

A portrait of a smiling woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing a dark green turtleneck and a matching blazer. A small South African flag pin is visible on her left lapel. The background is a vibrant green with abstract, curved shapes. In the lower background, there is a faint, green-tinted illustration of a cityscape, including a large domed building on the left and a dense urban area on the right.

THE TALE OF TSHWANE

TURNING THE PAGE ON FAILED GOVERNMENT IN OUR CAPITAL

FOREWORD

When I was elected Executive Mayor of Tshwane in October 2024, I understood the enormous responsibility of leading South Africa's capital city. With just two years remaining in the municipal term, we faced the difficult task of stabilising a municipality burdened by financial distress, deteriorating infrastructure and declining public confidence.

Looking back, these have been two demanding years, marked by difficult decisions, unexpected setbacks and meaningful progress. It has also been one of the greatest privileges of my public life to serve the nearly four million people who call Tshwane home.

I am particularly proud that the progress reflected in this report has been achieved through a multiparty coalition government comprising the ANC, EFF, ActionSA, AIC, DOP, PA, ATM, PAC, COPE, IFP and GOOD. Our parties bring different histories, political beliefs and priorities to government, and working together has not always been easy. Nevertheless, we have demonstrated that political differences need not prevent us from finding common ground in the interests of the residents we serve.

The achievements documented in The Tale of Tshwane belong to this collective effort. I am grateful to my colleagues in the Mayoral Committee, our coalition partners, municipal leadership and the thousands of dedicated employees who have worked to restore the City's finances, rebuild its infrastructure and improve services. I am equally grateful to the residents, businesses and community organisations whose participation and partnership have helped us make progress.

I recognise that many residents continue to experience unreliable services, economic hardship and the consequences of years of inadequate investment. Two years were never going to be enough to resolve every challenge facing Tshwane. But I believe we have demonstrated that, with responsible leadership, cooperation and a willingness to make difficult decisions, it is possible to begin changing the direction of a municipality.

This report is an account of that journey. It reflects the progress achieved, the challenges that remain and the foundations established for Tshwane's continued recovery.

We are not yet the Tshwane we aspire to become, but we are no longer the Tshwane we inherited.

Dr Nasiphi Moya
Executive Mayor of Tshwane



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THE TSHWANE WE INHERITED



When Dr Nasiphi Moya and the new multiparty coalition government assumed office in October 2024, they inherited a capital city facing serious financial, economic and institutional challenges. Years of political instability, poor financial management and inadequate investment in infrastructure had weakened the municipality's ability to deliver the services on which nearly four million residents depended.

The scale of the financial crisis was considerable. Tshwane had operated with four consecutive unfunded budgets and accumulated more than R13 billion in debt, including approximately R6.67 billion owed to Eskom. Combined with limited cash reserves, this left the municipality with little financial flexibility to maintain infrastructure, meet its obligations and respond to the growing needs of residents.

For ordinary residents, these problems were experienced through deteriorating services and declining confidence in local government. Ageing water infrastructure, leaking pipelines and failing reservoirs contributed to prolonged water interruptions, while neglected electricity infrastructure left communities vulnerable to repeated power outages. Roads deteriorated, maintenance backlogs grew and residents increasingly struggled to get basic municipal problems resolved.

The City's economic prospects were equally concerning. Economic growth had fallen from approximately 6% in 2011 to just 0.3% by 2023, while unemployment affected approximately one in three economically active residents. Businesses faced unreliable infrastructure, administrative delays and an uncertain investment environment, limiting the opportunities available to residents seeking employment and better livelihoods.

These challenges were compounded by weaknesses within the municipality itself. Critical skills shortages, outdated administrative systems, poor financial controls and inconsistent accountability had undermined the institution's ability to respond effectively to the communities it served.

This was the difficult inheritance confronting Dr Moya and the newly formed multiparty administration, with only two years remaining in the municipal term. Reversing years of decline would require more than repairing individual roads, pipes or substations. It would require rebuilding the financial and institutional foundations of the municipality itself.

The task was not simply to manage Tshwane's decline, but to begin changing its direction.

TURNING THE PAGE: A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT



Confronted with these challenges, the new administration recognised that Tshwane needed more than a change in political leadership. Restoring the municipality would require a fundamentally different approach to government, one focused on financial discipline, institutional accountability and delivering meaningful improvements in residents' lives.

Rather than pursuing isolated interventions, the administration recognised that Tshwane's financial recovery, infrastructure renewal and economic revitalisation were fundamentally connected. Restoring financial stability would create the conditions for infrastructure investment, while rebuilding municipal capacity and strengthening accountability would improve the City's ability to deliver services and support economic growth.

