properly recorded and celebrated.

RAL continues to occupy a distinct value-adding position in the economic life of the Limpopo Province. As the Board of Directors for RAL, we are delighted about the turnaround progress made by executive management in dealing with some of the Supply Chain Management (SCM) challenges that had been identified by the Board as worrying factors.

We had emphatically instructed management to address all SCM related challenges for the year under review. It is an imperative of this Board to ensure that oversight on RAL is effectively carried out and the public purse is spent fruitfully and accounted for in accordance with the applicable prescripts. Once more, well done to RAL Executive Management!

One important and notable improvement in the business of RAL is the continued support we receive from our most valued stakeholders – the communities we serve. It is through the support of the Limpopo communities and more



Mr. Matome Ralebipi
Chairperson: RAL | Board of Directors

“ROADS AGENCY LIMPOPO (RAL) CONTINUES TO OCCUPY A DISTINCT VALUE-ADDING POSITION IN THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE. ”

impactfully, the sound political leadership provided by the Honourable MEC for the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Dr. Namane Dickson Masemola, that today, RAL is seen as a stakeholder-centric service delivery agent rather than an engineering and construction entity.

Through MEC Dr. Masemola's leadership, we serve the people of Limpopo effectively. We, furthermore, do not only acknowledge where we fall short but also strive to work with our communities to fix what needs to be fixed.

Two appointments for the representatives of Limpopo Departments of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and the Limpopo Provincial Treasury were made by the shareholder representative. It should be commended that, on the same note, all the committees of the Board are now properly constituted.

We currently have the following committees fully operational: Planning and Contracts, Social and Ethics, Human Resources and Remuneration, and Audit and Risk Committees. This, in our view, is a clear demonstration of our commitment to the empowerment of women. The Premier of Limpopo, Honourable Chupu Stanley Mathabatha in amplifying the call by his Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa, has on many occasions called

on us to ensure that women and youth empowerment becomes a reality. Our efforts could not have been realised without the supportive leadership of MEC Dr. Masemola.

Since MEC Masemola's arrival as a shareholder representative and a political leader responsible for RAL, we have seen huge improvements in terms of the projects that were deadlocked and stalled because of, among others, community protests. Many of such projects have now been unlocked and are progressing well.

Since its inception in the year 1999 and beginning its operations in the year 2000, RAL has undoubtedly made stupendous improvements to the road infrastructure network of the Limpopo Province considering its allocated

are glad that the decision we took is yielding positive results as envisioned.

Our wish is not only to make RAL effective but also efficient with sound financial management and stringent supply chain management processes. We are also doing our best to address all historical irregular expenditure.

We are delighted that our collective efforts with management are paying dividends and will have a lasting effect in the history of the Agency. As the Chairperson of the Board, I want to sincerely express my gratitude to the continued leadership and direction offered by our MEC and his department and the Limpopo Provincial Treasury.

Given the road infrastructure challenges in the Limpopo



Chairperson Matome Ralebipi pictured with RAL board members as inducted in February 2021.

annual budget. With funding continuing to be constrained, it is also of importance to acknowledge that much still needs to be done to reduce over 20 000km of the road infrastructure backlog.

As part of a turnaround strategy for RAL, the Board has taken a firm decision to make good governance part of the Agency's operational culture so that we assist management in entrenching adherence to all laws governing the entity specifically, as well as those of the country in general. We

Province, it is important that we work with all the stakeholders under the leadership of the Honourable MEC to address them.

We cannot afford to falter on our commitment and mandate to deliver the road infrastructure services to the people of Limpopo.

Once again, well done to RAL's management and the hard-working staff for achieving an unqualified audit opinion. **m**

Leading the pack: RAL CFO,
Hobyane Magopa confident of
future improvements.



IT'S CLEAN AUDIT OR NOTHING

Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) has set its eyes on securing a clean audit for the financial year 2021/22.

Following more than three consecutive financial years of receiving an unqualified audit opinion, RAL management believes the organisation is ready to secure a clean audit in the next financial year to be audited.

In 2020/21, RAL received yet another unqualified audit opinion with huge improvement in critical areas which was audited by the Auditor General of South Africa (AG). Unlike the 2019/20 financial year, where AG raised a considerable number of financial and supply chain management issues, the audit only raised thirteen findings in the 2020/21 financial year.

RAL's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mr. Hobyane Magopa lauded the 2020/21 audit outcome as a significant improvement compared to the 54 matters of emphasis raised in the 2019/2020 financial year, noting that "with only thirteen matters raised, this is an indication

that the target to get a clean audit opinion is within reach."

The unqualified audit is an indication that the AG was satisfied with the manner in which the financial affairs of the Agency were handled, reported or disclosed in the financial statements as at 31 March 2021, except some instances of noncompliances.

to ensure that the control measures and financial management systems of the Agency are strengthened."

Some of the audit aspects which have improved significantly in the current financial year include the performance information section and financial statements which the CFO attributes to maximum efforts put to

"IT IS ALWAYS HEART-WARMING TO KNOW THAT EVERYONE AT RAL IS DOING THEIR PART TO ENSURE THAT THE CONTROL MEASURES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS OF THE AGENCY ARE STRENGTHENED."

The CFO expressed his confidence in the audit outcomes, further highlighting that "it is always heart-warming to know that everyone at RAL is doing their part

ensure clear presentation of accurate, complete and properly supported performance information that is based on the SMART mantra.

Magopa attributes the annual improvement in audit outcomes to the existence of an optimal control environment set by the Agency. Such a control environment according to him includes professional expertise and proper policies to ensure that people adhere to the procedures and uphold accountability.

Elaborating further on the specifics of that control environment, Magopa said, “We developed an audit improvement plan which guided us on elements that needed to be observed to get an unqualified audit outcome. This was the most contributing factor to circumvent challenges associated with most of the audit findings over the past years.”

He says that establishing a stringent audit improvement strategy as a turnaround strategy in the past five years significantly helped to minimise the AG’s concerns raised in those years. However, he subsequently noted that it was taking a bit longer than expected to get a clean audit, which they are illustriously building towards and hoping that, once achieved, it will be sustained for a long time.

Magopa acknowledges that RAL is now at a point where it has built a solid foundation for a sustainable clean audit

at all material times.

According to Magopa, organisations such as RAL that spend over a billion rand in a year on infrastructure development, encounter unique challenges and complexities. Amongst others, he remarked on the numerous challenges linked to projects and multi-year contracts which may have irregular expenditure that run over multiple years before being cleared, thereby making it difficult for institutions like RAL to move quickly



“MOVING FROM AN UNQUALIFIED TO A CLEAN AUDIT REQUIRES SUPPORT FROM EVERYONE THROUGHOUT THE ORGANISATION TO COMMIT THEMSELVES.”

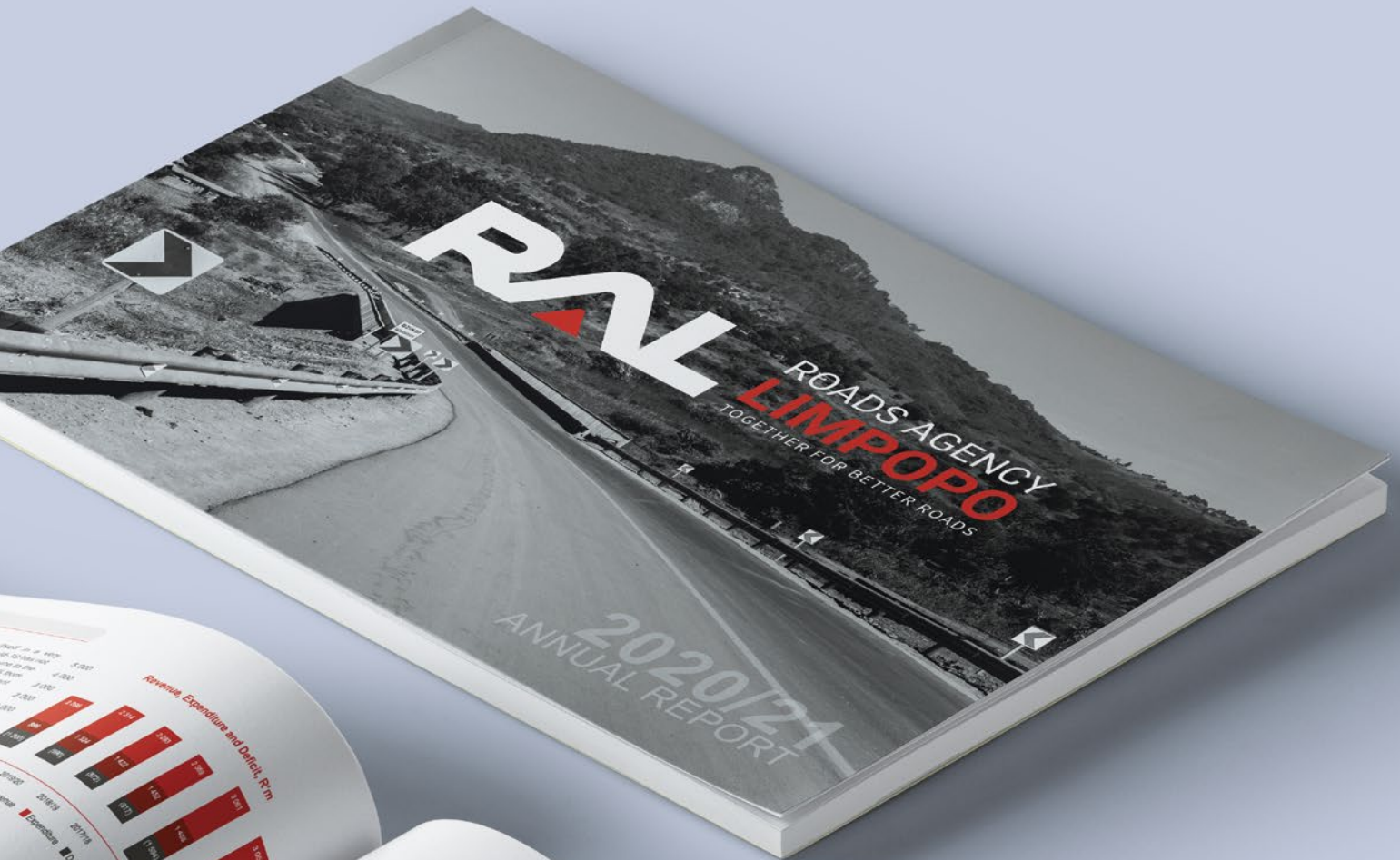
from a qualified to a clean audit.

