

MetroMonitor report: December 2023 – January 2023

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THE THIRD REPUBLIC

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Glossary

AGM	Annual General Meeting
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COGTA	(Department of) Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DM	District Municipality
DAC	Department of Sports, Arts and Culture
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
GFIS	Group Forensic and Investigation Services (City of Johannesburg)
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IPP	Independent Power Producer
JPC	Johannesburg Property Company
JRA	Johannesburg Roads Agency
Mayco	Mayoral Committee
ME	Municipal Entity
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MM / CM	Municipal Manager / City Manager
MMC	Member of the Mayoral Committee
MPAC	Municipal Public Accounts Committee
MPL	Member of the Provincial Legislature
MSA	Municipal Systems Act
MSDF	Mangaung Service Delivery Forum
NERSA	National Energy Regulator of South Africa
PR	Proportional Representation
PTT	Provincial Task Team
REC	Regional Executive Committee
RTT	Regional Task Team
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers' Union
SANS	South African National Standards
SCA	Supreme Court of Appeal
SOCA	State of the City Address
SOE	State-owned Enterprise

Parties and coalitions

AASD	Afrikan Alliance of Social Democrats
ABC	Abantu Batho Congress
ACC	Active Citizens Coalition
ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
AIC	African Independent Congress
AIM	Abantu Integrity Movement
ANC	African National Congress
APC	African People's Convention
ATM	African Transformation Movement
CMP	Cape Muslim Party
COPE	Congress of the People
DA	Democratic Alliance
DOP	Defenders of the People
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
FF+	Freedom Front Plus
GLU	Government of Local Unity (ANC, EFF, PA, others)
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IRASA	Independent Ratepayers Association of South Africa
MPC	Multi-Party Coalition (DA, ActionSA, IFP, FF+, ACDP, others)
NA	Northern Alliance
PA	Patriotic Alliance
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
RCT	Republican Conference of Tshwane
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UIM	United Independent Movement

Summary

Almost every metro is in crisis as councils shuffle into their third year

Events in the metros did not slow down through the festive period and the start of 2024, and government failures were a depressingly large part of the news cycle. Poor audits for the 2022/23 financial year, violence in council, civil servants shot and murdered - these were just the loudest warnings that local government is still in decline.

2022/23 audit outcomes and other signs of poor financial health

Tshwane was three months late in submitting its financial statements to the Auditor-General (AG) and three months behind on its payments to Eskom. The metro also failed to spend tens of millions in grant money from the province.

Opposition parties in Ekurhuleni questioned why the finance MMC had not released the AG's report to them. Both Nelson Mandela Bay and Buffalo City received worse audits for 2022/23 than the previous year.

The poor financial management cited by the AG in her Buffalo City report was evident across the metro. The metro implemented a financial recovery plan while it scrapped community programmes and pumped money into costly 'vanity projects'.

Murder and violence flare up as coalition tempers rise

In Johannesburg two people were killed and the chief whip shot three times at a primary school. A procurement adjudicator was killed in Ekurhuleni and a mayoral committee member in Buffalo City was left fighting for her life after being shot in front of her house. Violence in an Ekurhuleni council meeting left the DA threatening to press charges against EFF members.

The ANC faced internal pressure to leave coalitions with the EFF in Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni while the DA-led alliance's decision to create a deputy mayor position was heavily criticised by opposition parties. The IFP and DA planned a motion of no confidence against the eThekweni mayor.

Main report

Johannesburg

December 2023

Speaker Margaret Arnolds was appointed in mid-November but her party, [the AIC, remains weak and factionalised](#).

In response to the coalition instability, a group of Johannesburg residents formed the [Johannesburg Crisis Alliance](#). The group includes professionals who have offered their technical services to help the metro, but the group also threatened litigation against council leaders.

The Alliance asked president Ramaphosa for a [probe into the reappointment of Floyd Brink](#) as city manager. The group said that Brink's appointment was 'unconstitutional, unlawful and invalid'. The DA confirmed it would [take the metro to court](#) over Brink's reappointment.

Service delivery

A threat by City Power to [cut off Charlotte Maxeke Hospital](#) was averted after the power utility agreed not to disconnect any provincial hospitals. City Power and Gauteng Health agreed to keep talking as City Power continued with its revenue recovery drive.