Under Dr Moya's leadership, a multiparty coalition of political parties with different priorities and perspectives came together around a common programme of government. Despite the complexities of coalition politics, the administration sought to place the needs of residents ahead of political differences, focusing on the practical responsibilities of running South Africa's capital city.

This approach reflected a simple belief at the heart of ActionSA's vision for local government: residents deserve a municipality that manages their money responsibly, delivers reliable services, creates opportunities for economic growth and holds those entrusted with public office accountable.

Over the following two years, these principles began taking shape through financial reforms, investment in municipal infrastructure, renewed law enforcement, economic development initiatives and efforts to rebuild professional capacity within the City.

The work was not without setbacks, and many of Tshwane's longstanding challenges remain unresolved. Nevertheless, the administration began laying the foundations for a more financially stable, capable and responsive municipality.

The significance of Tshwane's turnaround lies not only in the progress achieved, but in the different approach to government that made that progress possible.



RESPECTING YOUR MONEY, REBUILDING YOUR MUNICIPALITY

Restoring Tshwane's financial stability was one of the most urgent responsibilities facing the new administration. A municipality that cannot manage its finances cannot maintain infrastructure, pay its suppliers or deliver reliable services to residents. After four consecutive unfunded budgets and years of accumulating debt, rebuilding financial discipline was essential to the City's recovery.

Under Dr Moya's leadership, the multiparty administration began restoring control over municipal spending, strengthening revenue collection and addressing longstanding financial obligations. Tshwane achieved its first fully funded adjustments budget since June 2021, followed by fully funded annual budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27, ending years of budgeting beyond what the municipality could realistically afford.

Progress was also made in reducing the City's debt burden. Through a structured payment arrangement with Eskom, outstanding debt fell from R6.67 billion in October 2024 to approximately R4.13 billion by September 2026. Over the same period, the City's financial position strengthened, with cash reserves increasing to approximately R1.8 billion by July 2026, after payroll.

Financial recovery also required confronting unnecessary expenditure and rebuilding the municipality's own capacity to deliver services. One example was the reform of Tshwane's water-tankering operations, where dependence on expensive outsourced services had placed growing pressure on municipal finances. By expanding the City's own tanker fleet and tightening expenditure controls, monthly operating costs were reduced from a peak of R20.56 million to R8.34 million. Alongside these savings, the City reduced its 2026/27 water-tankering budget by 79%, redirecting R110 million towards municipal tankers, pipe replacement and infrastructure improvements. This marked a shift from expensive emergency responses towards longer-term solutions.

Importantly, restoring financial discipline did not mean abandoning residents who genuinely could not afford municipal services. The administration provided more than R4.3 billion in debt relief to over 85,000 qualifying indigent households, recognising that financial sustainability must go hand in hand with protecting vulnerable communities.

These reforms have not eliminated Tshwane's financial challenges. Historical debt remains substantial, and sustained revenue collection and expenditure discipline will be necessary to protect the progress achieved.

Nevertheless, the City has begun moving away from financial crisis towards greater stability, creating a stronger foundation for maintaining infrastructure, improving services and investing in Tshwane's future.

Respecting residents' money means ensuring that every rand is managed responsibly and directed towards building a municipality that works for the people who fund it.



MAKING TSHWANE A CITY OF OPPORTUNITY

For a city where approximately one in three economically active residents is unemployed, creating jobs and economic opportunity must be among the most important responsibilities of government. Tshwane has enormous economic potential, with established industries, universities, research institutions and a growing population of entrepreneurs and young people eager to build better lives. Despite this potential, economic growth had fallen to just 0.3% by 2023, while major developments remained constrained by inadequate infrastructure, administrative delays and a lack of coordinated investment support.

In April 2025, Dr Moya led the adoption of the Tshwane Economic Revitalisation Strategy, establishing a plan to attract investment, support businesses and create employment. The strategy set targets of achieving average annual economic growth of 3.9%, attracting between R17 billion and R26 billion in new investment and creating more than 80,000 jobs by 2029.

Early progress has been reflected in the City's verified investment pipeline, which grew from approximately R2 billion in June 2025 to more than R20 billion by June 2026. Beyond this pipeline, Tshwane has identified 17 Strategic Urban Developments with the potential to unlock more than R100 billion in private investment, support over 300,000 direct employment opportunities and generate approximately R1.55 billion in additional annual municipal rates and taxes. Realising this potential will depend on overcoming infrastructure constraints, accelerating development approvals and turning investment opportunities into projects on the ground.

