



a world class African city

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## **City of Johannesburg Announces State of the City Address (SOCA)**

The Speaker of Council for the City of Johannesburg, Councillor Margaret Arnolds has officially confirmed that the State of the City Address (SOCA) will take place on **May 20, 2026, at St Mary's Cathedral, commencing at 13:00**. This significant event will set the stage for the city's future while highlighting a transformative new initiative: the development of the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Precinct.

The Archbishop Desmond Tutu Precinct aims to regenerate a decayed and ailing area of the inner city, weaving the legacy of the beloved "Arch" into the very fabric of Johannesburg. This innovative project seeks to honour Desmond Tutu's lifelong commitment to social justice by creating high-quality public spaces that are welcoming, walkable, safe, and accessible to all.

Desmond Tutu rose to prominence as the first Black Anglican Dean of Johannesburg at St Mary's Cathedral in downtown Johannesburg in 1975. A globally renowned champion of human rights, he was widely admired for his moral courage and conviction, receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his efforts towards promoting peace and justice. St. Mary's Cathedral has long served as a sanctuary and beacon of hope, and this project aims to meld urban regeneration with heritage preservation, creating a living tribute that honours Tutu and his ideals.

The Speaker of Council emphasised that St Mary's Cathedral, as the venue for this year's SOCA, underscores the city's commitment to reclaiming its historical and cultural heart. "The venue is emblematic of our rich heritage and a beacon of hope as we work towards revitalising Johannesburg," Cllr Arnolds stated. "The Archbishop Desmond Tutu Precinct is a vital part of this revitalisation, encouraging a safe and inclusive environment for all Jo'burgers."

In support of the initiative surrounding the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Precinct, the City is running a public consultation process on the proposed renaming of four streets around St. Mary's Cathedral in the Johannesburg CBD.

This SOCA also marks a pivotal moment, as it will be the last address by the current political leadership before the local government elections scheduled for later this year. In the address, the Executive Mayor will reflect on the achievements and challenges of his term while outlining a bold vision for Johannesburg's future.

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