

# TIP-OFF



Business Against Crime South Africa™

## Reinvigorated Partnership Between Business and Government

website: [www.bac.org.za](http://www.bac.org.za)



Mr Mark Lamberti, BACSA Chairperson, and Minister of Police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, at the business briefing hosted by BACSA.

Minister Mthethwa recently reconfirmed the value of Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA) amongst the business community at a business briefing in Sandton.

“BACSA has established itself as a dependable partner in the fight against crime and it has a highly capable leadership and clarity of vision,” said Minister Mthethwa.

Chairperson of BACSA, Mr Mark Lamberti, posed two key questions with regard to the role of BACSA:

- What could business do to reduce crime? and
- Why should Government and business support BACSA?

In his response to the first question, he clarified that business neither had the resources nor skills to address the underlying socio-economic causes of crime. Neither could the business community intervene or act in isolation. “The state cannot pass on the responsibility to uphold people’s rights to safety and security and it cannot blame others when people’s safety and security is compromised,” said Mr Lamberti.

Mr Lamberti highlighted that since Minister Mthethwa’s appointment, his desire to work with BACSA was welcomed. “The approach to crime by the current administration is encouraging and has opened the way for BACSA to play a constructive role in crime reduction,” said Mr Lamberti.

BACSA was better poised today to work with Government in addressing the priority of crime.

Mr Lamberti stressed that the first responsibility of the business community was to comply with the letter and spirit of the law. The second was for companies and sectors to protect their business interests.

Mr Lamberti emphasised that BACSA was in a strong position to “facilitate and co-ordinate proactive crime prevention projects within the business community”.

Compelling reasons for Government to work with BACSA included the fact that BACSA, through its networks and technologies, could “assist Government to rapidly and effectively communicate messages and co-ordinate initiatives within large sectors of commerce and industry”.

Importantly, BACSA would partner with Government *only when invited to do so*, said Mr Lamberti. “BACSA was not a mouthpiece for the frustrations of the broader society, nor was it a proxy for this constituency’s dealing with Government on crime,” said Mr Lamberti.

The organisation continues to provide tangible support to Government and to mobilise the business community to reduce vulnerabilities to crime by putting preventative measures in place. BACSA leverages the skills, expertise, resources, goodwill and knowledge of the business community to achieve the required level of improvement and build appropriate capacity in Government.

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### FROM THE CEO’S DESK

Dr Graham Wright, CEO of BACSA, provides an update of the latest developments.

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The Minister of Police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa’s speech from the recent BACSA business briefing.

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## Waiting to Exhale – Alcohol Testing Centre Launched in Randburg



Elgina Ndlovu, Member of the Mayoral Committee and spokesperson for the City of Johannesburg, launches the Randburg Alcohol Testing Centre. Ronnie Napier, Chairperson of SAIA, and Siphwe Nzimande, Deputy Chairperson of BACSA, are present at the handover.

A new, state-of-the-art Alcohol Testing Centre was recently launched in Randburg. The venture was funded by the South African Insurance Association (SAIA) and facilitated by Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA) in conjunction with the Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD).

The purpose of the initiative is to combat drunk driving on Johannesburg's roads and curb the high vehicle accident rate that needlessly claims the lives of drivers and pedestrians. The Centre seeks to enhance the Metro police's capacity to enforce compliance and deter drivers from driving under the influence.

Using the latest breathalysing technology, the Alcohol Testing Centre circumvents the need for blood-testing to accurately determine a driver's alcohol levels. This means that the results of breath testing can be made available immediately via multiple, hard-copy print-outs, eliminating the possibility of a blood sample being tampered with or going missing. More importantly, drunk driving cases can be processed and finalised in court more rapidly than previously with the results of testing being highly reliable and virtually uncontestable.

"This bold initiative will send a strong message that drunk driving is a serious offence that endangers the lives of others," says Lorinda Nel, BACSA Project Manager. "It will help the law-enforcement agencies to promote a culture of zero tolerance for driving under the influence."

This is the latest of a number of initiatives funded and fully supported by SAIA over the past eight years. This year alone, the Association donated R1.53-million to BACSA to address the unacceptably high levels violent and organised crime and to put preventative measures in place. These initiatives have helped to significantly reduce claims relating to motor theft and vehicle hijacking within the short-term insurance industry. As a result, vehicle crime is no longer the primary concern for motor insurers, according to Mr Ronnie Napier, Chairperson of SAIA.

"Road safety has become a key priority," says Mr Napier. "More than 70% of insurance claims are accident-related, and alcohol consumption is a factor in many of them. We find that claims are often rejected in cases where alcohol-testing was undertaken."

According to Arrive Alive, road accidents in South Africa result in the loss of 36 lives every day. Per annum, 13,000 lives are lost at a high annual cost to individuals, commerce and communities. It was this consideration that prompted SAIA to support the initiative with its emphasis on road safety.

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Elgina Ndlovu, Member of the Mayoral Committee and spokesperson for the City of Johannesburg said "The JMPD applauds the actions of SAIA and BACSA in the opening of this Centre."

Gerrie Gernicke of the JMPD further acknowledged the value of the support provided to the JMPD. 'With over 4,000 people tested through a similar centre launched in Johannesburg, the festive season has begun with a promising start', said Gernicke.

## Crime Statistics "A Mixed Bag"

A mixed bag — that's how Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA) described the crime statistics contained in the 2008-2009 SAPS Annual Report, released in Parliament in September.

"Reductions in reported crime in some categories are dampened by significant increases in other categories such as aggravated robbery, sexual offences and commercial crime," said Dr Graham Wright, CEO of BACSA.

The increase in robbery with aggravating circumstances was of concern, said Dr Wright, especially the increase in the Trio crimes — business robbery, residential robbery, and vehicle and truck hijacking.

"We are encouraged, however, that Government has identified direct measures to address these crimes as a priority", said Wright. He praised the filling of critical positions, where the recent appointments of the Head of the DPCI and Head of Crime Intelligence were prime examples of Government's commitment to ensuring that personnel and resource gaps were addressed.

The auditing of skills in the SAPS and the continuing work to improve the Criminal Justice System were necessary actions aimed at ameliorating the performance of the law enforcement agencies and putting in place a cohesive, integrated and modern system.

These actions have yet to reap the desired results, but Government's visible leadership was "promising", said Dr Wright.

"The crime statistics reinforce the need for a strengthened partnership between business, civil society and Government to tackle crime. BACSA was engaging with Government to put such a structured partnership in place," said Dr Wright.

**For comments on articles in this issue, please contact Deborah Hunt on [deborah@bac.org.za](mailto:deborah@bac.org.za)**

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