
MetroMonitor report: November 2023



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THE THIRD REPUBLIC

Authored by: Paul Berkowitz, Atlehang Molefe, Bella Mkhabela, and Buhle Mbokazi



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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

MetroMonitor report November 2023: Two years later nothing has changed

More than two years after the local government election and formation of councils, most of the metros remained unstable and dysfunctional. The ANC and EFF escalated their arguments with each other in Ekurhuleni and eThekweni while the city managers in Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay struggled with their legitimacy.

Service delivery and financial health continued their decline. Municipal workers in Tshwane ended their three-month long strike that had left the metro with large backlogs in refuse removal. Problems at Transnet led to delays and congestion at Cape Town and Durban ports, while poor financial management in Nelson Mandela Bay and Buffalo City resulted in irregular expenditure of almost R100-million in each Eastern Cape metro.

Mayors and city managers on shaky ground

Top officials in Johannesburg, eThekweni and Nelson Mandela Bay came under attack by opposition parties and their own coalition partners alike. All three mayors in the ANC-led coalitions faced challenges in council.

In Johannesburg, a [motion of no confidence](#) was withdrawn against mayor Kabelo Gwamanda while the embattled city manager Floyd Brink had his [appointment declared unlawful](#). The metro [challenged the decision](#) but [it was upheld](#) by the Gauteng High Court. Brink is a controversial figure, and the DA-led Multiparty Coalition has opposed his appointment.

In eThekweni, the EFF asked city manager Musa Mbhele to resign during a [chaotic council meeting](#). The DA echoed the call and [asked mayor Mxolisi Kaunda to resign](#) too. The IFP echoed the DA's request for Kaunda to resign and threatened him with a [vote of no confidence](#). [Fractures in the ANC-EFF relationship](#) were evident as the two parties met to resolve their issues.

The embattled mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay, Gary van Niekerk, was [accused by a second law firm](#) of not paying their bills. He faced a multi-party [investigation for fraud](#) connected to the non-payment of another law firm. The investigative committee was hampered by the absence of ANC and EFF councillors - an absence [labelled a delaying tactic](#) by opposition parties.

Financial health takes a turn for the worse

The Ekurhuleni ANC caucus expressed concerns about the metro's financial sustainability, with operational revenue below targets. eThekweni's inability to spend two thirds of a grant from Treasury led to calls for the city manager and mayor to resign.

A preliminary report from the Auditor-General's office revealed that both Nelson Mandela Bay and Buffalo city had incurred irregular expenditure of close to R100-million for the 2022/23 financial year.

Main report

Johannesburg

The commission of inquiry into the Usindiso fire was put on hold after findings revealed that the [venue which was being used had no compliance certificate](#). It is unknown when the commission will resume.

A [council sitting to hear a motion of no confidence set against Mayor Kabelo Gwamanda](#) took place but ActionSA withdrew the motion, arguing that the DA-ActionSA coalition did not have a majority to approve it. DA caucus leader, Belinda Kayser-Echeozonjoku proposed a motion to dissolve council.

The [city manager's appointment, Floyd Brink, was declared unlawful](#) by the Gauteng High Court. This decision followed after the DA filed an urgent application to have Brink's appointment reviewed. [The CoJ filed an application of leave to appeal the court's findings](#).

The [ANC/EFF coalition in the municipality soured](#) after the ANC made an announcement that it planned on cutting coalition ties with some opposition parties. The EFF retaliated by telling its members to renounce their positions where they co-governed with the ANC in all municipalities.

COPE councillor [Colleen Makhubele was fired](#) after she started a political alliance. Makhubele was the only member that held a seat in council as a COPE member. [Margaret Arnolds](#) who served as the chairperson of the council's Section 77 committee was voted in as the new council speaker.

The Gauteng [High Court dismissed a court bid made by the CoJ](#) to appeal the ruling that declared city manager Floyd Blink's appointment unlawful.

Service delivery

Several [civil organisation groups formed a crisis committee](#) to help solve the governance crisis in the metro, calling on President Cyril Ramaphosa to intervene. The committee noted the service delivery crisis in the metro which includes the gas explosion and fire incident that wreaked havoc within the Joburg municipality.

