
FRIDAY, 4 APRIL 2025

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

The sign † indicates the original language and [] directly thereafter indicates a translation.

[Hybrid Sitting held with some members present in the House and some in virtual attendance through Microsoft Teams]

The House met at 10:00.

The Deputy Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may be seated. [Interjections.] Order, hon members. I trust that the membership of this House will remain in order. Hon members, as has been our practise to date hon members will participate in the Sitting of the House of the WCPP from both here in the Chamber with the Presiding Officer and the Table Staff and via Microsoft Teams.

Our Standing Rules have accordingly been amended to accommodate such hybrid Sittings of the House. Being more than nine months into the term I

trust that all hon members are familiar with the adopted Rules.

The Secretary will now read the First Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 1: Premier – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2 – 2025].

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I see the hon Premier. [Interjections.] [Applause.]

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, hon Cabinet colleagues, Leader of the Opposition. I am not sure for how long, maybe you will be on this side very shortly just like your Opposition leader in the City of Cape Town.

Hon members of this Parliament, the DG unfortunately cannot be here, but the CFO, thank you very much for being here. Distinguished guests, those of you online and of course most importantly the residents of our great province, the Western Cape.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The PREMIER: Hon Deputy Speaker, every household in South Africa, specifically right now, knows what it means to stretch a rand further than ever before. They have had to adjust, they have had to innovate, they have had to make responsible and very tough choices and tough decisions to make

ends meet because of our declining economy, our slow growth and the space that we find ourselves in here in this great country of ours, but, hon Deputy Speaker, the National Government is not capable of doing the same thing that our citizens have to do every single day.

They are not able to make those tough choices, those tough, responsible decisions like we have to make in this province when we balance our books, when we go through the months and months of process in getting to a budget that we can table. There are tough, tough choices that we have to make.

You know, our citizens are faced with should they buy that extra loaf of bread as opposed to perhaps some more units of electricity? Should they pay their rates and taxes or their school fees? How do they make ends meet at the end of the month, and guess what our country has done to them now as we move into the next financial year? And I say "our country", but in actual fact I said it was the ANC and our National Government component who are absolutely tone deaf to what our citizens face every single day, but not only them, the other parties, I see a lot of them have now gone home in shame, but that are missing here, that also voted for a tax increase to further burden those very same citizens who are finding it so very, very hard to make ends meet.

The ANC and those parties are tone deaf. They do not know what it is like on the ground for everyday voters and citizens. That is the reason that they lost the election last year because of that tone deafness. They do not

understand the reality of everyday life.

The election result gave us an opportunity. It gave us an opportunity to form a GNU and that opportunity should have been grabbed with both hands to make the biggest difference that we can for the citizens of our country.

That tone deafness, or should I say the other side of it, the ANC are hell-bent on keeping our people poor. They are hell-bent on not fixing the policy failures of the last 30 years.

Yesterday, the hon member Nkondlo spoke about policy. When you really get into policies and policy failures, there have been massive failures, and that opportunity after the last election when the ANC lost their majority, was a time to say let us recheck. Let us form this GNU and let us bring hope to our country. Let us show our country that we, like them, our citizens, can make those tough choices. We can cut that fat and that wastage, but no, they were tone deaf. They were hell-bent on growing poverty, on increasing the infrastructure failures that we face every single day, on not slowing down or changing the trajectory of growth in our country, on not fixing those SOEs or those ports, or the rail system, or the energy system, or fixing crime, or dare I say fixing corruption.

It seems to be the Sixth Administration 2.0 and that is not tenable. That is not a way forward for the next five years for this country.

We cannot have a Parliament that stands up after a vote on a framework that is going to burden the citizens with more tax and everybody stands up and celebrates like it is a massive win for the citizens of our country.

No, it was a win for the same old, same old, same old. More burden, more tax, more poverty, more crime and it is just totally unacceptable.

At the same time [Interjections.], at the same time, hon Deputy Speaker, we find ourselves in a world that has also gone a bit crazy. In a world where the US are announcing tariff barriers and tariff wars for the whole world, even islands that have no people living on them.

The EU is busy focussing on increasing expenditure, preparing for war, defence expenditure going from 2% to 5%. They are losing the traction of the citizens and what should be done.

We have got a crazy world out there and, you know, right now this place in Africa, this should be our time, the time for Africa and specifically the time for South Africa. That is actually what the election last year gave us. That is what the GNU gave us. It gave us that antidote to the populism and the right-wing shifts of other parts in the world. It gave us that opportunity. [Interjections.]

You know, I listened to that leaked voice note of the President speaking to the caucus [Interjections.] and it was quite interesting listening to it because

it was like we all have to join forces to increase tax to our citizens. We cannot get into the space of cutting and in actual fact we will push the DA into a corner and perhaps we will even chuck them out the GNU because this is the trajectory we want to go on. The same old, same old, same old Sixth Administration continuation, [Interjections.] and that is missing the opportunity for the real, real change here in South Africa.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as I have said the GNU is not the Sixth Administration 2.0. It cannot be the same old, same old. Politics in our country must seize the moment [Interjections.] and bring about those tough choices and those changes that we need.

We need to double down on fixing the problems. We need to double down on making things right that have gone wrong over the last few years. We have got to double down on reversing poverty, on getting the economy going and creating opportunities for our citizens and our residents to get jobs. That is what we should be doing, not increasing our taxes. We should be doubling down on fixing every single thing that is broken in our country.

Our citizens deserve much more and, you know, the irony of that standing up and celebrating the increase in tax to our citizens, the irony of it is that 0,5% which is supposed to be bringing in money to balance the books because we are too scared to cut those nice-to-haves, to cut those wasteful things, to fix those broken things, we are too scared to do that, to make the tough choices that our citizens make every single day, and what happens? The JSE loses a

trillion rand. The JSE loses 4% overnight.

An HON MEMBER: Ja!

The PREMIER: The rand-dollar starts to tank. Our economy ends up going into further free fall. [Interjections.]

That 0,5% VAT that everybody celebrated in Parliament, all of those who voted for it ...[Interjections.]

The HON MEMBER: All of them.

The PREMIER: ...has been lost because quite frankly we are not going to balance the books now, and are you all going to support the 5% VAT next year that is going to be needed to balance the books because the economy is going to keep on tanking?

An HON MEMBER: Ja!

The PREMIER: What a failure of political parties representing those citizens who make the tough choices in our country. [Interjections.] It was a shocking moment in our history and quite frankly the consequences are going to be massive.

Over and above that, hon Deputy Speaker, is the response to the risks. How

do we respond to risks?

So a big risk is this tariff war and what is happening in the US, and we have got different ways in responding to those kind of things.

What we should be doing is trying to fix the problem, trying to do a deal, get involved and try and save our second biggest trading partner and that relationship ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear! [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: ...but we do not do that, we send Rasool. Come on, guys. [Interjections.] Tone deaf.

The ANC is totally tone deaf and hell-bent on doing the same old, same old, same old thing that [Interjections.] they have been doing for the last 30 years, which has given us what? Slow growth, bad economies, highest unemployment rates in the world, no opportunities for young people and they missed the opportunity of saying let us use the Seventh Administration to do a check, let us relook at those policies. Let us bring about the changes that we need.

Let me just give you the consequences of us losing the AGOA and the opportunity of export of motor vehicles into the US. I am not talking about agriculture because I will get to that just now, and of course Minister Meyer

will talk about that a lot in the next Budget Vote, and if you were downstairs you would have seen the partnerships and the businesses and the economy ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The PREMIER: ...thriving. You would see the difference in a Western Cape Government, but we export through AGOA from South Africa R35 billion a year in motor vehicles. R35 billion. That is 110 000 direct jobs in our country in the automotive industry, there are 200 companies who supply that industry with another 200 000 jobs, and we are going to lose that export market like that.

In the Eastern Cape, which are our neighbours, 40 000 citizens have got jobs in the Eastern Cape in the automotive industry. When I raised this with the President two weeks ago, Oscar Mabuyane from the Eastern Cape joined me saying we have to get some action with the US.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear! [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: *Dololo*, nothing is happening. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You were there!

The PREMIER: Those 40 000 jobs that are going to be lost ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You were there!

The PREMIER: ...in the Eastern Cape ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You want other people to account...

The PREMIER: ...what are those citizens going to do? They are going to have to come here to the Western Cape to look for opportunity.

An HON MEMBER: What were you doing there? [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: They are going to come here to look for opportunity. Their kids are already here, their families are already here, [Interjections.] but they are going to have to come here as well.

That is because the ANC is so tone deaf and hell-bent on keeping on going same way that they have been going for the last 30 years. They are not using the election as a lever to say let us double-check these policies, let us actually take the tough choices, [Interjections.] let us make the difference now, let us save it, but no, they are not able to do that.

Hon Deputy Speaker, yesterday we saw the – or we saw the day before, the victory celebrations of charging our citizens extra tax. Yesterday we listened to this debate in the House and we see the same dissonance in almost every

one of their statements yesterday.

They tell us that they are pro-poor and yet we are more than happy to squeeze the working class by charging them more taxes. [Interjections.] Did you hear that rhetoric?

You know, it is quite interesting. [Interjections.] Yesterday after the Sitting I went off to Langa because we were having an open session in Langa with a whole lot of people in the traffic driving along, and guess what happens? An entourage of 20 cars with blue lights, the exact opposite of what the citizens want to see. [Interjections.] It is the same old, same old tone deaf ANC. Big entourages, big government, big expenditure for them and no one else.

I mean nothing, nothing, nothing made it so evident as what Minister Bredell told us about yesterday and our air force. Our air force, and this is the South African Air Force Rotary Wing. These are helicopters. Here is a graphic that shows of all of those helicopters that he spoke about, that is our whole Air Force, there is only one helicopter that can fly. One.

The 11 Rooi Valke cannot fly, they are all red, they are grounded; the eight BK 117 grounded; the Super Lynx grounded; the Augustas, 24 of them, grounded; the Oryx helicopters, 39, [Interjections.] one can fly, and whose one is that? The President's helicopter. [Interjections.]

Not one helicopter for the citizens when there are floods [Interjections.] or

fires or when citizens really, really need support from their government, not one of their blooming helicopters can fly. What a disgrace.

You know ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You must apologise.

The PREMIER: ...yesterday we also heard about how they cared so much for the poor. You know, I think about, and I heard the hon member Nkondlo talking about electricity price increases and she referred to the 11,32% increase, and that is the increase that Eskom is giving their customers, right? 11,32%, four times higher than inflation.

An HON MEMBER: And Cape Town?

The PREMIER: Who can afford this? Those same citizens who do not know whether to buy bread or not are now getting that kind of increase.

In Cape Town they are absorbing the blow and giving residents in this City a 2% electricity increase ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: It is a lot.

The PREMIER: ...but you know what? But you know what?

An HON MEMBER: It is a lot.

The PREMIER: Not all citizens in Cape Town are going to be able to get that DA governance and that 2% increase, not all citizens ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Speak to your ...

The PREMIER: ...because if you live in Khayelitsha, the place that the hon [Interjections.] member Nkondlo says, "We care for the poor," guess who supplies them electricity? Eskom, at an 11,32% increase. [Interjections.] Who cares for the poor? Not them, not at all. They have shown it time and time again, [Interjections.] but, you know, hon Deputy Speaker, in this Government, in this Government we are exactly the opposite.

We have an apex, an apex priority where everything comes together to make sure that we are going to grow our economy, that we are going to create work opportunities for our citizens to get those jobs.

That is what we do and it shows in the results not in the rhetoric. It is not the same old, same old like the ANC continuing. It is a different space here in the Western Cape. This is where we have the lowest unemployment rate and the lowest youth unemployment rate. [Interjections.] This is where we have the highest business confidence rate. This is where we have the highest job absorption rate. This is where people want to come to, to get services because things work here. [Interjections.] This is where the Gini coefficient,

the gap between rich and poor, gets better and, you know, it was very interesting.

Again the hon member Nkondlo said property prices here keep on going up. Yes.

An HON MEMBER: Why does it ...

The PREMIER: If you go from 2010 to 2025 and you owned a property in the Western Cape, on average, and this is after removing the effect of inflation. So the average person who owned a property over the last 15 years in this region of our country or in the City of Cape Town, your asset value went up by 19%, and sure, that is what she was talking about, property prices are going up, but you know what, what she did not talk about was what happens if you live in one of the cities that are run by the ANC. [Interjections.]

Over that same period of time your property – and look at this graph. In 2010 if your property was there in all of these cities, ANC-run, your property was there, it would be 21% under the value it was 15 years ago. [Interjections.]

The biggest saving and the biggest investment any family makes in their lives is their home and if you live in an ANC-run space over the last 15 years your investment is now 21% less value than it was 15 years before. [Interjections.] How sustainable is that? And she complains that the property

prices go up. I promise you [Interjections.] I would much rather want to live in a place where the value of my asset goes up. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Premier, are you able to take your seat? Order, hon members!

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Hon Deputy Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I see the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: My colleague on the other side said the Premier is lying. That is not parliamentary. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, I would want to remind you we have to keep the decorum of the House. I have not personally heard that particular comment, but please let us hold the decorum of the House.

Hon Premier, may I also request that mic on your left, are you able to switch it on and turn it to you as well? Because I am aware that we have guests in the gallery that have joined us since we have commenced – welcome – because the speaker should never be drowned out. Thank you. You may proceed.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, I appreciate it.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, in this province where there are far more opportunities where your investments grow, but where we also as a government can be trusted to make the right choices, to make the tough choices and that is what happens at a budget time. You make those tough choices. You put money where you need to put money. You understand the risks that your citizens face and you try to mitigate those risks as best as you can.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, in seizing those opportunities we have a massive one and that is called the G20. I spoke about that international environment in which we operate and play those markets. We are now going to have to find new markets, we are going to have to really be nimble in keeping our economy going, despite those threats that I have spoken about for our automotive industry or our agricultural industry, our export industry, because of the tariff war.

We have an opportunity because the G20 comes together for the first time in Africa and it comes together in this country, and we must use that opportunity to the absolute maximum, and we are doing it here, and I want to say to all of the departments and their teams that are in there making sure that just like our response was for when we put the World Cup together, where South Africa showed the world our best side, we are doing exactly the same thing, and those teams are working really hard at making sure that we

are putting our best foot forward, and I want to thank every single one of them, and we have allocated R20 million towards that specific programme because it is such a big opportunity for us, and we are there when other places cannot handle it.

I mean the President at the moment has had to go to Gauteng to say, "We have got the G20 coming, guys, and there are no roads and they have blown up and they have not been fixed for three years, and what are you going – no water." I mean it is a mess. It is a mess and you can see it in those property prices.

Are we going to have it ready in time? I do not know, but of course as the Mayor of the City of Cape Town and myself and our municipalities here say to the President, to the team, to the Sherpas, we are here if you need us. If you cannot pull a meeting off in one of those ANC municipalities where the value is dropping at 21% over that period in 15 years, do not worry, we will put up our hands and we will put our best foot forward, and we will show South Africa, and we will show the world what opportunities are like, and we will grab those opportunities to grow our economy.

So perhaps I also thought about saying, you know, when all of those people are arriving and ATNS fails and the aircraft cannot land. It is all of those infrastructure issues that we face that we are not fixing, but we are prepared to put up VAT. I mean it is just unbelievable.

At the same time, hon Deputy Speaker, we have a massive opportunity because we are also hosting the Regional Leaders Summit. This is something that I am very proud of and the partnerships that our Government has, but also to say to the members of the ANC, it is not something that it is just a DA thing. I mean it has been through ANC leadership with ANC Premiers, it has been through DA leadership with DA Premiers, and we have continued to work on this relationship.

It is a relationship that goes deep and it really does give us results in our partnerships on safety, in our partnerships on the economy, in new partnerships with those regional leaders from those partner regions and provinces around the world, and we will be hosting that summit later in the year, and hopefully many of you can also meet our colleagues from across the world and be part of those discussions.

At the same time we are also putting an Investment Conference together. Hon Minister Meyer, thank you very much, and your team obviously is core, centre to that Investment Conference, but of course investment can be in anything, not only in the economy, it can be in education, it can be in health, it can be in mobility, it can be in all of our areas that we have here in the province and our departments and our Ministers that are responsible. So we will take and make maximum use of it.

We have seen in the past, I mean I spoke about this earlier this year, that so far we have got 296 foreign direct investments or projects happening, more

than R171 billion into our economy. We want to use this to at least get another billion rand in, but hopefully it lays the foundation for billions of rand on top of that as we go forward, and of course I want to thank the team at Wesgro for the role that they play in making sure that we are selling ourselves, showing ourselves as the trade, investment, tourism opportunity space here in the southern part of Africa.

While talking about that I also want to make comment to Minister Barbara Creecy and say thank you very much for now including Cape Town and for going out on an RFI that we can actually really have a look at those broken infrastructure over the last 30 years that I have just spoken about, that we can actually get partners in and start to fix the rail, and start to fix our ports, and actually let us drive it and get our economy going.

I also want to say a few words about good governance because of course this budget DOTP and what we do around good governance, and in our Government we focused for 10 years on good governance and now we are there where we have got every entity and every department getting an unqualified audit, and now we have got to move to the next level, and that means good governance is a habit and we drive it and we make sure that we keep it going, because once the governance is in place that is the foundation that you start to deliver services to your citizens.

The next challenge for us in our province, and as I spoke to all of the Mayors and all the municipal managers, to say how do we get not only every

department and every entity in the province, but let us get every municipality in this province to an unqualified audit, and that has got to be the next level of how we are going to push things forward.

Hon Deputy Speaker, when you get that right you really start to get traction on making the biggest difference on creating jobs, uplifting communities and changing people's lives, and this Budget of ours, which is a R2,012 billion budget for 2025/26, it is actually a slight decrease, a 4,3% decrease on last year, but of course we know that one of the pressure points was the Microsoft licencing.

What happened two days ago when everybody was celebrating and, you know, the champagne was flowing because they had given our citizens extra burden of tax and the rand tanked, what is going to happen, Minister Baartman, at the end of the year? We are going to have to be saying, "Please cut some more services so we can actually turn it into dollars so we can pay for our licences." It does not make sense to me, but that is what we have to do and of course here we have got a reduction. Hopefully we can stabilise the rand-dollar before the end of the year and we actually do not have to dig deep into our service delivery pockets to fund it.

I also want to say that our Energy Plan and the R35 million there, and of course that is just the coordination and some of the projects. A lot of it happens also in our departments and the DOI and in Local Government, and of course the private sector. That is a 70, 80, R90 billion project in this

province where we have got 1 000 megawatts in our municipalities coming in now, another 1 000 in the pipeline. We are well on our way to the 5 700 megawatts that is in the plan. That is by 2035, but the independent survey we just had done says we will have power by 2032, enough and more to export.

I also want to say that we will continue to bring Government closer to our residents through our Broadband Project, our 82 Western Cape Government e-Centres. We will be expanding those again, a few more. We have 15 digital channels that our residents can use across our Wi-Fi hotspots, 1 600 of them, but of course in this Budget and this period going forward, under Broadband 2.0 we will be increasing that to 2 150.

So even more access points for our citizens and this is about the investment gives communication infrastructure that reaches the far distance parts of our province, and if we cannot get there we will put a mobile unit in to get that to you.

It is about the foundation for e-Learning and research and projects for our education system. It is about our health system and enabling record-keeping, or enabling us to send radiology pictures, or ask for second opinions, not only around our province, but around the world.

It gives various service benefits to our citizens via our libraries, it gives at our museums and it also is primarily an enabler for the economy and for jobs.

We will also make sure that there is an expansion in the digital ecosystem for information security. We will put more and more focus on our security of our systems.

We know that cyber-attacks are more prevalent around the world as we become more AI and IT enabled and of course we will continue mitigating that risk and making sure we are preparing for it.

We will also put some funding into the PTI, our Provincial Training Institute, because it is about upskilling. In actual fact this morning – and I am not sure, hon Minister, have you got it as well, and I saw Minister Simmers has already accepted it. Some AI training through Stellenbosch University and our PTI Institute in AI, so that we are enabling ourselves.

It is about continuous learning these days. We have got to be enabling ourselves to deal with this future that is coming at us and every single official has got this opportunity through our PTI Institute and that is why we will be putting money there.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is also about how – and this in conclusion – that we not dwell on obstacles, we build opportunities. Through good governance, transparent budgeting and the unrelenting focus on economic growth we will continue to drive investments in our province, create jobs and provide essential services efficiently and effectively.

No matter the circumstances, no matter the risk, no matter the pressure, no matter the celebration of extra taxes in our country and the burden that that brings to our citizens, we will respond, we will fight back and we will do what is necessary to make sure that we keep on building a better opportunity province.

We will do this through certainty and a credible fiscal environment that enables us to move forward, that enables trust in our system.

We have a roadmap, we have a provincial strategic plan that has already been tabled and already in place, that is already driving how we spend our money and how we are influencing discussions with our universities, with business, etcetera, etcetera.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as I end in tabling this budget I want to just ask this House to recognise one thing that happened yesterday as opposed to what happened at a national level. At a national level there was a whole lot of †*konkeling* [conspiring] against our voters, against the citizens, a whole lot of †*konkeling* [conspiring] to get a vote passed that burdens our citizens with extra tax and then a massive celebration of it.

In this House we have a debate on the Budget, we have really great inputs into that debate and the Second Reading was approved unopposed. Not even opposed.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, it is going to be quite interesting in this debate as we go forward to hear what the Opposition now start to say because they did not oppose us in that space, there was not a big vote called for yesterday, etcetera, etcetera, and of course, I presume, that because this Government is so far ahead of any other government in our country that in actual fact we are going to find ourselves in a new environment here in the Western Cape, where in actual fact this whole House looks at supporting this Budget, at moving and building a province over the next year and the next three years that makes the biggest difference it can while our citizens are making tough choices, that we show that we are doing the same alongside them, building trust and making a difference.

So I look forward to the rest of this Budget process and a support for this not only from this side of the House, but from that side of the House too. I thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Premier. I now recognise the Leader of the Opposition, hon member Sayed. The clock is visible on the screen as well. [Applause.] [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Hon Deputy Speaker, hon Premier, members of the Legislature and members of the public, both present and those watching online.

The former president of the African National Congress, a giant of the liberation struggle and an internationalist, Oliver Reginald Tambo, said:

"A nation that values its freedom and democracy must be led by men and women who earn the trust of the people through service and integrity."

Just two days ago the National Assembly adopted the 2025 fiscal framework and revenue proposals, a budget designed to reduce poverty, tackle inequality and invest in a better future for all South Africans. [Interjections.]

It is a budget reflecting our tough domestic and global economic reality and the sound fiscal decisions that need to be made to ensure that basic services, infrastructure and socio-economic interventions, especially for the most vulnerable, are sustained and expanded whilst continuing to work towards lifting millions out of poverty and unemployment, and keeping our economy globally competitive.

In fact the African National Congress has publicly committed to finding alternative revenue to deal with the 0,5% VAT increase and bracket creep adjustment which impacts negatively on personal income taxpayers from the working and middle class. We are not immune from criticism.

Am HON MEMBER: Yes.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: There is now a resolution [Interjections.] of the National Assembly to this effect ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: ...and let it be clear, celebrations that were seen were not a celebration of a 0,5% VAT. Those celebrations [Interjections.] were a celebration of the potential booting out of the racist right-wing [Interjections.] Democratic Alliance on the Government of National Unity. Citizens are happy.

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Majority of political parties in the National Assembly [Interjections.] are happy as to what may come. [Interjections.]

In contrast the Budget of the Department of the Premier is opposed by the African National Congress in this House as presenting a vision for our province which seeks only to perpetuate ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Sayed, are you able to take your seat? I see the hon member Walters.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: With pleasure. [Interjections.]

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, is the hon member willing to take a question?

An HON MEMBER: No!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Sayed, are you willing to take a question?

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: We can engage on Tuesday after the Committee. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: He says no, please proceed.

An HON MEMBER: Good, good, good! [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Now this is a budget, [Interjections.] this is a budget that divides not one that builds and unites the socio-economic divisions across our province.

The Premier's speech which he delivered now did not lay out a vision for an inclusive Western Cape. It did not answer how this province will address the deep inequalities that still scar our communities. It did not speak to the lived experiences of people in Philippi, Nyanga, Khayelitsha, Kayamandi, Mitchells Plain, Hanover Park, Beaufort West or De Doorns. [Interjections.]

Instead the Premier presented a budget reliant on national funding whilst his party, the Democratic Alliance, rejected the very national budget that provides 95% of this province's financial lifeline. [Interjections.]

Let us be clear, R81,6 billion of this Provincial Budget comes from National Treasury.

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Just 5% comes from the provincial revenue. So I ask the hon Premier what were you really offering in your Provincial Budget when the resources you depend on were ones your party voted against?

We have false promises and political posturing, not a plan for growth. It is a political blueprint to protect the privileged. It prioritises reserves over basic services, bureaucracy over delivery and marketing over impact. For example, whilst communities cry out for housing, education and jobs, your Government, hon Premier, earmarks R1,7 billion for unforeseen and unavoidable expenses with no clarity.

Another R1,25 billion sits in a stabilisation reserve. These are funds that could be used now to address urgent needs. This is what building an inclusive province has come to represent under the Democratic Alliance in

the Western Cape. A budget where the poor wait while the privileged are protected.

Hon members, this Budget deepens what we call the tale of two Western Capes. One Cape lives in comfort with access to quality education, safety and opportunity. The other Cape struggles with overcrowded classrooms, unsafe transport and economic exclusion, which hon member Nkondlo will speak to later. [Interjections.]

This divide is not accidental. It is maintained by a government more concerned with performance optics than the people.

Let me remind this House, over 50% of the Western Cape's residents are poor. Youth unemployment remains a ticking time bomb. Housing backlogs are growing while this Province fails to spend its housing budget. Yet this Budget does little to address structural inequality and where is the accountability?

Hon Premier, you talk about innovation yet your Centre for e-Innovation employs 339 people at a cost of R221 million with no evidence of real service delivery improvements.

You talk about efficient governance, but your own department, the Office of the Premier, employs over 1 000 people, many in high-paying senior positions. In fact between 2021 and 2025 the senior staff have reduced in

number, but the costs have ballooned from R83 million to R104 million. Where is the value for money, hon Premier?

Hon Premier, you claim to care for children, but where is the funding and support for the Children's Commissioner? Ms Christina Nomdo was appointed to protect the rights of children, but she herself has said that her office lacks independence and power.

An HON MEMBER: She does not spend money.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: After the tragic school transport crash in Mitchells Plain the Commissioner raised alarm on unsafe scholar transport for children. What did your Government do? Ignored her. Is this inclusion? Is this justice? Or is it silencing those who speak inconvenient truths? And we are still without a youth policy to this day.

Then there is your Government's foreign policy gambles and geopolitical risk-taking, while National Government is working under challenging global dynamics to protect and strengthen South Africa's diplomatic and trade interest, [Interjections.] especially with major partners like China, like the USA and BRICS partners.

Your MEC, [Interjections.] your MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Agriculture, Dr Ivan Meyer, [Interjections.] takes an unsanctioned trip to Taiwan, contradicting South Africa's official One-China policy.

[Interjections.] Under whatever circumstances this is just protocol breaking. It is reckless. It is reckless geopolitical gambling. [Interjections.]

Hon Premier, you dodge serious questions about this visit.

An HON MEMBER: It is for research.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: What is its purpose? [Interjections.] Who was met? Were any agreements signed? South Africa's policy is clear. We follow the One-China policy. [Interjections.]

Your silence suggests that the DA would risk national relationships for political games and puts thousands of jobs in the Western Cape at risk, especially in the agricultural sector.

On the other hand our National Minister of Trade and Industry and Competition, Parks Tau, together with Minister Lamola of International Relations, will convene a briefing today on South Africa's strategic approach to the new US tariff regime and South Africa's strategic adaptation to US tariffs to advance national interest through policy strategy.

In recent weeks our communities have mourned. They have mourned with communities of Jocelyn Smith, Cwecwe and Boy and Aluu, children who were victims of horrific violence. Marches and petitions have filled our streets. The province is crying out for action on gender-based violence and

child protection, but in your Budget, hon Premier, there is no urgent visible response, no emergency funding, no new strategy, no message of solidarity.

This is not what leadership looks like. The DA remains pro-poor in slogans, pro-privilege in practise.

Hon Premier, you speak of a pro-poor budget, but let us be honest, your party governs in the interests of a narrow base.

At every opportunity to support inclusive national policies, [Interjections.] free higher education, expanded child support, transformation of the public service, land reform, the SRD grant, quality healthcare for all, the DA votes no.

An HON MEMBER: For 30 years you failed!

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: You undermine the very policies that uplift the majority of South Africans.

An HON MEMBER: [Inaudible.] that is the only thing you can say [Inaudible.]

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: You govern this province as if it were separate from the rest of South Africa. [Interjections.] This is not constitutional. It is not inclusive. It is not sustainable.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Budget fails the people of the Western Cape. It protects privilege, it ignores poverty, it speaks to a narrow few while the many are left behind.

This is why today the African National Congress, together with other political parties, and we thank our colleagues in the Patriotic Alliance and the Good Party for their support in having rejected Vote 1 in the Committee last week.

We cannot support a budget that speaks of unity, but deepens divisions, that speaks of growth, but excludes the poor, that speaks of leadership, but avoids accountability. The Western Cape, hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, deserves a government that sees, hears and serves all its people. I thank you.
[Interjections.] [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Sayed. I see the hon member Stephens.

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I greet the hon Speaker, hon Premier, hon members and the public.

The increase was necessary to protect jobs, strengthen public services and prevent a much larger financial crisis, and Minister Gayton McKenzie from the Patriotic Alliance did not vote for a VAT increase, he voted against a 2%

increase. [Interjections.] Yes, he voted against a 2% VAT increase hike and he fought hard to reduce it, and through tough negotiations Minister McKenzie and his team successfully brought the increase down to 1%, [Interjections.] implemented in two phases of 0,5% each; one in May and one next year. [Interjections.]

Commission of Children ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Order, hon members! Hon Stephens is on the floor. [Interjections.] You may proceed.

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): It is not if the DA is that innocent when it came to the 2% increase. They had their reasons for not voting for it, but I am not going to go there seeing that we only got three minutes.

The previous Commissioner stated that funding was rarely made available and hence resulted in the loss of visible progress being made within the job scope and goals being reached. It is important that the mistakes are not repeated and that the new Commissioner has the appropriate resources and funds made available to have a valuable impact in his or her department.

Thank you for the amount allocated to the Innovation Centres. This is a crucial part of the development of South Africa and learners. However, the question raised is how these devices will thrive within a high crime and poverty stricken province.

The line between rich and poor is very thin and areas where the socio-economic circumstances are dire these innovations may not be beneficial and may pose the threat of contributing to the increase in crime, namely theft of these specific resources, and I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Stephens. Online I recognise the hon member Lithakong.

†Ms T LITHAKONG (EFF): †Enkosi kakhulu Somlomo. [Thank you so much Speaker]. Greetings to you, the hon Premier, community at the gallery and the House at large. I greet you all.

Hon Deputy Speaker, a budget allocation of just over R2 billion to the Office of the Premier in the 2025/26 financial year is unwarranted. This is so considering the fact that in his State of the Province Address the hon Premier spent half of his allocated time telling the province about how he wasted taxpayers' money busy roaming around the streets of Germany.

Somlomo, this is the same Premier who deprived the first ever office of the Children's Commissioner with resources in its first term until its conclusion.

The majority, hon Deputy Speaker, of poor people in this province still remain without proper housing while there are only few shelters made available to accommodate those who are homeless.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the DA Government under this hon Premier has done nothing to address issues of spatial planning in the province, more especially when it comes to creating housing opportunities closer to the Cape Town Central Business District with the Tafelberg matter being the case in point, while the murder rate and sexual assault cases in this province continues.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the hon Premier did not even bother in his SOPA to address the school placement system crisis which continues to affect the people of this province, and that is so because he just do not care about Black people.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, we cannot allocated R2 billion to this Vote. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon member Lithakong. I see the hon member Jacobs.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Thank you, thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Greeting to all, I greet you all in the name of the Most High.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Department of the Premier noted that Jobs for Growth is the plan for the future to build the province and it looks to build an educated, healthy and caring society through this programme for the next five years, but, hon Premier, cutting 2 400 jobs for teachers in the education

sector for the 2025 academic year, that makes a mockery of your plan for an educated society. Or is the no fee schools or the 80 children in a classroom on the Cape Flats or the poor areas in the Western Cape not really included in your plan?

So we ask of you, hon Premier, to allocate the Budget to those areas as a matter of urgency.

Hon Premier, you state that the people's experience in the Western Cape Provincial Government must be improved indeed as a matter of urgency. The allocations of funds should be used to improve not only buildings where windows are broken, but clearly there is a need for services to be rolled out.

We are also noting that the hon Premier is very serious when it comes to AI and digital transformation in the Western Cape. We hope that the hon Premier takes into account when he is spending that billions on the digital rollouts.

Hon Premier, let your team investigate the service providers and prevent them from using illegal foreigners on all Broadband infrastructure rollouts across the province. Let the communities who pay for these services benefit from these services.

Now I just want to bring something over. Hon Deputy Speaker, you know, when we talk about land expropriation and we talk about that Bill, it will

affect the Aboriginal and the Coloureds and those people.

The Democratic Alliance was willing to make a bargain with the ANC to say, "Scrap that Bill that will benefit Coloureds, scrap it. Do not worry about the Coloureds. Then you can go up with the tax." [Interjections.]

They did not want it to give to the DA, they did not want it to get rid of the NHI bill and then the DA walked away and said, "No, we are not supporting this VAT raise," but they were going to support it if they got what they wanted. Sell-outs. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon member Jacobs. [Applause.] I see the hon member Van Minnen. [Interjections.]

Ms B M VAN MINNEN (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, the Department of the Premier achieved a 100% of its performance targets during the 23/24 budget year and its management of financial affairs is beyond reproach, receiving clean audit outcomes for the past 10 years from 2014/15 to 2023/24. It has further improved on its budget spend from 94% in 2015/16 to 98% in 23/24. That is a decade of clean audits and improved spending.

The performance environment of the Department is geared to strategically lead key service integration areas for collaboration and optimisation towards evidence-informed decision-making via its respected programmes.

This is further evident in the decisions being taken on the new allocations of budget for the coming financial year.

The total Budget for 2025/26 exceeds over R2 billion spent on bettering the lives, the lived experience and the connectivity available to the people of the Western Cape.

So let us consider e-Innovation, ICT and connectivity and what it means to the people living in the Western Cape, the lived experience of people in Philippi, in Khayelitsha and De Doorns.

The Centre for e-Innovations receives the largest portion of the departmental vote and it is no wonder that the recent general household survey by Stats SA states that at 88,1% the Western Cape has the highest internet access rate in the country, and the Western Cape Government is steadfast in a commitment to extend the advantages realised through access to high-speed connectivity, ensuring a brighter digital future for all.

In this we are reminded of the importance of the e-Centres we visited in our recent oversight visit to the Central Karoo. Instead of being limited by the koppies on the horizon users of these centres now have access to blue sky options that stretch way beyond the physical geography of towns such as Merweville, Beaufort West and Laingsburg, that allow them to pursue dreams that are simply not available to people trapped in small villages and towns in other parts of the country being mismanaged by the ANC.

Let me remind the House what residents are offered at e-Centres:

- Free use of computers.
- Free access to the internet.
- Free access to email, and let me add that is a necessity when we have seen the wholesale destruction collapse of the Post Office under years of ANC misrule.
- Free printing of up to 10 pages per person per day.
- Access to computer training and accreditation.
- Access to Government information and services.
- Access to jobs, business and research information.

And it is not by chance that the Western Cape has the lowest level of unemployment in the country.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

Ms B M VAN MINNEN (DA): In short what we see is that through improved ICT availability the Western Cape e-Centre Programme is opening doors to better education, to employment, business opportunities, fuelling socio-economic development in communities where it is most needed. Now that is lived experience.

In the upcoming financial year we will see the enhancement of the enabling

environment for innovation. This includes implementing the next iteration of the Western Cape Government Broadband Network, known as Broadband 2.0, and given the growth in ICT and AI it presents opportunities to improve service delivery efficiencies.

In recognition of these innovative efforts the Western Cape Government received the prestigious United Nations Public Service Innovation Award in July 2024. This accolade acknowledges the commitment of the provinces to improved residents' quality of life through effective use of digital technologies.

In contrast to this DA-run province let us look at the bigger South African context.

- Lower levels of connectivity.
- Higher levels of unemployment.
- The collapse of property prices in other provinces while the property prices in the Western Cape continue to rise, which is a sign of confidence in the future of the Western Cape, [Interjections.] something the ANC fundamentally fails to understand.

Hon Deputy Speaker, can you imagine what it must be like to see possibly your most important physical asset, your house, lose value because of a devastated urban environment in which it is located, and the disastrous management by the ANC Government, which undermines your personal

investment in the Republic?

Not only do they increase VAT, but they conspire to devalue what you already own, and how does the ANC respond to this growing tide of despondency in the rest of the country? By proving they are indeed the party of poverty, the party of unemployment and the party of misery by hiking VAT rates, which they celebrate like it is some kind of victory against the poor and in this war against the people struggling with the rising cost of living they are supported by their lieutenants and enablers, the PA, Al Jama-ah and Good.

The NCC could not decide what they wanted or on which fence they wish to sit, so they made up various excuses as to why a leader failed to vote either way, hardly a beacon of principle and value. Mind you, given his history running pet shops it is a bit akin to a dead parrot skit.

I assume that these parties understand that VAT is a regressive tax. It takes ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Van Minnen, if you can take your seat. I see the hon member Sayed.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Hon Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The hon member Van Minnen is casting aspersions on a member of the National Assembly, the hon member Fadiel Adams, by the way for having a pet shop. Having a pet shop is a dignified job to have, but he is not here to defend himself. He is not a member of this House. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much. I will listen to the Hansard and if need be revert back to the House.

However, in saying that I am not going to entertain the content because it is a political debate, but like I have indicated if need be I will revert back to the House. Hon member Van Minnen, please continue.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: It shows [Inaudible.]

Ms B M VAN MINNEN (DA): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I assume that these parties understand that VAT is a regressive tax. It takes a larger percentage of income from low-income individuals than from the middle classes.

Basic goods get more expensive and directly raises the cost of living for the poor and results in a lower disposable income which impacts on savings. Savings for emergencies, healthcare or education, and widens inequality, and the ironic twist in this war on the poor? The VAT hike effect takes effect on 1 May, Workers' Day.

What an insult to the working classes struggling to survive ANC's struggle economics. Hardly the outcome the hon member Sayed seems to be lauding.

However, at least in the Western Cape the DA-led Government strives to continually improve and assist the residents of our towns and villages with not just connectivity, infrastructure, education and healthcare, but also with initiatives that look to the future, such as the Energy Resilience Plan and the Water Resilience Plan.

Plans that look to how the Western Cape can continue to future-proof our residents when we know that the National ANC Government will continue to fail them and drive the nation towards the fiscal cliff.

In the Western Cape we see a growing population and Cape Town has now grown exponentially in the last 20 years to almost 4,8 million residents, and this indicates that not only are people voting for the ANC in the ballot boxes pushing the ANC below 40%, but also voting for the DA with their feet by moving to the Western Cape, and nowhere is this more visible than in the Leader from the Opposition in Cape Town, Councillor Majingo, literally walking across the ANC. [Interjections.] Maybe it is time to reintroduce the walkover period and we can call it the Majingo Motion. [Interjections.]

To return to the 10 years of clean audits and increased spending, the Department of the Premier, [Interjections.] it is important to read the report of the Standing Committee in the schedule to the Western Cape Appropriation

Bill.

Whereas the majority of the Standing Committee considered and supports Vote 1, the usual suspects, being the ANC, the PA and Good, decided, unlike their avid and celebratory support of increasing VAT, not to support it and that, hon Deputy Speaker, tells us everything we need to know about the trio of economic succubi who spend their political capital sucking the lifeblood out of the economy, alienating trade partners with appalling diplomatic picks, renaming roads in order to pull some kind of tasteless prank and self-congratulating each other on ignoring all the public participation which indicated overwhelming opposition to the VAT increase and pushing it through anyway.

In conclusion, effective departmental leadership coupled with a commitment to innovation and e-services, plays a pivotal role in driving organisational success. By fostering a culture of creativity and embracing technological advancements, departments can enhance service delivery, improve customer experiences and streamline operations.

Furthermore, sound financial and strategic management ensures that resources are allocated efficiently, supporting sustainable growth and long-term goals. Together these elements create a strong foundation for achieving operational excellence, enhancing competitiveness and adapting to the dynamic changes of the modern landscape.

As the DA we support Vote 1. I thank you. [Applause.] [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon member Van Minnen. I recognise the hon Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, and thank you – first of all I will go to the Chair of the Standing Committee. Thank you very much, the hon member Van Minnen.

I am still looking to find succubi. I have never heard that before. It is a new word for me today. So thank you very much for that, but it is an amazing word. It sounds incredible and it just is so explicit, but as Chair, thank you very much for the role you play and not only just in this Budget process, but just as the Chair of the Committee, making sure that the Committee is busy with their oversight role, the job that they are supposed to do, making sure that we have got the transparency we need and we are spending the money in the right places, going to see those things that maybe need questioning or need further interrogation, so that we can all get better at what we do in offering better and better services.

Also thank you for recognising the awards that the Department have received and the recognition, because I can assure you that every single one in this Department, every single individual that works here works incredibly hard at making the biggest difference that they can.

I also want to thank you for recognising the 100% of our targets achieved. You know, one always says to oneself and in my meetings with the team, then are we not needing to push those targets a bit more, do we need to stretch them in order to get better? And those are obviously the management discussions that we need to have, but also recognising 10 years' worth of hard work in getting those clean audits.

What do they mean with the 98% of our spend, getting that right? It was a question that was asked of me in the Standing Committee, but that means that, you know, the question was, "Why do not you get to a 100%?" but we are not going to waste money. We are not going to dump money at the end of the year. We are not going to have a whole lot of accruals. We put proper management in place to spend our money according to the plan and making sure we get it right down to the last few days of the year to get it to those kind of positions.

That is about good management and the CFO I want to thank you and the DG and the full team for managing. That is daily management of our accounts and how we spend our money.

I also want to say that, hon member Van Minnen, you also spoke about the e-Innovation and what that means, and it is something that this Department and this Government is very proud of. It is also an envy of many other provinces who come here to have a look at what we do and how we do it, and maybe I will say a bit more about that when I reply to the Leader of the Opposition,

but I noticed when you said the Western Cape has the highest access and I heard mumblings from actually the Leader of the Opposition.

So we are not talking about numbers of people because of course other provinces have got many more people than we, but let us talk about access and household access, and this is over and above the free access that we give in the hotspots or at our libraries or our schools, etcetera.

So if you look at households with internet connectivity and internet access. In Gauteng that is 16,7%, but in the Western Cape it is 25,8%, and so – it is true, it is not untrue, Leader of the Opposition, but thank you very much to the hon member Van Minnen.

I want to then say, I want to then say I am going to go back in reverse in reply, I think, so I will end with the Leader of the Opposition.

Can I say to the hon member Jacobs, thank you very much for your contribution. I know that you spoke about the teachers and you spoke about the 2 400 and obviously that was last year's number. You need to get with a programme in this year's number and where we are now in the Budget, and listen to the reports that the Minister of Education is giving on where we are, but it goes back to the start of this debate and when I said we have to make really tough choices.

Some other provinces do not make those choices and they get to the space

where they run out of money by the middle of the year. What is the point? I mean you cannot then deliver any services whatsoever.

So we make those tough choices. That number was the last year's number. Go and have a look at what the current number is, number one, but, number two, sorry wrong debate. That is another one that is coming a little bit later.

You spoke about the – let me get to the digital rollout. When you spoke about who pays.

So this programme in the digital rollout people do not pay. This is free access to the internet. No other province gives the data volume that we give, the free access number of free points. They do not pay for it. It is part of this rollout programme of the 1 600 free Wi-Fi hotspot units with gigabytes every single month of free access.

Then the point that you made about expropriation, and this is where it is about Economics 101. It is about this predicament we find ourselves in in South Africa where our unemployment rate is the highest in the world, where we do not get the investments, and when someone who buys a house in Mitchells Plain and actually has the advantage of the asset growing in value, unlike these assets losing value, and they own their home in Mitchells Plain and they have spent a lot of money on it, and they have expanded it, and they have invested in it for years, and they want to give it or leave it to their children. It is the biggest asset that they own, and imagine, well, first of all

imagine being the children of these families who own these homes, when they say, "Please do not leave your house to me because I do not want that. It is losing value. It costs massive rates and taxes every month and I get no services for it," but in this province, it is very different.

The expropriation without compensation is the risk. Expropriation exists already in the Constitution before that last piece of legislation. It exists, but the check and balance is that if you do not agree with Government expropriating your house in Mitchells Plain you can go to the court and you get a proper valuation in that process. They can expropriate and you know what? Let us use a current example, [Interjections.] let us use a current example of what the risk is.

So there was a farmer who comes from the Cape Flats, his name is Ivan Cloete. Ivan Cloete actually received an award from me many years ago as an outstanding entrepreneur; a pig farmer. He had 90 producing sows, but he was on a piece of City land, and what we did is we said let us get this guy onto, through the National Department of Land Reform let us get him onto a piece of property where he can actually grow his business. I mean he has got an entrepreneurial award, he is doing unbelievably well, and what happens is he gets onto his piece of land, a lot of fighting, a lot of time. He eventually gets a proper farm that produces a proper pig farm. The thing that is going to make him into a mega farmer because he has got all the wherewithal to do it.

Guess what happens? The National Minister decides one of the ANC cadres

actually deserves that farm and not Ivan Cloete. He gets chucked off the farm and one of the comrades get given the farm. [Interjections.] No compensation, no rights, no nothing.

Now if that happens to Ivan Cloete imagine it will happen to everybody, and that is the risk that we have to take away because that is the basics of a law society where you have got systems in place that recognise investments [Interjections.] that can be trusted, and that is the problem. The ANC have knee-jerk type policies that have failed for 30 years and they keep on with it. It is unbelievable.

To the hon member Lithakong, thank you very for your input. Also a lot of what you were talking about was the wrong debate, but you spoke about the waste of taxpayers' money on visiting Germany.

Please put a question in on the costs of the trip to Germany, but just for your information, my invite came via the Bavarian Government and the Hanns Seidel Foundation and they paid for the costs.

