
THURSDAY, 12 MARCH 2026

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 Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER: Please be seated. Order! Good morning, hon members and to the guests in the gallery, and our guests in the Speaker's box. Welcome to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament.

Before I proceed, I would like to remind or make some comments about the logistical arrangements, hon members. Today's Sitting shall be governed by the Standing Rules and in instances where the Rules cannot be applied, the ruling by the Presiding Officer is final. Hon members, the Quorum

requirements for the Sitting of the House are as provided for in the Constitution and the Standing Rules. The Serjeant-at-Arms will be recording hon members' attendance.

Members who are present in the Chamber and via Microsoft Teams have all the privileges and immunities imparted by law. Hon members, unless there is an indication of unanimous concurrence, voting will be confined to hon members present in the House and who are entitled to cast their votes in accordance with our Standing Rules. Hon members who are considered to be out of order by the Presiding Officer will have their microphones muted and will be called to order.

When an hon member wishes to raise a point of order, such an hon member may address the Presiding Officer as normal but must mute his or her microphone when he or she has completed speaking. The hon members are kindly requested to ensure that their microphones are unmuted when they are recognised by the Presiding Officer, and to mute their microphones when they have finished speaking.

Hon guests in the gallery, I kindly request that for those who are not members of the House, to observe the decorum of the House. For the purposes of this meeting, language interpreting services are available by using the devices at your disposal.

Hon members, I wish to remind you that no interjections are permitted during

these hybrid Sittings and to this end, I wish to draw your attention to Rule 40 of our Standing Rules. The Secretary and the Administration will ensure that there is dedicated technical support at all times during this Sitting.

Hon members, we will now proceed with the Business of the House. I recognise the Chief Whip.

MOTION

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Good morning and thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, I move in my name without notice:

That notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 18, the hours of Sittings on Thursday, 12 March 2026, Monday, 23 March 2026, and Tuesday, 24 March 2026 shall be from 10 AM until adjournment. I so move.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Chief Whip. Hon members, are there any objections?

The SPEAKER: No objections, agreed to.

The Secretary will read the First Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Introduction and First Reading - Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1-2026].

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

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: Hon Speaker, hon Deputy Speaker, hon Premier Alan Winde, hon Minister of Finance, Mr Enoch Godongwana, to the SARS Commissioner who will be joining us. He is a little bit late for his meeting. Mr Kieswetter will be joining us. Hon members of the Executive, hon Leader of the Opposition, hon members, members of the Consular-Corps, Captains of Industries, special guests and especially those in Mitchells Plain, I am informed, that are here today as well as from the Deaf SA community, residents of the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, last year we committed to stepping up for the people of our province. Seven months later, we recognised that maintaining our footing was only the baseline, and that we had to scale our efforts and build real momentum.

Today we define that forward motion: growth that is deliberate, disciplined and sustained.

As a world-class agricultural region, we understand organic growth better than most. We know that a vine left entirely to its own devices grows wild. It spreads its energy across too many leaves and sprawling branches, ultimately yielding a bitter and unusable harvest. To secure a yield that actually sustains the entire estate, a viticulturist must apply two essential forces: the shears of

discipline, and the hands of care.

Discipline is the hard, necessary work of winter pruning. It is the act of cutting back excess and withdrawing from unproductive growth so that the plant's limited energy is concentrated into the branches that bear fruit. It requires making difficult, sometimes unpopular choices in the present to guarantee viability in the future.

But discipline alone produces nothing if the roots are starved. Care is the soil we tend, the water we preserve, and the windbreak we construct against this frost. A vine cut back to the wood will perish if abandoned to the elements and without care, even the most strictly managed estate will wither.

Hon Speaker, this budget is our harvest plan. We face an undeniably volatile global reality that presents us with a complex mix of risks and opportunities. We cannot control international markets, nor how it impacts our economy or even national fiscus. We can, however, control how we cultivate our own estate.

A society that feels supported and valued is the soil from which prosperity grows. To prosper, we therefore must mimic the wisdom of a farmer.

