

*Tuesday, 15 February 2022]*

No 1 - 2022] Fourth Session, Sixth Parliament

# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

# PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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TUESDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2022

1. The House met at 10:45.
2. The Speaker took the Chair.
3. [10:46] The Speaker announced that in line with COVID regulations, singing at public gatherings is prohibited. The Speaker further announced that a recording of the National Anthem be rendered.
4. The Speaker read the prayer.
5. [10:48] The Speaker announced that due to the resignation of Mr B S Madikizela, a vacancy occurred in the representation of the Democratic Alliance in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. This vacancy has been filled by the nomination of Mr D Plato with effect from 18 January 2022, and due to the resignation of Mr B N Herron, a vacancy occurred in the representation of the GOOD party in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. This vacancy has since been filled by the nomination of Mr S N August with effect from 8 February 2022 and that both Members had taken the oath in the Speaker's office.
6. For this sitting the Standing Rules of the House applies, further, in compliance with the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act 2004, the entire hall in Velddrif, including all visitor seating areas, passages and ablution facilities, were regarded as the precincts of the Provincial Parliament.
7. The Speaker welcomed all guest to the Premier's State of the Province Address.
8. [10:57] The Premier delivered his State of the Province Address, as follows:

Hon. Mr Speaker, Members of the Cabinet, the Leader of the Opposition, Members of this Provincial Parliament, those that are here, those that are in our Parliament back in Cape Town or remotely connected to this State of the Province Address: I welcome you; I thank you. I thank you for this opportunity. I also want to thank and recognise those Mayors, those Speakers, those Consul Generals, the citizens of the West Coast – of course, I will get back to the West Coast – but also the citizens of this province. This Address is for you.

Hon. Speaker, I also want to use this opportunity to thank you very much for once again bringing the opening of our year, the opening of our Parliament to the people. This is real democracy in action. This is the third time that we are opening our Province's government year, our Parliament year at a remote destination outside of our Parliament. Little did we know in that first time we did it in Mitchells Plain, that it would become a norm to be remotely connected and to continue to visit different parts of our province with the Opening Address.

Dit is baie lekker, Hon. Speaker, om by die Weskus te wees. Die Weskus, die plek van bokkoms, van kreef, van rooibos, van sout. It really is a privilege to be and so specifically, I would like to say to the citizens of Velddrif, the citizens of the Weskus: thank you so much for allowing us to be here, for hosting us in this opening of Parliament.

Hon. Speaker, you know, when I think about this part of our province, the Weskus, I think about Velddrif, I think of Laaiplek, I think of our fishermen. I think of our fishermen who have such tenacity and resilience. I think of our fishermen who despite the headwinds, despite the pressures on them, they get up every single day, they get out, and they set sail. They really are an epitome of what we all should be doing and I think that specifically for us right now as Government after two years of fighting a global pandemic, the time is like our fishermen here †op die Weskus we need to get up, we need to get out, we need to set sail.

Hon. Speaker, this is democracy in action. I am really excited that I saw you, I saw the Members of our Standing Committee, and I saw Members of the Cabinet. I saw the Opposition parties crisscrossing our province, but specifically, crisscrossing this region, the Weskus, having a look at what the issues are, where things are going well, but more importantly, where things need to be fixed, where we need to take things to a new level, where we have got much more work to do because that is actually what a parliament is about. The Members of this Parliament who represent the citizens of our province, getting into touch with all of our issues, but as we are here †op die Weskus, focusing on this region.

So, it is an honour and a privilege to be here and I sincerely hope the impact of this Parliamentary Opening and visit will be felt by the citizens of this region for a long time to come.

Hon. Speaker, as I said, we have been fighting this pandemic for two years. The time now is to move forward. We must push back against going back to normal and we must push forward to do even better. I often hear people say, 'I wish we could go back to normal; you know, the way things were.' Hon. Speaker, I must respectfully disagree. We cannot go back to normal. I understand why you say it. We remember what times were like before we had lockdowns, before we had job losses. We remember those times before we had lost so many family members, before this pandemic gripped us and so, it is natural to say, 'let us go back to what it was before, back to normal.'

Hon. Speaker, today I am going to set out our plan to push back against going back to normal and to push forward towards doing even better. Hon. Speaker, you know that we believe in evidence-led and data-driven systems and management, and, Hon. Speaker, we managed COVID-19 through evidence-led and data-driven principles, but I

want to say that it is clear through that data and evidence that we have now moved beyond the pandemic. It is now time that we normalise this virus.

Hon. Speaker, the data provided by our Health Department shows that 90 percent of our citizens surveyed were seroprevalence. It shows that through vaccination and through prior infection we have immunity, 90 percent have immunity. We also know that the Omicron variant was way less virulent. It is exactly what the epidemiologists started to tell us in the beginning of this pandemic two years ago. They said to us: as the pandemic starts to mutate, as the virus mutates, it will get weaker.

Hon. Speaker, we also know that of those citizens in our province that are 50 years old and older or between 50 and 60, 59,7 percent of you have gone out and got your vaccinations. 68,5 percent of you are fully vaccinated, over 60 years old. I want to say to each and every one of you, well done. I want to say to the teams that enabled that, well done. We need to keep making sure that we are mitigating risk, that we are protecting ourselves. That 90 percent figure is a great figure, but we have got to keep making sure that we are protected, so that we can normalise this virus. If we think – thank you. If we just think about the fourth wave, if we think about the higher than ever before number of cases, but the lower than ever before demand for oxygen, demand for beds and thank goodness, far lower death rates in our province.

As our Minister of Health normally says, Minister Mbombo, she says, ‘we have got this’. That is what our Department did. Our Department showed that ‘we have got this’ and I want to thank them for that.

Hon. Speaker, so therefore, we now need to focus on pandemic number two. Pandemic number two: that is the one of joblessness, of hunger. Do you know that from the first quarter of 2020 to the third quarter of 2021, another 132 000 citizens in our province lost their jobs or their businesses closed. More hardship; more hunger. Hon. Speaker, we might be quite proud that we have the lowest unemployment rate of all provinces in South Africa. We might be quite proud of our job absorption rate, but quite frankly, the unemployment rate really worries me and therefore we have to move forward in focusing on pandemic number two.

Another scary statistic, Mr Speaker, is that in the general household survey which surveys hunger in our households, we saw that hunger increased from 11,3 percent of our households in 2019 to 17 percent of our households in 2020. 17 percent of our households in our province, often go to bed without food and confront real hunger. This is a huge issue and that is why we have to make sure that we focus on this second pandemic.

Compounded by the virus, COVID-19, and the effects on our society, is the ongoing failure of a number of national departments. Hon. Speaker, I think of the South African Police Services who have to deliver a critical service in our province. At the moment, the average police officers deployed in our province, are one police officer for every 507 people. It should be one officer for every 350 people or actually, 300 people. We do not get sufficient deployment or deployment into the areas that there should be deployment.

