

impact



Some of the team members of Atlantis Search and Rescue, founded almost three years ago to conduct searches and investigations aimed at locating missing individuals. Operating on a volunteer basis, means the organization often faces major challenges, including limited resources and equipment. Despite these obstacles, they forge ahead, providing a much-needed service to the community.

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Joshlin's case should be wake-up call for everyone...

In the Joshlin Smith case earlier this month, the Western Cape High Court found Kelly Smith, Jacquin Appollis, and Steveno van Rhyn guilty of kidnapping and human trafficking. Their sentencing, due for the end of this month, is expected to result in life imprisonment. Despite the convictions, the little girl remains missing, leaving a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the case. "Joshlin's story must be the turning point that forces us all—parents, educators, and leaders—to take child protection seriously and to act before it is too late," says Stephanie Kraak, a mother and teacher from Mamre.

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Rescue organisation delivers crucial service, despite shortage of funds

● PETER LATEGAN

Atlantis Search and Rescue (ASR) is an organisation on a mission to reunite families, serve the community, and protect the vulnerable in Atlantis and its surrounds.

Founded in December 2022, the organisation has already made a significant impact in the community, providing essential services to those in need. They now also have teams in Vredenburg and Saldanha, with approximately 40 dedicated members giving their time on a volunteer basis.

At the helm of ASR is Monthany Hendricks, the founder and chairperson. This inspiring young woman and her team have been working tirelessly to provide support and resources to those affected by missing persons cases. In addition to their main service of conducting searches and investigations to locate missing individuals, they also provide emotional support and counselling to affected families. "When a missing person is found, depending on the circumstances of the case, we either take them or refer them to other stakeholders such as the police, Thuthuzela, Mosaic, Molo Songololo, community support groups, the Department of Social Development, and other government agencies. We arrange for counselling where needed and figure out ways to prevent the situation from happening again," she explained.

Despite the organisation's successes, they face major challenges, including limited resources and equipment. These include a shortage of transport, fuel, proper equipment, uniforms, torches for night searches, and more. Apart from a few fundraising events, the team mostly make use of their own money, while rendering such an important service in these communities. They could also do with more help, whether it is through volunteering time, donating resources, or spreading awareness.

To raise awareness about the issue of missing persons, ASR utilizes various channels, including social media and community events. The organization also relies on fundraising efforts to support its work, with two successful events held in 2024.

ASR is committed to its mission and has big plans for expansion, including the establishment of a community centre where life skills will be taught. "Our main goal is to become proactive and not reactive, meaning that we aspire to change the mindset of those within our communities to prevent situations from happening. We already know what our community lacks, and we need to install measures to change the current cycle," said Hendricks.

"We have noticed that whenever a teenager is reported as missing, the community responds differently than they would with other cases. People often pass remarks like 'he or she is out partying,' or 'maybe he or she is with a boyfriend/girlfriend.' We believe it is better to search and find them alive, instead of ignoring it and later reading an article that a body was found that needs to be identified."

Over the years, the organisation has also received many heartfelt testimonials from families who have benefited from their services. One notable success story that Hendricks remembers fondly involves a 13-day-old baby who was in need of essential items. "The community rallied together, donating generously, and the baby received an overwhelming amount of support," said Hendricks. A mother whose son was found with the help of ASR sang their praises: "My son, Cayleb Jasson, went missing last year. I didn't know what to do or who to turn to. I reported the missing case to the police the night my son disappeared, but the next morning, our search was led by the brilliant Atlantis Search and Rescue team. The search went on for three days non-stop. I can honestly say if it weren't for their support, I don't know what I would've done. It was through their moral support and excellent searching that we were able to locate my son."

Hendricks said the importance of community involvement in preventing missing persons cases is crucial. She also encourages parents to have open conversations with their children about safety and awareness and for individuals to look out for one another.



LEAN ON ME: The ASR teams of Saldanha, Vredenburg and Atlantis at the Cape High court in support of Joshlin Smith. They are also still actively involved in the ongoing search for the little girl.

Illegal connections disconnected at Witsand



Illegal electricity connections are a significant issue in the Western Cape, including Atlantis and its immediate surrounds. These unauthorized connections pose serious safety risks, damage infrastructure and undermine the sustainability of the electricity network.