Today, the Western Cape Government is not forced to choose between fiscal responsibility and social duty. Today, we will prove that one enables the other. We will deliver growth with discipline and with care.

Hon Speaker, the world has settled into a cautious rhythm. Global growth is uneven, marked by small pockets of resilience sitting alongside clear structural weaknesses.

Developed economies are moving in different directions. Some continue to hold steady, while others are losing momentum. Emerging markets reflect the same divergence. Across the board, tighter global financing conditions and rapidly shifting trade patterns continue to shape the outlook.

Trade flows are under strain. Value chains that once moved smoothly across borders are becoming more fragmented as countries raise barriers, tighten rules, and push for greater self-reliance in critical goods. This realignment brings challenges and opportunities: higher costs for certain inputs but also demand for reliable suppliers who can deliver consistently. For an open, export-oriented province like the Western Cape, these shifts test our ability to keep produce moving, sustain tourism arrivals, and maintain investment pipelines.

Global inflation has eased from its peaks, but the pressure has not disappeared. Food prices, energy costs and supply-chain disruptions continue to flare where weather shocks or logistical constraints take hold.

Hon Speaker, South Africa recorded economic growth of 1,1 per cent in 2025, with forecasts of 1,4 per cent in 2026. While this improves on the past decade's

average of 0,7 per cent, the economy remains constrained. Confidence has improved under the Government of National Unity with a sovereign credit-rating upgrade, the exit from the FATF grey list and a firmer Rand. Yet unemployment remains above 31 per cent. So, structural reforms in electricity, logistics and water are progressing and will be essential to unlocking stronger growth.

Electricity availability, hon Speaker, has improved sharply, supported by a surge of private investment in renewables. Ports and rail systems are beginning to open to private partners, and long-delayed water infrastructure is receiving focus.

Hon Speaker, as the national economy asks provinces to work harder with less room for error, the Western Cape enters this period on firmer footing, but not with any sense of complacency. Our economy is broad, productive and resilient, giving us the space to support real, organic growth.

Our outlook shows that strength. The provincial economy is thus set to grow by 1,6 per cent in 2026. It is still below what our residents deserve, but it outpaces the national outlook and shows that our province is generating momentum.

Hon Speaker, the clearest test of that momentum is jobs. In the Fourth Quarter of 2025, unemployment in the Western Cape was 18,1 per cent, well below the national average. Our province delivered 28,1 per cent of all new jobs in the

country, putting the Premier's new target of 10 per cent unemployment firmly within reach.

We remain realistic about risk. As an open, export-oriented economy, we are exposed to global trade fragmentation and rising protectionism. When external markets shift, our competitiveness will feel it.

We are equally honest about the sectors under pressure. Electricity, logistics and water constraints continue to hold us back. Manufacturing and construction sectors are affected. These sectors that absorb semi-skilled and lower-skilled workers and shape whether firms grow, whether the goods move on time and whether families can participate in economic life.

The budget thus meets our provincial economy with both realism and resolve. We are speaking to a province with real momentum, strengths and confronted by real pressure points.

We will therefore scale what is working, confront what is not, and protect the conditions that allow discipline and care to translate into long-term prosperity and growth.

Today, hon Speaker, the Western Cape Government tables a R285,8 billion budget for the 2026 MTEF period: R93,538 billion in 2026/2027, R94,770 billion for 2027/2028, and R97,506 billion for 2028/2029.

Our budget consists of 95 per cent of national transfers, specifically through the Provincial Equitable Share and Conditional Grants, with the remaining 5 per cent generated from Provincial Own Revenue, such as motor vehicle licence fees and gambling taxes.

Hon Speaker, in terms of the vertical division of the distribution of nationally raised revenue, provinces will receive 42,3 per cent over the medium term. In line with the Provincial Equitable Share (PES) formula, the Western Cape receives R217,583 billion in equitable share for the MTEF.

The equitable share portion for the Western Cape increases by 4,78 per cent from 2025/2026 to the 2026/2027 financial year. The increase is made up of both data updates and additional allocations flowing through our equitable share.