If I think about the mismanagement and corruption, and the effect that that has had on our province, just think about the mismanagement and corruption, and the effect on PRASA, on a train system that thousands of our citizens should be using every single day; cost effectively, safely, getting to and from school and work and healthcare, going about their business. This compounds this problem that we have in our province; not to mention Eskom and loadshedding; the burden that that has on the job creation in our province; on those job creating mechanisms in our province called entrepreneurs and businesses, small enterprises; the impact of loadshedding. We know every level is worth R75 million a day cost to those businesses, and puts more people into the category of hunger; puts more people into the category of unemployment.

Hon. Speaker, we learnt in this province a number of very valuable lessons from COVID-19 and the way we dealt with it. We built the biggest field hospital on the African continent in just six weeks.

The VECTOR programme, Hon. Speaker, we actually need to say this more and more often. The VECTOR program initiated by our specialists, professors and doctors in this province, this programme focused on 20,000 diabetics in our province, and made sure we really changed an indicator.

You know, think back to two years ago when those first COVID positive patients were ending up in our hospitals and a diabetic landed in an ICU ward and that diabetic patient was put onto a ventilator. You almost had a 100% chance of not coming back, of not coming out.

That VECTOR programme, Hon. Speaker, changed that nearly 100% to 4.5%. How unbelievable is that?

Hon. Speaker, we delivered medicine parcels to your door. 2.2 million Medicine parcels were delivered to citizens in this province. Those are the very citizens that were highly at risk: elderly, with comorbidities, standing in a queue for a long time at one of our clinics. Suddenly the medicine was dropped at the door.

We rolled out the biggest vaccination programme that this province has ever seen, and when people could not get to the vaccine sites, we partnered with business, we innovated, we put a Vaxi Taxi in place, and we took the vaccination to the citizen.

We had many citizens who were hesitant about the vaccination, did not know whether they should take it or not. Our doctors, both private and public, stood up, went to our taxi ranks, went to our shopping centres, went to places of congregation of citizens, dressed in their white coats and said, "Ask a doctor." The conversion rate was over 100% for every hesitant citizen that asked a doctor, they would get answers to their questions

I had an opportunity of working with a soup kitchen in Gugulethu. I first met Betty on a Zoom public meeting, and on that public meeting Zoom call Betty said, she put up her hand and she said, "I run a soup kitchen in Gugulethu, please can you help? I need some bicycles because I need to deliver meals to people who are bedridden; people who are elderly and cannot get to the soup kitchen."

I made a quick call to the Cape Town Cycle, to a Trust, and they brought a few bicycles, and we joined Betty at her soup kitchen. I had the opportunity to cycle with some of her volunteers to some of those citizens. I will never forget handing a meal to a gentleman who was in tears as his meal was delivered to him in his shack. Betty, you are an amazing person.

But you know what? Betty did not stop there. She then said to me, “Why can we not have a Vaxi Taxi here at my soup kitchen? I have got people here and they need to be vaccinated.

Not long after we were at Betty’s soup kitchen in Gugulethu once again with our health team, with a Vaxi Taxi. Betty was one of the citizens that use the services encouraging people in the neighbourhood to do the same. She said “If you want to save yourself from COVID, get vaccinated before the Christmas holiday. If you are elderly get your vaccination.” We had queues of people sitting on chairs outside of her soup kitchen, getting vaccinated because people in the neighbourhood could relate with her message.

Betty as a community builder also raise an issue about teenage pregnancy. She said “I want to deal with teenage pregnancy. I want to engage these young women in our community. We need to make sure we deal with the next issue.”

Betty, you are amazing; you never stop. You are an amazing activist and you epitomize all of those Bettys across our province, thank you very much.

Hon. Speaker, we honoured Betty. There are many Bettys. There is a Betty right here in Velddrift; we know her as “Barefoot Betty”. I want to thank all the Bettys, all the NGOs. I want to thank all those citizens who fund and sponsor those NGOs, because it is their funding that enables us to feed our people. Thank you very much for the caring that you show in our communities across our province.

Hon. Speaker, one last thing on COVID-19. We must end the State of Disaster. I was disappointed when the President did not go far enough. He said we are going to end the state of disaster, but there are some things to do, and although I welcome these comments, I must say that that was said in October last year already, it was said in November, it was said in December, January and now again in February.

Mr Speaker, we need to end the state of disaster. I have already offered our help and our ideas on what we need to change from a regulatory point of view but let us not just speak about it.

You know, the President, every time he says it, it sounds too general. We need commitment. I do not want to have this President that listens to us but then does not do anything. We need to commit to a time and a date. We need to end this disaster.

Speaker, in October last year this House will remember I delivered a special address. That special address was focused on recovery. Little did we know that we were only halfway between the start of this pandemic and now, but we have set those North Stars in our Government. We have set those focus area in our Government, those North Stars of jobs, safety and dignity.

Speaker, our single biggest focus now must be on jobs; must be on investment; must be on economic growth. Speaker it is the private sector that creates jobs and here I fully agree with the President and his speech last week in saying that we need to enable the private sector to grow, the private sector to create those jobs. I absolutely agree on it because, Speaker, you know that nothing stops a bullet like a job. Nothing puts food on the table like a job or keeps your child in school, keeps a young man off the streets and out of the way of gangs, puts a roof over your head. All of these – a job is what has to be the remedy. A job can mean a healthier, happier and longer life for you.

Speaker, jobs must be our obsession. We must make it easier for private sector investment to create jobs and we need to make sure that we have the basic infrastructure in place in order to create a place where people want to live that attracts investment, infrastructure that is the foundation and basis of investment. If you do not have that in place people do not invest. People leave parts of this country because of the lack of infrastructure and move here because of infrastructure. We need to make sure that we have that infrastructure in place. So Speaker, I want to say quite clearly, that I want to see a much more focused push on infrastructure in the Western Cape.

At present 29% of all infrastructure spend in this province comes from us as the Provincial Government, 29%. Mostly that is through our education, health, social and transport infrastructure investments. Since 2019 this Government has put R19 billion investment into infrastructure across our Department.

Speaker, I have therefore decided that we need a new department solely responsible for infrastructure in our province. This Department will include the current Department of Human Settlements, the current Public Works including our portfolio of Property and our Roads Division. Speaker, if we do not change we will not get better outcomes. You know, we sit with income on the one side which has been decreasing over a long time, less and less tax income. We have more and more demand on the other side and if we keep the same government in the middle expecting a different outcome, well, quite frankly, that is the first sign of madness. We have to reinvent. We have to change. We have to do better. We have to move forward and not back to normal.

This new department will be a department that leads change, like we did in COVID-19, that coalesces and brings together all of the partners in making sure that we have a focused determined infrastructure plan in this province. It is about government being aligned with the private sector. We have to bring all of that together. We also have to make sure that this team is resourced, funded and with skills so that they can play that all-enabling role. I will outline some of the things we do on infrastructure and you can just imagine if we add that to the bigger picture the change that we can make. We have to change in the centre.

