

Wheels come off ambulances

KATHARINE CHILD

EASTERN Cape has more ambulances out of service than in use, a shortage of paramedics and such poor roads that ambulances cannot travel on them.

These are among the findings of the SA Human Rights Commission, which investigated the state of the province's emergency services.

Commissioner Pregs Govender said she had heard from residents who had never seen an "ambulance in their lives even though they had been in emergency situations".

4x4 vehicles needed to drive on badly rutted roads

A shortage of state ambulances is "a problem that exists across the country", said Govender.

The SAHRC held the hearings in Eastern Cape due to the poor health system in the province, she said.

A report on the commission's findings is being released in Xhosa Mouth in Eastern Cape today.

Govender said: "People spoke of the indignity of being transported in wheelchairs to hospital." Community health workers told

stories of watching mothers in labour die because ambulances did not arrive.

The commission found that only 200 ambulances of the estimated

416 in the province were working.

According to Department of Health standards, the number of ambulances needed is 656.

Eastern Cape department of health superintendent general Thobile Mbengashe said no patient would wait longer than four hours for an ambulance.

Communities that attended the hearings were given emergency services district managers' cell-phone numbers to call if an

ambulance does not arrive.

The department also committed to purchasing more 4x4 ambulances to drive on the province's poor roads. It also said it would use tracking devices so call centres could see where ambulances were at all times.

Govender said: "What was very clear is that it will take decades before the roads will be replaced, even though there is a huge budget for infrastructure."

"The medieval conditions we heard about are going to persist unless those roads are changed."

#TO THE POINT

Will the department fix the service?

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Policing of schools 'not the answer'

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back their communities from criminals and gangs.

Parents' involvement in their children's daily lives, and communities working with police to root out the criminals, by identifying those responsible for crime, were more effective than policemen at schools.

"It is the responsibility of everyone to ensure our children are safe, from communities to school governing bodies, teachers and parents, and everyone needs to work together."

Criminologist Rudolph Zinn said the policing initiative would need to be thought through carefully.

"Would, for example, the police be working just during school hours, or would they be there after school when the children take part in sports and when most incidents take place?"

In poorer schools, sports facilities were often away from the school grounds. This would require the police moving to these areas too, Zinn said.

He is also concerned that police



ASSEMBLY: Cape Town mayor Patricia de Lille and the city's director of law enforcement, Robbie Roberts, at the launch at Cedar High School in Rocklands of the school police service. Picture: RUVAN BOSHOFF

might be sucked into enforcing school disciplinary action, which they are not mandated to do.

The deployment of police comes a month after Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga announced two new programmes to

end violence in schools.

In the first, the department will ensure all teachers are trained in values, human rights and citizenship. According to the minister, the training, at universities, would help pupils engage with

issues leading to violence.

The second programme is the national school safety framework, in which the department, supported by Unicef, partners with the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.

King Dalindyebo must clock in for jail tomorrow

NOMAHLEBI JORDAAN

KING Buyelekhaya Dalindyebo, the Paramount Chief of the AbaThembu, has until tomorrow to report to Mthatha prison to begin his 12 years in jail.

He lost his bid to have his convictions set aside by the Supreme Court of Appeal yesterday.

The Mthatha High Court convicted Dalindyebo in 2009 on three charges of arson, three of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, two of defeating the ends of

justice, one of culpable homicide and one of kidnapping. The victims were his subjects and the crimes were committed on the farm Tyalara, near Mthatha, Eastern Cape.

He was sentenced to a total of 44 years imprisonment — an effective 15 years because of sentences running concurrently.

The appeal court set aside the conviction and 10-year sentence for culpable homicide, but dismissed Dalindyebo's appeal on all the other charges.

Justice and Correctional Services Department spokesman Mthunzi Mhaga said Dalindyebo had to report to Mthatha prison within 48 hours of delivery of the Supreme Court of Appeal judgment.

The DA has terminated Dalindyebo's party membership.

The chief argued on appeal that the trial had been unfair because it did not begin until eight years after the events, he was inadequately legally represented and the presiding judge acted improperly.

The appeal court rejected this.

The judges said: "Imagine a tyrannical and despotic king who set fire to the houses, crops and livestock of subsistence farmers living within his jurisdiction, in full view of their families, because they resisted his attempts to have them evicted, or otherwise did not immediately comply with his orders."

"... This is not a description of ... medieval times but it is how the appellant treated his subjects at a time after South Africa became a constitutional state subject to the rule of law."

Inquest into deaths at sea

IT IS going to take at least a month for a full inquest by the SA Maritime Safety Authority into the tragedy that claimed the lives of 12 fishermen from Viking Fishing on Sunday.

Rory Williams, financial director of the company, said: "All the interviews with the survivors will be finished this week. They will then interview all the crews of the rescue vessels as well. The vessel itself must also be investigated."

The search for the three crew members lost at sea was suspended at 6pm on Tuesday.

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Senzeni Zokwana yesterday visited the stricken trawler in Cape Town.

The 42m Lincoln was towed into Cape Town harbour on Tuesday after surviving a freak storm south of Cape Hangklip on Sunday night.

— Tanya Farber and Bobby Jordan

MATTER OF FACT

ON September 21 in an article about gender balance within the Financial and Fiscal Commission, The Times reported that the commission had complained to the Presidency about its appointment. This was incorrect. Bongani Khumalo, acting CEO of the commission, pointed out this was not the case. He said he had indicated that gender balance was a challenge and that commissioners were appointed by the president in accordance with the Financial and Fiscal Commission Act.

ON September 30 it was incorrectly stated that the Gauteng MEC of education wanted power to regulate school admissions and enforce language policies. This was, in fact, a recommendation of the Provincial Education Summit.

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Snow

Fog

Frost

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Sunset: 18:49

Durban
Sunrise: 05:34
Sunset: 17:57

Johannesburg
Sunrise: 05:47
Sunset: 18:08