

ON THE MARRC



NEWSLETTER

#003

FEBRUARY 2026

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IN THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

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Contributions by: T.Mkhize & Anthony Waldhausen

CHAIRPERSONS

MESSAGE...

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON - FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER (MARRC)

February doesn't whisper. It speaks loudly—about pressure, priorities, and participation. In Msunduzi, we are standing at a critical junction where decisions taken in the next few months will shape how we live, work, and do business for years to come.

Let's start with the issue that's front of mind for many residents: the upcoming tariff increases. These are not abstract numbers buried in municipal documents. They translate directly into higher monthly bills, tighter household budgets, and tougher operating conditions for local businesses. In a municipality where unemployment is high and disposable income is shrinking; every increase must be treated with care. At MARRC, we are firm in our view: increases must be reasonable, clearly explained, and matched by improved service delivery. Residents have a right to ask questions—what are we paying for and what are we getting in return? That question deserves a clear answer.

Running alongside tariffs is the upcoming draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP). This is not "just another report." The IDP is the municipality's strategic playbook. It sets out where money will be spent, which infrastructure will be prioritised, and what kind of city Msunduzi will become. Roads, water infrastructure, electricity stability, economic development, safety—this is where those choices are made. Ignore the IDP, and you give away your right to influence the future and your voice. Engage with it, and you become part of shaping it.

This quarter, (Jan - March) Msunduzi will roll out a series of public participation activities—IDP consultations, budget roadshows, and tariff-related engagements. For residents, this is a tick - box exercise. This is where your voice moves from frustration at home to impact in policy. Public participation means you get to ask why certain projects are prioritised over others. It means questioning whether spending aligns with real community needs. It means pushing for timelines, not promises, and outcomes, not excuses.

Too often, we treat participation as optional and then complain when decisions don't reflect our reality. The truth is uncomfortable but necessary: silence is consent. When residents don't show up, decisions are made without them. And once budgets are approved and plans are adopted, reversing them becomes exponentially harder.



CHAIRPERSONS

MESSAGE...

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON - FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER (MARRC)

At MARRC, we will be actively engaging during this quarter. We will analyse the draft IDP, interrogate tariff proposals, and advocate for responsible, people-centred decision-making. But we cannot—and should not—do it alone. Strong municipalities are built when informed citizens participate consistently, not just when there's a crisis.

Msunduzi is not lacking in potential. What it needs is alignment, discipline, and shared accountability. We need leadership that is qualified, listens, communities that engage, and institutions that deliver.

Progress is not a miracle—it's the result of deliberate choices, made in the open, with the people who are affected by them.

February is your invitation. Show up. Speak up. Read the documents. Attend the meetings.

Ask the uncomfortable questions. Demand accountability. Because the future of Msunduzi is not decided behind closed doors—it is shaped by those who choose to be in the room.



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ISSUE OF THE MONTH RATE & TARIFF INCREASE...

It is that time of the year which is a repeat of years before. A consultation that is just a presentation and not much detail for the rates and tariff increase for 2026/2027.

We, the paying residents and ratepayers, categorically reject the proposed tariff increases for the 2026/2027 financial year. We demand an immediate moratorium on tariff increases until all our concerns have been met which are included in our submission.

The concerns include the following:

- Public Participation and Due Processes
- Multi Billing Saga
- Inclusion of Unbilled Areas in the Billing System
- Monitoring and Reducing Water Over Consumption
- Revenue Recovery and Sustainability
- Water Tariffs: Inequity Across Wards
- Electricity: Winter Tariffs, NDA Charges
- Failed electricity losses strategy
- Unlawful 2024/2025 tariffs of charges
- Property Rates: Dual Increases During Valuation Year
- Cemeteries and Crematorium: Collapsing Services
- Governance and Tariff Modelling Failures
- Request for VAT Exemption on Municipal Services



Each year we have the tariff increases but the question we must ask what are we paying for? We see in all communities that residents are doing the job that is supposed to be done by the municipality from cutting grass and verges, repairing potholes, cleaning and repaint road signs and much more.

We are paying for poor service delivery, poor workmanship – look at the tenders to repair potholes which is substandard, the CBD has collapsed etc. There are more examples throughout the city of poor workmanship. Why is Msunduzi municipality refuse collection always late?



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Why isn't funding set aside for repairs and maintenance of the water and electricity infrastructure and we have continuous water and electricity outages on a daily basis and where electricity is out for over three days or more.