Speaker, as part of this we will also create a Mobility Department – a separate mobility department. This is a critical component of creating a job-creating economy and environment. Mobility is key for people to move, goods to move. People need to be able to get to work and school. People need to be able to move properly. I have spoken about what happens when our trains do not work. Mobility is key. We also have to get our goods to market, our products to market. I will say a bit more about our Port, but if we cannot get our goods to market we cannot earn the foreign exchange, we cannot grow our businesses and we cannot employ more people. So mobility is key.

Mobility and the mobility department obviously will be responsible for our current Transport, Programmes and Policy, the financial support we give at the moment to our business companies, the Taxi Regulation and taxi services. It will include pilot projects like our Blue Dot Pilot Project, our Transport Legislation and Mandate will be based there. Our Traffic Management Operations, the Traffic Police will be managed there, but they will go further. Just as I said with infrastructure they need to go further. They need to make sure that what happens around mobility in this province is coalesced and pulled together. Whether it be PRASA, whether it be trains, whether it be our Port infrastructure, we have to make sure that we are getting that mobility right. Mobility is key as an enabling environment to attract investment and create jobs.

So Speaker, following this announcement today we will embark on a detailed consultation process with our staff, with the unions, and all of the stakeholders across this province. We will provide regular updates both internally as well as to the public, you, the public, so that this process is seen as efficient, fair and transparent. We need to make it happen as quickly as possible in order to make the biggest difference we can in creating jobs, much needed jobs for those citizens in our province. So Speaker, I said to you that I will outline what we do with infrastructure, so if I look at our health infrastructure, I announce here today five mega health infrastructure projects for the medium and long term. These will be new regional hospitals in Belhar, Klipfontein and Helderberg, the Tygerberg Central Hospital development and upgrade, and the Swartland District Hospital.

The funding has already been secured for the Belhar / Klipfontein Regional Hospitals and the public-private partnership for the Tygerberg Central Hospital development has already begun.

In addition to this we have already completed the Helderberg Hospital Emergency Centre upgrade, the Gansbaai Clinic upgrade, Laingsburg Clinic, Victoria Hospital Emergency Centre upgrade and the Observatory Forensic Pathology Institute. That is work that we have just completed.

If you think about our Health Department, its universities and the ecosystem and how infrastructure not only for the wellbeing and health of our citizens, but how infrastructure creates an environment for investment, it is that infrastructure that helped land the investment from Dr Soon-Shiong, a multi-billion rand investment into health tech and future vaccines for us here and on the African continent and we need to attract more and more of these kinds of investments to create the jobs that we need.

Speaker, education infrastructure, investing in our children, investing in their future, completed already this year, in the last year has been Delft North Primary School, Moorreesburg High School is planned for completion this year. We have replacement schools in Chatsworth, the Chatsworth Primary School, Panorama Primary School in Vredenburg, the Umyezo Wama Apile Primary School in Grabouw, new mobile schools anticipated for this year in Bothasig, in Fisantekraal, Nomzamo, Klapmuts and Silversands.

This is in addition to the ten schools that we have already successfully completed in the last year. We also have completed part of our Safety Plan, which is fencing.

This year, another 30 schools and next year, we will be expanding it to 60 schools because that infrastructure must also be safe for our learners.

But I want to pause there, Hon. Speaker, to say to the citizens of this province: when we invest in infrastructure, please, you need to look after it. I really get tired when we build a brand-new fence at a school and you go past the next week, and someone has broken the fence. How does that help with safety? You need to take ownership of your schools, of the infrastructure and the investment because if we have to come back and fix that fence, we do not get to build the next fence. Our Neighbourhood Watches, our citizens, our learners, our parents, the whole community, the whole of society must take ownership of your schools, of your clinics, of your hospitals, of all infrastructure because infrastructure enables our children to have a better life: education infrastructure.

Hon. Speaker, then we have got economic investment into roads infrastructure. Roads are also that economic conduit that helps to attract investment and create jobs. I have said it. It is how goods move, how tourists move. It is about mobility. Mobility happens on our roads and our rail, but roads and Hon. Speaker, I must say I want to congratulate our roads team. When you drove up here today, those of you that came from Cape Town would have come past a new bridge, new roads, all put in place, investment into infrastructure to help the private sector investment that are investing in our IDZ and in the Weskus. You know and I am sure you have all heard this: when visitors come from other provinces to our province and they drive on our roads, they go, 'wow'. They say to us, 'jeepers, I felt like I was in a different country'. It is because of that investment.

We have invested R6 billion in the last few years, into road infrastructure: 50/50. 50 percent onto new roads – †die Weskus, hulle wil altyd nuwe paaie hê- and 50 percent onto maintenance. Hon. Speaker, in the next financial year we will upgrade the road between Stanford and Gansbaai. We will also upgrade the Main Road from Paarl to Simondium. Those are just two upgrades of the 91 road projects that we are busy with at the moment and spending R3 billion. Across this province in all of our municipalities, spending R3 billion at the moment on 91 road projects, either new or upgrading existing.

Last year, we have spent R60 million on the Haaskraal Road project in the Cape Winelands and of course, one that really stands out for me is Route 61, the Aberdeen Road. You will all know the Aberdeen Road from those ghastly accidents, those ghastly crashes, loss of life on that road. That upgrade of that road will make it safer for you. It will make it safer for those visitors to our province, a really critical piece of infrastructure upgrade.

Then, of course, another one that stands out for me is the Ashton Arch Bridge. The reason it stands out for me is one, is here was a bridge that was built to spec so that it does not wash away at the next flood. Why do we need that? We need it because do you know that that region of our province – as Minister Meyer will say many times – is the top producing soft fruit industry space in the Southern Hemisphere and can you imagine if a bridge like that washes away when you are trying to get your goods to market? You lose that market somewhere in Europe or in the East and someone else takes it away from you.



This is critical infrastructure that we have to invest in, but that infrastructure goes more, goes further than just that. That infrastructure also gives our architects and our engineers, those people who want to build things, it gives them hope that in actual fact, we are prepared to build innovatively in our province. That was the first arch bridge built separately from the road and then, moved onto the road after it was built, on the African continent. That gives you hope for a better future. That tells our learners and students in our universities that they can actually come and work for us because we do cool things, we do innovative things. That is the future that we need to move towards.

Hon. Speaker, then I spoke about the SEZ, but let us talk about the Atlantis Special Economic Zone, as well as the Saldanha Bay Industrial Development Zone. Both Mayors of both of those municipalities sit here today, where those zones are. We built that enabling environment, that infrastructure, for investment. I am really happy that we have now got the 3D publication of the 3D for the enterprise for Atlantis. That means, Treasury has now given us the ability to trade and operate. That is really good news. You know, during this pandemic and what we have already done is landed two investments into Atlantis worth R790 million and there are three more in the pipeline right now. So, that shows you that when you create the space, you invest in the enabling environment, you show that we have got a place that Government can work with the private sector, that we enable investment.

In Saldanha Bay, I actually cycled past there the other day when I was visiting this region and it is amazing to see the completed buildings, the duty-free zoned off fenced area, your space where you control entry and exit from a duty-free zone into South Africa or out of South Africa linked to the port. Do you know that the investments, you are going to see those factories going up there? Just in the last year in that IDZ, 2 000 more jobs and that happened during a pandemic. There are huge opportunities going forward.