So it was not a waste of taxpayers' money and in actual fact it is exactly the opposite, because of what they give us and what they invest here when it comes to things like the safety of our citizens and really working hard on chasing safety.

Let us just have a look at the difference in Delft that Bavaria House has made

in that investment in Delft, and it goes on and on and on, and of course then you spoke about housing, sorry, wrong debate. You spoke about spatial development, sorry, wrong vote. You spoke about schools, sorry, wrong Vote.

We need to actually try and stick to the Votes that we are dealing with, and thank you very much for the rest of your inputs.

Can I then move on, hon Deputy Speaker, to the hon member Stephens.

Quite frankly it is totally incorrect. I mean you were here trying to make excuses for, you were trying to make excuses for your hon leader ...[Interjections.]

[Playing audio file] [1:17:4]

The PREMIER: Gayton McKenzie, yes, VAT increase. [Interjections.] Do not come here with your stories about in actual fact he was fighting for this and that. Quite frankly he voted to charge our citizens more money every single month. [Interjections.] They have got to make those choices between bread and electricity because they are paying for more VAT. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Premier. Yes?

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Hon Deputy Speaker, is it allowed in

terms of the Rules for a speaker to play a recording? [Interjections.] He is supposed to be speaking not playing recordings. [Interjections.] We are going to also start playing recordings from now onwards. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, order! Order! [Interjections.] Order! There is no explicit Rule in that regard. [Interjections.] There is no explicit Rule in that regard. [Interjections.]

Hon Premier, I will encourage you to continue using your voice and not audio at this particular junction, but also can you please speak through the Chair? [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes! [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. [Interjections.] I apologise and in actual fact I will withdraw that recording. [Interjections.] I was going to play it again, but I withdraw the recording, [Interjections.] but, hon member Stephens, your leader definitely did vote for more tax to our citizens. That is undeniable.

Then I want to get to the Leader of the Opposition. It is interesting the quote that you made right up front and there was a part of that quote that says "earn trust", and of course the ANC two days ago lost all trust with their vote actually, [Interjections.] their vote actually went to charge the citizens [Interjections.] more tax. I mean they lost all trust.

So it was the wrong quote to make right here and of course again, you know, he just keeps on and on. It is like the Sixth Administration 2.0 in every single thing that the ANC does, and it is exactly what they were doing in that budget at national level.

I also want to say that he spoke about lifting millions out of poverty and he spoke about keeping competitive, and I thought, wow, what millions are lifted out of poverty? In actual fact people are poorer today than they were 10 years ago. It is not lifting people out of poverty. People are getting poorer in this country, unemployment is getting worse, youth unemployment the worst in the world.

So it is exactly the opposite to what the hon member was talking about. He said keeping competitive. Jeepers, we are not competitive. The competitiveness of Cape Town Port. Let us talk about that. The worst in the world that gets measured. I mean unbelievable under his party's watch. Not competitive at all and that is exactly what we were talking about when we said we need to make sure that we do not charge VAT to our citizens, we find those alternatives and that is what the whole debate has been about.

Let us find the alternatives. Let us put the cuts on the table. Look at those documents that the DA put on the table at national level on where we will find the money. Lots of thought went into those documents on where you could find that money and more so that we could become more competitive,

so that we could make sure that we lift people out of poverty, but no, his party decided to rather charge the citizens more VAT. Unacceptable.

Then he speaks about the R1.7 billion set aside for unforeseen circumstances. Let me just refer back to this: helicopters. When there is a fire [Interjections.] or there are floods in other provinces, guess what? It is this province that sends helicopters and 4X4s and rescue personnel to go and help them. [Interjections.]

You know, Deputy Speaker, I remember a picture. It is vivid in my mind. There are these devastating floods in KZN, horrendous. Thousands and thousands of our citizens suffering because of these floods, and we sent the next day helicopters, 4X4s and disaster people, and it was interesting because when the Premier of that province was addressing the media he stood there addressing the media and right next to him advising him then on the update on what was happening was the very Colin Deiner, which we sent from this province, because they had no response. How can you have a response when there is no helicopter that can fly?

You know, once last year we then said there is a major fire and we now need extra resources from the Presidency. We got hold of the Presidency and said this helicopter must now come from Pretoria to come and help our residents because we are going to lose homes, we are going to lose people's ability and probably people are going to die. They said, no, it is on standby for the President. We then said we are going to the press with this and only then did

they say, "Okay, we will release that helicopter, that one helicopter." It is unacceptable.

So the R1.7 billion is for floods or fires or unforeseen circumstances. That is what this province does exceptionally well [Interjections.] and every other province is super jealous of this province and our ability to respond. [Interjections.]

Let us talk about the last floods and how quickly hon Minister Simmers and the DRI team stepped in and replaced those bridges, fix the problem, repair the roads, get the things back up and running.

You know that the President went to Johannesburg to talk about the readiness for the G20 and in the middle of Johannesburg, since 8 September 2023, [Interjections.] 8 September 2023, you will never forget those visuals with that explosion of the road, taxis flying in the air. †Dis nog nie reg nie. [It is still not right.] Still not repaired.

So of course that is why we have to have unforeseen. We have got climate change steering us down a barrel at the moment. We have to be responsible as a government and what he suggested here today would be totally unacceptable. Totally.

Then I also want to say that other regions are also seriously jealous of how we and what we do, and he spoke about innovation and what we do about

innovation and that is one other area, other than our ability to respond to disasters, it is our innovation that comes out of this Government. It blows my mind every single day.

If I think back to what we did during the pandemic, six weeks building the biggest field hospital on the African continent, the delivery of meds to our citizens, but I think about the Rapid School Build and that innovation that comes out of what we managed then. It is unbelievable.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Premier, are you able to take your seat?

†Me B N STOFFEL (ANC): Baie dankie, agb Adjunkspeaker. Agb Adjunkspeaker, kan die agb Premier miskien 'n vraag beantwoord? [Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, can the Premier perhaps please answer a question?]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you willing to take a question?

The PREMIER: [Inaudible 1:20:50]

†Me B N STOFFEL (ANC): Baie dankie vir dit. Agb Premier, is u bewus soos u praat nou, in Cederberg brand dit, en ek het geen helikopter gesien daarna toe gaan nie. [Tussenwerpsels.]

[Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Thank you for that. Hon Premier, are you aware that as you are speaking now, there's a fire in Cederberg, and I have seen no

helicopter going out there.] [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: Thank you very much for that question. Yes, the answer is yes, †en ons is op dit [and we are on it.] [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Hon members, the hon Premier took the question. [Interjections.] He answered the question. You may proceed. Order! We are wrapping up Vote 1. [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: Thank you very much. You know, I was speaking about innovation and whether it is robotics in our hospital or the Rapid School Build [Interjections.] or the path lab or our CSI, whether [Interjections.] it is our AI adoption and how you are seeing it being adopted across our departments.

Other provinces and other departments across the country are super jealous, and you know why I know that? It is you know when we have assessments of our senior officials we sometimes ask other officials to come and assess them from other provinces, and I was busy in an assessment and one of the Director-Generals from another province said, "You know, when we come to the Western Cape and we see you in your 'For you' shirts and we see the innovation coming out and we see how you get things done and how Ministers and their Heads of Department work together and how you administrate, we get so jealous because we are not able to do that in our province," and I am very proud of that and we work really hard at that and,

you know, so we have got to make sure that we keep on – oh, I have got a whole lot of other stuff I was going to talk to the Leader of the Opposition about in his debate, but perhaps then, [Interjections.] hon Deputy Speaker, I will ...[intervenes]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members! [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: Perhaps then I will just then finish off. [Interjections.] That – and I know that I am not allowed to say that he was lying, but I will say that the untruth about youth policy in his debate, the youth policy comes from 2013. You will see the youth policy in action in our PSP, you will see it in our G4J, you will see it in every single one of our departments. [Interjections.]

So, please, he must not come here with untruths in a debate. [Interjections.] If he feels it is not effective he must come up with substance. He cannot come here and then run away. It is just unacceptable, and so with that, hon Deputy Speaker, can I thank all of those who took part in this debate.

We will continue to make sure that we have effective government, responsible government, responsible government that builds trust with its citizens. We will focus on making sure everything we do grows our economy, reduces poverty, makes more and more opportunities for our citizens.

Like all the data shows us, we will keep on doing it not only for this province, but for this great country, South Africa, because we have got to show that there is an alternative to voting for VAT increases and celebrating that fact. There is an alternative and it is right here in this very province, the Western Cape. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Premier. Hon members, that concludes Debate 1, one of eight for the day. †Een van agt vir die dag. [One of eight for the day.] I thank the CFO for your attendance here as well.

We will proceed. Before we proceed I can check with the hon Minister, do you have guests? So we will wait for two minutes for the guests of the hon Premier to vacate and those in the Department with Minister Meyer to take up their seats.

I will allow the Secretary to read the Second Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 12: Economic Development and Tourism – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2-2025].

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Welcome to the Department for your attendance together with the HOD. I now recognise hon Minister Meyer.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, and to our hon Premier, my

Cabinet colleagues, members of the House, hon Leaders of the Official Opposition and leaders of other political parties present here today, but also to our members of this House who are on the online platform, as well as all the Government officials watching or listening on the social media platforms.

Hon Deputy Speaker, today I rise to table Vote 12 of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism Budget of R515 million for the 2025/2026 financial year.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Premier outlined his Government's vision during the SOPA and called on his Government and administration to step up.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the hon Premier promised to build a government that people could trust because the people trust his Government. He received an overwhelming electoral mandate on 29 May 2024. Hon Deputy Speaker, 2025 started rather unusual. Our context is thus business unusual.

Stepping up is a call for action within a fast changing global economic environment, which the hon Premier has outlined in his speech just a few minutes ago.

The global political economy has rapidly changed since the beginning of 2025. Hon members, before I signed the Wesgro five year strategic plan for 2026 to 2030, I carefully read and analysed the situational analysis and the global outlook. The geopolitical landscape changed in Washington on 20

January 2025.

In his first 15 days in office in Washington, President Trump signed 53 executive orders and just yesterday his administration announced US trade tariffs that will have far-reaching consequences for economies around the globe. We have seen the trade tariffs imposed by the US administration and punitive measures against South Africa. Funding and aid were cut from South Africa.

Hon members will know in this House we believe do not waste a good crisis, sir.

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: South Africa and the Western Cape have now a golden opportunity to conduct complex and an honest analysis of our current state of the nation and as a province.

Every crisis presents an opportunity, just like we had during COVID-19. We must and will come out stronger because of the resilience of our people, our business, our farmers and our institutions.

South Africa has great opportunities, but we must consider these hard facts to create breakout economic growth. The World Bank in its report:

"Unlocking South Africa's potential, leverage trade for inclusive growth and resilience."

Reflects on the findings about South Africa's trade and competitiveness since 2010, and they are:

- South Africa's export market declined and diversification has stalled.
- South Africa's exports on the African continent have expanded faster than any other regions, but there remain constrained tariffs and logistical barriers, specifically in the relations to SACU.
- A few firms have dominated the exports.
- Increased transport and logistical costs have penalised the competitiveness of South Africa's exports.

In the next speech I will detail out some of these things, but there are barriers to economic growth and this is an apex priority of this Government to grow the economy and create jobs, but there are barriers to economic growth, namely investment barriers, export barriers, economic growth barriers, job creation barriers, trade barriers.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM (CONTINUED): All these barriers are on the door of the ANC National Government that caused these barriers. But we are not going to sit here and cry. Hon Deputy Speaker, let me now turn to how we will turn these

things around in the field of trade.

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: New trade agreements present opportunities for trade and diversification. Last week, I met with the agricultural sector and many left for India last weekend to look for new markets, improving trade facilitation and addressing non-tariff barriers. Policy reforms and investment are needed to keep companies exporting. The hon Premier has alluded to this. Looking ahead requires structural reform. For South Africa to grow, we need a structural reform of the economy.

The hon Premier has alluded to this. No new taxes, including VAT and company tax because that is a regressive tax. It makes people poorer and when you say one of your priorities of the GNU is to reduce poverty, it follows naturally that you will not increase VAT. And yet, the ANC celebrates the increase of VAT and therefore by implication, celebrates the increase of poverty. [Interjections.]

We believe in creating pro-business and growth measures, a comprehensive spending review to reprioritise in the region of R60 billion, increase revenue without raising taxes, essential services and protecting the most vulnerable. By the way, for those people who thought the Budget was approved yesterday in the National Parliament, simply do not understand the fiscal and economic

budget process. That was not the Budget that was approved, that was the Fiscal Framework because Ministers must still go to Parliament to defend their budget ...[Interjections.] just like me now defending my budget. So, you are wrong ...[Interjections.] when you say the Budget was approved. It was the Fiscal Framework, hon member, it was not the Budget. [Interjections.] So, I hope people understand because you have been elected ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members! ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: You are the only person who understands.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon member. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: It is very difficult to debate with people when the level of understanding is not at a level where it should be in this House.

An HON MEMBER: Yes, correct!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: But I will, nevertheless, do my best. [Interjections.] Some barriers can be unlocked, hon member ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: ...of Education.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, are you able to take your seat.
[Interjections.] Order, hon members!

An HON MEMBER: That is the only party that ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I see the hon Deputy Chief Whip.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, I rise on Rule 39. The loud conversation does make it difficult to follow the speaker. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.
[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, the running commentary is drowning out the speaker. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: ...when they do the same.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, I will also request that the mic on your left hand side, if you are able to.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND

TOURISM: Yes, I can.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can kindly speak through the Chair.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND

TOURISM: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I think I am very glad for this opportunity because this message must reach the Union Buildings. Thank you for amplifying it. [Laughter.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, we can unlock these barriers. All of us together because there are policies and regulatory uncertainties which have inconsistent policy and direction. For example, South Africa is committed to the green deal, green energy, just energy transition and during the Mining Indaba, Minister Gwede Mantasha said, ‘no, I carry on with fossil fuel.’ That uncertainty, that inconsistency can be addressed.

What we need is to establish a policy stability and review commission to ensure consistency. One of the principles of good governance and good business is predictability. That is why the statement that you make in this House can affect business. You must make sure that predictability is in line with the principles of the Constitution.

So, this is important that we also have regulatory impact assessments for every piece of legislation. Sir, we cannot draft legislation and then the businesses suffer because of laws that we have passed. That problem can be

solved through a regulatory impact assessment.

In terms of the infrastructure and energy security, power outages, the hon Premier established an Energy and a Water Council to deal with that, encouraging also a second phase of reforms to commence this year with the enabling of Eskom, Transnet and other State-Owned Entities.

I am happy to report to this House that earlier this year, the hon Premier, myself, the hon Mayor of the City of Cape Town, and the hon member the Minister of Mobility and the MMC for Transport in the City of Cape Town, have met with Minister Barbara Creecy and her Deputy Minister, and I think we have found each other around a number of these particular matters.
...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Dankie ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: There is an open conversation. [Interjections.] You can logically negotiate with Barbara Creecy. There is a willingness to help: not the ANC, to help South Africa. We went into that meeting not to help the DA, but to help South Africa. We found each other. I do not want the Western Cape to succeed, I want South Africa to succeed ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: ...and that meeting was in that spirit. [Interjections.] Also, hon Deputy Speaker ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: We try to keep him in the GNU.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon Deputy Speaker, the hon Premier has alluded to this. The recently published request for information to develop an enabling environment for private sector participation and enhanced investments in the country's rail and port infrastructure and operation, is a significant milestone and will further boost the economy. Nobody is happier than myself and the hon Minister of Mobility over there.

The impending launch of the Electronic Travel Authorisation system to enable a secure digital visa application process which will allow rapid turnaround times for tourist visas, using Artificial Intelligence and automation. This is something all of us must be investing in: Artificial Intelligence. It is coming at a speed!

Closer to home, we have also decided to step up regarding the Growth for Jobs strategy. My HOD, Ms Jo-Ann Johnston, told me, 'hon Minister, this is your Bible.' I told her I am a Christian, I have a Bible, but she said, 'this is next to your Bible.' So, this is the Growth for Jobs strategy next to my Bible.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as the hon Premier outlined during his State of the Province Address in Beaufort West, in the Karoo, we have an Apex Priority: Growth for Jobs. As the hon Minister of Finance, Deidré Baartman, amplified the message of the Apex Priority during her Budget Speech, by framing her Budget Speech:

‘Helping Business grow and create Jobs: equipping you to get those jobs.’

Growth for Jobs is a central focus of this Budget. At the core of this Budget, it is about driving investment, driving exports, investing in infrastructure, investing in water, and making sure that there is energy security. This is critical, but also the investment infrastructure in this Government, as we have heard from the hon Minister, is R32 billion over the next three years in terms of the MTEF.

But critically, the hon Premier has spoken about it in his Budget Vote 1: the importance of information and technology. The hon Minister will later speak in his Budget Vote on the importance of attracting the right skills to kickstart the economy.

So, South Africa’s economy has been at a zero, a low growth for the last 15 years. All of us have become poorer over the last 15 years. If you look at the per capita income, everyone in this House became poorer over the last 15 years. Due to this low growth trajectory, unemployment has increased with

tragic consequences for people at the household level. Creating inclusive growth is so important that we can no longer reduce this debate to political and cheap ideological rhetoric.

†Die land, agb Adjunkspeaker, kan dit eenvoudig nie meer bekostig nie. Wat ons nou nodig het is pragmatisme. As so 'n inklusiewe ekonomiese groei want mense kry swaar en hulle wil werklik uit armoede uitkom. Kom ons kyk na die ekonomiese potensiaal van Suid-Afrika. Ons kort 'n nuwe visionêre benadering om ekonomiese groei te ontgin. Ek wil vandag prakties wees, agb Adjunkspeaker, want ons het ook die vraag ontleed hier in die Wes-Kaap deur middel van navorsing en data-generering, maar ook deur die stories van mense, na hulle te luister.

[The country, hon Deputy Speaker, can simply not afford it any longer. What we now need is pragmatism. As such an inclusive economic growth because people suffer and really want to get out of poverty. Let us look at the economic potential of South Africa. We need a new visionary approach to explore economic growth. I want to be practical hon Deputy Speaker, because we have also analysed the issue here in the Western Cape through research and data generation, but also through the stories of people, listening to them.]

†Ons sien dat metropolitaanse stede en subnasionale regerings regoor die wêreld nou meer en meer die groeisentrum van die wêreld word. En agb Adjunkspeaker, toe die agb Premier bewys,

[We see that metropolitan cities and subnational governments all over the world are becoming more and more the growth centres council of the world. And hon Deputy Speaker, when the hon Premier referred,] when he referred to the Regional Leader Summit, it is because now the growth around the world happens at metropolitan cities as well as at subnational governments. That is why around the world in metropolitan cities, the number one thing that all Mayors must speak about all over the world, is about jobs, jobs, jobs. We are doing that exactly here.

But what is this job revolution? The job revolution, hon Deputy Speaker, is to create a R1 trillion economy, a 5% GDP and 600 000 new jobs. Now, I know the hon member questioned me the other day and he said, ‘600 000 jobs? How is it possible?’ Let me take you there.

In the Second Quarter of 2025, hon Deputy Speaker, we reported the lowest unemployment figures in the country at 19,6 below 20. It is still high. The rest of the world is much lower. So, look at the rest of the country at the lowest unemployment figures. We created 62 000 new jobs. [Interjections.] We are stepping up. I can give you the analysis and you will be very surprised ...[Interjections.]. You should look at the analysis. You ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, hon Minister. Speak through the Chair. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: No! Not one of them!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please speak to the Chair. Please proceed.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon member, hon Deputy Speaker, sorry. South Africa has also exported \$14 billion of agricultural products in 2024. Agriculture is stepping up and I will speak more about that in the House. I see two members of Agri Western Cape in the House, and I am very pleased that they are here.

Over the 2025 MTEF, the Western Cape has allocated, in this booklet, please read it ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Show us.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Please read, R43,7 billion for the Growth for Jobs strategy. A budget is a policy, and we are clear on what the policy of this Government is: Growth for Jobs. We are stepping up to fund the Western Cape's economic growth and jobs agenda. We plan to attract an investment of R320 billion by 2030 and R450 billion by 2035. There is an investment potential, and the hon Premier will host a Premier Investment Summit later this year on the 5th and the 6th. I am so happy.

I was sitting next to the hon Minister of Infrastructure. He showed me bankable projects for infrastructure ready for the Investment Summit, but not only of this Government, also of municipalities. Anybody who is listening now around the world, on YouTube: if you have a bankable product, if you want to invest in the Western Cape, we are open for business. We are stepping up. The Investment Summit will take place on 5 and 6 November this year in Cape Town.

An HON MEMBER: We step up ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: We step up to unlock the investment potential. Our plan is to triple our tourism and exports. In 2024, foreign overnight arrivals at Cape Town International Airport surpassed 2019 figures by 8,9%, primarily driven by a 57,2% increase in visitors from the US. In 2024, the United Kingdom contributed to the larger share of tourist by 16,4%. What does that mean in practical terms, hon Stoffels?

The most tourists that come from around the world to Cape Town are based in the United Kingdom. Every year, 400 000 tourists come from there and this is the tourism revolution that we are starting here in the Western Cape.

Hon members, I am also now targeting municipalities as the source and growth of economic growth and municipalities. [Interjections.] Therefore, thank you also to hon member Constable and many of you that pressed us to

focus more strongly on municipalities, I acknowledge the work that you have done and the fact that you hammer on me. For that, we now will have a Municipal Economic and Tourism summit on 8 and 10 July. We are stepping up with municipalities in the Western Cape.

I want to give this House an assurance. No plans will be made. I am interested in running programmes and projects and developing the tourism potential of your town. Not another strategy, not another document, not another commission. This is not the National Parliament where there is a commission and a review and a document and a task team. It is not going to happen here. We are going to see real things happening.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, what is the outlook for the financial year? Hon Deputy Speaker, in line with the challenge of the hon Premier, the Department of Economic Development will also ramp up our programmes and projects to grow the economy. We have already 155 projects listed on our dashboard to grow the economy.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in the year ahead, the Department will work towards improving and positioning the Western Cape as an investment destination. We will expand our Western Cape investment pipeline. You have heard what the hon Premier said in the Vote 1 Budget Speech. In November, we are targeting and that is the minimum, not the maximum, R1 billion investment to come here to unlock opportunities. So, we are not going to say here that things are happening in the National Parliament. We are not going to cry.

We are going to make plans and get things done.

Besides the summit, the catalytic infrastructure priority area will be the key focus of the 2025/2026 financial year to pilot a new approach to catalytic economic infrastructure projects and to develop a pipeline of opportunities. Hon Deputy Speaker, hon members of this House will know that I chair a Cabinet Committee on the Growth for Jobs. Part of my oversight responsibility is to look at the infrastructure investment into economy to Growth for jobs. Part of my job is to do oversight, not only over the investment, but also over the repairs and maintenance.

I am super proud of the work of my colleagues because they have tabled at our last Cabinet Committee, a mega maintenance project. Why is this important? A mega maintenance project, because the hon Premier spoke now about a road that exploded in Johannesburg and is not yet fixed. That is not going to happen under my watch. It is not going to happen under the watch of this Government. It is not going to happen under the watch of this hon Premier because we have a mega maintenance programme.

Soon, I will be visiting Cape Town International Airport to make sure that everything is ready for the B20 when they arrive later this year. So, we also believe in stimulating market access. The Province's ability to export is heavily dependent on the logistics systems. There has been enormous pressure on Transnet, but they have come to the party. We also need to significantly improve the efficiencies at the Port, but there are hon members

here in this House and I want to thank them.

Mr Glen Steyn, if you can please stand up. There is one man who helped us to develop a Port Management Information System. He can track things now at the harbour. ...[Applause.] Fantastic work that is being done! I want to thank you, Mr Glen, because the system that he has developed is satellite connected. He can tell you the ship is coming, or the ship is delayed. The truck is coming, or the truck is delayed. That whole value system: the cranes or there or the wind is blowing. Everything is now on a digital platform, and we had a soft launch. I went with him, and I cannot thank you enough, Mr Glen Steyn. I think you deserve a round of applause. ...[Applause.]

Also, to this end with our support, we look forward to launching a transport representative organisation as part of the interventions to reduce truck turnaround time at the Port. I want to welcome one of such strategic partners here today in the audience, Mr Terry Gale. He is the Chairperson of the Western Cape Exporters Forum to the House. Can you please stand. Thank you, Mr Terry. ...[Applause.]

My predecessor, the hon Minister of Health and my other predecessor, the hon Minister of Education, instituted a regular port quarterly engagement. I continue with it and Mr Terry is at all these meetings. If there are things wrong at the harbour, he is going to talk about it. But if things go wrong, he whispers in my ear, ‘hon Minister, we had the best year at the Port of Cape

Town.’ I want to thank you and your partners for the work, but more importantly, I want to thank you that when things do not go right, that you have the frankness and the openness to tell us, † ‘Agb Minister, dinge lyk nie lekker nie.’ [Hon Minister, things do not look well.] I appreciate it. This Government appreciates honesty.

The Department will focus on export competitiveness and productivity related initiatives. Wesgro will continue to focus on accessing new export markets and investing in the Cape Trade Portal as a key digital platform for exporters and buyers.

For the third consecutive year, Wesgro’s *Made in the Cape* hosted buyers’ event has provided a valuable platform to connecting Western Cape exporters with international buyers. One such client is Mr Mark Benjamin from Benjamin Commodities. He is unfortunately not in the House today, but he has described his engagements as ‘a rounding success’, products made in the Cape. A portal connecting buyers and sellers.

To focus on the export programme, there is an awareness of the Western Cape brand and capabilities in priority markets. Enhanced competitiveness improves market access, lowers the barriers of trade, and establishes the Western Cape as a regional hub for services. At a reflection of the Western Cape interest international trade policies, a more efficient and cost-effective sustainable infrastructure.

Recently, I met with the ATF, the Agricultural Trade Forum. It is very important to negotiate and discuss with them. But this Department also has an export competitiveness of this programme. We have benefitted companies like Rickard Air Diffusion, which received a grant from my Department in its diffuser upgrade. The company's sales have grown an incredible 114% as a result of that small investment and they have launched new products at exhibitions in Australia, Singapore and India. And India is important. It has 1,4 billion people. We are targeting the markets towards the East. Also, we had visits, hon Deputy Speaker, we had marketing visits to Thailand by Wesgro and to South Korea.

One other recipient of our support is ONEOFEACH Pty (Ltd), a Cape Town fashion brand that through the support of DEDAT, has expanded its company product range and production capabilities. The brand is known for using ethnic prints, beading and embroidery. Tamburai Chirume of ONEOFEACH limited. Is that person in the House today? Please stand. ...[Applause.] Absolutely fantastic! ...[Applause.] There is a brand, there is a product, there is a client and there is a market. Thank you and welcome to the House.

A third beneficiary of the Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme is Advanced-FibreForm production which produced 6,5 metre and 8,5 metre carbon fibre and fibreglass boats for clients to Europe and North America. Through the support, hon Deputy Speaker, of this Government and the Competitiveness programme, it has now produced composite boats for export.

John Oehley, the CEO of Advanced-FibreForm: is that person today in the House? Sir, thank you for your investment. ...[Applause.] I am super proud of what you are doing because the boat building industry is a significant industry. And when I speak about Growth for Jobs, when I speak about partnership and collaboration, I am speaking about you, sir, in this House. The very august House here in the Western Cape. I want to thank you, your staff, your company and your workers for the great work you are doing. ...[Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Hon Deputy Speaker, earlier this year I paid a visit to another company in Woodstock, with the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Andrew Whitfield. We visited a boat company that has manufactured 212 boats for export last year. Hon Deputy Speaker, you will be happy to note that 124 of those 212 were destined for the United States of America.

This place is the place for boat building, but the due politics has now significantly changed, and we must support our industry and our industry partners to navigate through this complexity, as the hon Premier has indicated earlier. The third very important indicator for us is to step up and to triple our exports.

But hon Deputy Speaker, let me now turn to tourism. The Department will continue to pursue growth strategies to recover and grow tourism arrivals and

spend. Strategies that will include stimulating investment in tourism infrastructure. I am so happy, hon Deputy Speaker, in last year's Budget I noticed an increase in their spending of the infrastructure in CapeNature Tourism infrastructure. But we also want to see regulatory constraints relating to visas and bilateral air transport agreements, encouraging service excellence and promoting tourism safety. I am so happy that the Safety Tourism Ambassadors, also by Chrysalis, are helping us in this: promoting career and enterprise opportunities for priority groups and growing the Western Cape's share in new markets.

Two recent beneficiaries of the fund include Elgin Valley Trails. The Elgin Valley Trails located in the Elgin Valley in the Overberg, offer a premium mountain biking experience, spanning an impressive 120 kilometres. These trails cater to all skill levels from beginners to advanced, ...[Laughter.] and I am going to join the beginners on this journey.

With the support of the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism, an abandoned historic railway bridge has been redeveloped, allowing for a more scenic and safer route along the railway line and across the Palmiet River in the Overberg region.

Pieter Silberbauer from the company. Is Pieter Silberbauer around? Not here. Well, Mr Pieter Silberbauer, ...[Applause.] I want to thank you because whenever I am in the company of the Mayor of Overberg, this is what he tells me of the great valley of the Overberg. But when I told him the Karoo lamb

and the Karoo has the best lamb, he always reminds me of the Overberg lamb. But thank you for the work that you are doing in terms of that valley because we believe not only in agriculture and not only in tourism, but what you are bringing together: agri-tourism. Thank you and congratulations. ...[Applause.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, Winelands Guide is a family-run tour operator based in Stellenbosch. It specialised in personalised tours of the Cape Winelands and surroundings. With knowledgeable, fully accredited local guides, tourists are assured a memorable experience. With the support of this fund, the business has been able to expand its fleet.

Hon Deputy Speaker, Lilly Loompa. I hope she is in the House. Lilly Loompa who sells Upcycled Hip Homeware, participated in the Department's SMME Accelerator Support Programme. This programme is in partnership with the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, and I want to thank my predecessors and also the hon Premier who have met with the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. There is also a Johannesburg Stock Exchange office in Claremont, and I also want to thank the hon Premier for engaging with them. It is because of that fund that we can support people like her in terms of readiness training and individual company.

Kim Webster, the growth manager of Lilly Loompa, joins us today and we are very thankful. Thank you for joining us in this specific House today. We salute you. We thank you for your commitment to grow jobs and the

economy of the Western Cape. ...[Applause.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, we all hear about the shortage of funds in this Government and therefore, we will conduct a feasibility study to determine a potential for a tourism tax. Not VAT, tourism tax for the Western Cape to ringfence, to invest in destination marketing priorities and generate revenue for the priority focus areas.

I can see Ilse Van Schalkwyk smiling all the way to the bank and I can see the hon Minister of Finance, smiling all the way to the bank because what this will be, it will be an additional tax paid by tourists coming in. This is an international practice, international norm and we will then collect that tax, ringfence that tax and reinvest in the tax. I will be very cross if the hon Minister grabs that tax and puts it in the Provincial Revenue Fund. But she is smiling, which means I am in good company. ...[Laughter.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are stepping up. The enabling environment for growth requires resilience, technology and innovation, research and development. There are huge economic benefits. The forthcoming year is an exciting year for technology and innovation, and the team is sitting here: Mr Tim and his team. Technology innovation is one of the priority focus areas. Many hon members also spoke here about the importance of Artificial Intelligence.

Now, this unit's responsibility is now including advancing technology and

innovation to stimulate regional economic growth, aiming to position the Western Cape as Africa's premier technology and innovation hub. I am very happy that this team is stepping up. Through these concerted efforts, we are confident that the Western Cape will emerge as a leader in technology and innovation, driving economic growth and improving the quality of life of all citizens.

Hon Deputy Speaker, resource resilience. I am so particularly happy that we see Phase 2 of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms to support our export industries. As you know, hon Deputy Speaker, in terms of the Just Energy transition, there will be certain criteria and conditions in terms of export and therefore, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms is important to get your products into the markets. There are targets and timeframes.

Green hydrogen, hon Deputy Speaker, is being implemented focusing on developing the Green Hydrogen Master Plan. About two weeks ago, I met the Governor of the Erongo Province in Walvis Bay. So, this master plan will also benefit the Eastern Cape, the Western Cape, the Northern Cape and Namibia in terms of the geography of the Green Hydrogen Master Plan. We are stepping up.

Cape Town Air Access powered by Wesgro is a public-private partnership that includes the Western Cape, the City of Cape Town, the South African Tourism, ABSA, Cape Town Tourism brand as the Waterfront, and DHL. There are a number of new significant achievements in the last 18 months. I

think the hon members of this House will know and members in the gallery, and our foreign diplomats that I see here in the gallery, there was one new airline, Norse Atlantic Airways, from London, Gatwick.

Additional routes by FlySafair to Windhoek; Airlink to Gaborone, AirBotswana to Maun, FlySafair Lanseria to George. One new destination, Kasane, Botswana operated by AirBotswana. There was a 6% growth in domestic passenger numbers at Cape Town International Airport in 2024, taken from 2023. There is a 10% growth in international passengers at Cape Town International Airport with a new record. The Western Cape air cargo volumes recorded a 27% growth in 2024.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in this week, I met the Consul-General of Angola. She will be coming. Where is she? Ah, sorry, Consul-General. I am very happy that you are here in this House because I met you this past week at Elsenburg, in my office in Cape Town, in Stellenbosch. It is the hon Elsa Caposso Vicente. She is present in the House. She told me, hon Deputy Speaker, that in terms of the South African Western Cape Bilateral Tourism Forum which will take place next week, she gave me the exciting news that there will be a new flight between Angola and Cape Town later this year, in the middle of the year. I will be at the airport. ...[Applause.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, the hon Consul-General of Angola also told me that there are currently nine flights per week into Cape Town. That is how seriously we are taking this economic partnership.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in terms of entrepreneurship, we believe in entrepreneurship promotion, entrepreneurship focused activities in education, entrepreneurship effective support for SMME growth, but also the development of SMME strategies and township and rural informal strategy and implemented plans for the Western Cape will outline the Department's new approach. Entrepreneurship development through market access and funding.

Hon Deputy Speaker, a Township Action Plan has recently been introduced through the Growth for Jobs. This initiative will pilot a precinct development approach, similar to the one in the City of Cape Town. We have selected Mossel Bay as being identified as the initial site for this Township Action Plan. There was a multi stakeholder forum including multiple departments, whole of society and whole of government approach, and there will be many activities including integrated infrastructure, informal trading, economic growth activities and from the Department's side, we have almost put about R450 000 immediately into this project. Together with Mossel Bay Municipality, we are stepping up.

The Department will also continue scaling its experiential learning programmes which include the following: on the job training, accredited skills programmes, support learner development, full time employment of at least 80% of the learners who complete the Experiential Learning. This Government, hon Deputy Speaker, is stepping up.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I am ready to conclude. I am very proud of the work that the Red Tape Reduction Unit is doing because many businesses still continue to face some red tape or the other. I want to thank the team that work in the Red Tape Reduction Unit for the work that they are doing.

Earlier this year, Shonaquip, a mobility solutions provider, faced financial strain due to delayed payments and sought assistance of the Red Tape Reduction Unit. The Red Tape Reduction Unit recovered nearly R2 million in money owed to Shonaquip and in the process, secured the company's future, financial ability and saved jobs.

Shona McDonald, the founder and executive director of Shonaquip joins us today in the House. ...[Applause.] So, thank you for making use of the Red Tape Reduction Unit and if you know of any friends, any other businesses that have similar problems or other problems, please refer them to the Red Tape Reduction Unit so that they can also help more members. Any member of the international community in the diplomats and my friends on top there, if anyone of you have problems with the business and a startup.

Ms Tanja Werheit, the C-G from Germany. Tanja, I also see you. My friends from the other embassies that are up here. If you have any problems, please refer it to us because the Red Tape Reduction Unit is from red tape, as the hon Premier calls it, to the red carpet.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I conclude. The hon Premier has referred to economic

diplomacy. In the world where things are changing so fast, the way the world is under pressure preparing for an economic recession globally as a result of the trade wars, you have now to institute almost on a daily basis, interactions with the diplomatic community, the Consul-Generals, the business chambers because we want to protect jobs in the Western Cape. Therefore, the hon Premier has referred to an environment in which we try to create for the G20. We want the G20 to succeed because my job is that I want South Africa to succeed.

The hon Premier has referred to the B20. The B20 is coming to Cape Town. I am so happy. The Cabinet appointed me to oversee the effective implementation and support for the B20, and I will do everything possible to make the B20, together with Rashid Toefy and the team, the biggest success in history that we have never seen here in the Western Cape.

But also, apart from the B20, the hon Premier has now referred to the Regional Leader Summit and in the Regional Leader Summit, subnational governments are now coming to the Western Cape. The hon Premier is the Chairperson of the Regional Leader Summit that will take place in November this year. These are Quebec in Canada, Georgia in the United States, Upper Austria in Austria, Bavaria in Germany, Shandong in China, São Paulo in Brazil and the Western Cape.

We will be talking about how we can collectively grow the regional economies of the world, right here in the Western Cape. We also use this on

the backdrop of the Western Cape Premier Investment Summit because these people are here, so we want to put the investment on the table of these global players because it is important that we stimulate the economy and get the buyers and the potential investors.

Now, the successful hosting of these events will strengthen a positive perception and confidence. There are three ways to grow the economy: investment confidence, business confidence and consumer confidence. That is why we are happy that Rashid Toefy is also the Acting Consumer Protector. I do not know when you sleep because you are also the Acting Consumer Protector in this province.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is now my pleasure to present and table in this House, for consideration and discussion, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism Vote 12, their budget of R515 million for the financial year 2025/2026. We are stepping up to implement the Growth for Jobs strategy. This is my only job. This is my last job in this Government, to promote the growth of the economy and create more jobs in the Western Cape.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I thank you. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. As the podium is being transferred to the next speaker, I have already welcomed the HODs together with senior management. I have also noted various stakeholders, the Consular core and guests in the gallery. I trust that you are duly welcomed.

The following speaker is the hon Nkondlo.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Thank you, honourable. I do not need it. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. The clock even stopped. I actually was confused whether we are getting another second presentation of the Budget considering that hon Minister Meyer is a former hon Minister of Finance. So, I think we must just caution that, hon Deputy Speaker, that the hon Minister does not drown out the current hon Minister. That is very important. [Interjections.]

Having said that, hon Deputy Speaker, it is very important, hon Deputy Speaker, having to listened today that I think we must actually be very worried, especially with the first man, the hon Premier of the Province. That you see, once you start elevating your voice, then you argue. Clearly, there is something very wrong and I think it is something that we will have to caution each other here in this House.

And also caution, hon Deputy Speaker, when you allow the introduction of new things that we have not seen here in this House, of using the phones, you know, and also of allowing hon members of the Executive to degrade those who have got different voices when they argue. I think if you do not look at that in terms of the decorum of the House, it may be just an action/reaction because I am sure others have got the very propensity to do exactly that.

During a period, I think, of crisis narrative, one can always underscore how, indeed, crises are always viewed as both, you know, an opportunity outside of

the very thing that they are a crisis of. But also, it has been written that one of the things about crises in particular with politicians, it can actually make them either the best or the worst.

Sometimes in this House, we see, indeed, how the crisis of the social phenomenon of our country has been abused by politicians with their intent of trying to garner votes and especially, closer to the elections. I think it is something that we see of propaganda untruths fabricated and sometimes, even data is botched in the process of others trying to secure a VIP status. You know, we are in the voters considering that just a few months to come, there is an election. And I think it is important to make this point, hon Deputy Speaker.

I am making this point again that we are always I think on this side of the House, very clear that if you look at this Budget Book and actually, the individual Votes, there is no point of us speaking much about the first economy because that is very covered. Actually, the mini speech just done by the hon Minister now, actually tells you that almost 90% of what he was speaking about is actually the protection of the first economy and the extent to which public resources would be utilised under the name of ensuring investor confidence, business confidence, to ensure that indeed, the first economy is working.

We raise this, hon Deputy Speaker, because ours is to always indicate that in the very first economy, not only in this country, even here in this province,

stands a second economy of those that must also have a voice equally so, in this particular debate. Equally so in this Blue Books ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): ...they must speak about the balance that we must create for the very second economy so that there is a balance.

So, we are not going to fail our responsibility even when others believe by virtue of them being in the Executive, they have now found internet more than any other person, forgetting that there are men and women sitting here in the corners who are DDGs, HODs and many whom the State actually goes and comes and employs so that they make all of us look clever.

So, humility, I think, helps members to understand that when they stand here, we also understand that it is not only their own self-proclaimed wisdom, it is because there are men and women who are actually bureaucrats of the State which the State employs knowing for a fact that it has a series of politicians who sometimes get to be elected without necessarily being experts of the subject matter.

So, I raise this point, hon Deputy Speaker, so that we are taken seriously here, that we have the votes of the public and members and citizens of this country that we are representing, and no one is going to silence our voices.

I raise this, hon Deputy Speaker, that actually when we are listening here from the hon Premier about being tone deaf, he has not actually spoken about actually the monstrous deafness of this particular Government. That here the economic deterrent, which is safety in this particular province, has actually ensure that others bask in the sea of poverty in this very province. I am not sure when are the ears of this Executive, the DA-led Executive, going to wake up and actually listen.

They must listen to the street vendors in Kraaifontein where a woman had to be killed. In the month of August, Woman's Month in 2024, right here in this province, over a protection fee. In November, Noma Penolangwa in Gugulethu Ny 103 was killed with her son over refusing to pay protection, running a tavern in her house.

On 12 March this year, Nosisi Hewu, a 41-year-old was also gunned down by an assailant who stormed at around 11 PM in her house, who was a tavern owner. They opened fire on her with her kids, with a 12-year-old girl who died instantly and an 8-year-old who is still in Red Cross Hospital and they have got the story that he talked about that particular night. This is happening in the notorious area of Marcus Garvey, right here in this province governed by the very hon MEC of Economic Development, by the very hon Premier who was speaking here.

Actually, that particular area, Marcus Garvey, has gotten into a situation where teachers must now actually go to the police station every morning

when they have to go to school, so that they are escorted even when they are coming out. A phenomenon that is actually spreading in most of the schools in these townships. So, safety of women and children, of township entrepreneurs is something that even the R1 billion Safety Plan, we are not hearing that it is able to resolve.

So, it is important as we speak here, hon Deputy Speaker, to actually quote Antonio Gramsci who said:

“The old world is dying and the new world struggles to be born. Now is the time of monsters.”

Indeed, it is the time of monsters if indeed, our people must live in these kinds of conditions whilst our Provincial Government is oblivious of the lived experiences not of people in Gauteng, of people here because Gugulethu is here in Cape Town and in the Western Cape. Not of people Soweto, but of people here in the Cape Flats, in Bonteheuwel, in Netreg. Things are happening that this particular Provincial Government chooses to ignore.

So, we rise here, hon Deputy Speaker, to speak about this particular dualism and this is a dualism that is very dangerous for this particular province, that claims to be one of the provinces that is growing.

We further, hon Deputy Speaker, speak about this issue of economic dualism and cautioning this very Government by saying when the DA Government

launched the Growth for Jobs strategy, we cautioned you that this would lead to further inequality in the province. In launching this strategy, Finance and Economic Opportunities MEC, hon Mireille Wenger, then said and I quote:

“It is the private sector that creates jobs, and it is our job to provide a foundation for economic growth so that businesses can grow their businesses and create economic growth and jobs.”

The hon Premier is of the strategy creating and enabling an environment for the private sector to grow. However, it assumes that in the growth of the private sector, it will translate automatically in the creation of jobs which is not always the case.

Take America, for example. The growth of American companies over the years has resulted in their moving their manufacturing to countries where they will pay cheaper for labour, countries like Bangladesh, India and Vietnam. Instead, what has happened in America is that the private sector has grown to a point where they influence the government, they fund political candidates who can guarantee them tax breaks and favourable government contracts.

We know the DA aspires to be the West and wants to adopt western methods, even though they have failed in the countries of their own origin. Actually, what we see happening to date in the politics of America between Elon Musk and his proximity to the President, is a true example that actually we must

never allow happen in our province and also, in our country.

This economic dualism is something that we speak about, hon MEC of Economic Development, because we understand that these two economies coexist here in this particular province as they coexist in our country. We are asking that our responsibility as this generation of politicians, is to disrupt that legacy and the legacy of colonial rule and legacy of apartheid. You are saying as you pinpoint all the fault lines in others. Please do not forget to also self-reflect, look at yourself and be able to see such challenges that are happening right here in this province.

They happen here in this particular province because the very youth policy that the hon Premier was speaking about, has not been able to deal with youth unemployment which actually insignificantly decreased in the City of Cape Town in 2024 from 45% to 44,6%. The truth that we are bringing to the fore, hon Deputy Speaker, is that actually, more alarming is that in 2024, 35,5% of young people aged between 15 to 24 years, about 3,6 million, were not in employment, education or training.

When we look at the levels of crime that I have just spoken about in this province, the type of crime and where it takes place, you are able to see what that 35,5% that is not in employment, not in any form of education or training, is doing. If you want to deal with crime, we have to look at the root causes of it and the reality is that systematically, it is excluding many young people and many communities out of this very nice economy that you are

speaking about in this particular province.

We further, hon Deputy Speaker, want to actually make mention in this House, that the allocated Budget for the programme has decreased in the particular Programme 2 from R42,962 million to R38,59 million. This represents a decrease of 10,18% and this decrease is attributed, amongst others, to the termination of the SMME Booster Fund, which we fought for together as different political parties in this House.

All we are requesting is that a reprioritisation must be done to save the Booster Fund if any of the reports we are getting from the officials of the Department and also the hon MECs who have sat in this particular portfolio, about how this Booser Fund is working. So, we are asking that this Booster Fund is actually retained. We further indicate, hon Deputy Speaker, that for a government that claims to support SMMEs, meanwhile terminating this Booster Fund for this financial year, you cannot claim to be supporting SMMEs and prioritising them.

The DA is driving an economy for the rich of the world, with no loyalty to the South African citizens with the poor and the middle class as a sacrificial lamb under their mantra of private sector. As the ANC, we continue to shine a light on the frustration of informal traders and forums and Black businesses who are actually raising this plight on a day-to-day basis.

We are asking this, hon Deputy Speaker, whilst we recognise what the hon

Minister has just spoken about, about moving the issue of the township economy to Mossel Bay. And we are saying we do not understand why hon Minister, you are running away one, from a township strategy that we are demanding that we have been talking about this matter for almost ten years, sitting in the House, and now you are telling us about a township economic plan.

