

As we move into July, we cannot help but bask in the glory generated by our successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. We have redefined people's expectations of what we are capable of and impressed the world's naysayers. There has never been a better time to be proudly South African.

Like most corporates and government offices, our Office has been caught up in the whirlwind of the event, and time has passed in a blur. We are ending off a thrilling financial year and hope that next one brings a new awareness for communities of their rights.

If you have any comments or suggestions about what you would like to read in the next newsletter, feel free to contact us.

Until the next issue!

**Natasha Pause**

Office of the City Ombudsman

**In this issue:**

- [The World Cup comes to Cape Town!](#)
- [A day in the life of an Investigation Officer](#)
- [Better service delivery](#)
- [Ombudsing: Paving a way for policy changes](#)
- [Statistics for the period](#)
- [Top three tips for consumers](#)

**The World Cup comes to Cape Town!**

The 'Feel it, it's here!' slogan that has been posted on every available space (it seemed!) throughout Cape Town during the World Cup period embodies what the 2010 FIFA World Cup means to us. The vibe, spirit and culture generated by the event has been matched only by the pride we feel in hosting it as millions of people around the globe tune in to watch how we're doing.



**Cape Town's newest asset: Cape Town Stadium**

At the Office, staff are showing their 'gees' by wearing their soccer T-shirts on 'Football Fridays' and by decorating the office in soccer memorabilia. We also joined the world in watching our national team score the first goal of the first match in the tournament. It was a defining moment that united our nation in hope, and even though Bafana Bafana didn't make it to the next round, they went out with their heads held high.

Thanks to the World Cup, many more people are now football supporters, we have a world class public transport infrastructure, and we can congratulate ourselves for successfully hosting a month long tournament that has attracted more attention than anything else in our history. Millions of people around the world have gotten to see Brand Cape Town, and hundreds of thousands are experiencing it for themselves. Many of them plan to return, either for a holiday, or for business purposes. Most importantly, however, perceptions are changing. South Africa's diverse population has proved to the world that we can unite irrespective of race, creed or allegiance. And moreover, that there's nothing we can't do!



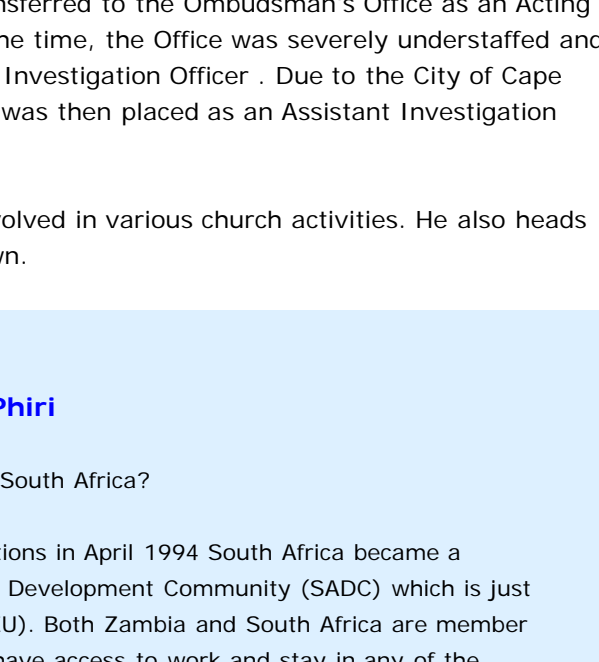
**The Fan Walk, a 2,4 km pedestrian walkway to Cape Town Stadium**

**A day in the life of an Investigation Officer**

David Phiri is employed as an Assistant Investigation Officer in the Office of the City Ombudsman. His role is to investigate complaints of injustice raised by members of the public against the administration and to facilitate their resolution by means of either a formal investigation or by alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

*"My function as an Investigation Officer in the Ombudsman's Office is to receive and investigate complaints and submit reports and recommendations to relevant departments and the complaints on the outcome of the investigations."*