Hon. Speaker, then with energy. I spoke right in the beginning about energy and Eskom. You know, there is infrastructure that detracts from investment. There is infrastructure and the lack of new infrastructure, and our ability to provide energy to the economy. That is devastating. We know what loadshedding does to our businesses.

But I am super proud of the capabilities that we have been building in this province around the Green Economy. Of our municipalities, 24 are already working with Local Government, Green Cape and our departments. Of our municipalities, 24 are already able to produce Solar PV energy and 19 of those municipalities can compensate their citizens and their businesses, for putting power back into their grid. The work we are busy doing at the moment in seven of our municipalities, is how we can wheel power.

So, now you are a business, you put power on your roof, you can then sell that power to the business next door or in the next municipality and the municipality will charge you for wheeling that power from one entity, from a seller to a buyer if they, themselves, are not the buyer. These are all things that start to move us towards being a province that can get rid of loadshedding.

Really exciting for me is the MER, the Municipal Energy Resilience Initiative. Now, that is where you have all heard the announcement: municipalities can put up to 100 megawatt power plants in place and lots of work has been going on in the background.

We have funded the ability to enable that. There have been more than 100 proposals that have come in, in a request for proposal. There are five really very promising ones that are being worked on at the moment and even more exciting than that, is that – and I am glad that the Mayor of Cape Town is here – because he, within the next few weeks, will not be putting out a request for bids for 100 megawatts, he will be putting out for 300 megawatts and I hope with many hundreds of megawatts to follow, but that is a great step. The first to do it.

Now, the challenge is to our other municipalities. Is that going to happen in Saldanha and in Mossel Bay, and in George, and in the Overberg region? We are going to start to see private sector investment in the 100 megawatt window space because if we get that right and we do it rapidly, we definitely will be able to get rid of loadshedding in our province. And that, more than anything else, will enable massive investment by businesses, entrepreneurs, job creators. They will come from across South Africa, across Africa and the world to come and invest in this amazing place called the Western Cape.

Lastly, on energy, Hon. Speaker, I must mention a meeting that I had with André de Ruyter from Eskom and we spoke about a strategy that we have worked on in the province for at least the last 10 years, and that is liquid natural gas. There is a lot of commitment there and we will definitely play our part in making sure that LNG gets into specifically, Ankerlig.

I have said it many times before. To produce energy from LNG is much, much cheaper than from diesel, but more importantly than that, as soon as an Ankerlig tenant like Eskom, can – and I must say that they have already converted Ankerlig to be able to use LNG – as soon as we get that first load of LNG, it starts to change the economic environment for Saldanha Bay because now, you can probably have further energy plants in Saldanha Bay using LNG. It could be part of those requests for proposals. You can also directly use LNG for energy top die Weskus. You can use gas for energy in Atlantis and probably, even take it further than that. That is also really critical that we focus on a varied range-mix of energy sources.

Hon. Speaker, then lastly or not lastly, but a key point on infrastructure is social infrastructure, housing – Minister Simmers – and over the last few years we have delivered 32 housing opportunities to citizens in our province and what this does is it helps us address the painful legacy of our divided past, the painful legacy of our divided past.

Hon. Speaker, also key is making sure that part of this is handing over title deeds. Title deeds are critical. A title deed gives you dignity. A title deed gives you the opportunity to start to build wealth, to start to play a role in the economy. Title deeds are critical and we need to roll out more and more and more of them.

But talking about housing opportunities, it was an honour and a privilege to be alongside our teams from Human Settlements and Public Works at the Conradie site. You will all know in this House we have spoken about the Conradie Better Living Model. From when we started it a few years ago as a concept.

The really great thing now is to actually be present in the delivery of that concept. It stands, it exists. It is not complete yet, but it exists. This is a R3 billion project on a 22 hectare site; an old hospital site of our province. The first 432 units are complete. If any of you want to go and see what a future should look like in bringing together citizens into a work, live, play environment, you need to go there.

I hope the Standing Committee will visit soon. In actual fact, our whole Parliament should visit there. It is really an unbelievable space to be in to feel; to feel what we have spoken about for so long.

Other projects like this are the Belhar partnership that we've got with the University of the Western Cape. 1,200 units already delivered. What really excites me is the 2,400 student bed accommodation complex that is being built, that will be delivered later this year. That also is really exciting as how we build opportunity for our future leaders, for our future entrepreneurs, for our future investors.

Another such project is the Founders Garden Artscape Precinct, but just as we spoke about the Conradie site and now it is a reality, we are now moving the spoken about Founders Garden site towards a reality.

We have now - this is 500 social housing units smack-bang in the middle of the city. That project feasibility and the financial legal and technical work have already been done, those first steps, and we now have also designed and developed the procurement documentation that includes the request for proposals, and a draft sale development agreement. So that is now moving to that next step and very exciting.

There are numerous projects just like this across all of our municipalities across this province.

In addition to this, our Cabinet approved an inclusionary housing framework. This has gone out to comment and has already been completed, and the next stage will come back to Cabinet for consideration and approval. This is another tool or lever to enable investment into our province, and enable private sector and public sector to join hands in dealing with this problem of making sure we heal those divisions of the past.

I am really excited and happy to welcome all of these investments, but, Hon. Speaker, I need to say a few things here. Do you know that our province is going to grow in numbers of human beings by another 1.4 million people in the next eight years?

Eight years goes like this. Another 1.4 million. That means our 7.1 million citizens in this province will become 8.5 million citizens in just eight short years' time.

We need to make sure that we end nimbyism and turn it to yimbyism. Do you know that I criss-cross this province and I talk to people across this province about the growth in population and the demand for accommodation, business premises, schools, you name it. We feel that demand every single day.

Everybody agrees with me; we need to densify and almost everybody says, "But we are fine here, we do not want to densify here. You have got to go and do it over there." We cannot do that. We have to make sure that we densify all of the regions of this province.

So I want to say thank you to the citizens of Pinelands and Thornton, who worked through this process of making sure that the infrastructure can hold roads and sewerage. I want them to be super proud of Conradie. I want them to be that catalyst that starts getting other citizens in other communities saying, “Where is our Conradie? We want to densify here. I want to feel what it feels like when you go to Conradie. I want to feel how that new live, work, play social housing to penthouse apartments, businesses, schools, workplaces and living places. I want that here where I live,” and I think that is the next step. We have got to make sure that we build a private sector/public sector partnerships.

Along the False Bay coastline there should be eight or 10 Conradie’s going up right now. We need to make sure that we enable this environment and that we speed up, and this can only be done in partnerships where we build trust and where we create an environment for investment.

Then of course there is social investment, social infrastructure investment. The Brandwag Modular Library in Mossel Bay. Ek hoor julle is, julle kyk van julle Raadsaal af op die nuwe biblioteek daar in Mosselbaai. Die Noordhoek Publieke Biblioteek net hier langsaan, and we will officially open that upgrade this afternoon.