[Ten mini-substations were vandalised](#) over November and December in Roodepoort. City Power confirmed that about R8.6-million was needed to replace the infrastructure.

[Almost 21 500 pensioners were granted rebates](#) on their residential properties. They received rebates ranging from 50% to 100% on their municipal rates.

The CEO of City Power announced the utility's new [Provincial Alternative Energy Plan](#) in partnership with the Gauteng provincial government. The plan will see City Power deliver alternative energy programmes to address loadshedding. The utility will also increase the amount of free electricity to indigent households from 50kWh to 120kWh.

PioTrans, the Rea Vaya bus operator, was [placed under business rescue](#). Metro MMC for transport Kenny Kunene reassured commuters that services would be uninterrupted.

January 2024

The ANC NEC announced its intention to [withdraw from certain coalitions](#) after a review. The party said that it would announce after the end of January in which municipalities it would leave coalitions. There was pressure from within the party to leave coalitions with the EFF, particularly in Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni.

SAMWU won a court case, declaring [Section 71B of the Municipal Systems Act unconstitutional](#). The Act prohibited any municipal employee from holding political office. Prior to the amendment of the Act, only municipal managers and managers directly accountable to municipal managers were prohibited.

The DA expressed concerns about the [lack of progress in repairing Lillian Ngoyi Street](#) following a gas explosion in July 2023. The party claimed that damage from the blast had increased and that crime in the area had escalated due to an absence of security cameras. The following day mayor Kabelo Gwamanda announced that [construction had resumed](#) at the site and that repairs would be completed in December. He also confirmed that project costs had risen from R178-million to R196-million.

Former judge Sisi Khampepe, secretariat of the [commission probing the Umsindo fire](#), reported that the commission had been granted an extension to submit its reports. In August 2023, a fire at the Umsindo residential building resulted in the deaths of 77 people.

[Another fire](#) in the Johannesburg CBD killed two people and injured four more. The two-storey residential building is illegally partitioned and houses between 150 and 200 people. The DA called on Gauteng premier Panyaza Lesufi and Gwamanda to prevent further fires and deaths. The DA and ActionSA expressed concern about the [metro's failure to tackle hijacked buildings](#).

German software company SAP admitted to bribing government officials in South Africa and other countries. In 2013 and 2016, [SAP bribed officials in the City of Johannesburg](#). Text messages between a metro official and SAP employee confirm a payment of R2.2-million into the bank account of an unnamed political party.

The DA demanded details on the [spending of a R2-billion loan](#) from the DBSA. The loan was a political football when the DA-led council tried to approve it in 2022. The DA-led coalition was blocked by the current coalition who subsequently approved the loan in February 2023.

[The Water Crisis Committee](#), a high-level civil society and activist group, had been trying to meet with Gwamanda since October 2023. Gwamanda cancelled two meetings with the group, who accused the mayor and Joburg Water of being in dereliction of their duties.

[Two people were shot dead](#) and the Johannesburg chief whip was wounded at a charity event in Lehae, near Lenasia. Chief whip Sithembiso Zungu was given urgent medical attention. One of the

two people killed was Rand Water executive Teboho Joala. The DA's Michael Sun called for arrests for the '[assassin-style shooting](#)' of Zungu. In response to the shootings, the metro said that it would ensure [a police presence at public events](#) attended by councillors.

The January [council meeting started late](#) and was further delayed by caucus breaks requested by the ANC, FF+, and DA.

Service delivery

Despite MMC of transport Kenny Kunene's reassurances in December, [Rea Vaya suspended its services](#) following a labour dispute. The dispute followed after it was announced that employee bonus payments would be taxed. The business rescue practitioner discovered [several irregularities in Piotrans's accounts](#). Piotrans, the Rea Vaya operator, obtained an [order against the unprotected strike](#).

More than 40 businesses have partnered with the JRA to share their backup power to [keep traffic lights on during loadshedding](#). The Traffic Signal Backup Power Initiative (TSBPI), launched in July 2023, has ensured that over 100 traffic intersections have an uninterrupted power supply.

Tshwane

December 2023

The city finally submitted its [financial statements](#) and other relevant documents to the Auditor-General after it failed to meet the stipulated deadline on 31 August 2023. The metro had asked for an extension to avoid receiving another adverse report.