Recognising that investment commitments mean little unless they translate into developments and jobs, Dr Moya established the Catalytic Investment Unit (CIU) as a legacy initiative of her mayoralty. Established in partnership with Big Win Philanthropy, with R4 million in grant funding supplemented by R1 million from the City, the Unit became operational in October 2026. Working through the Tshwane Economic Development Agency, it brings dedicated professional capacity to resolving municipal approval delays, bulk infrastructure constraints and other obstacles preventing major developments from proceeding. Its purpose is to help turn investment opportunities into developments on the ground, supporting job creation and expanding the City's economic base beyond the current mayoral term.

But economic opportunity cannot be limited to major investors. Township entrepreneurs, informal traders and small businesses also need a municipality that helps them succeed. The adoption of the Informal Trading and Township Economies By-Law and the introduction of an online business licensing platform have created clearer, more accessible processes for entrepreneurs to register and operate legally.

Recognising the particular challenges facing unemployed young people, Dr Moya also launched the Ithuba Youth Economic Development Programme in February 2026. By July, more than 9,200 young people had registered, with over 1,500 receiving training, skills development or referrals to opportunities through programme partners.

Much of Tshwane's investment potential must still translate into completed developments and sustainable employment. Nevertheless, the City has begun moving from fragmented economic initiatives towards a coordinated approach that actively removes obstacles to growth.

The ultimate measure of Tshwane's economic recovery will not be the value of investment announcements, but the number of residents who find work, build businesses and gain the opportunity to improve their lives.

FIXING WHAT MATTERS MOST

For residents, few things matter more than having clean water flowing from their taps and reliable electricity in their homes and businesses. Yet, years of inadequate maintenance and underinvestment had left Tshwane's ageing infrastructure increasingly vulnerable to failure, exposing communities to recurring water interruptions, prolonged power outages and deteriorating municipal services.

Recognising that emergency repairs alone could not reverse decades of neglect, Dr Moya and the multiparty government prioritised the development of two coordinated programmes: the Water Stabilisation Plan, introduced in March 2026, and the Electricity Stabilisation Plan, introduced in February 2026. Together, these plans represent a shift away from repeatedly responding to infrastructure failures towards systematically maintaining, repairing and replacing the networks on which residents depend.



The Water Stabilisation Plan focuses on reducing water losses, replacing ageing pipelines, strengthening reservoirs and pump stations, and improving the management of Tshwane's water supply. More than 28 kilometres of water pipelines have been replaced, and reservoir projects in Winterveld, Booysens Extension 4 and Louwlandia have been completed. Water supply has also been restored or improved in communities including Ikageng and Mahube Valley, while additional treatment capacity has been developed to address longstanding water challenges in Hammanskraal.

A central part of this approach has been reducing dependence on expensive outsourced water tankers and rebuilding the municipality's own capacity to provide emergency water. By expanding its municipal tanker fleet and redirecting expenditure towards permanent infrastructure, the City has begun moving towards a more sustainable model in which water is delivered through functioning networks rather than indefinitely through trucks.

The Electricity Stabilisation Plan similarly addresses the underlying causes of Tshwane's recurring power failures. With more than half of the City's high-voltage transformers over 40 years old and classified as high or extremely high risk, the plan prioritises preventative maintenance, restoring backup capacity at critical substations, replacing ageing equipment and protecting infrastructure against theft and vandalism. Progress includes the restoration of critical capacity at Kentron, the completion of the IA Substation upgrade in Soshanguve and ongoing work at other strategic substations across the City.

The administration has also made progress in restoring Tshwane's roads. More than 220 kilometres of roads have been resurfaced, while over 8,200 potholes were repaired following an intensified maintenance programme launched in April 2026. By restoring the Bon Accord Asphalt Plant and investing in new Jetpatcher equipment, the City has begun rebuilding its own capacity to maintain roads, reducing dependence on external suppliers and enabling faster repairs for residents.

These interventions are being supported by increased infrastructure investment, with approximately R721 million allocated to water and sanitation capital infrastructure and R597 million to electricity capital infrastructure in 2026/27.

Tshwane's infrastructure challenges remain substantial, and residents continue to experience interruptions that no functioning capital city should accept as normal. Rebuilding networks neglected over decades will require sustained investment, technical capacity and disciplined maintenance.

The objective is not simply to restore services when they fail, but to rebuild the infrastructure and municipal capacity needed to make those failures less frequent, less severe and less disruptive to residents' lives.