David was born on 3 September 1946 in Mambwe (previously known as Fort Jameson), a district of Zambia (previously known as Northern Rhodesia). He held various positions in the country's Department of Home Affairs, most notably as Assistant District Registrar. He later resigned and went to Lusaka to complete a diploma in Personnel Administration, after which he found employment in the Local Authorities in 1973 as an Administrative Officer, rising to the post of Deputy Town Secretary (Chief Administrative Officer) until his resignation. In December 1981 he took up the post of Personnel Manager in the Co-operation Union (a union body at provincial government level). He enrolled in a full-time diploma course in Adult Education at the University of Zambia during 1990 to 1992. In 1993 he emigrated from Zambia to Botswana where he found employment on a three-year contract as Co-ordinator of a Development Trust. The project was aimed at developing youth skills in carpentry, building and the electrical and mechanical fields and was fully funded by the Government of Botswana.



**David Phiri, Assistant Investigation Officer, Office of the City Ombudsman**

On termination of the contract he decided to move to Cape Town in May 1995 where he began working as an Administrative Assistant in the Directorate of Human Resources at the City of Cape Town

In February 2001 he was seconded to the Directorate of Information Technology Services and in March 2004 was transferred to the Ombudsman's Office as an Acting Senior Administrative Assistant. At the time, the Office was severely understaffed and David performed the functions of an Investigation Officer. Due to the City of Cape Town's restructuring programme he was then placed as an Assistant Investigation Officer in December 2006.

David is a devout Catholic and is involved in various church activities. He also heads up the Zambian Society in Cape Town.

**One-on-one with David Phiri**

Why did you decide to move to South Africa?

"Soon after the Democratic elections in April 1994 South Africa became a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which is just like the European Community (EU). Both Zambia and South Africa are member states of SADC and its citizens have access to work and stay in any of the SADC countries. After working in Botswana for three years I decided to move to South Africa and contribute to the development and share my skills in the Local Authority Administration."

What was it like living in Zambia?

"Zambia was colonised by the British until 24 October 1964 when it gained its independence. During that period the Government embarked on a free education system from Grade 1 up to Grade 12, making it possible for anyone to pursue a tertiary education. Copper was booming on the world markets and generally, the cost of living was very low and affordable up until 1985 when the country's economic trend declined. However, Zambians worked hard to survive. The national economy was diversified to agricultural production from copper dependence."

What are your plans after retirement?

"Although I am due to retire from Council employment in a couple of months, no decision has yet been made where I should settle. We have lived in Cape Town for the past 16 years and raised all our children here. Most of them have attained their tertiary education and are working here or abroad. The interest of the children comes first in whatever decision we make."

Tell me more about your family

"I am a father of seven\* children: one is residing in Canada, one in the United States of America and the rest are living in Cape Town. Most of the younger children are still pursuing their studies here. My wife is a stay-at-home mom and home maker."

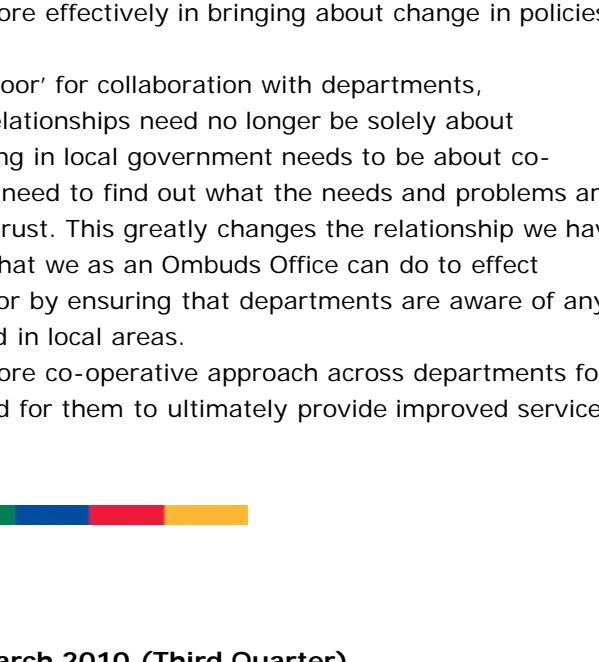
Any future plans?