We welcome the updates to the PES formula. It now reflects the latest Mid-Year Population Estimates, School Enrolment data, Total Fertility Rate, Premature Mortality, Patient Load Data, Income and Expenditure Survey, and GDP-R statistics.

The 2025 Mid-Year Population Estimates confirm that the Western Cape remains the third-largest province in South Africa, and for the first time, the economic component includes the adoption of a new methodology by Statistics South Africa's measuring regional GDP.

The poverty component has been updated using the 2022/2023 Income and Expenditure Survey (IE Survey), the first refresh since the 2010/2011 Survey. The updates confirm a shift in poverty from more rural provinces to more urban provinces as populations shift in search of work.

These updates increase the Western Cape's share of the PES formula from 10,3 per cent over the 2025 MTEF to 10,4 per cent over the 2026 MTEF, resulting in an additional R1,204 billion over the 2026 MTEF for the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, the additional allocations of R2,798 billion will flow through the Provincial Equitable Share formula from our National Government, which will be earmarked to the respective departments, consisting of the following.

A reduction of R566,498 million due to the inflation adjustment, reflecting the lower inflation outlook; an additional allocation of R1,035 billion for Education for Compensation of Employees; an additional allocation of R2,225 billion for Health for Compensation of Employees, the employment of doctors, and shortfalls in goods and services; an additional allocation of R55,289 million for the progressive equalisation of the remuneration of Grade R teachers; an additional allocation of R19,357 million for Early Retirement and Voluntary Exit Programmes; and an additional R30,232 million for Teacher Assistants under the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme.

Our PES will increase from 10,39 to 10,45 per cent of the total provincial portion nationally over the 2026 MTEF, averaging 10,42 per cent over the 2026

MTEF.

Hon Speaker, beyond the data updates and additional allocations, we welcome National Treasury's decision to review the composition of the PES formula. When we compare real PES per capita, cumulative population growth, real PES cumulative growth, and real PES growth from 2016/2017 to 2028/2029, the gap keeps widening. The real PES per capita is declining. Combined with the increasing cumulative population growth experienced in our province, it is culminating in the erosion of per-capital fiscal capacity.

As provinces, we need to seriously consider the incorporation of forecasted population growth and forecasted economic growth within the PES formula so that we can shift from reacting to historical data to preparing for the future, based on clear evidence. Therefore, there is a need to explore the notion of a formula that can anticipate changes in demographics, becoming much more proactive in dealing with the needs of our residents.

Over the 2026 MTEF, the Western Cape will receive approximately R50,482 billion in conditional grant allocations. These will reflect an increase of R60,813 million for the Education Infrastructure Grant; an increase in R1,284 billion for the Early Childhood Development Grant; an increase in R279,631 million for Health Facility Revitalisation Grant; an increase in R713,503 million for the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant.

There will be a reduction of R397,818 million for the Human Settlements

Development Grant, which will shift to the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant for Provinces. We will thus see an increase in R349,896 million for the Human Settlements Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant for Provinces.

There will be a reduction of R209,711 in the Ilima/Letsema Projects Grant, which will merge into the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme Grant to streamline and enhance support for emerging farmers. Thus, we also see an increase of R192,422 million for the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme Grant, and an increase of R43,488 million for the EPWP Integrated Grant for Provinces.

Over the MTEF, our conditional grant allocations from various departments decreased marginally by 0,92 per cent from 2025/2026 to the 2026/2027 financial year.

Hon Speaker, furthermore, our Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI) Funding for the 2026 MTEF, consisting of an additional allocation of R883,163 million for Health, will flow through conditional grants.

For the Metro East Hospital, previously known as the Belhar Regional Hospital, we will be receiving R106,658 million over the 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 financial years. For the Metro West Hospital, previously Klipfontein Regional Hospital, we are receiving R111,505 million over the 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 financial years. For Tygerberg Health Technology,

we are receiving R665 million over the 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 financial years.

Across all Votes, hon Speaker, provincial departmental own receipts are projected to total R2,295 billion over the 2026 MTEF, representing a 0,51 per cent decrease from the 2025/2026 financial year. Our Departments of Health and Wellness and Infrastructure collectively account for 80,9 per cent of total own receipts and are projected to raise R596,74 million in 2026/2027.

