

Mayor's Acceptance Speech: 29/08/2013

Thank you Mr Speaker, Chief Whip, Councillors, Municipal Manager and HOD'S, and Members of the community.

I would like to convey my sincerest thanks to all those people who were instrumental in me being elected as Mayor tonight. To the DA, the caucus that voted for me and the Midvaal councillors here tonight, it is extremely motivating to know that I have the support of this team behind me. One of the fundamental values of the DA is their belief in young people and their ability to pursue a career in public service. Electing me as Mayor is proof that they live by their principles. They have shown full confidence in my abilities, and see youthfulness as an enabling factor, rather than a cause for concern.

Young people often say that they would like to "make a change", or be given an opportunity to make an impact on the world around them...as I stand here tonight, having been elected Mayor of Midvaal, I realise that I am now lucky enough to be a young person who has been given the ultimate chance to do exactly that...to make a change. Being elected Mayor is a huge honour, and an incredibly humbling experience. It is also an extremely exciting time, because I will have the opportunity to make choices which can impact on the quality of life of the people living around me in Midvaal.

My first act as Mayor is to appoint a Mayoral Committee, and the members are as follows:

MMC Engineering and Deputy Mayor:	Cllr Malcolm Hack
MMC Social and Community Services:	Cllr Cliff Harman
MMC Corporate and Finance:	Cllr Patricia Pretorius
MMC HR & Protection:	Cllr James Botsoere
MMC Development and Planning:	Cllr Freddie Peters

My expectation is that my committee will at all times strive to deliver results that are in the public interest. The growth and development which Midvaal strives toward can only be achieved through the hard work of this committee. Leadership is a powerful thing...if each MMC gives off one hundred percent into their daily tasks, that behaviour will filter through to all the employees under them and create a culture of high performance. As MMCs, you need to be accountable and responsible at all times for the departments under your supervision, to ensure that they achieve their maximum potential.

It is important on an occasion like this to acknowledge those who have laid the foundations of the path that I will now take. I am honoured to follow in the footsteps of Mayors who have raised Midvaal from a small unknown area to a hub of development and activity, and the promise of great things still to come. The work of people like Marti Wenger and Timothy Nast, as well as Cliff Hartman in the interim period, was instrumental in creating

the Midvaal that we enjoy today, and it is now my responsibility to take their legacy forward and ensure that Midvaal remains on its pathway to success.

Residents can rest assured that stability and continuity will be maintained through the transition to a new Mayor, and there will be no disruptions to the daily functioning of Midvaal. Midvaal Local Municipality has always been dedicated to excellent service delivery, economic growth and development in the area. These standards will not change - as the new Mayor, I am committed to upholding these values of Midvaal, to driving business development, as well as entrenching the need for inclusive economic growth, which allows our poor communities like Sicelo and Lakeside to progress along with businesses and investors – we cannot afford to leave anyone behind as Midvaal expands its economy. Mr Speaker, the vast disparities between the income groups poses a threat to my generation.

Reaching out to the youth is therefore another priority on my agenda. We need to find ways to communicate with young people which they are receptive to, and to build a community which they WANT to be a part of, rather than leaving Midvaal for the prospects offered by bigger cities. Building integrated communities will also be a big focus area for me. Diversity should never become a cause for tension or hostility; rather, it should be celebrated and utilised in productive ways which benefit Midvaal as a whole.

To the residents of Midvaal, I would like my time as Mayor to be a time where we establish a solid relationship between the community and its leadership. Engagement between council and residents needs to become more pro-active, so where in the past the process was to identify an issue and then implement a plan, I would like more interaction with the affected communities, to ensure their full understanding and support.

Beyond that, building integrated communities will be a big focus area for me. Diversity should be celebrated and utilised in productive ways which benefit Midvaal as a whole.

Where differences of opinion do exist, as they sometimes must, we need to find constructive ways of moving forward. Issues such as the Golf Course Advertising matter cannot be left to fester and create tension within our community; we need to find a middle ground and come to reasonable agreements.

In the coming weeks, I will be visiting as much of Midvaal as I can, to meet the different sectors and areas in our municipality, to gauge how best we can serve them. My task as the new Mayor will be to ensure that the best of Midvaal is preserved, but simultaneously, that transformation occurs where it is needed. Change can be construed however one wishes to view it – it can be terrifying or it can be exhilarating. My hope is that my journey as Mayor is an exhilarating one, one which inspires my team to work hard to deliver only the very best to our residents, and one which helps Midvaal achieve its full potential.