We are asking that we need a strategy soon. We need your Red Tape Reduction to actually start going and dealing with the impact of red tape to informal traders in the municipalities. The Department of Local Government was telling us the other day that we need to talk to you so that your officials continue and be systematic in engaging with them around improving local economic development strategies in the municipalities.

We raise these because these issues are very important because as we speak in the nice and cool offices and also in this Chamber, there are a lot of people who are trying to fend for themselves in the small rural towns, in the townships, in the areas of Merweville where you are coming from, who also would want the same ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Nkondlo, you time has expired.
[Interjections.]

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): As the African National Congress, we reject this Budget. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon Nkondlo. ...[Applause.] I see online the hon Constable.

Mr N CONSTABLE (PA): Good morning, hon Deputy Speaker and good morning, everyone. Good morning, hon MEC and thank you very much for your speech.

Hon Deputy Speaker, allow me to start off where I ended off yesterday. As the Patriotic Alliance, we said we do not oppose progress, we oppose selective progress. We do not reject economic growth; we reject growth that only benefits a few. This Department and the hon MEC confirm that by giving us a quite good response to what we have said already in the previous statements. So, thank you, hon MEC for acknowledging also the municipalities in your future plans and future programmes. I think we can work together to make sure that rural areas are definitely part of your plans.

Hon Deputy Speaker, with regards to the Growth for Jobs strategy, hon MEC, the Growth for Jobs strategy is designed to expand the Western Cape economy and achieve a 5% GDP growth by 2035. Let us ensure that those opportunities, those expansions go across the Western Cape where all the people live and removing the barriers to economic growth in every part and in every region.

With regard to your infrastructure, hon MEC, infrastructure has a lot of

challenges and that will be a problem for economic growth. Our plea is that you, whilst we implement economic growth and whilst we deal with the economic opportunities, also invest very highly in infrastructure so that when that support comes or when that expansion comes, that every region, every municipality can participate in the economic dispensation of this province.

Hon MEC and hon Deputy Speaker, with regard to the digital DEDAT initiative. It is important to acknowledge that, but again, it is important to make sure that we take everyone and all of us, together moving forward so that all the economic opportunities, whilst implementing the digital side of it, move along so that every business, every farmer, every entrepreneur can be part of this.

In conclusion because I only have three minutes, so let me conclude. This Budget presents an opportunity for economic growth, but challenges remain in infrastructure, workforce development and physical efficiency. The success of the Growth for Jobs strategy depends on the policy execution, investment attraction and effective infrastructure spending. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Constable. Online, I see the hon Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM (EFF): Thank you very much. Hon Deputy Speaker, as the hon Minister and his team are stepping up with opportunities for the

province, we would also like to know exactly how they are stepping up for the informal sector. Because the success of the Department of Economic Development should be measured against the impact it has in the informal sector economy of our province, especially in townships, hon Deputy Speaker.

The informal economic sector is responsible for making sure that those without formal jobs are able to at least afford bread so that they cannot go to sleep with empty stomachs at night. But the reality is, hon Deputy Speaker, it is also these informal businesses who are even creating employment opportunities for other unemployed neighbours and citizens who would otherwise be unable to make ends meet.

Now, hon Deputy Speaker, under the hon Minister's watch, as he says, he should also know that there are great economic opportunities in this province, other than just tourism. There is also great potential in township informal sector business with which if adequately assisted with funding, hon Deputy Speaker, they can grow and provide a diversified economic sector which is capable of employing thousands, if not millions of people.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Department needs to find a balance between supporting those who seek jobs, whilst empowering those who want to be entrepreneurs as they, themselves, are potential future employers. However, hon Deputy Speaker, as things stand, our people operating in the informal sector are not only neglected by this Government, but they are also left at the

mercy of extortionists who come and rob them of their only or rather, come and rob them of the little profits they are able to generate.

Now, in conclusion, hon Deputy Speaker, this Department does not have a track record of development, especially when it comes to informal businesses and especially, when it comes to helping them into the mainstream economy to grow. Until they are able to do that, hon Deputy Speaker, and step up for the informal sector as well, the EFF will not be supporting this Budget Vote. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

[The Speaker takes the Chair.]

The SPEAKER: Thank very much, hon Cassiem. I now move on to hon Jacobs. Hon Jacobs, can I just ask that you switch on your microphone.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Ja, thank you, thank you, thank you. Hon Speaker, the Economic Development and Tourism, they have indicated that jobs ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Jacobs, my apology. Can I just ask the Table Staff to correct the time. I have just noticed that there was more than two minutes on the clock and the Speaker's list says two minutes, hon Jacobs. Hon Jacobs, you may continue.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Blessed love. Hon Speaker, the Economic

Development and Tourism has indicated that the Jobs for Growth plan is also high on their agenda. Now, the report indicates that the Western Cape is the fastest growing province with 27,7% and it must be noted because it seems like the Western Cape ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Jacobs, my apologies. Hon members, just for noting: we will do the timing from the Table. There seems to be an issue with the electronic timer on the screen. So, hon Jacobs, my apologies. Hon members, we are doing the time from the Table manually. So, I will give you an indication, hon Jacobs, when you have 90 second remaining.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Can I go?

The SPEAKER: You may. I just needed to do that just for the record.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Okay, no problem. No problem, thank you. So, the report indicates that the Western Cape is the fastest growing province with 27,7%, but it must also be noted that the Western Cape Provincial Government is rather proud of this. The reality is that the Western Cape has around 507 informal settlements and they are growing daily, and these are 90% from out of the Western Cape.

Now, these labour migrants are placed in jobs in our own areas and our own people cannot work, even if it is in their own hometown. Hon Speaker, in every municipality that the DA governs, every Coloured business gets

targeted, or they get closed down. Informal traders get chased away from trading spaces from which they have been trading for 20 to 30 years. Drakenstein, Lady Grey: †wat gaan aan daar? [what is going on there?] White privileged favouring, White interests.

Hon Speaker, the hon MEC spoke boldly about tourism and the sector, but in reality, who benefits out of tourism? Do we have tourism on the Cape Flats? Okay. Ashley Kriel was born in Bonteheuwel. Do we have tourism in Bonteheuwel? No, we do not. [Interjections.] The UDF monument was put up by the DA in Rocklands, Mitchells Plain. [Interjections.] The forceful removals are there. The aboriginal history is there. Do we have tourism in Mitchells Plain? No, we do not. So, I think it is time to call a spade a spade.

The tourism industry is hijacked by the foreign nationals, and it is supported by White supremacy. Every hotel, every bed and breakfast, self-catering, backpackers from the chefs to the cleaners, the security, the waiters, the receptionists and sometimes, the owners. All foreign nationals and this Government is okay with it. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Hey!

An HON MEMBER: Silent.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Hon Speaker, I need to bring it clear. This, too, shall pass and we shall overcome.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Jacobs. Before I recognise hon Brinkhuis, is that a point of order, hon Nkondlo?

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Thank you, hon Speaker. I did not want to disturb the hon member when he was making his address. I wanted to check in observation of the issue of time. Can you please check with Hansard if my time of 14 minutes was actually ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: It is 10 minutes.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): ...utilised [Interjections.]. [Interjections.] If you can check that with Hansard.

An HON MEMBER: It was 10 minutes.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Thanks. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You must get more votes and then you will get more time.

The SPEAKER: I will definitely do that. Hon members, I ...[Interjections.] Order, hon members. There was a valid point of order, so I will, hon Nkondlo. I will also with that commitment, make sure that all speeches that were delivered prior to this, that we check all of those and I will revert back

to the House if need be.

With that being said, hon Brinkhuis. We will also do your time manually, so please just be mindful of it. You have 2 minutes as per the Speakers List. Hon Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AL JAMA-AH): Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, let us talk about small business. They are the real drivers of job creation, yet many struggle to access funding, resources and markets while large corporations receive incentives and support, emerging entrepreneurs, especially those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds are left fighting an uphill battle. Where is the targeted investment to ensure economic inclusion?

Tourism is another so-called success story, but it remains highly concentrated in certain areas. Cape Town thrives, but the rural tourism potential is neglected. Towns like Ceres, Beaufort West and Swellendam have reached cultural and national attractions, yet the Province's focus stays on the usual hotspots. Diversifying tourism would not only create jobs but also uplift communities that have been excluded from the mainstream economy.

Let us not ignore the reality of unemployment. The DA Government continues to market the Western Cape as an economic leader, yet youth unemployment remains alarmingly high. If this Government was serious about economic development, it would prioritise real skills development, not

just fancy reports and pilot projects.

Hon Speaker, a truly thriving economy must work for everyone, not just a privileged few. We need inclusive policies that support small businesses, expand tourism beyond Cape Town and equip our people with skills for the future. That is the only way to build an economy that serves all the people of the Western Cape. I thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Brinkhuis. I recognise the hon Masipa.

An HON MEMBER: Ah-huh!

The SPEAKER: Hon Masipa ...[Interjection.]

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Today ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Oh, there your microphone goes.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Okay.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Must I start? Hon Speaker, hon Premier, hon members of this House. Today, we stand at a forked path. Across South

Africa, more than 12 million people cannot find jobs. A crisis engineered by 30 years of ANC corruption and mismanagement. These failures are written in parastatals that haemorrhage funds, shattered businesses, and the desperate faces of the unemployed.

But here in the Western Cape, the people have chosen a different path. Here, under the DA's leadership, we do not just hope for change, we deliver it, we step up. This Budget Vote 12 of Economic Development and Tourism is not just numbers on a page, it is a weapon in the fight against joblessness. It is a lifeline for businesses struggling under National Government's neglect, and it is proof that while the ANC talk, the DA delivers. The DA steps up.

Let me be clear. South Africa's economy is being strangled by incompetents that are seated on the left. The national unemployment rate is a disgrace: 31,9%. Get it, hon member! But in the Western Cape, it stands at 19,6%. Last Quarter, we created 62 000 new jobs. The highest in this country. This is not luck; this is a result of policies that work, and a government that cares. A government that steps up!

An HON MEMBER: That is it!

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): However, we remain concerned about inefficiencies at the Port of Cape Town. As such, our oversight efforts have uncovered troubling reports. For instance, one importer informed us:

“The dry dock has unrepaired leaks, and all workers are on unpaid leave while waiting for repairs. Ships are being turned away as a result.”

Such accounts are deeply concerning, though they help us pinpoint where intervention is needed. That said, we acknowledge the improvements made since the Western Cape Government’s involvement and commend the Department for its efforts in addressing these challenges. Mr Glen Steyn and Terry, we really thank you for the work that you are doing at the Port to turn around this situation.

This is the heart, sorry. The heart of this budget is the Growth for Jobs strategy. Our blueprint to unleash this province’s potential. By 2035, we aim to triple our exports, attract R200 billion in new investment and create new jobs in the industries of the future.

Through you, hon Speaker, hon Nkondlo: this is not about taking from the poor by taxing them more to enrich the elite. It is about growing the economy to create a robust tax base that supports the poorest community in Langa, in Nyanga, in Joe Slovo, in Elsies River, in Ravensmead, in Mitchells Plain and in Khayelitsha.

We firmly believe that the Department of Economic Development and Tourism deserves a larger budget. Currently, DEDAT has the third lowest employee cost compared to other departments, yet it is tasked with the crucial role of delivering economic growth for the province. This brings us

to the issue of Equitable Share.

The Western Cape demands its fair share of allocation from the National Government. Despite being the third largest province in the country, we receive only the fifth largest allocation. This is utterly unacceptable. This will help, hon Jacobs, who is out of the House, to deal with the issues that you have raised with regard to crime in the Cape Flats.

The National Government's failure to allocate resources fairly is a direct hinderance to our economy, growth and social development. Their mismanagement and inequitable distribution of funds are stifling the potential of the Western Cape. It is imperative that we address this imbalance to ensure that our province can thrive and contribute effectively to the nation's prosperity.

We call on the National Government to rectify this injustice, including the safety challenges that we are facing as a province, and provide the Western Cape with resources it rightfully deserves. Only then, we can build a stronger and more equitable South Africa, hon Nkondlo.

For those who say these aims are ambitious and cannot be done, I say it has been done before. Vietnam tripled exports in a decade by focusing on trade partnership. By placing a similar focus on exports in the Western Cape, we are proving it can be done here. Already, we are seeing results.

Wesgro, our trade and investment agency, has secured to date R8,7 billion in

new investment, money that creates nearly 11 000 jobs in the next five years. Their trade teams have helped businesses land export deals worth R2,64 billion to date, supporting over 1 000 additional jobs. That is why we support the R400 million investment in Wesgro over the next three years because this is an initiative that drives economy and that delivers jobs.

Furthermore, in a world where tariffs and trade wars are becoming an ever-present risk, it is important to help our businesses navigate this environment. This Budget is increasing funding for trade and sector development by 23%, R140 million to help businesses export more and employ more. The Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme is already helping 18 companies break into global markets.

In addition, the Budget is supporting workshops across the province from George to Beaufort West, to teach businesses how to export and address the concerns that hon Constable constantly raised that we are not reaching out to the Karoo area.

In Saldanha Bay we are positioning this province as Africa's green hydrogen hub. Four major projects are already in the pipeline, and we are finalising an Infrastructure Master Plan to unlock billions in investment. It is not enough to focus on what industries are already successful, we must invest in the industries of the future. When the rest of the world thinks of green hydrogen, they just, hon Minister, think of Saldanha.

Atlantis, our special economic zone, is gearing up for a beacon of green technology. Companies are testing cutting edge innovations, such as roads made with recycled plastic, solar paved walkways and even hydrogen powered energy systems. Demand is rising. Every available plot in Zone 1 is reserved with investors lining up for space.

On tourism, the province is bouncing back. This season, a record 84 cruise ships docked in our harbours. Over 3 million passengers passed through our airports whilst our conventions bureauxs have secured R686 million in business events. We have rebuilt flood-damaged attractions, trained hundreds of new tourist guides and helped businesses prepare for climate risk. That answers the concern that was raised by hon Nkondlo that we are not supporting the people in Khayelitsha and Gugulethu. Through these opportunities, they will also find their opportunities to work and to also attract the tourists in their own townships.

Hon Speaker, this is what it means to have a government that works for you. Tourism is a major industry in the province, bringing in foreign spending and supporting small businesses. Jobs, jobs, jobs: that is what our country needs. Holistic opportunities enabled by the resourced endowed to our province. Government must not make jobs but provide the opportunity for the private sector to do so.

A major fact affecting economic opportunities is bureaucracy. Needless red tape that hinders businesses from thriving. Our Red Tape Reduction Unit

resolved over 215 cases in the last financial year, helping businesses cut through the nonsenses. In Mossel Bay, we fast-tracked a R15 billion housing and a commercial project. In Stellenbosch, we slashed delays in building approvals.

This Budget is a vote for jobs, a vote for innovation, a vote for a Western Cape that works. This Government is about stepping up by providing opportunities, investing in the future and by cutting red tape. This Budget invests in our people so that they can shape their own success.

To this end, hon Speaker, the DA supports this Budget. I thank you.
...[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Masipa. I now recognise the hon Minister Meyer.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon Speaker, thank you to those hon members who took part in this very important debate today in this House.

Hon Speaker, there were some questions during my debate, about infrastructure. That Infrastructure Vote debate will take place on Monday. I have consulted with the hon Minister of Infrastructure, and he will respond to those things. There were also a lot of questions relating to Vote 4, which is Safety. I have consulted with the hon Minister of Police Oversight and Community Safety. She has informed me that today at 4 o'clock, she will

table her Budget Speech in this House so that I do not move into that space of her speech.

Also, hon member, there was a question relating to the spatial distribution of the Budget and I like what the hon Minister of Finance has done when she told us we must read this book. In this small booklet when she tabled the Main Budget, she made provision for the spatial distribution of the Budget and therefore, the spatial distribution is well documented. I refer people to just look into this document as requested by the hon Minister. We will get a detailed spatial footprint of this Budget.

Also, thank you. Also, hon Speaker, there is, however, a matter that hon member Nkondlo raised that I think deserves an answer because it is a serious matter. We have dealt with it on a daily basis and that deals with the issue of the safety in informal settlements and the issue of people being attacked, and small businesses.

We have looked into this particular matter in terms of the township economy and the safety of business people. Now, we have established, hon Speaker, a dedicated committee is being established to tackle extortion involving the Provincial Government, the City of Cape Town, law enforcement and the South African Police. This committee will then focus on developing strategies to address extortion specifically in the townships, particularly impacting on businesses including those in the informal sector.

A conference of strategic planning meeting is planned to align the efforts and solidify and action plan to deal with this because we do not want our township economy, which must become a thriving economy, to be subjected by these economic mafia in informal settlements.

So, there is a plan and in terms of the township strategy for economic development, significant progress has been made in partnering with the Department of Small Business Development. The Department has also now an E-stakeholder in those discussions in terms of also formulating key economic indicators. We have also built a strong relationship with other organisations, such as Rlabs Innovation Hub and the foundation is there. These partnerships will play a critical role in driving economic activity and strengthening township enterprises.

The hon Minister of Police Oversight and Community Safety will later, at 4 o'clock in this House, further elaborate on this matter and I want to thank hon member Nkondlo for bringing this matter because if you are an informal trader working hard, and at 5 o'clock somebody with a gun comes and says, 'I need all your profits'. It is painful for the family, and we cannot sit down here and observe these things. So, I thank her for that question. That question warrants serious attention.

Also, I have informed her during the Standing Committee Meeting, chaired by the hon member Noko Masipa. The hon member also asked me questions about townships, and I replied that there is a Township Action Plan, and I

have indicated what that will be in the main speech.

Also, I think that there is more work that needs to happen. That work will happen, but I do not want to sit here in this House and write a policy or a strategy as proposed by you, without proper consultation. That engagement will take place. But this Government is also on record, sir. We are not going to develop strategies and everything, to come to a standstill. While the strategy is being built, we carry on with the Township Action Plan and so we will continue to do that. But that will also be feedback as a pilot feeding back into the strategy.

The hon member Cassiem is right. We need to get the balance between jobs and those growing the economy, but I want to thank the EFF for voting yesterday against VAT. That is a significant thing. I also want to congratulate the EFF for taking the Speaker of the National Parliament to court for wrongfully using an incorrect prescript in terms of approving the fiscal framework in the National Parliament and causing that havoc. So, hon member Cassiem, thank you to your party for standing with the poor.

Also, the hon members that spoke about the Drakenstein traders. We know that the movement of the Drakenstein Municipality, there are a few traders, and this Government want people to give people dignity and pride. As a trader, you need to have facilities with access to transport and access to decent toilet and sanitation facilities. So, moving traders from a place where there are no toilets to a place where there are toilet facilities and closer

access to the taxis, I think that is a dignified thing to do. This Government supports dignity.

I noticed yesterday that Al Jama-ah did vote for the VAT and that will then punish small businesses even more. Some people spoke about the inequalities. I have just looked at the inequality figures as represented by the Gini coefficient, and the Western Cape has the lowest inequality in South Africa. For those who want to write it down, our Gini coefficient for 2023 was 0,595. The place with the highest Gini coefficient, in other words, with the highest level of inequality is run by the ANC in the North-West Province. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Ja!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: So, if you want to relocate, that is certainly not the place where you want to go to.

Also, I think ...[Laughter.], hon members, I want to thank you for supporting this Budget. I was informed by the Chairperson of the Committee that when this Budget was discussed and tabled by me, there was support in the Committee and I am now calling on this House to also support my Budget and I thank you for this opportunity to present and table my Budget. ...[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Thank you very much, hon colleagues. [Interjections.] Order, hon members. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote. I will also now suspend the proceedings, and we will resume at 2 PM for the next Vote. The House is suspended.

[House suspended at 12:58.]

[Business of the House resumed at 14:00]

The SPEAKER: Please be seated. Hon Minister, before I recognise you, can I just get an indication if all your guests have arrived and if I can continue? Can I continue? Okay, I will give you a couple of minutes. Hon members, I just want to give you an indication that we have addressed the technical glitch with the electronic clock on the screens so we are good to go. As normal I will trust but verify, so there will also be a manual clock from the Table Staff. Hon Minister, if you can give me an indication and then I will... Just for the record hon members, I am not doing anything out of the ordinary; we normally give 5 minutes between Votes, so this is the 5 minutes, before I get accused of giving additional privileges to the hon Minister of Agriculture. Hon Minister, I am going to allow the Secretary to first read the Third Order of the Day. [Interjection.]

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 11: Agriculture – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2–2025]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I now recognise the hon Minister of Agriculture, hon Minister Meyer.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Hon Speaker, hon Deputy Speaker, hon Premier, Cabinet colleagues, Leader of the Official Opposition, Leader of Government and Business, leaders of other political parties, hon members in the gallery, special guests. Thank you for joining us here today.

I rise in this House today to table the Budget for the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, the Main Appropriation Budget of R1 billion for the 2025 and 2026 financial year. Hon Speaker, this Budget carries significant responsibility to the people of the Western Cape and it underscores the crucial role that each of us have here today in this House.

Hon Speaker, when the Premier Alan Winde delivered the Western Cape State of the Province Address in Beaufort West earlier on 26 February, he challenged us to make 2025 the year where we must all “step up.” Today I table this Budget in this House that responds to the call to “step up” because my experience is that agriculture is “stepping up.” Esteemed Speaker, it is crucial to note that the agriculture and agri-processing sector and its sub-sectors play a significant role in contributing 11% of the GDP of the Western Cape underscoring the vital importance of this sector in the economy.

Hon Speaker, according to Stats SA Quarterly Labour Force Survey of 2024, the figures, 192 000 are employed in the agricultural sector and another

120 000 in the secondary sector, implying the agri-processing sector. As a result there are about 331 000 people, or 11% of the people working in the agricultural sector. It is worth noting that agriculture is not just a contributor to the economy, still it is also the most competitive sector in each of the five districts, with tourism which has a strong agricultural foundation.

Hon Speaker, members of this House will know that at numerous times I have indicated that 66% of all Western Cape agricultural products, primary agricultural products are exported, and as members know 55%, and I am now told by Jannie Strydom, the Chief Executive Officer of Agri Western Cape, that is in the House today, he has now reminded me that we are no longer responsible for 55% of South Africa's primary agricultural exports, Mr David Bryant, we are now responsible for 58%.

An HON MEMBER: Joh!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: So this is the work of primary agriculture which I support. Mr Jannie, you will know that I have now signed, sorry, Jannie is over here. I have signed now a performance agreement with the Premier that I want it to be 60%, so there is work in this House to be done.

And, Mr Jannie, I am so happy that the wine industry will help us with this matter, and also non-alcoholic wine, Mr Marais.

Well, hon members in this House will also know that of the 10 biggest agricultural products at this Western Cape export, eight of the 10 has an agricultural base, and so we are very happy for the work that our farmers, our producers and agri-workers are doing.

Hon Speaker, the Western Cape Growth for Job strategy is given a laser sharp focus, and that is why hon members, I have defined four ministerial priorities.

- Agricultural support.
- Business support.
- Food security and nutrition.
- Market access talking about exports, which I will later deal with extensively.

Hon Speaker, when you come to this Parliament you must not only reflect on the future, but you must reflect back. Let me reflect back.

Hon Speaker, our LandCare team contributed to sustainability and the development of agriculture by rendering 876 technical LandCare services; rehabilitating 23 074 hectares of agricultural land and creating 967 green jobs during the last financial year. Thank you ISA, sustainable resource use management and your team and the colleagues working with you.

However the sector is not without its challenges. The province has

experienced three major floods, events in April, June and July last year, severely impacting the agricultural sector through major disruptions of the agrarian production during harvesting. Moreover, the sector is also affected as major roads collapsed and were washed away, and unlike KwaZulu-Natal, the hon Minister of Infrastructure fixed those roads in no time, in record time, in the history of South Africa's infrastructure repairs and maintenance. I think he deserves a round of applause, because major roads were washed away, because many of the roads were inaccessible, and I have received numerous calls from farmers about the impact of these roads that were washed away, because they had to transport their products to the market.

Despite these challenges, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture has supported this sector; let us look at Agriculture Producer Development Support. The Department continued its commodity approach to delivering producer services across the whole value chain. 10 Commodity Project Allocation Committees are now fully constituted, with agri-processing, CPAC, being the latest addition, given its importance in job creation. In other words we added another committee namely agri-processing. These continue to provide much needed support to smallholders and commercialised farmers, projects within the CASP and Ilima/Letsema grants.

The Department reaffirmed its collaborations with various commodity groups by renewing a memorandum of understanding. So members in this House when I speak about partnership and collaboration, it is not talk, it is action. Soon my Head of Department, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa, will soon sign

memorandums of understanding with 11 existing industry organisations. Agriculture is an important strategic partner, Agri Western Cape, and today we are joined in this House by Mr Heinie Du Toit, the Vice President of Agri Western Cape, sitting out at the back. Heinie, can you stand please? Thank you for your presence here today; as well as the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Jannie, can you please stand? † ‘n Bietjie oefening daar. [A bit of exercise there.] Thank you very much to our gentleman for supporting our work in this Government. Without you I cannot do my work.

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, before you continue, I wish to remind the members in the gallery you are more than welcome to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, but I would like to caution you that you may not participate in the proceedings of the House, and that includes clapping for the member, or the hon Minister in this instance on the floor, but you are very welcome to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. Hon Minister, you may continue.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Thank you, hon Speaker. The extension and advisory services programme undertook 3 131 on-farm site visits, conducted 42 business skills audit and hosted 25 farmer days during the three-quarters.

One beneficiary of our advisory services, Ms Sheena Paulus, who owns Tri Toad (Pty) Limited, I do not know if that person is in the House today? If that person is in the House, please stand. We are particularly proud because

we provide technical services, extension advisory services, and we are particularly happy that you are here today. We are proud because women are rising and standing up together with agriculture. We salute you because this company that she represents specialises in production of vegetables and flower seedlings, as well as various potted plants. Her farming is 100% in a fully automated climate control greenhouse and a shade net tunnel. Fantastic! Produce from Tri Toad (Pty) Limited is marketed through Stodels retailers, Kleinensorgen (Pty) Limited, Productco, Casidra, private enterprises and walk in customers. Based in Philippi, she has created 20 new jobs. We salute you for implementing the Growth for Job strategy of this Government.

Another person is Natasha Williams, the owner of Signature Wines, an agri-processing enterprise in specialising in premium wine production, the wine brand “Lelie van Saron”, has established markets in the United Kingdom in London. Is that person over here? Can you please stand, ma'am? Thank you. Her work... Markets in the United Kingdom, †hulle hou van ‘n wyntjie in die winter [they like a bit of wine in the winter.]

†Mnr G P MARAIS (FFP): Dit is koud.

[Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): It is cold.]

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Dit is baie koud daar, Mnr Marais, [The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: It is very cold there, Mr Marais,] and also in the United States, †dit is ook nou ‘n bietjie koud daar, julle weet hoekom, [it is also a bit cold there, and you know why,] and also in Gauteng. Also

based in Hermanus, Signature Wines has thus far created also 10 new jobs. Thank you for helping this Government in implementing my Growth for Jobs strategy. Thank you for coming to this Parliament.

Hon Speaker, through the food security subprogramme the Department supported 35 smallholder farmers, 108 subsistence farmers, 29 school food gardens and 2 451 household gardens.

Hon Speaker, something that is becoming more and more close to my heart is Veterinary Services. Animal health continues to play a crucial role in maintaining the wellbeing of both animals and humans in the Western Cape. By enforcing the set of standards for the surveillance and monitoring of animal diseases, the Western Cape prevented the outbreaks of foot and mouth disease and highly pathogenic avian influenza. I want to thank my team, but I also want to thank Mr Jannie Strydom, and my HOD Dr Trautmann, Dr [Inaudible] and the team that joined me on the border of the Eastern Cape when there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, in Humansdorp, and I wanted it to be prevented from entering the borders of the Western Cape, because of the many dairy farmers, particularly there in the Southern Cape, and specifically in the region of George.

By enforcing also the standards of the surveillance and monitoring of animal diseases in the Western Cape, we prevented the foot and mouth disease. The enhanced surveillance and monitoring structures resulted in the European Union recognising African horse sickness controlled areas and lifting the ban

on the export of horses. Two loads of horses left Cape Town for the European Union after a 14 year ban. I want to thank our state vets because the Premier was on my neck with late night WhatsApps and messages about this particular problem. It has now been resolved and our horses are being exported to the European Union.

The outbreak of rabies in seals resulted in the enforcement of a One Health multidisciplinary approach which integrated multiple institutions co-led departments, health and wellness.

Hon Speaker, I am deeply concerned of what is happening now in the world in terms of animal health, hon Memory Booyesen, because you now have a situation that certain animal diseases can be from any livestock, can now move to poultry, and from the poultry the disease can spread to humans, zoonotic diseases, and I have seen the pictures of people with zoonotic diseases. This is really a major thing that we need to watch in future, and so Veterinary International Trade Facilitation continues to play a crucial role in supporting market access for our agricultural products in the Western Cape.

The number of veterinary certificates issued has increased compared to previous years, along the rise in the improved export facilities. However these increases primarily reflect stricter trade requirements imposed by trading partners, rather than a direct expansion of trade volumes. Hon members of this House will know that the Western Cape Exports Certification Office, now located in Roeland Street, no more in Milnerton, has continued

to enhance the efficiency in export facilitation, streamlining communication and improving traceability within the veterinary trade facilitation. We are “stepping up”.

Hon member Jacobs, to make it simpler. If you have a veterinary product and you want to export, you need an export certification certificate, and you have to come to our veterinary office in Millerton, you have to fill in forms and wait there for days, and during Covid everything had changed. All your data of your products are now preloaded on the ecosystem, you can now directly print your export certificate at your home and you can export. We are “stepping up”.

The system's impact on productivity compliance and transparency has been widely recognised, and efforts are underway to expand its use to other trade authorities and Government departments within South Africa. That is why I say I do not want the Western Cape to succeed, I want South Africa to succeed, and this ecosystem is now being used by the National Government and other trading partners. I do not want it only for veterinary services; we want South Africa to succeed.

Research Technology and Development Services, a fantastic programme run by Dr Ilse Trautmann, and due to close collaboration with the Department and industry partners, response time to the sector challenges is quick and often addressed before the broader producer community becomes aware of it. So what this means in simple language, we do not do research for the purpose

of research, we ask the industry what is the problem, we research it, we do a pilot study, and we conduct the research and the research then finds its way back to the producers into agriculture.

Climate change, hon Speaker, its impacts on the agricultural sector in the Western Cape, it is projected to be generally adverse to various activities across the value chain. I am so happy the hon Minister Bredell and I, we are members of the Western Cape Climate Change Inter-Ministerial Committee. We have recently met and discussed future plans. I will later elaborate on this further.

The sector will also feel it through the frequent drought, excessive rain, flooding, and limited water allocation; the changing occurrence of agricultural pests and diseases and the introduction of new species due to climate change.

In agricultural economics we support various industries as they implement the market access interventions, a key partner in this House today is the Fresh Produce Export Forum, which is ably led by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Anton Kruger, who have joined us here today. May he also please stand? Thank you, Mr Anton Kruger, when I asked him about the export strategy, he said to me: “Minister, our export strategy is called GRO.” For a very important thing: “G – Gain new markets, R – Retain your current markets, O - Optimise the business processes.”

Thank you for the work that you do, I know he was recently in Brazil, while he was in Brazil I met with the Agriculture Trade Forum, I met with the South African Fruit Industry, and he signed in 04:00 in the morning in Brazil, while I was having a Zoom meeting, thank you. For that is the commitment of the Western Cape. People want to know why we succeed; it is because we have committed people like you. Thank you, sir.

Hon Speaker, for the Mr Anton Krugers of this world, to do their work successfully, they need exceptional producers who deliver products. He can export nothing unless there are products, and we have such products here today, “grapes”, and I will later talk about the grapes, I will later talk about table grapes.

One such producer, exceptional product, is Unifrutti South Africa, which prides itself on producing fresh responsibly grown exceptional produce, Mr Simon Baty. Where is he? He is coming, having tea. Mr Simon Baty, I have met with him in the West Coast, fantastic products also for the export market.

My ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank the Chief Executive Officer of the South African Table Grape Industry, also known as SATI. She is represented, that organisation is represented by the CEO Mecia Petersen, who is also with us. May she also please stand? I have met with her with Agri SA, with the CGA, with their colleagues at the harbour at Nedbank recently, and she delivered an exceptional great presentation about the future markets. She has also confirmed to me that in terms of the SATI Industry, the grapes, 6% are

targeted for North America.

I am particularly happy for the work that they are doing, because she and her team also developed a digital management platform to improve the operations at the Port, and I went with her staff to the harbour of Cape Town. Not only was I at the harbour, I was on the boat loading her grapes at the port, and this is the result of a digital platform system. So to fast track the grapes that day, it was going to London. Thank you for the work, because the table grape is an important subsector of the agricultural sector, in fact 98%, and I know this is table grapes, I am not talking about wine, but they are related, cousins and brothers.

98% of all the wine cellars in South Africa are based in the Western Cape, but you cannot make wine without grapes. Mr Jerry Aries, you were a lecturer at [Inaudible] with Dirk Troskie. So thank you to you and your team for the exceptional work, and thank you for also taking our wine, I mean the grapes to Asia. †Iemand sê ek is dors. [Someone says I'm thirsty.] But thank you very much for the great work that you are doing in exporting our grapes. Hon members, each of you have received table grapes on your table, complements of SATI and Ms Petersen. I thank you.

The weekend has not yet started. Hon Speaker, I am reminded of a billboard that I do not like, and I am glad that that billboard is no more in this province, because as I drove home the billboard says, there was a bottle of wine, and the billboard says: † “Smaak soos naweek.” [“Tastes like

weekend”]. So hon Minister of Education, †dit smaak nog nie soos die naweek nie [it does not yet taste like weekend”.]

Hon Speaker, Europe is still a key market for South Africa; hence initiatives like WIETA and SIZA programmes were supposed to meet. They were supported to meet the requirements of the established markets in Europe; that is why I had an EU Trade and Investment breakfast with Wesgro. I met with the EU Ambassador, Dr Sandra Kramer; we are working very well to increase our exports into Europe.

With the Department’s support, De Pizan Beverages based in Kenwyn, Lansdowne, has successfully registered and signed a distribution agreement with a partner in Ghana through the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. The second consignment is currently underway in Ghana and they will soon expand the products to Nigeria. Today De Pizan Beverages, are they represented here? I was informed they are coming. Ah, thank you very much. Represented by its CEO, Ms Shafeekah Booley, thank you very much and congratulations, because when you entered the market in Nigeria, it is a R100 million market. Thank you for the work you are doing.

Hon Speaker, Tanya van Stade’s agri-processing businesses has developed into a certified organic farm with the support of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. At the Agri-hub facility, beetroot and spinach are dried. Using conventional dehydrators; then pressed and blended into nutrient rich powders, ensuring high quality production standards, under the

supervision of the Department of Agriculture's processing team. Thank you, Bongiswa, for you and your team.

"Seeds for Life" has expanded beyond dried vegetable powder, successfully incorporated into their own processed dried vegetable powders into various products, including organic vegetable juices, wraps and powders and confectionery products. Tanya van Stade, is she in the House here today? Thank you very much, Ms Tanya. Our client is "stepping up". She got the support from the agri-processing unit. Agri-processing is the biggest growth area in the Western Cape. Agriculture, primary agriculture is 4%, secondary agriculture processing is 7%, but we know you cannot do secondary agriculture unless you do primary agriculture. But thank you for being in the secondary agriculture. We support your work.

†Agb Speaker, Landbou, Onderwys en Opleiding is baie belangrik want dit bied nie-formele opleiding, formele opleiding en erkenning van vorige leer-inisiatiewe regoor die Wes-Kaap by vier gedentraliseerde liggings en die hoofkampus op Elsenburg. By die Gradeplegtigheid wat 7 Desember verlede jaar gehou is, het 137 studente van die Hoër Onderwys en Opleidingstroom hulle Baccalaureus in Landbou en Diploma in Landbou kwalifikasies ontvang. Altesaam 40 beurse is toegeken aan studente wat weens finansiële beperkings hulp nodig gehad het om hulle akademiese aspirasies ook na te streef. Vir die 2025 akademiese jaar het 560 studente, insluitende 'n diverse groep van plaaslike en internasionale studente reeds geregistreer vir die Baccalaureus in Landbou, Diploma in Landbou, en 'n sertifikaat in Perdestudieprogramme.

Die Landbouvaardighede ontwikkelingsprogram het nie-formele opleidingsprogramme en vaardighede verskaf aan meer as 2 500 deelnemers regoor die Wes-Kaap gedurende die vorige finansiële jaar.

Vandag sluit die nuut-aangestelde skoolhoof, mnr Granville Stander, wat 'n magdom ervaring en 'n vars perspektief na ons inisiatiewe bring, aan en hy is vandag hier in die Huis. Hy word vergesel ook deur die Voorsitter van die Studenteraad van Elsenburg Landbouopleidingsinstituut, Juan-Marie van Jaarsveld, wat 'n deurslaggewende rol speel om die studentekopstuk te verteenwoordig en te verseker dat hulle stemme in ons besluitnemingsprosesse gehoor word. Sy is vanjaar 'n derdejaar student in Dierekunde. Ek vra beide mnr Granville Stander en Marie van Jaarsveld om op te staan. Ons is trots op hulle. Mnr Granville is een van ons ouens in die boks. Baie dankie.

[Hon Speaker, Agriculture, Education and Training is very important as it offers informal training, formal training and acknowledgement of previous learning initiatives across the Western Cape at four decentralized sites and the main campus at Elsenburg. At the graduation ceremony held on 7 December last year, 137 students of the Higher Education and Training stream received their Baccalaureus in Agriculture and Diploma in Agriculture qualifications. Altogether 40 bursaries were awarded to students who because of financial limitations needed support to achieve their academic aspirations. For the 2025 academic year, 560 students, including a diverse group of local and international students already registered for the Baccalaureus in Agriculture, Diploma in Agriculture, and a certificate in

Equine Studies programme. The Agricultural Skills Development programme provided informal training programmes and skills to more than 2 500 participants all over the Western Cape during the previous financial year.

Today, the newly appointed principal, Mr Granville Stander, who brings a magnitude of experience and a fresh perspective to our initiatives, joins us and he is here today in the House. He is also accompanied by the Chairman of the Students Council of Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute, Juan-Marie van Jaarsveld, who plays a vital role to represent the student body and to ensure that their voices are heard in our decision-making processes. This year she's a third year student in Animal Science. I ask both Mr Granville Stander and Marie van Jaarsveld to stand up. We are proud of you. Mr. Granville is one of our people in the box. Thank you.] He comes from Education so he brings a wealth of education, and I am thankful to the hon Minister of Education that released him to the Department of Agriculture.

Hon Speaker, rural development is very important in this province. Rural development focus for the 2024/25 financial year has been on raising awareness on substance abuse programmes, gender based violence, youth employment, study opportunities, financial literacy, labour rights and the responsibilities of Agri-workers, and all other activities including rural safety. I am also particularly happy for the work that people are doing like mister... I will come to him now.

Today I am also joined in terms of this specific programme, in terms of rural

development, by one of the recipients of the Agri-worker programme. As this House knows, †die Wes-Kaap is die enigste provinsie in Suid-Afrika wat ‘n Agri-werker kompetisie het, en die wenner van die Agri-werker kompetisie 2024, is vandag hier saam met ons in die Huis. Ek en my vrou het haar vroeër vanjaar gaan besoek op die plaas waar sy werksaam was. Sy is vandag hier in die Huis, Lindie-Alet van Staden. Sy kan maar opstaan. Sy is ‘n Agri-werker soos al die ander Agri-werkers, en ek is trots dat sy vanjaar saam met ons kon gaan na Nederland. Sy was in Amsterdam, sy was in Rotterdam, en sy was by die grootste landbouskou in die wêreld in die vrugtebedryf, en sy was daar by die Fruit Logistica saam met Jackie Pandaram, ons Hoofdirekteur in Berlyn, en daardie waarde en die toevoeging en die kennis gaan Lindie terugploeg in haar werkers. Sy het my klaar gesê dat sy beplan om een van haar werkers in te skryf. Lindie, dankie vir jou teenwoordigheid vandag hier. [the Western Cape is the only province in South Africa that has an Agri-worker competition and the winner of the Agri-worker competition 2024, is today here with us in the House. My wife and I visited her earlier this year on the farm where she was working. She is here in the House today, Lindie-Alet van Staden. She can stand up. She’s an Agri-worker like all the other Agri-workers and I am proud that this year she could go with us to the Netherlands. She was in Amsterdam, she was in Rotterdam, and she was at the largest agricultural show in the world in the fruit industry, and she was there at the Fruit Logistica with Jackie Pandaram, our Chief Director in Berlin, and that value and the addition and the knowledge Lindie is going to plough back in her workers. She has already told me that she plans to enroll one of her workers. Lindie, thank you for your presence here today.]

Hon Speaker, for us it is important to look after the safety of our workers and it remains a priority for this Department, and for this reason I work very closely with the hon Minister of Police Oversight and Community Safety and we recently addressed a meeting in the West Coast. Hon Speaker, investment in Agri-workers is one of the best investments, and that is why I want to ask Mr Kobie van Breda to please stand. This is a man that builds tractors. He takes people from the street with no knowledge and turns them into productive tractor makers, builders, engines, assembling. He has not only done that with unemployed people, he took them even overseas, and so I am proud of the work of Mr Kobie van Breda. He is building South African based tractors, so that we do not have to import all these tractors. Kobie, you and your colleague, thank you for the work that you do, to invest in the skills and the development of people. I went to his factory and I saw people. The day when I went to his factory he said, “look at this man, he was unemployed, knocking on the door, just watching, he is a cleaner, watching what was happening.” Today that man is assembling tractors and engine parts. We salute you, Mr Kobie van Breda.

Hon Speaker, let us look at sustainable resource use management as we go forward because agriculture is “stepping up”. LandCare sub-programme plans to render 1 100 technical services to promote sustainable use and management of natural agricultural resources. 30 000 hectares of agricultural land will be rehabilitated. 1 100 green jobs, together with my colleague of Environmental Affairs will be created, and 30 farm management plans will be

developed.

†Landbouprodusente-ondersteuning- en ontwikkeling - die Departement sal voortgaan met die implimentering van die kommoditeitsbenadering oor die volgende drie jaar. Ons sal ook MOUs onderteken met die verskillende kommoditeitsorganisasies. Dit sal gebeur binne die volgende 100 dae. Een so ‘n belangrike kommoditeit, agb lede van hierdie Huis, is die Wolkwekersvereniging, verteenwoordig deur die hoofbestuurder, al die pad van die Vrystaat, mnr Dan Kriek wat vandag hier by ons aansluit. Hy mag ook staan.

Mnr Dan Kriek is ‘n persoon wat spesialiseer in verskillende goed maar ook in diere. Hy is hoofsaaklik ‘n man vir die beeste, maar vandag het hy vir my gesê, “Minister, ek is ook nou in die skape.” 500 klein opkomende boere van die Wes-Kaap gaan hy oplei in die wolbedryf, in die wolkwekersbedryf, en u weet ons wol, agb Beauty, word uitgevoer Oos-Kaap toe. Daarvanaf gaan dit na die Ooste toe en dan kry jy ‘n lekker *jacket*. Maar dit begin by mnr Dan Kriek daar. So Dan, ek weet jy moet later vinnig weer terugvlieg na die Vrystaat toe. Groot dank en waardering van hierdie Parlement en vir die mense van die Wes-Kaap vir u bydrae. Die Departementshoof, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa het my reeds ingelig van jou vergadering wat jy gehad het ten opsigte van die Wolkwekersvereniging. Baie dankie, ons waardeer u.

Die herlewing van voorligting en adviesdienste sal vir ons ‘n prioriteit bly, saam met ons projekvenote, Casidra. Dr Keith du Plessis kan ook staan. Ek is

baie trots op die werksaamhede van Casidra, want hulle ondersteun 3 800 opkomende boere, en het ook 50 vaardigheidsprogramme gedoen en daar is ook baie ander belangrike werk. 2 750 huishoudings het hy ook ondersteun met voedselproduksie.

[Agricultural producers support and development - the Department will continue with the implementation of the commodity approach over the next three years. We will also sign MOUs with different commodity organizations. That will happen within the next 100 days. One such important commodity, hon members of this House, is the Wool Producers Association, represented by the General Manager, all the way from the Free State, Mr.Dan Kriek who is joining us here today. He may also stand up.

Mr Dan Kriek is a person who specializes in different things but also in animals. He is mainly a man for cattle, but he told me today, "Minister, I am also involved in sheep." 500 small emerging farmers from the Western Cape he's going to train in the wool industry, in the wool producers industry, and you know our wool, hon Beauty, is exported to the Eastern Cape. From there it goes to the East and then you get a nice jacket. But it starts with Mr. Dan Kriek there. So Dan, I know you have to fly back quickly to the Free State later. Great gratitude and appreciation from this Parliament and the people of the Western Cape for your contribution. The Head of Department, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa, already informed me of your meeting you had with regard to the Wool Producers Association. Thank you, we appreciate you.

The revival of guidance and advisory services will remain a priority for us

along with our project partners, Casidra. Dr Keith du Plessis can also stand up. I am very proud of the work of Casidra, because they support 3 800 emerging farmers, and also held 50 skills programmes and there is also other important work. He also supported 2 750 households with food production.]

Hon Speaker, veterinary service for me is very important. I have already reported in this House the great work of veterinary services, the Veterinary Provincial Laboratory, the accreditation of SANAS, and the DALRRD food safety and veterinary laboratory system. Agriculture is “stepping up”. I have already referred to the great work of the Veterinary Export Certification Office, I will not go there. I have already referred to the Memorandum of Understanding with commodity organisations; we are “stepping up”. I have already referred to the great work in terms of research and development, very important.

But Hon Speaker, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture has now signed a ground-breaking partnership with Case IH to advance research and technology development in agriculture. I first met them at NAMPO Bothaville in the Free State. This partnership will now boost research and precision agriculture, and precision farming, at seven of our research farms in the Western Cape to pave the way for economic growth and job creation. Jacques Coetzee, which side is he? Jacques Coetzee was earlier here today from Case IH, a very important partner in the Western Cape Department of Agriculture.

†Landbou ekonomiese ontwikkelingsinisiatiewe - marknavorsing is vir ons belangrik, ons werk met verskillende vennote om ons marktoegang te verbeter.

Agb lede, vanjaar gaan ons ook omtrent 30 000 studente beroepskwalifikasies gee vir veeplaasopsigter, tuinbou, plaasvoorman of -vrou, in daardie verband.