The CFO views a clean audit as something that does not only require commitment from the finance division, but requires concerted teamwork from everyone in the organisation. “Many people think that you can get an improved audit by solemnly pushing the finance division to do things properly while the rest of the organisation is on low guard.” He emphasises that a clean audit requires a total change of the organisational mindset about how things should be done, “where things which used to not matter, have to be prioritised when you want to move from an unqualified to a clean audit.”

He alludes to how issues of non-compliance may occur within or outside

the supply chain, but may affect the audit outcomes, emphasising that “we therefore must not have any non-compliance issues if we want to get a clean audit,” he advises.

His message to all RAL stakeholders is that “moving from an unqualified to a clean audit requires support from everyone throughout the organisation to commit themselves. It also requires leadership that is control conscious and compliant, and everyone should rally behind RAL. **m**





LETŠEMA DITSELENG

IMPROVES ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE
WHILE CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES



MEC Masemola and various stakeholders lead by example as they patch potholes on road D3748 at Mutswetweni-Mashau village during the Letšema Ditseleng project launch.

The Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI) recently launched the Letšema Ditseleng initiative, a labour intensive roads revitalisation and job creation programme in the Vhembe District in Limpopo Province.

This is in tandem with fulfilling its

mandate of improving the quality of roads meanwhile creating job opportunities for the underprivileged.

Letšema Ditseleng is part of the broader National Department of Transport S'hamba Sonke, established in 2011, dedicated to road maintenance on secondary and rural roads, with particular emphasis on repairing potholes, using

labour-intensive methods of construction and maintenance.

For the Limpopo Province, the initiative was launched at Mutswetweni-Mashau village within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality and will be rolled out to other municipalities in due course.

Scores of people are already benefiting



Mr. Gabriel Maluleke, RAL CEO and Hon. MEC for Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Dr. Namane Dickson Masemola at the launch of the Letšema Ditseleng project.

from the project since its commencement in the Collins Chabane Municipality. About 227 community members have been employed, with some having commenced patching potholes on road D3748. Furthermore, some Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) have also begun benefiting as the medium graded asphalt material used in patching potholes is procured from the businesses within the municipality.

Speaking during the launch, the Hon. MEC for LDPWRI, Dr. Namane Dickson Masemola said the initiative is anticipated to improve the state and quality of the roads whilst creating job opportunities for unprivileged people with no official skills.

MEC Masemola also emphasised that the initiative augurs well with the LDPWRI focus and its entity, the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) towards delivering quality roads to the people of Limpopo, further highlighting infrastructure as a central component to the economic development of any society. “The socio-economic infrastructure that we have to provide to our communities is very important. It serves as a stimuli for economic development but is equally important as an enabler for social services.

“I THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WE HAVE TO PROVIDE TO OUR COMMUNITIES IS VERY IMPORTANT.”

As such, roads are a critical component of the infrastructure that we need to provide as government to the people of our province to unlock economic activities,” he said.

Highlighting the project’s employment prospects, especially amid the Covid-19 pandemic, MEC Masemola said the negative effects of Covid-19 have seriously impacted on the nation, hence the President has urged the arms of government to come up with economic recovery plans and stimulus packages, to ensure that the devastation caused by the pandemic is mitigated.

“As government, we must try to come up with programmes and activities that will provide opportunities for our people to survive in the immediate term. In our area of public works, roads and infrastructure, we talk about the labour

intensive programme of providing roads infrastructure. Therefore, the Letšema Ditseleng programme is amongst the initiatives that are aimed at creating conducive conditions to alleviate poverty in the immediate term.”

Furthermore, the programme dictates to both RAL and LDPWRI to massify the participation drive among the people so that “they become labour intensive and participate in numbers to benefit their families,” MEC remarked.

He added that the programme will also offer SMMEs opportunities as there are materials that will need to be purchased locally. “Our people have to get a piece of this national cake in the next 3 years,” said MEC.

Despite these initiatives, the MEC highlighted the financial constraints and challenges faced by LDPWRI and RAL



Scores of community members in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality benefitted from the Letšema Ditseleng project through employment.

in delivering quality road infrastructure in Limpopo, adding that his team will continue to invest their efforts and the needed resources to turn the situation around.

One of the workers, a father of two, Mr. Norman Munyai from Ha-Mashau who lives with a disability, said the project has impacted his life positively. “I appreciate the government for this project because I’m now able to afford other necessities which I could not afford before being



Community members of Mutswetweni-Mashau village within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality express gratitude for the job empowering project which has come with an improved road.

“THE PROGRAMME WILL PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN IMPROVING OUR ROADS WHILE ALLEVIATING UNEMPLOYMENT WITHIN OUR MUNICIPALITIES.”

involved in this project,” he noted.

Meanwhile a single mother of three, Ms Irene Mundalamo from Vuwani, added that “my livelihood has improved since I became part of Letšema Ditseleng. I wish that the government could introduce more initiatives of this nature so that we can benefit continuously.”

Cllr Dowelani Nenguda, the Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality appreciated the programme citing that,

“the programme will play a vital role in improving our roads while alleviating unemployment within our municipalities.”

He further urged both the private sector and the government to work together in addressing the high unemployment rate in the communities, noting that programmes such as S’hamba Sonke and Letšema Ditseleng are a step in the right direction towards alleviating poverty and unemployment. **m**



External communication experts shared their views with RAL communication team on various strategies to be implemented to improve RAL stakeholder engagement activities.

REALIGNING COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES: THE MACHINERY TASKED WITH PRESENTING RAL TO ITS STAKEHOLDERS

As part of strengthening the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) Communications Strategy and Public Relations activities, the Agency recently held a two-day Strategic Mid-Term Review session where industry experts and internal staff members engaged in avenues to improve key stakeholder engagement, especially in the era of Covid-19.

According to RAL's Head of Communications, Dr. Maropeng Manyathela, the Strategic Mid-Term Review session was important to objectively evaluate the progress made on the 2020/2025 Communications Strategy, as well as to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy since its approval.

"We believe that RAL and its communications machinery can immensely improve if we continue to combine thoughts and call for objective assessments of our initiatives, hence the involvement of external experts to these sessions," he explained.

The session was facilitated by Communications, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement Specialist, Mr. Danny Legodi who highlighted the importance of organisations getting into the habit of reviewing their strategies periodically.

Legodi told the gathering that there was a tendency of reviewing the strategy at the end of the year which leaves virtually no space for corrective action before the reporting time. "The review was mainly to realign the project to the current brand trajectory so that it remains an exciting and relevant communication tool of the Agency."

Since its adoption, 2020/2025 RAL Communications Strategy has been central to supporting the Agency's vision and mission by clearly setting out objectives which have to be reviewed from time to time.

RAL is responsible for one of the most needed services in the province which entails planning, designing, managing, constructing, and maintaining provincial roads. For this reason, it is necessary that communities be kept abreast with the latest developments pertaining to the construction of roads. In this regard, "the people of Limpopo can only know about RAL's work if the Agency's communications and public relations machinery is effective in presenting the holistic view of the Agency and its work," Manyathela highlighted.

presented about roads and the value that they bring to the people, RAL should look at various mediums of sharing such information with the communities of Limpopo.

In sharing what the consumers of RAL's communications offerings should anticipate, including publications on the digital platforms, Mr. Legodi said; "Amongst others, readers of the Mmileng newsletter should expect an informative top-class magazine that will not only be available in print but also reach many people online. The stories and information in Mmileng should be

"WE BELIEVE THAT RAL AND ITS COMMUNICATIONS MACHINERY CAN IMMENSELY IMPROVE IF WE CONTINUE TO COMBINE THOUGHTS AND CALL FOR OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENTS OF OUR INITIATIVES, HENCE THE INVOLVEMENT OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS TO THESE SESSIONS."

During the deliberations, it was revealed that communication interventions in the Communications Strategy are properly aligned to the aim of informing and educating stakeholders about RAL's programmes in order to build a positive corporate image and trust amongst all stakeholders. This approach will strengthen RAL's communication management environment. In unpacking all these objectives and tracking RAL's progress in each area, all attendees were able to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the strategy.

Over and above the information

educational, informative about opportunities, and inspire many people about the successes of role models who originate from Limpopo."

The Strategic Mid-Term Review session was extremely necessary and its success will be seen in how the strategic plans of the Agency will be received and executed by the different stakeholders.

"I was extremely satisfied with the objective assessment and inputs received from everyone. What we need to do is to facilitate the implementation of the agreements made in the review," Manyathela concluded. **m**

Advocate Morota the convergence of LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Despite Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) being his inaugural board appointment, Advocate Kgagudi Bernard Morota who has been serving for 9 months in the Planning and Contracts Committee, is optimistic that his contribution will continue to steer the Board in the right direction.

Despite Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) being his inaugural board appointment, Advocate Kgagudi Bernard Morota who has been serving for 9 months in the Planning and Contracts sub Committee of the Board, is optimistic that his contribution will continue to steer the RAL Board in the right direction.

As much as he acknowledges the immense responsibility that comes with this position, he embodies qualities that earned him the seat at the RAL Board table. He is not only passionate, but connected to what is happening on the ground, making him a perfect fit for RAL's competitive board. Having a clear understanding of his role as well as the challenges faced by the Board, Morota is ready to serve the people of Limpopo.

"It is quite a challenging responsibility; we uphold governance in the entire institution. Only one thing is needed for us to execute our tasks, commitment! When you work for the people, you need to maximize the communal values because the goal is no longer about you but about

the communities," he comments.

His aura changes as he shares his views on communal values and in no time he finds himself lost in a discussion about societal inequalities. One gets a sense that he is not misplaced as a board member or even as the co-founder and current Chief Executive Officer of the Black Forum South Africa (BFSA) - a lobby organisation that advocates for black solidarity in South Africa.

"IT IS QUITE A CHALLENGING RESPONSIBILITY; WE UPHOLD GOVERNANCE IN THE ENTIRE INSTITUTION. ONLY ONE THING IS NEEDED FOR US TO EXECUTE OUR TASKS, COMMITMENT!"

He speaks unreservedly about the work that needs to be done to level the ground for previously disadvantaged groups in society. "Poverty is bad, it could steal your dreams! You cannot envision yourself as an advocate, especially when still at the basic education level. You can't even

mention that dream to your friends who come from middle-class families, they will laugh at you," he says.

