



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE,  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

**Keynote Address by the MEC for CoGHSTA, Mr. Basikopo Makamu**  
**On the Occasion of the Department's First Research Day**  
**Theme: "Innovative Governance for Inclusive and Sustainable Communities"**  
**04 December 2025 | The Ranch Hotel**

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## **1. Opening and Welcome**

Program Director

Our esteemed researchers,

Our partners from SAAPAM,

Our Traditional Leaders,

Our colleagues from municipalities,

SALGA,

Our Academic Institutions,

Our dedicated officials,

Our Sponsors

Every one of you here today—a very warm welcome.

It is a true honour to stand before you on this historic day—the very first Research Day for the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs. Today is more than a calendar event; it is a declaration of intent. Today, we are planting a seed—a seed of knowledge, of evidence, of new thinking. For a few precious hours, we shift our gaze from the urgent demands of service delivery to the vital work of deep thinking and learning.

**Why are we here? You may wonder, "Why a Research Day?"** The answer is simple: our world is changing at breath-taking speed, and with it, the challenges facing our communities grow ever more complex. To meet those challenges effectively, we cannot rely on the playbook of yesterday. We must become agile—quick to understand developments on the ground, quick to adapt our policies, and quick to pioneer fresh solutions.



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An agile department is, at its core, a learning department. It is a department that asks, “What does the evidence tell us?” before we act. It is one that collaborates across traditional boundaries, that seeks out new ideas, and that empowers every member of the team with knowledge. This Research Day is a fundamental building block of that vision. It is our public commitment that in CoGHSTA we value facts, we welcome innovation, and we are serious about building a culture of continuous learning.

Our theme today—**“Innovative Governance for Inclusive and Sustainable Communities”**—is our north star. To bring it to life, we have organized our discussions around four critical pillars:

**1. Transforming Local Government for the 21st Century.**

Our municipalities must become more responsive, more effective, and truly ready for the future. We will explore new models of decentralization, citizen engagement platforms, and performance management systems that turn good intentions into real, on-the-ground impact.

**2. Inclusive Human Settlements and Housing Development.**

Access to safe, decent housing is not a privilege—it is a human right. Today we examine strategies that leave no one behind: mixed-income developments, eco-friendly building techniques, community-driven planning, and financing mechanisms that unlock possibilities for every family.

**3. The Evolving Role of Traditional Leadership.**

Traditional authorities remain a cornerstone of social cohesion in our rural areas. We will discuss how to strengthen partnerships among traditional councils, municipal officials, and civil society—so that



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when local issues arise, we face them together, blending centuries-old wisdom with modern governance tools.

**4. Service Delivery Innovation and Technology.**

Data and digital tools can transform the way we serve our people—making our processes faster, smarter, and more transparent. From mobile service kiosks to GIS-enabled planning, from citizen feedback apps to AI-driven analytics, we will explore technologies that help us anticipate needs, allocate resources more efficiently, and measure our impact in real time.

The insights we gather under these four pillars will directly support our Constitutional mandate. They will help us serve our communities with greater precision, speed, and dignity.

But none of this would be possible without extraordinary teamwork and partnership. I extend my sincere thanks to the **Directorate of Strategic Planning, Research, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Communications** for driving this initiative. Your dedication has turned an idea into reality. Our collaboration with the **South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM)** has brought invaluable expertise and research talent to our doorstep—thank you for shaping the agenda and for enriching our discussions.

We are also grateful to the private sector champions who believed in our vision. Thank you to **MTN South Africa** for providing this excellent venue. Thank you to **Toyota Polokwane** for your generous support, and to **Microsoft** for coming on board. Your partnership demonstrates what is possible when government, academia, and business unite behind a shared purpose.

To the **University of Limpopo and the Tshwane University of Technology**—thank you for your vibrant exhibitions. Your research sparks

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our imagination and points the way forward. **And most importantly, to our researchers: you submitted 36 abstracts and 28 full papers—each one a testament to your commitment and expertise.** You are the heartbeat of today's event. We are here to listen, learn, and act on your insights.

**So what is my charge to all of us over the next hours?**

**To our presenters and panellists:** Speak boldly. Challenge our assumptions. Give us the evidence we need to make smarter decisions.

To all our officials and guests: Listen with an open mind. Ask tough questions. Engage actively in every breakaway session. Connect with the researchers. Your mission is simple but profound: find at least one idea, one piece of data, or one new partner that you can take back to your desk to transform your work.

We have appointed scribes for each session to demonstrate our commitment to implementation. Their notes will be compiled into a comprehensive report for submission to our Executive Council and Management Committee. The concepts generated here will not gather dust on a shelf; they will guide our strategic initiatives, inform our policy development, and inspire pilots that deliver real benefits to the people of Limpopo. Moreover, we aspire to set a benchmark for other departments at the provincial and national levels, and to publish exemplary papers with the support of **SAPAAM**.

**In closing**, let us make this day count. Let us move from simply having information to wielding actionable knowledge. Let us break down the silos that limit us and build powerful collaborations that lift us all. Let us go beyond talking about innovation and become an innovative, agile, and learning department.

Today, we plant the seed. Let us nurture it together so that it grows into a stronger, more effective CoGHSTA—one that builds truly inclusive and sustainable communities for all the people of Limpopo. I am excited to learn



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with you, to be challenged by you, and to see the remarkable ideas that emerge from this gathering.

It is my great pleasure to declare this inaugural CoGHSTA Research Day officially open.

**Thank you, and let us get started!**