MMC for human settlements, Ofentse Madzabatela announced that [Mamelodi flood victims](#) would finally be relocated to Leeuwfontein after delays and countless complaints from the victims. Over 500 households were expected to be relocated by the end of the month.

Tshwane was one of 29 municipalities that could be [criminally charged](#) for failing to comply with the provisions of the National Water Act. A total of five cases were opened against the City of Tshwane for failing to comply.

The metro reported that its [grave sites north of Pretoria, Mabopane and Ga-Rankuwa were reaching full capacity](#). Once full, families would have to travel to Soshanguve to bury their loved ones.

The [municipality found itself heavily indebted](#), owing Eskom R4.2-billion. Eskom called out the municipality for failing to pay off its debt for August, September and October 2023. The municipality blamed its troubles on the [municipal salary bill](#) after losing a court bid to avoid salary increases.

The metro launched a [community upliftment precinct initiative](#) to help in improving and maintaining public infrastructure. The initiative will enable residents, businesses and communities to formally support the city with service delivery. According to the executive mayor, Cilliers Brink, the initiative is voluntary; it is not a transfer of municipal functions to communities.

Service Delivery

In an effort to [improve service delivery](#), the city partnered with Enterprises University of Pretoria to provide a three-year assessment drive to equip municipal employees with new skill sets. More than 20 000 employees are expected to take part in the assessment drive.

January 2024

[The Lotus Gardens, Atteridgeville and Saulsville Civic Association](#) planned to rebel against the municipality's "Tshwane Ya Tima" campaign. The campaign targets consumers who owe the municipality and blocks their electricity prepaid cards and cuts off their water.

The municipality had for the past ten years invested R500-million into a [development agency that proved to be futile](#). Proposals were sent to the administrative capital's council to have the agency closed down. The city manager's office planned to retain the agency, but have it report to its office.

The [SAP and its co-conspirators were charged for paying bribes to the metro](#) to secure contracts with the national water and sanitation department and Eskom in 2013 and 2017.

The EFF's regional secretary, Tshegofatso Mashabela responded to the [DA's proposal for a deputy mayor](#) saying that it would just be a waste of taxpayers' money. According to the EFF the DA's manoeuvre was an attempt to win over their coalition party. Opposition parties said that [there was no need for a deputy mayor position](#) to be created in the metro and agreed to vote against it. Coalition partners were accused of trying to fulfil personal agendas for pushing for the position to be created.

ActionSA's [Nasiphi Moya](#) was elected as the metro's first deputy mayor. [The EFF accused Moya](#) of misappropriation of funds. It was alleged that Moya misused R10 000 on travel allowance for a trip to West Asia which she never took in 2020. [An investigation was lodged](#) by the office of the city manager.

[Civil society groups with the support of opposition parties rallied](#) to demand that the city scrap all estimated municipal bills on residents' accounts.

[ActionSA welcomed the council's passing of two reports](#) which would see the metro partnering with IPPs and also the renewal of infrastructure in the metro. The [metro was given the go-ahead to lease the Rooiwal and Pretoria-West power stations](#) to IPPs,

The [metro's failure to utilise grants and subsidies](#) meant that it stood a chance to forfeit millions of rands in future grants. Among the grants which the metro failed to spend are a R22-million community library grant (due to late submissions) and a R62-million project preparation support grant. The metro only spent R7-million of a R133-million expanded public works incentive grant.

The [ANC criticised the metro's decision to apply for a R1-billion loan](#) from ABSA, According to ANC councillor, France Boshielo the party would only support the decision if employees' overdue salaries were paid off.

The [metro was given a R1-billion loan from ABSA](#) to be allocated to service delivery. Opposition parties were not happy with the loan and stated that it only added to the metro's debts.

Service Delivery

A company in Centurion was burdened with the financial cost of having to fill a [sinkhole](#) which appeared inside of its property in March 2018. Another sinkhole appeared again in April 2023.

Ekurhuleni

December 2023

A [collaborative operation](#) involving the police, the army, and the Department of Home Affairs resulted in the arrest of over 100 alleged [illegal miners](#) in Primrose, Ekurhuleni.

The DA intended to lay [criminal charges against the EFF](#) and its councillors after a tense council meeting that ended in violence.

[Rand Water issued a warning](#) to residents of Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Ekurhuleni regarding excessive water use. Ekurhuleni residents exceeded their daily usage target in November 2023.