RECLAIMING OUR CAPITAL

Every resident deserves to feel safe in their community, walk through clean and orderly streets and know that the law applies equally to everyone. Yet, years of inadequate enforcement had allowed illegal trading, dangerous buildings, infrastructure theft and urban decay to take hold in parts of Tshwane, undermining public safety and the dignity of communities.

Under Dr Nasiphi Moya's leadership, the City introduced the Reclaim Our City initiative, bringing together municipal law enforcement, building control, environmental health, fire safety and other authorities to address unlawful activities and restore order. Rather than treating these problems in isolation, the initiative uses coordinated enforcement operations to confront the conditions that allow criminality and urban decay to flourish.

These interventions have included action against dangerous and unlawfully operated properties in the Pretoria CBD and surrounding areas. At the Ipi Ntombi Sports Bar, municipal enforcement teams uncovered more than 40 rooms associated with unlawful activities, alongside serious building and safety violations, resulting in the closure of the premises. Similar operations have targeted other non-compliant properties and businesses, demonstrating a renewed commitment to enforcing municipal laws and protecting vulnerable residents.

Restoring the rule of law also requires rebuilding the institutions responsible for enforcing it. During this term, Tshwane initiated the first expansion of its Metropolitan Police Department since 2015 with 200 new recruits. This represents an important investment in the City's long-term law-enforcement capacity, strengthening its ability to enforce by-laws, improve road safety and protect communities.

The administration has also strengthened cooperation between the Tshwane Metro Police, SAPS, Home Affairs and other authorities to address unlawful trading, suspected immigration violations, infrastructure theft and other criminal activities within the City's legal powers.

Beyond enforcement, restoring pride in the capital means creating cleaner, safer public spaces. The City has removed more than 95,000 illegal signs, insourced 170 municipal cleaners and cleared over 19,000 tonnes of illegally dumped waste. Through the Re A Spana Campaign, more than 28,000 residents and community partners participated in over 300 clean-up activities.

The City has also repaired more than 21,000 streetlights, restored 291 high-mast lights and installed 999 new streetlights and 27 high-mast lights, improving visibility and safety after dark.

While crime, vandalism and deteriorating infrastructure remain significant challenges, these interventions form part of a broader effort to restore order, protect public spaces and rebuild confidence in the capital.

Reclaiming Tshwane means building communities where residents feel safe, businesses can operate lawfully and government takes responsibility for maintaining clean, orderly public spaces.



A GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE



A municipality cannot measure its success only through stronger finances, new investment or improved infrastructure. It must also consider whether progress is reaching the residents who need it most, particularly families struggling with poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing and limited access to basic services.

For Dr Nasiphi Moya, this responsibility has been central to the work of rebuilding Tshwane. While restoring financial discipline, the administration recognised that households genuinely unable to afford municipal services required protection. More than 85,000 qualifying indigent households benefited from over R4.3 billion in municipal debt relief, helping vulnerable families escape historic debt burdens while strengthening the City's approach to supporting those most in need.

Improving access to housing and secure land tenure has also been an important part of the administration's work. During the 2025/26 financial year, more than 4,000 qualifying beneficiaries were relocated from informal settlements to permanent stands, while over 2,800 title deeds were issued to residents. For families who have waited decades for formal ownership, these interventions provide greater security, dignity and the opportunity to build a more stable future.

One such resident was 90-year-old Gogo Nxumalo from New Eersterus, who finally received the title deed to her home after waiting since 1994. Her story illustrates the significance of municipal decisions that can appear routine on paper but have a lasting impact on the lives of residents and their families.

The administration has also continued providing basic water and sanitation services to informal settlements while working towards more permanent infrastructure solutions. These interventions recognise that residents cannot be expected to wait indefinitely for essential services while longer-term housing and infrastructure programmes are developed.

Delivering progress across a city as large and diverse as Tshwane has required cooperation beyond any single political party. Under Dr Moya's leadership, a multiparty coalition government has worked through political differences to pursue a common programme of financial recovery, infrastructure renewal and improved municipal services. The experience has demonstrated the importance of maintaining a shared focus on residents' needs, even where political parties hold different views.

Significant inequalities remain across Tshwane, and many communities continue to face inadequate services, housing shortages and limited economic opportunities. Addressing these challenges will require sustained investment, cooperation and a municipality capable of responding fairly to the needs of all its residents.

The measure of a functioning capital city must ultimately be whether progress reaches every community, especially those that have waited the longest for government to deliver.

BUILDING A GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

Restoring public confidence in Tshwane requires more than improving visible services. It also means rebuilding the municipal systems responsible for managing public money, responding to residents and holding officials accountable. Addressing longstanding weaknesses in financial controls, procurement, administrative capacity and consequence management has therefore been an essential part of the City's recovery.