Agb Speaker, ek is trots dat vanjaar gaan ons weer in hierdie begroting geld opsy sit vir die [Agriculture economic development initiatives – market research is important to us, we work with different partners to improve our market access.

Hon members, this year we are going to provide about 30 000 students with career qualifications for livestock farm manager, horticulture, farm manager male or female, in that regard.

Hon Speaker, I'm proud that this year we are again in this Budget going to put money aside for the] Agri Worker of the Year comptetition 2025. Hon Speaker, I want to thank all the partners that are here today in this House. I am pleased that we are also joined here today by a PHD student, Azaar Cada, can you please stand? He is a PHD student studying Agriculture, and he is busy developing a digital twin to enhance traceability in the fruit supply chain. We welcome you to this House. We thank you for doing a PHD in agriculture, specifically in terms of developing a digital twin for the enhance traceability, because traceability is very important. From the farm to the

market, from the farm to the shelf, and people want to see what is happening, and that man that is sitting next to you knows everything about traceability, and if you want to know anything for your PHD about traceability, Mr Anton Kruger, Mecia Petersen... You are sitting next to the library of traceability in agriculture. Thank you.

Hon Speaker, I get the feeling in the House that they want me to conclude.

[Laughter.] I read the body language, I read the body language behind me, so I will comply. I therefore, Hon Speaker, I am pleased therefore to table for deliberation in the Western Cape Department of Agriculture our central Appropriation Budget of R1 (billion) for the 2025/2026 financial year, and I hereby confirm in this House by the authority given to me by this Cabinet that Agriculture is “stepping up” and beyond.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. I now recognise – can I just get an indication before I recognise the hon Nkondlo, hon Nkondlo, do you need the podium?

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: In that case, hon Nkondlo, I recognise you.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, colleagues and the people of the Western Cape. I wish the hon Minister would have also told us and maybe made us understand what he calls Agri-

workers, how many in his guest list has he invited here to also be represented, so that he can also speak about the issues here in the House.

An HON MEMBER: Yes [Inaudible.]

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): I wish he had also made mention of how many informal farmers that he would have invited and told a story of how his Department is actually attending to the issues in this very economy. It is unfortunate as we keep on raising – Minister, all we are asking from you and from this Provincial Government is a balance. Today we stand at a critical phase where we must speak hard truths about an agricultural sector that feeds our nation, but continues to starve its own workers of dignity and justice.

Actually, a CSIR study makes the point that 10 million tonnes of food go to waste every year, of which a third of that 1 million tonnes is what is produced annually. Actually a CSIR study says these results point to high levels of inefficiency in the food value chain in South Africa at a time when there is increasing food insecurity in South Africa. Let me further share with you, hon Minister, that what the study reveals, it tells us that the majority of South Africa's food losses and waste, actually 68% thereof, occur in the early stages of production, with 19% occurring during post-harvest handling and storage, and 49% during processing and packaging. Food waste at the consumption stage is only 18%, more than three times higher than previous estimates. In terms of commodity groups, it says:

“Cereals contribute 50% of the overall losses and waste, followed by fruit and vegetables at 19%, milk 14% and meat 9%.”

I raise this, hon Minister, to actually relate to the fact that, yes, you know when it comes to these issues we hear your rhetoric speaking about how passionate you are about these issues, but yet if you open your blue book, at page 575 we see that at Programme 3, where food security sits, actually its budget is the least of the four programmes, which is actually getting an increase, a 15% increase, and its budget is only R18,2 million, from R15,7 in the last financial year, and yet someone, if they were to say, “put your mouth where the money is”, actually when they look at this, they would not find this commitment that you are talking about in as far as food security in this province.

The only thing that we know you speak about when you talk about food security, you know is a string of food patterns; that is what in your view, you know, would resolve the hunger in our province. Whilst millions go hungry and workers face exploitation this Provincial Government is tabling a Budget that is decreased by over R285 million. The Budget before us is not just about money, it is also a moral failure, if you consider the human face of the very agricultural sector, which we must always point out and bring to this House when we talk about all these billions of rands, huge investments that you are talking about, you must always know that such billions are at the backdrop of human faces, women and children who work in these farms to ensure that the investment that you are talking about, the exports, the quality

of the exports, are actually on the backdrop of these families and farm workers that you forgot to actually invite into this Budget today.

It is a budget that protects privilege while punishing the poor; that safeguards commercial interest while sacrificing farm workers on the altar of profit. We reject this Budget, not out of political posturing, but because it fundamentally failed to transform an agricultural economy still rooted in the yesteryear's apartheid's bitter soil. The choice is clear, we can continue with an agricultural economy rooted in colonial exploitation, or we can finally build one based on justice, justice and shared prosperity. The ANC chooses justice, we choose transformation and we choose the people. Economic development and growth on the bedrock of a capitalist or market economy trajectory, must be allowed to give space also to an agile economic role of the State, so that it is able to protect the economies against capture, coercion, by big monopolies and oligarchs.

As I was listening to you, one of the things that I get scared of is that we do not want to be producing other Atul Gupta's that we have seen, you know through the State Capture in this country. We must be very sure about what many have written economies about, effecting and allocating a redistributive role that State must always play in the protection of public goods, in the protection of the ordinary citizens that remain vulnerable, where in a capitalist environment "a dog eats dog." The Western Cape's agricultural sector contributes a staggering R69 billion to our provincial economy, with R43,9 billion coming from beverages and tobacco alone, yet this wealth is

built on the broken backs of farm workers who still earn below minimum wage, who are still evicted from their homes when they dare to organise, who will face the indignity of the “dop” system in towns like Ceres, where alcohol replaces wages. [Interjection.]

Let me also share with you, from the Faculty of Health Sciences in the University of Cape Town here, they tell us on a study they have done, that in Gauteng Province, one in 40 children who enter Grade 1 have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. In the Western Cape the rate is double. So it is important that we look at the impacts and downstream effects in the Agri sector. It further says the wine industry has never fully accounted for its role in the “dop” system and the habituation of workers in rural communities to alcohol. In the Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces it says, between 5 and 10% of children entering school have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and there are areas in the Western Cape with clusters of higher Fetal Alcohol Syndrome rates than those found in earlier studies.

The question is, in your engagement with the captains of industry, the practitioners and experts, who some of them are here in this House – is this conversation part of what you are bringing to the fore? Because this issue is not only a public health issue, it is an economic issue, because the very farm workers that we talk about are human who also would like to see their children one day taking them out of the poverty cycle that they have endured.

This Department documents show that by the third Quarter of 2024, there

were 409 000 agri-processing workers employed in the province. 13,2% of all jobs in the province is in this sector, yet this Budget does nothing to address their precarious working conditions or provide pathways out of seasonal employment into permanent jobs with benefits, and I am sure if you were to talk to the South African Human Rights Commission, they will give you a long list of challenges from this province of farm workers, which if you are interested, I am sure you would be able to make a call to them.

There is no denying that AGOA has been so critical to our Agri exports, and thereby creating jobs. The facts are undeniable, nearly 30 000 Western Cape jobs depend on AGOA. Five of South Africa's top 10 AGOA exports come almost exclusively from our province, from the citrus, wine, preserved fruits, and more, yet this lifeline is now in grave danger, not because of National Government Policy only, but because of the reckless actions of the DA and its allies, AfriForum and Solidarity, and we have seen you and the Premier just crossing to the US, [Interjection.] but you are not telling us in your accountability, you know, what have you secured for us? [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Have you secured the AGOA for us, so that when we look for September, towards September, we can be assured that at least your trips were not wasteful expenditure, you have actually ensured that you have saved this particular industry. Because when farmers in the industry are talking they must ask you about the reckless statements that you have

been making about the economy of South Africa, that there is always, it is said, “action brings reaction.” [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yeah, yes, yes. Yeah.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): So as you had not known that you would had awoken Trump in the US, and today you are sitting with the challenge, here, and we have got a collective problem, all ourselves now having to face 30% tariffs from the very Trump that you very boldly, you know going to the US... [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): These groups actively campaigned in the United States, peddling dangerous myth of white genocide and land grabs, which are utterly lies that have severely damaged South Africa's international reputation and put AGOA at risk. This is not governance, this is economic sabotage that puts 25 000 jobs at risk. Where is the contingency plan if AGOA collapses? Where are the alternative markets? The silence from this Department and this Budget is defining!

You, MEC, your ill-advised visit to Taiwan, a diplomatically hostile act that ended the Chinese markets further demonstrates this Government's dangerous disregard of our agricultural economy. It is deeply concerning that while the Provincial Government and this Department have invested heavily in building

trade relations with China, a market that has been identified as critical for the province's agricultural growth, you as an MEC; the MEC of this Department has chosen to undermine these efforts with their ill-advised excursion to Taiwan. Through extensive research and collaboration with key industries, this Department has identified China as a critical and growing market for our agricultural exports, a fact emphasised by active initiatives, such as the R300 million chicken feed export agreement pending avian flu clearance and the GACC approval, the South African table grapes China market development campaign and proven China trade mission, I am not sure whether you have consulted the industry when you made your reckless statements.

Given this high stakes investment, MEC Meyer's decision to undermine the One-China Policy, a cornerstone of diplomatic relations with one of our biggest trading partners, is not only irresponsible, but economically reckless, and here we are this morning, we have been taught by the Premier that we must actually rein in our former Ambassador Rasool, and he fails to do just that with his own colleague here. This is the double standards and speaking on both sides of the mouth of the ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Nkondlo, please take your seat. Hon Walters, is that a point of order?

Mr T C R WALTERS (DA): Hon Chair, I just wondered whether the hon member is willing to take a question on foreign affairs.

The SPEAKER: I will ask the hon member if she is prepared. Hon member, are you prepared to take a question?

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): I do not have time for that.

The SPEAKER: The hon member is not prepared to take a question, hon Walters.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): We can have coffee over the road [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order members, I have ruled. Hon Nkondlo, you can continue.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Thank you. Thank you, hon Speaker. Such conduct cannot be ignored, it demands accountability. The MEC must explain how will he repair this damage or step aside for those who take the province's economic interest seriously. Hon Speaker, the hypocrisy of the DA on farm workers' rights is equally staggering. They posture as champions of the poor in National Parliament, while at the same time fighting against the minimum wage in this particular province. [Interjection.]

We heard one of them, and the member is here this morning, talking here, he does not have a clue about working class issues, talking about [Inaudible.] and worker rights. Yet here, in this province, they have refused what is due

to workers when you look at minimum wage, and minimum wage does not even, if you look at cost escalation, actually give much income for these farm workers. They challenge the National Budget not to uplift the marginalised, but protect elite interest here in this particular province. As part of its main services the Department lists promoting safety in rural areas and on farms through partnerships with all three spheres of Government and organised agriculture towards a safe and sustainable agricultural sector. That is what is said by the Department.

It must be made clear that to the DA safety in rural areas and farms means safety of commercial farmers and not the farm workers and their families. The DA jumped to mobilise millions of the so-called farm safety when white farmers demanded protection, yet they turn a blind eye to the daily dangers faced by Agri-workers. [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Where is the Budget allocation for safe transport when workers are forced to travel in overloaded, unroadworthy and unsafe trucks? Currently we have got a situation in Mamre, to which the Chairperson of this committee has not even attended to, where livelihoods of informal farmers is actually under threat. Where is the enforcement of the extension of security of the Tenure Act to prevent illegal evictions in farms?

So, hon Speaker, looking at my time, I wish to mention that informality is

one of the issues that actually is here to stay with us, and those that are
[Interjection.] [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Nkondlo, your time has expired, please conclude.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): ... this Department actually attend to their
plight. Thank you, hon Chair. [Interjection.] [Inaudible.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Nkondlo. I now recognise the hon
Constable on the hybrid system.

Mr N CONSTABLE (PA): Good afternoon, hon Speaker, and thank you very
much for the opportunity. Hon Speaker, the Patriotic Alliance maintains our
stance with the call [Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Constable, please just give me a second. Hon members,
there is a member on the virtual platform. I am struggling to hear and I am
sure that the members in the gallery are also not able to hear, so can I please
ask that you afford the member an opportunity to make his submission. Hon
Constable, you may continue.

Mr N CONSTABLE (PA): Thank you, hon Speaker. We maintain our call
with the fair and equal distribution of grant funding within this Department.
Hon Speaker, with regards to the agricultural Producer Support and
Development Programme, I believe and we believe that there must be more

emphasis on this programme, more funding for small farmers support, specifically in rural areas. Hon Speaker, we also want to implore the MEC and the Department for the funding of R5 million, specifically for the assistant agriculture practitioners. We hope that this practitioners will be utilised correctly and equally throughout the regions. We also welcome the support to the 3 800 farmers. But hon Speaker, let us be clear that we need this money and this support to flow through all the regions, specifically in the rural areas, and I like the way MEC Meyer is talking about rural development, because this is where the emphasis must be.

Hon Speaker, then there is an issue with regards to illegal foreigners on farms, I believe and we believe that this Department and other Departments and this Parliament must look into the framework with regard to the regulation with illegal foreigners, because they are taking the work opportunities of actual South Africans.

With regard to the Agriculture Education and Training system, thanks for this, we believe this needs more investment because this programme must be rolled out, hon Speaker, to rural areas, because transportation and the move from a rural area to, like Stellenbosch, it is a costly exercise and we need to maybe duplicate this kind of programmes within other regions so that it is accessible for local and rural people to do so.

The risk reduction with regards to the flooding system, I do not believe we are doing enough. The MEC and this Department must do more and prepare

more and make sure that there is more funding available, so that when flooding comes, that we can support specifically the small farmers in the rural areas. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Constable. Hon members, just for noting and in terms of the Speakers' List, I have received an apology from hon Lithakong, so I will move on to the hon Jacobs.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, agriculture in the Western Cape is one of the cornerstones when it comes to food security in South Africa, but also as an employer for both full time and seasonal. In that regard we must see that the Department invest in small scale farmers in the province to allow for economic growth. This will also assist in job creation and boost local economic development. Hon Speaker, investment in small scale farming and agriculture at last must be a priority. People need sustainable jobs and permanent employment.

We also want to appeal to the Department that funding be made available to strengthen the Legal Department to make sure that farmers stop with the illegal evictions, which is still a serious, serious problem here in the Western Cape. The Department also has a moral obligation to the people of the Western Cape to make sure that they do not employ foreign nationals, and make sure local communities are employed, as they were the first nation that was found here on the farms.

Hon Speaker, the Department must also have some inspectors to visit these farms often, not just like the DA councillors that go and visit and check the people's ID's and after that they do not see them anymore, but they must go there and see the living conditions of these Coloured farm workers. Hon Speaker, these people they get treated as if they are nothing, waiting to be replaced by some cheap foreign labour or Black replacements.

Now the President in his SONA 2025 was very clear on the mandate that cannabis is an agricultural business and it should be prioritised. Now if we can shift the focus and we can focus on the medicinal values of this plant, this can be a regulated process that can enhance the lives of many, many, many, poor people, †maar nou is dit dan nou net weer wit *farmers* wat die *licences* kry [but now it is again only White farmers who get the licences.] Hon Speaker, let us share the wealth of this country equal to all without regards to race. [Inaudible.] .

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Jacobs. Hon Sayed, is that a point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: No hon Chair, just a technical issue, I have been monitoring now for the past few speeches, it seems to me that there is – I do not know if maybe the technical team can just try to sort out the clock, it seems to me like the clock is not 100% working. Sometimes you will find that the time moves forward... I just think if they can just double check. I am not saying that there is anything untoward, but if

the team can just double check, thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: We do not want the hon members to lose valuable time, thank you.

The SPEAKER: No, no, absolutely. I am... It is my job to ensure that the hon members have a voice and that your time as per the Speakers' List is protected. Just for the record hon members, there is a big clock in front of me as well as a manual clock on the table, and the clock reflects exactly the same from the manual clock to the digital clock that is displayed. So I am comfortable that the clock is working. With that being said, I now recognise the hon Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AL JAMA-AH): Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, agriculture is the big one of the Western Cape economy, yet the very people who sustain this industry, our farmers and farm workers are struggling against an unjust system. The DA-led Provincial Government continues to boast about agricultural growth, but let us talk about the reality on the ground. Small scale farmers, particularly black and emerging farmers are being left behind. The DA claims to support transformation, yet most of the agriculture funding and resources still benefit commercial farmers who have been in the industry for generations. Where is the real effort to level the playing field? Where is the targeted support for land reform beneficiaries?

Water security remains ...

The SPEAKER: Hon Brinkhuis, I am not able to hear you. Hon Brinkhuis? Hon members, in the interest of time, I am... Hon Brinkhuis, for the third time...

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AL JAMA-AH): Speaker, am I audible?

The SPEAKER: Now you are audible, saved by the bell, you may continue.

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AL JAMA-AH): Thank you, hon Speaker, and there is the issue of farm workers, many of whom still live in dire conditions, limited access to proper housing, healthcare and fair wages. The DA will say that agriculture is thriving, but at what cost? Who truly benefits from their policies? Hon Speaker, the Western Cape has the potential to lead the country in sustainable inclusive agriculture, but that will require [Inaudible.] that prioritises all farmers, not just a privileged few. We must push for fair land redistribution, better access to [Inaudible] for small farmers and long term solutions to water scarcity. Only then can we truly say that agriculture is the province, in the province [Inaudible] all its people, not just...

The SPEAKER: Hon Brinkhuis, I am losing you again. Hon Brinkhuis, for the third time, hon Brinkhuis, with three seconds remaining of your time... I am now going to move on to the hon Masipa.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Hon Speaker, I rise today in support of a Budget that puts farmers first, a Budget that recognises agriculture as the backbone of our economy and the key to food security for millions of South Africans. At the outset I must acknowledge the hon Minister and his Department for their diligent work in crafting the Department's Strategic Plan. Hon Speaker, I am not going to go through all the speeches, I will be jumping some areas.

This week the ANC pushed through a VAT increase that will hit poor households hardest. It is what I call a reverse “stokvel”, collecting from the poor to distribute to the politically connected on the left. After the VBS scandal that stole pensioners’ life savings, after the obscene expenditure on Nkandla, this latest move shows the ANC has perfected the art of taking from those who have least to give.

Hon Speaker, let me be unequivocal, raising VAT does not stimulate economic growth, in fact it does precisely the opposite. When smallholder and commercial farmers see their customers’ purchasing power decline, they cut jobs; and when unemployment rises, the social fabric of our farming communities begin to tear, as hon Nkondlo was highlighting the issues. This is not sound economic management, it is desperation disguised in policy. The Western Cape offers a fundamentally different approach. The Western Cape Department of Agriculture Strategic Plan understands that sustainable growth comes from empowerment, not extraction.

The hon Minister has identified his four key priority areas that will drive

agricultural growth, which include business support, agricultural development food security and nutrition. What makes these four key priorities different is how they were created. Not through bureaucratic decree, but through engagement with those on the ground, farmers and farm workers, who really understand the challenges that they are faced with, who informed these decisions, reinforcing the Western Cape Government's commitment to listening and acting in the best interests of the sector.

This participatory approach has produced measurable and accountable targets. Take our commitment to food security for example, we are not just pledging improved access to food, we are implementing specific programmes to increase production capacity among smallholder farmers, it has been proven by the survey that was done to assess the land reform farms as productivity, improve distribution network and enhance nutritional education. Similarly our business support initiatives include concrete steps to reduce red tape, improve access to financing, and connect farmers with new markets.

The importance of this work becomes even clearer when we examine South Africa's performance in the final Malabo Declaration's Bi-Annual Review. Scoring just 4 out of 10, the review shows South Africa in the last 10 years, and the nine wasted years, dangerously short of our continental commitments, yet within this disappointing results we do find important success that prove progress is possible. Our 84,5 score on agricultural data usage, demonstrates world-class capacity for monitoring and evaluation. In addition almost half of our farmers are showing climate resilience. Furthermore South Africa's

perfect 100% score on public private partnership for smallholder support provides a model for other countries to follow.

However the review also reveals critical gaps that South Africa must address with urgency, and I am glad that the industry is here with us today, that only 12,1% of farmers have access to advisory services, that just 7,6% of youth are entering agriculture, and our trade facilitation scored 40,7 out of 100, it shows how much work remains to integrate South African farmers into continental value chain.

This brings us to the Kampala Declaration, which will guide African agricultural development through 2035. Its ambitious targets include the 45% increase in agri-food output and the elimination of trade barriers demand equally ambitious responses. The Western Cape through Wesgro is uniquely positioned to lead South Africa's engagement with this new continental framework. The Western Cape's established trade networks, advanced agricultural sector and proven track record in public private partnership, make us the ideal gateway to inter-African agricultural trade. To improve on intra-Africa agricultural trade, something that this august House can consider is to support the Minister's work through the establishment of an Intra-Africa Provincial Agricultural Trade Parliamentary Network. This will encourage and improve collaboration, policy harmonisation, and promote cross-border trade across the province in the continent. To turn these ministerial strategic priorities into tangible outcomes, a R1 billion Budget allocation reflects the Department's commitment.

In summary, the following allocations have been secured. R305 million agricultural Producers Support and Development, R170 million for Veterinary Services, which the hon Minister has highlighted, the R155 million for Research and Technology, and the R47,2 million for Agricultural Economic Services. This will translate directly into farmer support programmes, infrastructure improvements and research initiatives.

Sustainable resource use and management received R300 million just days before the Budget was passed. Although late, we welcome the funding. Unlike the ANC, the Western Cape does not do fiscal dumping. We do not do that. We plan, we deliver, and we do not treat money like it is the last minute funeral catering. The Committee resolved to ask the hon Minister to request a rollover. Yet funding alone is not enough, hon members, we must also address systematic barriers to implementation. The Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme's transition from Schedule 4 to Schedule 5 of the PFMA, has created bureaucratic bottlenecks that delay critical funding reaching farmers; these administrative hurdles do not just frustrate, they actively harm agricultural development, which is why this framework must be reviewed as a matter of urgency, because when support is delayed, opportunities in farming are lost.

Hon Speaker, the contrast between these two approaches could not be clearer. On one hand we see a National Government that taxes first and thinks later, that imposes policies without proper consultation and that treats citizens as

resources of revenue rather than partners in development. On the other hand we have a Provincial Government that listens before it acts, that invests in potential rather than extract you from the poor; that understands that true empowerment comes from enabling people to build their own prosperity. This farmer focused Budget embodies that philosophy. It is a Budget that is built on consultation designed for impact and accountable to the results. It recognises that agriculture is not just another economic sector; it is the foundation for food security, the backbone of rural economies, and the key to unlocking South Africa's potential. To this end, hon members, hon Speaker, hon Minister, the DA support this farmer focussed Budget. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Masipa. Hon Minister, would you like the podium?

The SPEAKER: Then I recognise you, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Thank you, hon Speaker, and thank you to all of our hon members who took part in the debate, and thank you to members in the gallery and people that came all the way to listen to this debate.

I want to thank the hon member Nkondlo, because I agree with some of the issues that she raised, specifically the issue of food security and nutrition; the issue of hunger that she raised, and also show signs of appreciation of her R69 billion Gross Value Added of agriculture, that was what she was saying.

I agree that issues regarding Fetal Alcohol Syndrome must be a permanent matter on the agenda.

I am also equally concerned, as she is, in terms of the food waste that happens at different levels, but I can assure you the industry, particularly the agri-processing industry, particularly in terms of their production capabilities are looking at these matters, even on farm matters, but these are still matters, not only in South Africa, but this is a global phenomenon, but we all have to look, you cannot have food insecurity and levels of wastage, so this is something that is continuously happening, that people try to, in terms of the business process, reengineer and try to improve the situation.

Hon Speaker, I am also particularly proud that Mr Breyton Milford, he was here; maybe he is out somewhere, that he is the Chief Executive Officer of agri-Expo. He recently invited me and Dr Mogale, together with the Royal Agricultural Commonwealth Society, and he will now be the host in the Western Cape of the 2026 Royal Agriculture Commonwealth Society Conference that will take place here in the Western Cape. This will be big, this will be massive, and I want to thank him for the work that he is already putting in.

I think one of the reasons of AGOA risk in 2025, Mr Jannie Strydom is absolutely correct, if AGOA is not renewed in September this year, it has major implications. But I am just reminded by the hon member, the Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, he said there is one way in which we can stop

this non-renewal of AGOA. The hon Minister gave me a brilliant idea, he says: “Minister, if the ANC can just stop their racist laws and policies, AGOA will come to South Africa.” So there is an option, stop all your nonsense and AGOA will be renewed. The hon member Marais is agreeing with me, but there is another excellent suggestion that I get from this House... By the way you must look at where the excellent suggestions come from. [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Another colleague right here behind me gave me another brilliant idea. He says if there is no capacity in the ANC to negotiate for AGOA, you must inform your National Government that the capacity to renegotiate AGOA is on this side of the House. [Interjection.]

I like the brilliant ideas, so I must listen to the hon member Noko, he said trade barriers, trade tariffs, renewable of agreement... Hon member Noko Masipa informed me that South Africa has little or no preferential trade agreements, another great idea from this side of the House. [Interjection.]

† ‘n AGB LID: Die *clever* kant.

[An HON MEMBER: The clever side.]

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Die *slim* kant. [Gelag.]

[The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: The clever side.] [Laughter.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I do not know...

† 'n AGB LID: Die slim kant.

[An HON MEMBER: The clever side.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: But, hon member, during my speech I referred to the issue of the droughts and the floods. Hon member Jannie Strydom went with me to see the impact of the floods on agriculture. Dr Keith du Plessis sees it all the time in the nature of his work. Ms Petersen sees it all the time in the work that she does. Climate change is real, and I want to announce in this House that the Mediterranean Climate Action Partnership, a global partnership, is visiting us from 6 – 10 May, and the hon Minister of Environmental Affairs from the State of California will be arriving at Cape Town and we will have an event also at the official residence of the Premier, and I want to thank the Department of Environmental Affairs, Karen Shippey in particular, and Agriculture, Dr Ilse Trautmann for the great work.

If you have proper intellect, capacity, skills and diplomacy, you get the R2 million. Not from this Budget, from money, from outside that people are willing to give to the Mediterranean. †Almal geld van buitelandse donateurs, vrywilligers. [All money from foreign donors, volunteers.]

Mr Adam du Plooy from the Bergrivier Municipality, thank you for being

here and thank you for the work that you do in Bergrivier Municipality...

Mr Naike all the way from Gauteng, could you please stand? Thank you, sir
[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: I am from the Western Cape.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: ... for seeing the opportunities here in the Western Cape [Interjection.] We value your presence here today. I appreciate that Professor Bayat has informed me that you would come here, but Professor Bayat also told me that you are willing to make an investment in the Agri Worker competition, and I want to announce that Mr Naike will give R100 000 towards the Agri Worker competition this year.

So the support of our Agri-workers, for the departments, we are the only province that does this. When people see your money is not stolen, they come and invest here. We also budget for food security through the two grants that you are familiar with, food insecurity, yes, we deal with that in the Growth for Jobs; that is why we try to increase access to our “One Home, One Garden.”

The first issues that you raised are very important, we provide support through Jackie Pandaram through the Farm Worker Development, the only one in South Africa. The AGOA matters, it is very important. The ANC uses this megaphone diplomacy. In Afrikaans † “*grootbek*” [loud mouth]

[Laughter.] What we believe is silent diplomacy, behind the scene, diplomatic engagements meet here, not this megaphone [Interjection.]

† 'n AGB LID: Grootbek

[An HON MEMBER: Loud mouth]

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Daarsy, jy verstaan dit [The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: There you go, you understand it] brother. Also, I think it is important that we understand the trade relationships. We are busy – I was hearing a call for a trade policy. The trade policy is being developed, in the meantime trade negotiations. There are certain things we will talk about later, but there are some developments that are happening, and I will fully brief the Standing Committee led by the hon member Noko Masipa.

About the illegal evictions, this is the mandate of the National Department, but if you bring this under attention, we will also intervene through the ESTA inspection on farms. We support Agri-workers through the Farm Worker Development. We have set R5 million aside for agricultural assistant practises. We will appoint 14 young people to augment our extension services. APSD, yes, we need more funding, however the current fiscal environment – I heard some people say we need more money, I agree. Blended financing is one of the options.

Hon Brinkhuis, thank you for your input. We support the land reform. The only Government that has a successful record of land reform is this

Government. The previous national hon Minister was asked in the National Assembly, “tell us about land reform by the National Government”, she gave a report and she said under the ANC, land reform failed by 90%. [Interjection.]

Thoko Didiza replied, I like her because she is honest, and so we did the same study here, hon member, and our land reform [Interjection.]

† ‘n AGB LID: Los maar die wiskunde.

[An HON MEMBER: Leave the maths.]

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Wiskunde [The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Maths] is not the strength of the ANC. [Interjection.]

† ‘n AGB LID: Wiskunde [Onduidelik.]

[An HON MEMBER: Maths][Inaudible.]

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU: Die ANC het baie sterk punte maar wiskunde is nie een van hulle nie.

[The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: The ANC has many strong points but maths is not one of them.]

\

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: That is why we have maths and

science.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I want to conclude. [Interjection.]

83% success rate for land reform conducted, independent study, not us, no, independent, and Angie Motshekga was not near the exercise, and so this is very important, we will continue with that. I know you spoke about the CanPlan, we have a successful CanPlan, but the hon Minister Aaron Motsoaledi, he issued regulations, he want to stop the cannabis and hemp that we can use for by-products, and the health industry, it can add R28 billion to the economy, and here you have a National hon Minister that stopped the CanPlan, that cannabis industry, and I wrote to him, I said you make a mistake, you must withdraw it, and I am so happy that the wisdom arrived, and the plan is – the regulations has been withdrawn [Interjection.]

We agree, and also I want to conclude, I see the members of this House, their body language says, “Minister, conclude.” I am happy to do so. I want to thank my HOD, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa. You know Heads of Department are appointed for five years, after which you have to reconsider whether you want to go on or not. Based on the record of delivery that I tabled in this House, based on his excellent and exceptional skills and good relationship with the industry, I am happy now in my Budget Vote, to announce that Dr Mogale will continue to lead this Department for the next five years.

I want to thank my Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Mr Noko Masipa, for doing outstanding work. He understands the industry, but also understands the role-players. I learn a lot from him. I want to thank the role-players in the industry that are here and members in the gallery, and thank you Mary, you did an outstanding job with the exhibition together with Daniel and all the other people downstairs. That was an excellent exhibition. †Die Minister sê dankie vir die lekker sop. [The Minister says thank you for the delicious soup.]

Agri-processing Bongiswa... I want to thank also the hon Minister of Finance for tabling an excellent Budget. I want to thank the Premier because he is a member of the Budget Policy Committee, together with also the Leader of Government Business and the hon Minister of Health and Education and hon Minister Bredell. I want to thank them, and my Cabinet colleagues. I want to thank my wife. She asked me to be a little bit quieter today and I tried to do that. She will tell me tonight whether I was quiet. [Laughter.] Depending on her answer tonight, I may not come back to work tomorrow. [Laughter.] But I want to thank her and my two sons. My one son is in the audience. I want to thank them.

But I also want to thank my Office staff, the head of my Office, Marietjie van Jaarsveld. My media liaison officer this year had to write two speeches, Daniel Johnson, excellent speeches, excellent cooperation with the two departments, and I want to thank both Department of DEDAT and the

Department of Agriculture, as well as the two heads of communication, Mr Joe Marks also, and to Mary. I want to also thank my private secretary Ms Amanda Vos, outstanding individual. I want to also thank Annelie there by the Office of the HOD, as well as Sydney, as well as Chrissie, and also all the support staff in my Office. By the looks of my wife, I have to sit down. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much hon Minister. Hon members that concludes the debate on this Vote. The House will now suspend for 2 minutes to allow the guests of hon Minister Bredell to enter the Chambers; and the guests of hon Minister Meyer to leave if they so wish.

The House is suspended.

[Business of the House resumed at 15:30]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister Bredell, do you have any guests that will be arriving? Hon members, we will proceed at this particular time and I will see the Secretary to read the following Order.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 9: Environmental Affairs and Development Planning – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2–2025]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Hon Premier, hon members of this Cabinet, hon Deputy Speaker, members of the House. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Budget for the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning for the 2025/26 financial year.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we saw the Los Angeles fires at the start of this year and recently also in South Korea, another first world country. These wildfires are examples of climate change and how even the richest and most advanced countries in the world are struggling to cope with natural disasters when they happen. Locally we also experience climate change and the associated challenges. Winter storms have destroyed infrastructure in recent years, where we are challenged with wildfires every summer and the next drought is only one dry winter away. Hon Deputy Speaker, we also know that our best strategy to prevent and minimise the impact of climate related events is by maintaining the health of our natural ecosystems as best we can.

Hon Deputy Speaker, our province has a growing population and more people means more pressure on the environment, as well as basic services planning and regulating human activities, with the natural environment front in mind it is more important than ever before. Biodiversity is being threatened on a global scale and in the Western Cape we must also confront this reality. As a province we are blessed with more than 10 000 plant species, of which 68% is endemic. Unfortunately many of these are threatened, with 334 species categorised as critically endangered. Looking at our animal kingdom, 47

species are recognised as being critically endangered.

To address these challenges it is crucial that we grow our economy in a manner that is in balance with, and the protection of our biodiversity and ecological systems. If we get this balance right, we will not only support sustainable economic growth, but we will also be future proofing our province through improved disaster and climate change resilience.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is against this background that we present the 2025/2026 Budget, Vote 9 is allocated R 670 million for the 25/26 financial year. This is split between the Department, R338 million, and CapeNature R332 million.

In terms of the Department, the following allocations are being made per programme:

- Environmental policy planning and coordination, R38,1 million.
- Compliance and enforcement R36,6 million.
- Environmental quality management, R94 million.
- Biodiversity management, R17,2 million.
- Environmental empowerment services, R836 000.
- Development planning, R72 million.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are also making earmarked allocations in support of the Western Cape overarching drive in creating an enabling environment for

the private sector to grow the economy and create jobs. As such we will continue with our housing market study and budget of R1 million towards the completion of the second round of studies that have been developed for seven municipalities in the Western Cape. These studies provide invaluable information for municipalities and property developers on housing dynamics in a specific region.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the ISSP programme continues to implement neighbourhood living projects that demonstrate how settlements can be improved and better integrated, and how the public realm is a key enabler for safety, dignity and well-being. The programme will receive R14,2 million to implement projects in 12 municipalities this year. Environmental impact studies often form the foundation of starting blocks for new business ventures. As a Government we do not want to make things more difficult for investors, so if we can improve the efficiency with which we manage this regulatory function, everyone benefits. R4,3 million is earmarked for higher efficiencies in our EIA processes.

Hon Deputy Speaker, pollution of landfill sites and dysfunctional wastewater works are easy to see and to smell. Air quality is more difficult to detect and to monitor, but not any less important. We have earmarked R5,5 million for essential repairs and maintenance to our network of air quality monitoring stations.

Clean energy is one of the building blocks for a prosperous and healthy

Western Cape in the future. As such we have earmarked R9,5 million for the Green Economy Ecosystem Support GEES programme to continue providing technical support to the private sector and municipalities where green energy and water projects are concerned.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Department has earmarked R3 million for catalytic water projects that will support economic growth and jobs in line with the "Growth for Jobs Strategy."

CapeNature will fund the following programmes:

- Biodiversity capabilities, R45,6 million.
- Conservation operations, R194,8 million.
- Eco-tourism and access, R118,7 million.

Hon Deputy Speaker, wildfires are part of our natural environment, but if we do not manage it, it becomes a threat to human lives and infrastructure. The Western Cape saw 32 187 hectares of land burned from October 2024 to the end of February 2025. CapeNature managed reserves have borne the brunt, with nearly 19 000 hectares affected. CapeNature has earmarked R19,5 million for disaster prevention measures, such as the management of wildfires and floods in this Budget.

CapeNature Tourism facilities are world class and truly something to be proud of if you are a resident of the Western Cape. Our facilities suffered

extensive damage during the past two winter seasons and we need to do a lot more work to maintain the high standards we associate with CapeNature. As such, R42 million is earmarked for essential upgrades and maintenance to its facilities for this financial year.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to thank my HOD Gerber and the CEO Dr Ashley Naidoo, and their respective senior management teams, who together with all dedicated officials, have gone to great lengths to find ways to support the overarching provincial strategies of growth and jobs within the limits of our Budget. With that I table my Budget. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister Bredell. I recognise the hon Stoffel.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): [Inaudible .]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will get assistance for you, hon member Stoffel.

†Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Bring podium

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Serjeant-at-Arms, the podium is here in front. Thank you so much, hon member. Hon Stoffel, as soon as you commence the time will then tick.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Thank you hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, colleagues and distinguished guests. I rise today on behalf of the African National Congress to firmly reject the proposed Budget for the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning. This Budget represents a profound failure to address the most pressing environmental developmental challenges faced in our province. I want to express our deep disappointment in how this Budget neglects constitutional obligations, abandons vulnerable communities and undermines our collective future. This Budget is not just weak; it is an insult to the people of the Western Cape and a direct threat to our environment.

The MEC, hon Anton Bredell, has shown us time and time again that he is either unwilling or incapable of doing his job. Under his leadership this Department has become a symbol of neglect, incompetence and broken promises. Let me be clear upfront. The ANC takes environmental protection seriously. At the national level our Government have passed the Climate Change Act [Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Stoffel, are you able to take your seat?

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, I am not sure if the hon member is aware that she is imputing improper motives on the hon Minister Bredell? Call her to order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Stoffel, this is a political debate; however it

is very clear that if there is any particular matter in terms of Rule 59(2) a substantive motion can be brought. Can you withdraw and then proceed?

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): I withdraw. Understand this leadership, hon Deputy Speaker, this Department have become a symbol of neglect and incompetency and broken promises. Let me be clear upfront. The African National Congress takes environmental protection seriously. At the national level, our Government have passed Climate Change Act 22 of 2024, a bold and necessary Law that commits South Africa to tackle climate change head on. This Act is not just word on paper; it is a blueprint for real action. It ensures that our country moves towards a low carbon climate resilient future, while creating jobs and protecting our natural resources. The Act empowers us to fight pollution, invest in renewable energy, and build a sustainable economy that works for all South Africans.

Yet here in the Western Cape the MEC of the Department is dragging his feet. While the ANC-led National Government is pushing forward with strong climate change policies, the Western Cape Government is moving backwards. This Budget proves it. There is no urgency, no vision and no real commitment to protecting our environment. Instead, we see the same old excuses, the same lack of funding and the same failure to act.

One of the most glaring failures of the Department and the entire Western Cape Government is refusal to appoint a Commissioner for the Environment. This is not an oversight; it is a deliberate violation of our constitutional duty.

The Commissioner is supposed to uphold polluters accountable and force environmental laws and protect our natural heritage. Without this Office there is no real oversight. Without this Office big corporations and reckless developers can do whatever they want, leaving our rivers, oceans and wildlife to suffer. The MEC knows that. Yet he does nothing. How can we trust him to protect our environment when he refuses even to establish the institution meant to safeguard it?

Then there is this crisis in our informal settlements, a serious crisis in our informal settlements. The uncontrolled growth of these settlements is destroying our environment, yet the Provincial Government has no real plan to stop it. We already lost the Driftsands Nature Reserve because of this Government in action. How many more protected areas must be destroyed before this DA Government wakes up? The Department of Infrastructure State of Environment Outlook Report 2024 shows the terrible conditions of these settlements, illegal dumping, raw sewage in the streets, and polluted waterways.

But instead of increasing funding for waste management and sanitation, this Budget cut transfers to municipalities. This is not just neglect; it is a direct attack on the poorest and the most vulnerable communities, and what about the sewage crisis at our beaches? Every day millions of litres of untreated waste are pumped into our seas. Beaches are closed, marine life is poisoned, and people's health is put at risk, yet the Department does almost nothing.

The compliance and enforcement programme which is supposed to stop the pollution is given only R36 million, nowhere near enough to do its job. Where is the urgency? Where is the leadership? The MEC should be holding polluters accountable, but instead he looks the other way whilst our oceans turn into dumping grounds. We have been raising this matter here within these walls and Chambers, we have said that to the MEC, “call your municipalities to come and explain the plans to address this crisis.’ He chooses to be the protector of this environmental criminal at the expense of our environment and the well-being of our people. This is wrong MEC and you know it too.

Hon Deputy Speaker, on climate change the Department’s failure is even more shocking. The ANC Climate Change Act sets clear targets for reducing emission and building resilience. [Interjection.] It supports renewal energy, protects communities from disasters and creates green jobs. But the Western Cape Government is not keeping up. [Interjection.] The biggest problem with the Budget is where the money goes. A shocking 82% is spent on salaries, leaving only 17% for actual service delivery. This is not just poor planning, it is a disgrace. Critical positions remain empty and force teams are understaffed and the key projects are underfunded. The MEC is paying bureaucrats instead of protecting the environment. How can we expect this Department to function when almost all its money goes to salary instead of solutions? [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yeah.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): We remain deeply concerned about the 14,73 decrease in the Department's own receipt which have fallen to 3 million. This is a clear sign of lack of financial oversight, whilst the Department claims to prioritise environment health; its actions tell a different story. How do you explain the environmental quality management programme, it is only allocated R93 million. This underfunding is deliberate and its aim to weaken the capacity of the Department to do its job. The R118 million allocation to monitor 38 water sites is a step in the right direction, MEC, but why is there no similar allocation to monitor the sewage being dumped in our oceans? The pollution in our marine environment is just as critical as the quality of our inland water sources. The Department's selective focus reveals disturbing patterns of neglecting the most visible and harmful environment violations. The ANC commenced the Director of Environmental Law Enforcement for issuing a pre-directive to the City of Cape Town to clean up the dumping crisis in Du Noon last year; however it is deeply disappointing that it took a pre-directive to force the City of Cape Town to do the job. What a shame. The situation in Du Noon, where heaps of rotten garbage, plastic waste and polluted water threatened the health of residents, should never have been allowed to reach this point.

Even more concerning is the lack of continuous monitoring in informal settlements. The Department cannot wait for conditions to become unbearable before acting. Proactive measures and regular inspections are needed to prevent such environmental and health disasters. The Department claims to

prioritise spatial transformation and inclusive development, but the Budget tells a different story. There is no significant investment in upgrading formal settlements despite the clear evidence of their environmental and social impact. There is no clear plan for sustainable housing.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we cannot ignore the disturbing link between environmental degradation and gender based violence highlighted in the 2024 State of Environment Outlook Report. The report reveals that communities where the environment is neglected, where sewage flood streets, waste are piled up and natural resources are destroyed, incidents of gender based violence increase. This is not just an environmental crisis; it is a human rights emergency. When women and children are forced to walk long distances for clean water through unsafe areas, and when overcrowded informal settlements lack lighting and sanitation, their vulnerability to violence increases. Yet this Budget does nothing to address this [Inaudible] injustices.

Where are the targeted programmes to make this community safer? Where is the investment in green space, proper lighting and sanitation that could protect women and girls? The MEC's failure to act on these findings shows a callous disregard for both our environment and the most vulnerable amongst us. Environmental justice cannot be achieved without gender justice, and this Government is delivering neither. If the Department was serious about the environmental justice, it would invest in communities most affected by pollution and neglect. Instead the Budget abandons them. The ANC will not

stand for this, we demand better. We demand a Budget that will address the following:

- Funds the Commissioner for the Environment to hold polluters accountable.
- Invests in informal settlement to stop environmental destruction.
- Cracks down on sewage pollution with proper enforcement.
- Supports climate action with real funding, not empty promises.
- Puts service delivery ahead of bloated salaries.

The ANC has shown its commitment to the environment through the Climate Change Act, now it is time for the Western Cape Government to do its part. This Budget is a failure and we reject it. The people of the province deserve a government that actually cares about their future. Together with this speech, as the ANC, as the African National Congress, we are very serious.

Currently, all of us as we sit here, some of us were residing in these areas, but because of this problem that we are facing, we chose to move for better avenues. This problem of informal settlements, drowning in illegal dumping, unhygienic situations that we as members of this Parliament cannot even tolerate in your yard, but we expect those people must accept this condition. [Interjection.] It is unacceptable from all of us in this House, and we want to plea to the Government and the hon Minister of Environmental Affairs. MEC, if you go to these small areas, that situation that is there currently is unacceptable. We are pleading to you, bring the Environmental

Commissioner, so that that Commissioner can go to that areas, identify these areas and learn where people cannot occupy it, because currently people are occupying land that is not supposed to be occupied. Where there are no services and we are sitting in this crisis, so we believe you can do something. So we trust, MEC, you will go to these areas and stop just looking into the CBD. The CBD is covered, but that areas there, they need our attention [Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yeah.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): ... in terms of this problem that we are facing. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Stoffel. Online, I recognise the hon Constable.

Mr N CONSTABLE (PA): Hon Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. Hon Deputy Speaker, looking at the Budget, I do not believe that the Budget allocation is enough for the MEC to do his work, and I am not saying it is the MEC's problem, this is a budgetary problem.

Disaster management is a big concern in all our regions. Water security becomes a problem, and I think there needs to be a greater intervention with regards to the Karoo National Park and the conversation between this Government and the National Department with regards to water resources and

water securities within the Central Karoo, specifically the Beaufort West area.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the focus areas of this Department is very broad, but one that catches the eye quickly, is the promotion of sustainable spatial planning. I do not see, hon Deputy Speaker, in this Budget, how is this Department going to assist municipalities specifically with regards to spatial planning; also the waste management planning system, and with regards to the waste licences, we learned last week, hon Deputy Speaker, that 14 municipalities' waste facilities are unlicensed. So how will this Budget and this Department assist municipalities in that regard?

Hon Deputy Speaker, we also call on the Department to assist municipalities specifically with regards to education, education in the waste area, education with regards to environmental programmes, education with regards to waste facilities and how to promote a clean environment. So the Budget also needs to speak to that regard.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we, as the Patriotic Alliance, we support this Vote, but we need to emphasise also that we also support the African National Congress with regards to the environmental and the appointment of the Environmental Commissioner. This is very much a legislative requirement that this Government needs to do. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Constable. I recognise the hon Marais.

Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, a healthy environment is at the heart of our very existence. With the signing of the Expropriation Act without compensation, we can expect illegal invasion of land to increase even further. Some have become emboldened to invade open spaces in anticipation that the Expropriation Act will serve their interest to possess land. Even environmentally protected areas are in danger. They chop down our valuable forests; pollute our vleis and our rivers and estuaries, a direct threat to our agriculture and tourism sector.

The high cost of employment within the Budget Vote, under compliance and enforcement programme is a great concern while enforcement and protection of our environment remains weak and ineffective. We need more boots on the ground, not more office staff in terms of compliance and enforcement. Like the National Department has the Green Scorpions, we need a similar agency live on the ground.