"After working for the past 45 years continuously, I feel most honoured and privileged to serve members of the public in the Ombudsman's Office in Cape Town, where I am able to fully utilise my broad experience in local government. My work history spans 24 years in Zambia, Botswana and South Africa. I have no doubt that I will use my more than seven years' experience in the Ombudsman's Office and hope to write books on the concept of the Ombudsman's scheme for the good of those who practise and have developed an interest in serving in the Ombudsman's scheme internationally. I also hope to continue to profess the concept of ombudsing in various forums and to continue to be of service to 'people with no voice' in search of justice and fairness from the Administration."

\* David has since lost his youngest son in a tragic accident. Our thoughts are with him and his family during this difficult time.

**Better service delivery, that's what we need ....**

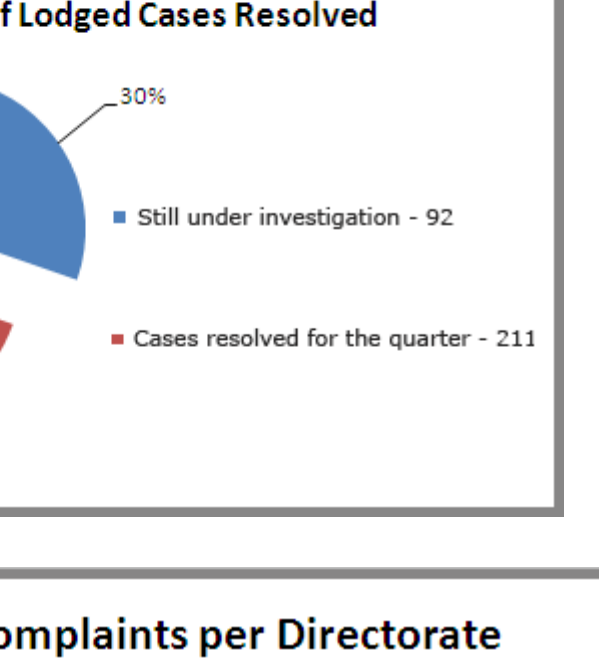
The Office of the City Ombudsman hosted a series of information sessions at the Brooklyn Library and Parkwood Clinic in the first half of 2010, where it quickly became apparent that, despite their diverse nature, each of these communities needs improved local government service delivery as a matter of urgency.



**Parkwood Residents being addressed by City Ombudsman staff and the local councillor, George Maart**

The Brooklyn community, which is situated in the northern part of Cape Town, welcomed the information sessions, and were very interested in our services. This middle class community has problems with crime and substance abuse and experiences delays in local government service delivery. Many have heard of the Ombudsman and were happy to hear that our service is provided free of charge.

Parkwood is a relatively poor community in the southern suburbs that is plagued with social problems such as unemployment, drugs, teenage pregnancies and health problems such as TB and asthma. The community's main complaints were the lack of maintenance work on rental housing stock and how it affects the health of the elderly and the children. Many of those present at the session were women. The local ward councillor welcomed the idea of working towards the greater good of overcoming problems in the area and better service delivery.



**Mandlenkosi Mgoogose, Compliance Officer, Office of the City Ombudsman and Councillor George Maart addresses the community members at the Parkwood Clinic**

The way forward for the Office is to have regular follow-up sessions in the communities we have visited and to promote our presence, especially in areas where community members cannot afford to come to our Office in the Cape Town Civic Centre. We hope to assist communities such as these in bringing about improved service delivery in the areas that need them most.



**Clarissa Williams, Ombuds Officer, Office of the City Ombudsman, engaging with members of the community**

We would like to thank the staff at the Brooklyn Library and Parkwood Clinic for hosting us and going the extra mile.

**Is ombudsing paving a way for policy changes?**

Is ombudsing paving the way for policy changes or is it merely considered a 'toothless animal' as argued by some? There is the perception that it is not possible for our Office to be impartial due to the fact that we are employed by the municipality and that we can only make recommendations to line departments.