We are concerned that the MEC of COGTA removed Msunduzi municipality out of administration, but the municipality is still dysfunctional and operating under crisis management. This was a political decision, and all stakeholders were not consulted on the decision which was a poor decision.

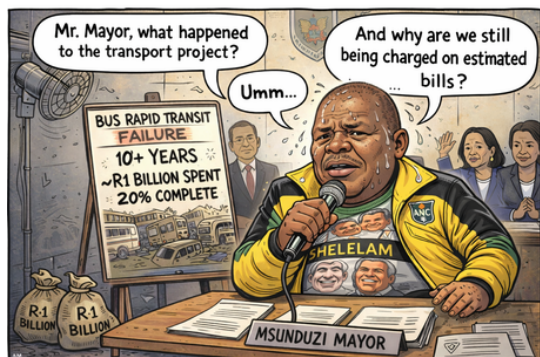
We as residents are sick and tired of the poor leadership at all levels, corruption, political interference, nepotism and cadre deployment of unskilled and unqualified staff especially at senior level. It is time for residents to take back their power and to take a stand and what best time than this year for the local government elections where we can bring about change.

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ISSUE OF THE MONTH RATE & TARIFF INCREASE...

Rates & Tariff Increases!

Item	Percentage increase 2026/2027
Electricity	9,26%
Water	13%
Sanitation	13%
Rates	2%
Refuse removal	3,70%
Landfill site	3,70%
Community Halls	3,70%
Cemeteries	3,70%
Swimming pools, sport & recreational facilities	3,70%



BY: T. Mkhize

MARRC has submitted a submission on the rates and tariff charges for 2026/2027.

We have rejected the proposed tariff increases and demanded an immediate moratorium on tariff increases until our concerns have been met.

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The meeting also highlighted the importance of civic participation. Whether in agreement or opposition, residents showed up, spoke out, and engaged. This is a sign of a community that still believes in the possibility of responsive governance.

Moving forward, the real test will not be in the proposals themselves, but in how the municipality responds to the concerns raised. Transparency, clear communication, and measurable improvements in service delivery will determine whether residents see tariff increases as justified or simply inevitable.

Because ultimately, tariffs are not just about numbers. They are about trust.

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LINCOLN MEADE RESIDENT & RATEPAYER ASSOCIATION

Since its inception in 2019, the Lincoln Meade Residents and Ratepayers Association (LMRRA), under the dedicated leadership of Chairperson Kantha Naidoo, has been a beacon of hope and progress for the local community. With a mission to uplift and enhance the area, the LMRRA has made significant strides, fostering a sense of unity and collaboration among residents.

The Association has opted to rather fundraise, instead of asking resident to pay a subscription. One of their most successful fundraisers has been hosting regular flea markets. The funds raised from these enabled one of the cornerstone projects initiated by the LMRRA, being the community clean-up initiative. Recognizing the importance of a clean and inviting environment, the association invested in a brush cutter and employed a general worker to help tackle the neglected verges and roadsides. This initiative not only beautified the area but also instilled a sense of pride among residents, encouraging them to take ownership of their surroundings.

The local park, a hub for community gatherings, underwent a much-needed transformation. With fresh coats of paint and repaired swings, it has become a vibrant space where families come together to enjoy leisurely afternoons. The revitalization of the park stands as a testament to the power of community collaboration. The place where laughter echoes and friendships flourish. Currently the association faces a challenge in that their brush cutter was stolen. They are appealing to anyone willing to sponsor them a second hand one, so that they can continue to beautify the area.

LMRRA's commitment extends beyond beautification efforts. The association has been proactive in addressing essential infrastructure issues, working tirelessly to repair potholes and ensure that streetlights remain functional. Their persistence in liaising with the municipality during electricity and water outages has been crucial, demonstrating their unwavering dedication to the community's well-being.

A project that showcased the spirit of cooperation was the repainting of road signs in the area. Spanning over months, this ambitious two-stage project involved sanding down, cleaning, and applying fresh coats of paint to the signs, accompanied by the rebranding of street names. Community members rallied together, transforming this task into a shared experience that fostered camaraderie and pride in their neighbourhood.

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LINCOLN MEADE RESIDENT & RATEPAYER ASSOCIATION

The LMRRA also took a compassionate step last year by organizing a festive meal for the less fortunate in the area. The association's members came together to prepare and distribute warm meals, while the community generously donated the necessary items. This heart-warming initiative highlighted the unity within Lincoln Meade, proving that together, they could make a meaningful impact on those in need.