Tshwane

Brilliant Telecommunications, a company that was awarded a R585-million [contract](#) in secret, lost a key legal bid to keep details about why it was awarded the deal secret. Earlier this year, Tshwane appointed Brilliant to manage the city's Wi-Fi, telephone and radio networks, voice, internet and other services.

Public Protector Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka called the metro to [account](#) for the delay and failure to supply water to the residents of Hammanskraal. Gcaleka ordered the city to fix the [water challenges](#) in Hammanskraal within 60 days.

The [Hawks](#) made another arrest in connection with the murder of former politician and activist Loyiso Nkohla. The unit traced and arrested a 38-year-old man in Tshwane.

Service Delivery

[City Manager](#) Johann Mettler announced that the service delivery in Tshwane was restored after a 3-months long strike by some of its municipal employees. The strike was started by a salary increase dispute between the city and the municipal workers.

The mayor [Cilliers Brink](#) announced the objectives to clear the service delivery backlog after finding common ground with the municipal workers and the unions, who fought the battle for the salary increase.

An [emergency](#) spokesperson Charles Mabaso, said a standby generator caught fire and affected parts of the hospital facility, including the casualty ward. The staff managed to evacuate 20 patients from the ward that caught fire at the Marais hospital in Tshwane.

Ekurhuleni

The Ekurhuleni ANC caucus was dissatisfied with the [financial sustainability plan for Ekurhuleni](#). According to the council's Quarter One report, operating revenue was below target and supplier payments were past due. The council's cash on hand was 12 days and it collected 93.3% of its income for the quarter.

Despite accusations from ActionSA, the DA, and the ANC, [EFF leader Julius Malema](#) downplayed worries about the [City of Ekurhuleni's financial viability](#).

The metro was looking into the use of a private car owned by a businessman with municipal contracts. The car, part of a blue-light convoy transporting Finance MMC Nkululeko Dunga, [was involved in a deadly collision](#). The car is owned by Motlatsi Thomas Moloi, [whose companies have done business with the metro](#).

The ANC alleged the car was unlawfully outfitted with blue lights while Dunga shot back, claiming the party was [undermining the EFF's success in the metro](#). ActionSA councillors [filed a criminal action](#) against Dunga.

Ekurhuleni and Cape Town were praised for their anti-corruption efforts, with Ekurhuleni's success in

reducing corruption largely attributed to [Dr Imogen Mashazi](#). Mashazi was appointed as municipal manager in the metro in 2016.

Service Delivery

Residents faced [power disruptions](#) due to malfunctioning substations, overloading, and cable theft. Despite the advertised 48-hour response time, the metro takes between a week to two weeks to rectify these outages.

Let's Care South Africa's Gauteng [housing project was in danger of losing its R71-million financing](#) owing to bad debt and financial mismanagement. The company was given public funds to construct [Sondela Village in Springs](#) but stands accused of maladministration.

Cape Town

Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana's proposed budget cuts would result in Cape Town's [housing projects losing R107-million](#).

The Minister of National Human Settlements criticised the metro for failing to [decentralise disaster relief money to municipalities](#). Kubayi claimed that the city was unable to provide fire kits to neighbourhoods and that the existing approach was unsustainable.

The performance of Cape Town port [fell to its lowest level since Covid](#). Turnaround times and capacity were well short of targets and there are long-term risks to agricultural exports. The port ships 35% of the country's agricultural products.

Tertuis Simmers was elected as the [next DA leader in the Western Cape](#). Cape Town mayor Hill-Lewis was chosen as deputy leader of the Democratic Alliance in the Western Cape.

The City proposed redeveloping the decommissioned [Athlone power plant](#), which had previously been designated for catalytic investment and housing construction.

Service Delivery

Following two recent efforts by the G4 Development group, Cape Town acquired a court injunction against [additional land grabs](#) at the Lentegeur Sports Field. Residents and sports club members demonstrated against the land seizures, emphasising the value of the pitch to the community and its role in social cohesion.

Votsho informal settlement residents were evacuated as [sewage flooded](#) into their shacks due to a broken busted sewer. The problem had been ongoing for about four months, according to councillor Anele Gabuza, who said it has been reported to Cape Town many times.

