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THURSDAY, 7 MARCH 2024

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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 10:15.

The Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

The SPEAKER: Please be seated. Good morning, hon members and hon guests in the gallery.

I have to announce that due to the resignation of Mr D Plato, a vacancy occurred in the representation of the Democratic Alliance in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. This vacancy has since been filled by the nomination of Mr C Poole with effect from 6 March 2024. Mr C Poole was sworn in, in my office, on 6 March 2024.

Hon members, as has been our practice to date, hon members participating in the Sitting of the House, both from here in the Chamber with the Presiding Officer and Table staff and via Microsoft Teams. Our Standing Rules have accordingly been amended to accommodate such hybrid Sittings and hon members experiencing challenges in connecting to the Sitting are requested to contact the WCPP ICT colleagues who will assist to resolve their connectivity challenges.

Hon Members, the quorum requirements for the Sittings of the House are provided for in the Constitution and the Standing Rules, and unless there is an indication of unanimous concurrence, voting will be confined to members present in the House and on the hybrid system, who are entitled to cast their votes as per the ATC issued on 11 August 2020.

Members present in the Chamber and via Microsoft Teams have all the privileges and immunities imparted by law. Hon members, members who are considered out of order by the Presiding Officer will have their microphones muted and called to order. The Serjeant-at-Arms will record members' attendance. Hon members, I wish to remind you that in instances where these directives do not cover any particular eventuality, the Standing Rules must apply and in instances where the Rules cannot be applied, the ruling by the Presiding Officer is final. Members, all microphones have been muted. However, those hon members participating in the Sitting of the House and on the hybrid system who wish to raise a point of order, please use the raise-hand functionality of the system when you desire to raise a point of

order and I will recognise you.

Hon members, the media have also been granted access to the MS Teams as guests of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament. However, members of the press may not use the chat room or speak or activate their cameras while the Sitting is in progress. If an individual, who is not a member of the House, activates their microphone and video camera, such an individual will be exited from the Sitting immediately.

Hon Members, I wish to remind you that no interjections are permitted during these hybrid Sittings, and to this end I draw your attention to Rule 40 of our Standing Rules. That is the logistics, hon members.

I now recognise the Chief Whip.

(Motion)

The CHIEF WHIP: Thank you, hon Speaker, I move without notice:

That notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 18, the hours of sitting today, Thursday, 7 March 2024, shall be 10:15 to adjournment and the hours of sitting on Monday, 25 March 2024, Tuesday, 26 March 2024, and Wednesday, 27 March 2024, shall be 10:00 to adjournment.

Thank you, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Chief Whip. Hon members, are there any objections to the motion being moved?

No objections? Agreed to.

The Secretary will read the Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Introduction and First Reading – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B1–2024]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I now recognise the hon Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities, Minister Wenger.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, hon Premier, Cabinet Ministers, Chief Whip, Leader of the Opposition, members of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, Executive Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Mayoral Committee members, representatives from the National Treasury, members of the Consular Corps, Heads of Departments, special guests and people of the Western Cape.

Today I have the honour of tabling before you the 2024 Overview of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure, the Overview of Provincial and Municipal Infrastructure Investments, the Estimates of Provincial Revenue

and Expenditure; the Western Cape Appropriation Bill, the Provincial Gazette of Allocations to Municipalities and, of course, this Budget Speech for discussion and deliberation in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament and its Committees.

I would specifically like to thank the hardworking people who make up the Western Cape Provincial Treasury led by our new head official of the Treasury, Ms Julinda Gantana, and each... [Applause.] ...and I would like to thank each accounting officer. You will see them in the officials' bay over there, and their teams for the tremendous determination to work together for the people of this province and in building this budget. Our Treasury team in particular deserves immense thanks and I extend my immense gratitude and appreciation to Ms Analiese Pick, Ms Shirley Robinson, Mr Malcolm Booysen, Ms Taryn Van e Rheede, Mr Paul Pienaar, Ms Sharon Van Breda, and Ms Michelle Nicholas and the full teams that support them. Thank you so much. [Applause.]

Yes, I think they do deserve a round of applause. [Applause.]

The Western Cape Budget 2024 sets a pathway to enable a growing economy to promote the safety and wellbeing of the residents of the Western Cape over the medium term, giving full expression to Premier Alan Winde's State of the Province Address centred on working and striving for a better future for all. Over the 2024 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) this R255,29 billion budget places the 7,4 million residents of this province, our

vulnerable communities and future generations at the very centre of decision-making.