This is social infrastructure. These kinds of infrastructure upgrades are desperately needed. I think about the infrastructure upgrade of the new living units and classrooms at the Outeniqua Child and Youth Centre that will become operational this month.

I also think about the six GBV shelters that Minister Fernandez invested in and operationalised. Of all the GBV shelters handed to all provinces across this country, there is only one province in South Africa that has operationalised those handed to them, and it is this province. Always this province.

Well done to the team that have made sure that that infrastructure was invested in so it creates an environment, specifically GBV shelters, we know how we need them desperately.

Hon. Speaker, I am also very proud of the broadband infrastructure rollout. We have been doing this for many years. So far we now move to Phase 2. We have 1,910 sites across our province that have a minimum speed of 100 megabites per second. This is completed this year, but, Hon. Speaker, the next phase goes to one gig per second, and even though that is only supposed to commence in October, there are 22 of our schools already that have one gig per second speed in the school. Can you imagine the difference that that makes to a learner when you are in your school, you have got one gig speed per second? What does that do to your ability to think about that future that we all want to create; to be that tech entrepreneur; to be that medical specialist that is going to be getting a bursary from that latest investor, Dr Soon-Shiong, to say we want to invest in future skills; into making sure that we continue being the best at epidemiology in the world.

That kind of investment really makes a difference for our youth into the future. Investment into our Regional Socio-Economic Project Programme, the RSEP programme, which is creating safe areas in our communities. This comes as an offshoot from the VPUU, which was originated in our province with German donor funding in

Khayelitsha.

We have rolled out that project now, there is more than a hundred of them across 12 municipalities.

You can go just up the road here in this municipality, and you see how two separate geographic spaces of citizens, generally rich and poor, are now connected through this programme. There is a road that joins the two together. There is a space where schools are being built; there is a space where Neighbourhood Watches and safety and security cameras are based, and they all come together in the interest of safety for the citizens. It breaks down those barriers.

We need to go and have a look at these projects. I am really proud of these projects. This is social infrastructure investment.

Then, Hon. Speaker, while we are doing investment, and infrastructure specifically, we need to make sure that we develop our province sustainably. We need to make sure that we understand the impact of climate change, and, Hon. Speaker, I am really happy to announce that our Western Cape Biodiversity Bill is finally signed into law, and speaking about climate change, we also have completed our Western Cape Climate Change Response Strategy Vision 2050. It is actually out for comment at the moment, so please make your comments. It is really critical that we get that balance right; that we know that we must protect our environment.

Our Department of Agriculture is busy with five extensive river protection plans that will be rolled up this year to make sure that our rivers are protected. I think you here in Veldrift know exactly what it means if you have an unprotected river coming into your town. The consequences thereof. If we do not protect our river systems, we cannot grow our agricultural products and send them to markets.

Lastly on infrastructure, Hon. Speaker, I want to talk about our national partnership, and nationally I really want to use this opportunity to thank Dr Ramokgopa. Dr Ramokgopa, in charge of infrastructure in the Presidency, has built a relationship with us over the last months, even years, and through that relationship we now have five priority projects submitted through his office.

These projects are the Wingfield Interchange between the N1 and N7, a critical piece of infrastructure that needs to be upgraded. The investment into our Saldanha Bay Port Infrastructure, if we want ships to be able to come in we need to have a top class port. We see those ships there already but we need to expand it and that infrastructure investment is also one of those projects.

In Belhar and Klipfontein, those two Regional Hospitals, they are also in that plan for funding. The Tygerberg Hospital in the public-private partnership, which I previously mentioned, is also one of those five projects.

Then lastly, it is the expansion of Biovac, our own manufacturing facility of vaccines. Now Biovac is also expanding and enabling investment and at the moment for them to expand we have our Emergency Medical Services that sit right next to them, we are going to move that piece of infrastructure so that they can expand over into the area that

we use as a province at the moment.

I think what I have outlined here today is the magnitude of infrastructure that we as Government are involved in, and, you know, I have not spent time on Local Government infrastructure. Local Government infrastructure I want to almost say with all of the Mayors here, is almost more critical, because that is at the coalface, and I have not spent time on the private sector investment into infrastructure. If we get that nexus right through this new department and we can actually play that role with Government and private sector, we really can move the needle. We are already – people already tell us, “Wow, this feels like a different country.” But we also know as I outlined right in the beginning, there are lots of challenges, lots of infrastructure challenges that need to be looked at and if we get this right and take it to a new level as I projected here, we will really start to create a different environment that will attract investment across South Africa, across Africa and across the world.

Speaker, then I want to move on to the next focus area, which is pandemic number 2. Pandemic number 2 is jobs, is creation of jobs, and is enabling investment in jobs. Speaker, I want you to go back and think about the time when we started taking on COVID-19 as a Government, what we did. We focused. We collaborated. We innovated. We became intensely obsessed with protecting our citizens and saving lives. That energy – that way of work is what I want to harness in the new way of work in focusing on pandemic number 2; not going back to normal, but going forward to something new. So I want to put in place a Jobs Extended Cabinet, an Extended Cabinet, like we put together before, but focused on jobs.

This Cabinet, this Extended Cabinet, which the members of the Cabinet and our Heads of Department know very well, this Extended Cabinet will also then bring in some outside players, just as we brought in municipalities, we brought in the police, we brought in role-players in putting together civil society, met so often with the faith-based organisations of our province in fighting that pandemic. I want to in that Extended Cabinet make space for some of the very best business minds, entrepreneurial minds in our province so that they also have the opportunity alongside us to create, to focus, to obsess about making sure that we are the place to invest, we are the place to create jobs, we are the place that is actually going to take jobs to that new level, the focus on pandemic number 2, and Speaker, in this regard, we need to make sure that this House holds me accountable. We need to measure, we need to manage and we need to move forward.

I want to say that we start off with a very good base and we have to expand on those bases. I think of our existing ecosystem. I think of the agricultural sector and the amazing work the agricultural sector has done in our province during the last two years – outstanding! Minister Meyer, you and your team, those businesses out there, it has just been phenomenal. I think about our Green Tech Hub that we are busy developing and those amazing businesses. I think about BPO. We are the BPO Capital of Africa. We are the top destination in Africa from a tourism point of view. Do you know as an ecosystem to launch investment and jobs we have the best performing municipalities in the country. What better place – what better place to start your business to invest to grow jobs.

We are Africa's tech capital. This is where Fintech start-ups start and build businesses that go global, that build businesses that take us to the next level and while talking about that I want to really recognise one of those innovative entrepreneurs of our time from this region, Mr Marlon Parker. Are you here?

Marlon Parker, ladies and gentlemen, and I know, Speaker, from your ruling everybody in the audience just wanted to clap for him and you did not allow them, but Mr Marlon Parker from RLabs – do you know that he has just been recognised by the World Economic Forum as the Global Social Innovator of the year?