Born on 10th day of 10th month, mid-eighties, in Leolo, Ga-Magolego around Schinoord, in the Sekhukhune District of Limpopo, one gets an impression that the stars had aligned during his birth, guaranteeing that his life would unfold harmoniously without any major obstacles.

Even though his father decided to move the family from Ga-Magolego to Glen Cowie, Ga-Moloi A Madihlaba, in order to afford his kids better access to schools, life was generally challenging.

"We grew up in a family where no one was working; my father had been

At your service. Young people with big brains at the forefront to make Limpopo Province shine.



Morota is one of the Limpopo born minds adding value to the province through his expertise.

retrenched from the mines in the early nineties and we relied solely on subsistence farming for survival,” he recalls.

For him, the love for the law was sowed in his heart in Standard 8 (Grade 10), when a newly appointed Deputy Principal at Legaletlwa High School in Glen Cowie, Mr. Majeletje Mogaladi, organised for learners to attend a career exhibition at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in Pretoria. “That was a turning point for me and I knew that I wanted to become an Advocate, even with my inadequate English language,” he reminisces.

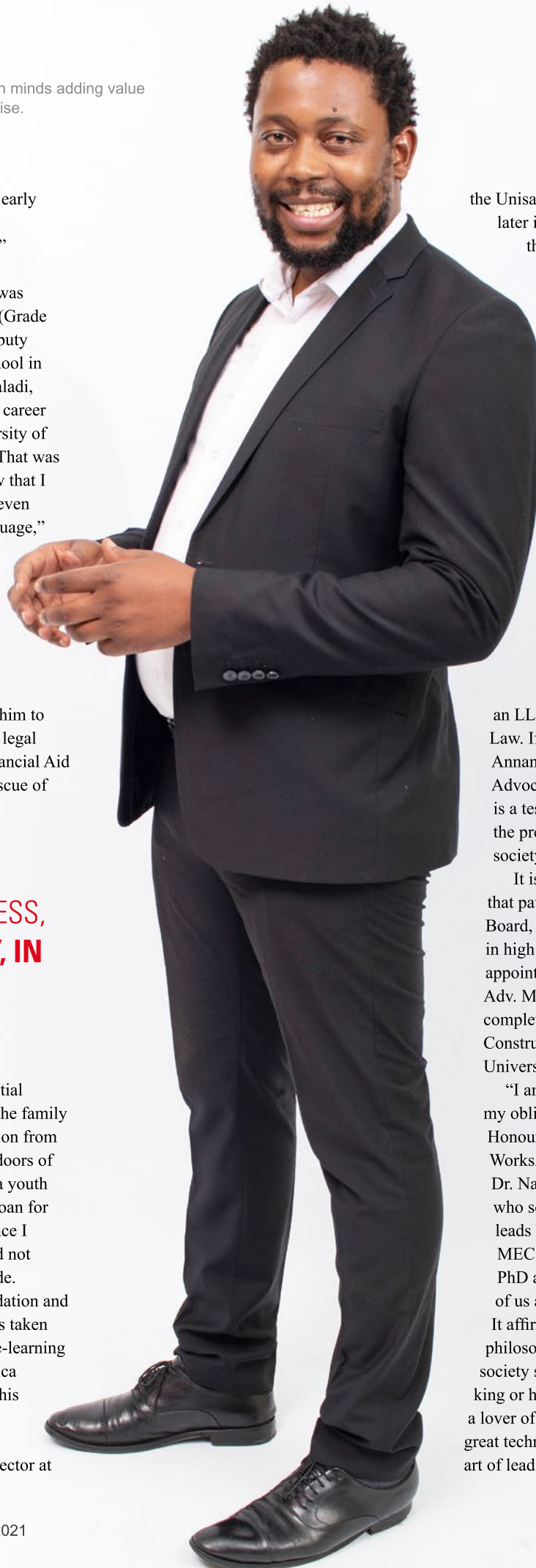
In spite of his stellar exemption matric results, it was still not adequate to guarantee him an opportunity at institutions of higher learning, owing to financial woes. While a plan had to be hatched to enable him to realize his dream of pursuing his legal studies, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) came to the rescue of young Kgagudi.

“EDUCATION IS THE PREMISE OF PROGRESS, IN EVERY SOCIETY, IN EVERY FAMILY.”

Meanwhile, this came with a requirement for a compulsory initial registration fee which no one in the family could afford. It took decisive action from his brother who knocked on the doors of their local church where he was a youth pastor and secured a short-term loan for him. “I knew at that point that once I grabbed that opportunity, I would not disappoint,” he says with gratitude.

In order to save on accommodation and other costs, a family decision was taken for him to study through distance-learning with the University of South Africa (Unisa) while living with one of his brothers in Pretoria.

Advocate Morota, who is the current legal practitioner and Director at



the Unisa Law Clinic, found out later in life that Unisa would be the starting point for his legal career. After completing his LLB, he went the Law School route with the intention to become an attorney. It soon dawned on him that his passion was to argue matters in the court of law, so he advanced to become an advocate.

During the same period, Unisa offered him a position as a lecturer, which he accepted and even further enrolled for an LLM degree in Environmental Law. If the words of the late Kofi Annan are anything to go by, Advocate Morota’s development is a testament that “Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.”

It is his value of education that paved his way to the RAL Board, a position which he holds in high regard. In honouring his appointment and commitment, Adv. Morota enrolled for and completed an advanced course in Construction Contracts with the University of Pretoria.

“I am quite gratified to execute my obligations under the Honourable MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Dr. Namane Dickson Masemola, who sets the tone very high and leads by example. Given the MEC’s demanding schedule, his PhD achievement challenges all of us academically to work hard. It affirms the words of great philosophers that a leader of a society should be a philosopher-king or highly educated, therefore, a lover of wisdom who acquires great techniques and skills for the art of leading”. **m**



Be **SAFE**. Drive **SMART**.



Left to Right: Thovhele Musiwa Mphaphuli, MEC Namane Masemola, Nelson Makuya (VhaMusanda vha Khavhambe) and Vuledzani Mutele (Acting Chief of Mutele Village).

RESUMPTION OF ROAD P277/1 BETWEEN MAKUYA AND MASISI TO CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Having managed to engage various communities to resolve stalled projects in the province, Makuya-Masisi project in the Vhembe District being the latest, the MEC for Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI), Hon.

Namane Dickson Masemola, was confident that the resumption of the project would create job opportunities for local residents.

Addressing community members during a sod-turning event to hand over a new contractor, held at Tshibalo Primary School at Vhurivhuri, Ha-Mphaphuli in

the Vhembe District of Limpopo, MEC Masemola said that despite the upgrading from gravel to tar road being the main focus, the resumption of the project has the potential to help local communities in various ways and enhance the standard of living among the locals. “During this project, many of you will be employed so



MEC Namane Masemola at Tshibalo Primary School during the sod-turning event for Makuya-Masisi Project.

that you can take care of your families. I hope a proper recruitment system will be used to accommodate communities who are beneficiaries or linked to this project,” the MEC appealed. Hon. Masemola also highlighted that the benefits of the project to the local people included a 30% allocation of the contract value to Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and 10% local labour service. Both initiatives are geared towards empowering communities.

The 25.2km road project that stalled in 2019 due to community protests, among other challenges, will resume from the surfaced road at Makuya and end at the intersection with road D3705. At the time the project was halted, 10.72 km had already been completed. Currently, a budget of R112 million has been set aside to complete the remainder of the project with the revised duration for the construction of the road being 11 months.

MEC Masemola further said that

his department (LDPWRI) together with Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL), and other stakeholders such as local leaders and municipalities, continue to work tirelessly to resolve any stalled projects in the province. “The project had stopped, and it was very clear that we needed to get it resolved. Our role is to give communities infrastructure, roads in particular, so that they can drive with ease and safely... that is our commitment,” the MEC added.

Moreover, the MEC urged the communities concerned to work together to ensure that the Makuya-Masisi project becomes a success and is completed on

the previous time when the construction stalled.”

Meanwhile, Mr. Thovhele Mphaphuli from the Mphaphuli Traditional Council, said that they are grateful to the MEC and his team for hearing the outcry of the villagers of Vhembe regarding the Makuya-Masisi project. “Upon completion, the road will facilitate movement to various places of their choice. It has been very difficult to travel on the gravel road, but now we have witnessed that our government cares, and we hope to achieve more goals through our government.”


CIlr Humbulani Mulovhedzi, Mayor

“HON. MASEMOLA, WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE RESUMPTION OF THE PROJECT WOULD CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS.”

