



KwaZulu-Natal's coastal property corridor. Original illustration — Ryan Michael & Associates.

CONVEYANCING | MARKET COMMENTARY

KwaZulu-Natal: South Africa's Next Property Powerhouse

What a province-wide investment surge means for buyers, sellers and investors - and where sound conveyancing fits in

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KwaZulu-Natal is fast establishing itself as one of the country's most active investment destinations, with new property and infrastructure spending across several sectors recasting the province as a genuine national contender rather than a holiday afterthought. For those of us who act daily on transfers, developments and leases along this coastline, the shift is not merely a market story - it is a steady, measurable increase in deal flow that carries real legal consequences for everyone on either side of a transaction.

The figures behind the trend are striking. As reported by Moneyweb, the province's Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs recorded pledges exceeding R75.8 billion in new developments and manufacturing investment at the 2024 KwaZulu-Natal Investment Conference, the large majority of which had already moved into construction. The 2025 conference set its sights on a further R95 billion in commitments. Whatever the eventual conversion rate of pledges into spades in the ground, the direction of travel is clear - and, as set out below, several of the headline projects have since moved decisively from announcement to completion.

A broad-based surge, not a single hotspot

Industry commentary points to a turning point for the region. Wesley Cowan, managing director of Galetti Auction, has described KwaZulu-Natal as a province long overlooked in favour of

Gauteng and the Western Cape, but now firmly in a phase of resurgence (as quoted by Moneyweb). The drivers he identifies are familiar to anyone advising local buyers: lifestyle migration, the expansion of logistics and industrial capacity, and relative affordability. Demand, on this view, is strengthening across residential, industrial and commercial markets alike - with secure estates, retail nodes and well-regarded schools drawing semigrants and families to both the coast and the interior.

The lettings market tells a complementary story. Moneyweb reports ooba Home Loans data indicating that roughly 13.9% of new home-loan applications nationally now come from buy-to-let investors, while Lightstone figures place year-on-year rental growth in KwaZulu-Natal at about 4.5% - ahead of price growth. As affordability pressures mount elsewhere, particularly in the Western Cape, capital is increasingly being redirected to this province on the strength of its coastal value, climate and pricing.

Flagship projects and the appetite to fund them

Several large developments anchor the momentum. According to the Moneyweb report, these include the R2 billion Club Med resort and the R20 billion expansion of the Sibaya Precinct north of Durban, alongside substantial upgrades to the Durban and Richards Bay ports. Crucially, the spending is no longer confined to the North Coast.

Speaking on Moneyweb's Property Pod, Vumiso Nyamazana, KwaZulu-Natal regional head for commercial property finance at Absa CIB, described the bank's strong appetite for funding these catalytic projects. He noted that Absa acted as lead arranger on the Club Med resort - the first in South Africa - providing a little over half of the R1.5 billion in finance, and that the bank had committed more than R1.5 billion to the Salta Sibaya development at the height of the pandemic, a position vindicated by more than R2 billion in sales within weeks. Of particular note for the western corridor, Absa has also deployed in excess of R1.5 billion toward the new Westown development off the N3, a project expected to generate thousands of permanent jobs and unlock more than R15 billion in investment. The picture Nyamazana paints is of growth that is, at last, geographically balanced.

Where the flagship projects now stand (May 2026)

Since this commentary was first prepared, the most encouraging development is that the headline projects are converting from glossy announcements into completed, certified buildings - and in one case into a trading retail centre. A short status update on each is worthwhile, both because it confirms the underlying thesis and because each milestone carries its own conveyancing and compliance dimension.

Club Med, Tinley Manor - complete, but not yet open. There is a widespread impression locally that the Club Med resort has already opened its doors. It has not. What has happened is arguably more significant from a legal standpoint: construction is finished, and KwaDukuza Municipality formally handed over the occupation certificate on 30 April 2026, with the public opening scheduled for 4 July 2026 (as reported by IOL, The South African, NovaNews and BusinessTech). The Club Med South Africa Beach & Safari Resort sits at Tinley Manor in the iLembe District, roughly 17 kilometres north of Ballito and about thirty minutes from King

Shaka International Airport. Now valued in excess of R2 billion (up from the R1.6 billion figure cited by Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal in 2021), it spans some 54 000 square metres across 64 buildings and offers more than 400 rooms and suites - described by BusinessTech as the most expensive resort yet built in South Africa. It is led by Umhlanga-based developer Collins Residential (founding director Murray Collins) and operated by the French Club Med group (Olivier Perillat-Piratoine, managing director for Southern Africa, with Chris du Toit as project lead), and is Club Med's first resort in Southern Africa, with a Big Five safari lodge planned for a later phase in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

Why the occupation certificate matters. For our purposes the certificate is the point worth dwelling on. Press reporting indicates that it followed roughly 2 000 completion and compliance certificates across twelve submission packages, including some 570 electrical certificates of compliance. That trail is a vivid illustration of the diligence theme below: on a development of this scale, ownership, occupation and the right to trade rest on a deep stack of municipal sign-offs and statutory certificates.