Mr Marlon Parker has been responsible for training more than 2000 individuals across 23 countries and helping to create 90 000 jobs. You can feel super proud, Marlon, thank you very much for being here and I really am proud of you. We all are proud of you. Keep doing it. That is what our entrepreneurs need to be doing. Well done!

Also as part of recovery, Mr Speaker, we will continue to up our game. We have established an SMME Booster Fund. SMMEs need money to grow their businesses.

We will continue with our Red Tape Reduction and ramp-up efforts to cut more and more red tape, to make it easier and easier to do business. At the moment the Red Tape Unit is focusing on seven business-facing services to improve them in the municipalities and partnering with the municipalities of Hessequa, George, Knysna and Drakenstein, making sure that those business processes make it easier to do business in those towns.

We will continue with our team in working with the Port of Cape Town to up the efficiencies in that Port. It is critical. If we do not get efficiencies right in the Port all that investment that has gone into agriculture cannot get to the market and bring us those dollars, euros and pounds that we desperately need.

We will continue funding our stipends in partnership with business in apprenticeships. We need to grow more and more apprenticeships across our province. We will make it easier for companies from other provinces, from other countries to come and invest here across our province.

Wesgro, our trade, investment and tourism agency, is busy at the moment urgently putting marketing plans into markets to convince those tourists that were hesitant to tell them about the world-class response to COVID-19. We have beautiful open spaces, sunny skies. This is where they need to come – grow that tourism cake.

We continue with our Airlift Programme, making sure there are more direct flights, and Wesgro also has a target of exceeding R2 billion investments through their facilitation and facilitating an extra R3 billion in export deals this year, and lastly, we are the best remote working destination in the world and I want to thank those officials both in the City of Cape Town and in our departments who have been working on getting the visas right. So much work was done that the President even announced it in the State of the Province Address. A little bit more to go to get it over the line, but remote working visas. How many people are here in the Weskus of our Province, remote working in other parts of the world, and we can do more and more of that.

Speaker, then I must move on to Safety. You know that safety is something that I have focused on from day one when I was elected. We still today have the most extensive Provincial Safety Plan in South Africa.

That Safety Plan, boots on the one side, policing, and violence prevention on the other side. I will answer these figures shortly.

Hon. Mr Speaker, we now have 1 039 Law Enforcement officers deployed to 13 crime hotspots and precincts. We have also continued to focus, innovate and work. Those officers now work on a 24-hour shift system and have been deployed based on data and evidence, directly into those areas specifically on weekends and at times of the day and night when murders happen more often.

We have also established a Special Reaction Unit of LEAP officers that can quickly respond across the board between those units when needed. We also have aligned our Area Based Teams and those Area Based Teams are multifaceted from different departments across our governments, and making sure that they are focusing in on those hotspot areas.

So, Hon. Speaker, I am really proud to say today that when our Minister of Police releases the statistics that he releases, generally too late, but he releases that data, there is only one part of South Africa where murders have stabilised and started to reduce. Only one place in the whole of South Africa and that is in the City of Cape Town in those 13 focused areas where LEAP has been deployed. That is nothing to snigger at, Hon. Mr Speaker. These are peoples' lives that are being saved. That is why I am so passionate about safety in our province. Too many people are murdered every day in our province. We have to make sure that it is safer. Hon. Speaker, these are early signs. This is a 10-year project, but I am super proud of these initial and first indications.

You know, Hon. Speaker, I have and still will ask for devolution of power. I still believe that provinces should have the power of police management and deployment, but in the meantime, Hon. Speaker, what we are going to do as part of the Safety Plan is, we are going to beef up our oversight. We are going to beef it up. You know, the lessons that we learnt in COVID-19 with data management and evidence, that dashboard, that is award winning. The dashboard and the data where we could GIS-map a positive case of COVID-19. We knew which areas were at what level of vaccination. We knew who was ill and who was not. We knew how the virus was spreading. We had heat maps. We had up-to-date real time data on COVID-19. It was a perfect tool to manage. If you want a world class response, put in world class tools and use world class methodologies. So, the Department of Community Safety is going to implement similar kind of management tools.

But I want to go further than that. It does not just help saying that our Department of Community Safety is going to up the game with data and evidence. I am also going to change the name of our Department of Community Safety. The Department of Community Safety is going to become known as the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety because if we cannot control and manage police in the province, what we will do is we will definitely up our game with oversight.



Do you know, I listen to this side of the House: I cannot believe, I cannot believe that we still have more police officers in a police station like Claremont and hardly any police officers in a police station in Langa. How many times have we spoken about this over how many years and who can make that change? Who can make that change?

Is the National Minister, but he is absent, but we will hold him to account. But not only that, we will use the data from our Troy units, the data from our ambulances and morgues. We will use the data from our Neighbourhood Watches. We will use real time data to every day put it on the table of the South African Police Services. This is where the deployment needs to happen, this is when it needs to happen, this is how we need to, through the boots on the ground, make it safer for our citizens.

But Hon. Speaker, the other side of the equation: Violence Prevention. And you know that actually violence prevention is, at the end of the day, even a bigger lever than the police, even a more important lever than the police because policing deals with a symptom. We should deal with the cause. We must get ahead of the game. And here, a further announcement, Hon. Speaker: we are going to set up a Violence Prevention Unit, a dedicated unit, a team of people with skills in a department.

It is going to be set up in the Department of Health. They will be the centre point of Violence Prevention. It will still be across the board in every one of our departments. They all have a role to play, but they will be the centre of Violence Prevention management where the centre is held and the Area Based teams, and how we partner just like we have learnt in COVID-19, just like I want to see in infrastructure, just like I want to see in jobs, in Violence Prevention the same thing. And I promise you, I can think of no better department than the Department of Health and their ability to do this.

From what they have managed in focusing on our first 1 000 days, pulling that together, our Boys II Men, making sure that GBV finds a home in that centre, although managed in every single one of our departments. This is the first dedicated Violence Prevention unit to be established in South Africa and it will coordinate across all of our departments, across ABTs, across. This will be a true WOGA, Whole of Government Approach, and then, moving to Whole of Society Approach.

Hon. Speaker, I must also just quickly update you on the progress with the Amendment to the Western Cape Liquor Act. Much work has been done by our various departments and Cabinet has now passed and approved the final draft. In other words, it has come to Cabinet, we have interrogated it, and we have approved the final drafting. It is now going through final drafting, the Regulatory Impact Assessment. Remember, in our province, all legislature must have a Regulatory Impact Assessment. I have also said that we want to have quick wins. We want to make sure that only one or two amendments come through at a time. We test them, we try them. If they make a difference to our harms and the harms caused to our citizens, we will expand on them. If they do not, we will come again and try something new.

We have to be nimble, we have to move quicker and faster because of course, the harms caused to our citizens as we measure in most of our hospitals now, and it is the only province that measures harms across South Africa in our hospital sites. That is the key space of where you get to understand harms and it will feed back into the system so that we can continually change the regulatory environment to get the best out.

Of course, we will also do this being mindful of the economy and, of course, the two sides of this equation.

