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> **MIG Projects**
handover in Villiers,
Frankfort and
Tweeling



FEZILE DABI NEWS

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Fezile Dabi Executive Mayor Khasudi Celebrates Completion of Key MIG Projects in Mafube



HANDOVER OF MAFUBE MIG PROJECTS AND MEDIA TOUR

"Building Resilient Communities: Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure
for the Community of Mafube Local Municipality"



Introduction: A New Dawn for Service Delivery



I am deeply honoured to address our residents, stakeholders, and partners in this inaugural edition of our District Municipality Newspaper. This platform is not merely for communication—it is a bridge that connects our municipality with the people it serves. It is an accountability tool, a record of service delivery, and a demonstration of transparency.

Over the past months, our district has been hard at work ensuring that projects funded through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) are not only implemented but completed to the satisfaction of the communities they are meant to serve. On 29 August 2025, we gathered in Villiers, Frankfort, Namahadi, and Tweeling to hand over critical projects to Mafube Local Municipality. These projects included water infrastructure, boreholes, pump stations, sewer upgrades, and sports facilities projects that touch the daily lives of our people.

Despite criticisms, misinformation, and attempts to discredit the progress we are making, the truth is visible. Today, our communities can see, touch, and witness the results of intergovernmental cooperation and accountable governance.

Setting the Record Straight: Media Accountability and Public Truth

Recently, some media houses reported that certain projects “do not exist.” Articles suggested that millions of rands were misused, particularly around boreholes. We responded by inviting all media houses—both those who support and those who criticise us—to attend the handovers and verify the projects for themselves. Sadly, some chose not to attend.

As our Municipal Manager, Mr. Sipho Thomas, clarified: Our invitation still stands—our doors are open.

Accountability means showing evidence, not hiding. To those who seek to undermine development through falsehoods, we say: visit our sites, meet the communities, and witness the reality.

Cooperative Governance in Action: The Strength of Unity

The recent handover of projects stands as a living example of cooperative governance in practice. Three spheres of government—national, provincial, and local—came together to ensure that service delivery happens despite challenges.

The MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs, and Human Settlements, Honourable Saki Mokoena, reminded us:

Through this partnership, Mafube Local Municipality, which has faced long-standing challenges, received support from Fezile Dabi District Municipality to complete projects that would otherwise have been delayed or abandoned. This is not about politics—it is about people.

Water is Life: Boreholes and Pump Stations Restoring Dignity

One of the most pressing challenges for our communities has been access to clean, reliable water. In towns like Villiers, Tweeling, and Frankfort, water shortages have caused frustration, protests, and loss of dignity.

Today, we can proudly say progress is being made:

- Boreholes in Tweeling are already supplying safe, drinkable water to households that previously relied on inconsistent supply.

- Pump stations in Villiers were refurbished to ensure continuous water flow and reduced disruptions.

These are not temporary fixes; they are long-term investments in human dignity.

When we stood at the boreholes in Tweeling, surrounded by residents who now have drinkable water, we saw relief, hope, and pride in their eyes. It reminded us that water is not just about infrastructure—it is about life itself.

Recreation, Youth Development, and Social Cohesion: Zomba Sports Ground

Service delivery is not only about pipes and boreholes. It is also about building communities where young people can thrive. That is why the fencing and upgrading of Zomba Sports Ground in Namahadi, Frankfort, is so important.

For years, young people in Namahadi have lacked safe spaces to play, train, and showcase their talents. Today, they have a sports ground that belongs to them—a space for football, athletics, and community gatherings.

We appeal to the community: protect this facility. Public infrastructure is your property, and its destruction only robs the very people it was built for. Let us nurture it, use it, and let it serve generations to come.

Sanitation and Environmental Health: Sewer Pipe Bridge Upgrade

In Frankfort and Namahadi, sewage spillages have long plagued residents, threatening health and polluting streams.

Through the sewer pipe bridge project, these problems are being addressed.

The upgraded infrastructure now reduces sewage overflows, improves environmental health, and protects downstream municipalities from contamination. This is an example of how district-wide cooperation ensures that what happens in one municipality does not harm its neighbours.

Accountability and Transparency: Seeing, Touching, Witnessing

At the handover events, leaders, engineers, councillors, and community members walked together, inspecting each project. The theme of the day was simple but powerful: “See, Touch, and Witness.”

Unlike in the past, when projects were sometimes announced but not completed, today the people of Mafube can physically witness the infrastructure built for them. This is the credibility we seek to restore in governance.

As Executive Mayor, I stated:

The Role of Oversight and Partnership

These projects were not implemented in isolation. Partners like MISA (Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent) and National CoGTA provided technical and financial oversight, ensuring quality control and accountability.

MISA’s Chief Engineer, Mr. George J, noted: National CoGTA also highlighted that more than 20,000 households in Mafube directly benefit from these projects, with over 50 jobs created during implementation. This is service delivery with economic impact.

Addressing Challenges: Intervention in

Mafube Municipality

It is no secret that Mafube Local Municipality has struggled.

Placed under Section 139(5)(c) intervention, it required urgent support to stabilise governance and service delivery.

By regazetting its MIG allocation to Fezile Dabi District Municipality, projects were rescued from delay and implemented successfully.

Mafube Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr Tlhoare Motsoeneng, acknowledged:

This humility and cooperation are what will rebuild trust in local government.

Looking Forward: Sustainable Governance and Economic Vision

Our vision as Fezile Dabi District Municipality goes beyond today’s projects. We are building a district that:

1. Provides reliable basic services – water, sanitation, electricity, and waste management.
2. Promotes youth empowerment – through sports, training, and job creation.
3. Strengthens economic growth – leveraging our agricultural and industrial potential within the Vaal River City Region.
4. Fosters accountability – ensuring funds are used properly, audit outcomes improve, and communities can trust their leaders.
5. Encourages community ownership – because infrastructure is only sustainable when communities protect it.

Our MEC reminded us that Free State remains the breadbasket of South Africa, and municipalities like Mafube play a strategic role in food production. With stable governance, we can unlock this economic potential.

A Call to Communities: Protect and Value What is Ours

To the people of Villiers, Frankfort, Namahadi, and Tweeling, I say: these projects belong to you. They were funded with your tax money. They are not gifts from politicians; they are your rights as citizens.

Please, protect them. Do not vandalise them when angry. Use them responsibly. Report theft or damage. Because when infrastructure is destroyed, it is the community that suffers first.

Conclusion: Fezile Dabi District Municipality is Delivering

As I conclude, I want to affirm once again: service delivery is happening in Fezile Dabi District Municipality. Despite misinformation, despite challenges, and despite political noise, the reality is visible.

Our projects are complete. Communities are benefitting. Jobs were created. Dignity is being restored.

This is the story of Fezile Dabi District Municipality—a story of resilience, accountability, and progress. It is the story of leaders who rise above politics to serve people. It is the story of a district determined to build a Free State that works for all.

Let us continue this journey together.