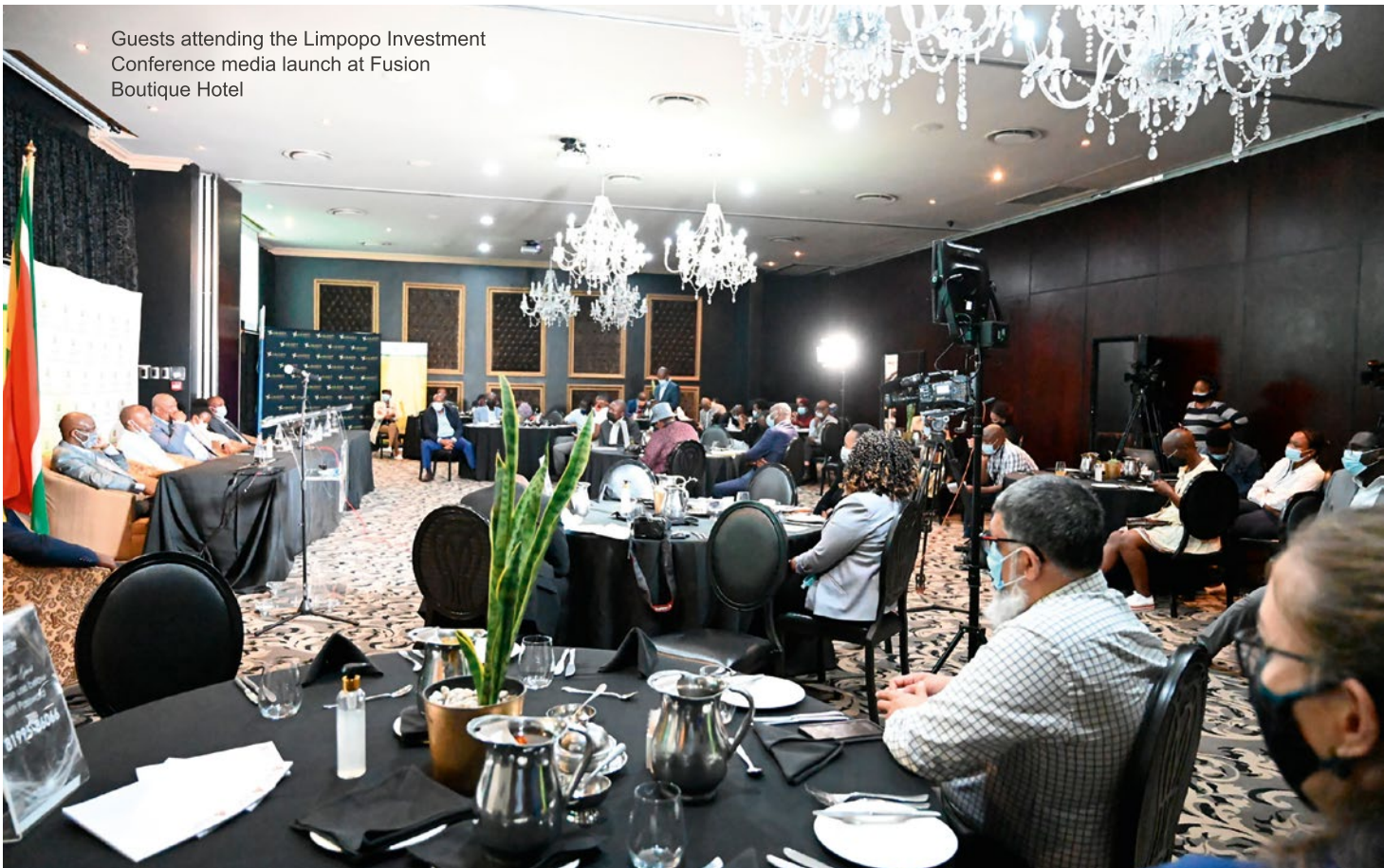
time. “All that happened in the past is now history. We have brought a new contractor to complete this project. Let’s work together so that we can complete this project and move forward to help other communities.”

According to a local resident, Mr. Fhumulani Razwimisani from Ha-Makuya Mutshikilini village, the community desperately needs the construction of the road to be resumed as it presents job opportunities. “We have been waiting for a longer period for its completion and we hope that its resumption will not resemble

of the Thulamela Local Municipality, added that the resumption of the construction of the road will benefit people from Ha-Makuya, Ha-Mutele, and Masisi villages equally. “This will make the villages’ movement to town, hospitals and other government services easier. Currently it is difficult for ambulances to access the villages due to gravel road.

The tar road will also help greatly in giving access to ambulances which have become even more important amid the Covid-19 pandemic,” she concluded. 

Guests attending the Limpopo Investment Conference media launch at Fusion Boutique Hotel



INCREASING LIMPOPO'S INFRASTRUCTURE STOCK LIMPOPO INVESTMENT CONFERENCE 2021

In the month of September, the Limpopo Provincial Government pulled off two investment conferences which are crucial to the growth of the provincial economy, namely; the Limpopo Investment Conference, attended virtually by 1 100 delegates across the world, and the Limpopo Provincial Mining Conference.

Roads Infrastructure Development, which is part of Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL)'s mandate, stands out as one of the priority investment areas which will benefit from the commitments from both conferences.

According to the Limpopo Provincial

Head of Communications, Mr. Nдавhe Ramakuela, Road Infrastructure Development cuts across and connects all the different sectors of the Limpopo economy in the province.

“For all these investment commitments to thrive, reliable energy infrastructure and water networks will be required, including a road network, hence the investment that is coming through will also be channelled towards our roads, amongst other priorities,” he clarified.

Both investment conferences are part of the South African Investment Conference (SAIC) launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018. The main premise of

SAIC is to attract domestic and foreign investment, amounting to R1.2 trillion in a space of five years.

During the Investment Conference, President Ramaphosa addressed delegates and highlighted the importance of investors partnering with the province on its journey towards sustainable and inclusive development.

“Investment should contribute to the development of integrated industrial value chains that generate sufficient added value for the economy,” said President Ramaphosa.

The Limpopo Investment Conference picked up where the Provincial Tourism



(Left) LEDA Group CEO: Mr. Thakhani Makhuvha directs the programme during Limpopo Investment Conference
(Right) MEC Thabo Mokone of Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism.

Lekgotla left off a week prior to the conference, where the emphasis was on prioritising areas that can connect various aspects of the economy to trigger tourism development. In all these engagements, RAL is deemed as a reliable service delivery agent that connects different players in the Limpopo economy through the delivery of quality road infrastructure.

Limpopo Premier Chupu Mathabatha concluded the Investment Conference by reiterating the success factors of the conference, further noting that, “the hosting of the inaugural Limpopo Investment Conference is a clear indication that our vision of transforming the economy for inclusive growth is well on course.”

Moreover, the Limpopo Investment Conference served as a curtain-raiser to a series of discussions between industry players, stakeholders, the private sector and government, availing the stage to provide an overview of the regulatory framework in the country’s intersectoral economy. “The value chain of industrialisation that will be brought about by the investment, ranges from mining, property, development of malls, as well as leisure in the tourism industry,” Ramakuela emphasised.

Unlike the Limpopo Investment Conference where R208 billion was pledged, the Limpopo Mining and Energy Conference focused on the adopted plan of action that includes the generation of quarterly reports from different stakeholders. According to the MEC for Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), Hon.

Thabo Mokone, the mining and energy industry will invest over R93 billion and R20 billion, respectively, in the next five years.

“This investment will lead to the creation of jobs in Limpopo as well as increase the GDP while increasing our infrastructure stock,” MEC said.

The Mining Conference had a clear agenda to provide an overview of the outlook for minerals and mining globally and regionally, while outlining Limpopo’s investment and growth opportunities, including new projects. Mr. Mathabatha emphasised the governments’ position on

emphasised that the Limpopo Province can be developed to be amongst the top three mining headquarters in the sector in South Africa.

“Here in South Africa we believe that three provinces can develop into massive mining headquarters in the country, which is Limpopo, North West and Northern Cape. We should have headquarters of mining companies and processing plants in these provinces and avoid operating Limpopo minerals from the Gauteng Province. Therefore, Limpopo must take its role in mining seriously,” he implored.

“INVESTMENT SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED INDUSTRIAL VALUE CHAINS THAT GENERATE SUFFICIENT ADDED VALUE FOR THE ECONOMY.”

mineral resources and how the state acts as a custodian of these mineral resources.

“We carry an obligation to ensure that mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects the environment for the benefit of future generations. We can advance our economic and social development while at the same time caring for our environment; the two are not mutually exclusive,” Premier reiterated.

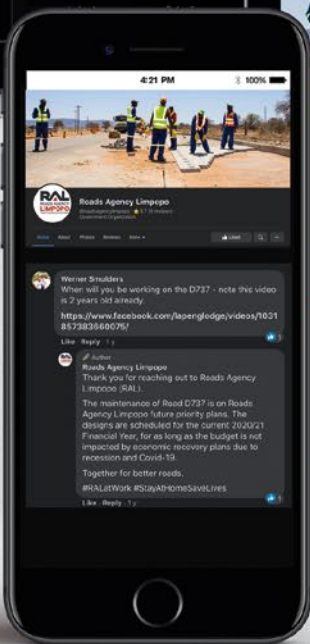
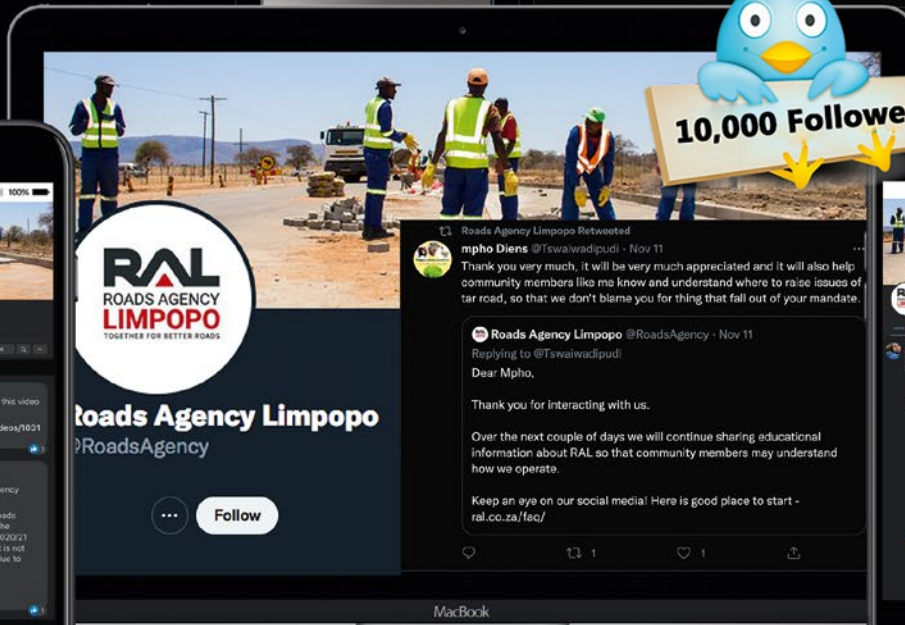
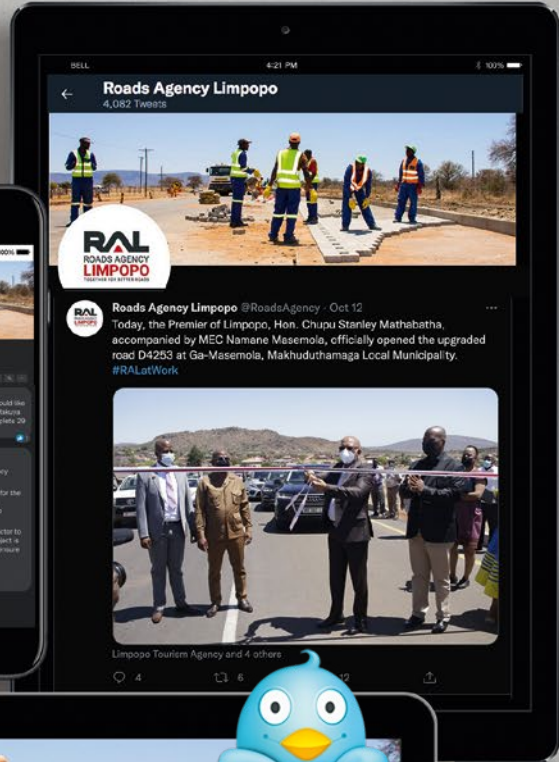
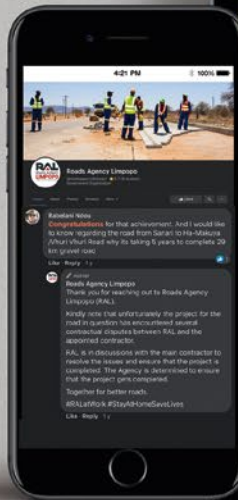
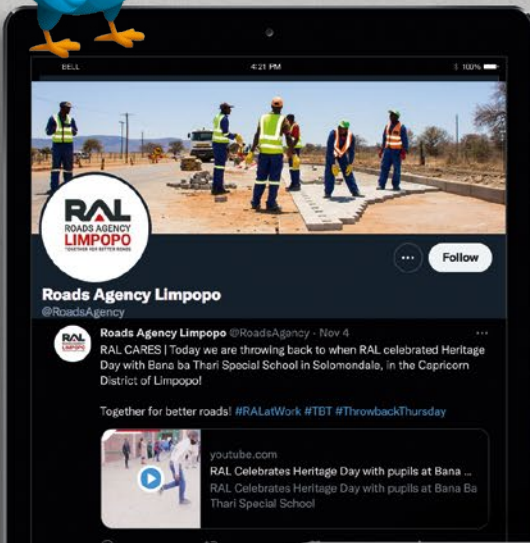
Giving the keynote address, Minerals and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe

