

22 May 2026

WALKING TOGETHER: A Weekly Reflection from the Office of the A-CEO

Building Organisational Coherence

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

In Touch Bulletin



OPENING REFLECTION AND MOTIVATION

This past week I was reminded that institutions are not built by individuals moving quickly and alone, but by communities learning to move together with purpose.

A simple yet profound observation was shared with me and it brought me to an epiphany – that while urgency, vision and energy are important, leadership also requires the humility to look back and ensure that others are still walking the journey with you. That reflection stayed with me.

Too often in environments of reform and pressure, we become consumed by targets, meetings, crises and deadlines, forgetting that institutions are ultimately human projects before they are governance structures, this institution is no different. It really exists because of its people, the beneficiaries and you, the worker. The work of reforming the Trust cannot belong to one person, one office, one profession or one business unit. It is the work of many hands, many disciplines, many sacrifices and many lived experiences – both inside and outside of this institution.

Every person within this organisation forms part of

a value chain of bringing benefit, material welfare and social wellbeing to beneficiary communities. We may carry different responsibilities, but none of those responsibilities are without value. In many ways, one of the greatest tragedies of institutional life is that people are often taught their function before they are taught their value. Yet no institution can become coherent when its people do not understand the importance of their contribution to the whole.

Perhaps one of the greatest things this journey of institutional reform will teach us is not merely how to improve systems, governance and administration, but how to rediscover our own human value within the work that we do.

Because ultimately, what we are building here is bigger than compliance, bigger than administration and bigger than ourselves. We are building an institution that must carry the developmental aspirations of communities who have entrusted us with something deeply precious – land, dignity, continuity and future possibility.

And no one walks that journey alone.

REFLECTION ON THE PAST WEEK

This past week we undertook important engagements with the iNadi Traditional Council and the Mathonsi Traditional Council. These engagements continue to reveal a serious need for information sharing, governance support and capacity building at community and traditional leadership level.



What is becoming increasingly clear is that capacity building can no longer be viewed as the responsibility of one business unit or one programme alone. It is becoming a core institutional competency that every employee of the Trust must begin to develop. The nature of our mandate requires us to lead in knowledge, guidance and institutional support across many complex areas – governance, land administration, development, finance, legislation, traditional leadership and community engagement.

This means the expectation on an employee of the Trust is not simply to perform tasks, but to continuously grow in understanding so that we may better support the communities and traditional structures we serve.

The engagements this week also highlighted the practical governance and operational challenges experienced at Traditional Council level. Many of these are matters that our Real Estate Officers and institutional support structures should increasingly become capable of assisting with proactively and effectively. We must continue finding innovative and practical ways of transferring knowledge into our districts

and communities because information itself is developmental capacity.

At the same time, we must acknowledge the concern raised by communities regarding the pace at which we are reaching and teaching them. That concern is fair. Communities want visibility, support, responsiveness and progress. This creates an opportunity for our

district structures, particularly our REOs, to take leadership in strengthening the relationship between the institution and the communities we serve.

The institution also held engagements with the Auditor-General of South Africa as part of the continued efforts to conclude the 2024/2025 audit of the Trust.

It is important that we continue developing a healthy institutional attitude towards governance, oversight and audit processes. Reviews by AGSA, Internal Audit and other governance structures should not be viewed as interruptions or threats, but as necessary mechanisms that help us evaluate ourselves honestly and improve where necessary.

True institutional maturity is developed when an organisation becomes comfortable with transparency, accountability and review. This MUST be a central culture of the Trust.

The 2024/2025 audit process remains ongoing, while planning has already commenced for the 2025/2026 audits of both the Trust and the Board. Employees are reminded that all AGSA-related requests, supporting documents and responses must continue to receive priority attention within stipulated timelines.

This week also brought challenges within our ICT environment following damage to a server motherboard during scheduled maintenance work relating to security systems. We must commend the ICT unit within Corporate Services for responding swiftly and effectively to minimise operational disruptions, particularly during a critical period in which Financial Management

Services is preparing Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026.

We also recognise that many employees would have become aware of the governance discussions and public discourse relating to the Board and resignations. It is important for staff to understand that institutions such as the Trust operate within highly contested environments because the work we do, the land we administer and the developmental mandate we carry are of significant importance.

Land remains one of the most strategic and sought-after assets in society. As a result, institutions entrusted with such responsibility will inevitably experience differing interests, pressures and attempts at influence.

What becomes important in such moments is that employees remain grounded in the mandate of the institution, guided by policy and procedure, and committed to stability, professionalism and service to communities. As matters currently stand, the Board continues to exist with five members, including His Majesty the King.

A WEEK AT A GLANCE

Executive Management will be undertaking a day-and-a-half strategic working session focused on the 2030 Organisational Strategy, the 2026/2027 Annual Performance Plan, and the practical implications arising from both.

The purpose of these engagements is to ensure organisational coherence and alignment across the institution. A key focus will be translating strategy into practical implementation so that every employee understands the role they are required to play in advancing the broader mission of the Trust.

Following these engagements, Executive Managers are expected to cascade key strategic messages and outcomes into their respective business units to ensure that daily operational work remains aligned to the institution's developmental objectives and long-term direction.

The institution will also convene an upcoming Board meeting on 28 May 2026, during which the Board Annual Financial Statements (AFS) and Annual Performance Report (APR) for the year ended 31 March 2026 will be considered for approval for audit purposes.

In preparation for this process, various governance structures and committees will convene to review these reports, beginning with FINCO on 19 May 2026, followed by the Audit Committee on 22 May 2026.

These governance processes are important because they reinforce a critical institutional principle: there is no final product without adequate review. Review mechanisms exist not to frustrate work, but to strengthen it, improve it and ensure accountability, accuracy and organisational integrity.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

This week, deliberations continue around South Africa's revised White Paper on Local Government.

The revised White Paper represents a significant national reflection on how the local government system has performed against the intentions of the 1998 White Paper and seeks to establish a refreshed policy framework for the next phase of governance reform in South Africa.

This process is of particular importance to the Ingonyama Trust Board because many of the proposed reforms directly affect the legal, governance and administrative relationship between traditional leadership institutions and elected local government structures.

The White Paper therefore represents a potentially significant shift in the institutional environment within which the Trust operates, making it important that the organisation remains informed, responsive and strategically aware of broader governance reforms taking place nationally.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

This week's STAR recognition goes to Mr Baai from ICT for his outstanding work in assisting with the restoration and stabilisation of the ITB ICT environment following recent technical challenges experienced within the server infrastructure.

Your responsiveness, commitment and professionalism helped minimise operational disruption during a particularly critical reporting period for the institution, and your efforts are sincerely appreciated.

We would also like to acknowledge and encourage the Financial Management Services team as they continue with the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026.

This period demands extraordinary focus, discipline, long hours and sacrifice. The work being undertaken is important not only for compliance purposes, but because it contributes directly to the credibility, accountability and governance standing of the institution.

The institution recognises and appreciates your continued hard work and commitment.