



NELSON MANDELA BAY CHURCH LEADERS NETWORK

Church Leaders letter to President Cyril Ramaphosa May 2025

Mr President, we write this urgent letter on behalf of the citizens of Nelson Mandela Bay out of the utmost concern for the dire state of affairs in our metro and the way it is impacting on lives.

We must emphasise the urgent need for the President to intervene in the political leadership of the metro, which has been dysfunctional for more than a decade.

Nothing less than the dissolution of the council and placing it under administration or reconstituting it under Section 79 is required until the 2026 local government elections.

The motivation for this call includes:

- The economy and thousands of jobs in the Metro are at risk due to the import tariffs being threatened and imposed by President Donald Trump. The council has no plan to support the motor and agricultural sectors.
- Ongoing problems with the harbours and Transnet have severely impacted on the competitiveness of companies operating in the Metro. The council has failed to engage with the institutions.
- NMB Executive Mayor and ANC leader Babalwa Lobishe attempted on March 27 to write off R3.2bn in unauthorised, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
- Subsequently the metro wrote off R2,6 billion in water debt.
- There is an outstanding debt book of “between R17 and R18 billion,” according to Nelson Mandela Bay mayoral committee member for budget and treasury, Khanya Ngqisha.
- Ms Lobishe is the 13th Executive Mayor since the metro since 2001
- Deputy Mayor Gary van Niekerk, who was suspended by the council for alleged fraud, was reinstated by the MEC: CoGTA, Zolile Williams despite an ongoing court case against Mr van Niekerk.
- By midyear, the municipality has only spent 29,9% of its budget. Grant funding is being returned to the fiscus.
- Critical vacancies within the municipality have not been filled for some time – directorates have only acting heads.
- Last week (April 10) the NMB municipality halted the implementation of urgent flood damage repair contracts worth R53m after three contractors threatened a courtroom battle with the metro due to alleged tender irregularities.
- The excessive use of deviations to tenders creates an opportunity for corruption and enriches an entitled minority while excluding the majority of businesses in the Metro.
- It is estimated that over 100 service delivery contracts are currently not in place. These include job creating work such as grass cutting, and the fixing of water leaks and streetlights.



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- Work on the Matanzima Bridge which links KwaNobuhle to the town and factories of Kariega (Uitenhage) has not started a year after it was washed away and funding was provided by National Treasury.
- In 2024 NMB lost R430 million in grant funding due to underspending.
- Since 2016 the metro has had more than 16 different city managers.
- It has had nine mayors since 2019.
- Less than 50% of the municipality's budget was spent in 2024.
- According to the municipality's figures, the municipality attended to just 43 of the 958 complaints about street lights being out of order.
- During the same period 3 787 callers to the call centre hung up because they had been kept waiting too long.
- The Mexican Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice (CPSC) has identified Nelson Mandela Bay as the most dangerous city in South Africa.
- It is ranked among the top 10 most dangerous cities in the world.

Mr President, there is no time to waste.

Failure by your office to address the political leadership of the dysfunctional Nelson Mandela Bay Metro will be conveyed widely to the voters of the Metro to enable them to make informed choices in the 2026 municipal elections and subsequent national elections.

NMB Church Leader Network

Bishop Vincent Zungu: Catholic Diocese Gqeberha

Bishop Dr William Leleki: Bishop of the Methodist Church of SA (Makhanda District)

Apostle Neville Goldman: Ebenezer International

Reverend Danie Mouton: Director Synod Eastern Cape DRC

Dr Dave Pedersen: National Director Vineyard Churches SA

Bishop Themba Mahuwa: The Bishop of the Ethiopian Episcopal

Pastor Russell Viljoen: Ebenezer North

Pastor Glenn Weiss: Joy to the Nations

Pastor Victor Befile: Motherwell Ministers Fraternal

Pastor Tyrone Strydom: Church in Action (Northern Areas)

Pastor Patrick Douglas-Henry: Regional Leader EC AFM

Pastor Mark Scholtz: Harvest Christian Church

Pastor Richard Crompton: Word of Faith Ministers International

Vicar General Sharon Nell: Anglican Church of SA (Gqeberha Diocese)

Reverent Andile George: Moderator Presbyterian Church (Central Cape)

Pastor Richard Preston: New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI)

Bishop John Vena: Coordinator of Concerned Ministers