Hon Speaker, turning to provincial tax receipts, collectively motor vehicle licence fees, gambling taxes and liquor licence fees raised R3,757 billion in the 2025/2026 financial year, and are projected to generate R12,528 billion over the 2026 MTEF, constituting a 4,5 per cent increase from the 2025 MTEF driven mainly by inflation.

Hon Speaker, later today, our Government will also introduce today the 20th Gambling Amendment Bill, aimed at accounting for the difference between original casino bid fees and the new economic advantage casinos would gain by choosing to relocate. Over the MTEF we will review our provincial gambling legislation in full, in order to keep up with the industry.

Hon Speaker, having outlined our funding sources and the total amount we will appropriate over the 2026 MTEF, you will see a deficit between expenditure and revenue. This deficit will be financed from accumulated reserves, mainly the Asset Finance Reserve and the Provincial Revenue Fund. To address key

spending priorities and pressures, the Western Cape Government is adding R5,955 billion in Provincial Funding to our MTEF.

Hon Speaker, approximately eighteen months ago, we warned this House about the rising frequency of disasters and the need for our province to budget for a rainy day. That day has arrived. We are now drawing down reserves as a deliberate decision to act swiftly in responding to disasters.

This also means that, when we table the Adjustment Budget later this year, our first task will be to begin replenishing those reserves so we can prepare for future shocks with the same foresight, discipline and care.

In total, we are making provisions for R2,842 billion in reserves over the 2026 MTEF, of which we will have set aside R1,346 billion for our Unforeseen and Unavoidable Reserve, R707,503 million for our Stabilisation Reserve, and R269,180 million for our Acquisition of Property Reserve, to deal with the impacts of climate impacts, protect essential services in the face of national fiscal constraints, and support infrastructure as projects accelerate.

Hon Speaker, a herd reflects the discipline of the farmer who tends it. Good farmers do not lose discipline in good seasons. They prepare for the seasons that will surely come.

In that spirit, I wish to announce that in line with long-term planning, the Western Cape Government has approved the establishment of the Alternative

and Blended Financing (ABF) Reserve, aligned with our 2025 Policy Framework and funded in part through over-collection on Motor Vehicle Licence fees.

This R518,814 million Reserve will be dedicated exclusively to servicing borrowings for infrastructure and related projects, strengthening capacity to manage strategic development, reinforce fiscal resilience and help scale our infrastructure portfolio.

So, just as a farmer must balance the growth of the herd with the health of the pasture, Government must balance growth with discipline and care. Continuing with these values as a government, the Western Cape acted swiftly during the 2026 budget process to respond to emergencies and disasters affecting our communities.

We are drawing down from our Unforeseen and Unavoidable Reserve, alongside existing departmental budgets over the MTEF, to support and scale our disaster response and strengthen resilience across our province. The 2026 Budget will thus respond with R949,8 million in provincial funding for unforeseen and unavoidable events.

This includes R177,942 million for Water Resilience and Drought Response, including groundwater augmentation, bulk raw water supply and alien vegetation removal; R452,529 million for Energy Resilience, including solar installations for schools, clinics, emergency services, and farmworker homes;

R139,7 million to combat foot-and-mouth disease, for vaccines and scaling our veterinary capacity to protect our dairy and meat industries; R67 million to address fire damage at Paarl Hospital; R65,530 million allocated for integrated fire management, firefighting and aerial support; and R47,139 million to combat gender-based violence.

Hon Speaker, genuine growth is not declared. It is cultivated. It takes root when barriers are pruned, foundations are strengthened, and the conditions for enterprise and employment deliberately tended.

That is the work of this budget. That is why Growth and Jobs remains our apex priority. We allocate R36,651 billion over the 2026 MTEF to drive our Growth for Jobs (G4J) priority, of which we are adding an additional R1,496 billion in provincial funding into the MTEF.