Knoflokskraal Forest near the Houw Hoek area has been invaded illegally. The same as what happened with the Milkwood Forest in Hermanus a few years ago. Further, we do call on the DA to exercise the same political will that led to the appointment of the Children's Commissioner, the only one in South Africa, and to consider the appointment of the Environmental Commissioner as provided for in the Western Cape's Constitution. Our

commitment to mitigating climate change and protect the environment must be at all costs. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Marais. I see the hon Jacobs.

†Mnr D G JACOBS (NCC): Ons is waar toe, watter nommer, waar? My Bybel.

[Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): We are where, what number, where? My Bible.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may proceed, hon Jacobs.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Thank you. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, climate change is a huge issue that is changing weather patterns and we know it, so the Department must invest heavily in infrastructure upgrades to minimise the damages that these uncertain weather patterns bring. Residents in new developments and in poor areas are at the mercy of circumstances, and in social development housing that needs urgent addressing.

The Department must take a full blow for allowing immigrants to put up informal settlements in our nature reserves, among our Cape endangered species, on our graveyards, on our wetlands, in our mountains, and yet this Government is okay with it. Is this maybe one of the reasons why you took so long with the Environmental Commissioner?

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Government is well aware of all the informal settlements that were put up on stolen land, and this Government continues to brag about the fastest growing province, supporting the illegal growth of this province. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Department must make sure that we include the Environmental Commissioner to deal with environmental issues such as raw sewage running into our beaches, and this automatically strip our beaches from their Blue Flag statuses. Developments are happening on wetlands favouring major corporations over environmental practises. Now how is this possible? MEC, you need to step up or step out. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Jacobs. I see the hon Bryant.

Mr D W BRYANT (DA): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, [Inaudible] if I did not begin by addressing a matter that is very close to my heart. I recently learned, as mentioned by the Premier in his speech earlier, that the United States will soon be imposing trade tariffs on the populations of two small Antarctic islands, Heard Island and McDonald Island. Now, hon Deputy Speaker, the main challenge with the implementation of these tariffs is that the population of these islands is made-up almost entirely of penguins.

An HON MEMBER: [Laughter.]

Mr D W BRYANT (DA): Now, hon Deputy Speaker, I understand that these penguins may live very fancy in their little black and white suits, but it is

important that the US understands that there is simply no way that these penguins will be able to afford the tariffs, and it is simply unacceptable to pull them into the centre of a global trade war. But I can assure you that we will protect our own endangered African penguins from this tariff onslaught, although hon Deputy Speaker, I am a bit concerned that the ANC may follow suit and attempt to start charging our penguins extra VAT.

An HON MEMBER: [Laughter.]

Mr D W BRYANT (DA): On a more serious note, hon Deputy Speaker, our DA leaders have really stepped up to help save the endangered African penguin from extinction. Our National Minister for the Environment, Dion George, has been working tirelessly to protect the penguin feeding areas, and is working together with local NGO's and environmentalists to produce innovative solutions. This work, along with his efforts to address climate change, increased fishing opportunities and improve waste management, has been amazing to see, and long may he continue as the National Minister.

This Government is also playing its part; considerable progress is being made by CapeNature to increase the footprints of the Stony Point Nature Reserve in Betty's Bay, one of the largest remaining African penguin colonies. Four properties, totalling 6,7 hectares, have been identified by CapeNature, all of which qualify for nature reserve status, and late last year, member Stoffel will remember, our Standing Committee visited these sites and offered full support for the proposal to extend the geographic area of the Reserve in an

effort to help protect the African penguins and the other seabirds.

This is taking place in conjunction with the establishment of a new colony at De Hoop Nature Reserve being spearheaded again by CapeNature. You will not see anything like this in any other province, and I would like to thank the hon Minister Bredell for his continued commitment towards saving this iconic species from extinction.

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr D W BRYANT (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, biodiversity in our province is certainly under threat. The Western Cape State of Biodiversity Report was a sharp wakeup call. Between 2017 and 2023, our province saw a worrying decline in biodiversity, being driven largely by habitat loss due to human expansion. But like so many challenges we face, this stems from a growing population, as a result of people moving here for jobs and a better life, and we welcome them with open arms, but we must acknowledge that the strain that a growing population places on our natural ecosystem is huge. The expansion of urban areas and informal settlements creates conflict between people and nature and we must continue to work to achieve a more symbiotic balance.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we should see this as a challenge, and this Budget presents a plan to achieve this balance between development and conservation. One of the world's six Floral Kingdoms, the Cape Floristic

Region, falls almost entirely under CapeNature's care. This extraordinary landscape is home to over 9 000 plant species, 70% of which exist nowhere else on earth. Despite covering less than 0,5% of Africa's land, it holds 20% of the continent's plant diversity. This presents us with a massive opportunity to leverage of this biodiversity and use it to create jobs, while simultaneously protecting our precious natural resources.

Our agricultural sector, tourism industry, and even our drinking water, depend on having healthy ecosystems. If we allow our natural environment to degrade it means fewer jobs, threats to water resources and grades of vulnerability to climate shocks. The Western Cape's ecotourism sector generates billions annually, supporting thousands of jobs in rural communities, from whale watching in Hermanus, to hiking in Table Mountain Park, our natural beauty is an economic engine. But when an invasive species overrun trails or wetlands vanished, those livelihoods vanish too.

That is why it is encouraging to see R93,9 million allocated to environmental quality management. If we want to conserve biodiversity, we must put our money where our mouth is. When it comes to ensuring that we spend in the right areas and we do the right things, I think it is important to address some of the points that the hon Stoffel has made, and I am sure the hon Minister will also come back to those.

The hon Stoffel mentioned that the ANC is brilliant when dealing with environmental issues, and hon Deputy Speaker, unfortunately that is the

furthest thing from the truth. The worst environmental crimes in the country are taking place in areas under the ANC's jurisdiction, and it really is under our new DA Minister Dion George in the GNU, that we have really started to see a big difference, and you talk about water quality and you talk about sewage being pumped into the oceans, I think I might have mentioned this stat before, but 77% of all the marine outfalls and all the waste is going into one province, which is the KwaZulu-Natal Province, which is run by your party, the ANC.

An HON MEMBER: Yes.

Mr D W BRYANT (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, let us not forget that nature is our best ally against climate change, and we support the Climate Change Act as well, hon member Stoffel, it is certainly not an ANC Act. Wetlands, fynbos and healthy catchments act as natural water filters, carbon sinks and buffers against floods and droughts, and in line with this the Province's catchment to CO strategy is a critical step in restoring these systems.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I have got a bit more on my speech, but in the interests of brevity and to save us a little bit of time, I am going to conclude, but I am just going to say that I do not see why anybody would oppose this Budget which seeks to protect nature, our economy, our water, and our people, and hon Deputy Speaker, to this end the DA supports the Budget. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Bryant. Also for your comment,

we are on track to potentially conclude at 8:30 tonight, but I will now see the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I get the †skimp [hint.] Hon Deputy Speaker, I am always glad when the ANC does not approve my Budget because that means we are on the right track. I will be very worried the day they support the Budget. So just a couple of things, you know, they must talk to their researchers, hon Deputy Speaker, because when the ANC is very quick to go and sign international contracts with UNESCO and, and... I asked them to come back and show us the money and the budget they put in, not a single cent, none, zero. But they have got the contract, they signed internationally, that is why the international community do not trust them anymore.

Biodiversity - we have got five biospheres in this province that is being run by volunteers. I beg the National Minister, meet me rand on rand. We put something in like R350 000, it is nothing; help the volunteers, no, but today they want to be clever, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, but we must be also honest with one another. The country after 30 years of ANC mismanagement is on its knees financially, we are bankrupt. So where is the money going to come from? We must decide, we cannot increase the Budget, except if the ANC think they can start to print money. But we need to decide, do we put it in Health, Education, Social Services? We have got the whole of Government to support and I think Treasury has done a brilliant job, and if it

was not for Treasury's discipline and good management of our financial resources, putting from our investment back into the coffers, we would have been in deep trouble, I can promise you that. So thank you to Treasury as well.

Just quickly on the Commissioner, you know, hon Deputy Speaker, if we have not been bankrupt, maybe yes. But in the meantime we do have the Human Rights Commissioner, we do have the Public Protector, we do have Parliament petition committees, use that mechanisms, because we do not have the money for luxuries.

Hon Chairperson, we do what we can to help and to support our informal settlements, with the ISSP programme [Inaudible] it does not mean we are not very worried about the state of informal settlements. But with population growth that the Chairperson touched on of 19,6%, and if you go back to 2011, 27%, people flee from ANC provinces to come to the Western Cape for a better life. So we must also not stand up in Parliament and put the blame on them and make immigration now the big problem. It is failing Government, that is why people move, and we must actually respect people who want to come to a province where there is hope, hope for a job, hope to build a career for their children, and that is why they come. Yes, we need to step up, we understand that. Unfortunately it is very difficult with a failing National Government.

Hon Chairperson, our environmental inspectors get the award every year for

the best law enforcement agency in the country on environmental matters. We are the only province who fights environmental crime, who gets them in front of the courts, etcetera. Yes, we want to do more, but to the cost of what, Health, Education? So we are very proud of the men and women in that unit doing the work.

Hon Constable, thank you for supporting the Budget. You touched on crucial points. Yes, it would be great to have more money, but where must it come from is the question that I think Treasury is always grappling with, and Treasury has acknowledged the fact of climate change, the importance of water, all those things, that is why they put some money in there, we cannot get all of it, because we have got other sectors that we need to build.

The water in the Karoo National Park, our geohydrologist picked up that water. So yes, it is a negotiation with National, but in the meantime hon Constable, you will be glad to know that we are busy fixing the boreholes in Beaufort West, because we have realised that it is no use just drilling new boreholes, because you drill in the same veins. So I might be wrong in the figures, but we have fixed, like of the 12, there were 10 that – and it is something that we need to talk to, hon Constable, and you will know because you are from that area, and yes, it is also because of poverty, people destroy our infrastructure, they steal our pumps, etcetera. So we now fixed half of that and embedded the motors in concrete, etcetera. So we try our utmost best, so currently the water supply is stable in Beaufort West, and we will keep on negotiating with National. But also remember hon Constable, that

there is also the Blossoms Project, so if we can get that water into the Klein Karoo Water Scheme that will also help Beaufort West and Kannaland and those areas, so we are busy with that negotiations as well.

The utilisation of waste and the licencing of waste sites, it was always our vision to first of all close the sites that are unlicensed, to licence the sites, but then a big programme to get the municipalities to manage the sites within the licence conditions.

The Green Scorpions, we are very busy, we are trying to get there, it is no easy fix, but we are busy with that whole programme, I think there are 70 waste sites that have been licenced and we monitor it, and obviously longer term with the “waste thinking” is to get regional waste sites so that we can do recycling on a profitable way, so that we also can reduce the price of it. Education in waste – in the whole environmental sector it is crucial, you are spot on, and we as a team will need to see how we can educate our communities and do more on the educational side [Interjection.]

We need more staff on the ground, hon Marais, yes, but also our environmental inspectors are not police, we must also understand that. There are different sectors that have got different responsibilities. Land invasions happen. There are a lot of the people that stand up today and talk about land invasions, but their party sat behind the land invasions before the elections, we know it. Go to Knoflokskraal, look at the stickers on the cars, etcetera, and then now we must solve it. It was a political agenda to motivate people to

invade land, and we know we do not have the backing of National colleagues, and most of these things also happen on national land and on SANRAL land, and try and get them to get the eviction orders, etcetera, and yeah, then Father Christmas †*sal kom* [will come.]

Also, hon Chairperson let me conclude. Hon Jacobs, yeah, so I have touched on the illegal growth, and, and... But people move to this problem because they flee from ANC provinces. It is the only province where they have got a hope for jobs, and we will keep on doing good and keep on building the economy because that is the way out of poverty.

Hon Chairperson, thank you for your support. Thank you for your oversight. Thank you for the way you managed the Committee because you really understand the Parliament's role and the oversight role, it is not a friendship role, you have got a role to fulfil, and you will hold me and the Department accountable, and we respect that because that is your role, and I want to thank you for that because you keep us sharp. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister Bredell. I believe that there is no direct Local Government guest, so whenever you are ready, hon Minister, I will again recognise the hon Minister of Local Government, Anton Bredell. The Secretary will read the Order. Hon Minister?

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 14 – Local Government – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2-2025].

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Hon Premier, hon Cabinet members, members of the House, to the hon Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to present 2025/2026 Budget for the Department of Local Government today.

The Department's 2025 Budget allocation increased by R6,3 million for the 24/25 revised estimate of R433,6 million. The increase in 25/26 is primarily due to an additional R2,3 million allocated for the cost of living adjustment to be implemented on 1 April.

The Vote Budget amounts are:

- R440 million for 25/26;
- Plus-minus R353 million for 26/27, and
- Plus-minus R358 million for 27/28.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Local Governments across South Africa are in big trouble:

- There are 257 Local Governments in South Africa and according to the stats from National Treasury;
- 157 are in a state of distress;
- 96 adopted unfunded budgets, and

- 41 are under administration.

Something to be worried about.

Then you look at the Western Cape with 30 Local Governments and you will see the following:

- 20 received clean audits with no findings.
- Cape Town is the best Metro in the country.

Hon Deputy Speaker, there are several other studies that also show that the Western Cape municipalities are head and shoulders above their counterparts in the rest of the country. That is a fact, but I want to thank HOD, Graham Paulse, and his management team for their hard work in this regard.

Hon Deputy Speaker, President Cyril Ramaphosa in the State of the Nation Address earlier this year highlighted the importance of efficient Local Government and he warned about the dire state of water security throughout the country.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Department's core mandate is to support municipalities to deliver on their developmental mandates, which include the delivery of services to all its residents. This might sound simple, but it is actually a very difficult task given the current South Africa context.

South Africa is one of the most unequal societies on earth. Some people can pay for municipal services, but many cannot. Only economic growth can create the jobs that will reduce inequalities. The Western Cape population is growing and therefore there is a lot of pressure on our services.

Climate change is making the province hotter and drier and this impacts directly on our ability to provide water security to residents and businesses. Climate change is also intensifying natural disasters in our province. These include wildfires, droughts and floods.

To address these challenges I want to highlight the following earmarked budget allocations for the medium-term which speaks to our efforts to address the challenges and needs before us.

Water security is a looming crisis in South Africa and we must act now. A lot can be done to promote more efficient water usage. We need to focus more on reuse of water. I would like to see a future where no municipality releases wastewater into the rivers and the ocean, instead focussing on recycling and reuse of water.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are allocating R27 million to strengthen our water resilience in response to increasing climate change volatility. The Water Resilience Grant provides financial assistance to municipalities for water supply, augmentation, infrastructure capacity, upgrades, water source

management and water demand management.

These initiatives form part of our Water Resilience Strategy which we will launch in July 2025. This is in collaboration between municipalities, water users' associations, water catchment management agencies, the commercial and agricultural sectors, and the National Department of Water and Sanitation.

Water resilience projects for 2025/2026 have been identified based on the outcome of the Department Infrastructure Forum, which is substructure of the joint district and metro approach.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we need investment in catalytic water and wastewater infrastructure to secure water for the future, especially with the growing population and the impact of climate change.

Often our smaller municipalities struggle to fund these large projects, but at the same time the projects are too small for them to individually approach large investments.

Our Sustainable Infrastructure Development and Financial Facility (SIDAFF) Programme solved this dilemma through an innovative blended funding mechanism that can pull projects together and offer a basket of investment opportunities to investors locally and internationally.

This Budget allocates R13,3 million to fund the dedicated project management support required to ensure the successful rollout of the SIDAFF Programme. The SIDAFF Programme has already secured grant funding of R72 million from the Swiss State Security and Economic Affairs, and R35 million from the DANIDA Sustainable Infrastructure Finance. These financial contributions are helping us to progress to the next phase where 17 projects worth R2,2 billion will be taken from feasibility to bankability.

Hon Deputy Speaker, our dedicated fire and rescue services in this province is something to be very proud of. Floods, wildfires, building collapse, a truck that spills flammable cargo on the road, to name but a few, these men and women are always ready to serve and to protect. They put their lives on the line to keep the rest of us safe.

I want to personally thank each and every person in our province, our municipalities, our volunteer services in the rescue service family. The least we can do is to make sure that these brave men and women are well-trained, have the correct safety equipment and have access to the tools they need to perform their work.

As such:

- R15,9 million is earmarked in the medium-term towards the Fire and Rescue Capacity Grant to enhance disaster preparedness and response capabilities.

In addition to the earmarked funds the following is budgeted over the medium-term for the fire and rescue services:

- R37,7 million for firefighting.
- R10,2 million to supplement aerial firefighting.
- R6,5 million to strengthen our capacity in our fire and rescue services.
- R22 million over the medium-term for disaster and rapid response.
- R7 million for drought support.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are also allocating R10,2 million to mitigate natural disasters. This money will go towards the procurement of systems and technology, which include artificial intelligence, to be able to better anticipate potential disasters.

Reliable and affordable electricity forms the backbone of an economy. As part of the Western Cape Government's commitment to energy security the Department will allocate R52 million over the medium-term towards the Western Cape energy response. This includes:

- R37 million to pilot renewable energy solutions in municipalities.
- R6 million for professional service providers.
- R1,8 million for the municipal master planning process.
- R5,7 million in 25/26 and R1,5 million in 26/27 for additional critical skills to support the energy programme in the Department.

We will continue to work with our municipalities to support them to develop spatial development frameworks. Our focus is the alignment of long-term municipal infrastructure planning, R2 million is earmarked for this function in 25/26.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to conclude with the following. Everyone wants to live in a community that is clean, safe and with reliable basic services such as water and electricity. As the Provincial Government we also want to offer this to each and every resident in this province.

We are currently investigating the minimum prescribed water and electricity indigent households are entitled to. Hon Deputy Speaker, I believe that the current allocation of water and electricity is not in step with the reality and we will have to do more to offer people a dignified life they deserve.

Many people will immediately react and say we cannot afford to subsidise even more services. The uncomfortable truth, however, is that if the National Government did not mismanage our economy so badly over the past three decades, money would not have been a problem.

We also need to understand the benefits that comes from access to electricity and water. Let me mention a few:

- A community with streetlights is safer with less crime.

- Homes where children can do homework and study at night because there is electricity improves education outcomes and strengthens the workforce.
- Access to clean and safe tap water improves health outcomes and reduces the burden on our health facility.

Hon Deputy Speaker, with this Budget I commit my Department of Local Government to work as a partner within the Western Cape Government to serve our people of our province.

I table the Department of Local Government budget for 25/26. I thank you.
[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. I now recognise the hon member Stoffel.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as the African National Congress we firmly reject this Budget [Interjections.] once again as it reflects the Department of Local Government continue failing to uphold its own values of caring, accountability, integrity and responsiveness.

The hon MEC's which-hunt against non-DA-led municipalities has destabilised Local Government while serious internal issues, such as

unresolved sexual harassment allegations against the HODs and the unfair targeting of the CFO remains unaddressed. If the Department cannot even adhere to its core values in its own operations, how can it be trusted to manage public funds or supporting struggling municipalities?

The Budget also ignores the urgent needs of the poor. The DA's deliberate failure to update indigenous registers while demanding an increased Equitable Share exposes its hypocrisy by blocking vulnerable households from access to basic services. The Department is actively worsening inequality.

Meanwhile it lacks of meaningful support for housing and legislative compliance that has led to municipalities drowning in backlogs with informal settlements expanding, disasters like George's building collapse still unresolved. Worse, the hon MEC have weaponised oversight to punish non-DA councils, creating chaos instead of stability rather than addressing crucial issues such as water shortage, disaster preparedness and financial management in municipalities, like Beaufort West. This Budget fuels political vendettas.

We cannot accept the Budget that, one, prioritises political intervention over service delivery, abandons the poor by manipulating indigenous policies, ignores crises like housing, infrastructure and accountability failures.

Until the Department proves it can act with integrity and focus on real

solutions, this Budget deserves outright rejection.

Parliamentary Sitzings. Local Government, when we look at the state of smaller municipalities in the province you ask yourself where is the Provincial Government to strengthen this capacity of municipalities?

Yes, we are aware you are trying your utmost best by bringing in the Financial Recovery Plan, but what take you so long to bring that plan?

So to intervene where there is non-fulfilment of legislative, executive and financial obligation you have a duty to support municipalities with their development and legislative compliance. However, with how many things have you failed to step up, hon MEC.

Western Cape housing crisis. As much as we have got a housing crisis in the Western Cape, it got a huge impact on Local Government itself. Therefore, in the presentation of the Portfolio Committee of Human Settlement the Mayoral Committee for Human Settlement in the City of Cape Town, [Inaudible] said based on the current housing backlog we would like the City close to 80 years to address the waiting list, and while we have got that waiting list that is going to be addressed, I do not know when, we will always have this pressure on Local Government itself as a department.

For the Urban Settlement Development Grant the City of Cape Town has allocated R1,04 billion for the 2024/25 financial year. In addition to the

approved rollover of R56 million the total available funds increase to R1,1 billion after reallocation of R50 million by the National Treasury. As at 28 February 2025 R1,041 billion has been transferred to the Metro, with a reported expenditure of R578 million, which is equivalent to 56% of transfer funds and 50% of total available funds. Why we cannot say that about other municipalities?

For the Informal Settlement Upgrading Partnership Grant the Metro has been allocated R592,9 million for the 2024/25 financial year as at 28 February 2025 R409,5 has been transferred, with R166 million spent, which is equivalent to 40% of transfer funds and 29% of total available funds.

The total available funds was reduced to National Treasury due to poor performance, poor performance, but on top of it they still got money. Whilst other municipalities are performing, but not a single cent has been transferred to them. Give them their fair share, hon MEC. [Interjections.]

Provincially the housing backlog in the Western Cape has risen to approximately 620 000. [Interjections.] The housing crisis is direct result on the DA failure to prioritise affordable housing and land distribution. Yesterday or last week the hon MEC of Finance, Deidre Baartman, said that they would challenge these figures. Yes, it is good, but challenge it with the hope that that municipalities will also get the same. We suggest channelling the energy in supporting municipalities, which I suggest you give that energy in supporting these municipalities.

The DA let Saldanha Municipality reckless manage R2,5 million and this audience of the DA is quiet about it, but if it is Kannaland, if it is Knysna, the papers must hear about it. It is a national announcement. Can we change from attitude and do the right thing equally so to municipalities?

An HON MEMBER: Yes, yes, yes!

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): So therefore yesterday [Laughs] the DA [Interjections.] – and we said that people, the Municipality of Saldanha Bay, there is a recommendation there. We want you to act. Hon MEC, act, please. Let us leave this thing to politicise everything.

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Let us be fair towards the municipalities. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Those responsible for the George collapsing building are yet to be held accountable. The people of the George collapsed building are here in the House. Why they cannot be held responsible? [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Why? And where is the report? [Interjections.] What is the secret in the report of the collapsed building in George? [Interjections.] You are protecting no one *mos, ne?* You are very fair, fair governance. [Interjections.] Let us practise it. Bring the reports.

An HON MEMBER: Do not keep the information to yourself.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): So we are saying in [Interjections.] terms of this disaster management, we are saying hon MEC, [Interjections.] in terms of disaster management, yes, [Interjections.] we can see you are doing your utmost best when it comes to disaster management, but we do feel that is not enough.

Please, go to the informal settlement that has been a victim of flooding. Those people, two years back, they are still struggling to recover from the previous flooding.

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Not a single Local Government official went and looked to those people. [Interjections.] Please, do your work. [Interjections.] Please, do your work. Do your work. [Interjections.]

As we all know we are approaching winter again and during the winter season a lot of our communities experience flooding. Go to Khayelitsha here by you, here by you.

An HON MEMBER: Next door.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Go there, next door. [Interjections.] Particularly informal settlement. We know this happens every year and yet this Government fails to plan and put appropriate measures in place. [Interjections.]

The amount of R10,211 million, of which R8,711 million in 2025/2026, and R1,5 million in 2026/2027 respectively, to mitigate disaster risk is insufficient. It is insufficient because this money does not reach the poor. It does not reach the poor. So do something, hon MEC, we know you can. You know you can. [Interjections.]

Does this allocation take into account fires? I do not talk about fires. [Interjections.] Every day in this informal settlement there are fires, but these people do not get the necessary support in recovering. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You know you can, MEC.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): We know this disaster happens particularly in poor communities.

Water crisis. We can see you are doing your best again in water crisis, but we think we must also look into the issue of these white farmers that are draining even the, what you call these things? These pumps that your Government is giving to these municipalities. They are draining it. There must be consequences to those people. [Interjections.] †Hoekom kan ons nie kyk na daai mense wat ons water steel nie? Jy sit die pomp daar neer en dan kom hulle, dan sit hulle, hulle pomp en hulle *drain* ons water en ons mense kry nie water nie, en dan die tweede ene. Die mense wat so damme het, is daai damme, is daar 'n *proper* opname van die damme? [Tussenwerpsels.] Want hoe kan die gemeenskap nie water hê en die boere op die plase het 'n klomp water, want hulle steel ons water. [Tussenwerpsels.]

[Why can't we look at those people stealing our water? You place the pump there and then they come, then they put the pump, and they drain our water and our people to not get water, and then the second one. The people who have dams, are those dams, is there a proper survey of the dams? [Interjections.] Because how can a community not have water and the farmers on the farms have a lot of water, because they steal our water.] [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Hon member Stoffel, are you able to take your seat? [Interjections.] Hon members. [Interjections.] Hon members, order! I did not want to stop hon member Stoffel in her stride. We are on track to actually conclude at 20:30 tonight based on where we are on the programme.

I have evaluated the noise level and it is from both sides of the House. I am also going to caution all of the speakers. If you are speaking, speak through the Chair. If you are speaking directly to a member of the opposite side of the aisle you are further contributing to the agitation.

So please, hon member Stoffel, and any speaker moving forward, speak via the Chair. It makes it easier for us to maintain the decorum of the House.

You have three minutes and 14 seconds remaining, hon member Stoffel.
[Interjections.]

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. This government failure is to learn from the past before the Day Zero in Cape Town. There were alarm bells ringing regarding the potential water supply in Cape Town. They failed to listen and we all know what happened. There is a looming water crisis in the Municipality of Matzikama, we all know that. In Kannaland and that. We want you to take drastic action around that.

Financial crisis in municipalities. The amount of R12,58 million allocated to over MTEF [Inaudible] millions in 2025/26, R3,367 million in 2026/27, and R3,50 million in 2027 to provide for capacity building and support municipalities, support to municipalities is not sufficient.

Financial management for municipalities should be one of the leading focus

areas for the Department, Beaufort West and the formal intervention since 2021, but still no change. Now you take SOPA there. Now all of a sudden there is this money that was being pumped into Beaufort West to create that beautiful picture there.

So we are saying we must stop doing that practice. Let us be real for a change. This Budget does not meet the current needs of the Local Government. We need this Department to plan and think beyond Cape Town. There is a need for this Department in terms of support, capacity investment and oversight. We need this Department to step up for our people. Unfortunately looking at this Budget we are not sure if it is up to this task. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Stoffel. Online I recognise the hon member Constable.

Mr N CONSTABLE (PA): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Department's mission emphasises crucial areas such as monitoring compliance with municipal mandates and enhancing disaster response capabilities. However, we must critically evaluate whether current expenditure translates to tangible outcomes as laid out in the Department's departmental objectives.

Is there demonstrable increase in service delivery efficiency? Are disaster management strategies being adequately resourced to reduce future risk?

That is the question, hon Deputy Speaker, that we need to ask.

With regard to capacity building and governance, how effective, hon Deputy Speaker, are the proposed capacity building initiatives in enabling municipalities to meet the mandates, especially in high-need areas? How will the Department ensure that resources, particularly in the form of set budgets and grant allocations, translate into increased capabilities for Local Government?

With regards to disaster management, hon Deputy Speaker. Given the R10,2 million year mark for disaster mitigation, what specific measures and oversight are being established to ensure these resources are effectively utilised? What metrics, hon Deputy Speaker, will the Department use to assess the impact of disaster management expenditure on reducing the impact of natural disasters within municipalities?

Again, hon Deputy Speaker, with an outlook to the future, in the lead-up of the '26 Local Government elections it will be imperative for the Department to focus not only on stability in service delivery, but also on sustained governance and potential changes in potential composition through coalition formation, *ten ons weet daar gaan baie coalitions wees na die volgende elections* [and we know there are going to be many coalitions after the next elections.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is important to understand and say this, that the

emphasis on training for municipal staff is crucial and also the incoming councillors, we need to look into that, and also with regards to monitoring protocols after Local Government elections, to ensure newly appointed officials rapidly adhere to the governance expectations.

In conclusion, hon Deputy Speaker, in summary. Examining the Budget through an Opposition lens would suggest a need for greater transparency, rigorous oversight, equitable resource distribution and empowerment of under-deserved areas, particularly in the light of the 2026 elections.

Continuous engagement with municipal stakeholders, equitable resource allocations and effective implementation processes must integrate into the Department's operational mandate to ensure accountable governance and sustainable community support.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Patriotic Alliance does support this Budget Vote as well as the entire Budget of the Provincial Government. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Constable. As indicated earlier via the chat function, the hon member Lithakong had to attend to an emergency. I will briefly ascertain if the hon member Lithakong is back online.

The account online is currently on hold and we will proceed. I now see the

hon member Jacobs.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Budget plan for 2025/2026 raises concerns so far in addressing the natural disasters in the province. Yearly we see extreme damages due to rain and these damages are visible for very long periods.

Now, hon Deputy Speaker, last year when the roads washed away in Citrusdal, it is not worthy to mention, but it was addressed with speed by the Department. Now it always makes me wonder why are there two different sets of agendas when it comes to the poor?

Hon Deputy Speaker, when we speak of Local Government we must shift our focus to the municipalities, especially the municipalities that get clean audits, but fraud and corruption is at the forefront. The City of Cape Town should not get clean audits. Drakenstein should not get clean audits. Stellenbosch should not get clean audits. George should not get clean audits. [Interjections.] On the issue of George, we are still waiting on the report of the collapsed building. There is so many municipalities that are corrupt. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Ask the police! [Interjections.]

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Hon MEC, hon MEC, let me take you back to 2012. Let me take you back. When you were the Mayco for Economic Development

a Coloured lady that sells flowers in George tendered for a piece of land, but because she was a Coloured woman she received the most points and she won the tender. The minute the Municipality and the *Boere* mafia found out it was a Coloured lady they tried everything in their power to stop the sale, and our hon MEC was part of all the incorrect steps that were taken by the Municipality. Hence the reason the Municipality cannot sell the land up until today. We got the matter before the court.

However, hon MEC, [Interjections.] hon MEC and your Department, you seem very hesitant to act on matters of such, but we hope this time the hon MEC will act swiftly on these reports.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Jacobs. I now recognise the hon member Marais.

Mr G MARAIS (FF+): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, it is important that we give enough support to municipalities that they are the government that is closest to the people. It must reflect the needs of the people, address it, because they are the ones that experience a very difficult life.

The Strategic Priority 2, I think it is page 755, says:

"Initiatives to improve access to socio-economic opportunities."

Now the communities in George municipal area, specifically the Coloured areas of Uniondale, Hoekwil, Kleinkrantz, are still waiting for access to the GoGeorge bus services. This has been for quite some time. We know that poor people, indigent people, spend most of their income on travelling to work and back. [Interjections.] I hope that there will be plans to address that by the hon Minister.

We want to thank the hon Minister for the increase in the firefighting budget and the programme there, as well as the use of innovation such as AI.

Now in December 2024, December alone Drakenstein area experienced 243 fire-related incidences, one month. 188 of those were wildfires. The complaints that I received are that there were not sufficient support given to the farmers of those areas and I hope that this Budget, going forward, will make sure that that will be addressed and that we will not see a repeat of that.

On behalf of the Freedom Front Plus, with limited time, we do support the Budget and we believe that it addresses the urgent needs of our people. Thank you.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Marais. I see the hon member Bryant.

Mr D W BRYANT (DA): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak today in support of the Department of Local Government's 2025 Appropriation Budget.

The increase, which could probably be best described as modest but meaningful, shows growth of R6,331 million, representing a 1,46% rise compared to the revised estimate of R433 million for 2024/25.

In terms of the additional spend, a significant portion, R2,345 million, has been earmarked for the cost of living adjustment, an adjustment that is now so much more important as we see the ANC raising VAT and driving more South Africans into poverty. As the DA we will not allow the people of the Western Cape to be left behind. For as long as the DA is in government in this province we will do all we can to protect our people from the rising cost of living.

Another way that this Budget is helping to protect the people of the Western Cape is through the dedicated funding for fire and rescue in the Fire and Rescue Capacity Grant. Hon Deputy Speaker, this is a vital investment in the safety and resilience of our municipalities and it is central to safeguarding lives and strengthening our collective ability to respond swiftly and effectively when disaster strikes.

From 2025 over R200 million will be allocated to disaster risk management

infrastructure and development planning, and this funding will strengthen rescue capacities and build resilient communities, reflecting the Government's commitment to addressing the needs of all Western Cape municipalities with data-driven insights.

Hon Deputy Speaker, over the festive season our province faced a wildfire crisis. Over 11 000 wildfires were reported in the Western Cape and 68 of them are under investigation as suspected arson. Who is behind this? Well, we will find out in time. The City of Cape Town saw more than 7 000 wildfires, seven times more than any other municipality in this province.

Hon Deputy Speaker, our firefighting teams are regularly asked to assist countries in the so-called global north when they face similar wildfires, and this is a testament to what the DA does best, getting the basics right and putting our people first and receiving recognition at an international level.

The Department is also far ahead of the curve when it comes to technology and is making more funding available to make increased use of artificial intelligence to help anticipate and prevent disasters going forward, and disaster risk management is often viewed as a reactive measure, but it is actually a critical component to resilience and a proactive strategy.

This is why our municipalities consistently lead in this area and while the Budget for Local Government may pale in comparison in terms of scale when compared to some of the other departments, the money being allocated will

be essential to support municipalities in fulfilling their developmental mandates and delivering quality services to our people, and just in terms of this, hon Deputy Speaker, again through you to the hon member Stoffel. She mentioned a number of things and I do not think I am going to be able to respond to all of them, but I think a couple that stand out.

The indigent registers are updated by municipalities not by hon Minister Bredell, and the Local Government Equitable Share is determined by National Government not by hon Minister Bredell, and it is not Minister Bredell's fault that the ANC-led coalitions in many of these municipalities are a flop. It is because they have useless ANC politicians in charge and involved, and that is why we have seen the collapse in areas like Knysna and elsewhere.

Hon Deputy Speaker, again I am going to leave some of the rest of this out in the interest of brevity and time, but just to close, in terms of water, it is very, very important for us to remember that access to water is not a luxury, it is a fundamental right, which is set out in our Constitution, and we must make sure that as a province we are prepared for potential shocks and stresses that will inevitably come as a result of ongoing climate change, and regardless what the weird parts of the internet will tell you, climate change is accelerating.

Droughts are longer, floods are stronger, and as we know rainfall is no longer predictable and it is the most vulnerable among us, our farmers, our children and those living in rural communities, who will bear the brunt.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, while most of our municipalities across the Western Cape are thriving, as we know there are some that are struggling with unstable coalitions under the ANC, but we are confident that this Department, under hon Minister Bredell, will continue to do everything in its power to empower and assist those municipalities, and I want to thank the hon Minister and his team for all the hard work and all the hard work that is yet to come. We support the Budget. Thank you.

An HON MEMBER: Useless.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Bryant.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: To conclude the date I see the hon Minister.
[Interjections.]

[The Speaker takes the Chair.]

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Hon Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. Hon Premier, you must give me a new title, the Minister †vir alles, want ons is, ek dink [for everything, because we are, I think] we have covered now all the departments in this.

Hon Premier and hon Deputy Speaker, there are also members from the City of Cape Town in the House and from Drakenstein. I think I must just start off by thanking them, because was it not for the capacity also in the City of Cape Town, a lot of comments have been made on the City of Cape Town and George and those municipalities also.

The bigger municipalities in this province working with the province to safeguard our communities. They are always there with the MOUs to support our efforts to safeguard our communities. I really want them to take back the message and thank them on behalf of the Provincial Government, [Interjections.] because your Drakensteins, your Georges, your Stellenbosches, the City of Cape Town, was it not for them we would have lost a lot of lives, although the ANC does not see that.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I have mentioned it yesterday. We are on our knees and I gave you the example of the helicopters. Of a fleet of 86 one is working. That one is for the President to fly him around. [Interjections.] Go and Google the Navy. Of the 49 vessels one is working. [Interjections.] We do not have a defence force anymore, [Interjections.] and that is because of the ANC Government. [Interjections.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, let me also come back to there is no such thing as free basic services. [Interjections.] There is only such thing as subsidised basic services, and hon member Stoffel has mentioned it.

Now she wants to talk about the Indigenous Household Register. Now we are the only province where municipalities try to uphold a register of indigenous households, but ask Swellendam what has happened when they wanted to upgrade the indigenous households and how the ANC mobilised their members to burn down the municipal offices, because they do not understand, [Interjections.] they do not understand discipline. [Interjections.]

Hon ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ...Speaker, the George building collapse. If there are people in this House from George and who has been affected by that, our deepest condolences to them, but was it not for this Provincial Government, the readiness of our rescue workers, we would not have saved nearly 50% of the people in that building. [Interjections.] If it was not for this Government I can promise you, you will wait 10 years for any outcome of a report.

The ANC Ministers, the President made promises there that they cannot keep. [Interjections.] They dropped the community that has been affected because they promised them money, they promised them grants, but they are not registered for grants. [Interjections.] They will never see that grants, but

today they want to make as if they are now all holy. They have lied and I said to them that day, "You lie to affected people, people who have lost families. [Interjections.] You basically lie to them..." ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: ...and we have saved a lot of lives, hon Speaker, and we have instituted an investigation which the hon Premier and the hon Minister of Infrastructure proudly handed to the police and say, "Now you do your job." [Interjections.] We are not in the †skinner besigheid. Ons is nie 'n mense vernietig lewe besigheid nie [Tussenwerpsels.] [gossip business. We are not a people destroying business. [Interjections.]] The police must do their job and people must go to jail who are affected, [Interjections.] but to get them to jail we must follow the legal process. If we go the ANC route, hon Speaker, they will become [Interjections.] – †hulle sal losgespreek word, hulle sal vrygespreek word, en ek wonder of die ANC nie 'n agenda het daarmee nie. [Tussenwerpsels.] Hulle kan nie so *stupid* wees dat hulle nie die reg verstaan dat jy kan nie die ondersoek vooruit loop nie. [They will be acquitted, they will be acquitted, and I wonder if the ANC does not have an agenda with that. [Interjections.] They cannot be so stupid that they not understand correctly that you cannot run ahead with the investigation.]

An HON MEMBER: You are useless! You are useless!

The SPEAKER: Order! [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please take your seat. [Interjections.] Order, hon members! Hon members, the hon Minister is being afforded an opportunity to respond to your inputs. The constant commentary must stop. It is the hon Minister's opportunity to respond to inputs made during this debate. If you do not like the content it is not the opportunity now to engage the hon Minister.

Hon Minister, my apologies, you may continue.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: †Reg. [Right.] Thank you, hon Speaker, and, hon Speaker, on the building collapse, I also see the police enter, and we have got a lot of comments and negative things to say about the police all year long. I can tell you on the building collapse in George the police were brilliant and I also want to thank General Patekile because he was there day and night with me on that site. [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, we talk about water. [Interjections.] We talk about water. The hon member mentioned about water. [Interjections.] Ask the hon member who

have solved the †gemors van die water in Kannaland nou [mess of the water in Kannaland now.] This Provincial Government, our engineers. [Interjections.] Who governs that municipality?

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister ...[Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: The ANC.

The SPEAKER: ...my apologies once again. Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon members, this constant commentary, running commentary while the hon Minister is responding is drowning out the speaker on the floor. Can I please ask that both sides of the House, if you want to have an engagement outside of what the hon Minister is responding, please leave the Chamber and have a cup of tea if you want to engage one another, but it is now the opportunity for the hon Minister to respond.

There are people in the gallery, there are citizens watching this debate and it is only fair that the hon Minister is provided with an opportunity to now respond to input that you have made.

Hon Minister, my apologies. I will protect you and your right to respond.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, the hon member mentioned about a member in the City of Cape Town, [Inaudible], who said 80 years for the housing list to be deleted and to build houses.

The real question the ANC must ask, if they have not for 30 years stolen the money how long would it then take to get rid of the housing backlog? [Interjections.] Maybe just five years, hon Speaker, but now it is all in their back pocket, nothing for the citizens.

Hon Speaker, we have instituted a programme, 16 000 smoke alarms in informal settlements. It is part of a bigger picture because we understand that in informal settlements you lose lives and you lose the little property that you have, and it is always very sad, but, you know, hon Speaker, we are a province who has done something. The smoke alarms save lives every single day and we will keep on rolling that programme out and see how we can support our communities.

We have got a Winter Readiness Programme, but, hon Speaker, if political parties help people to build houses or shacks in the middle of a river, what must we do? Because that is the reality. I was yesterday in Tulbagh. People sit in the middle of a river. If the rain comes they are going to die. The ANC will not help us to go to that community and tell them, "Listen, this Minister is telling you the truth, he wants to safeguard your lives." No, they will mobilise against us when we go there and tell them.

Hon member Constable, thank you very much. Thank you for supporting the Budget. You also understand the pressure on Local Government and we welcome your inputs and we know that we must always try to do better and to do more for our people.

To the hon members who mentioned about farmers and give us the names. You are an oversight, Parliament oversight. Do not wait for a budget debate to come and put allegations out there that there are no facts on. Give us the facts, we will investigate. We will look into that matters.

To the other hon members more or less on the same issues, on clean audits again. Every good government starts with good financial management. I do not say it is the Alpha and Omega, I do not say, but if you do not have proper financial systems in place you will go under. So we respect the clean audit process, hon Speaker.

Hon member Marais, on the Drakenstein farmers, give us the names, please. Let us work because we have got one law in this country, we do not distinguish between, and you must also remember that Uniondale, it is like 120 kilometres from George, so it is not just rolling out buses quickly, but we are very proud of what we have achieved with the GoGeorge and we will never stop dreaming, because it is not only George, there are other municipalities. There is Drakenstein, there are other municipalities who also need, because we understand that transport plays a crucial role in economic

growth and that is the drive. It is economic growth. Get people out of poverty, that is the solution for South Africa and we will keep on that.

To the Chair, thank you for holding us accountable. Again, I respect your role and you are a very strict Chair and I respect that, and I want to thank you for that because you make us better. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote. The House will now be suspended for two minutes to allow the guests of hon Minister Bredell to exit the Chamber and the guests of hon Minister Marais to enter the chamber. The House is suspended.

Hon members, the Secretary will read the sixth order of the day.

†Die SEKRETARESSE: Debat oor Begrotingspos 4 – Polisie Toesig en Gemeenskapsveiligheid – Wes-Kaapse Begrotingswetsontwerp [W 2-2025].
[The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 4 – Police Oversight and Community Safety – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2-2025].]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the Hon Minister of Police Oversight and Community Safety, Minister Marais.

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY:
 Hon Speaker, hon members of the Western Cape Provincial Legislature,

Heads of Department, our Provincial Police Commissioner, distinguished guests, fellow citizens of the Western Cape. It is an honour to stand before you today to table the strategic plan 2025-2030, and Annual Performance Plan and Budget 2025/2028 for the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety.

This moment is both a reflection on the strides we have made and a firm commitment to addressing the persistent safety challenges faced by the people of the Western Cape.

Safety is a basic human right enshrined in our Constitution. Every resident, inclusive of the Cape Flats, our rural districts, our urban centres, deserves to live a life free from fear, to pursue opportunities and to thrive in resilient communities. Today we present a plan that aims to bring this aspiration to reality.

Hon Speaker, we must begin by acknowledging the harsh realities confronting our communities. The Western Cape remains one of the provinces most affected by violent crime. Gang-related violence and gender-based violence or femicide remains the biggest contributors to murder in our province.

According to the most recent crime statistics murder remains concentrated in specific precincts, particularly on the Cape Flats, areas such as Mfuleni, Delft, Kraaifontein, Gugulethu, Nyanga, Mitchells Plain, Harare, Khayelitsha, Bishop Lavis and Philippi East, Lwandle and Kleinvlei, continue

to experience unacceptably high levels of crime and violence, accounting for almost half of murders in the province.

These crimes are typically driven by gang activity, substance abuse and social conflict exasperated by poverty and unemployment. Our situational analysis identifies several key factors that drive crime. Poverty and inequality remain root causes, creating conditions that foster desperation and criminal activity. Drug and alcohol-related violent crimes account for a very high number of murders and assaults. Our province has a long history of alcohol abuse with significant social, economic and health costs. Alcohol-related harms are destroying lives, tearing apart the social fabric and hampering socio-economic development. This highlights the need for integrated and sustained support for effective interventions to reduce alcohol-related harms.

In this regard the Western Cape Liquor Authority plays a crucial role in striking a balance between public interest and the economic benefits associated with the issuance of liquor licences.

The entrenchment and expansion of gangs in the Western Cape lead to turf wars, the expansion of illicit markets, the trade in illegal firearms and ammunition, with regrettable loss of lives of both those involved in gangs and many innocent bystanders. Community members are exposed to continuous and severe levels of violence, which impacts on every aspect of life.

Another growing concern is extortion, which has expanded beyond nightclubs and downtown businesses to target small enterprises, public transport operators, construction sites and more recently even our schools. This illegal practise undermines economic activity, threatens livelihoods and disrupts essential services.

To combat extortion a specialised task team has been established by the SAPS to investigate and dismantle extortion networks. The Western Cape Government will be hosting a multi-sectoral summit on the combating of extortion in the Western Cape with the aim of developing a comprehensive, unified response that leverages the collective expertise and resources of Government, law enforcement, the private sector and civil society organisations and affected communities.

Gender-based violence is another pervasive challenge which affects families and communities, causing physical and emotional harm. GBV affects women and children disproportionately with devastating consequences for individuals, families and communities. Addressing GBV requires a multifaceted approach that includes prevention, victim support and holding perpetrators accountable.

Hon Speaker, crime is not limited to the City of Cape Town Metro as we are also grappling with rural safety challenges. Farmers, farmworkers and rural residents face unique vulnerabilities due to geographic isolation, limited

access to law enforcement and rising incidents of stock theft, farm attacks and organised crime. Strengthening rural safety is a vital component of our broader safety strategy.