As we reflect on the achievements of the LMRRA, it is clear that their efforts have not only improved the physical landscape of the community but have also fostered a strong sense of belonging and togetherness. With each project, they remind us that when residents unite with a common purpose, they can create a brighter, more vibrant future for everyone. Here's to continuing this journey of growth, unity, and community spirit in Lincoln Meade!

Kantha Naidoo – Chairperson LMRRA



READ MORE

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WOODLANDS RATEPAYERS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

The Woodlands Ratepayers and Residents Association (WRRRA) is a community-based civic organisation serving the suburb of Woodlands in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. The association was established in 2018 in response to growing concerns around service delivery, infrastructure maintenance, safety, and resident representation. Recognising the need for a structured and accountable civic body, the association was formally constituted in 2019, providing it with a clear governance framework and mandate to act in the interests of the Woodlands community.

Since its formalisation, WRRRA has become a trusted and well-respected voice within Woodlands. The association operates as a non-partisan, resident-led structure that prioritises transparency, collaboration, and constructive engagement. Its primary objective is to promote the wellbeing of residents by advocating for effective municipal service delivery, fostering community participation, and responding to issues that affect the quality of life in the area.

WRRRA is recognised for its consistent engagement with residents, ensuring that concerns are heard, documented, and addressed through appropriate channels. The association serves as a link between residents, ward councillors, municipal departments, and broader civic structures. Through regular communication and meetings, WRRRA helps residents understand municipal processes, their rights and responsibilities as ratepayers, and the mechanisms available for resolving disputes and service failures.

The association is an active participant within the broader civic landscape of Pietermaritzburg. WRRRA is a member of The Msunduzi Association of Residents, Ratepayers and Civics (MARRC), enabling collective advocacy on citywide issues such as billing accuracy, infrastructure backlogs, and governance accountability. This collaboration strengthens the association's ability to influence policy discussions and ensures that the interests of Woodlands residents are represented at municipal and provincial levels.

Beyond advocacy, WRRRA is known for its practical, community-centred approach. The association works closely with local organisations and civil society groups when the need arises. These collaborations are driven by shared goals and a commitment to addressing challenges through cooperation rather than conflict. Whether engaging with Community Police Forums, neighbourhood safety initiatives, or local organisations, WRRRA prioritises respectful partnership and effective coordination.

A notable example of the association's impact is its direct intervention during periods of severe electricity disruption. Recognising the risks posed by prolonged power outages, WRRRA mobilised resources to purchase an industrial generator for Isabel Beardmore, ensuring continuity of essential services during load shedding. This initiative demonstrated the association's ability to move beyond advocacy into tangible action, responding decisively when community welfare was at risk. The project reinforced trust within the community and highlighted the association's commitment to protecting dignity and wellbeing.

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WOODLANDS RATEPAYERS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

WRRRA's leadership and governance are guided by principles of accountability, inclusivity, and service. The association encourages active resident participation and believes that sustainable community development is achieved when residents are informed, organised, and engaged. Its leadership has earned respect for balancing firm advocacy with collaborative problem-solving, ensuring that relationships with stakeholders remain constructive and solution focused.

Today, the Woodlands Ratepayers and Residents Association stand as a stable and credible community institution. It is widely regarded within Woodlands as a reliable structure that acts in the best interests of residents and responds effectively when challenges arise. Through advocacy, collaboration, and direct community support, WRRRA continues to play a vital role in strengthening civic participation and improving the lived experience of residents.

The association remains committed to its founding purpose: to serve, represent, and uplift the Woodlands community through collective action, responsible leadership, and meaningful collaboration. To partner with us, please contact us, we would love to collaborate with you.



Chairperson: Linda Mtshali,
Vice-Chairperson: Charles Johnson,
Secretary: Joy Pieteroni,
Treasurer: Frank Bloem

Linda Mtshali
Chairperson
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"Woodlands our home"



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BE AN ACTIVE CITIZEN

Partnerships and networks: MARRC is an affiliate of Defend Our Democracy (DOD).

Active Citizen of the Month

In 2016 Lower Mount Michael area was re-zoned from Umgeni into ward 1 and again from ward 1 to ward 40 which comprises of tribal and municipal land. The residents of Mount Michael were never consulted or notified of this change prior to it being implemented.