The Limpopo Province currently boasts rich mineral deposits in the form of platinum, chrome, coal, gold, vanadium and diamonds, with under a hundred and thirty-six mines in different local communities.

Limpopo remains a desirable investment destination with a road network that is growing from strength to strength due to RAL’s commitment to connecting the province through quality roads. **m**

#RALatWork

Complaints and Compliments



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MINTIRHO YA VULAVULA

In October 2021, Mmileng revisited Ga-Masemola village to attend the official opening of Road D4253 and hear first-hand feedback from community members, road users and other stakeholders benefiting from the recently completed upgrade, from gravel to bituminous (tarred) surface, of road D4253 within the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality of the Sekhukhune District. Story on page 30.



“

Roads play an important role in boosting the local economy. The road will also ensure that our people drive on quality road to avoid muddy journeys, especially when it rains.

Cllr. Minah Bahula, *Mayor Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality*

”



“

We appreciate the new road. We thank the government for ensuring that we also enjoy the benefits of democracy. We urge everyone in the area to take care of the road to ensure that it lasts for a long time.

Mr. Moditi Masemola, *Masemola Tribal Authority*

”



Scan the QR Code to watch this vox pop.



“

The road is very convenient as we no longer encounter hurdles associated with potholes, thereby saving on time since we can now reach destinations timeously compared to previous instances.

Botjape Kgaditsi, *Community member Ga-Masemola*

”



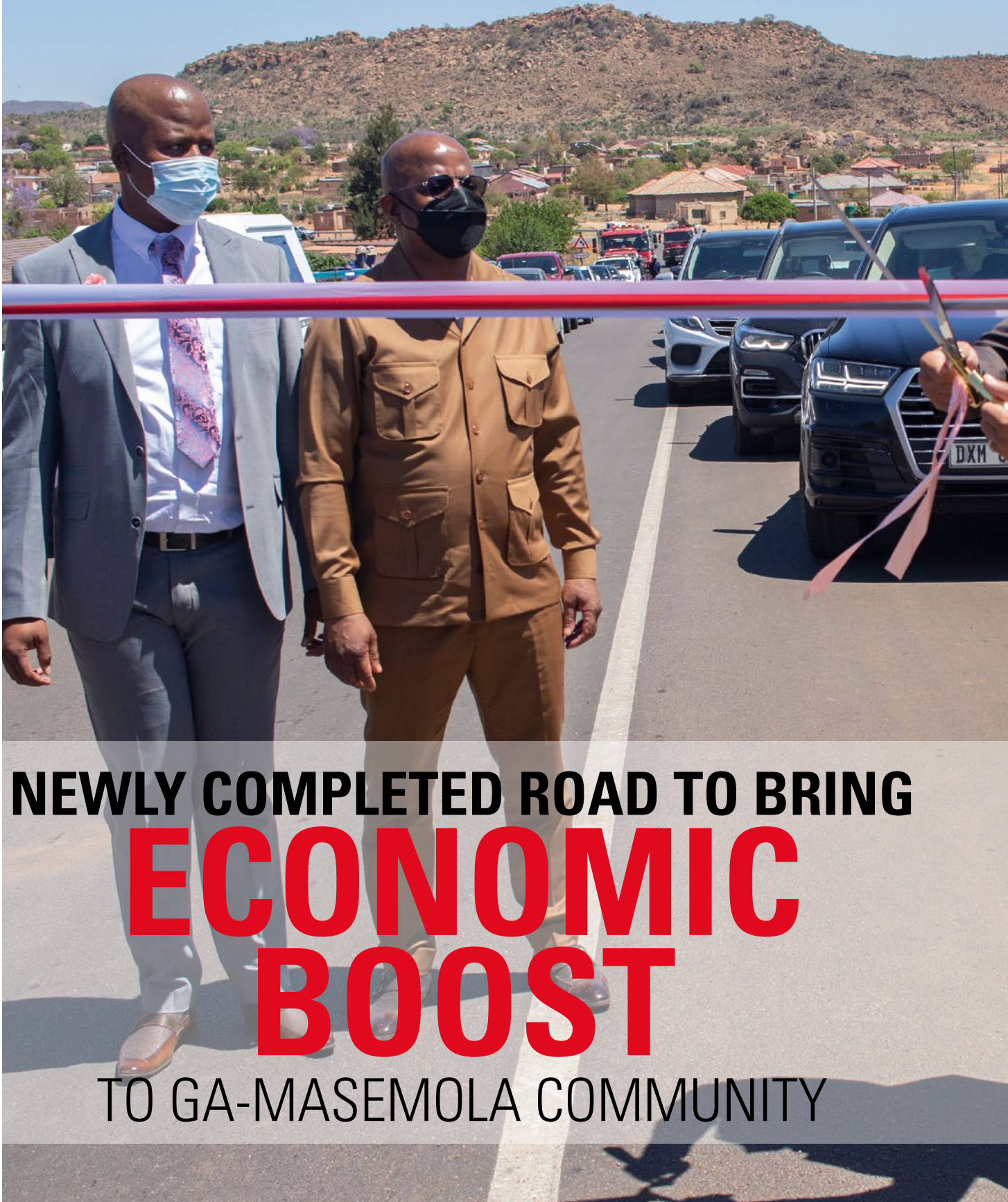
“

We are excited about the new road. Personally, it is convenient for me because I use it daily.

Sandra Mothupi, *Community member Ga-Masemola*

”

Premier Mathatbatha cuts the ribbon to the applause of MEC Masemola (right), Mr. Moditi Masemola of the Tribal Authority and Executive Mayor Cllr Ramaila (from far left).



**NEWLY COMPLETED ROAD TO BRING
ECONOMIC
BOOST
TO GA-MASEMOLA COMMUNITY**



In turning attention towards the road construction work done by the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL), the Limpopo Provincial Government has shone light on various road projects completed by RAL recently.

Premier Honourable Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, accompanied by the MEC for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI) Hon. Namane Dickson Masemola and other stakeholders in the roads infrastructure network, officially opened road D4253 at Ga-Masemola in the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality within the Sekhukhune District.

The 5.42 km RAL project was upgraded from gravel to bituminous surface (tar) to link the Ga-Masemola community to the R759 road, providing easy access to Lebowakgomo and Jane Furse townships, amongst others. The successful project completed in the 2020/2021 fiscal year has been hailed by community members for enabling them access to government facilities such as clinics, schools and police station around the district. It was completed at a total project cost of approximately R57 million, of which R2.7 million was spent on the employment of local labourers and R10.2 million on services provided by the local Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), respectively.

Speaking during the official opening of the road, Premier Mathabatha highlighted a number of ways in which the Ga-Masemola community will benefit from the new road. He noted that “the road will boost the economy of the area as taxi operators’ vehicles will have a longer lifespan while immensely reducing travel time to ensure that people spend more time with their loved ones at home, as opposed to spending long hours negotiating their way on the road.”

In highlighting the government’s commitment to the people, Hon. Mathabatha also indicated that through various projects and service delivery efforts, their role is to make life easy for everyone regardless of where they come

from. “Our commitment is to create an infrastructure that makes life easy everywhere, not just in the big cities. Growing up, we would get teased that ‘re tšwa kgole le sekontiri’ (we come from a place far from a tarred road), hence we endeavour to bring these services into rural areas as well to show that our people are equally deserving as this road is your collective heritage,” he emphasised.

Hon. Mathabatha also urged the community to take good care of the road indicating that if it is vandalised, it would

completed recently in the other four districts of the province is the 9.55 kilometre upgrade of road D1468, that connects Senwabarwana (Bochum) to the villages of Ga-Machaba, Indermark and Vivo in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. The project is one of the few RAL projects which were completed on time and within the allocated budget, where the surplus budget was in turn used to help other communities in need of roads.

Meanwhile, in Mopani District, the

road D3820 from Blinkwater to Rotterdam was also upgraded from gravel to tar. The 3 km road project worth over R31 million was completed recently, helping the community to access various facilities while simultaneously reducing travel time and vehicle operating costs.

In the Vhembe District, RAL recently completed the design and construction of road D3671 with a stretch of 3.36 km towards Musekwa village. The construction of this road has benefitted neighbouring villages such as Khomela,



(Left) Premier Mathabatha's arrival greeted by Cllr Minah Bahula - Mayor of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality and Executive Mayor Cllr Ramaila (Behind)

(Middle) MEC Masemola in attendance of road launch for Road D4253, seated in the front row is RAL's Chairperson: Mr. Ralibipi (Far Right) and RAL General Manager Operations: Mr. Martin Ramaboea (Far Left).

probably take many years to be repaired because the demand for roads is an urgent matter in the whole of Limpopo. “This is a beautiful and quality road that we are proud to hand over to the people of this area. We rely on all of you to protect it against those who destroy property simply because they have this-or-that grievance,” he implored.