Cllr Dennis Khasudi

Executive Mayor: Fezile Dabi District Municipality



Fellow residents of Fezile Dabi, partners in government, community leaders, businesses, civil society, and members of the media—what has brought us together, once again, is the unitary nature of our Republic. South Africa is one country with one Constitution, and three interdependent spheres of government that must cooperate in mutual trust and good faith to deliver for the people. That is not a slogan. It is a constitutional duty, and it is the spirit that guided our handover of completed Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) projects to the Mafube Local Municipality on Friday, 29 August 2025, across Villiers, Namahadi (Frankfort) and Tweeling.

This editorial note sets out, in clear and accessible language, what we did, why we did it, how it was financed and managed, and what must happen next to protect these assets and turn them into daily, lived improvements in people’s lives. It also addresses lingering misinformation about so-called “phantom projects” and speaks directly to residents who rightly insist on transparency, service delivery, and visible progress. I invite you to read, to verify, to visit the sites yourself—and to join hands with us in keeping these facilities functional for the long haul.

1). The Unitary State in Action

When people ask why a district municipality would implement projects for a local municipality, the answer is straightforward: because we are one country and one government, and because the law expects us to assist each other to meet constitutional obligations. The District Development Model (DDM) and intergovernmental relations (IGR) are not academic abstractions—they are practical frameworks that let us pool capacity, unblock bottlenecks, and deliver faster and better for communities. In Mafube, the Council took the responsible decision in the previous financial year to regazette certain MIG projects to Fezile Dabi District

Municipality (FDDM) due to implementation challenges. Our task, as the implementing agent, was to complete those projects diligently and hand them over—as assets—back to the local municipality. That is exactly what has now happened. Assets planned, procured, delivered, tested, and handed over.

On the day, cooperative governance was not a line on a page—it was working, shoulder to shoulder, across all three spheres: national, provincial, and local. The MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Mr Saki Mokoena, joined the Executive Mayor of Fezile Dabi, Cllr Dennis Khasudi, the Mayor of Mafube, Cllr Tlhoare Motsoeneng, members of Parliament, councillors, officials, engineers, and—importantly—residents. Together we moved from site to site with a simple refrain: “see, touch and witness.” If government says it has delivered, people must be able to see it, feel it, and use it.

2) What We Handed Over—And Why It Matters

The programme covered multiple sites and functions that directly affect quality of life and local economic prospects: Water security: refurbished pump stations and borehole schemes to stabilise supply in water-stressed areas (including the Dwelling/Tweeling cluster). Where people have spent months “making a plan” for drinking water, reliability is not an abstract concept—it is dignity. Sanitation and environmental health: a sewer pipe bridge solution to curb spillage into streams, along with manhole level corrections and connections to ensure proper flow to pump houses and treatment works. When sewage runs in streets or into rivers, everyone downstream pays the price. Fixing that is both a public-health and an inter-municipal imperative. Youth and community infrastructure: upgrades at Zomba Sports Ground (Namahadi)

Editorial Note

to secure and prepare the facility for progressive, phased development—so schools, clubs and young people have a safe place to train, play, and build community cohesion.

The total value of the projects visited on the day was over R14 million in MIG funding, benefitting an estimated 20,000 households and delivering more than 50 work opportunities during implementation.

That is not the end of the story. As our national partners from the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG) and the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) indicated, Mafube’s 2025/26 MIG allocation is about R19 million, and an additional Schedule 6 grant (circa R19 million over two years) has been signed to support critical wastewater refurbishment.

This additional Schedule 6 grant for the refurbishment of waste water treatment works will be implemented by MISA, not us. These interventions go hand-in-hand with capacity building, technical training, and on-site coaching for municipal officials and artisans—because bricks and pipes alone do not sustain services; skills and institutions do.

Let us also be very honest: some of these sites are “first-phase” milestones. At Zomba, for example, we fenced and levelled the ground within the R1.4 million budget envelope to create a secure, protected platform for subsequent phases (ablutions, change rooms, seating, kiosk, drainage and turfing). This is prudent project sequencing: secure the perimeter, then build inwards. The fence itself is as much a long-term investment as what it encloses—if we do not protect it, we will spend our limited budgets rebuilding the same assets, over and over.

3. “Come and See”: On Verification, Media Freedom, and Public Accountability

I want to address, directly and calmly, the noise that has circulated about “projects that don’t exist.” As the district, we invited all media houses, including those who had published the harshest criticisms, to come on site and verify, with their own eyes and cameras, what is on the ground.

Some came. Others did not. Let me be clear: we welcome scrutiny. We are a public institution, funded by public money, and we work for the public good. When people say, “prove it,” we say, “Here are the coordinates. Let’s go.” Accountability is not a press release; it is a site visit, a pump switch that turns,

a tap that runs, and a sports ground that opens its gates to kids on a Saturday morning. We will continue to load project details onto accessible platforms, we will publish photo logs and “as-built” summaries after completion, and we will keep saying: “see, touch, and witness.”

Regarding the specific borehole allegation that R6.44 million was “drilled and equipped at the municipal manager’s private property”: the claim is false, malicious, and flatly contradicted by the physical reality on the ground in Mafube.

The boreholes are where they are supposed to be—in communities, connected to communal reticulation. We again invite any sceptical reader to visit the sites, with technical staff present, to inspect the infrastructure and verify the records. We have nothing to hide, and everything to gain from public confidence restored by fact.

Freedom of the press is non-negotiable in a democracy. So, too, is the freedom of the public to demand evidence—and to get it in the open. Our stance is simple: engage us. Ask for documents, ask for the geolocations, ask to be shown valves, manifolds, meters and panels. We will gladly accommodate. Editorial integrity and public confidence thrive on the same nutrient: truth, verified.

4. How We Deliver: Governance, Finance, and the Law

The Constitution and the Municipal Systems and Structures Acts set the foundation for intergovernmental cooperation. Section 41 speaks to cooperative governance and IGR; Section 88 charges districts and locals to support one another, including with technical and administrative capacity. The MIG framework channels national funding to municipalities to provide basic services—water, sanitation, roads, and community infrastructure—prioritising poor households and areas with historic backlogs.

In Mafube, the context included a Section 139(5)(a) NC intervention, and the regazetting of specific projects to FDDM for implementation within strict timeframes. The district did not “take” projects; Mafube Council assigned them to us—formally, lawfully, and transparently—because that was the best way to protect the allocation and deliver benefits to residents without further delay. Our duty as the district was not to “own” projects; it was to deliver them and hand them back as serviceable assets with documentation, warranties, and training to local operations teams.

This is what cooperative governance

looks like when it is working:

National provides the framework, funding and oversight (MIG, Schedule 6, DCoG).

Province leads political stewardship, inter-sphere alignment, and targeted support (CoGTA and Human Settlements). District unblocks, implements and mentors where capacity is thin. Local plans, consults through the IDP, operates and maintains assets day-to-day, and is ultimately accountable to the community.