The Atlantis police, SAPS crime intelligence and SAPS Public Order Policing (POP), in partnership with the City's Traffic and Law Enforcement Departments, recently accompanied Eskom officials to Witsand to disconnect several illegal connections. According to Captain Elizabeth Munro, the spokesperson for SAPS in Atlantis, there were no disruptions during the exercise. "Four transformers and 65 poles were disconnected by Eskom workers. Law enforcement and traffic officials blocked roads where Eskom were busy with the disconnections." With penalties of up to 30 years' imprisonment for those found guilty of tampering with essential infrastructure, this is considered a serious crime. The public can report illegal electricity connections anonymously by contacting the Eskom Crime Line on 0800 11 27 22 or notifying local authorities.

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Parents say Joshlin tragedy should be eye-opener for everyone

● PETER LATEGAN & MONIQUE HANSEN

The disappearance of six-year-old Joshlin Smith from her home in Saldanha Bay in February 2024 sent shockwaves through the country and the world, highlighting the growing concerns around child safety and human trafficking.

Earlier this month, the Western Cape High Court found Kelly Smith, Jacquin Appollis, and Steveno van Rhyn guilty of kidnapping and human trafficking. Their sentencing, due for the end of this month, is expected to result in life imprisonment, given the severity of their crimes. Despite the convictions, the little girl remains missing, leaving a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the case.

Nationally, Missing Children South Africa recently reported that an average of 1,300 cases of kidnapping are reported to police every month. The country has been identified as a hub for human trafficking, which is a growing concern. In the Western Cape, 56 cases of missing children were reported between October and December 2024, with 40 successfully located and 16 still missing. Smugglers often target vulnerable individuals, including children, migrants, and those in difficult economic situations.

Stephanie Kraak, a parent and teacher, said this case is every parent's worst nightmare. "As a mother of a three-year-old little girl, it shook me to my core. It reminded me how fragile and trusting our children are, and how important it is for us, as parents and educators, to

always be vigilant, especially when those who harm children are often the ones closest to them. At home, I focus on building trust with my daughter from a young age. Even though she is only three, we have already started practicing small things like identifying 'safe people' and learning basic body autonomy—what is private and what is not okay. It's about laying a foundation of confidence and openness now, so she always feels safe talking to me, without fear, in the future.

Rodwin Pieterse said he does his best to help his 8-year-old make sense of the world. "We teach him about the dangers that exist without letting fear overshadow the good in our communities. Honest, open conversations are everything—he needs to know he can trust us and feel safe, while we take on the responsibility of staying watchful." He said that is why his son is not allowed to be out on the streets alone, go places alone, or talk to unfamiliar adults. "I always teach my children to alert me when they feel discomfort in the presence of company. We should teach our children to always speak up, and we must trust and believe them. Our justice system is weak so it is up to us as parents, neighbours, and the community to keep our children safe," said another parent, Pamela Mack.

Another parent, who wanted to stay anonymous said as a single parent, she constantly prays for her child's safety. "With that, I make sure that I know where she is and with whom. I. Perhaps government should employ

people to just be visible and roam wherever kids are on a daily basis, creating jobs while keeping our children safe," she said.

Kraak added that as a teacher working with children the same age group as Joshlin, she carries a deep sense of responsibility. "I do my best to create a safe, nurturing environment where children feel seen, heard, and protected. But safety cannot rest solely on parents and teachers. I believe that the government has a critical role to play—strengthening social services, improving response times to missing child reports, funding school safety programs, and empowering communities through awareness campaigns. We need a system where every report is taken seriously and no child slips through the cracks. Joshlin's story must be the turning point that forces us all—parents, educators, and leaders—to take child protection seriously and to act before it is too late."

Missing persons: No need to wait 24 hours

● STAFF REPORTER

There is no time period which must go by before someone can be reported as missing or before the police can begin investigation. This is the advice from Captain Elizabeth Munro, spokesperson for the Atlantis police.

She added that reporting someone missing to the police is crucial, because it allows law enforcement agencies to initiate a search and investigation, potentially saving lives by identifying potential foul play, alerting the community, and mobilising resources to locate the missing person, especially if they are vulnerable or in danger. Prompt reporting can significantly increase the chances of finding someone safely, especially in cases where time is critical like with children, elderly individuals, or people with mental health concerns. The police must be your first responders. All other organisations and community can assist police in the search to the missing person. The police will investigate the case and add the missing person to the National Bureau for Missing Persons database.

These are the typical steps to follow:

- Go to your nearest police station as soon as you know the person is missing. You don't need to wait 24 hours.
- Bring a recent, clear photo of the missing person.
- Provide as much information as possible, including the persons last known whereabouts, time and location, what the person was wearing, and a physical description including height, weight, hair and eye colour, age, and any distinguishing features.

