

# Number plates misfortune

## COURT RULES AGAINST PROPOSAL SAYING 'IRREGULAR' TENDER PROCESS FOLLOWED

ELFAS TORERAI

THE North West community safety and transport management department said yesterday that it was weighing its options after a court ruling set aside its proposal for new vehicle number plates.

The high court ruled against the department's proposed number plates saying that the tender process followed was irregular, unfair and uncompetitive.

Since 2015, the department has sought to introduce new securitised number plates.

Retrone Road & Traffic Solutions (Pty) Ltd was appointed to manufacture the new plates.

The proposed plates replace NW with BB for Bokone Bophirima, they have a national flag, provincial coat of arms and a bar code among other features.

The new number plates were supposed to be rolled out in February last year.

However, a court application by two interested parties, New Number Plate Requisites and South African National Number Plates Association (Sana) halted the process.

Owner of New Number Plate Requisites Johan Stenekamp said his company had filed court papers to stop the process due to tender irregularities.

"The National Road Traffic Act does not give the MEC the power to do what he has done. Furthermore, we believe that the securitisation fee charged by the distributor is excessive and we believe the securitisation of number plate happens on a national level," Stenekamp said.

"We do not think that each province

should do its own thing. The company that was appointed for securitisation does not have infrastructure and they have no track record."

Sana CEO Surika Louw said that the system followed will cripple the business and result in job losses.

In her ruling, high court judge Nadia Gertza said that the way the department went about acquiring a service provider fell foul of the law.

Questions were raised on the appointment of Retrone, the appointed company to introduce, securitise and distribute the proposed number plates.

The court said that the company had not made a significant investment in the industry and comparatively had little experience in the number plate business.

Community safety and transport management spokesperson Thabo Sematle told The New Age that the department respected the court's ruling on the matter.

"As a department, we respect the court outcome but we reserve the right to apply our minds and get counsel from our legal team," he said.

"We met the department's legal advisers on Friday and they are busy studying the ruling before advising us on the next step."

Sematle said that it might be too early but options, including appealing the high court judgment, are still on the table.

National chairperson of Justice Project South Africa Howard Dombrowsky said: "This ruling is great news, not only for the number plate industry but for North West motorists at large."

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# Stolen computers recovered

ELFAS TORERAI

A 35-YEAR-OLD man was arrested and computers worth more than R30 000 recovered in a crime crack-down operation in Moretele village.

Police in Brits and Bedwang conducted a joint crime intelligence driven operation at the weekend and managed to receive information on the man which they acted upon.

Lt-Col Pelonomi Makau said: "The suspect's apprehension came after information was received that he was in possession of suspected stolen goods at Moretele village near Bedwang.

"Upon following up on the tip-off, the suspect from Suthelong village in Moretele was found in possession of seven suspected stolen computers," she said.

Makau said that a further probe revealed that the goods worth R30 000 belonged to the New Horizon

College which is in the same building as Makana Crèche in Suthelong village.

"The goods were positively linked with a case of business burglary committed last month when nine computers were stolen.

"The suspect is expected to appear in the Temba Magistrate's Court today on charges of business burglary and possession of suspected stolen goods," she said.

Police officers who made the arrest were applauded for their swift reaction after receiving the tip-off.

Provincial police commissioner Lt Gen Baile Motswenyane commended the officers

and pointed out that cooperation of various units and proper deployment of resources that resulted in the successful arrest will continue to be used in bringing criminals to book.



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# Giving up illegal arms

## Committee to hear how police will integrate, strategise processes of 2018 guns amnesty

NONDUMISO ZWANE

THE South African Police Service has until tomorrow to reconsider the paper-based system it intends using for the handover process during the proposed firearms amnesty 2018.

The portfolio committee on police will be expecting the SAPS to present how it will integrate the committee's suggestions into the strategy.

The committee suggested to reduce the high number of illegal firearms on the streets using the amnesty as there is a need to integrate information technology systems to mitigate risk and ensure clear and effective record-keeping of surrendered firearms must be built into the strategy.

Chairperson of the committee Francois Beukman said the intention was to ensure that the firearms were traceable throughout the entire amnesty process, including the point of destruction.

The committee also said that police officers designated to receive these firearms at police station level, must be vetted.

"The committee supports the amnesty but must highlight that this support will be retracted if officers that receive these firearms are not vetted.

There is a need to reduce the risk factor and this can be achieved through vetting," Beukman said.

He said the surrender of firearms at all police stations is also questioned, especially in relation to the trust deficit that exists in relations with the police and some police stations have been flagged for losing many firearms in recent history.

"We urge the SAPS to rethink this strategy of surrendering arms. Either designate a police station in a cluster or come up with an list of police stations that will be excluded from the amnesty process.

"The committee needs safe steps and risk mitigation procedures built into the strategy to enhance the amnesty process," Beukman said.

The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) said there were many illegal firearms roaming the streets.

Popcru spokesperson Richard Mamabolo said this remained a mammoth challenge for both police and communi-



**RETHINK:** The SAPS have until tomorrow to reconsider the paper-based system it intends using for the handover process during the proposed Firearms Amnesty 2018. PICTURE: GETTY IMAGES

ties need to both confront for common safety.

"Throughout our country, violence remains at an alarming rate and it is reported that gun-related killings remain the leading cause of death," Mamabolo said.

He said despite the minister of police's commitment to speed up processes for the registration and control of firearms,

they urge communities to work closely with law enforcement agencies in reporting those who might be concealing firearms.

"It is only through our joint efforts that we can reduce these regrettable killings among ourselves," Mamabolo said.

As of March 2015 there were 1.8 million licensed civilian gun owners in the

country which means out of 100 people, three own a gun.

Just more than 3 million firearms are registered to civilians.

"The majority of guns are legally manufactured, all illegal guns were once legal before being diverted to the illegal pool of weapons in South Africa," he said.

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# Hawks reach out to schoolgirls

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GIRL pupils at Mayaeyane Primary School near Manikeng were happy to receive sanitary towel hampers on Friday.

The hampers were a donation from the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) woman's network and men for change in the North West province.

DPCI officials, known as the Hawks, said the gesture was a social responsibility project aimed at making a meaningful contribution in the lives of female pupils.

One of the pupils at the school, a seven-year-old girl, said that she wanted to be a police woman to fight and reduce the high crime levels facing the country.

Provincial Hawks head Maj-Gen Linda Mbana said that after carefully assessing the status of the school, her unit had decided to adopt it so that it becomes a post for peace in the community.

"As the North West DPCI, we have decided to adopt the school for the entire



**GIVING BACK:** Members of the Hawks handing over sanitary towel hampers to pupils at Mayaeyane Primary School.

2018, meaning that all social responsibility projects next year will be to the benefit of the pupils at the school," she said.

Mbana said the Hawks would work with education authorities to make sure infrastructure challenges at the school attended

to. "The aim of the project is to promote confidence among young girls going through puberty. The goal is to ensure that no girl misses school during the exams as a result of their monthly cycle."

"In addition, the goal is for the girls to have a stress free festive season and return to school in January to kick start the year with a bang," she said.

Mbana also used the opportunity to appeal to parents who gathered to witness the donation to be the eyes and ears of the Hawks in their neighbourhoods.

The event was also graced by Makgobistadt education circuit manager Kgomotso Tladi who in her address, said that she was not aware that the Hawks were involved in community upliftment projects and that she was pleasantly surprised.

School principal Aobakwe Mokoto thanked the Hawks for what he said was a "wonderful gesture, specifically the choice of Mayaeyane primary school".

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