Despite these challenges there are areas of progress. Our flagship Law Enforcement Advancement Plan, or LEAP, in partnership with the City of Cape Town, through which we deploy over 1 000 LEAP officers annually in priority precincts, has already demonstrated significant success in high-crime areas. LEAP officers focus on visible policing, firearm confiscation and community engagement, contributing to increased safety and stability.

Our strategy to increase LEAP deployment in highly affected areas has seen a 12,9% reduction in murder in the last quarter, compared with a 7,9% reduction for the whole of the province.

I want to salute the LEAP operational command structure for their commitment to carry the vision of the Western Cape Government. May Chief Brand, Deputy Chief Jason Hamilton, Assistant Chief Raboliba, kindly rise in the public gallery for this House to recognise you for your contribution. I think they are right in front of me. [Applause.]

However, we recognise that more must be done. By adopting a whole-of-society approach and a whole-of-government approach, we can tackle the root causes of crime, strengthen law enforcement and create safer, more resilient communities.

One of the key whole-of-government approach interventions achieved in the province over the last year is the signing of the Safer City Co-operation Agreement between the South African Police Service, the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Government.

The objective of the Co-operation Agreement is to jointly pursue the shared vision for safety and security within the City of Cape Town by collaborating on various initiatives, programmes and strategies aimed at promoting a safe, secure City that is conducive to socio-economic growth and development.

Various joint projects are already underway and the respective administrative teams are hard at work to finalise the Integrated Work Plan, paving the way for a safer city and province. This new structured way of collaboration in the City of Cape Town will pave the way for similar agreements throughout the province.

While the challenges are significant they are not insurmountable. With a clear, evidence-informed and data-led strategy and a collective effort of Government, civil society, law enforcement and communities, we can and will build a safer Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, as I am tabling the strategies and Budget for the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety, it is essential that I provide a comprehensive overview of the provincial strategic direction in relation to

safety.

During the course of the coming week our Department will distribute for comment the second draft of the Western Cape Safety Plan 2025-2030, which will serve as the foundation of our Province's strategic interventions and aims to foster a province where safety and social resilience become the hallmarks of our communities. I would like to invite all relevant Government departments at all three spheres of government, and our external partners and stakeholders, to submit inputs to the plan.

This plan is built on three core pillars, each of which represents a critical pathway to achieving meaningful, sustainable change in community safety. These pillars align with the broader Provincial Strategic Plan of 2025-2030, which seeks to create cohesive communities, expand economic opportunities and improve Government governance systems.

Let me take a moment to elaborate on each of these critical components.

Integrated violence prevention goes beyond law enforcement to address the social and economic drivers of crime. This pillar emphasises the whole-of-society and life-course approaches that include Early Childhood Development, substance abuse prevention, mental health support, positive parenting and youth empowerment. By reducing the factors that contribute to violent behaviour we aim to break the cycle of violence and build more resilient communities.

Our Province's interventions will focus on at-risk youth, providing them with educational employment opportunities to divert them from a lure of gang activity and substance abuse. Programmes like the Chrysalis Academy will continue to play a central role in this effort, equipping young people with life skills, mentorship and pathways to employment.

Hon Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Joey Pieters. I do not know where Joey is. Joey is one of our former Chrysalis Academy graduates – you may stand – who found employment in the law enforcement environment and is currently the community safety coordinator in the Saldanha Bay Municipality. [Applause.] Joey Pieters, I salute you. Thank you.

Public safety is closely linked to the physical environment. Well-designed and well-maintained public spaces can deter crime and promote social cohesion. Under this pillar we will implement area-based interventions in high crime precincts, promoting community-led safety initiatives and together with our partners in the City of Cape Town and other municipalities, we will be improving street lighting and expanding CCTV surveillance.

Community-based safety structures such as Neighbourhood Watches, Community in Blue and Community Policing Forums, play a crucial role in crime prevention and fostering trust between law enforcement and residents.

These structures will be strengthened through training, accreditation and the funding of safety initiatives. By empowering local communities to take ownership of their safety we can create safer, more connected neighbourhoods.

I wish to acknowledge the Western Cape Provincial CPF Board, under the leadership of Francina Lukas, for their efforts in building that very important trust relationship. I do not know if Francina is here.

While prevention is essential, effective law enforcement remains a critical component of our safety strategy. We will continue to contribute towards enhancing the capacity and professionalism of law enforcement agencies through target training, improved data sharing and better oversight mechanisms.

The LEAP has already made a significant contribution towards reducing contact crimes in targeting areas in the City of Cape Town. Over the next five years we will build on this success by expanding LEAP deployments in rural municipalities, enhancing the K9 Unit programme and training and deploying peace officers across the province to improve visible policing.

Evidence-based policing is the hallmark of our efforts to combat crime. The DKNG Hotspot Project is a collaborative effort between the SAPS, the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Government, which tests evidence-based policing strategies in the precincts of Delft, Khayelitsha, Nyanga and

Gugulethu. Results showed a reduction in contact crimes in some hotspots of up to 15%.

The success of this intervention has led to a plan to expand the Hotspot Policing Project to nine precincts in the coming financial year and scale it up even further in the coming years.

I wish to acknowledge the valuable partnership we have with the Hanns Seidel Foundation and the Institute for Security Studies in this regard. Thank you, Hanns, sitting there right at the back. [Applause.]

To enhance accountability we will strengthen our oversight of the South African Police Service, ensuring that police stations meet performance standards and respond effectively to community concerns. Our policy and research intervention, together with enhanced data sharing, performance monitoring, evaluations and impact assessments, will enable us to make evidence-informed adjustments to our strategies.

Hon Speaker, our strategic framework is a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to building a safer Western Cape. By addressing the root causes of crime and violence, creating safe public spaces and strengthening law enforcement, we can create a province where every resident feels secure, empowered and connected. The success of our strategic plan depends on targeted, adequate funding interventions designed to create safer communities, enhance law enforcement effectiveness and address the root

causes of violence.

Over the 2025-28 medium-term framework period, we have identified several key programmes that will drive these objectives. Allow me to provide an overview of these programmes and the corresponding Budget allocations.

Youth are often both the victims and perpetrators of violent crime. To break this cycle we must invest in early intervention and youth development programmes that provide young people with viable alternatives to crime, substance abuse and gang involvement.

The fight against gender-based violence remains a top priority. To address the pervasive issue we will implement a multifaceted approach that includes prevention, contributing towards victim support programmes and an improved law enforcement response. Our key initiatives in this area include our Chrysalis Academy.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year Chrysalis Academy will continue to provide at-risk youth with life skills, vocational training and employment opportunities. Graduates of the programme will be given workplace experience and opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

Hon Speaker, I would like to make use of this opportunity to thank Dr Lucille Meyer who will be leaving the Chrysalis Academy at the end of June this year, for her excellent service and leadership to this institution over the past

decade. Unfortunately her mom took ill this morning and she cannot be here. Dr Marlene le Roux is representing Chrysalis, as well as [Inaudible]. I do not know if they are in the - ja, thank you.

Through the Expanded Public Works Programme the Department aims to create 800 work opportunities for our youth. These youth will be deployed in institutions such as the Department of Health and Wellness clinics, South African Police Service police stations and municipalities across the province. We will roll out specialised training programmes to ensure the law enforcement officers handle GBV victims and survivors with sensitivity, dignity and professionalism.

Our Department together with the Western Cape Department of Social Development, will continue to implement social crime prevention programmes aimed at building resilience amongst vulnerable groups. Community awareness campaigns will be launched to challenge harmful gender norms and promote respectful, non-violent relationships. Substantial funding will be allocated to these youth-focused initiatives, reflecting our commitment to building a brighter future for the next generation.

Community safety cannot be achieved solely through law enforcement. Community safety requires active participation of residents, community-based organisations and local safety structures. To this end we will continue to support and strengthen Neighbourhood Watches, Farm Watches and Community Policing Forums.

I also wish to acknowledge the partnership with the business community. Private security companies regularly collaborate with the SAPS and support safety activities by Farm and Neighbourhood Watches across the province. I wish to acknowledge Billy Laubscher and his team at Business Against Crime Western Cape for the valuable partnership. Thank you for being here. [Applause.]

Our goal is to accredit and support a 1 000 Neighbourhood Watches by 2030, providing them with training, funding and digital tools to enhance their effectiveness.

Given the unique safety challenges faced by rural communities, we will enhance the capacity of Farm Watches to address stock theft, farm attacks and other rural crimes.

CPFs will receive resources and training to improve community-police relations and facilitate effective communication between residents and law enforcement agencies. Through structured engagements with key community structures the Department will facilitate the development of local community safety plans tailored to the demands and dynamics of 20 communities experiencing the highest prevalence of violent crime. A dedicated budget will be allocated to these initiatives, ensuring that community safety structures are adequately resourced to play the integral role in crime prevention.

Our Department plays a major role in improving the capacity and capabilities of our policing and law enforcement agencies in the province through coordination of interventions, training of peace officers, financial support to municipalities and supplementing municipal law enforcement capacity.

We will continue to support the deployment of LEAP officers in identified hotspots, particularly in precincts with high murder and gang-related violence rates.

We will be building on the success of the Hotspot Policing Pilot Project. The methodology will be expanded to nine police precincts, which include Mitchells Plain, Delft, Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Philippi East, Kraaifontein, Grassy Park and Mfuleni.

In addition to the LEAP programme in the City of Cape Town the Department will also continue to supplement the municipal law enforcement capacity of two municipalities through the Rural LEAP Programme.

We will enhance the K9 unit. These specialised units in the municipalities of Mossel Bay, Overberg and Swartland will be maintained to continue combating drug trafficking, illegal firearms and the transport of stolen goods. Should additional funds become available in future we will expand the number of K9 units in areas where it is most needed.

We will train and deploy 240 peace officers annually to strengthen visible policing and improve rapid response capabilities in our rural communities.

To ensure the effectiveness of these interventions we will allocate a substantial portion of our Budget to support LEAP operations, peace officer training and the procurement of critical resources, including vehicles, protective gear and surveillance equipment.

Our Department is also responsible for ensuring the safety and security of the Western Cape Government's hardworking staff and its infrastructure. We will continue to provide strategic coordination and direction to all provincial departments towards building a safe, secure and resilient Western Cape Government.

A key part of ensuring the safety of our staff and infrastructure is the maintenance of our more than 600 access control and CCTV cameras.

To ensure that departments are continually hardening their safety and security posture we will conduct security risk management maturity assessments and develop improvement roadmaps for departments based on the assessment results.

We will adopt a risk approach and facilitate safety, security and business continuity risk assessments and provide recommendations for the mitigation of these risks.

We will continue to support the Western Cape Government departments in enhancing occupational health and safety in the workplace.

Hon Speaker, I wish to provide you with a brief overview of the key policy interventions planned for the year ahead. The Western Cape Government's Provincial Strategic Plan 2025-2030 was launched at our Premier Alan Winde's State of the Province Address.

It sets out the Western Cape Government's priorities and strategic direction for the next five years. It is a people-centred, integrated plan designed to address key challenges and unlock opportunities for economic growth, safety, social well-being and governance.

As I have mentioned earlier we will distribute the second draft of the Western Cape Safety Plan 2025-2030 that we aim to complete in the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year.

We will engage with municipalities, the SAPS, the City of Cape Town and various other stakeholders to ensure that the strategy incorporates the requirements and initiatives of all relevant stakeholders.

The effective execution of the various programmes and initiatives contained in the Western Cape Safety Plan 2025-2030 requires an enabling legislative and policy environment. We will therefore be pursuing amendments to the

Western Cape Safety Act and the Western Cape Liquor Act to address constraining prescripts and introduce new ones.

Hon Speaker, I hold the view that guns do not kill people, bullets do. We will therefore, in partnership with relevant civil society organisations and Government departments, pursue the amendment of legislation to impose stricter controls over the retail, distribution and ownership of ammunition.

In addition to this our Department intends to collaborate with the SAPS in the province to use existing requirements to establish a local firearm destruction site to mitigate the potential risks associated with transporting firearms to Gauteng for destruction.

We will establish a provincial Safety Council under the chairpersonship of our Premier, Alan Winde, that will provide strategic leadership and oversight for all safety programmes and initiatives in the Western Cape. The Council will convene quarterly following the release of the South African Police Service crime statistics to assess trends, evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing interventions and refine strategic priorities to enhance public safety.

Hon Speaker, we will continue to pursue the devolution of powers of the South African Police Service to the Western Cape.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY:

This shift would enable a more localised, strategic and responsive approach to addressing the province's unique safety and law enforcement challenges. Integrated police services with Provincial Government departments would foster stronger collaboration, better resource coordination and enhance integration of safety initiatives, ultimately leading to more effective crime prevention and enforcement.

Beyond devolution the Western Cape Government is also pushing for an equitable distribution of policing resources in the province. The critical shortage of policing resources undermines effective policing and crime prevention efforts, further emphasising the need for both resource reallocation and structural reforms to enhance law enforcement capacity and community safety in the province.

Hon Speaker, our Department will strengthen its role as central safety coordinator by establishing a Provincial Safety Coordination Centre which will play a pivotal role in leading the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of safety initiatives across Government departments and municipalities.

By leveraging data and technology we will enhance oversight, identify areas for improvement and recommend evidence-based adjustments to our strategies.

The negative sentiment regarding the SAPS largely overshadows the successes they achieve. Despite their limited resources the SAPS in the province are actively pursuing those responsible for terrorising our communities. To demonstrate this I want to draw your attention to recent crime statistics.

During the third quarter of the 24/25 financial year the SAPS confiscated 613 firearms. They show real tenacity in ridding our communities from illegal firearms as they continue to disrupt the operations of criminal gangs through the seizure of large quantities of firearms, ammunition and drugs.

I wish to thank General Patekile and his team for their efforts. General Patekile will leave us soon as the PC of the Western Cape.

An HON MEMBER: Oh no. [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY:
General, I will engage with you before your official departure.

I also wish to acknowledge the now retired Major General Beaton for his support during his tenure as a District Commissioner in the Metro.
[Applause.] It was a real pleasure working with you.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY:

At this juncture I want to recognise the presence of six SAPS heroes in this house. During the devastating George building collapse Warrant Officers Riaan le Roux and K9 Lex, Sergeant Buyisile Makhosonke and K9 Bond, and Sergeant Willie Visser and K9 Abby, from the SAPS K9 search and rescue team, played a significant role in the search for survivors.

May Warrant Officer Le Roux, Sergeant Makhosonke and Sergeant Visser please rise for everyone to see who you are and acknowledge your excellent service to the people of this province. [Applause.] Thank you again.

Hon Speaker, to achieve all of the above our Department has been allocated a Budget of R753,478 million for 2025/26, R779,954 million for 2026/27 and R812,956 million for 2027/28 financial years.

The key Budget items for the 2025/26 financial year are as follows:

- Compensation of Employees, R179,9 million.
- The LEAP Programme, R350 million.
- Peace officer training, rural municipalities, R1,8 million.
- The Chrysalis Programme, R24,2 million.
- Our Neighbourhood and Farm Watch capacitation, R5,9 million.
- Community Police Forums, R0,8 million.
- K9 units, R12,8 million.
- The EPWP programme, R31,9 million.

- The rural LEAP, R10,1 million.
- The Western Cape Liquor Authority, R60,8 million.
- The Western Cape Police Ombudsman, R9,3 million.
- The WoSA, the Whole of Society Approach, Safety Implementation Plan, district municipalities, R4,6 million.

Collectively these major expenditure items make up R512,3 million or 67,9% of the Department's budget.

Hon Speaker, as we embark on this ambitious journey to build a safer, more resilient Western Cape, I must acknowledge the dedicated men and women of the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety. It is their unwavering commitment, expertise and hard work that will be instrumental in delivering the programmes and interventions outlined in our strategic plan.

This is a call to step up, a call to redouble our efforts, to innovate and to collaborate in ways we never have before. The challenges we face are immense, but so too is our determination to overcome them.

Together with the support of our law enforcement partners, civil society and the people of this province, we will create a future where safety, hope and opportunity prevail.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the hardworking team in my office who are diligently and loyally supporting me in all my endeavours. Without

you I will not be able to tackle the daily challenges.

I wish to acknowledge the valuable inputs by the members of the Western Cape Provincial Safety Advisory Committee. It is really important to have an outside voice on the inside. I want to acknowledge you as part of our team.

General Reddy, Ombudsman of the Western Cape, thank you to you and your team for your dedication in restoring the relationship between SAPS and our citizens.

Last but not least, I wish to thank our Acting HOD, Hilton Arendse, for the fresh, inclusive and innovative management style he brought to this Department. You really brought a new vision to this Department and we promise to build on that vision long after you leave.

In closing, hon Speaker, let me emphasise that safety is a shared responsibility. Government alone cannot solve the complex challenges of crime and violence. We need the active participation of every resident, every business and every civil society organisation.

Safety and wellness are not just the absence of crime, it is a presence of opportunity, hope and social cohesion. Crime and violence ruin lives, deter investment, limit economic opportunities, instil fear and erode trust in public institutions.

A safe and resilient Western Cape is a foundation for economic growth, job creation and social stability. Let us rise to this challenge with determination, unity and an unwavering commitment to a safe and resilient Western Cape that helps businesses to grow and create jobs, and equips our residents to get those jobs. I thank you. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, hon Minister. Before I recognise the next member on the virtual platform I wish to remind the members on the gallery, the guests to the WCPP, that you are not allowed to participate in the proceedings of the House and that also includes clapping, but you are most welcome to observe the Sitting.

So with that being said, hon members, I ask for your indulgence as the next speaker is on the virtual platform and I recognise the hon member Ngqentsu. [Interjections.]

Mr M B NGQENTSU (ANC): Hon Speaker, [Inaudible] of the majority party, Leader of the Opposition, hon members, Police Provincial Commissioner.

Police Provincial Commissioner we are aware that there is a coordinated offensive directed at you, but we know very well that the fundamental basis of these attacks directed at you led by the National Parliamentary Standing Committee Chairperson, are aimed at weakening our South African Police Service, as a basis for the DA to drive their narrow agenda of devolution of

police powers. That is not going to happen and Ian Cameron, him being the Chair, does not make him a police expert.

Hon Speaker, as we are called upon by this Government of liberals to debate and pass an anti-poor and anti-Black majority Budget, because this Budget is premised on basic tenets of neoliberal theory, we invite you to observe the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, a proud revolutionary programme crafted by South African National Liberation Forces led by the ANC. This revolutionary programme continues to serve as a beacon guiding the social and economic transformation currently underway in our country.

Hon Speaker of the House, despite the ongoing neoliberal [Inaudible] offensive aimed at undermining the ideals of the Freedom Charter, we remain steadfast in our commitment [Inaudible] principles and objectives.

I do not mince my words, hon Speaker, when I say the [Inaudible] contradictions within the Government of National Unity should be further debated. The GNU would be ideologically better off without all puppets of international market forces, such as the DA and their Freedom Front Plus.

Hon Speaker, the rampant crime and chronic underdevelopment plaguing our communities in the Western Cape are undeniable and tends to undermine the vision of the Freedom Charter.

Hon Speaker, according to the 2021/2022 annual crime stats the murder rate

in the Western Cape was 57,76 per 100 000, higher than the national rate of 41,8. The Western Cape accounted for 20% of overall crime in South Africa.

In 2022/2023 the province experienced a 14,1 reduction in murders during the fourth quarter, compared to the same period in the previous year. However, the fourth quarter of 2024, hon Speaker, the province experienced a significant increase in murder cases, with a 27,5 rise compared to the same period in this previous year. Do you not see these trends and patterns?

This is a direct result of the neoliberal [Inaudible] trajectory. The real solution lies in addressing the chronic crisis of underdevelopment as this is the root cause of the rampant crime we are facing.

Hon Speaker, once again as we are called to debate this Budget, [Inaudible] which is based on the [Inaudible] of [Inaudible] it seeks to advocate nothing but budget cuts. This is evidence in the R11,2 million reductions in the defence budget allocation. This decrease exposes the Provincial Government's lack of understanding of the material realities in this province.

Hon Speaker, this province remains one of the leading provinces in violent crime. Despite a recorded 8,9% decrease in crime across the province approximately six police stations are still among the top 30 stations in the country with reported violent crimes.

The third quarter crime stats of this year further reports that Western Cape

continues to be the highest contributor to the overall murder rate, accounting for 17,4 of the total murders in the country. This province continues to record the highest number of gang-related murders with 263 counts reported in this quarter alone, hon Speaker.

A large number of these murders, 135 occurred in Bishop Lavis, Mitchells Plain, Kleinvlei, Delft and Elsies River. This was expected because the DA's golden boy in the City of Cape Town, J P Smith, is reported to be entangled in the nexus between the criminal network, the political elite and the corrupt business elements.

Given this evidence a listening Government committed to building safe, caring and resilient communities as per the Department's vision, would heed the call we are making.

Even more concerning is the growing construction mafia crisis in the Western Cape. Unless, hon Speaker, leading elements from the Provincial Government are benefiting from this criminal network. I must say the MEC has been mute on this question. Even today it was just a by-the-way statement.

Hon Speaker, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure released a shocking report that the Western Cape is one of the highest contributors to the construction mafia, with 198 reported cases and only 73 arrests. This evidence alone explains the urgent need for more budgetary allocations

because no investment can be sustained in conditions of criminal impunity.

Hon Speaker, there is either a lack of direction or crisis of leadership in this Government. Just under a month ago the Police Oversight Standing Committee debated and passed the Policing Needs and Priorities Report of the Department. However, the Budget in its current form does not reflect challenges [Inaudible] and recommendations made in the PNP report .

The PNP report makes a powerful statement that the Western Cape Government remains committed to supporting the efforts of policing at Local Government level to combat crime. However, the Budget allocation to rural municipalities in particular is glaringly insufficient. Given the economic state of rural municipalities we call on the MEC to review the Budget by deploying more resources to this local municipality.

Hon Speaker, unlike the apartheid era the current [Inaudible] dispensation requires community involvement in the fight against crime. Thus the ANC-led Government introduced [Inaudible] various organs [Inaudible] such as CPFs, Neighbourhood Watches, as a basis to involve our people. However, the Budget fails to acknowledge the centrality of these organs of people's power, given the lack of sufficient allocation of funds to this component. Fund CPF, Neighbourhood Watches. Maybe your Government still [Inaudible] on the apartheid *dondercop* police regime.

We can confirm though the existence of the *dondercop* apartheid police

regime because this Government was mute when traffic officers almost killed a minibus tax operator about a month ago. Again it has been reported that, and it comes as no surprise, that there are dogs in the Chamber today to serve with interest.

Hon Speaker, we demand a budget that is premised on the genuine need to address crime in working-class communities and to build a safe, equitable and just society for all South Africans.

The deployment of resources must be working-class bias because not a single day where bodies were collected in the leafy suburb of Constantia, of Brackenfell and so on, but bodies are collected in Mitchells Plain, in Khayelitsha, in Nyanga East. Such areas need resources.

In your whole-of-society approach, Chair, we urge as the ANC that boots on the ground alone do not serve as a Panado to resolve the problem. As long as there continues to be squatter camps in working-class communities crime will continue.

Hon Speaker, on behalf of the ANC we reject this Budget which is based on neoliberal austerity framework. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much to the hon member. Before I recognise hon member Stephens, do you need the podium? Do you need the podium? Then I recognise you, hon member Stephens.

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Hon Speaker and distinguished guests, our communities are under siege.

Crime rates continue to rise despite the deployment of another 1 000 additional LEAP officers. The reality on the ground does not reflect any improvement and people are losing faith in the system meant to protect them.

We hear tragic stories almost daily. Just last week Thamlyn Clarke was shot and killed in broad daylight while sitting in front of her home awaiting a trial case due to rape. In March theatre nurse Bevan Dudley was brutally murdered in Kraaifontein. One of five consecutive murders in the area.

Criminals are emboldened because they do not fear consequences and still LEAP officers were removed out of the Kraaifontein area in 2024, knowing that the Kraaifontein Police Station does not have enough manpower.

Even more disturbing is the ongoing crisis of gender-based violence. In 2019 President Cyril Ramaphosa declared GBV a second national pandemic, but despite various Government interventions we have yet to see real change. Women and children continue to live in fear and justice remains elusive for far too many survivors. Hon members, passing laws is not enough. We must ensure they are enforced. Survivors of crime in GBV need more than promises. They need access to justice, protection and real support.

This means strengthening our police services [Inaudible] so they can respond with urgency and sensitivity. It also means investing in education and prevention programmes that challenge harmful gender norms and teach respect, consent and equality from an early age.

Our people deserve to live in safe communities where criminals are held accountable and justice is swift. The time for talk is over, now is the time for action. Thank you, hon Minister, for ensuring us that the Department will do everything in their power to secure safety and security in our communities. Therefore we support the Budget. Thank you, hon Speaker. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Stephens. I now recognise the hon member Cassiem on the – order, hon members! I recognise the hon member Cassiem on the hybrid system.

Ms A CASSIEM (EFF): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, this Budget will not have an impact on tackling crime since the money will be placed in the wrong hands once again of the very same people who have been failing this province when it comes to crime.

I find it quite shocking, hon Speaker, that the Provincial Finance Minister celebrated a decline in sexual offences crime at a rate of minus 10% as if it was as a result of the direct intervention by this DA Government, whilst the latest national stats places Mitchells Plain and Delft as the top two highest

case areas for sexual assault.

Hon Speaker, in last week's Committee, when asked if this Budget speaks to drugs and gangsterism across this province, the Department could not outline how exactly it will cover intervention programmes with this Budget, other than stating that out of the entire province only five communities, specifically in Cape Town, will get the attention of the Department when it comes to tackling crime in this province.

So, hon Speaker, now we ask what about other communities across the province who also suffer and who are also held hostage under drug and gang activity?

It cannot be that every year we waste millions of rands on safety plans that do not yield results whilst there is zero innovation when it comes to tackling crime, because reality is, hon Speaker, when we look at those suffering and dying, especially on the Cape Flats, it is always only African and Coloured children being killed, especially through drug and gang activity in this province.

The EFF cannot vote for a budget that does not speak to communities who need it the most because we are here annually asking this DA Government to prioritise tackling drug and gangsterism, but they just do not want to do that, and therefore, hon Speaker, we reject this Budget. Thank you.
[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Cassiem. I recognise the hon member Jacobs.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Thank you, hon Speaker. Greetings to all. I think you are all aware the Cape Flats is at war.

Hon Speaker, the Department Planning Report for which this Budget must cater has the following to say. In the period of 2014 to 2024, 10 years, there has been a 43% increase in the murder rate in the Western Cape. From 2022 to 2023, to 2023 to 2024, there has been a 9% increase in murder rate in the Western Cape while the national increase was a mere 0,5%. So the latest crime stats indicate that the Western Cape is in a position two, three, four, five, eight and 10 in the national top 10 murder areas.

The Department in its report says that the top contributor to these figures are poverty and unemployment. I am going to say it again. Poverty and unemployment, firearms, alcohol and drugs.

Now, hon Speaker, we must ask ourselves how does the hon Premier and the hon MEC want us to believe that we have a 19% unemployment rate, but the contributor to poverty and unemployment is murder? Speaker, in 2006/2007, before the DA took over the province, the murder rate was low, the crime rate was low, gangsterism †*was outyds* [was in the past,] we had Bambinanis, we had fully functional Neighbourhood Watches, we had street committees, we

had block committees, we had night markets, switch on of the lights, street jams, park jams, block parties.

All these simple things were implemented to eradicate crime and all those activities were funded and supported by Community Safety. †Ek weet nie wat die DA aangevang het nie, rêrig. [I don't know what the DA did, really.]

Now while you spend billions per year on failed crime prevention programmes and projects, let me tell you something. You know why you do not get it right? Because you do not listen to us. Just give us a young, Coloured MEC that understands the Cape Flats. You will get things right.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Jacobs ...[Interjections.]

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Thank you.

The SPEAKER: ...your time has expired. Thank you very much. I now – order, hon members! I now recognise the hon member Herron on the online platform.

Mr B N HERRON (GOOD): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, the numbers before us paint a stark picture. The Provincial Equitable Share for Safety has nearly doubled from R347 million last year to R684 million this year.

In total the Treasury has allocated R753 million to the safety sector to fund a plan that is, by all objective measures, failing. The goal of this plan was to cut the murder rate by 50% in 10 years. Yet halfway to that deadline the numbers tell us a completely different story. Instead of declining the murder rate has climbed by 12,2% from 2019 when this plan was started, to 2024.

So the hon Minister can cherry-pick one quarter out of the last five years to find her reduction in the murder rate, but the overall number of murders in this province has increased despite the over R2 billion already spent on a failing plan, and it is not just the murder rate, hon Speaker. Gang violence has also worsened, extortion has spread like a disease, businesses are under siege, communities are terrorised and now even schools are being targeted with teachers receiving threats from extortion gangs, turning places of learning into places of fear.

The same money being poured into a failing Safety Plan could instead be invested in education, which is a proven tool to reduce crime. Quality education provides opportunities, disrupts gang recruitment and fosters safer communities. Instead investing in education should not just be an option it is a necessity.

The Budget increase is meaningless if it continues to fund a broken strategy. We cannot spend our way out of failure. What we need is a Safety Plan that works, one that dismantles gang networks, roots out corruption in law enforcement and makes communities safer and no politician ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon member Herron, your time has expired, please conclude.

Mr B N HERRON (GOOD): No politician who is implicated in crime should be in office. If law enforcement is kicking down your door ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Herron.

Mr B N HERRON (GOOD): ...you have no business being in government. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Your time has concluded. I recognise the hon member Walters. [Interjections.]

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Hon Speaker, let me declare right up front that the Democratic Alliance is supporting this Budget Vote and proudly so.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear! [Interjections.]

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Let me start by thanking our hon Premier, our hon Minister of Finance and everyone involved in the management of resources for delivering a budget that is pro-poor, that is pro-growth, that is pro-jobs. [Interjections.]

As was pointed out so factually, so objectively and so transparently by this Government, it is spending 80% of its Budget on services directly aimed at transforming the lives of poor residents of the Western Cape.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

Mr T WALTERS (DA): No amount of idiotic race-baiting, outright lies and frankly old, outdated posturing can change the objective fact that this Government is the guiding star in South Africa in job creation, reducing inequality and economic growth.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear! [Interjections.]

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Furthermore, it is achieving this noteworthy accomplishment on the back of an outstanding record of managing scarce resources, as evidenced by past Auditor-General reports. This is not a case of simply spending money that we do not have at the expense of future generations, but responsible, careful investment in a belief that the poor should not remain poor. In this province the money meant for the poor does not get stolen.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear! [Interjections.]

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Even more remarkably it is maintaining this example of how a pro-poor budget should be done [Interjections.] in a fiscal landscape

that has constricted. [Interjections.] Constricted, I might add, because we had a National Government that for 30 years specialised in destroying jobs, smothering growth and driving up inequality. [Interjections.]

This Budget also shows how this Government takes a stand against the uncaring ANC and its minions, who have shown this week that they have finally abandoned any pretence that they care about, and I quote:

"The poor Black working class in South Africa."

The truth is the ANC now proudly wears the legacy of apartheid and this Budget, if we are truly objective, shows that a DA Government is the answer for anyone who wants to defeat that legacy.

Hon Speaker, by supporting Vote 4 we are not merely supporting the efficient expenditure of Budget items in a mechanical manner, [Interjections.] but supporting it as part of a transversal strategy. This means, in very simple terms, that the Western Cape Government does not spend in silos. What happens in one department is intrinsically linked to what happens in another department.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Spending on education, spending on social development, spending on health and spending on cultural affairs and sport

all work in tandem with the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety.

It is the way that this Government gives expression to its key strategic priorities of Growth for Jobs, a safe society, an educated and healthy and caring society, and innovation. Furthermore, this whole-of-government approach is underpinned by a whole-of-society approach, where Government spending is directed in partnership with communities, other tiers of government and the private sector, to not only deliver to communities, but with communities.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

Mr T WALTERS (DA): What a great pity that anti-poor ANC National Governments in the past have deliberately underfunded the SAPS because they want successful governments to fail. [Interjections.] They cannot handle success. Imagine what this Government could do if the SAPS was devolved to this province.

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Chair – Madam – hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Madam Speaker? [Interjections.]

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Speaker, [Laughter] that was a throwback to my days in Parliament. [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, my sincere apologies, [Interjections.] but since we are on the topic of National Government ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr T WALTERS (DA): ...I think it is important to note that particularly the other parties in this House have, without fail, been criticising the Western Cape Government for failures of National Government. Without fail, you can literally tick a box. Everything they accuse this Government of is in fact their failure.

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Mr T WALTERS (DA): But can I say that I do not believe the hon members in this House and the Opposition are dishonourable members. I think they are honourable members. I think they are serious about what they are doing.

So I am actually interpreting this not as Opposition criticism, but a heartfelt appeal that the DA should really be taking up these functions. It is closet support for devolution. They know that we will do a better job and thank you for that sort of subliminal support.

Imagine what this Government could do taking over resources often wasted by the SAPS in the Western Cape, which the Opposition is criticising, which we can see they want us to be handling and dealing with. Imagine if the SAPS and other national departments just got with the whole-of-society programme. We still live in hope and we will work towards that, hopefully with the other parties in this House, and do welcome some positive signs that the past attitude might be changing.

With this backdrop I want to highlight the following in the Budget. The Main Budget for Police Oversight and Community Safety, and I am going to avoid a second embarrassment by not quoting the full number because I am scared of a Zuma moment, but the Main Budget for the Police Oversight and Community Safety for 2025/2026 is just over R750 million. [Interjections.]

Today I stand before you to highlight the critical importance of continuing our investment in the Law Enforcement Advancement Plan, LEAP, a partnership that has proven to be a beacon for hope for our communities in high crime areas.

The LEAP Programme has made significant strides in enhancing the safety and security of our communities. Through targeted funding the LEAP Programme continues to bolster the capacity of law enforcement agencies, with earmarked allocations set at R350 million for 2025/26, R365 million for 2026/2027 and R380 million for 2027/2028. [Interjections.]

Despite a decrease of 3,99% in the 2025/26 financial year the strategic funding is essential to maintain and expand our partnership with the City of Cape Town over the next five years. Let me be clear. LEAP's impact is tangible and undeniable.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

Mr T WALTERS (DA): The programme has led to the removal of 745 firearms from our streets, over 40 000 arrests and the seizure of millions of rands worth of illicit drugs.

These are not just numbers that represent lives saved, families protected and criminals taken off the street. [Interjections.] LEAP officers, including the learner law enforcement officers on the front lines, are actively working to improve community safety, while units like the Roving Reaction Unit provide critical rapid response capabilities.

However, despite these successes some continue to oppose LEAP, claiming it is ineffective. To them I ask how can we ignore facts? How can we disregard the lives saved and the criminals apprehended? The evidence is clear and it is our duty to continue supporting LEAP to keep our communities safe and secure.

However, the funding for that, given that it is essentially a national mandate, is not guaranteed. A National Government that truly cares will take this pilot

programme and invest in it and expand it, hon member Stephens, to all communities, like Kraaifontein as well. So really, let us take hands and devolve, as I mentioned earlier.

We also welcome the investment in the Provincial Safety Coordination and Intelligence Centre situated in the HOD's office. This institution has the potential to help fill the gap left by the very poor crime intelligence capacity of the ANC's SAPS at a national level. Again the Western Cape is coming to the rescue of a national department and will help to develop useful data in tandem with data gleaned from other departments.

Furthermore, we welcome the continued investment in the capacity of the Western Cape Liquor Board, who can play a big role in the fight against crime and be a source of revenue for the Provincial Government.

Similarly we welcome the continued support for the Provincial Secretariat. This assists the Department with keeping the SAPS both accountable and supported, and is a key part of bringing National Government to the party.

We welcome the continued support for the LEAP Programme, but again with this caveat, it cannot become an excuse for the SAPS to underinvest from their side. They see LEAP officers coming in and then they do not add the resources they are supposed to add, as per the original intention.

Right now there is a growing concern that this assistance to the SAPS's

mandate allows them to pass the buck to the Western Cape Provincial Government, ably assisted by members of this House, desperately trying to blame the Provincial Government for national failures. If they truly care about the poor they will demand that these programmes are supported, further invested in and mainstreamed by a National Government willing to play its part in a true partnership. A concept has been proven, let us make it work.

I further support the onboarding of the EPWP Programmes to strengthen police capacity, welcome the Chrysalis Programme to further invest in human capacity and appreciate the very successful support for Neighbourhood Watches. We look forward to a renewed emphasis on rural safety and acknowledge the good start that was made with K9 units.

The K9 Unit Programme plays a role in the fight against crime, significantly enhancing the safety and security of our communities. The Overstrand K9 unit patrolling nature reserves and coastal areas has adapted its working hours to target poachers operating in the early hours, leading to numerous successful arrests. In 2024 alone they arrested 984 suspects, disrupting illegal activities and protecting our environment.

Similarly the Swartland K9 Unit extends its reach across boundaries, conducting operations in areas such as Saldanha Bay, Cederberg and Bergrivier. The integration into the municipal law enforcement traffic service structure has proved effective with 369 arrests made in 2024.

The Mossel Bay K9 rural LEAP unit collaborates closely with the SAPS during operations, there are very good people in the SAPS who just want to do their jobs, contributing to the arrest of 228 suspects ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

Mr T WALTERS (DA): ...in 2024. These successes highlight the value of the K9 Unit's support in law enforcement. The continued investment and support for these units will ensure that they remain an essential tool in maintaining safety and combating crime in our region. [Interjections.]

There is another, there is a noise, [Interjections.] I think there is something that has been let loose in the House, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Is that a point of order, hon member Walters?

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Sorry, say again hon Chair?

The SPEAKER: Is that a point of order?

Mr T WALTERS (DA): No, there is...

The SPEAKER: Or is that part of your speech?

Mr T WALTERS (DA): There is a disruption here.

The SPEAKER: Okay, but you must speak ...[Interjections.]

Mr T WALTERS (DA): It is not a sensible disruption, but it is nevertheless a disruption.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Walters, please do not engage me. If you want a point of order please raise your point of order.

Mr T WALTERS (DA): No, it is fine, it is fine, hon Chair. It is not that troublesome.

Hon Speaker, let me take the opportunity to also respond to the comments made by the hon members. It was very difficult to hear the online commentary, but there was something about the construction mafia fearing J P Smith and trying to take him out, but we do not think that is going to work.

Let me also respond to hon member Jacobs. I differ with your approach that you have used, or the way that you framed your input, but you made one key point that I fundamentally agree with. Let us listen to one another.

The SPEAKER: Hon member Walters, please take your seat. Hon member Nkondlo, is that a point of order?

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Can you help this hon member and help this House just to remind him he talks through you?

The SPEAKER: The point of order is that you must address the Chair. Hon member Walters, can you please speak to me?

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Hon Speaker, I will do so. What I wanted to say through you in terms of the contribution made by the hon member Jacobs, I differ with the way that he framed, [Interjections.] he politically framed his input. He made a key point that I really think I take to heart, is that we should listen to one another. Nobody has a monopoly on good ideas and I hear what you are saying there.

Similarly, hon member Stephens, your comment, the comment that – the way I interpret your comment is much as there is progress, much as there are wonderful things happening in the Western Cape, we must not forget that trying is not enough. At the end of the day that kind of problem in the community you are referring to, the objective is that it does not exist.

Hon Speaker, let me conclude by offering a perspective on the challenges we face in the Western Cape around crime. None of us cannot be deeply moved by the constant gang-related murders that we hear about in the news and experience. None of us want to be remembered for impotent messages of condolences. We want to be remembered as politicians that want to change fear into hope, we want to turn ideas into actions and budgets into making a

difference.

The perennial crime problem in the Western Cape is driven by more than the dehumanisation and loss of dignity associated with poverty. It is sustained by a wide-ranging organised crime that forms an alternative government with its own revenues and its own economy based on drugs, extortion and protection rackets and various other crimes. It reigns through terror and it is pervasive.

This cannot be a permanent phenomenon in the South African landscape and I am proud that the Western Cape Government, with its limited resources and limited mandate, is not backing away from this threat to our most vulnerable.

We will fight the scourge by tackling both the demand for what it offers by drawing away people from its temptation, as well as tackling what it supplies. The DA supports this pro-poor Budget. [Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member Walters. I recognise the hon Minister, Minister Marais.

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: Thank you so much, hon Speaker. Thank you for everyone that participated in this debate. It is a very sincere debate and budget as well.

†Eerstens wil ek net sê dat LEAP ontplooiing word gedoen na aanleiding van data, en ek gaan nou sê in Engels, [Firstly I just want to say that LEAP deployment is done according to data, and I'm now going to say in English,] data and evidence-based, but also taking into account the resources available. So we are going to look at that. We have a meeting in April to re-look at the deployment of LEAP.

Then there is no misalignment in the PNP and our Budget. We support the municipalities in joint projects. We are not responsible for funding their full functions. They have their own budgeting processes through which they need to request funding.

†Dan vir die agb lid Jacobs. Ek het u vroeër genooi om by my koffie of tee of water te kom drink, want ten minste kan ons na mekaar luister, want dit is sodat ons weet, en ek weet wat die werklikheid is op ons Kaapse Vlakte. So u kan kom dat ons saam kan werk aan oplossings, dat ons hierdie geweldige misdaad kan bekamp.

Dan wil ek net sê baie dankie aan al ons gaste dat julle so lank gewag het, dat julle die uitnodiging geëer het, veral van diegene wat ver kom. Ek weet hier is mense van Swellendam en van Drakenstein, en veral ons *Mayco members* vir Veiligheid, baie dankie dat julle spesifiek gekom het, ek waardeer dit.

Dan dankie aan ons Voorsitter, agb Thomas Walters, vir ons konstruktiewe

verhouding en oorsig wat ons het vir die Staande Komitee, wat altyd professioneel is.

Dankie aan Waseem , die Komiteekoördineerder, ek waardeer jou, en hiermee lê ek die begroting vir die Polisie-oorsig en Gemeenskapsveiligheid ter tafel. Baie dankie. [Applous.]

[Then to hon member Jacobs. I invited you earlier to come and have a cup of coffee or tea or water with me, because then we can at least listen to each other, because this is so that we know, and I know what the reality is on our Cape Flats. So you can come that we can work together on solutions, that we can fight this serious crime.

Then I just want to say thank you to all our guests that you have waited so long, that you honoured the invitation, especially those who came from far. I know there are people here from Swellendam and from Drakenstein, and especially our Mayco members for Safety, thank you that you specifically came, I appreciate that.

Then thank you to our Chairman, hon Thomas Walters, for our constructive relationship and oversight we have in the Standing Committee, which is always professional.

Thank you to Waseem, the Committee coordinator, I appreciate you, and with that I table Community Safety. Thank you. [Applause.]]

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie, agb Minister. [The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister.] Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote. I will now suspend the House for two minutes to allow hon Minister Marais's guest to exit the Chamber. [Interjections.]

Hon member Windvogel, I am on the floor. I will allow the guests of hon Minister Marais to exit and then the guests of hon Minister Mackenzie to enter. The House is now suspended for two minutes. [Interjections.]

Order, hon members. Hon Minister, can I get an indication if all your guests have arrived? I know that we are running late so I am a bit lenient today.

Hon Minister, I am going to give another couple of seconds and then I am going to start.

Thank you very much. Hon Minister, we are going to start. No, hon Minister, I have not acknowledged you, I am asking you is it ...[Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Ja, I am ready.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon members, the Secretary will read the Seventh Order of the Day.

†Die SEKRETARIS: Debat oor Begrotingspos 13: Kultuursake en Sport –

Wes-Kaapse Begrotingswetsontwerp [W 1–2025].

[The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 13: Cultural Affairs and Sport – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1-2025]]

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie. Agb Minister van Kultuursake en Sport, agb Minister Mackenzie.

[The SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, hon Minister Mackenzie.]

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Thank you, hon Speaker, hon Premier Alan Winde, hon Cabinet colleagues, hon members of this House, partners in government and civil society, our Head of Department, officials from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, fellow residents of the Western Cape, the residents of South Africa and global community in sports, arts and culture.

Hon members, it is an honour to stand before you to table the 2025/2026 Budget for the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport. A department tasked with some of the most humanising work in government. The Budget is driven by a clear focus on enabling impactful service delivery across the Western Cape, while managing fiscal and service delivery risks.

It prioritises upstream interventions, particularly in youth development, cultural preservation, physical activity and community empowerment. These initiatives play a vital role in fostering resilience, promoting wellbeing and

servicing as preventative measures to mitigate future social and economic costs.

Hon members, this week I was in Oudtshoorn in the vibrant Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees, the KKNK, a celebration of creativity, culture and community. Festivals like these do not just bring people together, they create jobs, empower the arts and your cultural economy across the Western Cape. †En dit was wonderlik om te sien duisende, duisende, en duisende mense van oor die hele land wat in Oudtshoorn is en daardie dorp vol maak. [And it was wonderful to see thousands, thousands, and thousands of people from all over the country that are in Oudtshoorn and filling up that town.]

Hon members, in recent months we have also celebrated, and I have personally visited the declaration of Diepkloof Rock Shelter near Elands Bay, and the Pinnacle Point Site Complex in Mossel Bay as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We also went to Sibhudu Cave in KwaZulu-Natal where I was gifted a Zulu spear and a shield by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal. So, you are welcome to call me King Mackenzie. ...[Laughter.] It is obviously not.

As a department, we are committed to promoting and preserving our rich cultural heritage so that future generations may continue to learn from us and be inspired by us. We have recently launched our Robben Island Cleanup initiative to ensure that this iconic site, so central to our country's history and struggle for freedom, is protected and preserved for generations to come.

Now, hon members, you all know we do not own Robben Island. It is a national entity, but we could not sit idle and watch that entity deteriorate and that is why we took the initiative, took 100 people to Robben Island, to help clean up our beautiful island.

We have also introduced our Jazz on the Train because jazz, along with other forms of music and arts, plays a vital role in our work and has a meaningful impact on communities. These are just some of the examples of the work we have been doing and will continue to do.

Hon Speaker, the 2025 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework allocation for our Department reflects a deliberate investment in human development, social cohesion and economic inclusion through culture, sport, youth service and heritage. We are not simply spending money. We are allocating public funds to interventions that help prevent crime, boost mental health, ignite literacy, create jobs and build confidence.