Following the killing of procurement adjudicator Simnikiwe Mapini, the ANC in Ekurhuleni was concerned about [syndicates aiming to dominate the metro's supply chain](#).

Five men were apprehended in a sting operation conducted by the Ekurhuleni Metro Police Department, the South African Police Service, and private security firms. The operation attempted to stop [the theft of gasoline from the City](#), which was reportedly sold to a bus operator. The suspects included the bus fleet's owner and two of his workers.

January 2024

ActionSA urged ANC-EFF Speaker Cllr Nthabiseng Tshivhenga, to convene a [council meeting](#) to save the city. The party argued that despite being sent to the Ethics Committee, the council remained paralysed under her direction.

The DA added that Tshivhenga neglected to convene a meeting to pass critical issues for the new year, including the [metro council schedule](#). The November meeting was halted owing to a fight between EFF and DA councillors.

The council was due to [debate its finances](#). The issue has resulted in several breaks between the parties. Some opposition parties asked the Finance MMC to release the Auditor-General's draft report. Citizens have raised concerns about slow service delivery in the metro.

Members of the ANC Ekurhuleni caucus wanted to pass [a vote of no confidence](#) against city mayor Sivuyile Ngodwana, accusing him and MMC of Finance Nkululeko Dunga of concealing the Auditor-General's report.

Service Delivery

A fire ravaged the [Brakpan Library](#), destroying portions of the building. The 93-year-old library, recognised as a heritage landmark, was previously [attacked by vandals](#).

The community expressed its disappointment that the [Birch Acres Primary School](#) remained unfinished and abandoned. Construction was scheduled to begin in 2017 and be finished in six months.

Cape Town

December 2023

Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis slammed the National Treasury for [cutting funds](#) for long-term human settlements and enhanced household quality of life. The cuts came on the heels of countrywide reductions in grant financing for municipalities and provinces.

[Seven construction businesses linked to Nicole Johnson](#), the wife of accused 28s gang head Ralph Stanfield, were banned from doing business in Cape Town. Stanfield and his wife were charged with attempted murder and stealing a BMW 3 Series car in October. The decision to revoke Stanfield's wife's contracts came after a [City employee was shot and killed](#) near a housing development in Delft earlier this year.

January 2024

The City of Cape Town and the Passenger Rail Agency of SA (Prasa) were at odds over the [relocation of 891 houses from the Metrorail Central Line in Philippi](#). The move was part of Operation Bhekela, a combined effort to demolish almost 5 200 shacks erected along the Cape Town Central Line in Langa, Nyanga and Philippi.

Infrastructure concerns, heavy winds, and [vessel delays](#) were all blamed for [delays at the Port of Cape Town](#).

To demonstrate sympathy with the Palestinian people, residents at Wicht Court painted a [Palestine mural](#) on the court's façade. The mural was painted over by law enforcement authorities and City personnel, despite [community members' efforts to stop it](#).

Members of [Cape Town's community policing forums \(CPFs\)](#) threatened to resign owing to threats, undervaluation, and low compensation. The recent murder of three CPF members had campaigners terrified that criminals might attack them.

A high-ranking City of Cape Town official was accused of conspiring with the construction [mafia and the criminal underworld](#). Following a disciplinary process, the municipality dismissed Sipokazi September, the Director of Public Housing. She was suspended for months after police raided her office and searched and seized items related to procurement fraud suspicions against former Mayco member Malusi Booi. [September was subsequently fired](#). The city also suspended two additional employees for significant misbehaviour.

Service Delivery

The City published energy bids in order to reduce its dependence on [Eskom and prevent load shedding](#).

Tenants in the Avonwood rental flats in Elsies River were [unhappy with the state of their apartments and structures](#). The four-storey structures, constructed in 1976, are part of a network of community rental units (CRU) administered by the city. Issues include overcrowded balconies, shaky steps, mouldy walls, and leaking roofs.

The City implemented [safety measures](#) to curb crime in [Table Mountain National Park](#) and other tourist attractions, with law enforcement agencies not recording any incidents since December.

Grant Twigg (Urban Waste Management MMC) disputed charges that he and other top officials were responsible for the [metro's rubbish collection breakdown](#). The ANC accused the DA leadership in Cape Town of corruption after a special council meeting [disclosed a report linking Twigg](#) to the failure of rubbish collection in townships. Mayor Hill-Lewis proposed [suspending Luzuko Mduyvelwa](#), the executive director of municipal waste management. The council accepted the proposal, but councillors were unable to speak owing to secrecy.