Hon. Speaker, when it comes to safety of our citizens, I must give you an update today on Gender-based Violence. It is without doubt that Gender-based Violence is a major problem in our province and in our country, and it requires urgent attention. Right now, at every other second of the day, an incident of GBV will go unnoticed, unreported and unpunished. GBV is a crisis across all of our communities in South Africa. It is a crisis that needs much, much more focus. It is a crisis that Government and the private sector must address now.

Hon. Speaker, I want us to focus to this very serious issue. This area of gender-based violence in our province and in our country. As I said, gender-based violence is a problem in our province, across our country and needs urgent attention, and, Hon. Speaker, currently in my own Cabinet allegations of this nature have been made against Minister Albert Fritz, and I have therefore suspended the Minister and instituted an independent investigation by Advocate Jennifer Williams, which is currently underway to determine the veracity of the allegations, and I will, as soon as I get that report, communicate such.

Hon. Speaker, I want to use this opportunity today to unequivocally commit to playing my part in the fight against gender-based violence.

Hon. Speaker, last year in my SOPA address I said that the Western Cape Government will adopt a GBV implementation plan. Hon. Speaker, this Government has that plan now. It has been approved and adopted, and it is in all 13 departments.

I want to thank specifically Minister Fernandez for the role that she plays in pulling this together, in leading it, not 16 days of the year, but 365 days of the year. Thank you, Minister.

I also want to use this opportunity, Hon. Speaker, to give another shoutout to Dumisani Ntsodo, who is with us here today. He is a man that plays his role because what Dumisani does, he runs the Ikasi Soccer School Organization based in Khayelitsha.

What he has created is a safe space for girls in his community to be able to come and play sport. He has created this environment and that is what we need more men to be doing. To be playing their part to create safe environments for our young women so that they can grow; so that they can feel safe and comfortable as they grow. Dumisani, thank you very much for what you do. You are a hero in our community and I thank you very much.

Hon. Speaker, I also want to recognise all of the gender-based violence activists in our society. You know who you are across this province. I salute you. Those NGOs that you represent, that continually drive campaigns. Thank you for what you do. I said earlier that we have to definitely do more, and as a government and as a civil society, we have got to work out what those things are, and we have got to continually push to do more. We have to end the scourge of gender-based violence in our province.

Hon. Speaker, then well-being. I have spoken about jobs, I have spoken about safety.

Now to well-being. Well-being in our province, managed and pulled together by our biggest departments, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development.

Hon. Speaker, from the moment you are born until the moment you die, you deserve to live with dignity and with the opportunity to learn and develop so that you can access a job and live a long, healthy and fulfilling life.

We need to create that environment that enables this and so first to education. You know, Nic Spaull said last year, the Prof from Stellenbosch University and the study that was done on the impact of COVID-19 on our learners, and started to show how negatively impacting our outcomes and our school years were going to be through the pandemic; the lockdowns and the inability of our learners to have full-time schooling.

Those reports showed us a devastating future and that is why I am so happy that we are back to full school now. I said we got to end the disaster; that was one of those things that was being held captive: our learners, and so we really take recognition of what Professor Spaull said, but you know, Hon. Speaker, understanding the pressure on our system, the pressure on our learners, the mental health issues that we face, the truly remarkable outcomes to the 2021 NEC results was amazing.

Minister Schäfer, to you and your team, super well done.

You know, Hon. Speaker - you can clap after this. You know, Hon. Speaker, the pass rate in our province, despite what Prof was saying, despite the pandemic, increased to 81.2%; a 1.3 percentage point increase. Our Grade 10 to 12 retention rate, probably one of the most important indicators if we are thinking about our future; about not going back to the normal, but going forward to a better future. That indicator has grown again to now 70.3%; the highest level ever achieved amongst our learners staying in school. A 3.7 percentage point increase.

We have the highest percentage ever in Bachelor passes at 45.3%; those are the highest in South Africa. The highest percentage of distinctions in South Africa. We saw increases in Mathematics and in Science. Our underperforming schools went from 52 down to 40.

Now we have got to get 40 to naught, unbelievable. The work and dedication to make sure that we are creating better and better opportunities for young people to lead a better life in the future.

I want to thank our learners, our parents, our teachers, all of our school officials and of course our own department, for never giving up. Well done.

While staying with education, Speaker, the subjects that I am or the new focus areas of STEAMAC, which I really am so encouraged by, that we are now really starting to push a school environment that is creating opportunities for coding and computing. Those are the future Marlon Parkers of the world, the future innovators and tech entrepreneurs that are learning those subjects at school; the arts, those artists that are the future, telling stories, expressing themselves through their art, earning a living from their art. Art is really critical because we have so many artists in our society.

Then of course, agriculture, a key subject at school now. Agriculture, this massive engine room in our economy of creating jobs, attracting investment, we need to make sure there is a clear skills pipeline going into the agricultural sector. This science of agriculture needs more and more of our learners taking that subject.

I mentioned the broadband connectivity at 1 290 of our schools. We have 1 316 computer labs, 9 992 smart classrooms, and this year alone we will be adding another 1 662 (written speech mentions 1 162) additional smart classrooms in 160 schools. Our goal is very simple, Speaker, we want to achieve quality education for every child in every classroom in every school in the province so that our children can get into or onto the ladder of opportunity, so that they can beat poverty, so that they can live happy and fulfilling lives.

Speaker, then moving to that other component which I have had a lot to say about today which is the Department of Health. This beacon of hope on the African continent, this Department that delivered a world-class response to COVID-19, and despite all of the pressures, the innovations and what they did, they again for a third year in a row got a clean audit. You can definitely say that to them. They have embedded good governance as a habit, which is what we need to do, focus on good governance as a habit so that we can go out and do great things as a department, but in Health our focus is on COVID-19. We had to delay operations. We had to push back certain procedures. Some people did not come and present at our Health Services because of the fear of perhaps contracting COVID-19. We have a lot of catch-up to do and we need to make sure that we are investing in that catch-up, getting back to full comprehensive health service offerings in our province and we must do that by doing great technology like we have already put into Groote Schuur and Tygerberg. This is the Da Vinci robot, so certain operations, certain procedures will be done through a mechanised robotic system.

We need to make sure that we invest into mental wellbeing. Mental health, our mental health facilities, we need to make sure that they are able to deal with the greater pressure that is coming from society because of what has happened over the last while, we are seeing increased numbers in mental health.

We need to expand our telehealth, which is what we are going to be doing. This is where we contact, we learnt these lessons in dealing with that Vector Programme in phoning our diabetics and checking that their sugar was under control. We are now phoning our TB clients. We need to be contact-tracing, we need to be learning those lessons from COVID-19 and attacking TB in the same way. The number of deaths in our province from TB is astronomical and the most important thing to understand or know about TB is it is curable. Get into the system. Our healthcare system will be able to put you on a path that we can cure. We do not need to have TB as a death sentence in our province.

We also need to leverage public-private partnership into healthcare. Our role in showcasing our move to universal healthcare in our province, universal healthcare for all citizens of our province. The lessons that we learnt during COVID-19, and where we in this province worked so closely together between public and private, actually shows us the opportunities in healthcare going forward.