To this end, our Budget increases over the next MTEF by R36 million in 2025/2026, R27 million in 2026/2027 and R29 million in 2027/2028. A major contribution for this increase in budget shift from the Western Cape Department of Education. Thank you, my colleague, hon Minister Maynier. A transfer of R26 million in 20205/2026 to fund our growing operational footprint of our Mass Participation, Opportunity, Access, Development and Growth programme, the MOD programme.

Why is this important? Because the MOD programme is a shield, like the one I received in KwaZulu-Natal. It is a protective force field around children and youth in vulnerable hours after school. It is one of our province's most effective interventions against crime, disengagement, and despair.

Take, for example, Unathi. From the Oscar Mphetha High School MOD Centre in Nyanga. Unathi went from an introverted learner to a university graduate and future educator. She is a dancer and where did her journey begin? Unathi's journey began when dancing in our MOD Centre.

Or take coach Nathaly September from the Groenheuwel Primary MOD Centre in Paarl. She went from a local assistant coach to provincial mentor and university-level trainer. Nathaly embodies what a success story looks like for us. They come from our MOD Centres. That is why we are very happy for the money from Education to invest another R29 million into the MOD Centres.

Hon members, through safe and structured activities in sport, arts and culture, young people are exposed to discipline, teamwork, creativity, mentorship and the simple joy of belonging. That is why it is wonderful to see our young people here from the Rainbow Academy. Thank you for joining us in our Western Cape Parliament here today. This is who we supported and continue to support young people like that because this discipline is keeping them active, keeping them healthy and keeping them young to participate in groups. Because the alternative is too ghastly to

contemplate.

Hon members, this year we are expanding our MOD Centre footprint from 181 to 315 centres, reaching deeper into rural areas, neighbouring schools and underserved communities. From the streets of Nyanga to the stages of the Cape Town Carnival, and from rural sports to international arenas in India, the MOD Programme is a launchpad for dreams. These stories prove that with the right support, structured spaces and caring coaches, youth in the Western Cape can thrive. The MOD strategy is not just a plan. It is already delivering transformation one learner at a time.

Hon members, let us speak plainly: sport is not a luxury. It is not just about medals or scoreboards. Sport is an equaliser. On the field, a child from Mitchells Plain stands as tall as a child from Milnerton. It is in sport that we learn fairness, excellence, and grit.

Sport also builds the economy. From the Cape Town Cycle Tour to Sevens Rugby, to the Two Oceans Marathon taking place this weekend. Hon Speaker, I hope you give a directive that next year, all hon members of this House will join me in the Cape Town Marathon. ...[Applause.] [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, sport brings tourists, it brings jobs and media attention. It sustains families and communities. At these events you will find security guards, vendors, event staff, sound technicians, and hospitality workers. All earning decent income ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Even just for a few days. These are real jobs that matter to real people, and they help keep food on the table.

Hon members, over the past year, we have expanded our reach to ensure that every child and resident, no matter their background, can access the transformative power of sport. Through the managed network model, we are breaking down barriers, fostering inclusivity and building a culture of participation, excellence and shared pride.

The Recreation Programme in our Department has been vital in enhancing community engagement, promoting wellness and preserving our rich cultural heritage. Flagship initiatives such as Move for Health Day, District and Provincial Indigenous Games, and the Big Walk have encouraged active living, celebrating traditional sport and fostered mental wellbeing.

Notably, our province was proudly represented at the Kho-Kho World Cup. Sinesipho Jalumpu, from Makuphula High and Linathi Pikoko from Matthew Goniwe Memorial represented South Africa in India and the Kho-Kho World Cup earlier this year, and they have reached the semi-finals.

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear! ...[Applause.]

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: This is a testament to our dedication to promoting indigenous games on a world stage.

Active aging across the life course remains a key priority. Hon member, in this province you live much longer. So, with the Golden Games that we invest in as the Western Cape Government, that all of us in this room will one day have to participate in even though we do not want to ...[Laughter.]. Hon members, recreation centres across the Western Cape provide safe and inclusive spaces for all age groups, strengthening community bonds and promoting a culture of lifelong activities.

Hon members, young athletes, like Nasr Esau, currently an education student at the University of the Western Cape, has represented Team Western Cape at three editions of the South African National School Sport Championship and won gold in the table tennis Para TT category at each of these championships. It is taking place right now in Bloemfontein.

Lethuthambo Mthembu, a learner from Villiersdorp Senior School, a MOD Centre, was elected to represent South Africa at the Confederation of African Football Regional Championships in Zanzibar and Namibia in 2024. We are looking forward to getting more of our players to one day, play for Bafana Bafana. It is nice to see our Vice President, Mr Bennett Bailey, here from SAFFA in the House today. Thank you for joining us today, sir. She was also part of the Academy Programme that signals our commitment to high

performance development.

Hon members, in Lavender Hill where many challenges exist, 16-year-old Roshica Sondag has become a champion, not just in table tennis. From Prince George Primary School's MOD Centre that we fund and set up, to international podiums, she is proof that when talent, when given a chance, can thrive. She is presently the youngest female player in the SA senior female table tennis squad and will be competing in the United Arab Emirates later this year. Hon members, that deserves a hand of applause. ...[Applause.]

Hon members, we are not stopping there. The Western Cape Government has allocated R7,5 million to strengthen 123 district sports federations in the Western Cape. This investment is expected to benefit 500 000 people province-wide.

Hon members, community sports clubs, key to what happens in our communities, will receive support for leagues, equipment and governance improvements and new sports equipment. We have also recently handed over equipment in Beaufort West, Vanrhynsdorp, Blanco, Dysselsdorp and Tulbagh. So, as a provincial Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, we have reached the whole of the Western Cape.

We have also allocated an additional R5 million committed to our Western Cape Sport Academy system. We want to see more Western Cape athletes

going to the 2028 Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Hon members, we invest in big events to support the economy in the Western Cape. From the Cape Town Marathon, the Cape Town Cycle Tour, the ABSA Cape Epic, the Rugby Sevens and this weekend's Two Oceans Marathon, of course. These events create jobs. We have allocated R8 million that will go towards key tournaments that support national team selection and international readiness.

Hon members, upgrading facilities, sports facilities and communities is important to us as a Department. Just recently, we added brand new lights in Tulbagh. We have opened a multisport complex in Prince Alfred Hamlet. We have improved community facilities like cricket nets. I was in Dysselsdorp two days ago. This is how we help sport in the Western Cape. We invest in our facilities.

Hon members, youth are important to us as the members of the Western Cape Parliament ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Apologies, hon Deputy Speaker. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Thank you, hon colleagues. That is why, hon members, we invest in our flagship YearBeyond programme. Our YearBeyond programme is an incredible programme that can connect young people to economic pathways. Just recently, we have

advertised vacancies that were for those positions. Nearly 3 000 vacancies that will be filled by our colleagues in the YearBeyond programme for young people because we believe young people deserve opportunities.

One of the videos that we shared on TikTok nearly saw 90 000 views, predominantly obviously by young people, and my colleagues have informed us that they received more than 40 000 applications. Although it is wonderful to see so many applications, the message to us is clear. We must do more for our young people, of course in the Western Cape, and in the country. And anyone that increases VAT stops the opportunities for those young people.

Hon members, three quarters of the youth who exit our YearBeyond programme, transition into work or studies and less than 10% of them are likely to become NEET youth than their peers. So, we are asking our colleagues to please share these programmes that our Department has so that more of these young people get opportunities in our Government.

Hon members, our Department will continue to invest in our National School Sport Championships, and we wish all our participants currently participating in the competitions well and we know they are going to bring gold back to the Western Cape.

Hon members, we love the arts in the Western Cape, and we love supporting the arts in the Western Cape. Thank you, Marlene le Roux, the CEO of our

beautiful facility, Artscape. This year sitting at the bottom, joining us today. It is wonderful to see your new productions taking place in that beautiful facility and thank you for running an incredible entity in the Western Cape. One of our best entities, in my opinion, that you run, you and your team. A great team and I hope you will continue to run that. Thank you very much to everyone at the Artscape. ...[Applause.]

Hon members, we fully support the arts and for this year, we are allocating R17 million to support artists and organisations across disciplines, generating jobs, events and local economic growth. In this regard, I want to welcome two young ladies from McGregor. On their own, hon members, they built a beautiful facility using their own resources in McGregor. Caroline and your colleague, welcome here in our Western Cape Parliament. ...[Applause.] We will continue to support the Symbulon Centre.

Hon members, if ever you have time to visit McGregor, visit the Symbulon Centre. It is wonderful to see how young people, such as themselves, take charge in our community, hon Minister Meyer, and build this wonderful facility. A great investment by the private sector and when the private sector do so, we follow. So, we will also be assisting them, hon members, to live the arts in their community. Thank you very much, young ladies. ...[Applause.]

Hon members, heritage is important to us as the Western Cape and I want to welcome our CEO for our Heritage Agency, Dr Michael Janse van Rensburg,

who is continuously building our heritage in the Western Cape and ensuring we protect our heritage. We love heritage in the Western Cape, we are protecting it, but we also want to enable development in the Western Cape.

In this regard and in balancing development and preservation, and in line with our National Heritage Act, we have allocated R870 000 for operational costs and we have now in addition to that, allocated R800 000 for appointing a Project Championship to support the new UNESCO World Heritage Site: The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour. We want to protect our new World Heritage sites. I know our colleagues in the Department do incredible work in protecting that site and enabling jobs whilst protecting.

Hon members, to support our operations, we have also allocated and will transfer R7,7 million to affiliated museums and over R10 million will fund our Expanded Public Works Programme providing work opportunities and boosting capacity for our museums.

Hon members, Heritage Western Cape will designate the gravesites of repatriated liberation stalwarts as Provincial Heritage Sites, ensuring their legacy is preserved for future generations. Our freedom was not for free. People died for our freedom, and I am proud of the team who continues to invest in ensuring the legacy of those that died for our freedom, will get dignified burials and their history is preserved in a dignified manner. So, thank you very much, colleagues and thank you to the team.

Hon members, we love libraries in the Western Cape. In fact, we love reading in the Western Cape. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Readers are leaders!

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Readers are leaders, as the hon Minister of Finance always says. Hon members, our ...[Interjections.]

The Western Cape has the country's largest library network with over 375 service points, offering safe learning and free digital access. To strengthen the digital inclusion, especially in rural areas, we have allocated R8 million for internet and equipment, and over R2,3 million to expand digital collections like e-books and journals in our libraries.

Hon members, two days ago I was in Oudtshoorn, and I made a point to visit one of our libraries in Oudtshoorn. The reason I did so, and I bought them some lovely cake and tea and I will explain to you why I did it. I love the sitting libraries because I love libraries. In that library, hon members, when I went there last year there was a queue outside that library, and I tried to understand why there was a queue outside that library. So, there were young destitute children and homeless children waiting to get into the library.

So, the librarians there, hon members, the children obviously use the libraries for internet and for games, but before they can play a game, they must read

five pages. Hon members, those young children are going to take up our seats in 10–15 years' time because they are starting to read every single day. So, I went back there a few days ago just to give the librarians some tea and cake and to say thank you very much for encouraging reading in our communities because readers are leaders.

Hon members, as we move into the 2025/2026 financial year, our vision remains clear: to empower communities and organisations through arts, culture, heritage, sport and recreation. Organisations like Artscape, the Rainbow Academy, Zolani Youth Choir, the Symbulon Centre, SAFA, DeafSA, there are our colleagues that are here today. These sectors, programmes and institutions are vital to social cohesion, identity and economic growth and we are committed to keeping them vibrant, inclusive and sustainable.

Hon members, our strategic focus on participation, platforms and pathways will continue to drive wellbeing and opportunity. Youth remain central for us as the Western Cape Government.

Last year there was a young man that approached us. The young man had to go to London, over the waters as you know it. The young man is right there on the top there: Ajay Wonderboy. Ajay Wonderboy entered Britain's Got Talent. His wonderful voice now resonates to everybody in London in the UK, and Europe. He is from Cape Town and that young man is right here and we are proud ...[Applause.] And as the Western Cape Government, we are

proud to support Ajay Wonderboy.

Thank you, Marlene, Themba and the team for working with Carol, Dr Carol van Wyk, in absentia for working hard to make that beautiful Artscape facility available for a fundraiser that helped getting AJ Wonderboy to London. That is our job as the Western Cape Government. We are enablers of things. Thank you to Marlene for always being available to assist us.

Hon members, this year we are going to launch our Western Cape School Sport Strategy 2025/2029. I always tell people: yes, the last 30 years has been bad from policing, health, our trains have collapsed, all of those things. But the greatest tragedy of this country over the last 30 years was the demise of school sport. If we fix school sport, we can fix everything with our young people in this country.

So, as the Western Cape Government, we are proud that our Western Cape School Sport Strategy to revitalise school sport, promote mass participation and build a sustainable, inclusive echo system that will be launched soon. Thank you to the team for working tirelessly on this.

Hon members, let us move forward with purpose and unity. The future of sport, arts and culture in the Western Cape is bright and together, we will make it shine even brighter.

I want to thank Mr Guy Redman and his top management team for working

hard to keep this Department as the best performing provincial department in the country and one of the best departments, certainly in the country. I value you, I appreciate you, and I love how you love arts and culture, and understand upstream that there are a few people at National Government who understand.

To the team in my office headed Michael Pardenwachter and the rest of the team: Mickyla and Thula, Tamsen Naude, all of you are here, and my colleagues and councillors who are visiting us from Mitchells Plain, thank you for being on it and ja, thank you everyone. And here, I table the Department's Budget, and I hope everyone will support this Budget. Thank you. ...[Applause.]

[The Deputy Speaker takes the Chair.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. Online, I recognise the hon Benson Ngqentsu.

Mr M B NGQENTSU (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, hon members of this House, the Majority Party, hon Leader of the Opposition. We are called upon, once again, that they can pass a Budget Vote whose economic framework is based on a prescript of [Inaudible.], such as [Inaudible.]. Hon Speaker, despite the rhetoric by the hon MEC today, evidence before us suggests that the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport has been deliberately underfunded, leaving it unable to fulfil its critical mandate

because the children of the elite have access to well-funded sports whilst working-class children are made to choose between a clinic or school or a sports ground, as is the case in Gugulethu and Kraaifontein.

Thus, in this Budget Vote, we make a call that this Department should be prioritised at the same level as the Education and Health Departments. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape is home to 2,6 million young people aged between 15 to 34, and nearly 2 million children under 17 are making up 27% of our population. These youth face overwhelming challenges including the crisis of teenage pregnancies, depression, unemployment, gang violence, substance abuse and Gender-Based Violence.

In 2023 alone, hon Deputy Speaker, about 9 185 births were recorded among girls aged between 10 to 19, including 281 births by children aged between 10 to 14. Hon Deputy Speaker, despite these pressing issues, the Department's budget is under R1 billion as a [Inaudible.] economic path. This is also a clear signal that the DA does not prioritise development for working-class youth. It is one of the bases for us to reject this Budget. Hon Deputy Speaker, we argue in this debate that this underfunding is not just neglect, a mere hatred of the majority of Black people, but a deliberate and ideological choice that [Inaudible.] the working-class youth driving them towards crime and despair.

Hon Deputy Speaker, investing in sport, arts and recreation is a proven way to engage youth, keep them off the streets and away from gangs. However,

with over 1,5 million people in the province who are made economically inactive, the Department's programmes make little impact or no impact at all. Inside of addressing these challenges, we hear empty rhetoric from hon Mackenzie who speaks about everything, except concrete plans to uplift our youth. Hon MEC, focus on addressing failures in your Department first, before looking elsewhere.

This Budget is a betrayal of our youth and the majority of the Black working-class. Thus, we reject it outright.

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport plays, hon Deputy Speaker, a crucial role in preserving and promoting the resistance and liberation heritage route in collaboration with the National Heritage Council and the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. This initiative [Inaudible.] historical sites tied to South Africa's struggle for freedom and ensuring future generations understand the sacrifices made. Therefore, one of the key figures, hon Deputy Speaker, whose legacy must be elevated is Chris Hani.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as a former [Inaudible.] of the SACP, Chief of Staff of uMkhonto weSizwe, Hani's life and contributions are deeply tied to the Western Cape. His leadership is in the underground structures of the MK makes him a pivotal figure in our province's resistance history. Hon Deputy Speaker, this speech is dedicated to the sacrifices made by Chris who paid the ultimate price in the fight for the liberation of Black people in general and Africans [Inaudible.] from the bondage of centuries and decades of

[Inaudible.].

Because of his sacrifices, figures like Hon Ricardo, hon Simmers, Hon Baartman and hon Sileku, are now sitting comfortably in executive positions in government under a party of Whites and Afrikaners. However, they are often reminded that the DA is not their party and thus hon Prof NomaFrench Mbombo, a qualified medical practitioner, is made a backbencher and replaced by a White person who is a criminologist by profession, to oversee Health.

Hon Deputy Speaker, hon MEC Mackenzie has instead chosen to be a mouthpiece for other provinces, ignoring the fact that [Inaudible.] party magnates are pushing to demolish historic sports venues, like the Belleville Velodrome and Newlands Stadium to unveil their property business interests. Hani would never have allowed this.

Hon Deputy Speaker, today we remember Hani whose political and ideological consciousness was shaped by sports, arts and culture. This played a centre role in his fight for liberation. Hani went into exile and adamantly gave his life to ensure that sports, arts and culture will be accessible to all South Africans, regardless of race or background.

Hon Deputy Speaker, under apartheid, sport was segregated, and the Black majority and rural communities were excluded from major events and opportunities. And hon Ricardo is that victim too. To this day, there is never

a stadium nor any plan to build one in Black working-class townships across the Western Cape. This Government must build a stadium in one of the Black working-class townships.

It is no exaggeration to say that Black working-class townships and their schools lack proper sports grounds and recreational facilities. Areas like Mandlenkosi in Beaufort West, [Inaudible.] and Kraaifontein in Cape Town are just a few examples of this widespread issue. Instead, it is only the children of the elite who have access to the best sports code with the facilities, while the working-class from Gugulethu and Kraaifontein, and Nyanga East are made to play soccer in particular, in open spaces along the N2. Similarly, let the residents in Khayelitsha and the Central Karoo remain poorly resourced and vulnerable to criminal activities.

Hon Deputy Speaker, when we attained our democratic vote in 1994, there was a reasonable expectation that a democratic government will prioritise sports and recreational facilities in Black townships and rural areas. However, given the [Inaudible.] of this government, the majority of Black people still struggle to access proper sport and recreational facilities and with existing facilities facing Government neglect.

Therefore, we call on the hon MEC to revisit this Budget to ensure that each township, hon MEC, has an indoor swimming pool and use that one of Gugulethu as an example. A well-maintained sports and recreational facility, proper stadium in Khayelitsha or in George.

Hon Deputy Speaker, Hani was a revolutionary in every sense, and it is for this reason that we submit that the resistance and liberation heritage route must include his name. This Budget must reflect that. Important: April 2025 marks 32 years since the cowardly assassination of Hani by the right-winged racist Janusz Waluś. These right-winged forces wanted to plunge our country into civil war to prevent our [Inaudible.] towards democracy, but their efforts were thwarted by the leadership of Mandela and Slovo.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the same right-winged forces now embodied by AfriForum and Solidarity in the DA still linger. Today, they are attempting to sell off our national sovereignty to the right-winged populist Western imperialist Donald Trump. Let me be clear. Our national sovereignty is not for sale, and we will not allow our country to become a puppet of imperialists.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as stated in the Freedom Charter, South Africa belongs to all who live in it. Black or White. Those unwilling to live in harmony with the majority Black people and not committed to transformation, particularly the transfer of land and wealth to the hands of the majority, are free to join Donald Trump in the US. We will not succumb to the dictates of imperialists.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we also call on hon MEC Mackenzie and hon Bredell to accelerate the implementation of Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act

which aims to formally recognise Khoi and San leadership in the province. Similarly, we ask them to ensure that the Western Cape is ready to roll out Khoisan and [Inaudible.] languages in our schools as championed by President Ramaphosa and the South African Language Board.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as I conclude, we reject this Budget because clearly, amongst other things, it cuts funding for sport, recreation, school sports and youth programmes. It slashes funding for library services and [Inaudible.] in rural areas like the Central Karoo for instance, especially after the region hosted the Opening of Parliament. It defunds sports and recreation in the Central Karoo.

Therefore, to the people of the [Inaudible.] of this province, this Budget should serve as a wake-up call. The cuts to sports, recreational [Inaudible.] services are some of the worst unforgivable actions committed by this new liberal DA Provincial Government. Therefore, use the 2026 Local Government elections to register your grievances. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Benson. I recognise the hon Stephens.

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker and distinguished guests. The Department should focus more on sports facilities in underprivileged areas. As is known, sport is a major contributing factor to uplifting young people and providing opportunities that may prevent the

involvement in crime.

An amazing example stemming from Kraaifontein is our very own Cheslin Kolbe and Wayde Van Niekerk, who are both amazing examples to the youth of Kraaifontein. The sports facilities in Scottsdene, Citrusdal and Riverlands, to name a few, are in dire straits. What plans does the Budget have in place to keep these facilities in working condition? How will the Department ensure equitable funding for schools, sports programmes and sports in particular in historically disadvantaged schools and areas?

The municipalities need to be investigated on how funds are spent within Wards to reflect the plans being made on a provincial level, such as sports grounds especially in our underprivileged communities.

Furthermore, libraries within the province need to be relooked at. When doing oversight visits in Merweville, we noticed the poor state of the library that was meant for the community, but by far, no justice to the purpose. The library is situated in a badly planned location where flooding takes place in winter, and it becomes inaccessible during the most crucial times for our learners and students.

Funds need to be allocated to repairing the bridge and the library needs to be moved to a more secure and accessible place within the community to not only serve Merweville, but also the broader community. Merweville is but one community we are aware of. How many more communities are in dire

need of this very essential service?

Our youth are also very talented, but the limited opportunities they have to access for arts and culture is a huge challenge. NGOs like Join Bands Not Gangs have a positive impact on the youth. The only issue is that the youth cannot afford instruments and have limited resources to showcase their talent.

Therefore, we would ask the hon Ministers, both hon Ministers, provincial and national and their departments, to please make sure that the Budget gets allocated evenly in all areas within the Western Cape. And therefore, the Patriotic Alliance supports the Budget. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Stephens. I recognise the hon Jacobs.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Before I start, hon Deputy Speaker, I want to just say to the hon Minister of Infrastructure: † die *aircons*, man. [The aircons, man.] Step up! Step up! ...[Laughter.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, there is an old saying that says ‘a child in sport is a child out of court. A child out of court is a child next to the Lord’. Do not forget that, okay.

Hon Deputy Speaker, so the hon MEC in his report indicated how sporting

hubs will be developed and sustained. This goes for schools and community sports fields across the province. Hon MEC, let me remind you, sir. Just before the DA took over, Mitchells Plain in itself, had some of the best sporting facilities in the country. Do not forget that. Our sports and recreation facilities at our beaches were the best. School sports, entertainment on top of things. Then, the Democratic Alliance took over and everything on the Cape Flats just went down, but in the White affluent areas, there are top class sporting facilities. Their schools have every sporting code available that you can think of.

Now, hon Deputy Speaker, most of the Western Cape sporting opportunities are not really earmarked for Coloured learners, but you will only see this when you look through the eye of the needle. Mitchells Plain is older than Khayelitsha, but up until today, Mitchells Plain does not even have an athletics track or a proper stadium. Now, this kind of like reminds me, hon MEC, of when you go there to Mitchells Plain and you play tennis in the street. †Dit lyk amper soos die agb *MEC* wil nou vir ons toemaak. Moenie *worry* oor 'n tennis *court* nie. Speel sommer tennis in die pad. [It almost seems as if the hon MEC now wants to close us down. Don't worry about a tennis court. Play tennis in the road.]

Hon MEC, we see you, but we want proper sporting facilities. Hon Deputy Speaker, the hon MEC must make sure that his Department invests into local artists in the Western Cape. Only then, you will be able to see the revenue it can generate.

Now, hon MEC, let your Department put more shows together and create an environment in which artists can thrive. That will be the start for you where you eradicate gangsterism. I thank you. One love. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Jacobs. I recognise hon Walters.

Mr T C R WALTERS (DA): Thank you, hon Speaker. I will make sure that this time, I do not make that mistake again.

†Die DA, agb Adjunkspeaker, die DA ondersteun hierdie begrotingsitem [The DA, hon Deputy Speaker, supports this Vote item] and hon Deputy Speaker, let me also start by saying that this Department has a special fascination for me.

I would like to believe that all of us truly appreciate and cherish the sight of individuals striving for their best, often against the circumstances of their birth, often without the kind of support we all want for ourselves and succeeding. It is a department that at its core makes the well-loved narrative of an underdog ultimately winning narrative. It is something that is just profound.

I find it inherently inspiring and a society that inspires one another is a society we all want to live in. It connects us far beyond our differences.

Furthermore, this Department also plays a more direct and practical role. I will put it simply: children that spend their time participating in sport, cultural activities and reading as a habit, do not spend their time in gangs. I love the ‘readers are leaders’, but it really summarises what I am saying. It directly relates to the key necessity in society to create the self-belief, opportunity and culture that is so profoundly necessary to eradicate the social conditions that drive endemic crime in the province. More positively put, it teaches our society that we can all dream, aspire, be winners and that we are all better off if those around us succeed.

I also find its dedicated officials and enthusiastic hon Minister, the way our Committee members respond, and the huge number of dedicated people in civil society an inspiration. Now, while we are satisfied that this Department held its ground in terms of its overall budget allocation in our constrained fiscal environment where typically departments such as these suffer the most, I want to repeat my observation and present a challenge to this Department which we will assist with.

Cultural Affairs and Sport operates in a field where we all know that it plays an incredibly and increasingly meaningful role in the lives of individuals, yet it is incredibly difficult to quantify and attach monetary value to the role it plays. My challenge to the Department is to develop ways to quantify the value it adds so that it can go toe to toe with other departments who face less of a challenge in this regard.

Having said that, this Department can be proud of the challenges it sets for itself and the strategies it is employing to achieve its objectives. Its managed network model is deeply invested in creating local, highly relevant change agents in communities to maximise its limited resources to the fullest extent. It fundamentally engenders agency and true co-operative government by delivering opportunities, whether in sport, cultural or heritage activities and expanding the horizons of knowledge through its evolving library system.

I am proud to say that our Committee unanimously agreed to finalise the Library Bill to play its part in that approach. It is an approach, to quickly pick up on some themes in its Annual Performance Plan, that drives innovation, connects the unconnected from cities to rural areas; and lastly connects ideas and resources through its embracing of a whole of society and a whole of government approach.

Really, to summarise this point because I am under pressure to shorten my speech, but to summarise this point the famed entrepreneurship theorist Peter Drucker defined entrepreneurship as quote:

“Entrepreneurship is defined as a systematic innovation, which consists in the purposeful and organised search for changes, and it is the systematic analysis of the opportunities. Such changes might offer economic and social innovation.”

Hon Deputy Speaker, in this sense this Department is demonstrating through

its strategies and a positive mindset a pursuit of real changes that offer economic and social innovation for the people of this province. In this regard I would like to highlight the following aspects of this Budget. Sorry, hon Deputy Speaker. I am not going to repeat what the hon Minister said already, but the MOD programme he highlighted already with the allocations there and the value that it is adding.

The Year Beyond Programme creates a real opportunity to offer unemployed youth to be mainstreamed in this particular approach.

We see the extension to libraries, to the ECDs, the community centres of the read approach, the mass participation approach that the Department is pushing. Yes, I am not going to repeat what the hon Minister said there, but we are truly proud of what the programme is doing and trying to achieve.

We welcome the continued investment in mass-participation in sport, in pursuit of our hon Minister's objective of restoring a culture of sport, and hope that the reduction of the national department's grant will not become a trend. We welcome the municipal replacement funding and hope that municipalities also match the Department's willingness to invest.

The Department's investment in Broadband Library Connection and the Libraries top up is a game changer for many communities that has benefits that goes far beyond this Department's mandate. We welcome and acknowledge that.

We also appreciate the investments in Enterprise Content Management and the Economic Growth and Jobs flagship catalytic projects. The Department budgeting for its afternoon positive peer networks shows a real in-depth understanding of its transversal role in providing alternative pathways for vulnerable youth.

The emphasis placed by the Department on celebrating and promoting heritage sites and reimagining the museum experience both provide the province with economic spin-offs, as well as demonstrating a deeper understanding of the value of South Africans understanding where we come from, being proud of it and finding a way towards where we should be going. I am sure it is something the hon member Jacobs will appreciate. I am just checking whether he is listening, but it is exactly the kind of thing that we have been hearing from him as well.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I can continue in this vein but let me use the opportunity to respond. I really think this is a positive committee and the hon member Ngqentsu made some, I think, very... he used very Marxist language to make his point. I do not believe it is the ANC that was actually commenting, it was the SACP commenting, but I know. I agree with him that what we do not want. We want townships to be suburbs, we want the schools that are the most impoverished to be able to compete on equal footing with the schools that are with the most resources. That is what we are working towards, that is what a transversal approach is. That is what bringing in the

private sector, forming partnerships is all about.

There is only one question that remains unanswered to me, given that the hon member Ngqentsu is deeply committed as a principled person. He is deeply, deeply angry at exploitation, abusing the poor, the poor being exploited, the poor being stolen from. I am just wondering when is the SACP leaving the party that is not pro-poor and actually standing on its own in an election because clearly, they have been betrayed. Their beliefs have been betrayed by the multi-party alliance and the association with the African National Congress, the enemy of the poor.

I want to conclude by saying that it is my sincere hope that this Department plays a growing role in this pro-poor, pro-jobs, and pro-growth Government. It demonstrates what can be done with limited resources and I believe fundamentally works towards making the whole of government and whole of society approach a reality.

It also demonstrates how a department can strategically respond to a fiscally constrained environment and do good work in combating social ills and crime. I sincerely hope that this Department and this Committee view and use the work that it is doing to find one another on what we all agree on rather than differ on.

And hon Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Alliance supports Vote 13. But let me just conclude that there is one remark the hon Minister made that I truly

object to and that is expecting me to run the Two Oceans Marathon. ...[Laughter.] That will never, ever happen. ...[Laughter.] But we, the Democratic Alliance, support the Vote and I hope that was an abbreviated version that assists this afternoon. Thanks. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Walters. Brevity is the charm of eloquence. In this House, our actions must always speak louder. To conclude this debate will the hon Minister...

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. To the hon member, it must become compulsory. We must pass a motion in this House that every hon member must run a marathon, hon Deputy Speaker. A half-marathon at least, hon Premier, just one half and the Cape Town Cycle Tour, of course. It must be compulsory.

Hon members, thank you for the inputs. I really appreciate it. Obviously, where we have a blind spot, we appreciate it and that is why we have this debate. We look at those matters which the hon members have raised, and we will see how we can deal with it and work with my colleagues in the Department.

But I have to respond to some of the things that were said, some of the things that were implied to the truth, the non-truth and things that seem they were the truth, but they are not even close to the truth.

Hon member, we certainly do. We work with SALGA and our Local Government municipalities who administer the MIG grants to ensure that our facilities are maintained. In the last few months, including with our colleagues in National, we have opened facilities in Klawer where we contributed R1,1 million to the multipurpose centre. We have opened new pavilions in Blanco in George, new cricket nets in Dysselsdorp and obviously, the floodgate in Tulbagh.

We contributed to the upgrade on fencing and of netball courts and tennis courts in Prince Alfred Hamlet. So, we certainly do invest in sports facilities. We have also opened 55 netball courts as part of the Netball 2023 World Cup legacy, so we do invest in facilities.

With regards to MIG grant funding, we have given Stellenbosch money, R300 000; Witzenberg nearly close to R1 million; Langeberg R6 million and we will certainly. Municipalities, as you know, apply directly to COGTA. We support them through the endorsement as for our sector development and the following municipalities have received direct funding: Laingsburg R8 million, Saldanha R6,8 million. So, we also ask the Standing Committee when you do your oversight visits, please do visit these facilities.

Hon member Stephens, thank you for the support of the Budget. Your vote is counted and appreciated. I saw how you threw the other name in as well to cover your back, but it is ...[Laughter.] it is noted there. But yes, we will certainly look at matters of Merweville. We love visiting libraries, and we

will go around to see how we can help and improve that library.

Hon Jacobs, you are in Mitchells Plain. You have got a luxury that other people do not have. You are in Mitchells Plain every day and the Mitchells Plain athletic track is on the subcouncil 17 agenda, and I hope you can help us in pushing that through, please, sir. So, your vote: we need your vote there.

With regards to the sports fields. The Lentegour sports fields, as you know, we did a walkabout there. I think it is near your house. We invested millions in that fence around the Lentegour sports facilities. We have a beautiful facility at two schools. I think one is within walking distance from your house. ...[Laughter.] So, just to remind you. Just to remind you in case you forget we ...[Interjection.]

[The Speaker takes the Chair.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Hon Minister, speak to me.

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: I am sorry. Apologies, hon Speaker. And then, we are doing work in Lentegour as well, but I agree with you that there is more needed. There is always more needed, and we will certainly see how we can work with it.

The general trend and it is a South African thing, and we really have to work

hard on it, hon Speaker, how we stop communities from vandalising facilities. It is not unique in Mitchells Plain. From Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, Langa, across the country, our communities need to help maintain our facilities where we invest, and I know we all need to work with that. We will certainly work with you on that.

I now come to my hon colleague online now. Thank you, hon Chairperson for your support of the Vote and we will certainly work with you as well, to enhance whatever we do as the Western Cape Government. And yes, please, do start running. You have got a year to practice now for the Cape Town Marathon. ...[Laughter.]

And I want to respond to my hon colleague online, and I actually want to start with his comment around the ideological choice. It is a very important point he has made and a very important point that the hon member of the Communist Party who made that point. Because two days ago, there was a vote in Parliament and him, and his party, made an ideological choice to increase VAT in this country. So, if you want to make ideological choices, you must make it consistently, [Inaudible.] consistently. You must be principled, and you must make sure that the poor benefit the most.

Because very sadly, on 1 May, it is Workers Day. VAT is going to increase, and I really want to be part of that rally the hon member is going to be at because I want to hear what he is going to tell the millions of workers on Workers Day, why he voted for the increase of VAT. Because they are going

to have rallies on May Day. The poorest of the poor are going to pay 0,5% more this year, 0,5% more next year because of his ideological choice.

Staying on his ideological choice, the reason we do not have money is because of the ideological choice that the Communist Party has made. The Communist Party has members in National Cabinet, has members in strategic positions that can change the landscape of education.

Minister Blade, Dr Blade Nzimande, the leader of his party, the Secretary General member of this party, one of the key voices in that Cabinet, made ideological choices to bail out SAA over R300 billion over 10 years. Made ideological choices to bail out Transnet. If they really believed in the ideological choice, they would have said, 'no, let us kill SAA. Let us devolve PRASA. Let us kill some of the dysfunctional 173 air entities that consistently receive tens of billions of rands.' [Interjections.]

So, the ideological choice, hon member of the SACP online, should have been made 20 years ago so that none of us would sit in this mess that we are in as a country. The highest unemployment rate! SAPS deployed, crime intelligence not working. That is the ideological choice you and your leaders made over the last 20 years that got us in this mess. [Interjections.]

So, the ideological choice that we are now making is to dig us out of the hole that you dug us into, and you still dug us into that hole by voting for a VAT increase. So, the persons, the only person, ...[Interjections.] the only person.

I am on the vote, hon member. I am responding to the issue your hon member has raised.

So, the ideological choice ...[Interjections.] the only person that should never, ever, never ever speak about the ideological choice, should be members of the Communist Party because they are the ones that got us here because they supported the ideological choice ...[Interjections.] of not investing in sports. [Interjections.]

In 1994, ...[Interjections.] and I always argue. The first Minister of Sport was Nelson Mandela. It was not Steve Tshwete. [Interjections.] He was the appointed Minister. But the member of the ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Hon Windvogel, I know that you have asked permission to move due to the ventilation issue in the Chamber, but in terms of the Rules, hon member, you may not speak from a bench that is not allocated to you and that includes interjections and running commentary. So, hon Windvogel, my apologies, but you cannot speak if you are not in your bench. ...[Laughter.] Hon Minister, you may continue.

The MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT: Thank you. So, the ideological choice in 1994, and I say the first Minister, and I always argue. The first Minister of Sport was actually Nelson Mandela. He understood the value of sports and culture: 1995 World Cup, 1996 African Cup of Nations. He understood the value of it.

But the persons in that Cabinet, the persons who made the ideological choice of the SACP to, by the way, not run in the elections by the way, they are still part of the Cabinet. Nobody knows if they will ever get one vote. The persons who defied Chris Hani by going into that Cabinet, the bourgeois communists who made the ideological choice to not invest in sports in 1994 by the Communist Party.

Because if they really loved Chris Hani, if they really cared about Chris Hani, ...[Interjections.] they would not have been part of the 1994 Cabinet, they would not have allowed the destruction of the South African Police over the last 30 years, they would not have invested R300 billion in failed entities in the last 30 years. They would not have voted for the 0,5% VAT increase if they really cared about the values of Chris Hani.

Those are things the Communist Party would not have done. That is the ideological choice they have made and I hope one day, when they meet him wherever they meet him at the Pearly Gates, they will account for their actions and say why they made the ideological choice to be part of a government that singularly destroyed this country for the last 30 years, because I measure my standards by 1994, not before 1994.

The last 30 years. Singularly. The ideological choices they have made is responsible for us sitting in this mess, but this side of the House are constantly, every single day, digging us out of the hole they dug us into and

continue to dig into with the 0,5% VAT increase.

To the hon members, we support this Budget Vote. We will continue to fight for this country. We will continue to fight for what is right for the 7,5 million people in this Western Cape, using every single resource that we have. And I hope they will make the right ideological choice and tell the voters on 1 May that they will vote against the last bit of the Budget process, but I doubt they will have the guts and I will be back to tell you that in the debate in May: they did not have the guts to make a different ideological choice. Thank you. ...[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much to the hon Minister. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote. I will now give an opportunity for the guests of hon Minister Mackenzie to exit the gallery and the Chambers and allow the guests of hon Minister Londt to enter. The House will be suspended for 2 minutes.

[House suspended at 19:22.]

[House resumes at 19:24.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Hon Minister, can I just get an indication if you are expecting any further guests? I know that we have been, hon member, we have run behind schedule, so I am very mindful of that, and so I am very lenient on that, hon Minister. I am sure your guests have been

waiting for a very long time, so I do not want to start if there are any additional guests that still need to come. Alright.

Hon members, with that then being said, we will then move on, and the Secretary will read the Eight Order of the Day.

†Die SEKRETARIS: Debat oor Begrotingspos 7: Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling – Wes-Kaapse Begrotingswetsontwerp [W 1–2025].

[The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 7: Social Development – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1–2025].]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I recognise the hon Minister of Social Development, hon Minister Londt.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, hon Speaker, hon Premier and hon Cabinet colleagues, hon members of the Provincial Parliament, members of the media that are here, citizens of the Western Cape, guests who are here in the gallery tonight that are joining us tonight. Thank you, also, for your patience in waiting. *Goeie naand*, good evening, molweni nonke!

I rise to table the Appropriation Bill for the Department of Social Development. During his State of the Province Address, hon Premier Alan Winde called on residents and leaders to step up to build a better Western Cape. In her tabling of the Provincial Budget last month, hon Finance

Minister Deidre Baartman also spoke about the Province stepping up to deliver for all its residents.

This is what the Western Cape Department of Social Development has continued to do, despite facing tremendous challenges such as a grim global and national economic outlook, a pandemic, and a rapid increase in demand for services amid dwindling resources. Despite all this, the tenacity of the management of this Department and the staff working on the ground have proven time and time again to be greater than the obstacles. The Department has used ingenuity, innovation, available resources, and most importantly: partnerships, to continue delivering on its mandates.

The Department received an 8% increase in its Budget allocation for 2025/2026 financial year, from R2,522 billion in the previous financial year to R2,725 billion in the coming year. Thereafter we are expecting increases of R2,79. Well, I would love to have an increase of R2,796 billion ...[Laughter.] but it will go up to R2,796 billion and then it will go up again to R2,916 billion.

We are grateful for a Provincial Government that shows it truly cares for the incredible organisations that help strengthen the Department's hand in rendering crucial social services to residents of the Western Cape. The Department has received a significant increase in its transfer funding and subsidies for NGOs from R1,011 billion to R1,107 billion.

Then, we need to speak about social workers. We have just ended the Social

Workers Month. Honourable Speaker, I mentioned the Department is always stepping up, I have seen this through the staff who daily go above and beyond to serve the most vulnerable residents of this province.

Some of these social work professionals are here today from the different regions across the province †en hulle is maar 'n handjievol, maar hulle verteenwoordig al daardie maatskaplike werkers wat dag in en dag uit na die mees... [Onhoorbaar.] na die mees weerloses in ons gemeenskap kyk [and they are hardly a handful, but they represent all those social workers who look after the most ...[Inaudible.] after the most vulnerable in our community.]

I want to thank you, starting with hon Finance Minister Baartman who appreciates the value of social work professionals. †Die Departement se mense doen baie met min. [The Department's people are doing a lot with little.] And we can do so much more if we receive our fair share of the National Budget as a province. Thank you to members like hon member Kaizer-Philander who have joined us in the call to National Government, especially the National Treasury, to recognize social workers as essential services personnel.

I also want to thank members of the Committee: hon members Booysen, hon Van Wyk, hon Van Minnen, hon Kamfer, hon Stephens, and hon Cassiem. All of them out of one voice said: social workers need to be essential services and their accompanying resources that go with that. ...[Applause.]

I am also encouraged that when I raised this at our last MINMEC held here in Cape Town. It was not just the Western Cape that said this. Every single MEC from every province in this country, together with the National Minister said this is something that we need to fight. That is when we truly take hands. You talk about partnerships, and here we can truly take hands and be a partnership across the board, to ensure that we fight for social workers and let them be classified. Because if it was not for them, our society that is pulling at the seams, might actually tear apart.

These individuals and social workers often face hazardous situations, such as hijackings and assault, while they are trying to do their work in communities. We are now in a situation, similar to other Government frontline workers, where staff cannot venture into certain areas without a police escort. They are not even safe at the facilities or the offices, where vandalism sometimes occurs. Our child and youth care workers likewise face high risk conditions working in secure care centres with children who often exhibit challenging and even violent behaviour.

I am thus pleased with the R15 million additional funding to increase the safeguarding of DSD staff at facilities and offices. This will help to ensure staff feeling safe and secure, which is vital for their emotional and mental wellbeing so that they can serve residents more effectively. The Department also received an additional R4,8 million for the upcoming financial year to cover some of the municipal services, maintenance and repairs.

Here, I want to thank hon Minister Tertius Simmers and the Department of Infrastructure who have taken a proactive approach in working with DSD, finding ways and finding solutions so that we can stretch that rand further. So, hon Minister Simmers, what you have already done and the conversations going forward, thank you so much because it really helps us as a department servicing the most vulnerable. ...[Applause.]

Besides safety, social workers will also tell you about the immense administrative pressures they face every day. Last year, in the spirit of ‘stepping up’, we launched the Social Work Integrated Management System Application, or the SWIMS App, to address this issue in partnership with the Centre for e-Innovation. Thank you to the Premier and the Centre for e-Innovation for always supporting us. You walked through this journey with us every step of the way for this groundbreaking project.

It has already changed the way 1 067 social workers to their work in the province. Over 59 000 records/cases have been captured on the system and why I am so excited about this is that we are now starting to roll it out to our NGO partners, and we are continuously selling it because this can change the way ...[Applause.] We can change the way social work gets done in the country.

As Behanca Smal, a social worker from Langeberg, said,

“It makes my life so much easier because we don’t always get time to write things out while we are on the move, but with SWIMS I can be in the community and log a case on my phone.”

This rings especially true for the social workers who have been using the DSD Mobile Offices. They say the SWIMS App has helped them log cases online even in the most remote parts of the province. And to hon Minister Sileku and his Department for assisting us in servicing these remote areas by providing us with mobile offices, we thank you. We now have three offices that cover the Central Karoo, the West Coast, and the Cape Winelands and the Overberg regions. And hon Sileku, I know you are a son of the soil, and you know we have got five rural regions. So, I am not saying anything else on top of that.

I am so excited about the R4 million in additional funding that was allocated to the Budget to further develop, enhance, and roll out of the SWIMS to the NGO sector. So many more social workers’ lives can be made easier with the app, and it will ultimately benefit the residents who they serve. With less time on admin, they will have more time on therapeutic work.

Thank you to Stellcare for being the first NGO to use the app and thank you to all the departments and other organisations that have already shown interest in being part of a social work revolution! Thank you especially to the incredible DSD staff that walk the journey with residents, and as one social worker said, ‘we are with them from birth to death.’

Hon Speaker, when it comes to child protection, the journey is especially important for the children and youth in the care of DSD and the Designated Child Protection Organisations. Just ask Luphumlo Mahlubi, a matriculant from Delft who I met at a career day held by DSD at Northlink College last year for foster children. Luphumlo, who is here today, and I did not know how you can wear your school clothes that way, but Luphumlo, please stand up. ...[Laughter.] ...[Applause.] That shows the age difference.

He gave me his wish list for the Budget speech today. What he has said:

“I would love for there to be more foster care parents, because there are a lot of children in our communities who need the care.”

Now, I have got good news for you, Luphumlo. DSD’s Child and Youth Care programme received an increase of over R10 million. We are going from R123 million to R133 million. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: The Child Care and Protection programme increased by R20 million, from R247 million to R268 million.

A centre will be established for children from Child and Youth Care Centres

following stabilisation within a secure care centre, along with an independent living programme for youth discharged from a CYCC. From this centre, 30 children will benefit. The Department will also fund a specialist centre for children who were victims of trafficking.

An additional R6 million has been allocated in 2025/2026 budget and R13 million over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to increase subsidies to Designated Child Protection Organisations. This will enhance their support for vulnerable children like those in the foster system. We have also been pushing for exactly what Luphumlo is asking for: for more safety and foster parents, through a child protection campaign we have been running in the media.

Thank you to caring individuals who have stepped in across this province, stepped up and put their names forward. And here, I must also mention the hon Speaker Daylin Mitchell who himself, is a safety parent. And like this, hon Speaker, we have other safety parents with us today. So, I want you to give a big round of applause for the people who have opened up their hearts. ...[Applause.]

They have heeded the call to provide a temporary place of safety to children who are facing difficult challenges. For anyone who needs proof of the lifechanging impact of a foster parent and social workers, look to the gallery where there are several social workers: Channon Saayman from Hessequa, Mariel Opperman from Drakenstein, and Zodwa Ngqalo from Langa, who

were once in the foster system and are now making differences in their communities. Give them a round of applause. ...[Applause.]

