

**COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PREMIER'S OFFICE;  
FINANCE; ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM:**

**"TAKING THE LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE" (TLP) OVERSIGHT VISIT HELD IN  
THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, EHLANZENI DISTRICT, 25 JUNE  
2018 – MANYELETI NATURE RESERVE (DEDT / MTPA)**

---

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Section 118 (1) (a) and (b) (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa empowers a provincial legislature to facilitate public access to and involvement in its oversight processes. In addition, sections 114 and 133 of the Constitution, read together with rules 218 and 131 of the Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature (the Rules) directs the Legislature to hold the Executive accountable for the exercising of powers and performance of functions.

In carrying out its constitutional oversight and public participation mandate, the **Portfolio Committee on Premier's Office; Finance; Economic Development and Tourism** (the Committee) conducted oversight visits and a public hearing in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (the municipality) on 25 – 29 June 2018 during the "Taking the Legislature to the People" (TLP) event.

This report reflects the issues that emanated from the oversight activities during the said date, which will need further intervention of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) and its parastatal Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA).

**2. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES**

The Committee assessed progress on projects that are assisted by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA). The Committee wanted to interact with project beneficiaries and ensure that the DEDT's and entity's delivery of core mandated services is fast tracked.

### 3. METHOD OF WORK

As per the Legislature programme, the Economic Cluster had oversight visits planned for the period 25 to 27 June 2018 at the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. The Committee informed the department and entity about the oversight visits to be conducted and the purpose thereof. Invitations were sent to the department, management of the entity and the Municipality requesting them to be part of the visits.

- On 25 June 2018, the Committee conducted an oversight visit at the Manyeleti Nature Reserve.
- Subsequently, the Committee met and considered the draft Committee report on 01 August 2018.

### 4. OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

The Committee observed the following:

- There has been significant progress since the Manyeleti Nature Reserve (MNR) has been upgraded and refurbished compared to the previous financial year.
- The reserve is a Provincial nature reserve located adjacent to the western boundary of the Kruger National Park, and the Orpen Gate.
- The reserve offers incredible viewing experience including the Big 5; in addition a total of 51 small mammal species have been listed for MNR. Priority game species include White Rhino, Buffalo, Cheetah, Lion, Leopard and Wild Dog. Several other threatened mammal species are found on the reserve, including African wild cat, Antbear, African civet and Aardwolf.
- The reserve received a funding from DEA (Department of Environmental Affairs) for upgrading and developing infrastructure amounting to R45 000 000.00.

### 5. INTERACTION WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT / ENTITY AND THE NATURE RESERVE

#### 5.1 Manyeleti Nature Reserve

Mr Jimmy Tanyana: Manager of the Nature Reserve gave an overview on the reserve.

Manyeleti Nature Reserve (MNR) is a Provincial nature reserve located adjacent to the western boundary of the Kruger National Park, and the Orpen Gate. The size of the reserve is 23 000 000 hectares which shares a border with the popular Kruger National Park as well as the Sabi Sands and the Timbavati Game Reserve.

The reserve was transferred from the Limpopo Provincial Government to the Mpumalanga Provincial Government in 2005. The National Environment Protected Areas Act, 2003 [Act No. 57 of 2003] (NEMPAA) requires that the relevant provincial MEC assigns a competent management authority to a provincial protected area. Manyeleti Nature Reserve was formally proclaimed in terms of proclamation R 340 of 1967, currently managed by the Mpumalanga Tourism Parks Agency (MTPA). The reserve offers incredible viewing experience including the Big 5; in addition a total of 51 small mammal species have been listed for MNR. Priority game species include White Rhino, Buffalo, Cheetah, Lion, Leopard and Wild Dog. Several other threatened mammal species are found on the reserve, including African wild cat, Antbear, African civet and Aardwolf.

The reserve received a funding from DEA (Department of Environmental Affairs) for upgrading and developing infrastructure amounting to R45 000 000.00. The project was supposed to commence in 2015 however the minister did not approve the business plan in time therefore the start date was changed to 1 April 2016 while the end date was also moved to March 2018. The scope of work was to develop and upgrade the following:

- Upgrading and renovation of chalets (19)
- Conversion of reptile Centre to offices
- Reserve Managers house
- Upgrading of conference hall
- Renovation of three blocks of dormitories and ablutions
- Renovations to the hotel and main hall
- Renovations to existing offices, and Laundromat
- New pickets contraction (5 bed)
- Install new perimeter fence (17km)
- 3 ablution block to a family house
- Services (Water bulk service)

The reserve also received a funding from Provincial Government through the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) in the 2016/17 financial year amounting to R14 000 000.00 with the following deliverables:

- Construction of Lapa, 2 Kiosks, a Hall, 2 blocks of ablutions, swimming pools, 80 Braai stands, electrified fence, and curio stalls.
- Construction of 20 Caravan park stands and ablution facilities.

Through enquiry with Mr Robert Masango the Facility Manager, he confirmed that all infrastructure upgrades are completed except for the provision of bulk water; he indicated that the massive water tank was ordered and they only awaiting delivery in order for installation process to begin. It was noted that indeed the infrastructure upgrades are completed and a launch was supposed to take place on 27 May 2018, however it was postponed due to non-availability of the MEC.

