

Independent watch dog

Judging by his continued corruption-busting success in Ekurhuleni, Izak Berg is someone who brings hope and dedication to the building of a free and fair future democratic environment in local government. We caught up with this self-proclaimed risk taker who believes in putting the interests of residents and ratepayers first.



Being a long standing resident of Alberton, one who finished his schooling in Alberton and returned after his studies to make a living in his hometown, the sense of community runs deep in his veins. And it is this sense of community which started the fire for fairness and improved service delivery. So it goes without saying, he considers himself the watchdog of the community – especially when it comes to those vulnerable and when he feels that the ratepayers money is not well spend.

Starting out as a councillor in 2000, Izak is now embarking on his fourth term in the upcoming elections as an independent councillor in Ekurhuleni for the Independent Ratepayers Association of South Africa (IRASA). Izak's humanitarian side compelled him to make a difference in the community's lives and to realise that he can fight for residents without fear and favour. In his role as public representative, taking risks and pushing the envelope, is part of getting the job done. Rattling the bush, not leaving stones unturned, finding the truth and getting to the bottom of issues – this is what Izak is all about.

IRASA is a national ratepayer organisation and registered with the IEC to participate in elections for independent candidates. Izak is a strong campaigner to remove politics from local government and for people to be represented by more independent councillors. Politics in the metro has become too much about what the national agenda of political parties want and less about that is in the best interest of the community. Being an independent councillor in the Ekurhuleni Metro has removed political

agendas from Izak and IRASA will always put the interest of residents first.

As an independent representative of the people Izak is passionate about ending fruitless and wasteful expenditure and bring an end to corruption and nepotism. Izak believed that corruption cost the ratepayers almost a billion rand annually and has made it his mission to reduce this amount of wasteful expenditure so that this money can be spent on the needs of residents. "I am the watchdog of the ratepayers in Ekurhuleni" says Izak Berg.

Izak boasts an impressive background in law enforcement, which includes, among others, working to bring corrupt officials to book. He played a major role in removing Robert McBride as Chief of Police and Patrick Flusk as city Manager of the Ekurhuleni Metro. In addition, Izak was instrumental in establishing the fraud and corruption hot line. "We urge members of the community to use the line to report fraud and corruption."

Being independent has assisted Izak in earning the trust of many officials in the Metro who also want the evil of fraud and corruption destroyed, assisting and trusting him with relevant information about fraud and corruption because he is not aligned to a political party. As an independent councillor Izak gives a voice to the ratepayer and this award him a lot of credibility with municipal officials, the public protector and even the Minister of Finance.

Izak has an MBA degree and he chooses to do his dissertation on municipal finance and specifically collection of rates and taxes and quality service delivery. Izak believe that people that can pay should pay their municipal bill but he equally believes that the Metro should be responsible in how public money of the ratepayers is being used. There is no place for wasteful or fruitless expenditure in local government.

Tackling issues such as the metro's wasteful expenditure ensured that millions of ratepayer's hard-earned money is being saved. "I don't consider this as a job as other people may theirs;

this is my passion," he explains. This makes him the ideal candidate in the upcoming elections as his interests are with residents, making sure they get value for their rates and taxes.

Izak is also a champion in the ratepayers cause to improve service delivery. IRASA has declared war on potholes, cutting grass and cleaning up our streets. I make it my mission to report every pothole and personally check parks to ensure officials do their jobs that the residents pay them to do. I also keep residents updated on water interruptions and power outages across the metro. Ekurhuleni need more independent representatives and councillors so that we can grow the voice of the ratepayers in Ekurhuleni. Izak said that hopefully ratepayers will support the independent candidates of IRASA on 3 August 2016 when voters go to the polls to elect their councillors.

When asked about the highlights of his career, he refers to the people in the community he has managed to help and not the accolades he has received. Working with the people in Ekurhuleni my ward was awarded with the prestigious Bontle ke Botho as one of the cleanest wards in Ekurhuleni and Gauteng. Izak take s community safety very serious and have served as chairman of the Alberton CPF, and member of the East Rand CPF in his previous term. Crime is out of hand and Izak works tirelessly to reduce crime in our community. Izak is also passionate about the youth especially the fragile youth sector of the homeless, unemployed and children and Izak served two terms as the chairman of Child Welfare.

Izak tries to be a role model for future leaders but he was quick to give accolades to his own role model Mr. Johann van der Merwe, as a mentor in his political career. Izak is most inspired by one woman, Thuli Madonsela, Public Protector of South Africa, and the things she stands for have made her another role model for Izak. "Justice is what I have always strived for, like me she is not scared to

say the unpopular things to protect the ordinary man in the street". Izak has a soft spot for our senior citizens and as such he also serves on the board of the Alberton Home for the Aged. "Our most vulnerable residents, the pensioners, are currently mostly affected by issues relating to social benefits." This year, he has already assisted pensioners in getting registered on the system in order to qualify for all the rebates they are entitle to. Indigent benefits are for all and Izak works tirelessly to ensure seniors get the benefits they are entitled to.

Izak is a multifaceted community member and councillor but most of all his love for the East Rand and the people of Ekurhuleni is what will be remembers long after this interview. It is rare to find a person that is such a selfless leader of the community and champion of the ratepayers in our city.

Quick facts

Tell me more about you? What do you enjoy doing in your free time

Driving to places in South Africa and enjoy our lovely country and scenery (Go to all sorts of markets).

If you could be president for one day...

All political parties will be banned. hehehe

Favourite food...

"Rys, vleis en aartappels"
(boerekos)

Do you have any hobbies?

Watching sport (all sports – although our sport is at an all-time low). I also enjoy a good movie.

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IRASA

Independent Ratepayers Association of S.A.