5. The Economics of Service Delivery: Maintenance Is Non-Negotiable

A pump station works today because it was rebuilt, rewired, re-valved, and tested yesterday. It will work next year only if we budget for spares, protect it against vandalism, pay for electricity, monitor performance, and respond to faults fast. The same is true for sports grounds, sewer bridges, and borehole schemes. The biggest single risk to our new assets is not “politics”—it is neglect. That is why, together with Mafube, we have emphasised the following basics: Security and Access Control at critical sites (fencing, lighting, alarms, locks, and local stewardship structures). Preventive Maintenance Schedules that are actually followed—lubrication, meter readings, chlorination checks, backwashing, and timely replacement of sacrificial parts. Operator Training and Mentorship, backed by MISA’s accredited programmes, to ensure hands know what to do when gauges sag or noise levels spike. Spare-Parts and Chemical Supply Plans to avoid the slow death of critical assets through “waiting for quotes.” Budget Discipline that ring-fences O&M expenditure for water and sanitation first, because nothing else works if basic services fail. Community Compacts to reduce vandalism and theft. Infrastructure survives when residents treat it as theirs—because it is.

Let me add a point that is difficult but honest: payment for services is part of sustainability. We know many households are struggling. We also know that without a culture of payment (with indigent support for the most vulnerable), municipalities simply cannot keep pumps turning or garbage trucks rolling. We will continue to expand indigent registers, improve billing accuracy, and offer flexible arrangements—but we must all pull in the same direction.

Service delivery is a partnership.

6. Youth, Dignity and the Social Fabric

A sports ground is not just a fence and a field. It is a statement that young people belong in public space; that they deserve safe places to run, play, train, and dream; that schools and clubs can build identity and discipline around healthy competition.

The MEC was right: once you secure the perimeter, open the gates. Let kids and schools use the facility. Program it.

Animate it. The more a community uses a space, the safer and cleaner it stays.

In the months ahead, we will work with Mafube, schools, SAPS, community-sport organisations and sponsors to: formalise a Sports Ground Users Forum for scheduling, caretaking and small-

works volunteering; explore learnerships in turf management, groundskeeping and event operations; and pilot weekend leagues that tie sport to reading corners, career days, and wellness checks.

Service delivery must be about people—especially about young people who will inherit our successes and our mistakes.

7. Agriculture, Industry and the Vaal River City Region

Mafube sits in an agricultural heartland with strategic links to the Vaal River system and the neighbouring district economy. The MEC emphasised this bigger picture: if local government functions, the region can leverage its land, water, logistics, and agro-processing opportunities. But if sewage flows into rivers, that success is undermined everywhere downstream. That is why wastewater upgrades and sewer network rehabilitation are not merely local chores—they are regional growth enablers.

The forthcoming district-to-district engagements around the Vaal River City Region are an opportunity to place Mafube’s needs and strengths on the same map as investment pipelines, transport corridors, land-release programmes, and training hubs. Fezile Dabi will go into those engagements not as a supplicant but as a strategic partner, with credible plans and a record of delivery that we are rebuilding, brick by brick.

8. On Politics: Service First, Labels Later

Much has been made—more outside community meetings than inside—of the political colours of people who spoke on the day. Our MMC for Infrastructure, Cllr Nick Müller, was explicit: our role was to monitor, evaluate workmanship, and learn fast under tight timeframes to get projects done right. The Executive Mayor, Cllr Dennis Khasudi, appealed to communities to protect assets and resist the destructive impulse to burn what belongs to all when anger flares. The Mayor of Mafube, Cllr Tlhoare Motsoeneng, was candid about historic challenges and equally clear that regazetting to the district was a practical choice to avoid losing funds and to push delivery across the line.

If there is a politics worth defending, it is this: deliver the basics, together. Let the scoreboards be measured in megalitres pumped, hours of water availability, reduced sewer spills, fewer complaints logged, more children on pitches, and more local jobs created through maintenance contracts. Residents can argue ideology at the ballot box. Our day-to-day duty is service.

9. A Word to the Media

To the colleagues in the press: you are essential to democracy. Come to site. Ask uncomfortable questions. Phone the engineers. Read the close-out reports. Visit at night when vandalism is rife. Track the data, not just the soundbites. When you publish corrections—and everyone must, sometimes—make them as prominent as the original headline. We will continue to brief openly. In turn, we ask that criticism be anchored in verifiable facts and that every allegation be tested against the public record and the physical world.

For those who declined invitations to attend and verify: our door remains open. The projects will still be there tomorrow, next week, and the week after that. The best story, always, is the true one.

10. Gratitude Where It’s Due

The list is long because delivery is a team sport: MEC Saki Mokoena for walking the line between policy, oversight and practical encouragement—and for insisting on “see, touch, and witness.” Executive Mayor Dennis Khasudi for steady political leadership at district level. Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng and the Mafube Council and Administration for choosing cooperation over pride, and for recommitting to operations and maintenance. MMC Nick Müller for relentless monitoring and adherence to quality and timelines. MISA (Chief Engineer George J.) for technical support, training pathways and honest feedback when things get tough. DCoG (represented by Ms Sylvia) for both MIG and Schedule 6 backing, and for insisting that impact be measured in households served and jobs created. Consultant and contractor teams who stuck to scope, kept safety top of mind, and finished within envelope.

Community members who welcomed us, asked hard questions, and reminded us that infrastructure either works in a kitchen tap and a ball field—or it does not yet count.

11. Our Social Compact: Protect, Pay, Participate

If you take nothing else from this editorial, please take this: these assets are yours. We built them with public money entrusted to us. To keep them working we need three behaviours, as normal and as unglamorous as breathing:

Protect: report vandalism and theft immediately; discourage it actively; support local watch structures around critical sites. Pay: where you are able, pay for services; where you cannot, register as indigent honestly; where the bill is wrong, help us fix it; where the system fails, give us a chance to correct it. Participate: attend ward meetings, join users’ forums, volunteer for clean-ups and minor works days, and help us catch leaky taps before they become burst mains.

We will match that with transparent reporting, quick fault response, and a continued insistence that procurement favours value, quality, and local job creation—not rent-seeking.

12. Correcting the Record Patiently and Publicly

I began by emphasising the unitary character of our state. Let me close that loop.

Because we are one country, the success of Mafube is the success of Fezile Dabi, and the success of Fezile Dabi is the success of the Free State. A sewage overflow in one town is a river crisis downstream. A stolen motor at one pump station is a water outage for a whole community. A vandalised fence is a youth programme cancelled on Saturday morning. Conversely, a refurbished pump station is a weekend with water on, a repaired sewer is a street without stench, and a secured ground is a

hundred boys and girls playing in safety. To those who peddled the story that boreholes were drilled on private property: you are invited—again—to come and walk the sites with us. Bring your camera.

Bring your readers. Bring your measuring wheel if you like. See, touch, witness, and then write the truth. We will be there, not with lawyers and threats, but with valves, flow meters and site logs.