I must commend Minister Maynier and his Department that do great work under incredible pressure to provide quality education for vulnerable children, including the children in our system. We will continue having that conversation to see how we can streamline the provision of services to the kids in our foster system.

For at-risk youth, an additional R1 million has been allocated for 2025/2026 financial year and R2 million for the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework to increase the delivery of diversion programmes and crime prevention programmes in schools. The Department will also expand a reintegration and After-Care programme for child offenders discharged from our own Secure Care Centres.

An additional R5 million has been allocated for the next financial year and R10,8 million for the remainder of the MTEF for increase of transfer payments to NPOs providing Child and Youth Care services. This will assist them with their operational expenses in the face of inflationary pressure. Thank you also to the incredible partners that have taken hands with us over the last few months to strengthen support for these vulnerable young people.

At the start of the year, we partnered with Africa Skills who provided bursaries and learning opportunities for boys in our Outeniekwa CYCC. We

have hope that this opportunity will help these young people reach their full potential, that they will break the cycle of socio-economic circumstances that led to them being in the facility in the first place. This is another way we and our partners have stepped up, by collaborating to show that there is true potential among our youth, and they are the changemakers going forward.

To the hon Minister Mackenzie who assisted us recently in making the dreams come true of a few foster children who watched Bafana Bafana and Sudan, I think it was South Sudan, play one another. The light on their faces was remarkable. So, thank you so much for creating those opportunities for the children in our foster system. ...[Applause.]

Honourable Speaker, the saying goes you cannot teach a hungry child, and it is also very difficult to be productive when you are hungry. The Department has a range of food relief initiatives, such as its Community Nutrition and Development Centres (CNDC) and Community Kitchens. During 2024/2025 financial year, the Department funded 54 NPOs managing 102 CNDCs and 16 Community centres. These Community Nutrition and Development Centres provide food 5 days a week, reaching more than 10 000 beneficiaries per month. The community kitchens reach more than 8 000 beneficiaries per month.

Thank you to Minister Meyer and his Department for partnering with us to move CNDC beneficiaries from dependency to self-reliance, through community gardens. I also got a message from [Inaudible.] in Vredendal who

also said I must convey their thanks and appreciation to you for what you have done. ...[Applause.] DSD received an additional R1,8 million for 2025/2026 and R3,9 million rand over the MTEF period to sustain nutritional support programmes at CNDCs.

To the hon Minister Bredell, I do not envy you your position in leading disaster risk management efforts in this province. While we never hope for a disaster, I believe the province is the best prepared for when a disaster strikes. I am pleased that the Department of Social Development can now also step up in providing those soft relief efforts, while you have to do all of your work.

An additional R7,5 million in 2025/2026 financial year and R9 million for the remainder of the MTEF to subsidise humanitarian relief organisations to further their operational objectives and support existing post-disaster humanitarian responses. I also hope that through all our engagements with SASSA, a clear line has been drawn of the different responsibilities in disaster relief efforts and speeding up the turnaround time in making sure that beneficiaries get what they need when they lose absolutely everything.

We have been clear that we will do whatever it takes when a disaster strikes to get the necessary relief out to victims as soon as possible, but we need the national sphere of government to come to the party as well. We have worked really hard to establish a positive working relationship with SASSA just as we have done with Postbank during the card migration process, even though

they are not entities that report to the province. And even though we have been disappointed by some chaotic scenes, long queues, anxiety and unhappiness among our beneficiaries, we know there are hard-working individuals on the ground doing the best they can. We will endeavour to assist in any way we can for the benefit of vulnerable residents who depend on Government, regardless of the sphere, to deliver effective services.

Hon Speaker, when it comes to older persons, Luphumlo also asked that we make sure the needs of the elderly are met. I agree with him. As the saying goes, ‘A society that does not value its older people, denies its roots and endangers its future.’

Last year was a difficult one for the Older Persons programme as funding was reduced. The Department continued to focus on the safeguarding of the elderly from abuse and harm, but in my visits to the various old age homes and also, appreciation to Committee members for the oversight that you have done and flagging of the problems. I have continuously heard, as you have done yourselves, of the need that there is. I have got some good news for you today.

This plea has been heard and answered. Allocated funding for the Older Persons programme will increase by R23 million from ...[Applause.] R231 million to R254 million and an additional R13 million will go towards the increase of subsidies to support frail older persons in 117 Old Age Homes. This boost is indicative of a province that values and cares for its elderly

residents. We look forward to working with partner departments like Health and Wellness to further enhance services to the elderly.

While we are pleased with the additional funding, we will continue to work on partnerships to boost resources for NGOs and NPOs that are working so incredibly hard to render social services to vulnerable groups and communities. In this regard, we are once again stepping up, this time for the organisations that strengthen our hand as a department. We recently entered into a partnership with the Health Foundation to establish the Cape Care Fund, which will be launched later this year. The Cape Care Fund was created to raise funds to further support the work of vetted, registered, and well-functioning organisations in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, this week we observed World Autism Awareness Day. As a Department we support various organisations that provide support services to persons with disabilities, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Last year, K3 collaborated with us for Disability Rights Awareness Month, to take a group of persons with disabilities on the world's longest zipline. This was done to highlight the need for more inclusive public spaces and empowerment for those with disabilities, and it did just that. K3 says since that day it has received so many enquiries of people living with disabilities wanting that exhilarating rush of going down a zipline. And one of the three gentlemen that went with us is here to. Jabah, you can stand up as well, but most of the people know you as well. ...[Applause.]

The Department is a proud partner of the Disability Accessibility Movement with the Mossel Bay Municipality. This initiative aims to make Mossel Bay the first disability-friendly town, to promote inclusivity and enhanced support for persons with disabilities. But we took it a step further. We put a challenge to all the municipalities. We explained to them how the Mossel Bay model works, and we said let us all step up and let us make this a more disability-friendly province and have more towns that are disability, accessibility friendly.

The Department's Disabilities programme received a R28 million increase, from R196 million to R224 million. This will enable us to increase support to homes that care for persons with disabilities. Additionally, R12,5 million has been allocated in 2025/2026 financial year and R27 million over the Medium-Term period to increase subsidies to support 42 homes for people with disabilities.

We also received an additional R9 million in the current financial year and R16,7 million for the remainder of the MTEF for nutritional services, home-based carers, nursing services, waste removal, and kitchen equipment at Sivuyile Residential Facility for severely disabled children.

I am moving to the end, hon Speaker: GBV and substance abuse.

The Department's Substance Abuse, Prevention and Rehabilitation

programme received an R8 million increase, taking the funding from R102 million to R110 million. Going towards the rectification of salaries of NPO social workers in this space, is R940 000. Services in this sector will be bolstered, both within the Department and partner organisations.

Another reason why the Department can step up no matter the odds, is because of the residents of this province. Not only do we have a pool of incredible safety parents who always raise their hands to safeguard a child, but we have volunteers like the Gender-Based Violence Ambassadors who are doing their part to make a difference in communities.

We have some of the GBV Ambassadors here tonight. They are trained volunteers who assist the Department in raising awareness about GBV support services, they do referrals to DSD and the SAPS and sometimes they are a victim's first point. They are the shoulder to cry on; they are the ear to listen; they open the door. So, to the GBV Ambassadors that are here tonight, a big round of applause and a thank you to you. ...[Applause.]

Since the first programme was launched in 2022, eight programmes have been launched. We are launching the ninth one later this month in Porterville. To hon Minister Marais making sure that you are one of the most valued partners that the SAPS walks the journey with us. Thank you so much. Thank you for holding the police accountable so that they treat victims who come to the stations with the dignity, the respect, and the sensitivity that is needed. And I said that to the GBV Ambassadors. We truly value them; we truly

appreciate them, but I cannot wait for the day that we do not have to have something like a GBV Ambassador and that scourge in our society is something of the past.

The Department is committed to supporting victims of GBV and raising awareness about this scourge that continues to permeate every aspect of society. Thank you to the different departments for working with us transversally to realise the Provincial GBV Implementation Strategy. In a time of uncertainty over global funding sources, it is now more important than ever that we pool resources to support vulnerable individuals who have been abused or violated.

DSD's Victim Empowerment Programme received a significant boost from R70 million in the previous financial year to R78 million in the current one. We also received R1,5 million for the 2025/2026 financial year for the funding of the Thuthuzela Care Centre in Mitchells Plain. This was funded by a donor that has since pulled out, but we will now be stepping in to fund the psychosocial support services at that centre.

Thank you to hon Minister Wenger and the Health and Wellness Department for being continued partners within these TCCs. The Department received R2 million in 2025/2026 financial year to fund a GBV shelter in Caledon. That is something that we have heard over and over again that there is a need, and that money is now available. These shelters provide a vital lifeline for victims of GBV, helping them overcome their trauma so they may find

independence through skills development and job training.

Here I also want to just say a special word of thanks and not here, but I have heard stories of volunteers that go to these shelters and help the women train for interviews, prepare their CVs, walk with them from shop to shop so that when they go for an interview, they get that job and they do not have to go back when they are economically trapped on the perpetrator. So, thank you to all of those that offer up their time and support the victims even in that way.

DSD also received R1 million this financial year and R2 million for the remaining MTEF period to fund social auxiliary workers at NPOs that render victim empowerment services.

I now come to the thanks, Hon Speaker. It is a common thread in the Department that the Department is being able to step up in such amazing ways through our partnerships. Collaborations with other departments, with other organisations, and the private sector are key to effectively addressing social ills and creating pathways for vulnerable children and youth to reach their full potential.

Thank you to the NGOs and NPOs that strengthen this Department's hand to support as many vulnerable people as possible. It is not an easy task, but we value your passion for making a difference.

To all the DSD staff, the management under the leadership of Dr Macdonald. When the hon Premier spoke about ‘stepping up’, you have stepped up and you have stepped up and you have stepped again over the years. So, when I came into this Department, I had to look up at each and every one of you about the amazing work that you have done with so little. So, thank you for your tireless commitment and dedication to serving the residents of the Western Cape. You all have shown me what real ‘stepping up’ looks like. No matter how difficult things may get, you continue to push to get the job done.

To my Ministry staff, led by Bernhard, Monique, Elories, Thilisiwe, Colette, Dayle, Najinarah and the two gents that make sure that I always get safely where I must be, Thabo and Meyer. Thank you for your unwavering support and for walking this journey with me to serve the province to the best of our ability.

And lastly, to my wife, Dorcas. Thank you for the love, the support, for being my rock and allowing me to live out my passion. Hon Speaker, this is your Budget. Thank you. ...[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. I now recognise the hon Kamfer.

Mr F KAMFER (ANC): Oh, oh sure, oh sure. It is my right. It is my right.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Order.

Mr F KAMFER (ANC): Thanks, hon Speaker. Good evening, everyone in the House, hon Speaker, hon Premier, hon Leader of the Opposition, fellow comrades in the House.

I am happy to be here, and I promise our citizens I will speak in the rural areas in each language †dat jy kan hoor [that you can hear] for the first time that their people speak with them and that is Afrikaans.

†Baie, baie dankie agb Speaker. Ek het die mense belowe in die Wes-Kaap ek sal praat dat hulle hoor daar is 'n stem wat praat in hulle taal. Ek is bevoorreg vandag om hier te staan om namens die Regering hier te praat, die Provinsiale Regering, is ek vanaand hier om die besware aan die Wes-Kaapse Regering teen die Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling Begroting in te dien. [Tussenwerpsels.]

[Thank you very, very much hon Speaker. I promised the people in the Western Cape that I will talk so that they can hear there is a voice speaking in their language. I am privileged today to stand here to speak on behalf of the Government, the Provincial Government, I am here tonight to submit the complaints to the Western Cape Government against the Social Development Budget. [Interjections.]]

† 'n AGBARE LID: Ag, nee!

[An HON MEMBER: Ag, nee!]

†Mnr F KAMFER (ANC): Die begroting wat deur die Departement van Maatskaplike Dienste aangebied is, is nie net ontoereikend nie, dit is verraad teen elke gesin wat sukkel. Die vrou wat mishandel word, elke kind wat gevange is in die siklus van armoede en geweld.

Agb Speaker, die Wes-Kaapse voedselonsekerheid bly baie hoog met 18,1% huishoudelik wat nie voedseltoegang... wat nie toegang tot voedsel het nie. Hierdie krisis tref ons mees kwesbare die hardste. Kinders, bejaardes, mense met gestremdhede en die vroulike gesinshoofde en tog, wat bied hierdie begroting aan? 'n Blote R15 miljoen van monetêre hulp oor die drie jaar. Dit is 'n belediging wanneer rampe toeneem en meer gesinne as ooit tevore desperaat is en nood het.

Om sake te vererger, is die begroting vir armoedeverliging betroubaar, volhoubaar, 'n lewensbestaande vermindering - 'n besluit wat aan die wreedheid grens?

Agb Speaker, die mislukking van hierdie begroting eindig nie daar nie. Agb Speaker, in die Wes-Kaap staar ons 'n pandemie in die gesig van geslagsgebaseerde geweld. Die agb Premier het self 'n krisis genoem en tog, reflekteer hierdie begroting nie daardie dringendheid nie. Terwyl 7 294 seksuele misdrywe verlede jaar aangemeld is, is dit 'n toename van hierdie vorige jaar. Ons provinsie is verantwoordelik vir 13,6% van Suid-Afrika se totale seksuele misdrywe en bly die reaksie skrikwekkend, ontoereikend, agb Speaker.

Ja, ons erken die aanstelling van 24 gespesifiseerde *GBV* maatskaplike werksters, agb LUR van *Social Development*. Ons erken die bestaan van 26 veiligheidshawes na waar mense kan hulle toevlug kan neem. Ons erken dit. Maar hierdie maatreëls is 'n druppel in die oseaan.

Verlede jaar het slegs 2 120 vroue en kinders ondersteuningsdienste by hierdie ruimtes ontvang. As ons kinders uitsluit, is die aantal vroue wat hierdie hulp ontvang, skokkend laer. Waar gaan die res heen? Terug na hierdie mishandelaars, terug in 'n siklus van geweld met geen uitweg nie. En tog, hierdie begroting kan slegs 78 miljoen slagoffers bemagtig. Dit is die aangesig van hierdie krisis.

Ons waardeer die nege Thuthuzela versorgsentrums wat deur die Nasionale Regering ook befonds is. Maar hier, hulle kan nie alles alleen dra nie. As ons ernstig is om *GBV* te beëindig, ...[Tussenwerpsels.] het ons meer veiligheidsruimtes, maatskaplike dienste werkers nodig. Ons het hulle meer onder 'n ware toewyding nodig om lewens te red.

Agb Speaker, ek doen 'n beroep op ons vorige *speaker*, die LUR. Doen meer vir vroue wat vasgevang is in geweld. Doen meer in gesinne wat van honger vergaan. Doen meer aan kinders wat honger en in vrees grootword.

Hierdie begroting dien nie die mense van die Wes-Kaap nie. Dit laat hulle in die steek. Dit *fail* Suid-Afrika, die Wes-Kaapse Regering. Agb Speaker,

hierdie begroting ontbloom die DA se skandelike verwaarloosing van ons kinders. Die mees kwesbare onder ons, ...[Tussenwerpsels.] terwyl die LUR met vooruitsigte spog, het sy Regering stil weg besluit van die program. Hoe kan ons dit aanvaar?

Waar 10 000 swangerskappe van kinders onder die ouderdom van 18 in 2023 aangeteken is, insluitend 281 babas gebore aan kinders tussen die ouderdom van 10 en 14 jaar, en die DA-regering gesinsondersteuning verminder, terwyl kinders in trauma en mislukking van wanvoeding en 'n hawelose egpaar verkeer, prioritiseer die DA allesbehalwe om hulle te beskerm. Waar is die maatskaplike werkster, die kindersielkundiges, die programme om gesinne bymekaar te hou want plaas daarvan kry ons leë beloftes en begrotingsbesnoeiing wat sal lei tot meer kinders op straat, meer misbruik, meer gebroke lewens.

Agb Speaker, dit is nie net swak bestuur nie. Dit is 'n doelbewuste keuse om kinders in die steek te laat. Die Regering wat dienste aan kwesbare gesinne verminder terwyl die kinders ly, het alle morele gesag verloor. Ons verwerp hierdie hartelose begroting en eis 'n regering wat ons kinders werklik beskerm in plaas daarvan om hulle te *fail*.

Agb Speaker, die Wes-Kaapse Regering se dwelmkrisis wat ons gemeenskappe uitmekaarskeur, ontvang ewe skielik verwaarloosing. Met die dwelmmishandeling, misdade wat met 11,3% toeneem - en ons provinsie is die brandpunt van hierdie plaag - is die skamele R110 miljoen toegewys aan

die dwelmmisbruik, voorkoming en rehabilitasie niks minder as 'n kriminele nalatigheid nie. Ons kinders sterf in strate. Gesinne moet vernietig word. Tog, het die agb Premier geld vir alle ander, behalwe om die jeug se omstandighede te verander.

Agb Speaker, ek gaan nie so ...[Tussenwerpsels.] Ek het sewe ander om deur te gaan ...[Tussenwerpsel.]

[Mr F KAMFER (ANC): The Budget presented by the Department of Social Services is not only inadequate, it is treason to each family that struggles. The woman that is abused, every child that is a prisoner in the cycle of poverty and violence.

Hon Speaker, the Western Cape's food insecurity remains very high with 18,1% of households who do not...do not have access to food. This crisis affects the most vulnerable the hardest. Children, the aged, people with disabilities and the female heads of families and yet, what does this Budget offer? A mere R15 million of monetary aid over the three years. It is an insult when disasters increase and more families than ever before are desperate and need aid.

To aggravate matters, is the Budget for poverty relief dependable, sustainable, a life existence reduction – a decision bordering on cruelty?

Hon Speaker, the failure of this Budget does not end there. Hon Speaker, in the Western Cape we face a pandemic of gender based violence. The hon

Premier called a crisis himself and yet this Budget does not reflect that urgency. While 7 294 sexual offences were reported last year it is an increase on the previous year. Our province is responsible for 13,6% of South Africa's total sexual offences and the reaction remains frighteningly inadequate, hon Speaker.

Yes, we acknowledge the appointment of 24 specified GBV social workers, hon MEC of Social Development. We acknowledge the existence of 26 places of safety where people can find shelter. We acknowledge that. But these measures are a drop in the ocean.

Last year only 2 120 women and children received support services at these spaces. If we exclude children, the number of women receiving this support is shockingly low. Where does the rest go? Back to these abusers, back to a cycle of violence with no way out. And yet, this Budget can only empower about 78 million victims. That is the face of this crisis.

We appreciate the nine Thuthuzela Care Centres that are also funded by the National Government. But here, they cannot carry everything alone. If we are serious to end GBV, ...[Interjections.] we need more spaces of safety, social services workers. We need them more under a true commitment to save lives.

Hon Speaker, I appeal to our previous speaker, the MEC. Do more for women trapped in violence. Do more for families perishing of hunger. Do more for

children growing up with hunger and fear.

This Budget does not serve the people of the Western Cape. It is neglecting them. It fails South Africa, the Western Cape Government. Hon Speaker, this Budget exposes the DA's shameful neglect of our children. The most vulnerable among us...[Interjections.] while the MEC boasts with prospects, his Government quietly decided on the programme. How can we accept that?

Where 10 000 pregnancies of children under the age of 18 were recorded in 2023 including 281 babies born to children between the ages of 10 and 14 years, and the DA Government is reducing family support, while children experience trauma and failure of malnutrition and homeless couples, the DA prioritises everything but protecting them. Where are the social workers, the child psychologists, the programmes to keep families together, because instead we get empty promises and Budget cuts that would lead to more children on the streets, more abuse, more broken lives.

Hon Speaker, it is not only poor management. It is a deliberate choice to neglect children. The Government who reduces services to vulnerable families while children are suffering, has lost all moral authority. We reject this heartless Budget and demand a government that really protects our children instead of failing them.

Hon Speaker, the Western Cape Government's drug crisis tearing our communities apart, is suddenly neglected. With the drug abuse, crimes that

have increased by 11,3% - and our province is the centre of this plague – the mere R110 million allocated to the drug abuse, prevention and rehabilitation is no less than a criminal neglect. Our children die in the streets. Families must be destroyed. Yet, the hon Premier has money for all other things, except to change the circumstances of the youth.

Hon Speaker, I'm not going to ...[Interjections.] I have seven others to go through ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

†Mnr F KAMFER (ANC): ...deur te gaan.

[Mr F KAMFER (ANC): ...to go through.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

†Mnr F KAMFER (ANC): Agb Speaker, ek kom ten slotte. Ek gaan nie tyd...ek sien dit is 8-uur. [Tussenwerpsels.] Agb Speaker, Beaconvalley Sentrum het ons geopper in hierdie Huis. Beaconvalley Sentrum is in hierdie Huis geopper en die LUR het belowe van 'n ondersoek. Tog, wag ons nog steeds op antwoorde. Wat was die bevinding? Wat was die gevolge? Agb Speaker, dit is 'n mislukking, niks anders en 'n verraad nie.

Agb Speaker, die totale verandering hier, om Beacon Valley se werklike beskerming van al ons bejaardes hier te implementeer, sal hierdie Regering se

verwaarloosing van ons mense, mees kwesbaar, die grootste skande spaar as daar iets aan gedoen kan word.

Agb Speaker, armoede is nie 'n politieke *soccer*-spel nie, ...[Tussenwerpsels.] dit is tussen dood en lewe vir ons mense. Die ANC verwerp hierdie Begroting van *Vote 7*. Ek dank u. ...[Applause.]

[Mr F KAMFER (ANC): Hon Speaker, I conclude. I'm not going to ...I see it's 8 o'clock. [Interjections.] Hon Speaker, Beaconvalley Centre we have mentioned in this House. Beaconvalley Centre was mentioned in this House and the MEC promised an investigation. Yet, we are still waiting on the replies. What was the finding? What were the consequences? Hon Speaker, it is a failure, nothing other, and treason.

Hon Speaker, the total change here, to implement the real protection of Beacon Valley of all our aged, will save this Government's neglect of our people... most vulnerable... the greatest disgrace if something can be done about it.

Hon Speaker, poverty is not a political soccer game ...[Interjections.] it is between life and death for our people. The ANC rejects this Budget of *Vote 7*. I thank you. ...[Applause.]]

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie aan u, abg Kamfer. [The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Kamfer.] I now recognise the hon Stephens. Order, hon members. Hon Stephens, can I just get an indication if you need the podium?

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): No.

The SPEAKER: Hon Stephens, you may continue.

An HON MEMBER: Just say you support, hon Stephens. Don't worry
...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Do you support?

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Hon Speaker, it was a very emotional speech. Social Development has become a crisis in the Western Cape, due to the high demand in services required when it comes to basic services such as the attention required by older persons, domestic abuse, Gender-Based Violence, child abuse, drug related crimes, drug abuse and the crimes associated with this. This has become the biggest issue facing the Western Cape as this goes hand in hand with gangsterism.

More emphasis needs to be placed on programmes focused on the youth and the rehabilitation of our young people. Services like these have been taken away from the youth in places such as De Novo. Old age homes need urgent attention and provision in the Budget.

Our old people are experiencing heavy neglect and abuse in old age homes across the Western Cape. The Government needs to ensure that vulnerable

individuals and families in underserved areas can access essential social welfare services. Many residents in areas all over the Western Cape face barriers to accessing social grants, counselling and support services due to limited facilities and outreach programmes.

By affectively utilising the newly allocated Budget and implementing targeted programmes, the Province will uplift and support our most vulnerable population in the Western Cape. I know hon member Kamfer, you were very emotional, but you cannot just blame the Provincial Government. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Yes!

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): The National Government are just to blame. ...[Interjections.]

Hon MEMBERS: Yes!

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Therefore, the Patriotic Alliance support the budget. Thank you, hon Speaker. ...[Applause.]

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie aan die agb Stephens. [The SPEAKER: Thank you to the hon Stephens.] Hon members, the next speaker is on the online platform, and I recognise the hon Cassiem. [Interjections.] Order! [Interjections.] Order! Hon Cassiem ...[Interjection.]

Ms A CASSIEM (EFF): Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: ...you may continue.

Ms A CASSIEM (EFF): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, homeless people will still remain homeless and without shelter even if there is more than R2,7 billion allocated to the Provincial Department of Social Development.

Hon Speaker, over the years the Department has made it clear that it will not be playing any role in caring for the most vulnerable people in our society, which are homeless people and some of them elderly and living with disabilities. The fact that this Department is unable to build shelters for homeless people speaks volumes.

Hon Speaker, this Province needs to rely less on non-governmental organisations when it comes to providing shelter for old age people, as well as victims of Gender-Based Violence. The past year provided us with a snapshot, hon Speaker, of how some of these old age homes, NGOs, maltreated and abused the elderly; and how many of these organisations reject Black people's applications for care based on what they have; and comfortably telling this Department on oversights that only having SASSA is not enough for them, despite these organisations being funded by the Province.

Hon Speaker, the time of outsourcing crucial and primary services such as old age homes and shelters for Gender-Based Violence victims must come to an end and the Department must use its Budget to provide for these services. While the kids are dying on the Cape Flats, hon Speaker, we need more intervention programmes especially when it comes to diverting funds to youth and gang infested communities to programmes that will benefit and help them out of a life of misery. More rehabs and development centres must be established in this province, especially in Coloured and African communities and not only on the Cape Flats, but across the entire province.

In conclusion, hon Speaker, until the Budget speaks to addressing these issues in all communities, the EFF will not be supporting this Budget. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Cassiem. I now recognise the hon Jacobs.

Mr D G JACOBS (NCC): Thank you, hon Speaker. Thank you, hon Premier. [Interjections.] Hon Speaker, we note with concern the increase of Gender-Based Violence in our communities and the ever-growing lack of support of these victims. Looking at the report, we note that the whole of Witzenberg has one contact for the Department of Social Development, which is a huge concern. This Budget should be used to address the shortcomings urgently.

More spaces need to be created. Victims should not be sitting at police stations, some for two days, before being assisted to a place of safety. The assistance to special needs children, both for primary care as well as aftercare, needs urgent intervention. The Budget should also be used to increase assistance.

We see the shortage of social workers in the province and this is costing us. Maybe when the hon Premier wants to shift another billion, shift it to the Department of Social Development so we can appoint more social workers, send more social workers into our schools, send more social workers back into our communities. Let us advocate for the reopening of the Nicro Centres. Bring back organisations like the ACVV.

Hon Speaker, the Department must also pull up their socks when it comes to the Children's Commissioner. We are well aware that our Commissioner did not really get assistance to operate in the functions that they should. Hon MEC, it is up to you. Let us bring social development back into our communities, please. One love. Ayesa. ...[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, to the hon Jacobs. † Agb [Hon] Kaizer-Philander, do you need the podium? No. Order, hon members. We are nearly there. I recognise ...[Interjection.]

†Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER (DA): Baie dankie, agb Speaker.

[Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER (DA): Thank you, hon Speaker.]

The SPEAKER: I recognise the hon Kaizer-Philander.

† 'n AGBARE LID: Hoor, hoor!

[An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!]

†Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER (DA): Verskoning. Baie dankie, agb Speaker.

[Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER (DA): Apology. Thank you, hon Speaker.] Hon Speaker, hon members of this House, hon Premier, guests and the residents of the Western Cape.

Today I rise in support of the Department of Social Development's Budget for the 2025/2026 financial year and this Budget is one that reflects our unwavering commitment to protecting the most vulnerable in our province. This Budget totalling R2,726 billion marks a significant step forward in efforts to improve the lives of the people in the Western Cape. This is an 8,07% increase from the previous year's budget and it is a clear sign that this Department is determined to not only maintain, but to intensify their commitment to the welfare of our people.

The largest portion of this allocation, R2,587 billion, comes from the Provincial Equitable Share reinforcing the dedication to uplifting the most vulnerable, despite the many economic pressures we face as a province and as a country. Hon Speaker, let us take a moment to explore how these funds will make a tangible impact on the lives of the people that we serve.

One of the most critical areas of focus in this Budget is Social Welfare Services which has seen an increase of 10,94%, bringing its total to R1,236 billion. This significant investment ensures that we can strengthen and expand service for our elderly citizens, persons with disabilities and struggling families. We are deeply committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable are not left behind and that their right to dignity, security and wellbeing are being upheld. This increase in funding allows us to expand subsidies for services that support these groups, which will ensure a stronger safety net and greater access to essential services.

Hon Speaker, at the heart of this Budget is also our unwavering dedication to the protection of children and families. With a 6,09% increase in funding for this programme, there is a focus on safeguarding the future of our province by investing in the wellbeing of children, our most precious resource. The future of the Western Cape lies in the hands of its children, and we must do everything within our power to provide them with the support and the opportunities they need to grow into healthy, thriving adults.

Moreover, there are significant enhancements in restorative services which have received an 8,74% increase, now totalling R584,4 million. This funding will improve our efforts in rehabilitation and reintegration, crucial components in the battle against crime and social disintegration. The dedication resources to the fight against Gender-Based Violence with funding allocated for a new shelter to provide safety, support and dignity for

survivors. It is our collective duty to protect women and children from harm, and this investment reflects our commitment to that fight.

Hon Speaker, while the Administration Programme has seen a 7,77% increase reaching to 105 million, it is important to note that this increase is primarily due to the Public Wage Bill, a challenge faced by all departments nationally. However, let me assure this House that every cent spent on administration is being directed towards increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery as the priority remains to serve the people, not to expand bureaucracy.

Hon Speaker, as we continue to strengthen our social safety nets, we recognise that efficient service delivery is just as important as the financial investments that we make. To this end, R2 million will be invested in the expansion of the Social Welfare Information Management System, the hon Minister has made mention of SWIMS, the SWIMS app, to include non-governmental organisation. This innovative move will modernise case management, improve service delivery and enhance accountability in child welfare services.

Hon Speaker, technology, when used effectively, is a powerful tool that can greatly improve the impact of the Department's work. Through this digital platform, we will ensure more efficient handling of cases, timely interventions and ultimately, better outcomes for those we serve to continue to address the critical issue of food insecurity through Programme 5,

development and research, which sustains nutritional support programmes at our Community Nutrition Development Centres. These centres are essential lifelines for communities in need and with this Budget we reaffirm our commitment to enhancing food security and nutrition across the province.

Hon Speaker, and hon members, and guests, while we acknowledge the challenges of homelessness and the plight of the vulnerable individuals, it is essential to set the record straight. Our commitment to these groups is evident through various initiatives, such as the R3,67 million allocated to the sector Education and Training authority for skills development in the social sector, adapted vehicles delivered to NGOs enabling children with intellectual disabilities to access critical services. The increase in accredited shelters for human trafficking victims, including a new shelter in the Overberg region. Our Feed the Province initiative which integrates agricultural skills and food gardening in child and youth care centres and GBV shelters, ensuring that food security is addressed sustainably.

Hon Speaker, these efforts demonstrate that we are not merely reacting to issues as they arise but are strategically investing in long-term solutions. The fight against homelessness and vulnerability requires sustained commitment and this Government is doing just that.

Hon Speaker, there is no issue more urgent and pressing than the fight against Gender-Based Violence. This crisis continues to affect countless families in our province, and it demands a concerted unwavering response from all of us.

Since April 2020, over 88 763 victims have received psychosocial support services as part of the Western Cape Government's GBV implantation plan. These efforts are not just in response to this crisis, they are part of a comprehensive Government-wide initiative to address and mitigate the impact of GBV in our communities.

Hon Speaker, to improve access to GBV support, the Department is expanding shelter services, particularly in the rural areas ensuring that survivors outside urban centres can find the safety and the support that they need. Additionally, 24 social workers are appointed that are specialising in GBV which will increase our ability to provide therapeutic support for survivors of sexual violence. The Social Development Department ongoing funding for shelters including Thuthuzela Care Centres, ensures that survivors receive holistic trauma-informed care from the moment that they seek help.

Hon Speaker, furthermore, we continue to empower communities through the GBV Ambassadors Programme which has been successfully expanded to various regions in the province, including areas like Delft, Witzenberg, Mitchells Plain, and Metro North, among others. This programme encourages community-driven solutions and awareness campaigns, ensuring that the fight against GBV is not just a governmental effort, but a collective effort.

Hon Speaker, substance abuse continues to be one of the most significant challenges that faces our province, contributing to cycles of violence and

family breakdowns. In response, this Government has committed to providing both prevention and treatment services ensuring that those affected by substance use disorders have access to the support they need to recover. This includes in-patient and community-based treatment. And those options do exist, particularly in the rural areas where services have traditionally been scarce. The Department is also working hard to ensure that all treatment facilities adhere to the higher standards of care, providing a safe and a supportive environment for those that are seeking rehabilitation.

Hon Speaker, since 2020, more than 900 000 qualifying beneficiaries have accessed subsidised meals through our CNDCs and we are committed to expanding these efforts. Nutrition plays a vital role, not only in health, but in the empowerment of vulnerable communities. We are determined to ensure that food insecurity is not an unconquerable barrier to individuals achieving their potential.

†Hon Speaker, ek kan nie vanaand glo wat ek gehoor het nie. Agb lid Kamfer is 'n baie gedissiplineerde lid van die Komitee en altyd teenwoordig en ek verstaan dat as jy jou politieke mandaat moet oordra, maar ek glo regtig nie vanaand dat die agb lid glo wat hy vanaand hierdie Huis meegedeel het nie. [Tussenwerpsels.]

Agb Speaker, die agb lid van die EFF aanlyn: dit sal goed wees om hierdie Komitee-vergaderings by te woon ...[Tussenwerpsels.] want ons neem ons oorsigrol regtig ernstig op. En ek is seker die lede van die Komitee kan

getuig dat waar ons uitdagings bespeur, ons dit onmiddelik met die Departement opneem en die aandag daaraan gegee word, soos wat die agb Minister ook uitgewys het. Ek wou ook net vir agb lid Stephens sê dat op die 5de vloer, daar is 'n lidmaatskap *booklet*, agb lid Stephens. ...[Applous.] U is meer as welkom.

[Hon Speaker, I cannot believe what I heard tonight. Hon member Kamfer is a very disciplined member of the Committee and always present and I understand that you have to convey your political mandate, but I really do not believe that the hon member believes what he told the House here tonight. [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, the hon member of the EFF online: it will be good to attend these Committee meetings ...[Interjections.] because we take our oversight role really seriously. And I am sure the members of the Committee can testify that where we see challenges, we immediately take it up with the and attention is paid to it, as the hon Minister also pointed out. I also just wanted to say to hon member Stephens that on the 5th Floor, there is a membership booklet, hon member Stephens. ...[Applause.] you are more than welcome.]

†Agb Speaker, [Hon Speaker] and hon members, this Budget is more than just a financial document. It is a commitment to the people of the Western Cape. It is a commitment to care; it is a commitment to dignity; and it is a commitment to a better future for all who call this province home. As we stand together to approve this Budget, let us remember that every cent

allocated is a step towards a more inclusive, compassionate and a prosperous society.

†Agb Speaker, daar is altyd 'n broer of 'n suster wat sê, 'moet nie na die stem luister nie. Luister na die woorde.' En ek dink Ben E King het seker aan die Wes-Kaap gedink toe hy geskryf het:

[Sing.]

“When the night has come and the land is dark and the moon is the only light we’ll see. My darling, darling stand by me”

[Hon Speaker, there is always a brother or sister who says, ‘don’t listen to the voice. Listen to the words.’ And I think Ben E King probably thought of the Western Cape when he wrote:

[Sings.]

“When the night has come and the land is dark and the moon is the only light we’ll see. My darling, darling stand by me”]

Hon MEMBERS: [Singing.] *Oh, stand by me.*

†Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER (DA): Agb Speaker, so vra ons vir die inwoners van die Wes-Kaap ...[Tussenwerpsels.] om saam met ons hande te vat. Ek wil dankie sê vir die agb Minister vir sy op die grond aanslag. Die agb Minister is altyd teenwoordig. [Tussenwerpsels.] Dr McDonald, dra asseblief ons groot dankie en waardering oor aan elke liewe personeellid in DSD. Ons sien

wat julle doen en ons sien die verskil wat julle maak in ons gemeenskappe. Maar ek wil vanaand vir u nou baie dankie sê. Dit is ons werklike kampioene wat vanaand hier sit, sonder u bydrae in die onderskeie gemeenskappe sou dit nooit moontlik wees nie. So, baie, baie dankie aan een en elk van u vir u bydrae wat u doen in ons gemeenskappe.

[Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER (DA): Hon Speaker, so we ask the citizens of the Western Cape ...[Interjections.] to take hands with us. I want to thank the hon Minister for his on the ground approach. [Interjections.] Dr McDonald, please convey our great thanks and appreciation to every single staff member in DSD. We see what you do and we see the difference that you make on our communities. But I want to thank you now tonight. It is our real champions sitting here tonight, without your contribution in the various communities it would never have been possible. So, thank you very, very much to each and everyone for your contribution in our communities.]

Hon Speaker, together, we can create a Western Cape where no one is left behind, where every individual is empowered, protected and given the opportunity to thrive. Having said that, hon Speaker, on behalf of the Democratic Alliance, I fully support Vote 7. Thank you, hon Speaker. ...[Applause.]

†Die SPEAKER: Baie dankie aan die agb Kaizer-Philander. [Tussenwerpsels.] [The SPEAKER: Thank you to the hon Kaizer-Philander [Interjections.]] Order, hon members. Order, hon members. The Hansard would be interesting to watch how that will be captured. ...[Laughter.] So, I am

looking forward to seeing the unedited version. With that being said, I now recognise the Minister, hon Minister Londt. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: So, I wanted to leave the hon Kaizer-Philander to last, but then you must also acknowledge when God gave out talents, she was standing right in the front of the queue. When the singing talent was given, I was right at the back. ...[Laughter.] So, I will not do that to the hon members of the House. But I will get back to the Chairperson a little bit later.

†Agb Kamfer, eerstens ons stry nie dat daar nog baie is wat gedoen moet word in die provinsie nie. Dit beaam ons. Ons is daar op dieselfde bladsy. En dit is wat ek gesê het in my toespraak ook: as ons saam hande neem en ons wil ons regverdige begroting kry vir die Wes-Kaap.

Maar ek dink jou woede is op die oomblik gefokus op die verkeerde mense. Jou woede moet agter jou wees en dit is omdat ons die provinsie is met die derde-grootse aantal inwoners, maar ons kry net die vyfde-grootse deel van die Begroting. Dit is omdat u party se nasionale Minister nie die maatskaplike werkers wat hier bo sit en dag in en dag uit werk om na die mees weerloses te kyk, om hulle te sien as noodsaaklike werkers nie.

So, dalk moet u, as jy 'n geldige tak kan gestig kry van waar u kom, na u kongres toe gaan en asseblief, daardie emosie indra want dalk op daardie manier kry ons dat hierdie wonderlike mans en vrouens as noodsaaklike

werkers gesien word ...[Tussenwerpsels.] en hulle ook befonds moet word.

Laasjaar het u gekla dat daar nie genoeg geld is vir ouer mense nie en weer vanaand gekla. Ek het 'n boek wat ek sal kan aanskaf. My kantoor: Bernhard, just please make a note. Accountancy for Dummies. Ek sê nie jy is dom nie, maar dit is net 'n beginnersboek om te laat leer wat se kant is debiet en krediet. ...[Gelag.] [Tussenwerpsels.] Maar ek gaan dit daar so los.

Hon Stephens, baie dankie dat jy pak gee wanneer daar pak gegee moet word, maar baie dankie dat u krediet gee waar dit moet toekom. Dit is hoe 'n komitee moet werk en ek vat die pak wanneer dit kom, en ons sal hande vat en dinge regdraai.

[*Hon* Kamfer, firstly we don't deny that there is still a lot we have to do in the province. That we agree on. We are there on the same page. And that is what I also said in my speech: if we take hands together and we want to get a fair Budget for the Western Cape.

But I think your anger is at the moment focused on the wrong people. Your anger must be behind you and that is because we are the province with the third most inhabitants, but we only receive the fifth most share of the Budget. That is because your party's national Minister does not see the social workers who are sitting up here and work day in and day out to look after the vulnerable, as essential workers.

So, perhaps you should, if you can get a legitimate branch founded from

where you come, go to your congress and please convey that emotion because perhaps in that way we can succeed in getting these wonderful men and women to be seen as essential workers ...[Interjections.] and they also have to be funded.

Last year you complained that there is not enough money for the older people and you complained again tonight. I have a book that I can acquire. My office: Bernhard, just please make a note. Accountancy for Dummies. I'm not saying you are dumb, but it's just a beginner's book to teach which side is debit and credit. ...[Laughter.] [Interjections.] But I will leave it there.

Hon Stephens, thank you that you reprimand when it needs to be done, but thank you that you give credit where it's justified. That is how a committee should work and I take the punishment when it comes, and we will take hands and turn things around.]

Hon Cassiem, I promised my spokesperson I would not go too hard on the zingers tonight, so I was only allowed two and I am leaving one for you. If only, ...[Interjections.] if only the Department of Social Development could get the money that you guys stole from VBS, we would be able to serve all the most vulnerable people in this province. [Interjections.]

†Hon Jacobs, dankie vir die motivering vir die ekstra geld, maar ook soos ek gesê het vir die agb Kamfer, ek baklei hard in hierdie provinsie en ek gaan nie vir jou kan sê wat nie, maar van my kollegas was vir my baie nors gewees

na van ons gesprekke oor wat ek gesê het gesny moet word
...[Tussenwerpsel.]

[Hon Jacobs, thank you for the motivation for the extra money, but as I said to the hon Kamfer, I fight hard in this province and I can't say to you what, but some of my colleagues were very cross with me in our discussions about what I said should be cut ...[Interjection.]]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon Leader of the Opposition, is that a point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Yes, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, just I do not want to prolong the evening.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: But the issue here is the hon Minister or hon MEC spoke to the hon Cassiem and said, 'which you guys stole from VBS'.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: He is casting aspersions on an hon member of this House. [Interjections.] He is referring directly to hon member Cassiem.

An HON MEMBER: No, no, no!

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: He must withdraw that.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon members. Honourable [Interjections.] Order! Order! Hon members, there was a point of order, and it is for me to adjudicate that point of order, hon Leader of the Opposition. I am going to ask the hon Minister. Hon Minister, did you refer to anyone in this House?

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Speaker, I am happy to withdraw and say the money that the EFF stole, if that could have come to the Department we would have looked after the vulnerable people.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Honourable ...[Interjections.] Order, hon members. Before I allow the hon Minister to continue, just for the record. The hon Minister has ...[Interjections.] Order! The hon Minister has withdrawn the reference to an hon member of the House and the Hansard will reflect that. That brings us to the end of that point of order. Hon Cassiem, is that a new point of order?

Ms A CASSIEM (EFF): Hon Speaker, I think that the hon member from the ANC has given the point of order, but the hon member on the platform still has to withdraw whether he says 'you' or 'EFF', he needs to withdraw that statement.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Cassiem. I have made a ruling. The hon Minister has withdrawn that the reference to an hon member of the House. It is not unparliamentary to refer to a political party in this case and therefore, that is not a point of order. Hon Minister, you may continue.

†Die MINISTER VAN SOSIALE ONTWIKKELING: Dankie. *Hon Jacobs*, ons moet egter hande vat en dit is wat ek ook in my toespraak gesê het dat dit help nie ons baklei hier so in die Provinsie vir meer befondsing nie. Ons kry nie genoeg wat ons toekom in die Provinsie nie. So, ons het nou gaan nasionaal. Die hartseer ding is, u party kon gister gestem het teen 'n verhoging in VAT wat ook vir ons nou gehelp het. U het uitgegaan wat u keuse was, maar dit is 'n ander debat. Wat ek vra, kom ons gaan as 'n Wes-Kaap. Kom ons neem hande as 'n Wes-Kaap *across party lines*. Kom ons baklei dat ons provinsie 'n meer regverdige deel kry vanaf nasionaal en u kollegas moet as hulle in die nasionale vergadering is, hulle ook baklei dat ons maatskaplike werkers gesien word as noodsaaklike personeel.

Dan laastens, die agb Kaizer-Philander. Ek wil regtigwaar dankie sê vir u vir hoe u die Komitee lei. Baie dankie. Die Komitee lei. Dit is u gee vir ons pak waneer daar pak moet gegee word, u stuur vir ons gereeld navrae met tydlyne en as ons dit nie nakom nie, volg u ons op en ek dink regtig studente van politiek kan 'n bietjie kyk hoe u die Komitee lei. En ons is regtigwaar geseën as 'n provinsie met u aan die stuur van daardie Komitee, en u het niks gesê waarmee ek kan stry nie. Ek stem saam met dit. So, baie dankie

daarvoor.

En laastens, aan ieder en elk van u wat uitgekom het. Dit is 'n laataand sessie en ek glo en vertrou dat almal het nou kennis geneem dat die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling, [The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you. Hon Jacobs, we however have to take hands and that is also what I said in my speech that it does not help that we fight here in the Province for more funding. We do not get enough of what is due to us in the Province. So now we go national. The sad thing is, your party could yesterday have voted against an increase in VAT which now could have helped us. You went out for what your choice was, but that is another debate. What I ask, let us go as a Western Cape. Let us take hands as a Western Cape across party lines. Let us fight that our Province receives a more fair share from national and your colleagues when they are in congress, that they also fight that our social workers are seen as essential staff.

Then finally, the hon Kaizer-Philander. I want to honestly say thank you for the way in which you lead the Committee. Thank you. Lead the Committee. That is you reprimand us when it has to be done, you regularly send us enquiries with timelines and if we do not adhere, you follow up and I really think students of politics can look at how you lead a committee. We are really blessed as a province with you at the helm of that Committee, and you have said nothing with which I can differ. I agree with that. So, thank you for that.

And finally, to each and everyone of who had come out. It is a late evening

session and I believe and trust that all have now taken note that the Department of Social Development,] we had our late night session. So, this is the last time in this term that we get the last lot. I trust going forward, we will have the earlier slots. ...[Laughter.] Thank you for making the time to come out. I hope you travel home safely ...[Interjections.] and continue the amazing work. Wherever you are, thank you for what you are doing in servicing this province. You are truly stepping up, like the hon Premier has asked. Thank you and have a lovely evening everyone. ...[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Minister. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this Vote and that also concludes a very long day. The Secretary will end the meeting, and all hon members will be exited from this Sitting. The business for the day is concluded, and the House is therefore adjourned.

The House adjourned at 20:27.