



# Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

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## **REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MOBILITY ON THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE WESTERN CAPE MOBILITY DEPARTMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT MOTOR TRANSPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024, DATED 12 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **1. Introduction**

The Annual Report programme for the 2023/24 financial year was advertised in newspapers, inviting stakeholders and members of the public to attend and participate in the discussions.

Members of the Standing Committee on Mobility deliberated on Part A: General Information, Part B: Performance Information and Part D: Human Resource Management of the Annual Reports of the Western Cape Mobility Department and the Government Motor Transport, on 17 October 2024.

### **2. Overview**

The Committee considered the Annual Reports of the Western Cape Mobility Department (the Department) and the Government Motor Transport (GMT).

Before proceeding to the consideration of the Annual Reports, the Minister and the Head of Department were given an opportunity to make opening remarks.

In the year under review, the Department received an unqualified audit opinion.

At the end of each Annual Report deliberation, the Chairperson afforded members of the public the opportunity to address the Department and GMT.

### **3. Deliberations on the 2023/24 Annual Reports**

#### **3.1 The Western Cape Mobility Department: Observations and Findings/Concerns**

3.1.1 During the year under review, the Western Cape Mobility Department (the Department) noted that there were several challenges in respect of providing transport services. The growing population in the Western Cape was a challenge. Whilst the provincial population grew by 28% according to the recent census, the vehicle population also grew by 28%, which placed pressure on the provincial government to provide sufficient public transport. The vehicle and population growth also placed pressure on the system in terms of private vehicle congestion. The increase in population resulted in an increase in goods and services, so increased freight costs were largely due to the amount of freight that was being transported

within the province. These challenges had a knock-on effect, as the Department played a regulatory role in these areas, which impacted negatively on the issuing of motor vehicle licenses.

- 3.1.2 The regulation of vehicles and freight movement, in addition to the increase in congestion and pressure on the roads, led to more frustration on the roads. This impacted negatively on road safety, as people seemed to become more irresponsible because of their frustration. This frustration, in turn, seemed to result in behaviour that led to more accidents and fatalities on the roads.
- 3.1.3 As much as the vehicle and population growth was a challenge, the Department wanted to support economic growth in the province. To do so, the Department wanted to focus on reducing costs, especially in freight movement, but specifically in public transport to encourage access to these services for work opportunities, social events and community activities.
- 3.1.4 The Department was affected by fiscal constraints, which in turn impacted public transport users in respect of affordable transport and accessibility. The Department was also concerned about its ability to provide more public transport services with the province's growing demand. Additionally, there were further constraints because the maintenance budget for roads were at times diverted to disaster management initiatives.
- 3.1.5 The Department was further impacted by rapid urbanisation in the province. Cape Town was named the ninth most congested city in the world, which led to long travel times, a reduction in productivity, and a reduction in access to transport because as urban spaces expand outside of the urban edge, it was more difficult to afford public transport or to access it.
- 3.1.6 The current, approved organisational structure showed that the Department was 30% under-capacitated. When the Department was created, there was an understanding that there would be a "lift and shift" in terms of employees. According to the Department, there was no consideration of what a fit-for-purpose structure would be for the Department. A circular was released by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in October 2023 that resulted in some departmental posts being frozen. This impacted negatively on the Department's second phase of operations. The Department struggled to fill posts because the DPSA's circular delayed the recruitment processes, the transfer processes, and the Department's ability to provide short term contracts, which then resulted in under-expenditure in this function.
- 3.1.7 The Department experienced 44 resignations during the year under review. The Minister noted that the resignations were a concern, as the Head of Department had also resigned and would be leaving at the end of October 2024. He indicated that building a dynamic team within the Department was a priority. There were employees that were open to change, and some that were not. The Minister had also called for a meeting to discuss change management and to address any issues within the Department.
- 3.1.8 In August 2023, there was a taxi stay-away that impacted quite negatively on commuters and the economy of the Western Cape; however, these incidents have been curtailed due to the Department's constant engagements with the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO). Some of the underlying reasons related to the taxi stay-away were addressed by the Department, especially in respect of the change to the operating license conditions that took place in November 2023. The Department was also looking at the tracking of public transport vehicles, the registration of drivers, and the training of drivers.