Prasa intended to restart rail service in [Stellenbosch and Du Toit](#) by February, following floods.

The city loses about R30-million per year owing to metal theft, with stolen infrastructure like electrical lines and kiosks being actively targeted by scrap merchants. [The Cape Town's Metal Theft Unit \(MTU\)](#) is tasked with tackling cable theft.

A obstruction in a main sewer line in Khayelitsha caused [sinkholes](#) to form beneath shacks, filling households with dirty water. According to the City, the repeated obstruction is caused by vandalism of an upstream manhole in order to construct illegal connections. The vandalism affected the whole Khayelitsha community.

Following the loss of 15 weapons from the Mitchell's Plain police station, locals in Cape Town demanded that [police leadership be removed](#). They suspected the firearms were used in violent crimes on the Cape Flats and asked that the station commander and other top commanders step down.

Ethekwini

December 2023

Two men charged with attempting to smuggle 52 street lights valued at R156 000 were granted R10 000 bail each.

The DA called for the municipal council to be dissolved under the Municipal Structures Act and a new council be elected. According to the party, the metro's service delivery collapsed under the ANC/EFF. The party added that continuous efforts made by them to engage with the mayor, municipal manager and city officials had failed.

A joint sampling of the beach water quality between the municipality and the Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology was conducted. According to the municipality the results showed good water quality in the metro.

Anti-Corruption head, Thulani Ntobela raised concerns about the failure to bring forth charges against those that have been flagged by the unit. According to Ntobela, it was difficult to measure the success of the unit when the recommendations brought forth by them were not being implemented.

Three suspects were arrested after they were caught with copper cables belonging to the municipality.

A municipal financial report revealed that over 800 households applied for the debt relief programme. The programme was implemented to ease financial burdens faced by consumers. The metro raised concerns that not enough consumers are taking advantage of this initiative.

A meeting was held by the municipality, during the meeting it was decided that the deputy mayor should not be held accountable for the misuse of funds that allegedly went into hosting a women's month event. During an investigation held by the City Integrity and Investigation Unit, it was revealed that no funds went into booking the venue, but no signed agreement was given to the Durban ICC to host the event.

Mayor Mxolisi Kaunda responded to claims that Moses Mabhida Stadium might be operating on a loss. According to Kaunda the stadium is integrated under the municipality as a business unit, Capital and operating budgets are being funded by the city.

Service Delivery

Major [water outages](#) affected the city for two weeks. Affected areas include Tongaat, Verulam, Phoenix and Umhlanga, Concerns that rising temperatures might spark health issues associated with the lack of water were made. Thirty-three water reservoirs were reported to have been affected by irregular water supply.

The [DA in the municipality raised concerns over the 500 food vouchers](#) which were distributed to each ward to assist the elderly. Claims were made that some councillors abused were using the food voucher for political gain.

[Six beaches were closed](#) after reports of high E. coli levels, Affected beaches include Point, uShaka, South, North, Battery and Country Club beaches. According to the municipality this was caused by heavy rainfall which washed up pollution from rivers, streams and stormwaters into the ocean.

January 2024

Thousands of Durban residents were affected by a [billing error](#), the municipality said that they would not cut services. In an effort to resolve matters, the municipality gave assurance to the ERPM. The meeting was [not well received by other associations](#), who chose to distance themselves from the predicament. [Ratepayers were not happy with the municipality's decision](#) to claw back the missing funds from 2022/23.

[Water and Sanitation minister Senzo Mchunu](#) blamed the municipality's administration for the water challenges that the metro was facing. According to Mchunu the municipality's infrastructure and poor maintenance were the reasons for the metro's current water troubles.

[The EFF drafted a motion that called for changes in the metro's MPAC](#). According to the party's committee chair, Thami Xuma, the party wanted to ensure that the members in the MPAC were able to hold errant officials accountable. Xuma said that they wanted to be able to submit direct recommendations to the committee.

[The Municipal Demarcation Board](#) rejected several proposals that could have seen the municipality lose key economic zones which include King Shaka international airport. Apart from proposed changes to eThekweni's boundaries, the proposals included redetermination of municipal boundaries for KwaDukuza and Ndwedwe local municipalities, and changes to boundaries for the district municipalities of iLembe and uMgungundlovu.

