

CELEBRATING SOUTH AFRICA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN



New Era for the Judiciary as Justice Maya occupies the Top Position

●
NPA Head
SHAMILA BATOHI

●
AGSA
TSAKANI MALULEKE

●
Ekurhuleni City Manager
IMOGEN MASHAZI

Chief Justice Mandisa Maya champions the cause for gender equality

South Africa's first female Chief Justice, Mandisa Maya, takes office on 1 September, a massive milestone not only in her own illustrious judicial career, but also in the country's move towards gender equality in all arms of the state

Maya, who was also the first woman to be appointed as the president of the Supreme Court of Appeal, a post she held from 2017 until she became the Deputy Chief Justice in July 2022, takes over from Chief Justice Raymond Zondo.

She was appointed by President Cyril Ramaphosa last month, after consultation with the Judicial Service Commission and the leaders of the political parties represented in the National Assembly.

In February the president first made public his intention to appoint Maya to replace Zondo - whom he appointed in 2022 despite the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) having named Maya as its preferred candidate to head the judiciary at that time. He made the formal announcement last month, ahead of Zondo's retirement date of 1 September.

Maya, who began her career as a legal clerk in Mthatha in 1987 after studying law at the University of the Transkei, is a Duke University graduate who has served at all levels of the judiciary since she was first appointed as an acting judge of the Cape High Court and the Mthatha High Court in 1999.



Chief Justice - Mandisa Maya

She was appointed full-time to the Mthatha bench the following year, and spent time as a judge in the Eastern Cape divisions of the High Court before being appointed to the Supreme Court of Appeal in 2005.

Maya has also acted in the Supreme Court of Namibia and in the Lesotho Appeal Court. In 2011 she was appointed to South Africa's Constitutional Court for the first time.

She was appointed as deputy president of the Supreme Court of Appeal in 2015, and acted as its president from 2016 until May 2017, when she took on the presidency of the court on a permanent basis.

Maya was appointed as deputy chief justice in 2022, the only female candidate among four who were interviewed, including Zondo. She ultimately got the job despite her being the JSC's preferred candidate for the position of chief justice.

In her 2022 JSC interview, Maya made it clear that she believed she was in the position she occupied because of her skills and experience and not because of her gender.

In response to questions on whether South Africa was ready for a female chief justice, Maya said the country had "always been ready" and historically had no shortage of capable and committed women judges.

"I'm not here because I'm a woman. I'm a worthy judge. I'm just a good woman judge," Maya said.

Throughout her career, Maya has been a champion of gender equity within the judiciary and the legal profession and has served on a number of organisations forwarding this agenda, including the South African chapter of the International Association of Women Judges.



On an international level, Maya was part of the Georgetown University's Law and Gender Fellowship Programme in the 1990s and a Fulbright Scholar, and was also a member of the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Commissions.

She also served on the South African Law Reform Commission and the South African Judicial Education Institute and is a patron of Lawyers Against Violence.

Commenting on Maya's appointment, Justice and Constitutional Development Minister Thembu Simelane described Maya as a "trailblazer" and a "brilliant mind" who had served at all levels of the judiciary with distinction.

"We now have a female Chief Justice. The appointment signifies the deeper appreciation of how far we have come as a nation and how much our courts have transformed, both in terms of race and gender," Simelane said on the significance of the appointment.

“I’m not here because I’m a woman. I’m a worthy judge. I’m just a good woman judge” - Justice Maya .

Speaking at Zondo's farewell dinner in Johannesburg, Maya praised the outgoing chief justice for his support for women in the judicial system during his tenure.

Maya said there had been several notable appointments of women during Zondo's term, including two women judge presidents, a number of deputy judge presidents, a deputy chief justice - and her own appointment as chief justice.

In the 27 years preceding Zondo's appointment as chief justice, only one woman had been appointed as a judge president.

"It is no random coincidence that these tremendous gains in the struggle to diversify the judiciary in terms of gender were achieved during your tenure. Your support added significantly to the impetus for the recognition of women in this arm of the state," Maya said.

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NPA boss Shamila Batohi steers the ship towards renewal



National Director of Public Prosecutions - Shamila Batohi

It was there that the depth of Batohi's courage and commitment to the rule of law would become clear, along with her determination to play a role in the long-term future of South Africa's criminal justice system.

The King commission was appointed to probe match fixing involving players and illegal bookmakers during the Proteas cricket tour to India in early 2000. Batohi led evidence for the commission - which resulted in Cronje, who until then was a national hero, being banned from the sport for life.

Batohi was relentless in her pursuit of the case against Cronje and reduced the golden boy of South African cricket and the white Afrikaner establishment to a tearful confession and public apology - in the process lifting the lid on a decade of deep rot within the sport.

