

MEDIA STATEMENT

ATTENTION: EDITORS AND JOURNALIST

23 October 2026

MATATIELE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY REJECTS MISLEADING CLAIMS OF EMPLOYEES BEING LOCKED OUT OF MUNICIPAL OFFICES

Matatiele Local Municipality categorically rejects the false and misleading claims that its employees were locked out of municipal offices. The Municipality wishes to set the record straight that no employees were denied access to their workplace, and the portrayal of the incident as a lockout is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. The municipal offices remained accessible, and employees were never locked out or denied entry. Instead, employees were directed to use an alternative side entrance to enable them to record their attendance. This was a normal administrative arrangement and did not prevent employees from accessing their workplace or performing their duties.

It must be further emphasised that late reporting for duty is not a significant challenge within the institution. Monitoring employee attendance remains part of normal administrative responsibilities aimed at promoting accountability and effective service delivery. The municipality is particularly concerned about the taking and circulation of an image on social media, which subsequently attracted media attention without adequately reflecting the circumstances surrounding the incident. This contributed to an exaggerated and misleading impression of an ordinary administrative measure.

Contrary to suggestions of strained labour relations, the Municipality continues to maintain constructive working relationships with organised labour through established structures, including the Local Labour Forum (LLF). This was further demonstrated through a cordial engagement between municipal management and union leadership on 20 October 2026. At the centre of the municipality's developmental agenda are its employees, whom it values as the backbone of the institution and the driving force behind service delivery. The municipality recognises that fulfilling its mandate depends on a committed, motivated and supported

workforce. It therefore remains dedicated to fostering a positive working environment founded on mutual respect, employee well-being and constructive labour relations. In keeping with this commitment, the municipality will host a Prayer Session, Employee Wellness and Social Engagement Programme on 30 October 2026, aimed at strengthening working relationships, promoting employee well-being and fostering institutional unity. While the municipality considers it important to correct misleading information, its primary focus remains on improving the lives of communities. Matatiele Local Municipality is an institution hard at work, implementing programmes, strengthening partnerships and creating opportunities that contribute to local economic growth, social development and improved service delivery.

In advancing this agenda, the municipality is developing the Friends of Matatiele initiative, aimed at mobilising investment, partnerships, professional expertise and resources to unlock economic opportunities and position Matatiele and surrounding areas as an attractive destination for development. This commitment is further demonstrated through the municipality's partnership with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA), which recently concluded a training programme benefiting 100 informal traders. Each beneficiary will receive support towards purchasing trading stock valued at R3 000, representing a combined investment of R300 000 in strengthening local enterprises. Equally important is the municipality's commitment to promoting social cohesion and a peaceful democratic environment. In this regard, the municipality is preparing to host a Political Tolerance Session on 25 October 2026, bringing together political parties represented in Council to promote mutual respect and peaceful democratic participation ahead of the Local Government Elections.

Matatiele Local Municipality remains committed to sound labour relations, institutional stability, accountability and effective service delivery. The municipality will continue directing its efforts towards programmes and interventions that advance development and improve the well-being of communities across Matatiele and surrounding areas.

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