The IFP and DA planned to partner up in a [motion of no confidence against the mayor](#). Opposition parties in the metro blamed mayor Kaunda for service delivery issues, According to IFP chief whip Mdu Nkosi, several issues contributed to the decision to file a motion, including the metro's failure to use the R1.9-billion grant to repair damaged infrastructure.

Service Delivery

Some elderly residents who received [food vouchers valued at R650 from the municipality](#) felt humiliated when they discovered that the vouchers had either been already used or little money was loaded on them.

Angry residents [staged a protest over the water conditions](#) in the metro. Residents were left without water for months. The municipality claimed that water tankers would be made available but according to residents tankers did not arrive in their communities. The municipality confirmed that restorations to repair damaged infrastructure were underway. [Meanwhile the DA lodged an appeal with the Human Rights Commission](#) to hold a public hearing in the north to investigate the ongoing water crisis.

The [municipality closed down most beaches and some public pools](#) after heavy rains damaged infrastructure leaving some residents in eThekweni and Stanger without water and electricity.

Nelson Mandela Bay

December 2023

[Mayor Gary van Niekerk](#) threatened to charge ACDP leader Lance Grootboom with fraud and crimen injuria. This was after Grootboom accused van Niekerk of exploiting the office's official letterhead to select Boqwana Burns Attorneys and rack up legal expenses.

The council was scheduled to examine a resolution claiming Retief Odendaal's meddling in the [Mandela Bay Development Agency's management](#) (MBDA). The motion, filed by NA councillor Stag Mitchell, sought Odendaal's referral to the rules and ethics committee for inquiry.

The Auditor-General found [improper appointments](#) by the MBDA and another entity, resulting in a regression from a clean to an unqualified audit for the fiscal year 2022/23. The MBDA was examining the appointments after a management report revealed R918 154 in questionable expenditure.

The inquiry into [mayor van Niekerk's violation](#) of the councillor code was halted because the EFF challenged the legality of DA councillor Rano Kayser's election to lead the ad hoc committee.

Roads and transport political head [Bradley Murray](#) distanced himself from van Niekerk's vow to repair all potholes by December 24. Murray withdrew his comments at a council meeting.

Tensions within the ANC-led coalition rose as van Niekerk attempted to garner approval for an [R24-million golf sponsorship agreement](#) and provide a report on the MBDA's future. The National Alliance's report on golf sponsorship was rejected by all parties, including van Niekerk's coalition members.

The [MBDA was approved](#) by the council despite opposition concerns. The municipality withheld R76-million in capital and operations budgets from the agency owing to disagreements over CEO Anela Qaba's selection and board retention.

The metro identified its first [cholera case](#), a 47-year-old woman who tested positive for the illness. The woman became unwell and was brought to the hospital. The town implemented changes, including repairing a sewer line obstruction at the woman's home. [The sewage obstruction](#) at her home was discovered to be the cause of the cholera.

According to a study by the [Office of Internal Audit and Risk Assurance](#) 26 workers were accused of fraud totalling about R4-million. Employees, including top officials, are accused of gross carelessness in relation to improper spending.

The mayor and two municipal officials were delayed on a seven-day trip to China owing to [unpaid tickets](#). The travel agent refused to release overseas tickets until the invoices were paid, resulting in turmoil and delays. Despite his membership in the Nelson Mandela Bay coalition, [Patriotic Alliance](#) national head Marlon Daniels met with the Hawks to discuss the mayor's trip to China.

City manager [Christopher Dyani](#) resigned over fraud charges. Dyani was the temporary replacement for Noxolo Nqwazi but was later accused of fraud by former EFF regional leader Amandlagawethu Madaka. The [accusations stem from Dyani's alleged falsification of his remuneration](#) when he requested a raise from Nqwazi following his appointment as COO in April. Dyani, according to Madaka, committed fraud since he left Pikitup in August of last year and was unemployed when he accepted a position with the municipality.

Service Delivery

To increase billing accuracy and data gathering, the metro initiated a [smart water metre replacement plan](#). Councillor Khanya Ngqisha led a team of workers at several Molly Blackburn cluster locations.