Thereafter Batohi served as the first head of the Directorate of Special Operations - the Scorpions - in KwaZulu-Natal. The unit, located within the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), focused on prosecuting high-profile organised crime and corruption cases.

The unit prosecuted high-profile individuals including former police commissioner Jackie Selebi and former president Jacob Zuma's former financial advisor Schabir Shaik.

In 2000 the then KwaZulu-Natal Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) Shamila Batohi first captured the public imagination with her tenacious interrogation of the disgraced former Proteas captain Hansie Cronje at the King Commission into corruption in cricket.

Durban born and educated, Batohi had already shown this tenacity since she joined the prosecution service in 1986 as a junior prosecutor at the Chatsworth Magistrates Court, working her way up through the ranks of the white male dominated institution

during the transition to democracy.

Batohi's prosecutorial skills and determination saw her being seconded to the Investigative Task Unit (ITU) appointed by then president Nelson Mandela in 1995 to probe apartheid era political killings.

Batohi would also prosecute a number of high-profile cases in KwaZulu-Natal in the late 1990s before being appointed as provincial prosecutions head, the role she held at the time she was seconded to the King Commission into match fixing.

However, the failed attempt to prosecute Zuma on corruption charges related to payments from Shaik, which were linked to the controversial 1990s arms deal, saw the Scorpions being disbanded in 2009 due to pressure from the African National Congress (ANC).

Batohi was among the prosecutors who either left the service or were forced out after 2009, in a tumultuous decade which saw a succession of prosecution heads appointed under dubious circumstances.

In 2009 Batohi moved to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, in the Netherlands, where she acted as advisor to the prosecution, addressing the of sexual violence as a war crime and finding ways to assist survivors.

However, in 2019 Batohi accepted an invitation by President Cyril Ramaphosa to return to the prosecution service as NDPP and lead the process of rebuilding the NPA's capacity and credibility. This involved enforcing accountability for the theft of state resources during the state capture era.

Batohi is the first woman to have occupied the position, one of the most challenging in the public service, not just because of its profile and strategic importance, but also due to its controversial and politicised history.

Under her leadership, the NPA has established the Investigating Directorate (ID), a now permanent structure which is tasked with investigating state capture crimes and other acts of high-profile corruption.

By late 2023 the ID had recovered around R5.4 billion in state assets looted by companies associated with the Gupta brothers, while a number of high-profile corruption cases from the state capture era were finally brought before court.

Speaking at a media roundtable hosted by the prosecuting authority in April, Batohi said when she became NDPP in 2019, the institution was "fractured" as a result of state capture.

Consequently, it had "not been easy" to rebuild the institution, which had lost key personnel and capability during the period when

politically tainted prosecution heads were being appointed – causing Batohi to face "unrelenting" pressure since her appointment.

"The pressure...in the past five years has been unrelenting, mainly with regard to state capture, but in the middle of all of this, we've been doing incredible work to turn this ship around," Batohi said.

The NPA had been stabilised and was led and staffed by people of integrity who will "do only what the Constitution and the rule of law demands".

Staff capacity and capability had been increased and specialist skills had been secured through partnerships with the private sector and civil society in order to prosecute high profile and complex corruption related matters, Batohi said.

"The NPA is now a well-run constitutional entity. We have a solid strategy. There are many incredible strategic initiatives that put the NPA firmly back on track to deliver," she said.

HAPPY Women's Day

As we commemorate the 68th year of the legendary actions of the 1956 women who marched against gender inequality, together let us blow the whistle to...

- Celebrate women who breakdown barriers of career stereotypes.
- Honour women who are trailblazing in leadership roles within households, businesses and nation building.
- Remember the great women who lost the battle against sickness and disease.
- Promote meaningful empowerment of women.
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- Fight against limited access to academic empowerment for women.
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AGSA Maluleke leads a diversified team to keep watch on public finances

After two years as head of audit followed by another seven years as deputy auditor-general, Tsakani Maluleke was thoroughly prepared for the top job.

In a wide-ranging written interview, Maluleke, whose appointment as Auditor-General was confirmed by President Cyril Ramaphosa in late 2020, reflected on leading South Africa's supreme audit institution in a dynamic and ever-changing environment.

Maluleke is not only the first woman to assume the role of Deputy Auditor-General in the institution's history, she also became the first woman to lead it upon confirmation of her candidacy. Her seven-year, non-renewable term began on 1 December 2020.

Armed with a combined nine years in the Office of the Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA), in 2020 the chartered accountant (CA) threw her hat in the ring to succeed the late Kimi Makwetu, trusting that the experience she had acquired as Head of Audit and Deputy Auditor-General would count in her favour.