A central part of this recovery has been rebuilding the City's own ability to deliver services. Between October 2024 and April 2026, 2,384 appointments were made across the administration to address critical vacancies, while 261 service-delivery vehicles and 555 pieces of horticultural equipment were procured or deployed to strengthen frontline operations. By investing in municipal employees, vehicles and equipment, the administration has begun reducing dependence on costly outsourced services and restoring the capacity to maintain infrastructure and public spaces directly.

Under her leadership, the administration introduced a coordinated programme to strengthen governance and address the findings of the Auditor-General. Through a consolidated Audit Outcome Remedial Action Plan and the establishment of an Executive Audit Tracking Committee, the City strengthened oversight of corrective measures across departments. As a result, audit qualification areas declined from six in 2023/24 to just two in 2024/25, marking progress towards the objective of achieving a clean audit.

The administration also strengthened its response to allegations of corruption, fraud and financial misconduct. During 2025/26, the City's forensic services reported completing 522 investigations into allegations of fraud, corruption, procurement irregularities and other misconduct. These investigations resulted in recommendations for disciplinary and criminal action, as well as approximately R3.54 billion recommended for financial recovery.

Preventing corruption is equally important. In July 2026, Tshwane introduced the SAP Ariba digital procurement platform, strengthening the transparency and traceability of municipal purchasing processes. By reducing dependence on fragmented manual systems, the City is working to improve financial controls and make public expenditure easier to monitor.

Improving the relationship between the municipality and residents has been another priority. Through the Service Delivery War Room, the administration introduced a more coordinated approach to identifying service failures, assigning responsibility and tracking corrective action. In September 2026, the City and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research launched the Enterprise Data and Analytics Platform initiative, building on a partnership established in 2023. Under a new implementation agreement, the platform will be developed and progressively rolled out across Tshwane's seven regions by June 2028, strengthening service-delivery monitoring, infrastructure management and accountability.

The City has also expanded access to customer care through mobile service facilities, Mayoral Open Days and digital communication channels. These interventions are intended to make it easier for residents to report problems, resolve municipal account queries and receive information about service interruptions.

Much remains to be done to address administrative backlogs, improve response times and ensure that investigations lead to appropriate consequences. Nevertheless, the reforms introduced over the past two years have begun strengthening the systems on which effective municipal government depends.



A government that works is one where public money is protected, officials are accountable and residents can expect their municipality to respond when they need assistance.

THE NEXT CHAPTER: FIVE MORE YEARS



The past two years have demonstrated both the scale of the challenges facing Tshwane and the progress that can be made when government begins addressing them with clear priorities, responsible leadership and a commitment to getting the basics right.

From four consecutive unfunded budgets, mounting debt and deteriorating infrastructure, Tshwane has begun moving towards greater financial stability and stronger municipal capacity. The City has returned to funded budgets, reduced its historical debt to Eskom, strengthened financial controls and established a clearer programme for rebuilding essential services.

The administration has also established a clearer direction for the City's future. The Tshwane Economic Revitalisation Strategy provides a plan to attract investment and create jobs, while the Catalytic Investment Unit represents a lasting commitment to turning development opportunities into economic activity. The Water and Electricity Stabilisation Plans have established structured programmes to address infrastructure failures, while renewed law enforcement and institutional reforms are strengthening the City's ability to serve and protect residents.

These achievements do not mean that Tshwane's problems have been solved. Too many residents still experience unreliable water and electricity, deteriorating roads, unemployment and inadequate municipal services. The financial recovery remains fragile, and much of the investment needed to transform the City's economy and infrastructure must still be realised.

For Dr Moya, the next five years must therefore be about building on the foundations established during the past two years. This means maintaining financial discipline, accelerating infrastructure renewal, unlocking investment and employment, strengthening public safety and ensuring that improvements reach communities that have been neglected for too long.

The experience of governing Tshwane also offers a wider lesson for local government across South Africa. While every municipality faces different challenges, the fundamentals remain the same: responsible management of public money, professional administration, reliable services, economic opportunity, respect for the rule of law and a commitment to serving every community.

These are the principles at the heart of ActionSA's vision for local government, and the experience of Tshwane provides a practical account of how they can be applied. The Tale of Tshwane is not the story of a city that has been fixed in two years. It is the story of a city that has begun changing direction, and of the work that must continue to secure its recovery.



The next chapter is about turning that progress into lasting improvements in the lives of the people of Tshwane.



THE TALE OF TSHWANE