Within the context of pressing global concerns, subdued national economic prospects and an increasingly constrained fiscal environment, the Western Cape Government has formulated a budget that responds to mounting service delivery demands within a reduced fiscal envelope. [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: And how much did you give...

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: In addition, domestic risks which include the energy crisis, State fragility and water-supply shortages have steadily, over time, impacted on provincial budgeting. Given the increased need to protect essential services, the challenge we now face is to do even better, to do even more with even less.

Through a robust and collaborative budget process we have adapted our fiscal strategy and related budget policy principles to ensure that this budget responds and adapts to fiscal consolidation, enables long-run fiscal sustainability, unlocks allocative efficiency and enhances productive efficiency. By applying these principles through a whole-of-government approach, the Western Cape Government spending plans commit us to a budget that keeps building a Western Cape that works for all.

A special word of appreciation to the residents from Worcester, Eersterivier, Pinelands, Brooklyn, Khayelitsha, Diep River, Kuils River, Retreat, Rosebank... [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: It works for a few, not all.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Stanhaven, Langeberg Ridge, Paarl, Helderberg, Kommetjie, Laingsburg, Maitland, Summer Greens, Milnerton, Goodwood and George, who took the time to share what is important to them and who shared ideas and suggestions for this budget. This budget is for you and for every community that makes up the Western Cape... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...and makes the Western Cape the caring, resilient and promising province it is today.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Speaker, it is no secret that this is a difficult budget to table today...

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: How many contracts did

you give to PWC? [Inaudible.]

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:  
...probably one of the most difficult this term. It was Malala Yousafzai who  
said:

"...that though adversity may test us, we persist with a steadfast  
commitment anchored by our core principles and the enduring values  
that have carried us through our most trying moments, serving as the  
wellspring of courage and resilience..." [Interjections.]

And though we face tough times... [Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Five million...

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...we  
continue to build a Western Cape that works where no child is forced to do  
homework under a table for fear of being hit by a stray bullet, where parents  
and guardians are not wrecked with worry about how they will put food on  
the table, where those who are sick are cared for by a healthcare system that  
works... [Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Hospitals.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...where  
entrepreneurs and businesses are supported to get up and running and to  
expand with confidence in a certain and stable environment that enables job



creation and where innovation and progress are the order of the day so that more residents have the opportunity to wake up to a better tomorrow.

We will keep building that "better tomorrow" now, step by step or as former US president Barack Obama said, "brick by brick, calloused hand by calloused hand", because it is our responsibility as Government to work relentlessly day and night to build a progressively safer, more prosperous and better future for our children. While this will undoubtedly be difficult, the decisions we make now will make the difference between continued decline and increasing unemployment and a growing economy, more employment and added opportunities in our best endeavours that works... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order members! Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon Chief Whip is that a point of order?

The CHIEF WHIP: Yes, Speaker. I do rise on Rule 39. The loud conversation by member Dugmore is disruptive. Can you please rule. Thank you, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I am listening very carefully. [Interjections.] Order, members! Order, members, order!

An HON MEMBER: ...to get the Speaker to rule.

The SPEAKER: Hon Chief Whip, I am listening. [Interjections.] Order, members! [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: That is your problem.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! Hon Chief Whip, I am listening very carefully.

An HON MEMBER: Exactly!

The SPEAKER: And the speaker on the floor, the Minister is not being drowned out and we can still hear the Minister. I want to caution all members that this is the Minister's opportunity to do the introduction of the budget. You will have an opportunity once it has been tabled and referred to committees and you will have your opportunity as part of the parliamentary and budgetary process, so please allow the Minister to continue. Minister, I recognise you.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Thank you, Speaker. Globally the World Bank expects international economic growth to slow for the third consecutive year to 2,4% in 2024 due to tight monetary policies to rein in high inflation, restrictive credit conditions and stagnant global trade and investment. Geopolitical tensions and conflict continue to impact the global economic outlook negatively, with escalating conflicts bringing potential surges in energy prices with knock-on implications for global activity, trade and inflation.

Climate-change related disasters continue to increase, putting abilities to respond under further pressure. Here at home, the economic picture remains pressured.

On Tuesday, we avoided falling into a technical recession by the smallest of margins and continue to see anaemic economic growth forecast of just 1,7% in 2024. This is far below the level of growth we need to uplift the 56% of South Africans living in poverty or to support the creation of jobs for the 7,8 million unemployed people in this country.