Facts have a way of ending arguments.

13. Looking Forward

Over the next year, our joint priorities with Mafube and provincial/national partners will be to: Consolidate water reliability by integrating borehole output with reservoir management and load-shedding mitigation, using practical energy schedules and backup arrangements where affordable. Eliminate chronic sewage hotspots through targeted pipe relays, manhole raising, and outfall upgrades tied to the treatment capacity coming online. Institutionalise maintenance with a visible “Green-Dot” checklist system posted at each site (date of last inspection, faults found, parts replaced, next service due). Publish quarterly dashboards—not pretty posters, but plain, auditable numbers that allow residents to hold us to account and allow us to course-correct in time.

We will also continue to nurture skills pipelines through MISA and SETA-aligned training, creating pathways for local youth into plumbing, electrical, water treatment, and groundskeeping. A municipality that grows its own artisans grows its own future.

14. A Final Word

On Friday, as we moved from Villiers to Namahadi to Tweeling, I was struck by something simple: people want to believe again. Not in speeches, but in switches that work. Not in blame, but in teams that arrive. Not in perfect plans, but in visible progress that holds from Monday to Monday.

My name is Siphso Thomas. I serve as the Municipal Manager of Fezile Dabi District Municipality. On behalf of our administration and political leadership, I recommit us to a style of governance that is humble, open, and relentless about basics. We will make mistakes; we will correct them. We will face storms; we will keep building. We will be criticised; we will keep inviting you to come and see.

To residents of Mafube and Fezile Dabi at large: these assets are now your assets. Guard them. Use them. Help us maintain them. And please, hold us to the promises captured on these pages

If ever you doubt that a project is real, do what we did on Friday: go there. If ever you doubt whether cooperative governance can work, look again at what is now standing in your towns. See. Touch. Witness. And then—together—maintain.

—*Siphso Thomas*

Municipal Manager Fezile Dabi District Municipality

Fezile Dabi Executive Mayor Khasudi Celebrates Completion of Key MIG Projects in Mafube



By Thobeka Makume

Fezile Dabi Executive Mayor Khasudi celebrated the completion of key Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) projects in Mafube Local Municipality during a handover event that highlighted intergovernmental cooperation and service delivery achievements in the Free State province.

Handover Event Showcases Infrastructure Milestones

On 29 August 2025, the Fezile Dabi District Municipality officially handed over several critical infrastructure projects to the Mafube Local Municipality in a ceremony that brought together leaders from all spheres of government. The event, held across the towns of Villiers, Frankfort, and Tweeling, marked the successful completion of initiatives funded through the MIG programme.

These projects address long-standing challenges in water supply, sanitation, and community facilities, ensuring better living conditions for residents in these historically underserved areas.

The day's programme began in Villiers with the handover of a refurbished pump station, designed to improve water distribution and reduce interruptions. The delegation then moved to Frankfort's Namahadi township, where the upgraded Zomba Sports Ground was unveiled, complete with new fencing to promote safe recreational spaces for the youth.

In the same area, a critical sewer pipe bridge was handed over to enhance sanitation and prevent environmental pollution from spills. The final stop was in Tweeling, where another refurbished pump station and a series of borehole projects were presented, providing reliable access to clean, drinkable water. These developments come at a crucial time for Mafube, which has faced significant financial and operational hurdles, including low revenue collection and account attachments that have demotivated staff and deterred service providers. As a result, Mafube regazetted its MIG funds to Fezile Dabi District Municipality last financial year, allowing the district to act as an implementing agent. This move ensured that the funds remained within the

community and were used effectively to deliver tangible assets.

Leaders Emphasise Unity and Service Delivery Fezile Dabi District

Municipal Manager Siphso Thomas expressed immense satisfaction with the outcomes, noting that the completed projects are now valuable assets for Mafube. "Today was a big day for the community of Mafube Local Municipality, especially those living in Frankfort, Tweeling, and Villiers," Thomas said. He clarified that the district was not merely handing over unfinished work but fully completed infrastructure that demonstrates cooperative governance across national, provincial, and local levels. Thomas highlighted how the event debunked speculations about the relationship between Fezile Dabi and Mafube, proving that their collaboration is purely focused on development. He also addressed unfounded accusations, particularly those from a recent article alleging that R6.4 million worth of boreholes were drilled and equipped on private property, such as the municipal manager's land. "Let's put it very clear: all those boreholes are being drilled and equipped here and not anywhere else. Those issues are unfounded and that information is very malicious," Thomas stated firmly.

The municipality had invited media houses, including those that published negative reports claiming the projects did not exist, to verify the work on-site, though some failed to attend.

Executive Mayor Dennis Khasudi echoed these sentiments, describing the handover as a fulfillment of the district's mandate to support local municipalities. "Today we're handing over the projects for Mafube Local Municipality. You remember the project that we engaged with the local municipality to look into how we are going to assist Mafube in terms of implementing their projects from MIG funding," Khasudi said. He specifically pointed to the 12 boreholes drilled in Tweeling, of which 9 are functional while the other 3 were for exploration purposes, which will provide drinkable water to the community, and the fenced sports ground in Namahadi, urging residents to take responsibility for maintaining these facilities.

Khasudi appealed to the community to protect the infrastructure, noting that anger often leads to damage of public assets. "This is a lifetime project that they're going to benefit from it. So service delivery has been delivered through the intergovernmental relations that we have with our CoGTA at the provincial level, us as a district together with the local municipality," he added. The mayor, whose full name is Tshediso Dennis Seun Khasudi, has been instrumental in driving these initiatives since Fezile Dabi, under Democratic Alliance (DA) leadership, took control to ensure clean governance and effective service delivery. Contributions from Key Stakeholders Mafube Local Municipality Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng expressed gratitude for the support, acknowledging the challenges that prompted the regazetting of funds.

"As Mafube Local Municipality, we are very glad for this day. We are very happy that at long last this day came. Last year, in the past financial year, we regazetted

our MIG to Fezile Dabi District Municipality because we were having certain challenges in our municipality whereby we could not implement the projects thoroughly," Motsoeneng said. He explained that minor issues remain to be finalised, leading to another regazetting for the current financial year starting in July 2025.

Motsoeneng emphasised that the focus is on service delivery, not politics, and that intergovernmental relations (IGR) allow sister departments to assist when needed.

Mafube has been under Section 139(5) intervention for several years due to its struggles, and this handover is part of efforts to consolidate support from provincial and district levels.

Nick Muller, Fezile Dabi's Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for LED, Tourism, and Infrastructure, shared his excitement about the projects' impact. "We're here in Tweeling in the Free State, just coming here at Mafube Local Municipality to just come and hand over the MIG projects that we assisted with. We assisted the local municipality in completing them and handed them back over today," Muller said. As a DA representative, he noted the time constraints due to inheriting the projects but praised the workmanship and on-time delivery.

Provincial Government's Role and Broader Vision

Free State MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs, and Human Settlements, Saki Mokoena, who officially handed over the projects, stressed that the event was about more than infrastructure—it was about delivering basic services that people can "see, touch, and witness."

