

# City aims to put world-class ICT set-up in place

## Industry invited to put best ideas into metro plan

By **JOHANN BARNARD**  
Business Editor

NELSON Mandela Bay may soon have an overarching information and communications technology strategy and infrastructure to match leading cities like Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban.

Acting municipal manager Vuyo Zitumane yesterday called on ICT service providers to partner with the municipality to make this a reality.

She was speaking on the opening day of the Nelson Mandela Bay ICT Summit 2006, being hosted at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

"I am appealing to all of you. Come to our institution, not as competitors, and have a management meeting," she said.

"I will extend an invitation to all of you, we will outline all the ICT initiatives that we have and we will say to you: Please advise us. Are we on the right track?"

"Once you outline a comprehensive strategy for us, we will issue a huge tender and you can compete."

High-powered delegates from the ICT industry present at the summit included Dimension Data chairman Andile Ngcaba and some of his regional and group executives, Business Connexion public sector group executive Isaac Mophatlane, Microsoft director Chose Choeu, and Godisa CEO Charles Wyeth.

Zitumane's call was widely applauded, with Didata regional executive Darryl Dennis saying such an approach was long overdue. "For the sake of the city we need to do it, because we are all citizens of the city."

Zitumane also said one of the metro's Vision 2020 goals was to be globally competitive with an excellent business environment.

Allied to this vision was the metro's economic growth and development strategy that had identified the need for greater industrial diversification as a key objective.

To this end, she said, the ICT sector was the perfect vehicle for this, and was also one of the priority sectors identified in the government's Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa.

"There are many opportunities in this sector with the potential to create jobs and it is ideal for SMME growth," she said.

There was also a wide range of government support initiatives on which ICT entrepreneurs could draw.

The acting municipal manager said a number of challenges remained, of which access to capital, information and skills combined with high interest rates and high failure rates in start-up companies were the most pressing.

So the municipality had identified some interventions to drive the growth of this sector. This included the need to increase investment into the sector, enhancing technological innovation, and improving the productivity of SMEs.

Port Elizabeth's innovation hub, a project initiated by the Eastern Cape Development Corporation, which is expected to be launched soon, will go a long way to taking care of these needs.

The conference continues today. C 1/2

KEY PLAYERS



FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY  
.. Nelson Mandela Bay hopes to implement world-class information and communications technology infrastructure to support this sector and other businesses. Discussing this yesterday were acting municipal manager Vuyo Zitumane, who is pictured with the organiser of the NMB ICT Summit 2006, Pepsi Mtiya.

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