Speaker, in October last year, the warning signs were clear. For the first time when I delivered the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement, we could only give broad estimates for allocations by cluster because of the uncertainties created by the chaotic budget process. We also faced unprecedented in-year cuts, compromising budgets that this House had already passed. In-year we were dealt a body blow when the nationally negotiated Public Sector Wage Deal was unilaterally imposed on provinces.

In the Western Cape, only our Departments of Health and Education received partial funding of the Wage Agreement of 70% and 64,5% respectively, of what they required. Every other department had no choice but to absorb the full cost of the Wage Agreement. Our shortfall remains R1,1 billion in the current year and our fight for this funding through the intergovernmental dispute moves steadily forward with the aim of establishing clear principles for how future wage deals are decided, in the hope that never again will core

services be put on the line like this, again.

We know now from the National Budget delivered by Finance Minister Godongwana in February that Government debt-service costs will increase from 20,8% of revenue in 2023/24 to 21,1% in 2026/27, meaning that South Africa will spend an astounding R1 billion a day on servicing its debt.

To put this into context, what the National Government spends in one day on debt servicing could employ 1 126 educators, 992 professional nurses and staff nurses and nursing assistants, and 125 social workers for an entire year in the Western Cape. On top of this, the Main Budget Revenue is projected to be lower by R46,4 billion in 2023/24 and lower by R113,3 billion in 2024/25 and 2025/26, when compared to the 2023 Budget Estimates. The significant projected shortfall reflects downward revisions due to the prevailing economic conditions and the resulting decrease in corporate and net Value-Added Tax.

While total funding to provinces is projected to increase year-on-year by 3,3% in 2024/25, by 4,3% in 2025/26 and 3,9% in 2026/27, the increases remain well below the projected inflation rate of 4,6% over the 2024 MTEF.

(The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:)

Hon Speaker, in South Africa today we are very short on cash and extremely large on debt. Despite being the province with the fastest growing population expanded by 27,7% between 2011 and 2022, and because of the

delayed release of the 2022 Census data sets, technical changes and data updates, the Western Cape share of the Provincial Equitable Share is projected to decline by R379-million over the MTEF. Simply put, as the third largest province by population, the Western Cape only receives the fifth largest PES allocation amongst provinces. [Interjections.]

In addition to this, due to fiscal consolidation, the Western Cape Government's budget is significantly reduced by R6,36-billion over the 2024 MTEF. Conditional grants allocated by National Government to provinces for specific programmes have also been slashed by a net reduction of R1,1-billion over the MTEF. This includes: cutting the Human Settlement Development Grant by R621-million; cutting the Ilima/Letsema Grant for emerging Black farmers by R19,3-million over the MTEF; cutting the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme by R13,3-million over the MTEF; [Interjections.] slashing the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant by R841,4-million over the next three years; [Interjections.] cutting the District Health Programmes Grant by R180-million over the MTEF; and cutting the Health Facility Revitalisation Grant by R69,9-million over the MTEF.

What do all these cuts, consolidation measures and reduction in the PES mean for a government like the Western Cape, that is already very lean, which already has the lowest cost-to-employee ratio in the country and where caring for the needs of the poor our primary priorities? It means that this province is forced to pull back or even cut some key plans, leaving no choice

but to slow down or freeze hiring in key positions in departments, all of which come with very difficult human and social consequences.

Despite the challenges, we are determined to move forward. We must work smarter, strategically plan, and implement solutions because we must keep building a Western Cape that works for all. Which is why our approach to the 2024/2025 Budget ...[Interjections.] focused first on protecting basic service delivery outcomes and supporting departments to absorb the impact of baseline reductions in the Wage Bill.

Second, we are driving the implementation of programmes within the key provincial priorities of jobs, safety and wellbeing while maintaining stability. A stable province is a working province, and we will keep building as Western Cape that works.

Third, we have prioritised infrastructure maintenance and because the Western Cape carefully plans to build a province that works for all, we are able to protect and to prioritise where it matters most for our children who are our future, for the elderly for whom we must care, ...[Interjections.] for the sick and the vulnerable because we are their safety nets so that they, too, have an opportunity to succeed.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: And you do not support the ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Hon Speaker, we have, indeed, reasons to be hopeful and to forge on because we are building a Western Cape that works and is working. Just over two weeks ago, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey released by Stats SA, showed that the Western Cape continues to have the lowest unemployment rate in South Africa at 20,3% ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: It was 17% a few days ago.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: The lowest expanded unemployment rate at 25,6%, the highest employment to population rate in South Africa at 55% and the highest labour force ...[Interjections.] participation rate in South Africa at 69%.