"Today's handovers are not just about infrastructure, but about giving our people the basic services they rightfully deserve. Clean water, proper sanitation, and recreational facilities are the foundations of a healthy and thriving community," Mokoena said.

He brought greetings from the provincial government led by Premier Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae and underscored the unitary nature of South Africa's government, where spheres collaborate



Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng Thanks Fezile Dabi District Municipality for Ensuring Completion of Mafube MIG Projects

By Mpho Moloi

Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng Thanks Fezile Dabi District Municipality for Ensuring Completion of Mafube MIG Projects. The long-awaited handover of completed Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) projects in the Mafube Local Municipality was celebrated on Friday, 29 August 2025, when the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, supported by the Free State Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), delivered critical infrastructure upgrades to communities in Frankfort, Villiers and Tweeling.

The event, attended by district, local and provincial leaders, showcased completed water, sanitation and sports facilities that will benefit thousands of residents. Mayor Motsoeneng expressed gratitude to Fezile Dabi District Municipality for stepping in to assist Mafube, which has faced service delivery and capacity challenges.

Mayor Motsoeneng: “It’s About Services, Not Politics”

Speaking at the handover, Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng emphasised that the day marked a turning point for Mafube residents. “Now as Mafube Local Municipality we are very glad for this day. We are very happy that at long last this day came. Last year, the past financial year, we regazetted our MIG to Fezile Dabi District Municipality because we were having certain challenges in our municipality whereby we could not implement the projects thoroughly. So we opted to do the regazetting to Fezile Dabi District Municipality and they have managed to implement our projects,” he said. He confirmed that while some minor issues remain to be finalised, Mafube has again opted to channel some of its grants through the district in the current financial year to ensure delivery continues. “It’s not about politics. It’s about working hand in hand, showing that our government is at work to assist each other to render the services to the communities. Where one cannot deliver the services, the other sister department or the district municipality will have to come in handy to assist so that these services can reach our communities,” Mayor Motsoeneng added.

Projects Delivered: Water, Sanitation and Sports Facilities

The projects handed over included:

- Nine boreholes in Tweeling, providing residents with access to clean and reliable drinking water.
- Refurbished pump stations in Villiers and Tweeling to address chronic water challenges.
- Zomba Sports Ground in Frankfort’s Namahadi township, now upgraded and fenced to provide safe recreational space for young people.
- A sewer pipe bridge to improve sanitation and environmental health.

MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human



Settlements, Saki Mokoena, underscored that the handover was about more than infrastructure.

“Today’s handovers are not just about infrastructure, but about giving our people the basic services they rightfully deserve. Clean water, proper sanitation, and recreational facilities are the foundations of a healthy and thriving community. These projects reaffirm our government’s commitment to accelerate service delivery and to ensure that no community is left behind. We want our people to see, feel and touch the services,” he said.

District Manager Clears Misconceptions

Fezile Dabi Municipal Manager, Siphon Thomas, firmly rejected allegations that borehole projects were misused or diverted for private gain. “To answer this thing fully: there have been accusations or information going around to say that the R6.4 million boreholes were drilled and equipped on private property. Let’s put it very clear and open – we invited media houses here so that all can verify that the boreholes are drilled and equipped here in the communities, not anywhere else. Those issues are unfounded, and that information is very malicious,” he said. Thomas also stressed that the projects were now assets of the Mafube Local Municipality, proving that intergovernmental cooperation can deliver results for communities.

District Leadership: “A Lifetime Investment for Mafube”

District Executive Mayor Dennis Khasudi highlighted the importance of community ownership in sustaining the infrastructure.

“One of the biggest projects that has been making news is this one of the nine boreholes that were drilled in Tweeling.

The community will now be able to have drinkable water. We also handed over the fenced sports ground in Namahadi. We appeal to the community to take care and responsibility of this infrastructure. Normally, when communities are angry, the first thing they want to destroy is infrastructure. This is a lifetime project that will benefit Mafube and its people,” he said.

MMC for Infrastructure, Nick Müller, representing the Democratic Alliance in the district council, noted the challenge of completing projects under tight timelines after they were regazetted.

“Under the time constraints we did very well and have learned a lot. We look forward to future projects,” Müller said.

Provincial Government: Accountability and Future Planning

MEC Saki Mokoena also linked the projects to the provincial medium-term development plan, which focuses on inclusive growth, job creation, and stronger municipal governance. He emphasised that Mafube, long under Section 139(5)(c) intervention, is strategically important as part of the Vaal River City region and as a Free State agricultural hub.

“We need to build municipalities that are professional, accountable, and that can live up to the standards our people require. The only credibility we have is when people can see, feel and touch the services we provide,” Mokoena said.

Media Invited, Critics Absent

Municipal leaders noted that all media houses, including those that had previously reported negatively on Mafube’s projects, were invited to the handover to verify the work on the ground. However, many did not attend, missing an opportunity to confirm the visible progress made.

to execute constitutional mandates. Mokoena referenced the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), which focuses on good governance, financial sustainability, and service delivery to transform communities. Key tasks include strengthening municipal economies, improving audit outcomes, and reviewing the local government funding model to address challenges from the past 30 years.

Mokoena highlighted Mafube’s strategic role as an agricultural hub in the Free State, known as the country’s breadbasket, and its position in the Vaal River City region development. He called for continued collaboration to leverage this potential for economic growth and job creation. The MEC also addressed the end of “passive intervention” in Mafube, committing to active daily support to improve performance. “Mafube is not a lost community. It’s a community that has got a very strategic role to play within the context of our province as well as our country,” he affirmed.

Projects like the boreholes were prompted by temporary shutdowns of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which supplies water to the Vaal Dam. Initially planned for six boreholes, the initiative expanded to deliver up to 12 functional ones, exceeding expectations despite a budget of R6.4 million. The cemetery fencing in Frankfort, now 80% complete, restores dignity to sacred spaces, while road paving in Villiers improves access. These align with national efforts, with MIG allocating R19 million to the district this year.

Addressing Challenges and Looking Ahead

The handover countered malicious allegations, including claims that boreholes were non-existent or improperly located. DA national spokesperson Karabo Khakhau and others have publicly defended the projects, with site visits proving their existence. A press conference in March 2025 addressed similar concerns, reinforcing the DA’s commitment to transparency.

Fezile Dabi, established in 2000 as a category C municipality with 32 council members, has earned a reputation for good governance under Mayor Khasudi, Speaker Sidney Pittaway, and Municipal Manager Siphon Thomas. It has secured additional funding like a R19 million Municipal Systems Improvement Grant and donated over 1,000 LED streetlights to local areas for better safety. Looking forward, Fezile Dabi has been appointed as a water services implementing agent, set to expand infrastructure from the 2025/26 financial year.

Priorities include financial stability, infrastructure investment, tourism growth, disaster management, and climate change adaptation. Through the District Development Model (DDM) and partnerships with entities like the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Rand Water, and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), the district aims to sustain progress.

