



TNPA is probing the relocation of the SA Navy Base to the Port of Richards Bay Dave Savides

# Naval base move process outlined

Gugu Myeni

A PRE-feasibility study to map out the relocation of the SA Naval Base from Durban to Richards Bay is set to be completed by the end of the year.

This is amid ongoing plans to move the navy base to the Port of Richards Bay with only a satellite station remaining in Durban.

The study, which began last month, will look into land acquisition, environmental issues and funding strategy.

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) said the key focus is on the SA Navy Base within Pelican and Naval Island in Richards Bay, SA Navy Satellite Station in the Port of Durban and residential facilities in Richards Bay.

TNPA portfolio director for KwaZulu-Natal Logistics Hub, Dr Bridgette Gasatoboti said once the pre-feasibility study is completed, a joint project team will table their findings to their respective governance structures for approvals.

"An intergovernmental business case will then be

developed to source funding for the development prior to being tabled at National Treasury," said Dr Gasatoboti.

The relocation project is one of over 30 mega projects that constitute the KZN Logistics Hub Programme.

Last February, Dr Gasatoboti said, "Projects of this nature are quite complex, and require a lot of finesse and sensitivity in the delivery approach."

"Precisely because the SA Navy relocation project touches on the safety of our republic, we have had to ensure all key and strategic partners are fully on board."

The proposed move has been welcomed by economists, who believe the project could inject billions into the City of uMhlatuze.

Economist at University of Zululand, Professor Irrshad Kaseeram said, "If we are talking about an estimated R9-billion investment for the project, we are looking at about a R4-billion yearly injection into the City of uMhlatuze."

# UNDER FIRE Continued from page 1

On Saturday morning, the SA Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) said the downgrade was owing to safety concerns and non-compliance to Civil Aviation Regulations.

"The SACAA would like to clarify that the downgrade of the FARB [Richards Bay Airport] followed an inspection by the regulator, which identified the risks related to their fire and rescue services that do not meet the required safety standards under this grading," said SACAA communications manager Sisa Majola.

"Under a Category 2 classification, an aerodrome is not permitted to land commercial aircraft and is only granted permission for small aircraft."

Majola went on to say, only once the airport submits a 'corrective action plan that showcases compliance as well as the mitigation of safety risks that were identified at the airport' will the regulator consider a higher aerodrome categorisation application.

## Suspend operations

Airlink, the privately-owned aircraft carrier operating the Richards Bay-Johannesburg route, has subsequently been forced to suspend operations until further notice.

"The safety and well-being of our customers, crews and equipment is paramount for Airlink and we scrupulously follow the SACAA's safety regulations."

"However, Richards Bay is an economically important route and we intend to resume services on the route as soon as the SACAA lifts the restriction on the airport," said Airlink MD and CEO Rodger Foster.

The airline said holders of tickets for flights between Johannesburg and Richards Bay should contact Airlink's Customer Service office on 011 4517550, or their travel agent, to be rebooked for travel at a later date, or to another destination (e.g. Durban), or to request a refund.

The Airport Company of South Africa (Acsa) partnered with the City of uMhlatuze through a multi-year

contract to manage Richards Bay Airport after it was closed during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and remained closed for two years.

Since the reopening in September 2022, Airlink has been the only carrier that returned to operate out of Richards Bay.



The downgrade was a result of insufficient firefighters, and deficiencies found in one of the fire trucks

In December 2023, Airlink further introduced a jet service on the route, which saw a significant increase in capacity and reduction in flight time following an increase in demand for passenger and cargo services.

## Deficiencies

A source revealed that the airport downgrade was a result of insufficient firefighters, and deficiencies found in one of the fire trucks.

"It is not clear when these deficiencies will be attended to and nobody knows when more staff will be hired," said the source.

These problems were confirmed by another source, who revealed that, like Empangeni, the Richards Bay Fire Station building is also in a bad state.

"Windows are broken, the roof leaks badly and roller doors are not functioning. Both the Richards Bay and Empangeni stations need more manpower."

"Both have basic equipment that is required, but they do not have resources to deal with hazardous fire incidents."

"Another challenge faced by Empangeni is that water tankers have taken over their hydrants. [Tankers filling at hydrants] cause many delays when firefighters need to fill their trucks to attend to an emergency."

"Firefighters have to locate a water tanker driver and ask him to move his truck to fill up."

The station is muddy and they can't keep it clean, as water tankers spill water all over the place.

