

The gist of The Gathering's 'game changers'

By [Walter Pike](#)

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There were many hot topics at the fourth ever #DMGathering, held on Thursday, 11 June in Midrand. This year's conference was themed 'game changers'. Here are a handful of my highlights...

Paul Mashatile distances himself and the ANC from the Nkandla whitewash. Julius Malema expresses his fear that the building of swimming pools may catch on as some sort of status symbol that causes the drowning of councillors. He also explains the possible reason for the delay of the Marikana report is that it may fatally compromise Ramaphosa. Mmusi Maimane paints a picture of South Africa in 2029.

The Deputy Minister of Justice John Jeffery, bizarrely asks us not to consider whether the glass is half full or half empty, just that there is liquid in it and asks why civil society wastes so much time taking government to court. Mark Heywood of Section 27 explains that it's only the courts in South Africa that are prepared to listen; government does not.

Songezo Zibi asks whether a black homophobe is better than a white homophobe and calls for more focus on the substance of the discussion. Fatima Hassan laments that we all call for a free press, but that no one wants to pay for it and suggests it as a CSI project. Corporate South Africa is criticised for its absence from the political debate and Gareth Cliff speaks about the new media landscape while Deep Fried Man sings about load shedding.



The panel of speakers

This is the colour of the *Daily Maverick's* annual The Gathering meeting. It's a unique event of civil society, business, politicians, the media and activists identifying the issues facing our society and offering ideas and solutions of how to address them. The room is full of the energy of thinking, of debate, of solutions. Twitter carries this debate into the rest of the world.

There is so much said that it is impossible to report it in one article - run a search on Twitter using the [#DMnandosgathering](#), [#DMthegathering](#), [#DMGathering](#) and [#TheGathering](#) hashtags and follow the conversation.

What is also interesting is how this conversation spread. Social network analysis establishes who the agents in spreading the message to the rest of the world are and tells us who the mayors of the hashtag are. These aren't the people who saw the stream; this is a picture of the active distribution mechanism, a picture of how these ideas are spreading. Many more saw the ideas, many will be picked up by the printed media and still more will form the basis of conversations around dinner tables.

You can see the social network analysis map [here](#).

The mayors of the hashtags are:

[Chester Missing](#)

[The Daily Maverick](#)

[Rebecca Davis](#)

[Mmusi Maimane](#)

[Zwelinzima Vavi](#)

[Ranjeni Munusamy](#)

[Ivo Vegter](#)

[Mail & Guardian reporter](#)

[Nchemba](#)

[Julius Sello Malema](#)

What did I learn from this fascinating day?

There is a remarkable amount of clarity as to the issues facing South Africa. There are widely divergent ideas as to how these issues should be solved. But there is no doubt that many smart minds are engaged in trying to find the solutions and that South African democracy is alive and well.

ABOUT WALTER PIKE

Walter has decades long experience in advertising, PR, digital marketing and social media both as a practitioner and as an academic. As a public speaker; Speaks on the future of advertising in the post - broadcast era. As an activist; works in an intersection of feminism & racism. He has devised an intervention in unpacking whiteness for white people. As an educator; upskilling programs in marketing comms, advertising & social in South, West and East Africa. Social crisis management consultant & educator. Ideaorg founder

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