

Making Headlines

Dismissal of councillors in Gauteng

More than 100 municipal councillors and officials have been dismissed or forced to resign over the past five years in Gauteng's 15 municipalities following investigations into fraud, corruption and absenteeism. The most common offences discovered by the office of the Auditor-General and its investigative units were maladministration, fraud and corruption.

- **Kungwini municipality** in Gauteng, which includes Bronkhorstspuit, instituted action against 14 councillors and officials. The mayor was forced to resign and the municipal manager was suspended.
- While no councillor was suspended or expelled at **Sedibeng district municipality**, which incorporates Emfuleni, Lesedi and Midvaal municipalities, 20 senior officials left following allegations of fraud and theft.
- At **Emfuleni municipality**, which incorporates Vereeniging, 42 officials lost their jobs last year.
- **Nokeng Tsa Taemane municipality**, which includes Cullinan, dismissed three councillors and suspended three others for absenteeism, theft and corruption.
- **Merafong municipality** – now part of North West Province – dismissed two councillors for “impropriety”, while **Randfontein** council dismissed 12.
- **Johannesburg** had nine cases in which four councillors were dismissed and four resigned.
- **Ekurhuleni Metro Council** dismissed three councillors and four others resigned.
- **Tshwane Metro Council** dismissed three councillors.

MORE PARTIES

More participation



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Party animals

Many new parties were listed on ballots in 2006. The total number of parties contesting elections in at least one ward rose from 79 to 97 in the five-year period since the last elections. Much of the diversity remains local as only the African National Congress and the Democratic Alliance contested municipalities countrywide.

The sheer number of candidates has boomed. In 2006, there were 21,507 party list candidates, a third more than in 2000. Ward candidates increased from 13,214 to 32,672. Only the independent candidates remained nearly the same in both elections. The growth in candidates is reflected in the battle for wards. While 79 wards were uncontested in 2000, the number has dropped to only 11 of the 3,895 wards demarcated in 2006.

Gender neutral

This year's elections were ambiguous for women. More women ran at the top of party lists for high-profile mayoral positions. But only a third of all candidates were women. This ratio is the same as the 2000 elections and far from the goal of equal gender representation in the *White Paper on Local Government* (see 'Electing women councillors' in *LG Bulletin* vol. 7 issue 5). When broken down by province, the 1:2 ratio remains virtually unchanged. Despite cosmetic

Five years after the first municipal elections, much has changed and much remains the same. Overall, 45,179 candidates representing 97 political parties contested the 2006 municipal elections. Dr Brigalia Bam, Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), notes that this is "almost a 50% increase in the total number of candidates from 30,477 to 45,179, which is spread across the nine provinces".

changes, the overall under-participation by women in local government remains.

Disqualified

Nearly 3% of all would-be candidates were disqualified before the 2006 elections (excluding those barred for late submissions of candidates list and/or deposits). The three main reasons the IEC listed for disqualification were that candidates were not on the voters' roll, candidates were not on the segment of the voters' roll of the municipality they wanted to contest, and that they failed to furnish documents and/or deposits required by the Municipal Electoral Act.