Among other roads that were

“THIS WILL SHOWCASE THE AGENCY'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN ALL THE FIVE DISTRICTS OF LIMPOPO,”

Makhushu and Pfumembe. The project cost around R19 million and was initially planned for the upgrading of the 3 km stretch of road D3671. This was later revised to include the rehabilitation of the first 2.76 km at the beginning of the project, due to the extensive deterioration of that section of the road that forced motorists to unduly improvise and drive on the shoulder of the gravel road.

Lastly, a 7 km road D3556 project from N11 at Gilead towards road D3564 was constructed with a total budget of over R58 million. The project included a pavement structure, pipe culverts and road furniture as part of the scope of work. The road connecting Tiberius Village to the N11 has had a positive impact on the village, creating employment for community members and procuring road building materials from local SMMEs.

Roads remain an integral part of the

“THE ROAD WILL BOOST THE ECONOMY OF THE AREA AS TAXI OPERATORS’ VEHICLES WILL HAVE A LONGER LIFESPAN WHILE IMMENSELY REDUCING TRAVEL TIME TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE SPEND MORE TIME WITH THEIR LOVED ONES AT HOME, AS OPPOSED TO SPENDING LONG HOURS NEGOTIATING THEIR WAY ON THE ROAD.”




(Right) RAL CEO: Mr. Maluleke addresses the community on efforts made by RAL to ensure the success of this project.

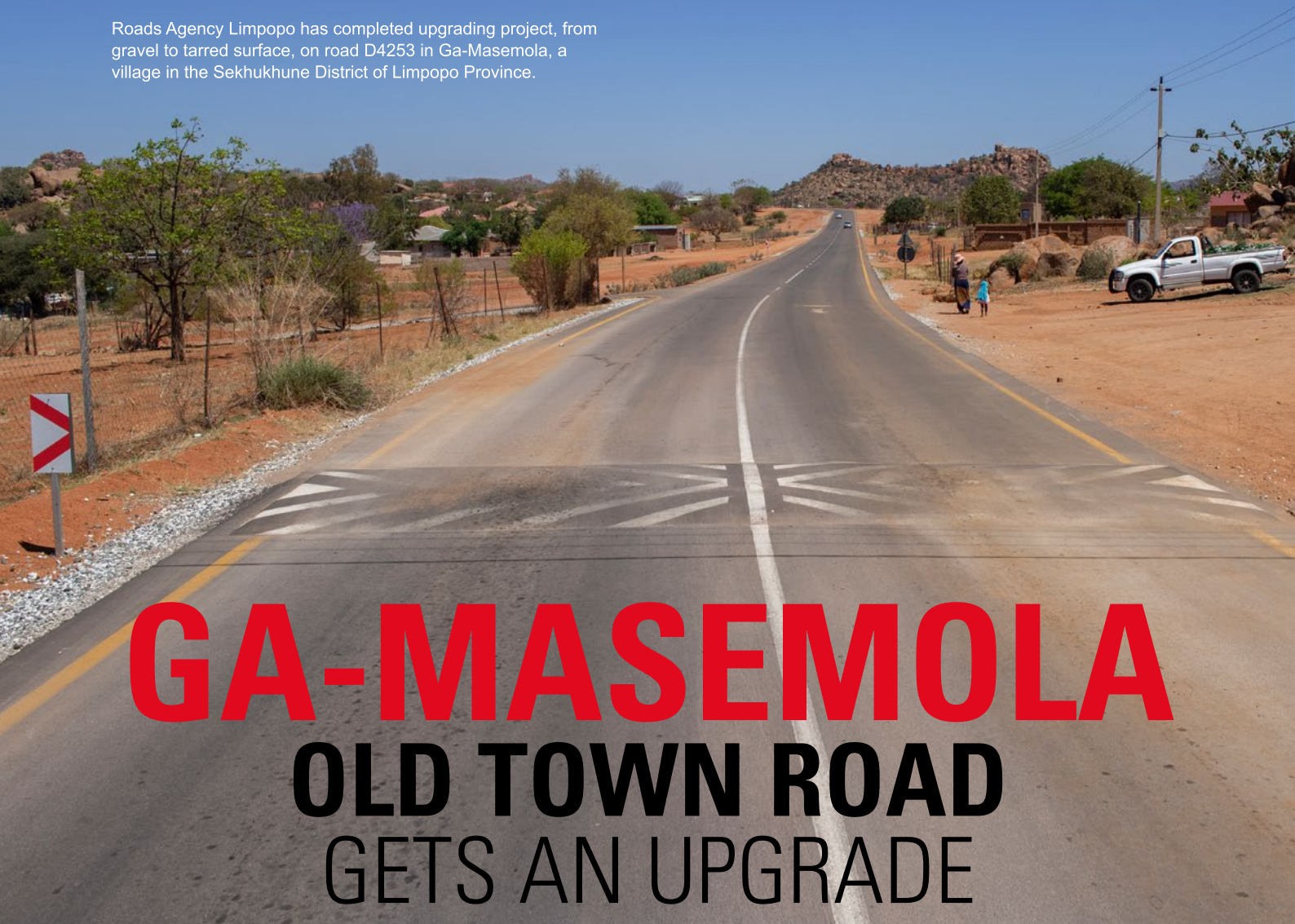
economic development of the province and as such, RAL has a pivotal role to play in the development of the Limpopo Province. According to a study conducted by the World Bank in 2018 titled *Infrastructural Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, approximately 75 percent of freight in South Africa is transported by road, making it the most popular mode of transport in South Africa. RAL approaches

its mandate and responsibility in the context of this study with demonstrable commitment, which echoes the understanding shared by the entity and its internal stakeholders.

The entity continues to invest all efforts at its disposal to address the road backlog in the province with upgrade and maintenance projects continuing in all the 5 districts of the province. In recognition

of the work that RAL does around the province, the Premier, while concluding his speech at road D4253 opening, also emphasised that RAL should host more events like this to celebrate the completion of roads in order to highlight the good work they are doing around the province. “This will showcase the Agency’s achievements in all the five districts of Limpopo,” he implored. 

Roads Agency Limpopo has completed upgrading project, from gravel to tarred surface, on road D4253 in Ga-Masemola, a village in the Sekhukhune District of Limpopo Province.



GA-MASEMOLA OLD TOWN ROAD GETS AN UPGRADE

The community of Ga-Masemola in the Sekhukhune District of Limpopo Province recently took back full use of a completed upgrading of the ‘old main’ road that will now give them improved access to government services such as primary healthcare, schools and social security facilities amongst others.

The road, D4253, was one of over ten multi-year road infrastructure projects mentioned in the 2021/22 Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI) Budget Speech, by the MEC responsible Honourable Namane Dickson Masemola.

The project, which started in July 2019, was for the rehabilitation and upgrade of road D4253 - a district road off D4045 (R579) – that transverses two wards of the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. The total extent of the project was 5.42

kilometres, which consisted of Phase A for the rehabilitation and improvement of structural capacity of the pavement layers of the existing 420 metres of surfaced road and an upgrade of 5km, from gravel to bituminous surface, on Phase B, including bell-mouths on formal access roads to Road D4235.

According to Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) Project Manager, Elvis Kgomeswana, this 16-month long project faced three main challenges that delayed the initial completion date of 20 November 2020, namely interruptions by local Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), various national lockdown alert levels imposed by national government aimed at containing the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the inclement weather, particularly heavy rainfall, that eroded portions of the road. Notwithstanding, and to the delight of the community of Ga-Masemola, contractor

Gebenga Construction was able to successfully complete this project by the approved and revised completion date of 17 March 2021.

Mr. Kgomeswana also highlighted several benefits of this RAL road infrastructure project to the community, road users and the public at large, including but not limited to, shorter vehicle travel times, improved access to Arkona Primary School/Tiitšane Higher Primary School in Mathema section and Masemola Senior Secondary School in ward 27, Manare section, and Magalies Clinic and the studios of Mascom FM (Masemola Community FM), a community radio station in ward 28, Maroge section of Ga-Masemola.

Traffic calming speed humps have also been installed next to the schools to offer a safer road for learners and educators. Other installations, according to Mr. Kgomeswana, were aimed at offering a



Premier Mathabatha cuts the ribbon to officially open the completed D4253 in the Sekhukhune District Municipality flanked by MEC Masemola (right), Mr. Moditi Masemola of the Tribal Authority and Executive Mayor Cllr Ramaila (from far left).

better management of stormwater along the road.

“The scope of work on the project also included the cleaning of silted stormwater drainage structure and the construction of a new stormwater drainage system, minor precast stormwater drainage structures and side drains,” Mr. Kgomeswana said. The project, as with all RAL projects, also had a job creation element to it during its 16-month long construction period, meeting its 10% target for the employment of local labourers and 30% for employment of available services of local SMMEs as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on the project.

Added to that, all the twenty-seven local labourers that were employed by the main contractor have been empowered with a Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA)-accredited on-the-job training and issued with certificates to empower them in future job hunting.

On the cooperation given to the main contractor by the host community, Siboniso Mdladla, the Site Agent for contractor Gebenga Construction, said the Project Steering Committee (PSE) and Community Liaison Officer (CLO) were integral in mediations with labourers and SMMEs, avoiding further delays than anticipated. “The project had its own challenges, especially with regard to late payment of SMMEs due to unforeseen circumstances. However, with the support

of the PSC and CLO, those challenges were managed,” said Mr. Mdladla. Mochidi Piitjo, whose company PXX Trading from Apel Cross section of Ga-Masemola installed culverts and stormwater drainage system on the project, said the experience gained on the project will help his company upgrade its Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) grading. “My company was working on a RAL project for the first time, and we employed five labourers, including two as recommended by the PSC.

However, I implore RAL, or the contractor, to brief the PSCs on how to recommend labourers with the right work

“TRAFFIC CALMING SPEED HUMPS HAVE ALSO BEEN INSTALLED NEXT TO THE SCHOOLS TO OFFER A SAFER ROAD FOR LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS.”

attitude and skill set to various SMMEs,” Mr. Piitjo said. Nkgagolele Projects, situated in Marutleng Moshate section, was another SMME engaged on the project, supplying mobile toilets and water. Business owner Mokwena Masemola said he appreciates the opportunity his company got from a fair and open briefing, against eight other companies, conducted by the contractor. “My company came in with two workers, and we were supplying six toilets for the duration of the contracts and later on, for three months, we also supplied water on the project,” said Mr. Masemola.