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Over the past five years, 78% of the net jobs created in South Africa have been created in the Western Cape. [Applause.] The QLFS also showed us that unemployment in the Western Cape ...[Interjections.] is on the down on the official definition by 2,2 percentage points year-on-year, which is the biggest decrease anywhere in South Africa.

And hon Speaker, the unemployment rate ...[Interjections.] among the most vulnerable of our unemployed residents, our African youth with less than

secondary qualifications made up of 8,7% of the total labour force in the Western Cape, has improved significantly between the Fourth Quarter of 2019 and 2023, with a decrease of 4 percentage points.

The facts show unequivocally that we are a province that works and is at work ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:  
...building a better future of jobs and dignity.

An HON MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Hon Speaker, our mission will not be complete ...[Interjections.] until our employment figures are worked down even further, but when compared to the national unemployment rate of 32,1%, we can clearly see that each and every day our work to get more people into job opportunities in the Western Cape, is working.

Hon Speaker, in total, this Government will allocate R84-billion in 2024/2025, R84,3-billion in 2025/2026, and R86,9-billion in 2026/2027. Over the 2024 MTEF, to keep building a Western Cape that works for all, we will allocate R182,3-billion to wellbeing, inclusive of Health and Wellness,



Education and Social Services. We will allocate R45,3-billion to continue our work to grow the economy and enable the creation of many more jobs across the province. We will allocate R21,8-billion to innovation, culture and governance as a critical tool to enhance service delivery and to do more for our residents. And we will allocate R5,08-billion to Safety to boost existing interventions, which includes an additional R190-million over the 2024 MTEF so we can keep building a future where we all feel safe.

Hon Speaker, of the total, R255,29-billion Provincial Budget over the 2024 MTEF, a full two thirds, 75,4% or R192,21-billion is being spent to champion the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable residents in this province.

Hon MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: To break down this budget further, some key allocations that prioritise the poor include spending at least R80-billion by the Department of Health and Wellness on primary healthcare, home and community-based care, mental health services, psychiatric hospitals, TB health services, and acute and transitional care in poor communities. In the past five years, our primary healthcare services have had over 56,7-million client contacts, so we know how vital these services are.

We will be spending at least R75,8-billion by the Department of Education as it addresses the learning needs of the poor through delivering quality

educators, offering learner transport ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: The Western Cape results are down ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...and providing resources to public schools ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...and you know this.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...and nutrition through the School ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: It goes down.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Nutrition Programme ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): It is a national programme.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...including education infrastructure ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): It is a national. Do not claim a national ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: 65 000 learners ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Dishonest!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...were transported in the 2022/2023 financial year. ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): It was a national grant!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: And the National School Nutrition Programme in the Western Cape feeds ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Another national grant ...[Interjection.] .

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...almost half a million school children ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Like she said, national.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...every day. [Interjections.] One of the comments I received on the MTBPS was from Tara, a Child Commissioner who shared: ...[Interjections.]

“I personally think it is extremely important ...[Interjections.] because sometimes ...[Interjections.] that is a child’s only meal.”

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: We think so too, Tara, and in this Main Budget, I am happy to confirm that to alleviate inflationary pressure on the School Feeding Programme and to make sure that the nutritional value is not compromised by rising prices, additional allocations of R63,8-million in 2024/2025, R67-million in 2025/2026, and R70,2-million in 2026/2027 will be made on top of the R1,6-billion over the MTEF from national grants. [Applause.] [Interjections.]

Other allocations to protect the poor include spending at least R19,14-billion by the Department of Infrastructure, to continue the focus on a housing response for the poor by providing low-cost housing as well as maintaining and developing vital public road networks that link residents to economic opportunities. This includes an allocation of R6,46-billion to develop sustainable and affordable housing opportunities, adapting to changes in

national policies affecting grant funding. ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Opportunities or houses?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: We will be spending R96,4-million by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sports for the Year Beyond programme, inclusive of afternoon positive peer networks to continue to provide access to services in vulnerable communities and a bridge into the economy for young people not employed or not economically active. We will be spending R51,99-million by the Department of Agriculture on food production initiatives which include food gardens in communities and schools, as well as support offered to small holder producers.