Janel van Vliet

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Besige maand vir Atlantis Rotariërs

Lede van die Atlantis Rotarië-klub het onlangs 'n heldevererings-tuin vir Sersant Adian Mahonie by die plaaslike polisie-stasie aangelê. Die helde-vereringsdiens het op Woensdag 16 April 2025 plaasgevind, vir die polisie-man wie byna 'n jaar gelede koelbloedig in Mamre doodgeskiet was terwyl hy aan diens was. Die klub het ook verlede maand stukkend geute by Silverstream Strebel Kleuterskool laat herstel. Die huidige president, Danny Pietersen (bo regs) het ook namens die klub 'n yskas en mikrogolfoond aan Emmanuel Spesiale skool in Sherwoodpark geskenk. Verlede week het hulle ook saailinge aan verskeie plaaslike primêre skole en organisasies geskenk.

Griep seisoen baie vroeër as normaalweg hierdie jaar



Met 'n vroeë toename in griepgevalle regoor Suid-Afrika het gesondheidsbeamptes die publiek gewaarsku oor die gevare van griep – 'n aansteeklike asemhalingsiekte wat tot ernstige komplikasies kan lei – veral vir individue wat in hoë risiko groepe val.

Volgens die Nasionale Instituut vir Oordraagbare Siektes (NICD) het die 2025-griepseisoen buitengewoon vroeg begin – in die week van 24 Maart – wat dit die vroegste aanvang sedert 2010 maak. Dit is 'n beduidende verskuiwing, aangesien die verkoue seisoen normaalweg eers vier weke later, in laat April, begin. Die Stad Kaapstad se klinieke sal vanjaar sowat 20 000 griepinentings beskikbaar hê vir kwesbare groepe, en die publiek word aangeraai om by hul naaste fasiliteit navraag te doen oor hul geskiktheid. Die Stad het gesê dat die griepinenting 'n veilige en effektiewe manier is om infeksie te voorkom, die erns van simptome te verminder, en die risiko van komplikasies te verlaag. Inenting help ook om die druk op gesondheidsdienste te verminder deur griepverwante hospitalisasies te voorkom.

Stadsamptenare het gemaak dat net sekere groepe weens beperkte beskikbaarheid van entstowwe in die openbare sektor, geprioritiseer sal word, wat die volgende insluit:

- Persone 65 jaar en ouer, aangesien hul immuunstelsel swakker raak met ouderdom
- Persone met chroniese toestande soos MIV en Tuberkulose (TB), asook ander longaandoenings, soos asma en

chroniese brongitis

- Persone met hartprobleme of 'n geskiedenis van beroertes
- Persone met diabetes of ander langtermyn gesondheidstoestande wat die niere, lewer, brein, bloed of metabolisme beïnvloed
- Kinders tussen ses maande en 18 jaar wat langtermyn aspirienmedikasie neem
- Swanger vroue, aangesien griep ernstige komplikasies vir beide die moeder en die ongebore baba kan veroorsaak

“Om ingeënt te word is 'n verantwoordelike keuse wat nie net jouself beskerm nie, maar ook jou geliefdes en die breër gemeenskap. Die griepseisoen is hier, so tree asseblief nou op om jou risiko te verminder. Ons herinner ook die publiek daaraan om goeie gewoontes in gedagte te hou, veral gereelde handewas en hoes-etiket, wat aanbeveel dat jy in jou elmboog hoes in plaas van in jou hand,” het Stad se Burgemeesterskomiteelid, Raadslid Francine Higham gesê.

Griep is 'n virale infeksie – indien jy dit opdoen, moet jy rus, baie water drink, en tot 10 dae gee vir simptome om te herstel. Bly sover moontlik tuis, dra 'n masker wanneer jy buite is en kry mediese hulp indien 'n sekondêre bakteriële infeksie ontwikkel. Tipiese simptome let sluit in koors, vinnige asemhaling, verkleurde sputum, ens.

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Mamre man dies after heart attack at mom's funeral

● MAXI VAN WILLINGH

The Mamre community is in deep sorrow following the unexpected passing of Clevelyn Petersen (37), who tragically died while paying his final respects to his mother at her funeral.

During the funeral service for his mother, Crystal Erasmus, on Saturday, 3 May, while her former colleagues offered a song in her honour, Petersen broke down in tears and exclaimed, "Yoh, what's going on?" as he clutched his chest, struggling to loosen his shirt. That was when people realised he was

having a heart attack. Although he was meant to carry his mother's body out of the church, he never got the chance. Instead, family members had to carry him out and rush him to the hospital, where he tragically succumbed to a broken heart.