In late 2016 the residents of Lower Mount Michael had a meeting with the Msunduzi municipality to try resolve the service delivery issues. We were introduced to the elected ward 1 councillor Ms Jabu Ngubo, and we informed her about numerous service delivery issues were raised as in: illegal dumping on Dennis Shepstone Rd, no streetlights, road resurfacing and water and electricity failures. Jabu never really dealt with or addressed these matters efficiently, and to date many remain unresolved.

Over the years many attempts were made to engage with Umgeni and Msunduzi councillor's and management, but both Municipalities seemed to think that our service delivery issues did not fall under their jurisdiction. This resulted in the residents of Lower Mount Michael having to fend for themselves and continued this way until 2025 when we received notification of the Msunduzi Demarcation Board meeting.

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Mr Ian Cliff and Mr Tim Lohrentz attended the meeting and were informed of the process required to apply to re-zone ward 40 into ward 26. Mr Mthobisi Manzini from the Municipal Demarcation Board assisted us with documentation, zone maps and the process to follow for the application of re-zoning. All necessary signatures and the MDB 3 Form (Ward Demarcation) with corresponding motivational letter and maps were sent through prior to the closing date for submissions of the requested re-zoning of Lower Mount Michael into ward 26.

On 19th November 2025 we received notification from Mr Manzini that our application was going to the official ward handover ceremony. On the 20th November 2025 we received the Government Gazette notice of the re-zoning of Lower Mount Michael into ward 26, and final submission was confirmation and no objection to the gazetted notice, which was done before 04 December 2025.

We would like to thank the residents of Lower Mount Michael, Anthony Waldhausen from MARRC, and Mr Mthobisi Manzini from the Municipal Demarcation Board for their assistance and contributions in our application. It shows that residents were able to mobilise, and it demonstrates active citizenry in action to address issues on their own.

There will be a public meeting on the rezoning of Mount Michael into ward 26 on 14 March at 2pm. Venue to be confirmed.

We will have Mr Mthobisi Manzini from Municipal Demarcation Board who will speak about the process and how Mount Michael residents can re-register with the IEC.

For more information contact 0827760329

Mr Tim Lohrentz

Lower Mount Michael



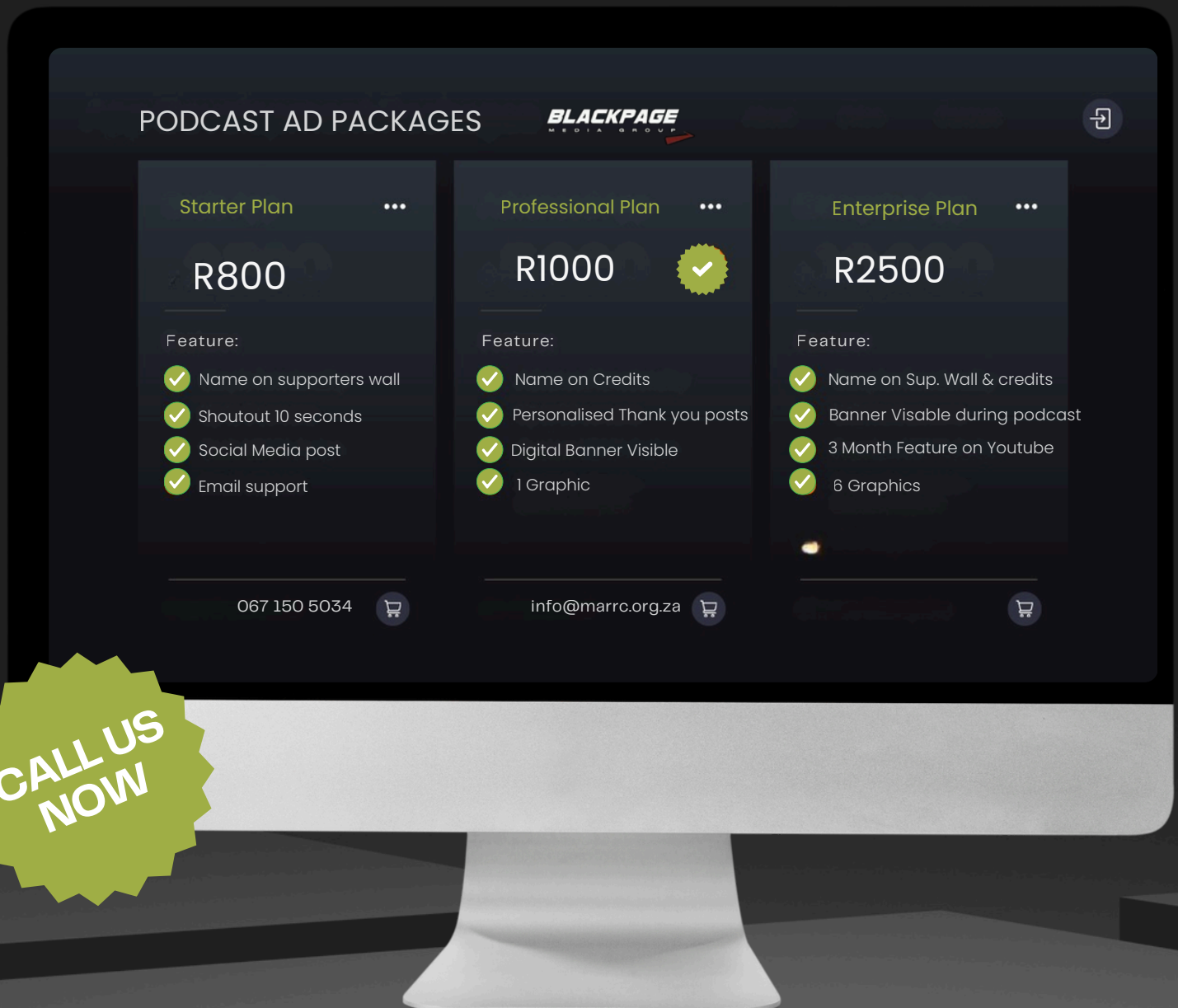
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WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION TO OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION. YOUR WILLINGNESS TO WALK THIS JOURNEY WITH US HAS STRENGTHENED OUR WORK AND REINFORCED THE SHARED COMMITMENT WE HOLD TO RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP AND ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY RESIDENTS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING THIS IMPORTANT WORK TOGETHER.