"As I had already been working in the AGSA for nine years – two years as Head of Audit followed by seven years as Deputy AG – I was confident of my understanding of the work of the AG and the functioning of the Office of the AG," Maluleke said.

"I had also invested time and energy in preparing for the preparing for the interview itself. While I did not anticipate that the interview would be as long as it was, I was able to 'hold my nerve' as I was prepared," she explained.



Auditor-General Tsakani Maluleke

Parliament's seal of approval

A multi-party parliamentary ad-hoc committee conducted the public interview process to select Makwetu's successor in 2020. Maluleke went up against five others who made it to the public interview stage, but ultimately emerged as the preferred candidate – the committee unanimously recommending her appointment.

"The process is well-structured and transparent. All this was done in full view of the public.

In fact, the level of transparency was the best I had seen for similar processes," Maluleke said.

Drive to succeed

Maluleke described her approach to leadership as one informed by humility and responsibility, and a sense of wanting to make good on the opportunity to head the Office of the AGSA.

"As the first woman to take on the role I am focused on doing well at it,

so that I normalise the idea women can do just as well – if not better – than the men that came before,” she said.

She added: “I must succeed as a tribute to all men and women that worked towards creating a moment when I could be appointed as the first woman AG or DAG [Deputy AG], and also young women that aspire to lead in any institution one day.”

Maluleke does not subscribe to the limiting idea that women cannot do the jobs men do and dismisses this thinking as mythical. Women in South Africa and beyond have dispelled the myth by earning and attaining key leadership positions and doing well at the helm.

“In South Africa, we have our first female Chief Justice [Mandisa Maya] ever. I think a female president is not too far off for us. Like many, I am inspired by the race of Kamala Harris towards the role of president of the United States,” Maluleke said excitedly.

With 20 years’ experience in both the private and public sectors, Maluleke draws professional inspiration from those who use their talent to serve the country, including members of her own team.

Maluleke stated: “The members of Team AGSA are predominantly young people – of the 3,600 employees, 68% are under 35 – who are talented, professional, hard-working and patriotic. Their quest for excellence as they serve our democracy inspires and grounds me.”

Office of AGSA skills base

Maluleke noted that the Office of the AGSA had grown in scale and in the depth and diversity of skills.

Out of 3,600 employees, 1,300 were audit professionals, including more than 1,000 qualified chartered accountants. The Office’s graduate programme enables young people to train as CA(SAs) and is one of the largest accredited by the SA Institute of Chartered Accountants, delivering a high number of new CAs into the market each year.

“Over the past couple of years, the number of newly-qualified CAs has been similar to that delivered by the Big Four auditing firms in South Africa,” Maluleke said.

Since being established 20 years ago, the graduate programme has produced more than 2,000, mostly black and women, CAs.

Some remain at the Office of the AGSA while many go on to build careers in the public sector as internal auditors, risk managers, chief financial officers, CEOs and heads of departments. Others go into the private sector.

“A growing number is finding exciting opportunities to work abroad, as many AGs across the world, are hiring from the AGSA. This is an endorsement on the quality of the training that we provide and on our success in helping young people fulfil their dreams,” she said.

The Office of the AGSA has also “diversified our expertise by having information systems experts, forensics specialists, data analysts, medical doctors, quantity surveyors and engineers that work alongside the auditors,” said Maluleke.

“This depth and diversity of expertise ensures that we deliver quality audits and reports across the different public institutions, departments, municipalities and public institutions, including the large and complex SOEs [state-owned entities],” Maluleke added.

Changing environment

In leading the Office of the AGSA, Maluleke is alive to the shifting dynamics in South Africa’s political



environment across the three spheres of government.

The AG considers it important that she and her leadership team “remain alert to changes in our context and respond by adjusting how we do things”.

“Fortunately, at the AGSA, our constitutional mandate remains constant. The opportunity for us is to keep striving to be relevant and effective in our work,” Maluleke said.

An accountable AGSA

The AG expressed a commitment to lead by example. This involves “doing the things that we expect of other institutions, especially those we audit,” she said.

Maluleke affirmed that the Office remained dedicated to performing its mandate effectively, transparently and with accountability.

“We have established governance processes and structures, including an independent audit committee and an independent external auditor that is appointed by Parliament through the Standing Committee on the AG (SCOAG),” Maluleke explained.

“We are audited every year, and table our annual report in Parliament. SCOAG scrutinises our strategic plans and budgets, as well as the annual report, and holds us accountable. We also operate on the basis of

international auditing standards, a code of ethics and a process to ensure the quality of our audit work,” she said.

