



### Live electricity cable wired across my kitchen!

Imagine having an electricity cable running through the trees in your backyard and all the way past the roof of your kitchen to the distributor board, after a temporary installation that was meant to hold for a week. That is the unfortunate situation that \*Ms. Olivia Pope now finds herself in, after more than five years of being promised a permanent replacement of the current cable by the state-owned power utility, City Power.



Source: Home Improvement

Her request was two-fold, one was to have a more secure electricity supply from a permanent system to prevent issues of tripping, while the other, was centered around the safety hazards of the identified errant, loose cables which posed an electrical risk, such as shocks and fires – a concern that has been left unattended by the utility until she sought assistance from the Office of the Ombudsman.

In her complaint, she further stated that she was unable to obtain a certificate of compliance from an electrician, which she required for insurance purposes as well as the possible sale of her property. Fearing that should anything happen due to an unforeseen electric fault; her house would ultimately not be covered by the insurance.

Our office accepted her complaint and subsequently investigated a case of maladministration due to the negligent behaviour of the city's officials and City Power was instructed to replace the temporary installation with a permanent structure to avoid endangering the lives of the occupants of the home.

This was efficiently actioned and to the satisfaction of both the complainant and our investigations team.



**Note:** Residents are urged to contact our office immediately to obtain swift assistance in such matters as transgressions of this kind, may often claim lives.

\* Not complainant's real name

### Mayor touts human rights commitments as the city “builds a stable and resilient City in service of the people.”

The core services that local government provides - *clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity, shelter, waste removal and roads* - are basic human rights and essential components to one's right to dignity as enshrined in our Constitution.

In his second State of the City Address (SOCA) delivered on 2 May 2024, the Executive Mayor of the city of Johannesburg, Cllr Kabelo Gwamanda, outlined several challenges facing the city and highlighted the urgent need to address them in his Mayoral strategic medium-term plans and priorities.



**Image 1.1** Aerial photo of Primrose (left), a middle-class suburb, and Makause (right), an informal township (slum) without streets, sewage, or running water. The neighbouring settlements lay 14 km east of Johannesburg, South Africa's largest and most affluent city. Source: Johnny Miller/ Unequal Scenes.

Redressing the inherited inequalities of our country's history, it remains notoriously difficult to keep up with the growing demand for basic provisions such as housing, partly owing to the legacy of apartheid spatial development and further exasperation of rapid urbanisation.

Today, adequate housing is seen as a panacea to many socio-economic ills facing thousands of people, a step on the ladder of upward social mobility; helping to create opportunities and reduce social impact created by homelessness particularly in the inner city.

As an office, we were pleased to hear that despite the current housing backlog, the mayor reported that the building of 10 000 rental housing units was close to completion. We acknowledge that the City is indeed making strides, adding to the handover of title deeds in Lehae, in Region G, earlier this year – giving people back, their sense of dignity.





On the issue of ensuring access to clean water and dependable electricity, the mayor acknowledged the water challenges residents recently experienced across the city, citing the difficulties the city faced when it came to providing safe clean drinking water for a rapidly urbanising population.

The mayor touched on the Brixton and Crosby bulk infrastructure projects which have a combined investment value of R512 million and are already helping mitigate the challenges of the Water Commando System, which has always been the hardest hit by water shortages because of factors such as the city's growing population and ageing infrastructure etc.

**"The City of Johannesburg currently provides water to 98.3% of households."**

He alluded to the Water Security Strategy which sought to improve water provision and quality in the city. Additionally, it is also "...geared towards addressing the threats to the city's urban water cycle while also capitalising on opportunities to transform Johannesburg into a sustainable resilient and adaptive city", particularly in the most marginalised communities such as informal settlements and rural areas, that have long been neglected.



Source: Freepik.com

While the provision of electricity is a precarious issue throughout South Africa, an added challenge is the vandalising of City Power infrastructure resulting in more protracted power cuts, lasting days and sometimes weeks in some areas. The electricity supply issue was characterised by mayoral commitments to upgrading infrastructure and ensuring sustainable delivery of electricity. The mayor highlighted innovative solutions such as repairing and bringing on line the John Ware substation on to the city's electricity grid bringing an additional 50 megawatts into the city's network, decreasing dependence on Eskom for the city's electricity supply.

As the Office of the Ombudsman, we are confident that the city is indeed moving swiftly towards the acceleration of equitable service delivery and we look forward to witnessing progress in the above mentioned key service areas.

**Celebrating 30 years of democracy under our Constitution**

Despite facing deep-rooted disparities, residents of Johannesburg have charted a course towards a fairer and more inclusive future, transforming the city from a once divided place of inequality and injustice to a symbol of hope.

As we mark 30 years of democracy, Johannesburg truly represents a story of our people and country. Through its diversity, its history, its present and its potential, our city weaves together the story of colonialism, struggle against oppression and the fundamental transformation of society.

The adoption of the South African Constitution on 8 May 1996 was one of the turning points in the history of the struggle for democracy in South Africa and is considered by many as one of the most advanced in the world - with a Bill of Rights second to none.

As we approach the national and provincial elections scheduled for 29 May 2024, the Office of the Ombudsman wishes to encourage every registered voter in the City of Johannesburg to participate in this pivotal democratic process in the hope of choosing an even better life for themselves and families.

Visit <https://www.elections.org.za/pw/> for more information.

**NEW APPOINTMENTS**

Our office is pleased to welcome the following new recruits to our Ombudsman Ambassador Programme, who will be #atyourreach in the CoJ regional offices from May 2024:

- Aluwani Lehlokota
- Given Ntsienda
- Angel Maraba
- Lihle Mhlangula
- Basetsana Makgamatho
- Unathi Mbulawa
- Evile Dhlamini
- Khanyisile Ndlela
- Peter Nkuna
- Kamogelo Molepo
- Neo Mudau
- Isaac Lekgothoane
- Tebello Maduna
- Nicole Modise
- Refilwe Huma

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