"These issues were raised with authorities, and they asked to look for alternative places where water tankers can fill up, but to date nothing has happened," said the source.

Additional fire engines are reportedly urgently needed as a back-up to the already ageing and insufficient fire trucks.

"Some of the vehicles they have are in poor condition."

"There is a problem in Supply Chain Management; some trucks have not been serviced for almost two years because of the delays in that department."

## Emergency response severely lacking

Richards Bay Clean Air Association (RBCAA) founder member/communications officer Sandy Camminga said, in a city with a concentration of noxious industries, many listed as major hazardous installations, a co-ordinated emergency response is severely lacking.

"This was proven with the NCT [woodchip] fire which relied heavily on the intervention of the private business sector and community members."

"As a member of the City of uMhlatuze Disaster Management Advisory Forum, the RBCAA, in the years preceding Covid, raised the urgent need for the implementation of an alarm system to notify the community in the event of a gas leak, including an evacuation plan."

To date, neither have been implemented.

"The gas incident in February 2022 highlighted these deficiencies. The public was panicked and there was no alert or co-ordinated emergency response," she said.

A response from City of uMhlatuze communications manager Bongani Gina was still forthcoming at the time of going to print.



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**King Cetshwayo District Municipality**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
2023/2024 ADJUSTMENT BUDGET - FEBRUARY 2024

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 22 of the Local Government Municipal Financial Management Act (Act No. 56 of 2003), read together with Section 26 of the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (Gazette 32141 of 17 April 2009) that the King Cetshwayo District Municipality has approved its 2023/2024 February Adjustment Budget for the 2023/2024 financial year. The 2023/2024 February Adjustment Budget was tabled and approved by Council at the meeting held on 28th of February 2024. A summary of the 2023/2024 February Adjustment Budget is outlined in the table below:

BUDGET SUMMARY	2023/24
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>1 349 153</b>
Total Operating Expenditure (including Non-Cash Items)	1 147 462
Total Capital Expenditure (Grant Transfers including VAT)	495 338
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1 642 801</b>

A detailed document can be viewed at [www.kingcetshwayo.gov.za](http://www.kingcetshwayo.gov.za). Should any further information in respect of the above be required, please contact the Municipality on the following details.

King Cetshwayo District Municipality, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi House, Richards Bay CBD, Private Bag X1025, Richards Bay, 3900. Tel: (035) 799 2500. Fax: (035) 789 1409. E-mail: [info@kingcetshwayo.gov.za](mailto:info@kingcetshwayo.gov.za)

MR P.P. SIBIYA: MUNICIPAL MANAGER

# Cost-cutting measures for KZN

Gugu Myeni

THE KZN government is tightening its purse strings, with budget cuts and various cost-cutting measures amid tough economic times.

Delivering the 2024 Provincial Budget last week, Finance MEC Peggy Nkonyeni said the reduction in spending is necessitated by a weak economic performance and several challenges within the province.

"The economic challenges in KZN are further exacerbated by climate change, which has caused frequent disastrous floods that continue to cause damage to economic and social infrastructure as well as leading to loss of lives," she said.

"The province has decided to effect reductions across the board to increase our contingency reserve from around the R225-million to R236-million per annum mark over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)."

Nkonyeni said this will allow the government to respond to unforeseen circumstances that may arise.

"In this regard, we have cut back spending by R132.5-million, R103.5-million and R105.4-million over the MTEF to fund this increase in reserves," said the MEC.



MEC Peggy Nkonyeni delivered the KZN budget in the provincial legislature KZN Treasury

"This means the provincial budget reduces by between R4.4-billion and R4.7-billion in aggregate over the 2024/25 MTEF."

The MEC said, despite an expected moderate expansion of 1.1% in economic growth this

year and 2.3% in 2025, they remain optimistic about job creation efforts, infrastructure investment, exports, port expansion projects, and the functioning of the Dube Trade Port and Richards Bay Special Economic Zones.

The bulk of the provincial budget is allocated to the departments of education, health and social development, which receive 80% of the budget.

The total infrastructure budget has been set at R17.1-billion, R17.3-billion and R17.4-billion over the MTEF.

"The budget cuts are significant, and departments were required to review the targets they have set for themselves in the 2024/25 annual performance plans to fall in line with their amended budget."

"For some, it has meant that various posts will not be filled, and additional cost-cutting measures must be implemented, while others have noted that some projects will have to be rolled out over a longer period."

"Departments will place more emphasis on implementing efficient business processes to ensure quality services continue to be rendered to our communities," said Nkonyeni.