Private capital invests where confidence is strong. In 2024/2025, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and Wesgro facilitated 14 investment projects worth about R14 billion, with more than 11 000 projected jobs. To maintain that momentum, Wesgro receives R396,877 million over the MTEF to promote investment, tourism, export growth and trade.

Hon Speaker, we are strengthening our industrial hubs. The Freeport Saldanha will receive R31,8 million in 2026/2027 as it expands as a green hydrogen, maritime and manufacturing centre. The Atlantis Special Economic Zone receives R129,432 million over the medium term as it grows its Greentech

manufacturing footprint.

Our 2025 Western Cape Investment Summit secured six major investment commitments valued at R50 billion which is expected to generate 45 000 job opportunities over the next two decades. Projects showcased at the Summit formed part of a R400 billion investment pipeline. We will thus provide an additional R6,196 million over the MTEF to the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) to support the continuation of this initiative.

Further, the DEDAT receives an additional allocation of R3,098 million over the MTEF for the implementation of its Growth Opportunity Coalitions, strengthening sector-specific growth opportunities that support business expansion and job creation in priority sectors such as food and beverage, clothing and textiles, and manufacturing.

Hon Speaker, in order to accelerate export growth and expand market access we will invest in scaling our support for the agriculture, tourism and logistics sectors.

Our Department of Agriculture will receive an additional R16,5 million for Africa Market Activations; an additional R12 million for our Export Certification Online System; and an additional R15,490 million for mobile abattoirs to advance market access through agri-processing in the informal economy.

In addition, we will scale nearly every single one of our agriculture programmes, consisting of an additional R13 million for our Agriculture Producer Support Programme; an additional R15,531 million for our Agricultural Producer Support And Development Programme; as mentioned earlier, R39,661 million will go to our Veterinary Services Programme and as well, the R100 million for vaccines to fight foot-and mouth disease; an additional R15,4 million for our Research and Technology Development Services Programme; and an additional R18,5 million for our Agricultural Education and Training Programme.

Our Department of Economic Development and Tourism will receive an additional R17,843 million for our Export Accelerator Programme, an additional R9,708 million for port and logistics performance support, an additional R3 million for Tourism Safety, and an additional R12,392 million for our Tourism Growth initiatives to strengthen destination quality and attract private investment.

Supporting a flourishing economy in the Events Economy, we will allocate the Department of Cultural Affairs an additional R31,326 million for hallmark and incubator events, and R15 million for the World Cup Legacy Infrastructure Upgrades for the 2027 ICC Cricket World Cup to ensure tournament readiness.

To do that, hon Speaker, we must secure the basics: reliable power and water security is critical.

Our Energy resilience programme receives R452,529 million over the MTEF, supporting capacity, alternative energy procurement mechanisms, energy sector opportunities, solar PV installations for schools, clinics, EMS services and farmworker homes, industrial decarbonisation; grid and transmission infrastructure upgrade planning; project preparation facility, green hydrogen, and support for municipalities.

We will further allocate R177,942 million for water resilience and drought response over the MTEF, supporting BFI programme preparation for ecological infrastructure; nature-based solutions for water quality improvement, clearing invasive alien vegetation; municipal borehole support and potable water tanks for drought relief, augmenting water security, bulk raw water security and resilience, and fabricated balancing reservoir.

We will build, further, a stronger technology ecosystem and boost innovation capacity. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism receives an additional R9,294 million to establish a Drones/Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Regulatory Sandbox.

Hon Speaker, growth will depend on how efficiently we move goods and people.

The George Integrated Public Transport Network will receive R329,197 million, of which an additional R50 million in the 2026/27 financial year;

and the Integrated Transport System receives R366,653 million for freight reform.

To lower the cost of seeking work, the Department of Mobility's Jobseeker Travel Voucher Programme receives an additional allocation of R5,08 million for the Cape Town and George areas. Supporting both our G4J and Safety priorities, our Department of Mobility receives R80 million for two heavy-duty mobile diagnostic scanners to curb the movement of illegal firearms, drugs, animals and human trafficking. I am going to repeat that when the SARS Commissioner arrives. ...[Laughter.]