Twelve families in Kensington's 6th Avenue informal settlement received [electricity for the first time](#). The relocation is being forced by two major road developments, including extensions of Church and Reed Streets, which will cut through the facility's current location. The Voortrekker Road Corridor Improvement District (VRCID) spoke out against the idea, claiming that it defied the city's urban regeneration process and was considered a fast fix to the [homeless problem](#).

Ethekwini

eThekwini metro police were called to intervene after a municipal [meeting turned into chaos](#). EFF members were asked to leave the meeting after attempting to remove city manager Musa Mbhele from presiding over the meeting. EFF members requested that Mbhele resign after the municipality had to return an unspent grant.

Opposition parties demanded that the ANC-led municipality account [for failure to spend R1.2- billion of the R1.9-billion restoration grant](#). The National Treasury rejected a request made by the city manager to roll over the funds. The DA's Thabani Mthethwa called for Musa Mbhele, Mxolisi Kaunda and Human Settlements and Infrastructure Services Committee head Themba Mvubu to resign.

ANC speaker [Thabani Nyawose vowed that he would charge the EFF](#) for violently attacking municipal security officials during a municipal meeting. The fight broke out after the municipality failed to spend R1.2-billion restoration grant. The National Treasury subsequently allocated R7-million to the restoration portfolio.

[The IFP joined the calls to have the mayor submit his resignation](#). IFP chairperson, Thami Ntuli said the party had given Kaunda a seven-day ultimatum to resign or else face a motion of no confidence.

eThekwini acting senior manager for plants and logistics in the city's water and sanitation department, [Emmanuel Ntuli was shot and killed at his home](#).

The Auditor-General revealed that [400 government employees received double pay](#) from both the metro and from the Presidential Employment Stimulus Package. Out of the 400 employees only 31 were confirmed to be working for the metro.

A [municipal employee from the water and sanitation unit was caught allegedly stealing](#) electrical cables. The individual was immediately suspended pending an investigation and a criminal case was opened with SAPS.

Former councillor, [Mzimuni Ngiba](#) who was charged for the murder of his predecessor, Siyabonga Mkhize, was accused of political interference and intimidating state witnesses while in custody.

[Two men were arrested for trying to smuggle 52 streetlights](#) which belonged to the municipality. Opposition parties demanded that an internal investigation be made in order to rule out if it was an inside job.

Service Delivery

Deputy President and Chief Whip of the EFF, [Floyd Shivambu conducted an oversight visit](#) to the service delivery projects in the metro. Shivambu assured the public that the metro's beaches and pools were safe and clean.

The metro implemented an [energy-saving project](#), as part of the project the municipality installed new LED street lights across the city.

Nelson Mandela Bay

The Auditor-General's 2022/23 audit revealed a large loss of R632.82-million across Eastern Cape municipalities. The metro was responsible for R98.7-million of the total financial and material losses due to [noncompliance and suspected fraud](#).

The Specialised Commercial Crime Court in the metro announced that the fraud and corruption trial of suspended city manager [Noxolo Nqwazi](#) will start in 2024. [Nqwazi](#) launched a complaint in the Eastern Cape High Court, alleging that her suspension was irregular, unjust, and politically motivated, and asking that it be ruled unlawful.

Mayor Gary van Niekerk asked the MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Zolile Williams, to [intervene in the Speaker's apparent contempt](#) for his position. Speaker Eugene Johnson had created an investigative team to probe allegations of fraud against van Niekerk. The DA [threatened Johnson with disciplinary action](#) for violating the councillors' code of conduct. The party cited the speaker's inability to handle suspected fraudulent activities by mayor Van Niekerk.

According to a letter, which was leaked to the public, [mayor van Niekerk](#) hired McWilliams & Elliott Attorneys to provide legal counsel and was now being sued for payment for a legal opinion he sought in 2022.

Following [claims made by the ACDP's](#) Lance Grootboom, van Niekerk was due to be probed by a multiparty panel. Van Niekerk was accused of appointing Boqwana Burns Attorneys and racking up legal costs on the office's official letterhead. [The mayor](#) was also accused of interfering illegally in administrative proceedings in the legal department.

The investigation into claims of fraud against the mayor was [hampered](#) by [infighting among councillors](#). The group, which includes representatives from all parties in the council, was authorised during a council meeting last week. The EFF and ANC councillors sought to remove the chairwoman of the investigation committee looking into claims of fraud against mayor Gary van Niekerk, but the [attempt failed](#).