And we will be spending R7,89-billion by the Department of Social Development on Child and Youth Care Centres for children who are victims of abuse, neglect and abandonment; on foster care and reunification programmes; on social crime prevention and diversion programmes for children and adults in conflict with the law; to care for older persons; and to support survivors of gender-based violence through psychosocial services, empowerment programmes and shelters, as well as poverty alleviation programmes by providing nutritious meals to those in need.

Hon Speaker, our work to de-couple our growth rates from that of South Africa, to lift many more people out of poverty and into opportunity, requires

meticulous planning followed through with purposeful action. By 2035, guided by our economic action plan, Growth for Jobs, we are determined to enable a R1-trillion jobs-rich, inclusive, sustainable, diverse, and resilient provincial economy that is growing at between 4% and 6% per year in real terms. And we will do this by supporting the private sector including formal, informal, and township-based businesses as the driving force of economic growth and job creation in our country.

To continue to build a better future, we will invest in and maintain vital infrastructure to support the growth of our businesses, our economy, and our people. Which is why we will invest in fixed assets, catalytic and agricultural infrastructure over the MTEF, amounting to a total of R32,12-billion. This includes a significant investment of R30-billion which is allocated for infrastructure, maintenance and development covering various sectors such as roads, education facilities and healthcare. This also includes R2,3-billion which is allocated to Public Works infrastructure for Provincial Government building projects, including mixed-used developments and Child and Youth Care Centres.

The Department of Mobility receives R9,6-billion to improve safety and access to affordable transport, while supporting economic growth and spatial transformation amidst climate change challenges.

While we are painfully aware that persistent power-cuts falls squarely at the feet of National Government, we will not sit idly by while the economy and

the Western Cape is turned on and off as Eskom sees fit. ...[Interjection.]

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

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:  
Currently, the number one binding ...[Interjections.] constraint for businesses  
and especially small businesses, is a lack of stable supply of electricity.  
[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You can say that song.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: And so,  
we are on a mission ...[Interjections.] to ensure the availability of affordable,  
reliable electricity ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: How much is affordable?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...upon  
which our economy relies.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Is it cheaper than Eskom?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: In fact,

Mr Tshepo Marengwa ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon Deputy Chief Whip, is that ...[Interjections.] Order, hon members! Hon Deputy Chief Whip, is that a point of order? [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): Yes, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I rise in terms of Section 29 of the Provincial Constitution, Section 214 of the National Constitution and Rule 185 of our Provincial Rules relating to the introduction of Money Bills. The hon Minister has certain rights today for the introduction of a Money Bill ...[Interjections.] in terms of Rule 185 ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): ...and the people of the Western Cape want to hear what the hon Minister has to say. [Interjections.] Unlike in National Parliament where they do not even have dates for finishing the National ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): ...Budget, we want to hear ...[Interjections.]



The SPEAKER: Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (DA): ...what our hon Minister has to say.  
[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Deputy Chief Whip. [Interjections.] Order, hon members. Hon Deputy Chief Whip ...[Interjections.] Order! [Interjections.] Hon Nkondlo, I am on the floor. Hon members, hon Deputy Chief Whip, ...[Interjections.] the first part of your point of order was ...[Interjections.]

Ms A P BANS (ANC): Too much mix this morning.

The SPEAKER: Hon Bans!

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): One minute, she was ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Nkondlo! Hon Deputy Chief Whip, the first part of your point of order was in relation to the Rules. I am listening very carefully. I am not going to stifle democratic interjections. The speaker on the floor is protected and the minute I cannot hear the speaker on the floor, I will rule accordingly.

Hon members, ...[Interjections.] with that ...[Interjections.] Order, hon members! [Interjections.] With that being said, can I please ask you to allow

the hon Minister to make her introductory remarks by introducing this budget. You will have ample opportunity in the next couple of days to make your input and have your opinion on these remarks, but it is now the hon Minister's opportunity to make those remarks. [Interjections.] Honourable ...[Interjections.] hon Leader of the Opposition, is that a point of order? A new point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Yes.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, my point of order relates to the conduct of the hon Deputy Chief Whip. You would have recalled, when she spoke, she raised initially certain Rules and then after that, she began to talk about, in her view, what is happening in the National Assembly.

Now, a point of order is about a point of order, and I am disappointed, hon Speaker, that you have ignored the fact that her point of order went way beyond a point of order. [Interjections.] And that, in fact, is we will continue to use your words ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Okay, order, hon members!

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: We will continue to use

your words of ‘democratic interjections’. [Interjections.] We are making democratic interjections, as you said, which we are allowed to. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Absolutely!

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Not Democratic Alliance interjections, but ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Okay ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: ...but just democratic interjections.