Hon Speaker, infrastructure remains a major driver of growth. The Western Cape will spend R31,1 billion over 3 years on infrastructure.

Over the MTEF, we allocate R11,109 billion to Road Construction and Maintenance; R5,557 billion for Human Settlements; R2,691 billion for Public Works; R5,199 billion for Health Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure Related Interventions such as health technology; R6,437 billion for Education Infrastructure; and R136,730 million for Ecological Infrastructure.

Hon Speaker, while businesses create jobs, we need to ensure our residents are able to get those jobs. This is why we will strengthen and scale improved access to employability and economic opportunities.

We will allocate an additional R3,098 million over the MTEF to the DEDAT to

support a new Employment and Enterprise Development Outcomes fund that will leverage public, private and donor capital to finance youth employment and enterprise development initiatives with funding linked directly to verified job creation results.

DEDAT receives R122,294 million over the MTEF for Skills Development in the BPO and technology sectors, and R250,567 million for its Skill Development programme.

Our Department of Infrastructure will spend R255,232 million on its community-based programmes like the Masakh'iSizwe Bursary Programme, apologies for the pronunciation, the Professional Development Programme and its Contractor Development Programme.

The YearBeyond Programme will continue creating pathways for more than 3 000 young people currently outside of employment, education, and training: R9 million is allocated to the YearBeyond 1 000 Stories Libraries Programme while an additional R15,764 million is added to expand the YearBeyond initiative.

Hon Speaker, supporting our Safety policy priority, we will allocate R8,595 billion for Safety in the 2026 MTEF.

We will invest R373,747 million over the MTEF in Care and Services to Families through the Department of Social Development. This will strengthen

parenting support, family therapy, reunification services and violence-prevention programmes.

We allocate R396,093 million for Substance Abuse Disorder Prevention and Treatment, focusing on prevention, early intervention for about 4 000 service users a year, and residential treatment. Our Department of Social Development receives R1,223 billion over the MTEF, supporting adults and children in conflict with the law, including the completion of diversion programmes.

We will scale the Planet Youth model, which applies a public-health approach to reducing trauma. In 2024/2025, it gathered data from nearly 49 000 learners to guide evidence-based interventions. We will thus invest R106,443 million to expand this work through Area-Based Teams and the Cardiff Public Health Model.

Hon Speaker, as mentioned earlier, Gender-Based Violence and Femicide has been declared a national disaster, and it demands a Whole-of-Society response. So, to support our GBV Implementation Plan in our province, we allocate R47,139 million over the MTEF to advance this work, reducing violence, restoring dignity to survivors and building safer, more resilient communities across our province.

Supporting a whole-of-society approach to building safe and secure communities, we will allocate R169,376 million over the MTEF to Neighbourhood Watches and Community Policing Safety Forums. We will

allocate a further R20,961 million to the Street Coaches and Safety Observatory, and R18,588 million to our Community Resilience Programme.

Through our Western Cape Liquor Authority, we must continue balancing economic opportunity with public health to reduce alcohol-related harm. In 2024/2025, the Authority achieved full inspection coverage of licensed premises and recorded a 53 percent drop in fines, reflecting improved compliance.

Over the MTEF, R245,307 million will support the rollout of the Differentiated Pricing Model, amendments to the Liquor Act will strengthen public-health outcomes, an e-portal will improve regulatory access, and ongoing enforcement and public education will be for reducing alcohol-related harm, while supporting responsible trading.

Hon Speaker, we remain committed to reducing murders in our province. In the precincts where the Law Enforcement Advancement Programme (LEAP) officers were deployed, we have seen a sustained decline. In 2024/2025, we maintained a deployment of more than 1 000 LEAP officers in six high-violence precincts where homicides declined by 1,5 per cent compared with a provincial reduction of 0,8 per cent.

We will maintain LEAP with a R1,14 billion over the 2026 MTEF, which will include extending support to 25 municipalities. We will allocate R6 million for our Anti-Gang hub and rollout a SAPS detective-capacity pilot, which aims

to strengthen case detection, analysis and gang-related investigations.