'Money Put to Good Use': Fezile Dabi Municipal Manager Sipho Thomas Says Mafube Projects Benefit Communities, Not Politics



good use for the benefit of its rightful owners, the community.”

Borehole Allegations Dismissed

Thomas also addressed a highly publicised article that alleged boreholes worth R6.4 million had been drilled and equipped on private property. He rejected the claims outright, calling them “malicious” and “unfounded.” “To answer this fully, all those boreholes are being drilled and equipped here in Mafube — not anywhere else,” he said. “We invited the media to come and see for themselves. The accusations are false and misleading.”

Nine boreholes have been drilled in Tweeling, providing drinkable water to communities that have long suffered from supply shortages

Mayor Khasudi: Communities Must Protect Infrastructure

Fezile Dabi Executive Mayor Dennis Khasudi said the projects marked a milestone for service delivery in the district. He appealed to residents to safeguard the new infrastructure. “One of the biggest projects making news was the drilling of nine boreholes in Tweeling. This will now provide safe, drinkable water to the community,” Khasudi said. “We also handed over the fenced Zomba Sports Ground in Namahadi. We urge communities to protect this infrastructure, because when people are angry, they often target public assets. These are lifetime projects that must be preserved.”

Oversight From Infrastructure MMC

Fezile Dabi MMC for Infrastructure, Nick Müller, explained that the projects were completed under tight timeframes after being re-gazetted to the district municipality. “From us as the Democratic Alliance, we did our best in monitoring and evaluating to ensure the workmanship was correct and the projects were completed on time,” he said. “Despite inheriting these projects late, we are proud of what was achieved and look forward to building on these lessons for the future.”

Mafube Mayor: Services Before



The Fezile Dabi District Municipality has formally handed over completed Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) projects to the Mafube Local Municipality, assuring residents that service delivery remains the priority and rejecting claims that the projects did not exist.

Municipal Manager Sipho Thomas strongly defended the work, saying the infrastructure is now valuable community assets that demonstrate transparent governance and the real benefits of intergovernmental cooperation

Media Invited, Critics Absent

In a pointed remark, Thomas noted that the municipality had invited all media houses, including those that previously published negative reports about the projects. Despite being given an opportunity to verify the completed infrastructure, some of those outlets failed to attend the handover.

“Speculations that the cooperation between Fezile Dabi District Municipality and Mafube Local Municipality had other intentions have been proven wrong,” Thomas said. “All of these projects have been completed and are now handed over as assets to Mafube. The money has been put to

Politics

Mafube Local Municipality Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng welcomed the projects, saying the regazetting decision was necessary to overcome capacity challenges in his municipality. “Last year we regazetted our MIG funding to Fezile Dabi District Municipality because we could not implement the projects thoroughly. Today, we are receiving completed projects that benefit our people,” Motsoeneng said. He confirmed that some grants for the current financial year had again been regazetted to ensure continuity. “This is not about politics. It is about service delivery and ensuring that communities receive the services they deserve.”

MEC Mokoena: ‘See, Touch and Witness’

Free State MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Saki Mokoena, described the Mafube handover as proof of effective intergovernmental relations under South Africa’s unitary system. “These handovers are not just about infrastructure, but about giving our people the basic services they rightfully deserve,” Mokoena said. “Clean water, proper sanitation, and recreational

facilities are the foundations of a healthy community. We want our people to see, feel and touch the services.”

The MEC also stressed the importance of strong municipal finances, better audit outcomes, and ethical leadership. He called for an end to “passive interventions” in struggling municipalities and urged leaders to embrace accountability.

Projects Delivered Across Mafube

The handover included a refurbished pump station in Villiers, the upgraded Zomba Sports Ground in Frankfort’s Namahadi township, a new sewer pipe bridge, and boreholes in Tweeling

These projects address critical needs:

- Water security through boreholes and refurbished pump stations.
- Recreation and youth development via the upgraded sports ground.
- Sanitation and environmental health through a new sewer pipe bridge.

A Turning Point for Mafube

The Mafube Local Municipality has been under Section 139 intervention due to persistent governance challenges. The district’s role as an implementing agent reflects efforts to stabilise municipal performance and restore confidence in local government.



Fezile Dabi MMC Muller: District Delivered Mafube Projects Within Tight Timeframes Despite Challenges



By Karabo Marifi

Fezile Dabi District Municipality MMC, Nick Müller, highlighted how the district successfully delivered key Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) projects within tight timeframes despite challenges, during a handover event to Mafube Local Municipality. The event showcased intergovernmental cooperation and service delivery achievements in the Free State.

Handover Demonstrates Resilience and Collaboration

On 29 August 2025, Fezile Dabi District Municipality officially handed over several vital infrastructure projects to Mafube Local Municipality in a multi-site ceremony across Villiers, Frankfort, and Tweeling. The event underscored the district's ability to complete these initiatives under pressure, addressing water, sanitation, and community needs funded through the MIG programme.

MMC for LED, Tourism, and Infrastructure, Nick Müller, praised the team's efforts, noting the inherited projects and the regazetting process that shortened the timeline to less than a year.

"We're here in Tweeling in the Free State at Mafube Local Municipality to hand over the MIG projects that we assisted with. We helped the local municipality complete these projects and handed them back over today. We're excited to see the impact this will have on the community.

As the Democratic Alliance, we ensured that workmanship was up to standard and that the projects were completed on time. We had less than a year to deliver because these projects were inherited by us as a district municipality and had to be regazetted. Under these constraints, we performed very well, learned a lot, and look forward to future projects," said Müller.

The programme started in Villiers with the refurbished pump station to boost water distribution, moved to Namahadi in Frankfort for the upgraded Zomba Sports Ground and a sewer pipe bridge, and concluded in Tweeling with a pump station and boreholes for reliable water access. These efforts address persistent challenges such as water shortages, especially with the planned shutdown of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project tunnel, which supplies the Vaal Dam.

Overcoming Financial and Operational Hurdles

Mafube Local Municipality has struggled with financial difficulties, including attached accounts and low revenue, making it difficult to implement projects. In the last financial year, Mafube regazetted its MIG funds to Fezile Dabi District Municipality, enabling the district to step in as implementing agent.

"As Mafube Local Municipality, we are very glad for this day. At long last, it has come. Last year, in the past financial year, we regazetted our MIG to Fezile Dabi because we were experiencing challenges that prevented us from implementing projects properly," said Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng.

Minor issues remain, prompting another regazetting for the current financial year starting July 2025.

Motsoeneng stressed that this process is about service delivery, not politics, under Section 139(5) intervention.

Fezile Dabi District Municipality, established in 2000 as a category C municipality with 32 council members, has built a strong reputation for good governance. Under Executive Mayor Tshediso Dennis Seun Khasudi, Speaker Sidney Pittaway, and Municipal Manager Siphso Thomas, the district has secured extra funding such as a R19 million Municipal Systems Improvement Grant. It has also donated over 1,000 LED streetlights to local areas, enhancing safety and reducing crime.