Revenue generation in the reserve has been improving since the 2016/17 financial year. The reserve management indicated that the increase in revenue is due to operation of a swimming pool and introduction of the game drive. He further explained that the reserve managed to establish a strong relationship with outside operators/Lodges i.e Shalati Safari Camp, Timbavati and Olive tree camp, these operators are allowed to bring-in their guests for a game drive and pay a monthly fee of R90 000 each. The reserve generated R8 000 000.00 in 2016/17, R9 400 000.00 in 2017/18 financial year and is expected to generate R9 000 000.00 in the current 2018/19 financial year.

MTPA is marketing the reserve on their website, Tourism Indaba, Johannesburg Expo, Innibos, Beeld show and Tri-land. It was noted that marketing for all nature reserves is centralized meaning it is being done at the MTPA head office. The reserve has a potential to generate more revenue and to reach the level of sustaining itself however it is not well marketed; the officials responsible for marketing are stationed at head office and it seems they do not clearly understand the activities of the reserve. There is a bright future for the reserve and it is believed that if MTPA can change the marketing strategy to attract local and international tourists, more profit can be made.

In terms of security measures the reserve is operating with trained armed field rangers working day and night to ensure that all assets are protected and secured; these field rangers are also working day and night to ensure the survival of rhinos. MTPA has also established a strong working relationship with Kruger National Park (KNP) and Sabie Sand Wildtuin (SSWT) to form a joint operation team to combat rhino poaching that also yield good results. The reserve does not have cameras installed as yet for security purposes.

DIVISION	POSITION	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
BIO	Control Social Ecologist Cluster 1	1	1	0
BIO	Reserve Manager - Manyeleti	1	1	0
BIO	Section Head	1	1	0
BIO	Section Head Filled Ranger	1	1	0
BIO	Filled Ranger	20	19	1
BIO	Handy Man	1	1	0
BIO	Forman	2	2	0
BIO	Artisan	2	2	0
BIO	Cashier	2	1	1
BIO	Administrator	1	1	0
BIO	General Assistant	5	2	3
BIO	House Keeper	7	0	7
<b>BIO</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>

The reserve is currently operating with 44 permanent employees of which 32 are males and 12 are females. There are three (3) environmental monitors assisting within the reserve. The reserve manager indicated that there is a shortage of staff and most employees do not meet the standard requirements of the nature of the work they should perform and are unable to carry out the daily activities of the reserve, which is hindering the smooth operating of the reserve. It was also noted that there is no gender equality; all four (4) employees occupying management position are males and females are only occupying the low positions such as House Keeping, General Assistant and Cashier.

There are disputes between the Manyeleti Conservation Trust and a concerned group of claimants are currently under the ruling of the court order; MTPA has no influence on the court ruling and they are currently awaiting their stakeholder RLCC to advise on the resolution, but that doesn't affect much on the management of the reserve; it is only affecting employment of temporary staff.

**The manager indicated that the reserve is experiencing the following challenges:**

- Shortage of staff
- Some employees do not meet the standard requirements of the nature of the work they should perform and are unable to carry out the daily activities of the reserve
- Shortage of game vehicles
- Grader to maintain the roads
- There is no water and electricity in the reserve's pickets

**6. FINDINGS**

**After the interaction with the entity and the management of the reserve, the Committee made the following findings:**

- 6.1 There are some employees who do not meet the standard requirements of the nature of the work to be performed and are unable to carry out the daily activities of the reserve.
- 6.2 The road leading to the reserve is not graded, nor is it well maintained and there is no signage leading to the reserve itself, especially from the entrance of the main gate.
- 6.3 The reserve is not well marketed.
- 6.4 There are disputes currently on the land claim matter between the Manyeleti Conservation Trust and concerned group of claimants.
- 6.5 The reserve is experiencing challenges with regards to adequate water supply.

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee made the following recommendations:**

- 7.1 The entity must submit the Organizational Health Audit Report to the Committee that contains findings and recommendations and a clear plan on how to deal with 'fair discrimination', concerning the employees who do not meet the standard requirements of the nature of the work to be performed at the reserve.
- 7.2 The entity must grade and maintain the access road to attract more tourists and finalize the signage within the current financial year. Furthermore, the entity must submit a progress report in this regard not later than 20 August 2018.
- 7.3 The entity must strengthen the linkage of the reserve to the market considering that it has a potential to generate more revenue and to reach the level of sustaining itself.

7.4 The entity must submit an updated progress report to the Committee on the finalization of the land claim dispute not later than 15 August 2018.

7.5 The entity must update the Committee on the process of installing another borehole/water tank that has all necessary equipment for water supply, especially during non-rainy season.

The Committee moves that the House adopts the report with the above recommendations.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson would like to extend a word of appreciation to the MEC Mr SE Kholwane, the Acting HOD Mr NM Sebitso, senior management officials of DEDT, MTPA, the management of Manyeleti Nature Reserve and the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality and all other stakeholders for their cooperation during the oversight work of the Committee.

In addition, the Chairperson would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Portfolio Committee for their active participation and constructive contributions during the oversight visit and the support staff for contributing to the production of this report.

**Unless otherwise stated the Department of Economic Development and MTPA are required to investigate the observations and findings in this Committee report and implement all the House Resolutions. The report detailing progress in the implementation of all recommendations should be forwarded to the Committee by 31 August 2018 and thereafter on a quarterly basis.**



\_\_\_\_\_  
**HON FV MLOMBO (MPL),  
 CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON  
 PREMIER'S OFFICE; FINANCE;  
 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

*09. 08. 2018*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