- 3.1.9 Unfortunately, the province has been plagued with the issue of extortion in the transport sector. The Minister has pleaded with SANTACO to condemn this behaviour and to assist in changing the negative perception that extortion has created in the public transport sector. The Department was aware that solving challenges within the transport sector was not an easy task, but it was committed to eliminating destructive competition between the different modes of transport. The Department envisioned a complementary system where all modes of transport worked together.
- 3.1.10 The Department introduced the Job Seeker Travel Voucher in February 2024, to assist unemployed youth and citizens in general to access bus services for free. The Department pays for a “gold card”, which provides job seekers with 12 trips, which they may use for travelling to interviews and job seeking-related activities. There was a concern that there seemed to be a burden on employers and job seekers applying for this voucher, and that the application process seemed cumbersome. The Department explained that the data they received from users was that the programme was quite beneficial and that 57% of job seekers had gained employment. The Department also thought it was important to bring businesses into the programme so they could better understand the difficulties job seekers faced. The Department further indicated that the programme would be re-evaluated once the pilot ended in March 2025.
- 3.1.11 The Department has introduced a Provincial Bicycle Distribution Programme where 400 bicycles were distributed to vulnerable persons within the province who needed them for various activities such as commuting to school or work. The beneficiaries were also trained to maintain their bicycles.
- 3.1.12 The Department indicated that the issue of road safety was a concern, noting major incidents in respect of the overloading of minibus taxis with school learners and commuters. It was also noted that most road fatalities happened in the Metro, in areas that are densely populated and areas with poor infrastructure and lighting. The Minister indicated that a possible solution to the road safety problem would be to implement legislation that would protect and secure the lives of commuters in the province. The Department also focused on road safety management, law enforcement and training. Many of the incidents were alcohol-related, in respect of both drunk driving and drunk walking. The Department held a meeting with relevant Ministers and departments, noting that this matter required assistance from the social development and health sectors, amongst others.
- 3.1.13 The Department’s Annual Report indicated support for the devolution of functions and the need for integrated solutions within the transport sector. The Department also worked with the City of Cape Town to advance rail devolution, including agreements on the governance of urban rail. The Minister indicated that the Department was aware that devolution was an issue of policy and that conversations around this matter had been held with the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA). The Department further noted that the City of Cape Town was doing a feasibility study, which included looking at governance within the transport sector and the different scenarios if rail stayed with PRASA, was devolved to the province, or was devolved to the municipality.
- 3.1.14 There was a question about whether the function of roads should fall under the Western Cape Mobility Department instead of the Department of Infrastructure. The Minister indicated that he would be having discussions with the Minister of Infrastructure on collaboration between the two departments because the two sectors were heavily interlinked.

- 3.1.15 The Western Cape Provincial Regulatory Entity (PRE) assisted the City of Cape Town to complete its Special Regulatory Process to balance supply and demand on existing minibus-taxi routes and to register new taxi routes. Depending on the need for additional operating licenses, the City would support these applications. The PRE would then grant those permits or operating licenses based on directives received from the City. The second phase would focus on the registration of new routes, based on different developments within the metro.
- 3.1.16 The Department indicated that the operating license conditions were changed to comply or align with the stricter reading of the National Land Transport Amendment Act (Act 23 of 2023), which provided for impoundments only in the case of evidentiary or investigative reasons. The Department has not received any information on whether any of the operating license conditions would be included in the City of Cape Town's Traffic By-Laws.

