

Shame dogs Tshwane council

Yesterday, Thursday, October 14, Tshwane mayor, Gwen Ramokgopa, and Members of the Mayoral Committee, visited parts of Laudium as part of a 'mayoral Imbizo to highlight the City of Tshwane's achievements since 2006'...and to announce when the remaining commitments would be met.

Little mention was made of the local council's latest 'achievement'...for non-achievement: the Rusty Padlock Award for 2010, which they were awarded just the day before.

The reason why Ramokgopa probably kept mum is that the award is not a very popular one. Last year's winner was the notorious failure, the Department of Health.

These awards expose the *poor performance* of institutions in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Paia) in the public sector. Tshwane was declared the 2010 winner because not only did they fail to respond to the majority of requests sent to them, but they have also failed (consistently over the past three years) to file the section 32 compliance reports to the South African Human Rights Commission, that the law compels

them to do.

These 'mampara' awards are a culmination of research into 82 different institutions which include national, provincial departments and municipalities – so to be singled out like this is quite a dishonour.

The research is conducted by the Open Democracy Advice Centre (Odac) and they noted that institutions had been less forthcoming this year than in previous years.

"The 31% result is a cause for concern as it is significantly lower than the 2009 and the 2008 results where we recorded a response of 40% and 39% respectively from the sampled institutions," noted Odac's deputy executive director, Mukelani Dimba.

Dimba added that the City of Tshwane Metro Council had to become 'more open and responsive to the needs of its residents'.

Ramokgopa's imbizo was seen by many residents as just another attempt to boost the ANC's dismal ratings ahead of the local government elections expected early next year.