Upon arrival, doctors attempted to save him but later informed his family that he had not survived. Petersen had previously suffered two strokes a few years back. He is survived by his fiancée Kayleane Jacobs, a nine-year-old son, Malachi, a maternal sister, and three paternal siblings. Having worked for over a decade at

the Department of Labour, he also served as the vice-chairman of the Hamlets Rugby Club since 2024. Those who knew Clevelyn describe him as a true people person, highly regarded in both his community and the local rugby fraternity. His funeral took place this past weekend. On the right is Petersen and his son, Malachi.



World Press Freedom Day: Why we all lose without it

On 3 May 2025, South Africa joined the global community in commemorating World Press Freedom Day, reaffirming the country's commitment to journalistic independence and the free flow of information.

South Africa has long upheld media freedom as a pillar of democracy, protected by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Despite this, challenges persist. A recent study revealed a growing "freedom gap"—while many South Africans value a free press, fewer believe it is fully realized in practice. Concerns about political influence, misinformation, and media ownership were raised throughout various discussions held on the day. Speaking at the national Press Freedom Conference in

Johannesburg, media experts emphasized the double-edged nature of artificial intelligence in journalism. While AI can enhance newsroom efficiency, automate reporting, and expand access to information, it also poses risks—such as the spread of disinformation, deepfake technology, and threats to journalistic integrity.

South Africa remains one of the few nations where press freedom is constitutionally enshrined, yet the evolving landscape requires continued vigilance. As technology reshapes the media industry, journalists and policymakers must collaborate to ensure truth, transparency, and accountability remain at the heart of public discourse. The day highlights the importance of a free and independent

press in safeguarding democracy and human rights. Press holds authorities accountable and fosters open discussions. In today's world, where misinformation and suppression are still major challenges, World Press Freedom Day 2025 serves as a reminder of the critical need to protect the freedom of the press.

As the only locally owned print publication, Impact News has been making a difference in local society for more than 13 years – one edition at a time.

Without press freedom, we all lose.

SASSA gold cards will keep working after 31 May, says Postbank

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) Gold Cards will continue to work beyond 31 May 2025.

In a statement last month, Postbank said grant beneficiaries with Gold Cards will continue to be paid their SASSA grants in those cards until further notice, which is great news for beneficiaries that have not yet migrated to Postbank Black Cards. Beneficiaries can continue to withdraw cash at all Postbank's partner retail stores and can continue swiping for purchases. "We are therefore hopeful and confident that this announcement addresses any concern relating to the payments of any beneficiaries that may not have yet obtained their Black Cards," Postbank CEO, Nikki Mbengashe, said in a statement. She advised social grant beneficiaries to ignore any call that they must change banks, as this is unnecessary.

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Women celebrate curves and confidence on Freedom Day

● MONIQUE HANSEN



FREE TO BE ME: Anastatia Davids (left) and (far left) she and the rest of the women at their recent event.

On Monday, 28 April 2025, several local women came together to celebrate Freedom Day in style, turning it into a celebration of curves, confidence, and community—embracing the freedom to be themselves.

Event organiser Anastatia Davids, a former Miss Curvaceous and well-known for multiple roles

in the community, said that the platform was about lifting each other up, embracing every curve, and creating a space where all are seen and celebrated. “This event is a celebration of us—the curvaceous ladies—many of whom often have to deal with body shaming. We decided to use Freedom Day’s public holiday as an opportunity to free ourselves from the negative comments and judgment,” Davids explained. “The

ladies showed up, let their hair down, released the stresses of life, and wore what they love—without fear of judgment. No criticism. No shame. Just confidence and joy.”

Davids hopes to see more of these events in the future and that the message reaches others who struggle with body shaming and negativity. The gathering also provided an opportunity to network, exchange

business cards, and support each other’s ventures. “It was about community, collaboration, and building a strong, empowered tribe,” Davids said.

Funding available for emerging talent in local film industry

The City of Cape Town’s Film Office has opened applications for its Film Fund, supporting productions scheduled for completion in the 2025/26 financial year. The fund aims to bolster Cape Town’s status as a leading film and media hub by providing financial assistance and municipal services to qualifying projects.

