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MEDIA RELEASE

To: News Editors

From: Kgamanyane Maphologela

Director: Communications & Stakeholder Management

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JOBURG PROCESSES OVER R1.2 BILLION IN DEBT RELIEF AS FINAL DEADLINE APPROACHES

The City of Johannesburg has reached a significant milestone in the implementation of Phase 4 of its Debt Relief Programme, with more than R1.247 billion in qualifying municipal debt relief from the first batch of applications submitted for processing.

By the end of July 2026, the City had received 18,043 applications, linked to approximately R2.052 billion in outstanding municipal debt across the various customer categories.

Following assessment and verification of applications against the approved Debt Relief Programme criteria and applicable addendums, a total of R1,247,776,399.33 in qualifying debt relief has been submitted to the City's system support team for uploading.

The City expects the approved relief from this first batch to reflect on qualifying customers' municipal accounts by the end of September 2026.

Director for Communications and Stakeholder Management in Group Finance, Kgamanyane Maphologela, said the milestone demonstrates that the programme is translating into tangible financial relief for qualifying customers.

"More than R1.2 billion in qualifying debt relief from the first batch has now reached the system-processing stage. This is significant relief for qualifying customers who have been carrying historical municipal debt and provides them with an opportunity to regularise their accounts and maintain a sustainable payment relationship with the City," said Maphologela.

ESP, RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS AND PENSIONERS ACCOUNT FOR MAJORITY OF RELIEF

The largest portion of the qualifying relief submitted for processing is concentrated among Expanded Social Package (ESP) beneficiaries, individual residential customers and pensioners.

Of the R1.247 billion submitted for processing, approximately R674.4 million relates to ESP beneficiaries, R315.6 million to individual residential customers and R205.1 million to pensioners.

Together, these three categories account for approximately R1.195 billion of the qualifying relief submitted for processing.

Maphologela said the figures demonstrate the importance of the programme in assisting financially vulnerable households and other qualifying customers struggling with accumulated municipal debt.

“Behind these figures are Johannesburg residents who have been struggling to bring their municipal accounts back into good standing. Debt Relief provides qualifying customers with an opportunity to address historical debt, while encouraging them to remain responsible for their current municipal charges going forward,” he said.

The City emphasised that the R2.052 billion represents the total outstanding debt linked to the 18,043 applications received by the end of July and does not mean that the entire amount will be written off.

The actual amount of relief granted is determined by the approved qualifying criteria applicable to each customer category and the circumstances of the individual account.

FIRST BATCH – FURTHER APPLICATIONS STILL TO BE PROCESSED

The current figures relate to the first batch of applications received up to the end of July 2026.

Applications received thereafter will form part of subsequent processing and assessment batches. The City will continue processing qualifying applications received up to the programme's closing date.

Customers whose applications form part of the current batch are encouraged to monitor their municipal accounts for approved adjustments.

FINAL CALL: APPLICATIONS CLOSE 31 OCTOBER 2026

The City is urging qualifying customers who have not yet applied not to wait until the last minute.

Phase 4 of the Debt Relief Programme commenced on 1 November 2025, following Council approval, and officially closes on 31 October 2026.

The 12-month intervention is aimed at assisting qualifying customers burdened by municipal debt to regularise their accounts while promoting sustainable payment behaviour and strengthening the City's revenue collection.

“The application window is closing. We encourage customers who believe they qualify to submit their applications and all required supporting documents as soon as possible. 31 October 2026 is the closing date, and customers should not leave their applications until the final days,” said Maphologela.

DEBT RELIEF IS NOT AUTOMATIC

The City reminds customers that Debt Relief is not an automatic or blanket write-off of municipal debt.

Every application is subject to assessment and verification against the Council-approved programme criteria and applicable addendums.

The level of relief granted depends on the customer category, qualifying debt and the applicable conditions of the programme.

Customers benefiting from the programme are also expected to comply with the applicable conditions and remain responsible for their current municipal charges.

DEBT RELIEF PROGRESS AT A GLANCE

Applications received by end July 2026: 18,043

Total debt linked to applications: R2,052,152,243.74

Qualifying debt relief submitted for processing: R1,247,776,399.33

Largest qualifying categories: ESP beneficiaries, individual residential customers and pensioners

Expected reflection of first-batch relief: By end September 2026

Programme closing date: 31 October 2026

HOW TO APPLY

Customers who believe they qualify for the Debt Relief Programme are encouraged to apply before the 31 October 2026 deadline through the City's approved channels.

Applications and supporting documentation may be submitted through designated Revenue Customer Service Centres and other official City of Johannesburg Debt Relief channels.

Customers requiring assistance should use the City's official customer service platforms for guidance on qualifying criteria, supporting documentation and the application process.

The City cautions customers against individuals or organisations claiming that they can guarantee Debt Relief approval in exchange for payment. Applications are assessed and approved only through the City's official processes.

Don't wait for the deadline. Apply before 31 October 2026.

ENDS –

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