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PODCAST



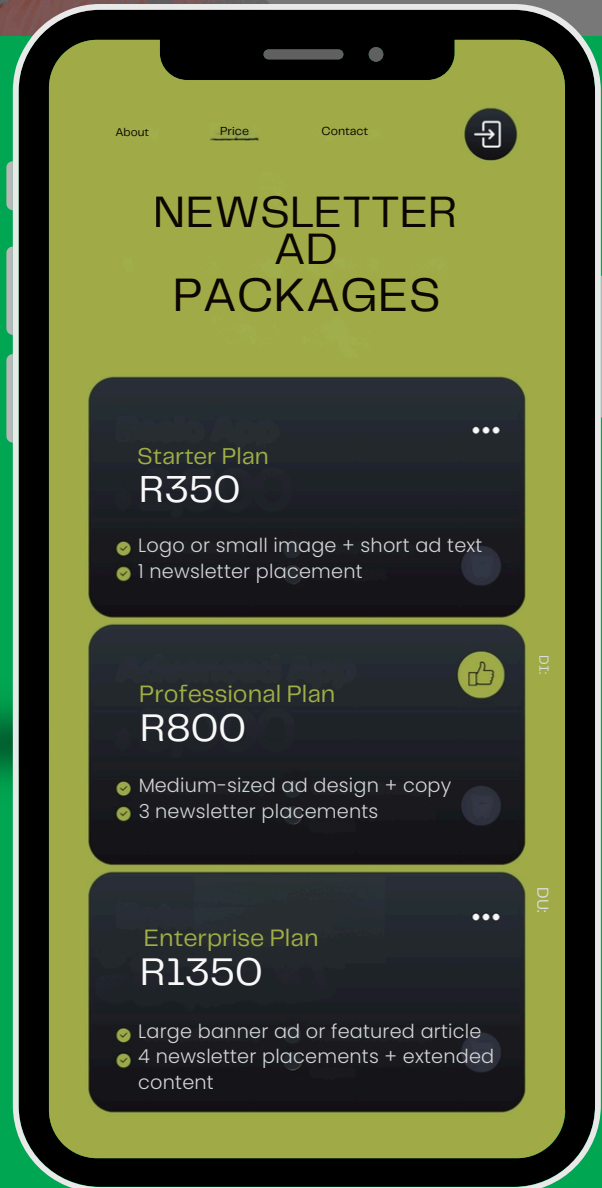


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