On her legacy, Maluleke said this would become clearer when her term had concluded. For now, her focus was on building upon the strong foundation her predecessors had left to strengthen the Office of the AGSA and ensure it became more effective in delivering on its mandate.

“Together with my team, we remain committed to using our independent audits and reports to contribute to making public institutions more effective, efficient and transparent in delivering services to the people of SA,” Maluleke said.





PSETA: Leading Public Sector Training with Six Clean Audits

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PSETA's success is rooted in solid governance. By focusing on oversight, accountability, and ethical practices, it has significantly improved its programmes through quality assurance and skills planning. These efforts address skills gaps in the public sector, turning workplaces into learning environments and equipping professionals to meet today's challenges.

The six clean audits are a source of pride, showcasing PSETA's commitment to fiscal discipline and responsible use of public funds. These audits highlight the organisation's effectiveness in managing finances while delivering successful programmes. Each audit reassures stakeholders of PSETA's ability to lead initiatives that positively impact national development.

PSETA's story is one of leadership, strategic planning, and a commitment to excellence. From skills planning to workplace-based learning, PSETA continues to innovate and adapt, ensuring South Africa's public service workforce is ready for the future. As it moves forward, PSETA's legacy of clean audits serves as a foundation for ongoing success and transformative change.

Honesty and Integrity | Accountability | Service Excellence | Fairness and Transparency

Dr Mashazi - A remarkable and dynamic public servant



Ekurhuleni City Manager - Dr Imogen Mashazi

Dr Imogen Mashazi was part of the team that established the City of Ekurhuleni Metro during the formative years of democracy. Three decades later, she looks back at a municipality that has built an efficient management machine and become the epitome of excellence.

A long table that seats about 10 people occupies pride of place in Dr Imogen Mashazi's office. But a quick word of advice from her staff is that visitors can sit anywhere except at the head of the table.

That is where the City Manager always sits, they say. People gather in the waiting room outside Dr Mashazi's office. Any minute spent with her is precious. Wearing a floral wrap dress and green strappy heels, Dr Mashazi takes her seat, revealing no impatience. "You can take all the time you need," she says with no hint of irritation.

You can tell that she's used to being the boss. She leads the interview, often interjecting to provide more details.

She is warm and welcoming. While her demeanour is generally serious, occasionally, she gives a belly laugh when recalling an event in her career and having had to deal with incompetence. Recognised as one of the country's most outstanding senior woman public servants, Dr Mashazi's mission to build a solid municipal administration has seen the city outshine the country's other seven metros in many regards. It now ranks as one of South Africa's best-run metros.

Dr Mashazi, who has dedicated more than 30 years to serving Gauteng's citizens, acknowledges that her firm and performance-driven approach is instrumental in managing the metro.

If you glance around her office, you will see a wall adorned with certificates awarded to her and the City during her administration.

The accolades include Dr Mashazi being recognised as a top public sector leader in 2020 and another from 2019, when Ekurhuleni was the overall public sector winner for the SA Board for People Practices HR Standards Award.

She was appointed Ekurhuleni's first woman City Manager in 2016 and is currently serving her second term. As a Christian, the golden thread that runs throughout Dr Mashazi's life, whether at work or in her personal capacity, is serving and uplifting communities.

"Helping people is in my character. I am a Cancerian and a woman of prayer," she notes.

Dr Mashazi believes that her leadership style and drive for governance and administration excellence are among the chief reasons she has managed to stay the course. Not only has she outlasted three mayors while in her position, but she has also managed to navigate the complex political terrain of Ekurhuleni's coalition government.

In addition, Dr Mashazi is blunt about the difficulties associated with being a woman leader. They have ranged from several death threats and resisting meddling politicians to learning how to manoeuvre in a space dominated by men, understanding that as a woman, she cannot always be the bedrock of her family, and the importance of asking for help.

Many would buckle under the pressure of her job, but Dr Mashazi, who is forthright and down to earth, shrugs it off.

“As a woman, I have had to work 10 times more to prove myself as the City Manager. And I have achieved that. More than any male could have achieved, given the opportunity,” she says.

“[Also], the way I do my job as a woman, and to protect my integrity and professionalism ... is not to please politicians or anyone, but to serve the people of Ekurhuleni. I believe God will always protect me. I don't carry a gun.”

Establishing a new metro

Dr Mashazi, who started her career as a midwife nurse in Soweto, was 29 when she was lured to what was then known as the East Rand after marrying Raymond Mashazi, who lived in Vosloorus at the time.