The SPEAKER: I hear your point, hon Leader of the Opposition. Hon members ...[Interjections.] Order! [Interjections.] Hon Nkondlo! Hon Leader of the Opposition, when I ruled, I ruled that the first part of the input by the Deputy Chief Whip relates to the Rules and on that, I addressed. The second part was not a point of order and I have addressed that. The point of order that you just raised is, in fact, not a point of order. Hon Minister, you may continue. [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Thank you, hon Speaker. Mr Tshepo Marengwa from Paarl wanted to know more about what we were doing to help SMMEs stay open when the power shuts

off. Mr Marengwa, the Western Cape Energy Resilience Programme aims to reduce the impacts of loadshedding on businesses ...[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: The consumer.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...and citizens in the Western Cape to facilitate a lower level of reliance on Eskom in the province. [Interjections.] For this, we are allocating R759,2-million over the 2024 MTEF to increase energy resilience in the Western Cape. [Interjections.]

I am pleased to confirm that R153-million ...[Interjections.] is allocated specifically for the installation of solar PVs for schools ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...and Western Cape Government Health facilities. We have also allocated R15,8-million in 2024/2025, R16,3-million in 2025/2026, ...[Interjections.] and R18,3-million in 2026/2027 for the SMME Booster Fund, the SMME and township-based initiatives because we agree with you, Mr Marengwa, that our small businesses are the engines of our economy providing jobs for thousands in this province.

And just as the economy cannot survive without power, it cannot grow

without an expanding pool of talent to take full advantage of the immense potential of our economy. The Youth Interventions Budget ...[Interjections.] the Youth Interventions Budget over the 2024 MTEF amounts to R2,9-billion and is an investment in our young people to make sure they have the right skills, the right qualifications, and the right experience for jobs available now and in the future.

We are also determined to make the Western Cape the easiest place to do business in South Africa and Africa. This means we are hard at work developing and implementing systemic solutions to economic challenges and binding constraints. To boost the work being done to rip up red tape that bogs down businesses, an allocation of R46,7-million is made over the MTEF to the Red Tape Reduction subprogramme.

Hon Speaker, another resident, Mr Bongani Ntsunswana from Khayelitsha, wanted to hear more about how we are helping young people access job opportunities. Part of our work to up-skill our young and unemployed young people, means we have prioritised skills development in export orientated sectors with an allocation of R269,5-million over the MTEF, through the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, who will target technology and BPO, clothing and textiles, artisanal development and work and skills. This will deliver training and internship experience so that more young people can join the job market permanently.

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

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: And hon Speaker, because we understand that the cost ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon Nkondlo, I have allowed interjections because I do not want to stifle debate and I do not want to create a situation where you are not allowed in terms of the Rules. But this running commentary while the hon Minister is delivering, is completely out of order. Can I please ask that you allow the hon Minister an opportunity. She is on the floor. You will have, as I have indicated before, numerous occasions in the next couple of days to make your input. That is the hon Minister's opportunity now, and as the hon Deputy Chief Whip alluded to earlier on, there are the citizens of this province that want to hear this Budget Speech by the hon Minister. Hon Minister, my apologies. You may continue.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Thank you, hon Speaker. We understand that the cost of transport is an obstacle too many young jobseekers face. The Department of Mobility has launched its innovative jobseeker voucher to connect young people with work opportunities as part of the R7,5-million allocated in 2024/2025 to make 180 000 gold cards available for improved access to opportunities. We are hard at work on the basics that all businesses and residents need to increase opportunities for residents in every region of the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, it is a sad reality that as South Africans, we all share the deep and real fear of falling victim to crime and we take the reduction of crime in the province extremely seriously. We will continue to work hard to make the Western Cape safer for all who live here. Through the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety, we will continue to fund law enforcement operations in the province, including the Law Enforcement Reaction Units, Canine Units, and other safety partnerships to bolster safety in all municipalities in the most crime affected areas of the province.

Over the MTEF, we have allocated R1,06-billion for the continuation of the Law Enforcement Advancement Plan, the LEAP programme. Over 1 200 LEAP officers will continue to enhance safety in the province. In total, we will allocate R2,28-billion to improve policing through the oversight of the South African Police Service, the resourcing of the provincial policing functions and the capacitation of community-based safety partnerships.