In 2024/2025, our Western Cape Police Ombudsman processed 366 complaints, and the Court Watching Brief Programme continued monitoring murder and GBV cases. A total of R54,231 million is provided in the 2026 MTEF baseline to implement the Capability Maturity Matrix to assess station-level performance.

Over the 2026 MTEF, we allocate R208,643 billion to the Educated, Healthy and Caring Society priority, of which we are adding an additional R3,719 billion in provincial funding for the MTEF. This means the protection of the frontline services that shape a person's future long before they ever enter the labour market.

In Education, our spending will rise from R32,738 billion in 2025/2026 to R35,108 billion in 2026/2027 with an additional allocation included of R1,034 billion.

We will strengthen our system by funding 701 new educator posts in 2026/2027, amounting to R799 million; and we will invest R330 million in education infrastructure, with priority given to the replacement and refurbishment of schools built with inappropriate or hazardous materials. Our full education infrastructure budget, including the Rapid Build Programme, as mentioned earlier, will total R6,437 billion over the MTEF.

Supporting the EHaCS priority, as we call it colloquially, the DCAS Department receives an additional R93,921 million because we must ensure that education does not end when the school bells ring. The Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's MOD Programme supporting after-school sports, art and culture activities will receive R234,504 million over the MTEF, scaled with R15,8 million for expansion.

Our Western Cape Library Services will receive R1,327 billion allocation over the MTEF and we will further reprioritise R130 million towards the implementation of our School Sport Strategy.

Hon Speaker, a caring society is also a healthy society. So, supporting the EHaCS priority, the Department of Health and Wellness receives an additional R2,305 billion, of which R2,225 billion is allocated to stabilise the system, through Compensation of Employees and Goods and Services. Our Health Infrastructure and Non-infrastructure portfolio will amount to R5,199 billion over the MTEF, inclusive of our BFI funding.

Hon Speaker, Social Development remains under heavy strain, and this budget targets the areas under the most pressure. Over the 2026 MTEF, the Department receives an additional R285,168 million.

To support vulnerable young people, R31,216 million is allocated towards designated child protection organisations, and R94,900 million to non-designated NPOs.

We are also allocating R15,5 million to fund additional CYCC bed spaces for children with disabilities and R9,5 million is allocated to support young adults leaving alternative care through independent living and transition services.

Additionally, R878,709 million is allocated to Child Care and Protection services, and R475,419 million to Child and Youth Care Centres. We are tightening the oversight, improving reunification services, and expand support for children with disabilities.

†Agb Speaker, ons ouer mensies verdien soortgelyke beskerming. [Hon Speaker, our older people deserve similar protection.] Residents like Natalie Kotze from Parow Valley have raised the need for more affordable old-age homes and care services, especially for seniors relying solely on a SASSA grant. This budget allocates an additional R36 million over the medium term to support older persons to live a more fulfilled and dignified life. This includes independent and assisted living, frail care, community-based services, and a stronger wellness orientation within the health system.

We will also, finally, in order to capacitate the social services sector, an additional R22,827 million will be received and is allocated to fund 32 additional social work posts, and additional R6 million for upgrades to the SWIMS system. This is discipline and care in practice. We must protect core services in a tight fiscal space and keep people at the centre, so that our province remains resilient, capable, and humane.

Hon Speaker, the quiet work of planting, tending and harvesting has become a powerful instrument of dignity. So, we cannot grow an economy when our people are suffering from hunger.

Supporting nutrition and whole of province commitment towards food security over the MTEF, our Department of Agriculture is allocated R64,410 million supporting household and school food gardens. The Department of Social Development prioritises R12,256 million for the provision of nutritious meals, a further R56,736 million allocated to food distribution centres and community nutrition development programmes; and R81,413 million for food relief under social distress interventions.

The Department of Education will spend R1,771 billion over the MTEF providing daily nutritious meals to learners in schools, with an additional R219,014 million over the MTEF to address food inflation pressures through the National Schools Nutrition Programme. The Department of Health and Wellness, through its Khulisa Care programme, will support underweight pregnant women and mothers of low-birth-weight babies with nutritious food vouchers and community healthcare to prevent child stunting and give children a healthy start in life.

