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MEDIA STATEMENT

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MEC LENKOPANE LEADS #ONEMILLIONTREES CAMPAIGN WITH 1,000-TREE DONATION IN AUSTREY

North West Economic Development MEC, Bitsa Lenkopane, says tree planting is an important response to environmental pressures, including land degradation, biodiversity loss and rising temperatures, while creating greener spaces that can benefit communities for generations to come.

MEC Lenkopane, together with the Barolong Boo Tlou le Tau Traditional Leaders, today led the provincial leg of the #OneMillionTrees mass planting campaign in Austrey Village, in the Kagisano-Molopo Local Municipality.

The campaign was activated as part of the 2026 Provincial Arbor Month Celebration, held under the theme, "Growing a Greener Future: Building on Our Tree-Planting Legacy."

As part of the programme, 1,000 indigenous and fruit trees were donated for planting across Austrey, Vragaas, Tlapeng, Magaabui, Ganyesa, Moswana, Goodhope, Tlakgameng and Morokweng, with 500 trees planted during the day's activities.

The initiative contributes to the national tree-planting campaign while strengthening the province's efforts to expand green spaces, restore ecosystems and build climate-resilient communities.

The day's activities began with symbolic tree plantings at the Barolong Boo Tlou le Tau Tribal Authority, followed by engagements and tree-planting activities at the Kagisano-Molopo Education Office, Ganyesa Clinic, Kgosi Thebe Combined School and Austrey Clinic.

MEC Lenkopane said the campaign must go beyond symbolic tree planting and translate into sustained community action, environmental education and responsibility for protecting natural resources.

"Communities must understand why biodiversity and our environment matter. We need to choose trees suitable for our soil, care for them as they grow, learn how to save water, and identify water-wise species," said MEC Lenkopane.

She said environmental education must also prepare young people to take responsibility for the condition of their communities and the economy of the future.

"Our kids will question us in future if we leave our environment to degradation and do not teach them about waste management, biodiversity and conservation. We have a collective responsibility to build a greener economy," she said.

The campaign also highlights the role of fruit-tree planting in supporting household and community food security, while contributing to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and healthier, more sustainable settlements.

The initiative builds on the province's 2025 Arbor Month programme, during which 27,903 trees were planted, and seeks to strengthen this legacy through expanded partnerships and greater community ownership of environmental programmes.

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