Through the new Western Cape Mobility Department, Traffic Law Enforcement is allocated R1,56-billion over the MTEF to enhance safety and security on provincial roads to achieve the long-term vision of reduced fatalities and serious injuries. We know that prevention is better than cure, and so this Government has established the Violence Prevention Unit to help identify, prevent, and reduce violence in communities through collaboration between law enforcement and prevention efforts targeting high crime areas and implementing effective violence prevention methods. For crime prevention and support, including for programmes that support young people

to choose a better path, R1,09-billion has been made available.

Where people do fall victim to crime, we have allocated R228,5-million to fund victim support programmes to deliver psychosocial support services. We have also allocated R31,8-million over the MTEF to maintain gender-based violence services, such as victim empowerment programmes, shelters for victims of gender-based violence, and psychosocial support services, which in the 2022/2023 financial year provided support to 18 500 victims of gender-based violence.

Hon Speaker, the wellbeing of our residents is paramount, and we support this priority through its different pillars of health services, mental wellbeing, education and learning, and meeting basic needs and protecting human rights. To achieve these goals, R182-billion is allocated to wellbeing over the 2024 MTEF. The largest additional allocations in the 2024 Budget were for the Department of Health and Wellness, the Department of Education, and the Department of Social Development. Overall spending on the Education priority area increases by 1,54% and spending on the Health priority reflects an increase of 2,2%.

In Health over the MTEF, R94,49-billion is allocated for the continuation of the Department's healthcare strategy. This includes R21-billion for primary healthcare such as child and adult curative care, preventative services, antenatal care, postnatal care, fertility and contraceptive services, mental health, TB, HIV and Aids, and chronic disease management. R1,9-billion for



home and community-based care services which will help strengthen population outreach programmes, intersectoral collaboration and community engagement. And R1,3-billion to continue our fight against the leading cause of death attributable to communicable diseases in South Africa and the Western Cape, tuberculosis. Additional funding for community interventions and telehealth support will strengthen current TB interventions to empowerment.

The response from the Health Department specifically includes improving mental healthcare services and R3,96-billion has been allocated over the MTEF, including a new acute psychiatric care unit at the Khayelitsha Hospital.

In Education over the MTEF, R98,68-million is allocated to support learners to read with meaning and to enhance their language competency. We are expanding our support for children at risk with a growing number of Early Childhood Development facilities receiving targeted assistance, underscoring the commitment to inclusive and impactful Early Childhood Development initiatives which will receive a total allocation of R413,6-million bringing the total allocation for ECD to R3,8-billion over the MTEF.

For children who require support in specialised schools, we will allocate R71,4-million in 2024/2025, R74,9-million in 2025/2026, and R78,3-million in 2026/2027 to respond to the needs of autism spectrum learners and to support the placement of these learners that are best for them.

To make sure that children with profound and intellectual disabilities are cared for, R70-million is allocated in 2024/2025, R73,8-million in 2025/2026, and R77-million in 2026/2027 to ensure appropriate educational access for these learners, which includes provisions for up-skilling caregivers, nutritional support, and funding for institutions.

In Social Development over the MTEF, R1,12-billion is allocated for the child protection system over the 2024 MTEF, under the Childcare and Protection subprogramme of DSD. Part of this funding will maintain the operation of the CYCCs, as well as child protection non-profit NPOs. R669-million has been allocated to care for persons with disabilities.

Mr Estian de Jongh Maritz from Langeberg Ridge wanted to hear more about plans to help homeless people. Mr Maritz, to combat homelessness, R89,8-million is allocated to fund the continuation of services for homeless adults, including subsidies for homeless shelters, reunification services and psychosocial support services. And for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods, we will allocate R166,6-million, most of which will go to food distribution centres and community nutrition centres. As the cost-of-living crisis continues, this support for those who need it most, is a literal lifeline.

Hon Speaker, to give life to our value of innovation, R68,36-million is allocated over the MTEF to enable this Government to do more with the ever-decreasing fiscal envelope received from the National Government. In a

broader environment of fiscal uncertainty, austerity and a rapidly growing population and declining Equitable Share in real terms, we are compelled to think about and design alternative and blended financing options and optimise our own revenue sources to create stability for the Provincial Budget.

Provincial Treasury is exploring different approaches to alternative and blended financing, and engaging stakeholders on the potential of outcome funds and social impact bonds. These efforts are aligned to and compliment the work that the National Treasury is doing to advance the scope and potential for alternative financing to catalyse and crowd in private sector financing, in particular for infrastructure investment that is critical to boost our economic growth prospects.