She held various positions, including training nurses in clinical health assessment treatment to

to help the new democratic government establish a foundation for introducing free primary healthcare in the area.

And it was a challenging ride. Dr Mashazi recalls resigning from one of her jobs before the elections due to continuous intimidation while working in Brakpan.

“There was too much intimidation of black people. I was one of them. I became the target of the then-head of the department. He was a health inspector. He did not even understand the importance of primary health care.

“They mistreated me, to be honest. My car wheels were punctured almost every second week. My husband decided it was no longer safe for me to work there. It was just before [Nelson] Mandela was released. I had to resign,” she says.

Dr Mashazi was head-hunted by the Springs Town Council after the 1994 elections. There, she was the chief community health nurse responsible for all clinics in town and the townships. While working there, she was promoted to deputy director for healthcare services and was in charge of solid waste, primary healthcare sites, and social development.

Her wealth of experience in the health sector did not go unnoticed. In 1999, Dr Mashazi became a member of an interim group that was identified to establish the Ekurhuleni metro.

“They gave us offices here, and I was responsible for formulating policies and audits for staff, skills, and assets for healthcare,” recalls Dr Mashazi.

Her first permanent appointment at the new metro was as the director responsible for primary healthcare.

She moved up the ranks, including being appointed the health and social development HOD and later the COO. During her tenure as HOD, her department was recognised as the best performer in the city.

Dr Mashazi's contract as City Manager ends in 2027. Looking back at her career and achievements in the city, the 64-year-old leader suddenly realises how long she has served in the metro.

“I have spent my whole life working for the government in one area. I started the city. I'm still here. The city is younger than me. That is passion,” she remarks.

“It shows you that I am a performer. My name is performance. The DA appointed me. Remember, the DA always criticises the ANC. In the first term, I was appointed by the ANC, and in the second term, I was appointed by the DA. That shows that I have those leadership qualities that any politician would want to work with.”

Hands-on leadership

Dr Mashazi does not doubt that the buck stops with her. Every Monday, she starts her working week with a senior management team meeting to ensure she is aware of what is happening in the metro's departments.

“That is where we discuss issues and reports that go to the mayoral committee and council. I must know all those reports because when they go to the mayoral committee, I must be able to talk to those reports,” she explains.

While her HODs are responsible for their programmes, Dr Mashazi says she is hands-on and continuously monitors their achievement of targets.

She describes her leadership style as a democratic and autocratic combination.

“In a democracy, you allow people space to do their work; if they do not, we must bring some autocracy. You step in and then show that things must be done. Because at the end of the day, we are not friends. And you are here to serve the communities of Ekurhuleni,” she says.

Being a woman, she says she leads with passion and humility. However, no one must mistake this for her being soft on insubordination.

“Without having a goal and a vision, being a female leader, those reporting to you will be directionless and unable to implement programmes as required. You need to have the best leadership qualities to manage people. You must implement consequence management without fear or doubt where you see underperformance,” she explains.

“Poor performance is something I don’t entertain. When I was the HOD, I monitored my KPIs and ensured that I achieved 100% of my targets every term because I was hands-on.

“So, monitoring your KPIs is important. Being firm and ensuring that there are consequences if people are not performing is important for a female leader. Because if you don’t do that, they’ll think ah! This one is weak. We can do as we please.”

Dr Mashazi gives an example of when she was the health HOD and realised that one of her male directors would need to meet his quarterly targets.

“I had to recall him from leave. He was so angry with me. I said to him,



, ‘You’re coming back. Before you go on holiday with your wife, you earn your salary from the city’.”

Governance and administration Responsible for Ekurhuleni’s four million residents, Dr Mashazi focuses on fast-tracking service delivery and ensuring that the city achieves a clean audit once again. Before its unqualified audit for the 2022-23 financial year, it received a clean audit in the previous three years.

“We want to reclaim it. Although the current audit is not bad... obtaining a clean audit is like our brand. So, we don’t want our brand to be spoiled.

“I’ve proved to be the best in the country because none of them received clean audits back-to-back. I’m talking about the metros. You can see that there’s strong leadership from the female. And if you look at their history, none of them completed their terms during the last term,” Dr Mashazi says.

Described by those close to her as “Mrs Fix It” because there is never a problem elevated to her that is not fixed, Dr Mashazi has worked tirelessly to clean up and improve the city’s administration.

This has included ridding Ekurhuleni of corruption and dubious contracts. She mentions the latest report by Corruption Watch, which found that 71% of corruption complaints in 2023 were in Johannesburg, Tshwane and Cape Town.

“Ekurhuleni is not there. And if you look at all the scandals, like VBS, Ekurhuleni is not there. It’s not that there weren’t any attempts from politicians; it’s because I resisted any interference. I told them that if they could press it, they could press the button, but I would not do it.