Leaders Address Speculations and Celebrate Achievements

Municipal Manager, Siphso Thomas, described it as a big day for residents of Frankfort, Tweeling, and Villiers.

“

Today's handovers are not just about infrastructure, but about giving our people the basic services they rightfully deserve



“Today is a big day for the community of Mafube, especially those in Frankfort, Tweeling, and Villiers. We are not just handing over projects; we are handing over completed assets to Mafube Local Municipality,” Thomas said. He highlighted cooperative governance across spheres and dismissed allegations that Fezile Dabi should not manage the projects. Addressing claims from a previous borehole article, Thomas clarified: “There have been accusations that the R6.4 million borehole project was drilled on the municipal manager’s property. Let me be clear: all boreholes were drilled and equipped within the designated sites. These claims are unfounded and malicious.” The borehole project, initially budgeted for six sites at R6.4 million, expanded to

12 functional boreholes in Tweeling and Mafahlaneng, countering water scarcity. Tendered in June 2024 and awarded in July 2024, the project included coordinates for transparency. Executive Mayor, Dennis Khasudi, urged communities to care for the new assets: “One of the projects that has been making news on social media and in newspapers is the boreholes in Tweeling. These will now provide drinkable water to the community. We also handed over the upgraded Namahadi Sports Ground, which has been fenced. I want to appeal to the community to take responsibility for this infrastructure. When communities are angry, they often target infrastructure, but these assets are for your benefit. This is a lifetime project, and service delivery has been delivered through intergovernmental relations.” **Provincial Support and Broader Vision** Free State MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and

Human Settlements, Saki Mokoena, officiated the event and emphasised the tangible benefits of the projects: “Today’s handovers are not just about infrastructure, but about giving our people the basic services they rightfully deserve. Clean water, proper sanitation, and recreational facilities are the foundations of a thriving community. These projects reaffirm our government’s commitment to accelerate service delivery and ensure that no community is left behind. We want our people to see, feel, and touch the services,” Mokoena said. He also linked the projects to the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), focusing on governance, sustainability, and support for underserved areas. Highlighting Mafube’s agricultural role, he said: “Mafube is not a lost community. It plays a strategic role in our province and in the country.” **Community Impact and Future Plans**

The handover formed part of a media tour, with journalists invited to verify progress on the ground. While some critical outlets did not attend, the district showcased additional projects such as 80% completed cemetery fencing in Frankfort for dignity, road paving in Villiers, and EPWP jobs with training for over 60 participants in safety and environmental practices. Fezile Dabi continues to partner with the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Rand Water, and Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) for anti-corruption and development initiatives. From 2025/26, the district will serve as water services agent, expanding its responsibilities. Its priorities include financial stability, infrastructure development, tourism, disaster management, and climate adaptation, all guided by the District Development Model (DDM).

Free State COGTA MEC Mokoena Commends Fezile Dabi and Mafube Cooperation in Delivering Basic Services

By Mpho Moloi

In a clear show of teamwork across government levels, the Fezile Dabi District Municipality handed over several completed infrastructure projects to the Mafube Local Municipality on 29 August 2025. The event took place in the towns of Villiers, Frankfort and Tweeling, drawing leaders from provincial, district and local government. Led by MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Teboho “Saki” Mokoena and Executive Mayor Dennis Khasudi, the handover focused on projects funded through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). These include refurbished pump stations, a upgraded sports ground, a sewer pipe bridge and borehole developments, all aimed at fixing long-standing issues with water, sanitation and recreation in the area.

The day started in Villiers with the handover of a refurbished pump station, which will help ease water shortages for local residents. The group then moved to Namahadi township in Frankfort, where young people gathered to celebrate the new Zomba Sports Ground, now fenced and ready for use. Next was the sewer pipe bridge in Frankfort, designed to improve sanitation and protect the environment from spills. The programme ended in Tweeling, where another pump station and borehole projects were officially transferred, ensuring a steady supply of clean water.

This handover comes at a key time for Mafube, which has faced tough financial and service delivery hurdles for years. With a history of low revenue collection and account attachments, the municipality has struggled to complete projects on its own. Fezile Dabi stepped in last year by having the MIG funds regazetted to them, allowing faster implementation. This year, more grants have been shifted to the district to keep services flowing while Mafube works on its recovery.

Leaders Highlight Teamwork and Community Benefits

MEC Saki Mokoena praised the partnership, calling it a real example of South Africa’s unitary government in action. “Today’s handovers are not just about infrastructure, but about giving our people the basic services they rightfully deserve,” he said. “Clean water, proper sanitation and recreational facilities are the foundations of a healthy and thriving community. These projects reaffirm our government’s commitment to accelerate service delivery and to ensure that no community is left behind. We want our people to see, feel and touch the services.”

Mokoena stressed the need for all spheres of government to work together under the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act. He noted Mafube’s strategic role as an agricultural hub in the Free State, which feeds into broader



plans like the Vaal River City region development with Gauteng.

“Mafube is not a lost community,” he added. “It has a vital part to play in our province’s economy, especially in agriculture where the Free State remains a breadbasket for the country.”

Fezile Dabi Municipal Manager Sipho Thomas echoed this, explaining that the handover proves the strong ties between the district and local

municipality.

“We are handing over completed projects which are now assets to Mafube,” Thomas said.

He addressed past rumours, including claims in media reports that boreholes worth R6.4 million were drilled on private land.

“Those issues are unfounded and

malicious. We invited media to verify, but those who wrote negative stories did not come. All boreholes are here in the community, for the community.”

Thomas highlighted how the projects show cooperative governance at work, with input from national, provincial and local

levels. He dismissed speculations of hidden motives in the partnership, saying the focus has always been on development for residents in Frankfort, Villiers and Tweeling.

Executive Mayor of Fezile Dabi, Dennis Khasudi, spoke about the borehole project in Tweeling, which has been in the spotlight on social media and newspapers. “The community of Tweeling and Mafube will now have drinkable water,” he said. Khasudi

also mentioned the sports ground in Namahadi, urging residents to protect it. “We appeal to the community to take care of this infrastructure. When people get angry, they often damage facilities first. This is a lifetime project for the benefit of everyone.”

Khasudi noted that Fezile Dabi’s help aligns with their mandate to support local municipalities. Under his leadership, the district has built a name for good governance, tackling past financial issues like R100 million in irregular spending identified by auditors. By strengthening controls and focusing on transparency, Fezile Dabi has become a model for others in the province.

Nick Muller, Fezile Dabi’s MMC for LED, Tourism and Infrastructure, shared his excitement about the projects’ impact. “We’re excited to see the difference this will make in people’s lives,” Muller said. From the Democratic Alliance’s view, he added that his team monitored the work closely to ensure quality and timely completion, even under tight deadlines after inheriting the projects.

Mafube Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng expressed deep thanks for the support.