A palpable problem that affects us all is climate change. In June and September last year, floods which caused a total of R1,6-billion in damages to the Western Cape infrastructure, is just one example. In response, the Provincial Treasury accessed R388-million from our Unforeseen and Unavoidable Reserve, to partially fund repair and reconstruction work and we are still waiting to hear whether the National Disaster Management Centre will contribute to these declared disasters.

We have identified climate finance as an important source of alternative finance and blended finance for South Africa and the Western Cape. \$8,8 billion in climate finance has been pledged to South Africa and National

Government has raised \$3,3 billion so far, from multi-lateral development banks and international finance institutions to support climate change, energy and Just Transition objectives. This Government will be actively engaged over the 2024 MTEF in accessing climate finance to mitigate climate related loss and damages, and to build back better climate adapted infrastructure for the Departments of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and Agriculture, taking up the lead on our climate change responses.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Where is the Environmental Commissioner?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Our Fiscal Futures project will play a key role ...[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Where is the Environmental ...[Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...as we keep building a Western Cape that works now and into the unknown. [Interjections.] A key application of the tool over the MTEF ...[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Just start.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...is to

estimate the impact ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: It is not going to stop there.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...of the 2022 Census data ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: He is protecting the ...[Interjection.] in this ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...on the Western Cape's Provincial Equitable Share and its ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...fiscal framework. It features dashboards for visualising financial positions. It supports scenario planning and facilitates expenditure risk management. The process will help us to better analyse national revenue trends, ...[Interjections.] spending pressures and provincial revenue projections to better forecast the province's financial position into the future.

Hon Speaker, as South Africans, we have in our minds eye a vision of a future that is bright. The details may look different to each of us, yet we all share the dream of being able to walk home safely, of having the dignity of a

job, of being able to provide for our families. We all want safe drinking water, well maintained roads and bridges needed to get to work and back. We all want and deserve a constant supply of electricity to not only sustain, but to help businesses grow and employ even more people. We all want a future where if needed, we have access to quality healthcare where we have the support for our mental health needs and where we can be safely cared for and helped if we suffer abuse.

While this dream may be or may seem far off, it does not have to be. With the right policies to attract and incentivise investment that support and enable the private sector with expertly designed and implemented plans, and through determined action, the future that we are building towards is possible.

And the proof is right here in this province. In the growing number of employed people, in the country's lowest unemployment rate and the country's lowest inequality rate where more people have access to the opportunities they need and deserve.

Hon Speaker, as I conclude, I would like to thank the many citizens from every corner of the Western Cape who had their say on the 2024/2025 Budget. To the Consuls-general, for their friendship and partnership as our major and emerging trading partners, which we value very much. To my Cabinet colleagues and to the extended Budget Policy Committee, thank you for your commitment to informing and implementing this budget.

To the accounting officers and their teams who exemplify what it means to be citizen-centric; ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: And the HOD!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...to the entire Provincial Treasury under the immensely talented and dedicated senior leadership team, ...[Interjection.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: And the President's Treasury, too.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: ...thank you. To my exceptional team in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Opportunities, for the tremendous support you have and continue to offer me day in and day out. To my colleagues in local government at the coalface, I appreciate the good working relationships between our spheres of government for a Western Cape that works for all.

And finally, to my dear family. [Interjections.] Thank you for your enduring love and support.

Hon Speaker, the Budget I table today strikes the difficult balance of protecting the essentials now for the poor and vulnerable who need it the

most and prioritising key interventions that will take us all into the future we want, as we keep building a Western Cape that works for all. Thank you.

[Applause.]

An HON MEMBER: Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Order! Thank you very much, hon Minister. Thank you very much, hon members. [Interjections.] Order! The Secretary will now read the Bill for the first time. [Interjections.]

The SECRETARY: Western Cape Appropriation Bill.

The SPEAKER: Hon members, in accordance with Rule 188 subsection 1, the Introductory Speech ...[Interjections.]

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Well, they are not coming back.

An HON MEMBER: Ja.

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: I am protecting my ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, are you [Interjections.] are you [Interjections.] have you concluded? I am on the floor, so please protect me



like I protect you when you are on the floor. [Laughter.] [Interjections.] In accordance with Rule 188 subsection 1, the Introductory Speech, the Bill and papers laid upon the table will be referred to the relevant committees for consideration and report.

Hon members, before we adjourn, I would like to remind the hon members that the Budget Committee meeting will commence 30 minutes after adjournment of the House. That concludes the business for the day, the Secretary will now end the meeting and all members will be exited from the Sitting. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 11:06.