



Remember to switch off from 8.30pm to 9.30pm tomorrow and help save the planet



**LILIAN NGOYI:  
BEHIND THE  
STREET NAME**

Feature Page 4



**SUTCLIFFE SLAMS  
VETCH'S 'MOTHER  
GRUNDIES'**

Opinion Page 7

# Mayor's good deed

Hundreds of Chesterville residents have been given title to their homes

SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

**I**T WAS a day of ululation and singing at Chesterville as hundreds of residents had homes transferred onto their names this week.

The handing over of title deeds to the community of Masixhawulane and Wiggins areas of Chesterville means that about 500 people are now legal owners of homes built by the City.

Speaking at a function to mark the occasion, Mayor Obed Mlaba said despite being residents of one of Durban's oldest townships, some people in Chesterville still held deeds of grants.

This, he said, more classified them as tenants rather than owners of properties.

"Chesterville was built in 1942 but to this day some people are still living in houses which are not registered in their names, this is what we are today changing," he said.

The process of accrediting RDP homeowners in Chesterville dates back to 2003.

It was disrupted after some members of the community illegally occupied some of the homes. This led to the houses being vandalised and left in a poor state by the invaders.



**A PLACE OF HER OWN: Mayor Obed Mlaba presents Thembi Ntuli of Masixhawulane with the deed of transfer for her home**

Picture: ZIBUSE NDLOVU

In 2006, after repairing the damage to the houses, the City began a process of handing out title deeds to the rightful homeowners.

Local Councillor Lindiwe Mtaka said the process was not an easy one.

"Although we have already issued about 500 title deeds, we are only about half way through the process."

She said aside from illegal occupations, there was a problem of deceased estates.

Mtaka said this usually ended up in family feuds where many dependants of the deceased wanted the home registered in their name. "This results in unnecessary delays in the finalisation of title deeds," she said.

The Chairman of the City's Housing Committee, Nigel Gumede, said people who had taken occupation of the homes could only sell them after a certain number of years.

"We have had many instances of people selling RDP homes and then wanting to benefit again from our housing scheme, that is

not how things work, you can only sell your home after eight years."

Gumede said people who tried to defraud government by reapplying for another house elsewhere would be caught out. "Once you receive a house, you cannot come back to us and ask for another house," he said.

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# Budget due out today

ROMITA HANUMAN

ETHEKWINI'S budget for the 2009/10 financial year is due to be tabled before the Council's Executive Committee today (Friday).

Deputy City Manager for Treasury, Krish Kumar, said the budget aimed to balance community needs with affordability and sustainability.

He said the operating budget had increased from R17.9-billion to R18.5-billion.

This was because of price increases from bulk suppliers such as Umgeni Water and Eskom.

Increases were also necessary to meet backlogs, for repairs and maintenance, employee costs and for increased capital spending.

Kumar said: "The tabling of the budget is a statement of commitment to the people of the city and is developed within the framework of the City's overall strategy and supports its vision."

"There are many exciting opportunities for the city and its residents. While acknowledging the many challenges, the budget represents a balance between the needs of the community, affordability and sustainability.

"We are proud of the achievements we have made, but are under no illusion about the work that still needs to be done," said Kumar.

More details on the budget will be contained in a special four-page supplement, due out on 1 April.

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# It's official: Remant Alton buses ready to roll

KEN MCHUNU

REMAN T Alton buses are expected to be back on the road by Sunday, offering relief to thousands of stranded eThekweni commuters.

This is according to a report due to be tabled at the City's Executive Committee meeting today (Friday).

The recent suspension of operator Remant Alton's contract was blamed on cash flow problems and the poor mechanical state of the fleet,

and prompted an outcry.

Deputy City Manager, Procurement and Infrastructure, Derek Naidoo, said that it had since been agreed, in talks with Remant, that the service be restored.

Meanwhile, City Manager Michael Sutcliffe insisted that the City had not "at any stage" put any of its funds into Remant Alton to keep it afloat, apart from money due to the company.

"Over the years there have been no bail-outs of Remant

Alton. All the money we have paid out has been due to them for services rendered," said Sutcliffe.

The City had, however, advanced money to Remant when there had been delays in payment from the national Department of Transport.

"A few years back when the department did not pay for the extra trips done, the City and the Provincial Department of Transport paid that money jointly."

After its suspended the bus

service, Remant Alton was served a 14-day notice to remedy their breach of contract with the City. It required them to provide a stable service of mechanically-sound buses and to address their labour issues.

## Dispute

Naidoo said 316 buses had since been serviced and were ready to roll. The report also said Remant had promised to withdraw retrenchment not-

ices served on some staff, resolving the labour dispute.

Sutcliffe said the City had always acted in the best interest of commuters.

He dismissed DA claims that the "unfair" awarding of the bus tender to Remant and the ANC's unwillingness to terminate the company's contract two years ago were the cause of the current situation.

"The decision to award Remant the tender to run the City buses was agreed upon

unanimously at Council. The DA and other parties agreed that Remant was the best and cheapest bidder."

Sutcliffe said it was last year's six-week strike by Remant employees that had "put a stick in the spokes".

He said the City regretted the inconvenience to commuters. "We are a caring City and we are doing everything in our power to ensure a stable service for our community."

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