The community of Tweeling and Mafube will now have drinkable water

“We are very glad this day has come,” he said. Motsoeneng explained that Mafube regazetted its MIG to Fezile Dabi last year due to internal challenges that blocked project rollout. “What matters most is that communities get services, even if it means working with our district or provincial partners.” He referenced Mafube’s placement under Section 139(5) intervention by the province, which mandates help from CoGTA to fix financial and governance problems. Motsoeneng assured that minor outstanding issues would be sorted soon, and the partnership would continue. “It’s not about politics; it’s about government working hand in hand to deliver,” he said. This approach fits into the District Development Model, which pushes for joined-up planning across government, traditional leaders, private sector and civil society.

Tackling Mafube’s Deep-Rooted Challenges

Mafube Local Municipality has been under provincial intervention for several years, starting with passive support but now moving to active daily involvement. A financial recovery plan highlights problems like poor revenue collection, high debt and weak institutional setup, all hurting service delivery. The municipality’s accounts have been attached in the past, scaring off service providers and leaving staff unpaid at times.

Fezile Dabi’s takeover of MIG projects, worth around R26 million this year, has been key in keeping momentum.

The borehole initiative in Tweeling, for example, drilled and equipped 12 sites, reaching 98% completion. This was vital during shutdowns of major water schemes like the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. Other efforts include paving roads in Villiers and fencing cemeteries in Frankfort, all part of restoring dignity to residents.

The Free State province as a whole faces big infrastructure backlogs, especially in rural areas. Mafube’s issues mirror wider problems, but the handover shows progress through targeted grants and partnerships.

MEC Mokoena has been active in oversight, including recalling an acting municipal manager earlier this year and seconding a new one to steady the ship.

Lasting Impact on Residents and Future Plans

These projects go beyond bricks and pipes; they empower communities, especially youth with better sports spots, and ensure basics like clean water for households. In Tweeling, the boreholes mean less reliance on unreliable sources, cutting health risks. The sewer upgrades in Frankfort will stop spills into rivers, protecting downstream areas like Metsimaholo.

Looking ahead, leaders pledged ongoing support. Mokoena called for better financial management, ethical leadership and community involvement to sustain gains. “We need to promote community-led development and restore working relationships between municipalities and residents,” he said. This includes talks with businesses to boost local economies and create jobs.

Fezile Dabi MM Sipho Thomas: Completed MIG Projects Are Now Mafube Assets Allegations Proven False on the Ground



By Thabo Mosia

The Fezile Dabi District Municipality has officially handed over completed Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) projects to the Mafube Local Municipality, confirming that the developments exist, are functional, and are now recorded as municipal assets.

Municipal Manager Sipho Thomas emphasised that critics who claimed “the projects don’t exist” were invited to verify the infrastructure on site but failed to attend.

The district’s open media tour and multi-site handovers in Villiers, Frankfort (Namahadi) and Tweeling on Friday, 29 August 2025, showcased water, sanitation, and recreational projects designed to restore public confidence and demonstrate basic services that residents can “see, feel and touch.”

‘Come and see’: open verification and transparency

The municipality made a point of inviting all media houses—including those that previously published negative claims—offering them the opportunity to inspect the infrastructure directly.

The day’s programme was structured as a transparent handover tour:

- Villiers: A refurbished pump station was delivered, strengthening water reliability.
- Frankfort (Namahadi): The upgraded Zomba Sports Ground was officially handed over, along with a sewer pipe bridge to combat spillages and protect environmental health.
- Tweeling: Borehole projects and a pump-station refurbishment were handed over, ensuring potable water supply for residents.

By opening the sites to public and media scrutiny, the district underscored its message: accountability comes through access, not speculation

Rebutting the borehole controversy

Earlier this year, widespread claims by City Press alleged that Fezile Dabi had spent R6.4 million on boreholes that “could not be accounted for,” with insinuations that one was drilled on a senior official’s private property.



District Municipal Manager Sipho Thomas dismissed these allegations in strong terms:

“There have been accusations or information going around to say that the R6.4 million was used to drill and equip boreholes at a private property.

Let’s put it very clear and open. We invited media houses here so they can see that all those boreholes were drilled and equipped in Mafube communities and not anywhere else. These allegations are unfounded and that information is very malicious.” The handover programme allowed officials to point directly to the completed boreholes and refute the allegations on the ground.

Thomas: ‘Completed projects are now assets’

Thomas highlighted that the district was not delivering unfinished work but completed projects that are now formally assets of Mafube Local Municipality. “Today is a big day for the communities of Frankfort, Tweeling and Villiers. We are not handing over projects in progress, but completed projects that are now municipal assets. What makes me extremely happy is that cooperative governance was demonstrated live, with all three spheres of government present and contributing to this work. Speculation that the cooperation between Fezile Dabi District Municipality and Mafube Local Municipality had other motives besides development has now been proven false. These projects were planned, finished, and are now handed over.”

Oversight and accountability from leadership

Executive Mayor Dennis Khasudi praised the projects, particularly the nine boreholes in Tweeling, and appealed to communities to safeguard new infrastructure: “The community of Mafube will now be able to access drinkable water. We appeal to the community to take responsibility for this infrastructure. These are lifetime projects meant to benefit the community, and they must be protected.” MMC for Infrastructure Nick Müller said the district acted as implementing agent to ensure that quality standards were met: “We monitored and evaluated workmanship to ensure projects were completed correctly and on time. Although the projects had to be re-gazetted to us, and the timeframe was short, we did well under the circumstances. We have learned a lot and look forward to future projects.

Why the district intervened

Mafube Local Municipality has been under Section 139(5) intervention due to financial and governance challenges. Under this framework, portions of its MIG funding were re-gazetted to the district to ensure service delivery. Mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng said Mafube opted to continue this arrangement:

“Our municipality faced challenges in fully implementing projects, so we re-gazetted our MIG funding to the district. Today, those projects have been completed and handed back to us.

For this financial year, we have again chosen to work with the district to resolve more of our problems. This is not about politics—it is about service delivery and ensuring that communities receive the services they deserve.”

MEC Mokoena: services residents can ‘see, feel and touch’

Free State MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and

Human Settlements Saki Mokoena underlined the province’s focus on basic services and accountability:

“Today’s handovers are not just about infrastructure, but about giving our people the basic services they rightfully deserve. Clean water, proper sanitation and recreational facilities are the foundations of a healthy community. We want our people to see, feel and touch the

services.”

Mokoena stressed that Mafube’s recovery is part of the broader Vaal River City Region economic vision, where reliable municipal services form the base for agricultural growth, investment and job creation.

Real impact for Mafube residents

- Water reliability: Boreholes and pump-station upgrades strengthen

household supply, especially during bulk-supply interruptions.

- Health protection: The sewer pipe bridge addresses chronic spillage issues that previously threatened communities and the Vaal system.
- Youth development: The Zomba Sports Ground in Namahadi provides a safe, fenced space for sport, recreation and community cohesion.