“Also, the personal protective equipment scandals – we are not there as the City of Ekurhuleni. That shows leadership, that we did not take any illegal instructions from anyone. I think females have firm convictions.

“Any political pressure does not shake them. You’d rather be insulted by politicians than be liked by them because you have taken illegal instruction,” says Dr Mashazi.

Robust training has been introduced for members of the Bid Evaluation Committee on internal processes to improve governance, especially on interpreting specifications for procuring goods.

“The department does the specs. I’m the one signing the specs. So, the local content was one of the issues the Auditor-General raised that prevented us from getting a clean audit. They don’t include local content in their specs.

“Local content is about ensuring that the goods that you buy come from within South Africa. However, at another level of evaluation, they include local content, such as quotations.

“So, we had to train them that you start from the BSC (Bid Specification Committee). You want local content, and you list the items on which you want local content. So, at the evaluation level, they evaluate accordingly. When they implement quotations in their department, they implement them accordingly. Because the A-G looks at the whole value chain from the BSC up to the actual expenditure,” she explains.

Also, Dr Mashazi has made it a law that when her HODs report to Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMC), “nothing will go without my consent. And I’ve taught my HODs that there must be no illegal instructions.

“They must also give the MMCs space, respect them, and allow them to play their oversight role as political heads of department. But in the end, it’s on the City Manager if anything goes wrong within the city.”

Dr Mashazi’s list of interventions to improve service delivery is extensive. She cites an example of when she cancelled a contract with a security firm operating in the city.

“The security guys had been running security projects within the city for ages. But remember, in terms of [the] MFMA [Municipal Finance Management Act], you can’t have evergreen contracts. And because we’ve tightened our supply chain management processes, they were kicked out.

“They decided to go to the streets and toyi-toyi and started threatening my life and saying they know where I stay, they’ll come to my house and whatever,” she recalls.

Another incident occurred during her first term when she scrapped the contracts of service providers delivering shoddy work on the city’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.

“There was a challenge with the completion of the BRT stations. There were challenges with service providers, so we had to change them and appoint new ones because people in Tembisa could not even access their houses. The service providers just left big holes and whatever. They were not happy.”

And sometimes, she has had to intercede when politics has prevented economic opportunities to build the city. She remembers a steel factory in Nigel that initially did not have the backing of opposition parties.

“They were unable actually to approve that until I stepped in. They said no, we won’t support this thing; it is an ANC thing. I told them it is for the City of Ekurhuleni citizens, not a particular party. They’re going to create jobs and develop the project at their own cost,” Mashazi says.

Under her term, the city has introduced the Build, Operate, and Transfer (BOT) programme, which identifies land parcels for the private sector to build and operate infrastructure projects.

Acknowledging the critical role of public/private partnerships in supporting local economic growth and job creation, Dr Mashazi says that sometimes she assists companies when departments frustrate the BOT process because of “junior officials”. She admits she doesn’t think twice about assisting communities with their complaints.

“You need some humility and understanding [of] where they come from concerning their positions – especially people in the informal settlements and ordinary community members with electricity challenges. As and when [they] get blackouts, they will call HODs, and some of them don’t respond.

“Then they’ll call the accounting officer, so I must listen to them and instruct this one to do their work. My cellphone is like a call centre.”

Professional and personal development

While Dr Mashazi’s numerous distinguishable traits tick all the boxes for competent stewardship, she believes her dedication to mentorship and tackling patriarchy have also improved the city’s administration.

In 2020, she won the prestigious Public Sector Leader Award for empowerment and transformation. She increased the number of woman HODs to around 45% and introduced the Women in Uniform Community Safety Project and the Women in Empowerment Legacy Project, uplifting women ranging from police officers to engineers.

“Mentorship means that you impart knowledge and experience to your juniors to prepare them for future career opportunities. [There are many people I mentor], including my HODs and divisional heads,” she says.

She regards former Ekurhuleni mayor Mondli Gungubele as her mentor. “The person who I can say led me, and I learnt a lot from, was Mayor Gungubele. When he was mayor, I had to use a 100 SPF (sunblock) because we were always in the communities.

“That one pushed me. When he was launching the aerotropolis, and Germiston Lake was chaotic regarding its aesthetic look, he said, ‘I’m giving you two months to work on this. I want to launch my aerotropolis, and international guests are coming’. Yo! He pushed me to the edge,” she recalls.

The City Manager says that even with service delivery, he expected her to address ward councillors every Thursday and communities on Fridays. “So that one, he remains my mentor, honestly.”

