

# Award is indictment of residents' gripes on service

THIS IS one award Tshwane executive mayor Dr Gwen Ramokgopa will not be proud of, and will never want to mention in public.

The municipality has been awarded the unpopular Rusty Padlock Awards for 2010.

This award exposes the poor performance of institutions in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act.

The city was declared winner for 2010 because not only did it fail to respond to most of the requests it received, but it also failed consistently over the past three years to file Section 32 compliance reports to the SA Human Rights Commission the law compels it to.

The research, conducted by the Open Democracy Advice Centre, is based on four key areas; the road map of the body to deal with requests and PAIA matters, the strength of records management,



the internal mechanisms for dealing with PAIA and the resources allocated to PAIA management.

Put simply, the award means that the municipality locked its doors with a rusty padlock (and seemingly lost the keys), denying residents and stakeholders access to information.

In an apparent response to this dubious honour, the municipality placed an advert in a Sunday newspaper outlining all its "achievements" for the 2009/10 financial year which spanned from July 2009 to last June.

According to the municipality, 15 172 houses were provided with water connections since 2006; 42 293 sewer connections were completed since 2006; 2 262 families were relocated to RDP houses or serviced stands, while 9 822 households in informal settlements were registered and their shacks "marked" to curb the growth of informal settlements.

The municipality further states in the advert that 82 100 registered indigent households get free basic services and 1 009 agricultural starter packs were distributed to support home and community food gardens in the financial year

under review.  
It's good for the municipality to highlight its achievement, but to balance the situation, it ought to mention the challenges it faces.

There are major challenges facing the municipality, including the fact that there are still thousands of residents using pit latrines; residents who are without electricity in their homes; and long stretches of untarred and inaccessible roads in some areas.

I also think the municipality missed the point... the Rusty Padlock Award is about the municipality's failure to provide information.

It does not challenge or dispute some of the achievements made by the municipality.

It's about time that the council addressed real issues and stopped harping on the same issues over and over again.

Ramokgopa has stated these

achievements in her previous speeches and State of the City addresses.

African Christian Democratic Party councillor Anne-Marie Spang summed it up well when she said: "The 2010 Rusty Padlock Award is proof that we cannot sweet-talk others as well as ourselves to disguise our problem."

Spang added: "As leaders of the city we cannot afford to claim our way to fame only because some houses were delivered... sanitation and water we have supplied."

Just a reminder to Ramokgopa; there are still a number of outstanding reports which members of the public are anxiously awaiting.

These include the Ntsebeza report, the trip to Copenhagen for the climate change summit and the new appointments in the executive mayor's office.