Eligible productions include feature films, short films, music videos, commercials, reality TV series, animation, and live-action content. The fund prioritizes projects that foster local economic growth, create jobs in the film and media industry, develop emerging talent, and showcase Cape Town’s distinct culture and landscapes. The City encourages applications from filmmakers whose projects promote sustainability, diversity,

inclusion, and heritage storytelling. However, adult content, corporate or training videos, and current affairs programming will not be supported. This initiative supports local filmmakers and strengthens Cape Town’s global film presence, providing critical resources to bring unique stories to life.

Applications must be submitted via email to Film.Fund@capetown.gov.za by 20 June 2025. Hand-delivered submissions will not be accepted. More information, including application forms and eligibility criteria, is available at filmcapetown.com and the City of Cape Town’s official website.

Fetola SMME programme still open

Applications are now open for Fetola Fire, a programme created to fuel investment readiness and expansion. It is designed to prepare black-owned micro and small businesses for scale.

This 12-month programme helps entrepreneurs aims to build a financially sound and investment-

ready business so that they can attract the right investors and lenders. There are only 60 spots available, and applications close on 16 May 2025. For more information on the qualifying criteria and to apply, visit the Fetola website, call 086 181 9209, or email fire@fetola.co.za.

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Atlantis school athletes thriving during current season

● MONIQUE HANSEN

The 400-meter hurdles have nothing on Niuwen Tango, an avid athlete from Robinvale High School. Tango has been performing well throughout the 2025 season in inter-school athletics. His coaches describe him as consistent, well-mannered, and having a bright future in sports.

At the beginning of April, Tango represented the school as part of the Western Cape team at the national athletics championships in Bloemfontein, competing against the best to make the South African team. Unfortunately, he did not make it onto the SA team, but he secured third place in his category with a time of 55.19 seconds. He was placed 10th nationally in his age group. Kuhle Magwaxaza, from Proteus Technical High School, who competed in the 10,000-meter race walk under-19, received gold and silver during the 2025 season. Having completed 25 rounds of walking, Magwaxaza said for him it's all about

stamina, hope, and self-belief. This was his first time competing since primary school, and he has made his school proud. Magwaxaza received a silver medal at the Metro North District Championship, gold at the Western Cape Championships, and silver at the Western Province Championships, qualifying for the National Championships in Bloemfontein. Unfortunately, he also did not make the SA team.

Dyazhanka Light, from Proteus, competed in the under-15 5000-meter race walk. "To be able to complete 12 rounds successfully, I exercise my arms and legs regularly to ensure I am strong enough to move my body during competition time," Light explained. Light received a silver medal at the Metro North District Championships, gold at the Western Province Championship, and took 4th place at the National Championships. Sharon Lombard, coach of the Proteus team, urges the athletes to continue their successful

journey, to strive toward their future sports goals, and to have fun while doing so.



TOP ATHLETES: Kuhle Magwaxaza and Dyazhanka Light from Proteus, and on the right is Niuwen Tango from Robinvale High



WC College students impress at CoSACSA event

● STAFF REPORTER

A group of 24 students from West Coast College (WCC) proudly represented the Western Cape team at the National College Sports, Arts, and Culture South Africa (CoSACSA) Track and Field Competition, held at the beginning of last month in Polokwane.

The event brought together athletes from across the country, showcasing their skills and setting new records. WCC student-athletes played a significant role in the success of the Western Cape team, which finished second overall with an impressive 54 medals: 16 gold, 21 silver, and 17 bronze. One standout performer from the West Coast College contingent was Tarmyn-Leigh Neethling, a Business Management student. She made a spectacular impact at the competition, winning gold in the senior women's javelin event with a throwing distance of 27.76 meters and also contributing to the success of the 4x100m relay team. Her achievements highlighted her exceptional athleticism and dedication to both her sport and studies. The success of the Western Cape team at the competition was lauded by Sipho-Esihle Mfazwe,

Sports, Arts, and Culture Officer, who praised the incredible talent displayed by the students. "To witness all nine provinces competing at such a high level, breaking records and showcasing remarkable talent, was truly inspiring. The growth of the CoSACSA program has been phenomenal, and it's exciting to see how it continues to develop," Mfazwe said.

The event not only celebrated athletic achievement but also emphasized the vital role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in nurturing well-rounded individuals who excel academically and in sports. WCC's participation in the competition demonstrated the institution's commitment to fostering excellence in all aspects of student life. As the competition concluded, it was clear that the success of the Western Cape team, and particularly the achievements of students like Neethling, marks a bright future for athletics within South Africa's TVET sector.



BEST OF THE WEST: On the left Tarmyn-Leigh Neethling in action in the senior women's javelin event, and below is the entire team, who brought home a total of 54 medals.