### 3.2 **Government Motor Transport: Observations and Findings/Concerns**

- 3.2.1 There was a concern about the outlook of the Government Motor Transport's (GMT's) organisational structure in respect of employment equity. More specifically, there was a concern about gender and race representation within the GMT. It was noted that GMT formed part of the Western Cape Mobility Department (the Department) that was only in existence since 1 April 2023, and that there were many movements in respect of staff from the previous Department of Transport and Public Works to the newly established Western Cape Mobility Department and the Department of Infrastructure.
- 3.2.2 The Department has implemented an Employment Equity Committee, where all recommendations for employment were reviewed first to ensure that the demographic needs of the Department would be fulfilled. The Department and GMT officials were fully aware that there was an under-representation of black women and men within the Department and the GMT unit, indicating that this matter was being addressed via the recruitment process. Employment equity in respect of women has improved, especially at top management level; however, there was still a challenge at lower levels, for example, employing women as traffic officers. There were concerns that there were no timelines attached to the plan to correct the employment equity challenge; however, the Committee noted that the employment equity matter was a slow process, but that GMT and the Department were committed to addressing the problem.
- 3.2.3 Initially, the Department thought that the GMT did not have to go through the Department of Public Service and Administration circular process for vacancies because the posts were self-funded and not funded through the provincial fiscus; however, it was indicated that those costs fed into the budgets of different departments. At this stage, the Department has started a recruitment process, but it has not evaluated any posts as yet.
- 3.2.4 It was a priority for the Department and law enforcement to deal with alcohol-related road incidents as it was a key reason for pedestrian fatalities. Statistics showed that 56% of all road fatalities were pedestrians. It was equally important that these incidents were also translated into convictions.
- 3.2.5 In respect of the acquisition of government vehicles, BMWs were acquired but kept in the government garages for a long period. This was due to a slow global supply chain recovery period after the COVID-19 pandemic. There were vehicle parts that were needed that were not delivered and there were factories that closed. The Department then had to restart the

supply chain process, which took time. The Department was also tied to the original manufacturers because they could not employ a random company to install the required cameras in the BMWs as it would affect the warranty of these parts. This had quite a negative impact on the GMT's performance because they had procured vehicles that they could not earn any revenue from. This matter also resulted in reputational risk for the Department and GMT; however, it was noted that the audit had indicated that there was no fruitless and wasteful expenditure that resulted from this matter.

- 3.2.6 The GMT has reviewed its electric vehicle strategy due to changes in the sector and will continue with a new energy vehicle strategy. The Western Cape was well placed to be a leader in this space, and the first order of business was to allow commuters to acclimatise to electric vehicles. Initially, the Department's strategy was to see how the GMT could expand its vehicle fleet and to assess what infrastructure was needed to support electric vehicles. The Department indicated that it was a better strategy to start with a hybrid vehicle approach rather than a full electronic vehicle approach because it was more suitable for the province's infrastructure, and a hybrid approach was more cost-effective. The GMT was also working with universities on the possibility of introducing hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles.

#### **4. Resolutions/Actions**

4.1 The Committee RESOLVED the following:

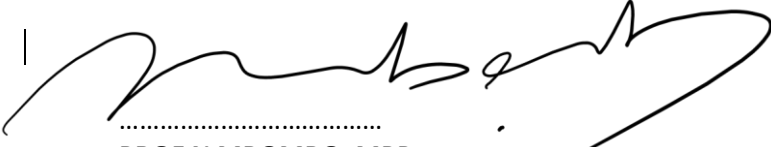
- 4.1.1 To visit the Government Motor Transport garages during the parliamentary term;
- 4.1.2 To request a legal opinion from the Legal Unit within the Western Cape Provincial Parliament on whether it is within the Committee's mandate to call for the City of Cape Town to appear before it on matters that impacted the provincial transport sector;
- 4.1.3 To request a briefing on the Special Regulatory Process to balance supply and demand on existing minibus-taxi routes and to register new taxi routes; and
- 4.1.4 To request a briefing on the amendments proposed to the public transport operating license conditions, as well as the new conditions, and whether these conditions were being incorporated into by-laws by the City of Cape Town.

4.2 The Committee REQUESTED the following from the Western Cape Mobility Department:

- 4.2.1 The provincial sustainable transport programme in respect of the Bicycle Distribution Programme;
- 4.2.2 A detailed report on the three dismissals during the 2023/24 financial year;
- 4.2.3 The Human Resources Plan, including the recruitment plan; and
- 4.2.4 A detailed report on the consultants appointed and utilised by the Department during the 2023/24 financial year and the 2024/25 financial year so far.

**5. Conclusion**

The Chairperson congratulated the Western Cape Mobility Department and the Government Motor Transport on their clean audit outcomes. The Chairperson thanked the Minister and the Department for their preparation and responses to questions raised by the Committee Members.



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**PROF N MBOMBO, MPP**  
**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON MOBILITY**  
**DATE: 12 November 2024**