Another area of focus in this province will be one of the impact that the pandemic has put on livelihoods and the knock-on effect that that has pressurised our citizens into those numbers that I said earlier about hunger. How many more people go to bed hungry at night? How many more people are homeless in our province? In all of our municipalities you see it day and night, more and more people without a home. How many more mental health-related illnesses and substance abuse cases we have to deal with so that the Social Development Department, the department that really holds that value of ours of caring, of giving citizens the opportunity that we can treat the vulnerable, and show that we care and give them the care that they deserve. We need to make sure that we continue with our programmes of investing into the space, and I mentioned homelessness. I am glad to see that the Department is again increasing their funding and we will be increasing by March this year up to 2 500 homeless shelter beds.

Another great announcement today is how we will also this year be funding and putting in place a new shelter. Some of you will know the Robbie Nurock Clinic, which stands open at the moment, which is not used – that is going to become a homeless shelter. The Department is investing in it, and very soon will be another shelter open to offer care, to offer a safe place to those vulnerable citizens in our province.

We will also continue as we have been doing, in our funded shelters to provide psychosocial support and reunification services. You know, when you are on the ground speaking to homeless people, so many of them actually just want to be able to get home. How can we help them get home? It is unbelievable to come across the number of people with the skills that you see in our homeless shelters. I worked with some of the counters that are busy with our Census, and I went along with the Mayor in the City of Cape Town and one of the first ladies I engaged with, is unbelievable, she was a drama student. She had actually acted on certain dramas on TV in our country through SABC, but she was also a qualified electrician and because of COVID-19 had lost her job, was actually staying at one of our shelters.

There are so many skills at our shelters and we have to enable a pathway that they can get back to a job, that we can also reunite them with their family and help them. These are vulnerable citizens and the Government must be judged on how we treat our vulnerable citizens.

Then Speaker, we also must be judged on how we treat our children, specifically how we treat our children in enabling them to lead a proper fruitful life. That is where violence prevention really starts, the way we can help our young boys not ending up as gangsters; the way that those vulnerable children, especially those vulnerable children in conflict with the law, are treated. You know that we have a Probation Case Management System that is now electronic and that our social workers, 70% of them have now completed the rollout and have mobile devices and these are our probation officers, so they also know any time a child in conflict with the law is pulled into one of our police stations, they are there. They are also connected through our Social Services and our area-based teams. We need to make sure that we focus on our children so that they do not drop out of school. We need to make sure that we also have drop-in centres where our children can be left safely when they are removed from places of risk. They need to have access to social workers, to food and to sanitation.

I also want to say at this stage that I am really happy that we were able to, despite the financial challenges, roll over a reallocation of funding and more funding for the office of the Children's Commissioner.

I must take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Christina Nomdo, our Children's Commissioner in the province, for the work that she does, criss-crossing this province, highlighting issues, making sure that our government is responding where necessary. Our children and I thank you for your steadfast commitment.

Then lastly, Speaker, I know I have been speaking for too long. I want to talk about how we as Government normally operate. You know we focus on strategies, on five-year plans, on three-year budget cycles, on one year plans. We report back to Parliament our APPs. We have every strategy and planning focused and we do not focus enough on our values, we do not focus enough on our culture, the culture of our government. And so I am really happy that we are changing that. We are focusing on values and cultures.

Our last Bosberaad with the Cabinet and the Heads of Department did exactly this. You know, values cannot be a laminated poster on the back of your office door. Our values of caring and competence, our values of innovation, of responsiveness and accountability, our values of integrity: they need to be embedded in everything that we do as a Government, the 80 000 officials in our Government.

So, I am really excited about this next journey that we are on. You know, that if we embed your values properly, the values become the lived culture in your organisation. You will all know, those of you in management or who have dealt with any kind of strategic process, you will know the saying, it says and this is Peter Drucker. He says:

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

How many times have you heard that over the last 10 years and then, you stay with strategy and you do not spend time on culture? If you do not get the culture right well, you cannot get the strategy right. So, in this province, we are going to put a lot of focus into culture. We have decided already that we are going to spend much more time listening, rather than saying. You know, in COVID-19 when we were hit with this disaster, our healthcare workers went out and they were listening to people, listening to the problems, and so we innovated and developed change. The 80 000-strong staff in this province: imagine if they were more inspired? Imagine if they lived more to those value sets? What the difference, the interaction between official and citizen would be.

So, we are going to reduce our time in meetings by 50 percent. We spend too much time sitting in meetings and not enough time listening, not enough time thinking, not enough time on the ground with our citizens. Can you just image some government officials going out, not saying a word, just going out and sitting next to the Home Affairs queue and observing for an hour, and then coming back and saying, ‘Well, this is what I observed, this is what I observed, how can we change it? How can we make it better? How can we get rid of those queues?’ So, Government officials spending less time in meetings – cut it by 50 percent; that is the goal – spending more time listening to citizens, spending more time thinking and innovating, becoming much more focused on our customer.

We also need to make sure that we measure ourselves. So, I want to make sure that our Government enters into those benchmark processes that business normally enters themselves into. The best place in the world to work, the best place in the country to work. We need to be in that competition, even if once we have entered, we come last, we are in the competition because next year we better not come last. We must measure ourselves against our culture because we all know that if culture eats strategy for breakfast, we should be focusing on the culture and if we get the culture right, can you imagine this great performing province, the next level that we will be able to go to?

Hon. Speaker, in conclusion. We cannot go back to the way things were before. We have to push back against going back to normal and we must push forward to do things even better. I think again of those fishermen from the Weskus, who every single day, despite the pressure, despite what they are facing, get up, get out and set sail.

Hon. Speaker, as I finish, I must also thank the frontline of this Government, every single one of the 80 000 employees, the Cabinet, the Ministers, the Heads of Department, the middle management, all of those people in this Government. I could not be talking about these amazing outcomes if it was not for you. I am so proud of you and I am so grateful for what you do every single day. You can give them a hand.

Do you know, Hon. Speaker, we may face some very, very serious challenges in our province, but we really, truly have such a special place. We have every single thing that we need. We have the best healthcare system in our country. We have the best and best-run public education system in our country. We have the best universities, top performing. We have such amazing, well-run and efficient local governments across this province. We have a modern infrastructure and great roads. We have natural resources in abundance. Just walk outside, you will see it. We have natural beauty in abundance. We are a place of innovation and entrepreneurship. We attract people from around our country, we attract people from around the world. We are such an amazing place, this Western Cape. We also have the most inspiring people here in this province.

This gives me hope, Hon. Speaker. I hope this gives you all hope, too. We now need to do everything we can to deliver the jobs and the safety that every person in our province deserves. We will rethink, we will focus and we will innovate. We will try new ideas and if they fail, we will get up again and we will try again. We will keep on finding new ways to be the Government that you deserve, so that you can live a long and happy life. I thank you.

8. The House adjourned at 12:40.

ROMEO ADAMS  
Secretary to the Provincial Parliament