



**MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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TO ALL MEDIA/NEWS EDITORS

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**“YOU KNOW THEM. HELP US FIND THEM.”:
NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR THE 2026/27 NATIONAL BATHO
PELE AND INNOVATION AWARDS**

Pretoria – South Africans can from today nominate the public servants who serve their communities with distinction, as the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) open nominations and entries for the 2026/27 National Batho Pele and Innovation Awards.

Nominations and entries are submitted at <https://cpsiregistrations.co.za> and close on **30 October 2026**.

The search for excellence extends beyond government departments and into the communities where public servants work every day - from metropolitan cities and townships to small towns, villages and rural communities. Members of the public, government institutions and public servants themselves are all invited to nominate.

The Awards recognise excellence, professionalism, innovation and dedication across the Public Service, and come as government intensifies efforts to professionalise the Public Service, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government services and rebuild public trust in the institutions of the state.

“THEY ARE YOUR MOTHER, YOUR UNCLE, YOUR NEIGHBOUR”

The acting Director General of the DPSA, **Mr Willie Vukela**, on behalf of the Minister for the Public Service and Administration, **Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi, MP**, called on South Africans to help government identify the public servants who make a difference in their communities.

“Excellence and innovation in the Public Service is not something that only happens in government offices in Pretoria. It happens in our townships, villages, cities and small towns every single day. It is the nurse at a clinic in uLundi who knows her patients by name; the teacher in Seshego who stays

behind to help a learner; the official who makes sure an elderly person does not leave without being assisted. They are your mother, your uncle, your neighbour or your former teacher.

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Innovation is defined here as *the process of transforming an idea into a new or improved product, service, process or approach which fulfils the mandate of government and enhances service delivery.*

The Mr Vukela said recognising these public servants is also about changing the narrative of the Public Service.

“We want their stories to travel beyond the communities in which they serve. A young public servant entering government must see what excellence looks like and know that this is the standard we expect. When we recognise those who serve with compassion, professionalism and integrity, we are not simply giving out awards; we are helping build the Public Service that South Africans deserve.”

FROM RECOGNITION TO REPLICATION

Beyond recognition, the Awards identify good and innovative practices that can be shared, replicated and scaled across government.

Mr Pierre Schoonraad Executive Director (acting) CPSI, said the Awards function as a mechanism for surfacing solutions that can be replicated elsewhere in the country.

“A solution developed, or excellence demonstrated in one clinic, one district or one municipality should not stay there. Our interest is not only in celebrating, but in ensuring that what demonstrably works in one part of the country is documented, shared and put to work in another.”

The **Multi-Certification Skills Programme** from Gauteng Department of Education which won the **Public Sector Innovator of the Year Award** share their journey of developing and implementing their solution. This ground-breaking initiative redefines schooling for the 21st century. Many learners left school without practical skills for work or entrepreneurship. This programme transforms that reality by ensuring that every learner, from Grade R to Grade 12, earns at least one accredited skill per year. By the time they matriculate, students hold up to 13 formal certifications — ranging from coding, drone technology, and artificial intelligence to first aid, entrepreneurship, and sign language — empowering them with both academic knowledge and real-world competence.

Through strategic partnerships with industry leaders like Samsung, MERSeta, and Komatsu, and practical implementation at schools such as Katlehong Engineering School of Specialisation, the MCSP is building a generation of multi-skilled, confident, and employable young South Africans. The programme is transforming township education by linking learning to industry, creating pathways to employment, and promoting self-reliance. Its long-term impact reaches beyond the classroom — reducing youth unemployment, stimulating township economies, and positioning Gauteng as a leader in inclusive, future-ready education innovation.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Service Excellence

- Best Front-Line Service Delivery Employee of the Year
- Best Public Service Leader (Senior Manager) of the Year
- Best Service Delivery Institution/Department
- Best Implemented Project of the Year

Public Sector Innovation

- Replication and Adaptation of Innovative Solutions
- Citizen-focussed Innovations harnessing non-ICT solutions
- Service delivery innovations harnessing technology
- Internal Innovations harnessing ICT or non-ICT solutions

Ministerial Awards are conferred at the discretion of the Minister for the Public Service and Administration.

HOW TO NOMINATE OR ENTER

Nominations and entries are submitted online at <https://cpsiregistrations.co.za>, where full category descriptions, eligibility requirements and submission criteria are available.

Nominations and entries open on 15 September 2026 and close on 30 October 2026.

Assessment and adjudication will follow, culminating in the **National Batho Pele and Innovation Awards ceremony in February 2027.**

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ENDS

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