Family assistance

Dr Mashazi believes having a supportive family has made all the difference in her career path and eventually running the city.



Her father, a chief officer in the Bantu Affairs department under the apartheid administration, played an essential role in building her character.

“He used to motivate us and say, ‘I’m not going to leave you with any money as inheritance. Your only inheritance is education’,” Dr Mashazi recalls lessons from her father.

“Work has been more important to me than my private life. But my private life gives me energy. Before I was appointed [as the City Manager], the former mayor, Mzwandile Masina, spoke to my husband and told him they were going to appoint me. He said, ‘Please allow her time and give her support’. My husband has been supportive and very positive, to be honest. He will even drive me to meetings late at night if I don’t want to use protectors.”

Leaving a legacy

Reflecting on her career, Dr Mashazi admits she never imagined being in her current position.

“I never thought I would be here. I want to share this,” she says, referring to when she was asked to join the team that got the Ekurhuleni metro off the ground.

“Remember, we had been appointed permanently in our erstwhile towns. And now we come to the metro [and they tell] us that if we appoint you to a senior position, it’s for five years. And all of us were damn scared,” Dr Mashazi says, explaining that they were putting their job security at risk.

“I had to call my colleagues and tell them that you know what, if you perform, they will appoint you again and again. They’ll reappoint you. They’ll renew your contract. That was me as if I knew I’d be identified as a City Manager one day. I did not know.

“But my whole understanding of being in a five-year contract is for you to perform so that the system understands you.

And whoever comes in as a politician will always want to work with you. That was my belief. But I never thought I’d be a City Manager or a COO one day.”

Despite her years of experience as a technocrat and her dedication to public service, Dr Mashazi has no interest in furthering her political career.

“Well, I’m turning 65 next year. I don’t want to do anything hectic, to be honest. I’ve done my part in government. I want to maybe play some role in university councils and some boards,” she says.

“I don’t like politics. To be a minister, you must be a politician. I want to do some beauty therapy thing. After my last day, I’m going on a cruise with my husband for three months. It’s just to detox. I’ve been working, working, working. I’ve never stopped working,” Dr Mashazi reflects on her eventful life in public service.

Although she concedes that she will need a break before deciding on her future, her unshakable devotion to serving others will continue.

“I’m a Christian. I belong to a group called Women of Prayer in the Methodist Church. We are doing a lot of projects for community members. We adopt nursing homes and childcare facilities to assist those who are vulnerable,” she says.

Regarding her legacy, Dr Mashazi avoids being ego-driven, as she has throughout her career in public service. “I want to leave government officials who work for the government, who are professional, competent, result-driven, and practising good governance.

“I want to leave the communities of Ekurhuleni with a lot of assets that will assist them, especially assets within the energy space that will assist them to deal with load-shedding and power outages, and water security for them, and clean water,” she says.

Her efforts to transform the City of Ekurhuleni so that more capable women can get their foot in the door and take on leadership roles will undoubtedly have a lasting impact.

“I have spent my life, my whole life working for government in one area. I started the city. I’m still here. The city is younger than me. That is passion.”

“in a sense that in democracy, you allow people space to do their work, and if they do not do their work, we need to bring some autocracy. You step in and then show that things must be done. Because at the end of the day, we are not friends. And you are here to serve communities of Ekurhuleni.”

You need some humility and understanding [of] where they come from concerning their positions. Especially people in the informal settlements and ordinary community members with electricity challenges and so forth. As and when [they] get blackouts, they will call HODs and some of them don’t respond. Then they’ll call the accounting officer, so, I must listen to them and instruct this one to do their work. My cellphone is like a call centre.”

“I’ve proved to be the best in the country because none of them received clean audits back-to-back. I’m talking about the metros. You can see that there’s strong leadership from the female. And if you look at their history, all of them during the last term, none of them completed their terms.”

“I don’t like politics. To be a minister, you must be a politician. In fact, I want to do some beauty therapy thing. Like after my last day, I’m going on some cruise with my husband for three months. It’s just to detox. I’ve been working, working, working. I’ve never stopped working.”



A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S ENERGY AND WATER SECTOR THROUGH WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

As South Africa embraces the ever-present opportunities and challenges of the energy and water sector, the Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA) stands at the forefront of a transformative journey for women who are making their mark on the sector. The EWSETA works to capacitate women in sector who are embracing their potential and the critical role they must play in the sector.

From management and leadership roles across the length and breadth of the sector, to involvement in research and development, policy making and advocacy, women who are empowered and capacitated through skills development will add their voices to shaping the sector.

BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING FUTURES

The story of women in energy and water is one of remarkable progress and untapped potential. According to EWSETA's Sector Skills Plan, women currently occupy 22% and 30% of management roles in the energy and water sector respectively. These figures are not just statistics, but rather a call to action and representation of the countless women who are breaking ground in traditionally male-dominated fields. Their determination is paving the way for future generations.

EWSETA's goal of inclusive economic transformation has placed focus on women empowerment programmes that seek to capacitate, support, and transform women in our sectors into strategic, innovative change makers and trend setters.

EWSETA's initiatives guide women toward leadership and excellence:

1. The Management Development Programme: Women in Renewable Energy has become a launchpad for 45 visionaries, backed by an R1,426,000 investment in their potential. These women are not just learning; they're preparing to reshape the renewable energy landscape, where women-owned businesses already claim 33% ownership in key projects.
2. In collaboration with Duke Corporate Education, EWSETA provided the opportunity for 105 women to participate in an innovative bursary programme to improve representation within professional and technical learning programmes, promote equitable representation across sectoral occupations and address transformation imperatives.



- The Women and Water Sector-Focused Programme is nurturing 40 pioneers with a R1,932,000 commitment. These women are diving deep into the challenges of water management, emerging as experts ready to tackle one of South Africa's most pressing issues.

A TAPESTRY OF PARTNERSHIPS

EWSETA's vision extends across the nation and includes international participation too. Through numerous partnerships that have been forged with a diverse range of national and international entities, the EWSETA has enabled women in the sector to embrace opportunities that might not have otherwise been made available to them.

- In **Gauteng**, the South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA) is spinning dreams into reality for women in renewable energy.
- Nationally**, the South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE) is building foundations for women's advancement in water sector development.
- KwaZulu-Natal** sees Vulindlela Sunrise Technical Solutions kindling the spark of skills development in women.
- The **North West's** Midvaal Water Company is opening floodgates of opportunity through professional registration and training.
- In the **Western Cape**, the College of Cape Town and False Bay TVET College are educational lighthouses, guiding women through extensive training and internships.

Women in Mpumalanga and Limpopo have received training on renewable energy technologies through support provided by USAID and UNDP Women.

These partnerships, including collaborations with prestigious institutions like Wits Business School and Duke Corporate Education, are not just programmes—they're lifelines to a future where women's voices echo in boardrooms and on project sites across the sectors.

A SPECTRUM OF SKILLS: NURTURING TALENT ACROSS THE BOARD

EWSETA's commitment to women's development is reflected in the diverse range of skills development programmes offered through nationally funded initiatives. These programmes cater to various stages of career progression and specialization:

The Management Development Programme: Women in Renewable Energy equips participants with leadership skills tailored to the renewable energy sector. For those starting their journey, the Internship Programme and Workplace Readiness initiatives provide crucial first steps into the industry. The Women and Water Sector Focused programme offers Continuous Professional Development (CPD), ensuring women stay at the cutting edge of water management practices.

For those looking to advance their careers, EWSETA supports Candidacy programmes, as well as specialized training in Marketing and Business Administration for graduates.

The commitment to higher education is evident in the support for Postgraduate Diploma and Master's Degree programmes

in Energy Leadership, accommodating 20 and 10 students respectively. For those aiming for the pinnacle of academic achievement, funding is available for PhD studies in Energy. The Master of Management in Energy Leadership programme further hones strategic skills for top-tier positions.

This comprehensive approach ensures that women have access to development opportunities at every stage of their careers, from entry-level positions to executive leadership roles, fostering a robust pipeline of talent in the energy and water sectors.

EWSETA's holistic approach to skills development, emphasizes its commitment to supporting women at all levels of their career journey in the energy and water sectors.

CELEBRATING EVERY STEP

In pursuit of its inclusivity mandate, EWSETA is not only able to celebrate the achievements of women in the sector, but also applauds every woman who has dared to dream of a career in energy and water. From the student sketching solar panel designs to the engineer overseeing water treatment plants, each woman is a testament to resilience and innovation.

EWSETA's CEO, Mpho Mookapele captures the spirit of this movement.

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Every woman rising in our sectors lifts us all. We're not just changing industries; we're transforming lives and securing South Africa's sustainable future.

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THE ROAD AHEAD

The journey towards gender equality in energy and water is ongoing, but the path is bright with promise. As EWSETA continues to champion women's development, we're not just meeting national goals—we're exceeding them, proving that when you empower a woman, you energize an entire nation.

We urge women operating in our sector to keep an eye on our social media pages and website for opportunities that arise.

Here's to the women lighting up our future and keeping our nation flowing with opportunity. In their hands, the energy and water sectors aren't just changing; they're thriving.



ewseta.org.za