Former EFF Bay regional chair Ngawethu Madaka handed over allegations that metro's NMB's COO, [Sidima Dyani](#), lied about his employment and salary to negotiate a higher salary.

Justice Jama, [a former DA staff member and activist](#) who was a critical witness in a 2019 murder in the Eastern Cape, was killed inside his house by a shower of gunshots. Jama was discovered face-down in his bedroom, shot many times, and alone in the house.

Service Delivery

Councillors were concerned about underspending, with just [3% of the R349-million](#) informal settlements improvement fund being used. Councillors blamed the poor expenditure of several ministries.

The metro's police launched a multidisciplinary operation and Operation Shanela in hotspot areas to guarantee [safer holiday season operations](#). Liquor and weapons compliance checks, blue light patrols, vehicle checkpoint stops, and searches were all part of the operation. murder.

The NMB Business Chamber urged [Transnet](#) to halt the implementation of a new truck booking system at Port Elizabeth until the country's logistical problem is rectified. The logistical problem at Durban Port is affecting the viability of NMB importers and exporters.

Buffalo City

About 150 cleaning staff [workers](#) who were hired five years ago by the metro's master project, did not receive their salaries for three months. The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) ordered the metro to pay more than R500 000 in salaries to the workers.

The metro [passed](#) a new bylaw, to reduce the metro's deductions from residential debtors to 60% of their electricity purchases. The previous bylaw allowed the metro to deduct 80% to service electricity debt.

The Auditor-General's report revealed that the metro incurred R96.7-million in [irregular expenditure](#) in 2022/23. The report recommended that portfolio committees for cooperative governance and

traditional affairs, and other accountability stakeholders follow up on accounting officers' actions to recover and prevent further losses.

The [Hawks](#) investigated a fibre internet connection tender due to allegations of maladministration and irregularities. The whistle-blower alleged that a councillor demanded a reward from the service provider.

In a bid to prevent the municipality's slide into a [financial crisis](#), metro officials were forced to work overtime hours with no pay, the vehicle hire and fleet management costs had been cut off as well. BCM held an emergency meeting with the unions to discuss the issues faced by the metro and the decision to cut off overtime salaries.

The metro had the second [highest](#) voter registration turnout in the Eastern Cape for the November 2023 voter registration weekend. 49 901 people registered to vote.

The metro incurred an overtime bill of R35-million over three months, which affected its cash-flow. The [metro's manager](#) Mxolisi Yawa, said the metro was looking to tighten controls and systems to prevent irregular expenditures. Revenue collection in the metro was at 62%, far below the recommended level of 95%. The municipality [maintained](#) that it was not bankrupt even after paying a significantly large sum of money on overtime.

Service Delivery

Residents took the metro to court for [failure](#) to give them notice before disconnecting their electricity. The final decision is due to be made in December regarding the electricity cut off.

Mangaung

Sello More was [appointed](#) city manager after working as an executive director for a full term and acting city manager. More has over fifteen years of experience in different spheres of government.

The metro was set to lose a R200-million grant from the [National Treasury](#). One of the conditions to receive administer grants is to have duly appointed senior management in place, and the metro's city manager and chief financial officer were only appointed weeks before Treasury's announcement.

The [Hawks](#) lodged an investigation into how a private company was paid nearly R4.2-million using a forged official's signature for an indigent registration programme. Chartered Accountants and Maine Management was tasked to identify and register economically disadvantaged households but was allegedly paid for work it did not do.

The metro held a [by-election](#) in Ward 47. The ward was vacant following the resignation of Mokgadi Kganaka from the DA, who was elected in 2019. The DA retained the [ward](#).

Service Delivery

The metro [launched](#) a cleaning and greeting initiative on 17 November 2023. It spent R200-million towards infrastructure and service delivery.

[Residents](#) in Thaba Nchu were informed that the OK pump station did not have enough time to recover for the water levels to increase due to the recurring power cuts. The metro extended its apologies and assured the residents that it would continue to provide regular updates regarding the water crisis.

The metro's staff owed the city R12.7-million in [rate arrears](#) and the city councillors were in arrears of R112 200.