Other small businesses from the village that were subcontracted on the project included Thugoma Projects and Companies owned by Moses Maphutha from Matopi section - that did stone pitching and gabions, Bapela Masemola’s Sedumong Projects (V-drains) from Marutleng section and Theme Peter Maphutha’s Spontiniki Business Enterprise from Maphutha section, which supplied two 18 000-litre water tankers. In total twenty-three local SMMEs were engaged on the project during the contact period. Turn to page 29 (Mintirho Ya Vulavula), to read more on what other communities leaders and members of Ga-Masemola think they will benefit from this newly tarred road in their village, not least that the now dust-free road offers reduced dust pollution for residents on the properties along the road reserve. **m**

Fortunes of fate

A SINCERE TALE OF CRAFTING THE ART OF FAMILY

While mixing business with pleasure is an anomaly and not meant for everyone, two time music awards nominated couple, and recent winners of the Best Music Video Award in the Sepedi Music Awards, Sido and Manana have proven the myth otherwise, as their romance and love for music has stood the test of time.

Affectionately known by their pseudo names in the music industry, Thabiso Mogano aka Sido (36) was born at Ga-Molepo Village (Ga-Mogano) in the Capricorn District of Limpopo, while Arbina Mogano aka Manana (34) was born at Klerksdorp in the Matlosana District of the North West Province.

In 2001 Manana's parents moved to Mankweng to preform pastoral duties as her father is a pastor. Moving to Mankweng, Manana was then enrolled for Grade 9 (then Standard 7) in 2001 at Mountain View Secondary School where she met Sido as her class representative.

Little did they know that they would be joined at the hip for years to come in a journey paved with serendipities and twists of fate. The duo hooked up when Sido stepped in as a support structure for Manana, who at the time was on a wheelchair.

"I first noticed Manana when her parents brought her to school on a wheelchair where I served as a representative for our Standard 7 class and volunteered to look after her, to ensure

her easy mobility around the school," Sido recalls.

Manana lived with a disability from her childhood. She had a limping leg that caused her to use orthopaedic shoes from a tender age. After multiple surgeries, she was capacitated to correct her posture.

Sido says the two became friends after realising that they had a lot in common, including music, which gave him ample time and opportunity to propose love to an uninterested Manana at the time. "I liked her so dearly, hence I ensured that I joined the same music groups as her. When the groups collapsed, the two of us clung together in music, subsequently becoming very close," says Sido with a smile.

After two years of knowing each other, the two were eventually involved romantically in 2003, solemnising their love with their favourite art. The formalisation of their relationship coincided with the release of their debut song *Wena le wena* which further popularised them in the entertainment circles.

The hit *Thiba Ntwe Monate* which was released in 2005 became a national anthem, sparking regular bookings week in and out.

According to the duo, the first time they were dazzled and hypnotized by the allure of performing live for a large crowd was at the University of Limpopo Fresher's Ball in 2006 where they shared the stage with the late Lebo Mathosa from the Boom Shaka fame.

Speaking about their music journey, the couple says in the early stages until now they did not have a mentor to guide them, leaving them to hustle their way out in the industry.

"We are self-taught in this industry. We have had to learn everything we know as we went along. There have only been a few prominent people who have guided us, like the prolific Fortune 'DJ Cappuccino' Maswanganyi, founder of Limpopo Music Awards (LIMA)," the duo explains.

Sido and Manana are successfully riding the Amapiano music genre, infused with elements of house music. They write their own music and are largely guided by the beat and mood of the kinds of songs they produce. Manana is the choreographer in this union and it is evident that their creative process stems from a deep inspiration.

Having worked independently since the

Thabiso (Sido) and Arbina (Manana) became household names in the entertainment circles through debut song "Wena le wena".

beginning of their music career, in August this year (2021), the couple released an Extended Play (EP) of seven tracks under a new records management Roshkie Production. The EP that features hit songs such as *MinaNawe*, *Shiwelele* and *Distraction*, is enjoying tremendous airplay on different radio stations across the country.

The duo's energy on stage has gotten them major appearances around the country, including on popular TV shows such as the now defunct SABC 1 *Jika Majika*, *Plate It Up* (SABC1) and *2 Families* and a *Wedding Dress* (BET).

Their experience of pursuing music in Mzansi has its own share of challenges as they often encounter frustrating moments, such as promoters who still delay payments or refuse to pay. "At times you can sense that promoters look down on you, but we have to accept all the challenges that we come across as a stepping stone," adds a frustrated Manana as she talks about navigating the challenges in the industry.

After many years in a romantic relationship, in 2017, the couple finally got married stylishly, with the wedding ceremony sponsored by SABC3's *Married In A Flash* show. The wedding was organised in three days with only a few people invited. "The show came at the time when we were also



PERSONALITY

The couple, Sido and Manana tied the knot in 2017 stylishly with few guests in attendance.



planning to get married, so it helped us in cutting down on costs. However, for those who missed our wedding, they will be invited in due course as we are planning for another white wedding,” says the couple.

When quizzed about how they separate business and pleasure, the duo said, “we don’t always agree in business or in our relationship but we are committed to resolving any issue and move forward in our lives... that grounds us,” Sido clarifies.

Despite dropping out of school in Grade 10 and temporarily pursuing Project Management at the Capricorn TVET Polokwane Campus which he could not complete due to music related commitments, Sido has a winning mindset. “We are not quitters; we believe in doing something until we get it right. We respect our craft - this is our bread and butter, and we value our time in studio. We are not just doing this for fun or for

“THANKS TO RAL, WE DO NOT HESITATE TO FREQUENT THE PROVINCE BECAUSE MOST OF THE ROADS WE USE GOING TO OUR GIGS ARE TARRED AND COMFORTABLE TO TRAVEL ON”

the fame, but we are passionate about what we do,” he explains fervently.

Meanwhile the energetic Manana completed her matric at Mountain View Senior Secondary School in 2005. She further obtained a certificate in Theory of Music at the Ochrim School of Music in 2005 as well as a certificate in Business Administration at MSC College in Polokwane in 2007.

The musicians have previously worked with a number of popular artists and producers such as Uhuru, Candy Tsa Mandebele Mokwena and Brazo Wa Afrika, just to mention a few.

Plans are underway to work with Nokwazi from Kalawa Jazmee as well as Thebe. As much as they are a duo, they still have their individual aspirations. “I would love to work with Zonke in

the future,” says the hopeful Manana.

Currently based in Gauteng (Pretoria), the couple enjoys numerous performance bookings in Limpopo, particularly over the weekends. They are currently promoting their EP in Limpopo, with most of the gigs staged in the easily accessible townships, courtesy of good workmanship by the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL), thereby making it easier to travel to their destinations safely and timeously. “Thanks to RAL, we do not hesitate to frequent the province because most of the roads we use going to our gigs are tarred and comfortable to travel on.”


Life has not always been smooth for the couple as they were blessed with twins (girls) in 2010. Tragically, one of them passed on when she was six months old. “We were happy to have the twins. However, losing one of them was a very difficult situation to deal with. It affected us for a long period but through God we eventually managed to deal with it,”

Manana responds with emotional affect and recalls grimly the effects of the devastating loss.

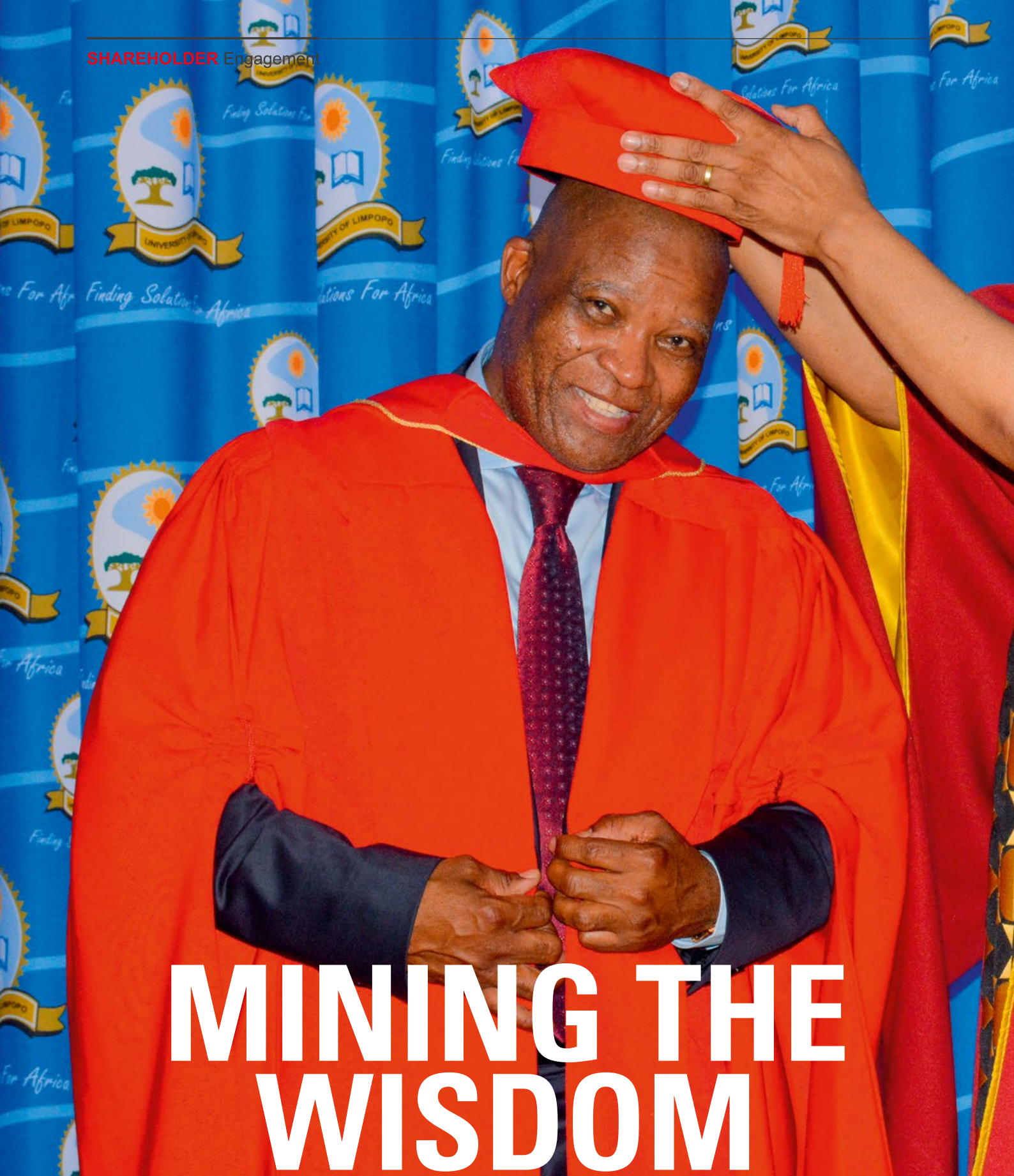
Despite all the challenges, the couple soldiers on with determination, optimism and continue to seek opportunities with unbridled

enthusiasm. In 2020, the couple got an opportunity to

rekindle their love when they featured on the first season of “Mina Nawe”, a show where couples who are in a committed relationship seek assistance to strengthen their relationship, aired on the Moja Love channel.