Mayor Gary van Niekerk's [commitment to eradicate all potholes by Christmas Eve](#) was not achieved, with just half of them repaired. He initiated an expedited programme in December with the goal of providing a "gift" to the city's citizens. Despite a decrease in the number of potholes, there were still around 9 000 remaining.

January 2023

The annual problem of finding [adequate school placements](#) for students in the metro resurfaced, with some parents making a last-ditch effort to locate a suitable school for their children.

The [Eastern Cape local government MEC's office](#) received a letter from DA councillor Retief Odendaal, expressing concern about fraud and corruption charges against mayor Gary van Niekerk. The letter also raised issues about Luvuyo Magalela's appointment as [interim municipal manager](#).

Khanya Ngqisha, EFF regional chairperson and member of the metro's mayoral committee, [sued GOOD councillor](#) Lawrence Troon for R800 000 for defamatory statements. Troon says Ngqisha accepted an R1-million bribe in December.

The metro intended to challenge the labour court decision in favour of [Cythia Nqxesha](#), a senior manager who has been suspended for three months for insubordination since June 2021. The negotiating council overturned her suspension and ruled it an unfair labour practice and a waste of ratepayer money.

Mayor Gary van Niekerk suspended a clerk, Giovanne Joseph, for refusing to hand over the key to a municipal safe and to divulge the whereabouts of [mayoral chains](#) valued more than R3-million.

City manager [Noxolo Nqwazi's prolonged suspension](#) violated the Local Government Disciplinary Regulations for Senior Managers, according to her attorneys. Nqwazi returned to work but was promptly suspended for an additional 90 days. According to Pagdens Attorneys, the disciplinary standards prohibit the extension of a three-month suspension.

Service Delivery

The police ministry was contemplating deploying specialised officers to combat [gang killings in the metro's northern districts](#). The [violence has gone on for decades](#), with innocent bystanders frequently involved.

The metro's smart meters plan, announced in September, aims to reduce demand through the use of [smart meters](#). However, the study was delayed because households refused to have the meters installed.

Hundreds of parents and students protested the [failing scholar transportation system](#), burning tyres and blocking roads. Since the beginning of the academic year, more than nine hundred primary and secondary students in Kuyga, as well as 100 in Humansdorp and St Francis Bay, have been left stranded.

The metro's municipal departments did not spend a [fifth of their capital budget](#) in the first half of the 2023/24 fiscal year (from July 1 to December 31 in 2023).

Buffalo City

December 2023

EFF members [disrupted speeches by mayor Princess Faku](#) and Eastern Cape premier Oscar Mabuyane at the unveiling of the Court Crescent beachfront property. DA leader Sue Bentley questioned the launch of a 'vanity project' and residents wondered whether the project was worth its R87-million price tag.

Another report claimed that the [costs had risen to R100-million](#) and the project had been delayed. Another flagship project, the Water World Fun Park, experienced similar delays and payment disputes. Bentley sent a [list of questions to the metro](#) about the state of these projects and various other ones.

[The Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency](#), the municipal entity responsible for the Court Crescent and Water World Fun Park projects, appointed a new CEO after a year of uncertainty.

The [mayor received a new official car](#) valued at just under R800 000. Since her appointment in March 2023, she had been hiring vehicles at a cost of R30 000 per month or about R300 000 in total.

The ANC-led council rejected a motion from the opposition to disclose information about councillors and municipal staff who owe rates and services. The metro is [owed R12.8-million by councillors and staff](#).

The metro appointed its former CFO, [Vincent Pillay, as COO](#). Pillay was suspended in 2018 and fired by the metro in 2019 for his involvement in the Nelson Mandela funeral funds scandal. Pillay subsequently turned state witness against the former mayor, deputy mayor, speaker, and other metro and provincial officials. The COO position was vacant but unfunded. The DA and EFF both criticised Pillay's appointment.

Service Delivery

An [oversight visit by the mayor](#) to Mzamomhle township was met with complaints by residents, who lack water and electricity, and do not have access roads. They also face leaking sewage, live electrical cables, and badly constructed RDP houses.

The [R52-million upgrade to Currie Street](#) came too late for many business owners in the area. The project was meant to be completed by October, but road markings and pavements were not complete by mid-December.