The City Ombudsman handles cases which fall within the boundaries of the City of Cape Town. The Office uses advocacy as a means to create a 'new' awareness, and ensures that policies which affect communities negatively are re-drafted, or makes recommendations on new policies. There are a variety of advocacy strategies, such as discussing problems directly with the relevant stakeholders, partners or policy makers and delivering messages through awareness campaigns and the media.

Advocacy is an approach that is used around the world to influence people and policies. Firstly, it is primarily about influencing. Many people have a preconceived idea or notion about what they believe the Office is all about. Secondly, advocacy is a planned process, involving intentional actions. Our Office plans which communities we will be targeting in our Advocacy programmes at the beginning of a financial year, and we are therefore clear as to whom we are trying to reach. In this way, we are able to make a greater impact. Advocacy can be a powerful tool as it assists the Office in being able to educate communities and departments by changing mindsets and preconceived notions.

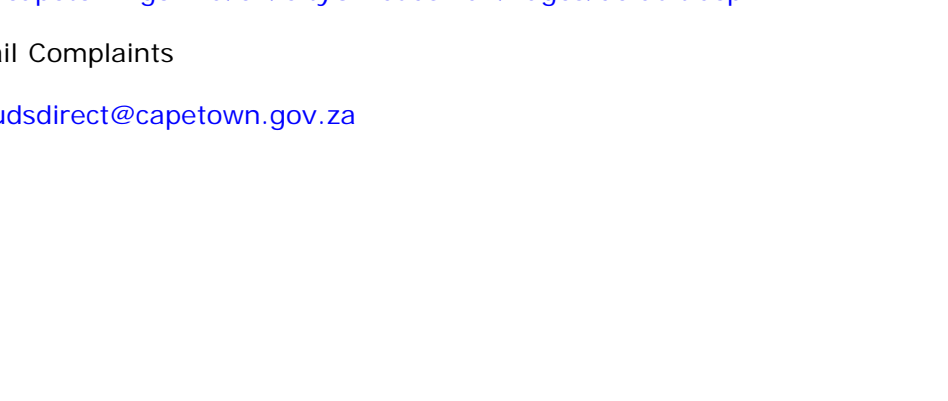
The Office of the City Ombudsman has a unique hybrid approach to ombudsing and is dependent on building relationships with people, line departments, councillors, NGOs and most importantly, the communities we provide a service to. It is vitally important that in doing so, we are able to make significant inroads with improved levels of service delivery and are also able to work together more effectively in bringing about change in policies.

There needs to be more of an 'open door' for collaboration with departments, stakeholders and the public so that relationships need no longer be solely about complaints and faultfinding. Ombudsing in local government needs to be about co-operative effort. On the one hand we need to find out what the needs and problems are in communities and gain the public's trust. This greatly changes the relationship we have with them. We also need to look at what we as an Ombuds Office can do to effect change, either through policy reform or by ensuring that departments are aware of any service delivery problems encountered in local areas.

In my opinion, there needs to be a more co-operative approach across departments for any future changes to be effective and for them to ultimately provide improved services to all communities.

**Statistics for the period**

**January to March 2010 (Third Quarter)**



**Number of Complaints per Directorate**



**April to June 2010 (Fourth Quarter)**



**Number of Complaints per Directorate**



**Top three tips for consumers!**

1. **Check your municipal account every month to check for irregularities.**  
If your water account seems higher than usual for a particular month, it could be due to a leak or error in the reading.
2. **Apply every year!**  
If you are receiving an indigent grant or rebate you must apply each year before 31 July.
3. **Act quickly!**  
If you fall behind on your payments, make an appointment with the respective department as soon as possible before you are unable to afford the arrear payments and the mounting interest.

**Contact us**

You can contact the Office of the City Ombudsman on 021 400 5487 or visit our website

[www.capetown.gov.za/en/CityOmbudsman/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/CityOmbudsman/Pages/default.aspx)

E-mail Complaints

[ombudsdirect@capetown.gov.za](mailto:ombudsdirect@capetown.gov.za)