The family enjoys cooking and touring when they are not ‘doing music’. 





MINING THE WISDOM

TO SERVE

THE PEOPLE OF LIMPOPO



influenced by the endless development of technology. Technology has made it easier to find education through internet search engines such as Google, but wisdom cannot be searched.

In his 2007 book titled *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, Dr. John C. Maxwell famously says; “Everything rises and falls on leadership, but knowing how to lead is only half the battle. Understanding leadership and actually leading are two different activities”. This statement gives us a glimpse into the thought processes that went behind the application of knowledge in Dr. Masemola’s latest achievement.

“We have witnessed a number of big and great organisations collapsing or struggling to survive in the face of adversities, as a result of, among others, the lack of strategic foresight and leadership,” commented the jubilant, Dr. Namane Dickson Masemola who recently graduated for his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Administration at the University of Limpopo, formerly known as the University of the North.

Dr. Masemola who currently serves as the Honourable MEC for the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI) finally attained one of his most significant and life changing qualification which will, in his view, come in handy to help grow Limpopo to become an economically viable province, given the importance of the research topic covered, “The Impact of Leadership on Socio-Economic Development of Municipalities: A Comparison of Ward 10 Villages and Seshego Township within Polokwane Local Municipality”. The topic explores some of the problematic areas in local municipalities with the purpose of drawing progressive lessons from the techniques and theories that he applied in his study to test his hypothesis and validate his real time solutions as future recommendations.

Dr. Masemola whose political career kicked off at an early age has seen it all. Not only did he develop as a political leader but has come to be recognised as one of the few who understand that to effectively serve the people, a clearer understanding of their needs in terms of employment and job opportunities, among

The ever-evolving world of today requires leaders who recognise that the best and everlasting value a leader can ever add to his people, is ensuring that their lives not only change

but change for the better.

The world today demands of leaders to have the capability to combine the use of education and wisdom to change the lives of people they serve. This is the trend that seems to be developing all over the world,

“IT WAS NOT EASY I MUST CONFESS. I HAVE HAD TO INSTIL GREAT LEVEL OF DISCIPLINE AND COMMITMENT TO REACH THIS LEVEL BECAUSE IT IS SOMETHING THAT HAD SET MY SIGHT ON FOR SEVERAL YEARS.”

others, is of utmost importance. Dr. Masemola undoubtedly leaves an indelible mark in every position he is deployed, dating back from his tenure as Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality to key portfolios such as, MEC for the Limpopo Department of Education and now LDPWRI.

His PhD achievement could not have come at the right time, as South Africa and most African states are battling to economically survive due to leadership and other challenges.

His current responsibilities include heading the LDPWRI as well as being the Shareholder representative of the Limpopo Provincial Government responsible for RAL. Given the said responsibilities, the provincial government led by the Hon. Chupu Stanley Mathabatha has demonstrated the amount of confidence it has in Dr Masemola’s abilities as a leader.

Quizzed by *Mmileng* to know how he managed to balance between his demanding schedule and studies, he took a deep sigh of relief, “it was not easy, I must confess. I have had to instil a great level of discipline and commitment to reach this level

because it is something that I had set my sight on for several years, I needed this!” he confessed.

Dr. Masemola who can arguably be classified as a servanthood leader, given his passion and interest in creating value for the people he serves, has demonstrated this through how he handles matters relating to service delivery demands. His self-expressed desire is evidently to see the infrastructure challenges faced by most Limpopo communities addressed without any degree of violence and conflict. Since

his appointment as the Shareholder representative for RAL on behalf of the Limpopo government, he successfully managed to unlock many projects that had stalled as a result of community protests. Many of those projects are today about to be completed for use by deserving communities, thanks to his unquestionable leadership.

Despite the daunting career and student demands, he steadfastly kept focused and stayed the course of being completely hopeful that the well-coordinated effort would yield a breakthrough and ultimately victory that must be celebrated.

“My message to young people in Limpopo is that where you come from and the limiting circumstances under which you were raised should never be viewed as a permanent wall that will block you from your success. What matters is your determination and your attitude,” he implores.

Scores of people congratulated him on social media pages, lauded his leadership and how acquiring his PhD inspires them. Here is what social media users had to say about Dr. Masemola’s achievement. **m**





Have another day by
BEING SAFE TODAY.

Some of RAL staff members and school principal who attended the Heritage Day Celebrations at Bana Ba Thari Special School. From left, Refilwe Shikwambana, Mohau Mamabolo, Gladys Maluka and Mahlatse Matswalela.



SHARING IS CARING

RAL'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The adage '*sharing is caring*' was fully embodied by the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) staff members who visited Bana Ba Thari Special School in Solomondale, Capricorn District of Limpopo. The staff spent valuable time with the school's pupils, encouraging them to preserve and celebrate their heritage.

According to Ms Thandi Hlabangwane, RAL's Human Resources Practitioner and event

organiser, the event formed part of outreach programme by the Agency aimed at empowering disadvantaged communities or individuals. She said this year they spent their time with special needs children at Bana Ba Thari Special School, imparting them with knowledge about the rich cultural diversity in the province and also inculcating the importance of preserving the ancient history of the country as part of celebrating heritage month (September).

Hlabangwane told the gathering that the living heritage plays a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity, social cohesion, reconciliation, peace and economic development.

"In every community, there are living human treasures who possess a high degree of knowledge, skills and history pertaining to different aspects of diverse living heritage. It is therefore important in South Africa to reclaim, restore and preserve these various living human treasurers for



Sido and Manana (Musicians), Modile Boshielo (Manager for Corporate Services at RAL), Jan Makwela (SGB Deputy Chairperson) and Molepana Nkoana (School Principal).

future generations to come,” she said.

The day’s festivities included some of the most popular childhood indigenous games such as diketo, kgati, mokuša, tsheretshere, morabaraba and ditshitswana.

Giving the keynote address during the event to emphasise the



“IN EVERY COMMUNITY, THERE ARE LIVING HUMAN TREASURES WHO POSSESS A HIGH DEGREE OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND HISTORY PERTAINING TO DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF DIVERSE LIVING HERITAGE.”

importance of heritage celebration, Ms Modile Boshielo, Executive Manager for Corporate Services at RAL, encouraged the learners to preserve and embrace their heritage and culture. “You will not know where you are going if you don’t know where you come from. Where we are now is also important. We need to know our origins so that we know who we are and where we are going,” she noted.

In encouraging the learners to take education seriously, Boshielo said that RAL was responsible for building roads, and “in doing so education remains very important, hence, we are partnering with you (school) to encourage a knowledgeable society.”

RAL donated some sanitisers and masks to the school. In addition, the Agency donated sporting kits as well as netball balls and soccer balls to encourage the children to participate in various sporting activities to keep them fit and healthy.

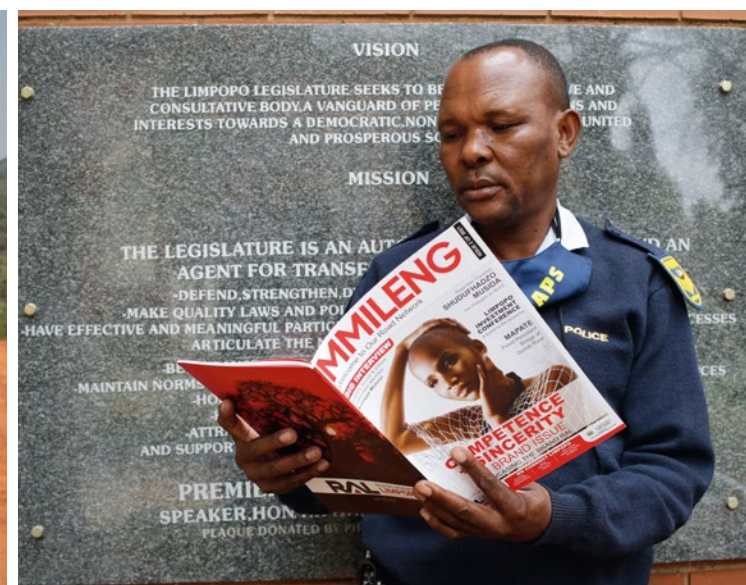
The School Principal, Ms Molepana

Nkoana stated that the school currently accommodates 153 learners with special needs from Grade R to 5 who all need various forms of support to empower them in various ways. “We feel honoured that RAL chose our school to celebrate heritage month with us. Some people look down on special schools, but we are happy that RAL has recognised us by showering us with special love,” she remarked, expressing her gratitude for RAL’s presence.

Nkoana added that since their school accommodates special needs children, the presence of RAL in the school will probably boost the confidence of their learners. “Our learners felt loved and appreciated through this event. It was both entertaining and educational as we were reminded about our cultural origins. Therefore, we believe that this is the beginning of more partnerships to come between us and RAL,” she concluded. **m**



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RAL'S VALUES

The way we conduct ourselves and our business in pursuit of our vision and mission is underpinned and guided by the following corporate values:

ACCOUNTABILITY

We remain accountable to all our stakeholders and the environment

COMMITMENT

We are committed to delivering quality road infrastructure in the province with pride

DIVERSITY

We value and embrace diversity within the work context

EFFICIENCY

We will go the extra mile in serving our communities

EXCELLENCE

We strive to exceed expectations

RELIABILITY

We offer reliable, safe and economic road infrastructure

TRANSPARENCY

We are transparent in both our internal and external business processes

TEAMWORK

We work together for better roads



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