Mayor Princess Faku hinted in a council meeting that the metro's [smart meter programme might be scrapped](#). The has cost the metro hundreds of millions of rands and has been criticised by opposition parties and residents. The city had a deficit of R432.4-million for its electricity revenue in October, prompting a [warning from finance minister Enoch Godongwana](#). Godongwana said that the metro was one of four metros with negative revenue.

Activists and opposition councillors accused the metro of [failing to protect vital infrastructure](#) from vandalism and crime. Local businessman and activist Schalk van der Sandt claimed that wastewater and sewage treatment plants were broken and could lead to cholera.

One of the metro's [most active care facilities might shut down](#). Guardians of Hope Place of Safety, which cares for vulnerable children, was ordered to shut down by the department of social development.

January 2024

Buffalo City Metro's mayoral committee member for corporate services, Kayise Tom, was [fighting for her life after being shot](#) in front of her house. In a separate attack an ANC regional committee member, Thembile Richard Luvela, was shot to death on the N2.

The metro's finances were so bad that it was forced to implement a [financial recovery plan](#). DA councillor Geoff Walton said that council did not know how much money the metro owed to suppliers. The metro has had to suspend a number of projects, including ones aimed at [fighting gender-based violence](#) and [implementing sign language](#) in the city.

The Auditor-General criticised the metro's [regression in its 2022/23 audit](#). The metro received a qualified audit with findings, worse than the unqualified audit it received in 2021/22, and was taken to task for failing to install financial management systems. The [Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency](#) also failed to achieve a clean audit.

Service Delivery

[Informal settlements grew](#) across the metro, including the suburbs of Dorchester Heights, Beacon Bay, Greenfields and Buffalo Flats. Residents of the new settlements claimed they had nowhere else to go.

An East London law firm was considering [taking the metro to court over potholes](#). Residents have complained that the potholes damage their cars and lead to accidents.

[Buffalo City's cemeteries](#) were in a terrible state. They have been used for illegal dumping, illegal electricity connections, and even as grazing ground for cattle.

Gonubie beach remained closed due to [sewage spills](#). Sewage had been leaking for over three weeks in January without leaks being fixed.

Mangaung

December 2023

The [DA's councillor, Rudi Maartens](#) retained Ward 47 in a by-election. Maartens replaced Mokgadi Kganaka who resigned to join a newly formed party.

The metro finally filled all but one [vacant position](#) after operating with only acting heads of department (HODs) for a year. Sello More also returned as city manager. More led [a two-day executive management team lekgotla](#) to share strategies and allow the newly appointed HODs to familiarise themselves with their departments. The Auditor-General, who was also present, confirmed a qualified audit for the metro for 2022/23.

Service Delivery

[Shack dwellers from 17 informal settlements in Botshabelo marched to the municipality's offices](#) demanding land rights. According to community leader, Moleboheng Jamjam they were demanding the formalisation of all informal settlements. Jamjam accused ward councillors of selling serviced housing sites.

[Residents in Turflaagte](#) were affected by a major storm that left several properties damaged. Many of those affected were poverty-stricken people who depend solely on state grants.

Mangaung released a statement on the [water supply](#) issue affecting the metro. City manager Sello More called an urgent meeting with both internal and external stakeholders to resolve the water crisis.

Residents voiced their concerns about not having water during the heatwave that hit the country. Three people had to be treated for signs of dehydration. The municipality reported that it had dispatched water tankers to affected areas, but residents confirmed that no water tankers arrived in those areas.

Residents in Soutpan voiced their concerns on the quality of water in their area. According to the residents water flows through their taps in the morning only before it gets shut down again.

The DA in the metro tested the water quality at three raw water sources along the Northern supply line of Bloemfontein-Rustfontein dam, Mockesdam, and Modderrivie, and found that the water was fit for human consumption.

January 2024

The DA questioned the credibility of the food parcel distribution initiative which was led by municipal speaker, Lawrence Mathae. According to the party there was no communication with the council on this initiative.

Residents were invited to a public hearing regarding the 2021/22 annual performance report by the Mpac committee.

Service Delivery

Local councillors in the south of Bloemfontein undertook an initiative to collectively clean their wards. Ward councillors planned to take on each ward weekly, with a main focus on islands to make it easier for motorists.

The DA received several complaints from the community about an incomplete demolition of infrastructure by the municipality, According to residents the site was left with exposed water pipes and electrical cables.