Sibaya Coastal Precinct - a new master developer and a larger horizon. The R20 billion figure quoted above now understates the precinct's ambitions. Following Tongaat Hulett's business rescue, Durban's Devmco Group took over as master developer in late 2024 and, in mid-2025, announced a fresh phase injecting around R5 billion - largely commercial - together with new road and non-motorised transport infrastructure (Moneyweb; Rainmaker Marketing). Devmco now frames the precinct's full long-term build-out at roughly R50 billion over a twenty-to twenty-five-year horizon, with the node having already recorded billions of rand in residential sales since its 2016 launch.

Westown, Shongweni - first phase already trading. The Westown development off the N3, which the commentary above noted Absa had backed, has passed its own milestone. The first phase - the R1.3 billion Westown Square retail centre and The Barn, of roughly 50 000 square metres - officially opened on 27 March 2025, with eThekweni Mayor Cyril Xaba performing the opening (Daily Investor; Construction Review Online; Global Africa Network). Developed by the Fundamentum Property Group as the first activity within a 2 000-hectare scheme, Westown is projected to draw around R15 billion in investment over ten to fifteen years and to create in the order of 8 500 permanent jobs, with Balwin's Shongweni Eco Park residential phase now under construction.

Read together, these three projects make the broader point better than any pledge total: the KwaZulu-Natal pipeline is not merely promised, it is increasingly built. For practitioners, that shifts the centre of gravity from speculative off-plan reservations toward registrable transfers, occupation certificates and operating leases - the work that follows once a development is actually delivered.

The conveyancing view: opportunity carries diligence

A rising market is good news, but it is also when corners are most often cut. From our vantage point as conveyancers and property litigators, a buoyant KwaZulu-Natal warrants more care, not less. Several themes recur in the matters crossing our desks:

Disclosure and condition. Under the Property Practitioners Act, a mandatory disclosure document must be completed before a sale. We continue to see disputes flowing from late, incomplete or absent disclosure of defects. Buyers should insist on a properly completed disclosure form, and sellers should treat it as a shield rather than a formality.

Off-plan and estate purchases. Much of the current pipeline is sectional title and estate development. Purchasers should scrutinise the body corporate or home-owners' association rules, the levy and special-levy position, the management and conduct rules, and any reserve-fund shortfalls before signing. Suspensive conditions, completion dates and developer warranties deserve close reading.

Buy-to-let realities. With investor demand climbing, sound lease drafting matters. Compliance with the Rental Housing Act, correct handling of deposits, and a clear understanding of the eviction process under PIE protect a landlord's yield far more reliably than an optimistic rental projection.

The cost and timing of transfer. Transfer duty, rates and levy clearance certificates, bond cancellation and registration, FICA compliance and Deeds Office turnaround all influence when a buyer actually takes ownership. Non-resident purchasers attracted by the province's value face additional exchange-control and tax considerations that are best addressed at the outset rather than at registration.

In each of these areas, the difference between a clean transaction and a contested one is usually made before signature - in the contract terms and the diligence that precedes them. That is precisely where appointing experienced conveyancers early pays for itself.

Where to from here

KwaZulu-Natal's coastal value proposition, supported by infrastructure investment and a clear lender appetite - and, increasingly, by completed flagship developments rather than mere intentions - gives the province a credible claim to being South Africa's next major property market. For buyers, sellers, developers and investors alike, the moment to act is matched by a need to act carefully. Our firm advises across the full spectrum of property work - from sale agreements, transfer registrations, to development structuring, leasing and property litigation - and we welcome the opportunity to assist clients in making the most of what the province now offers.

Sources & attribution

This commentary by Ryan Michael & Associates is an original analysis written for our clients. The market data and industry commentary in the opening sections draw on the article "KZN emerges as SA's next property powerhouse" by Terri Ann Brouwers, published by Moneyweb on 22 October 2025; full credit for that underlying reporting belongs to the author and to Moneyweb. The status update under "Where the flagship projects now stand" is drawn from the further public reporting listed below. All figures and statements are paraphrased and attributed; no source text is reproduced verbatim.

1. Terri Ann Brouwers, "KZN emerges as SA's next property powerhouse" — Moneyweb, 22 October 2025.
2. "Club Med Resort opening in KwaZulu-Natal, promising to boost European tourism" — IOL (The Mercury), May 2026 (opening date of 4 July 2026; KwaDukuza occupation certificate).

3. "Club Med South Africa resort clears final hurdle before opening" — The South African, May 2026 (occupation certificate handed over 30 April 2026; compliance detail).
4. "Inside South Africa's first Club Med luxury family resort" — IOL Travel, 12 May 2026 (scale, 54 000 m² / 64 buildings, completion).
5. "Most expensive resort ever built in South Africa gets ready to open its doors" — BusinessTech, April 2026 (investment value; municipal comment).
6. "Club Med R2bn beach resort for KZN North Coast" — Moneyweb, 2025 (Collins Residential; location; >400 rooms; future safari lodge).
7. "Durban's Devmco takes over from Tongaat to develop R20bn Sibaya precinct" — Moneyweb, November 2024 (change of master developer; R5bn next phase).
8. "Sibaya Precinct: Game-changer for Durban's property market?" — Moneyweb (Property Pod), 2025 (~R50bn long-term build-out).
9. "The new R15 billion city being built in South Africa" — BusinessTech, October 2025 (Westown Square opening; phasing).
10. "Westown Square opening signifies 'New City of the West'" — Global Africa Network, 2025 (opened 27 March 2025 by Mayor Cyril Xaba; jobs).

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