Hon Speaker, we need to build an agile, innovative government that improves service delivery. We will thus spend R31,924 billion on our Innovation, Culture and Governance priority, of which we are adding an additional

R280,864 million to the MTEF.

Hon Speaker, Charnelle Samuels from Ceres asked for increased funding for Western Cape e-Centres to expand access to digital services across communities.

Over the MTEF, we will allocate R4,268 billion for Information and Communication Technology, including an additional R6 million for e-Kiosks for Digital Services and an additional R21,5 million for Mobile e-Centres. We will accelerate digital transformation by strengthening broadband and ICT infrastructure at more than 2 000 Western Cape Government sites, and by expanding public Wi-Fi and digital hubs in vulnerable communities.

We will implement the Western Cape Government Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Governance Framework, strengthen cloud and data platforms, enhance cybersecurity, and build a shared digital ecosystem that improves service delivery and ensures better value from ICT spending.

We will institutionalise Alternative and Blended Finance as a key tool to expand fiscal space and unlock catalytic infrastructure. As alluded to earlier, R518,814 million has been set aside in the ABF Reserve, to enable responsible borrowing for infrastructure, and finance parts of the R34,626 billion ABF portfolio across the province.

This portfolio includes R10,088 billion in provincial and municipal

infrastructure for health, education, water and sanitation projects; R490 million established portfolio in Public-Private Partnerships supporting transport and environmental affairs; and R24,048 for catalytic ABF programmes and flagship initiatives.

Our Provincial Treasury will further continue our collaboration with the National Treasury and the World Bank to establish a Credit Guarantee Vehicle (CGV), aiming to mobilise private capital by de-risking critical projects in the energy, transport and water sectors.

Our Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning will explore a Biodiversity Credit Scheme, aiming to unlock new streams of alternative and blended financing by monetising conservation outcomes and attracting private-sector investment into nature-based and climate-resilient infrastructure.

The Provincial Treasury and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism will jointly undertake research to assess the impact of tourism from international visitors on our province, and possible associated revenue sources.

Hon Speaker, to strengthen our evidence-led approach to violent crime, we will allocate R6,526 million over the MTEF to the Provincial Safety Coordination Centre which will expand predictive analysis and support more proactive decision-making. We will also scale telehealth for chronic care, rolling out tools such as the Single Patient Viewer, upgrading infrastructure, and

strengthening data integration through the Patient Master Index.

To push this further, we will allocate R224,201 million over the MTEF for integrated electronic health records, expanded automation and telehealth, patient identification, and targeted investment in innovation and clinical technologies.

To support sustained good governance, we will expand our capacity-building initiatives with municipalities to strengthen financial oversight and professionalisation. The Department of Local Government receives R554,181 million to promote viable, sustainable and developmental local governance, improve integrated planning and deepen community participation.

We will advance cost-effective service-delivery models, support municipalities in reviewing public-participation and ward-committee policies, provide training for ward committees and strengthen community engagement through civic-education sessions.

Hon Speaker, our Department of Local Government will also be allocated R29,929 million over the MTEF to strengthen intergovernmental planning and budgeting. It will institutionalise Integrated Development Planning as the central coordination framework and embed the Joint District and Metro Approach to improve forums, alignment and budgeting.

In 2026/2027, 34 provincial grants from 10 departments totalling R8,686

billion, will support municipal infrastructure and capacity-building. The assignment of the library function will also now remove VAT from all future transfers.

The Department of Local Government will further be allocated R363,3 million to monitor and support municipal infrastructure development, including planning, finance, asset management, maintenance backlogs and capacity constraints.

Supporting Culture and People-Centred Delivery, we will deepen our Western Cape Culture Journey to strengthen leadership, embed values and enhance people-centred service delivery; and supporting workplace development and capacity building, our Provincial Training Institute will receive an additional R41,134 million over the MTEF to support phased reconfiguration, including a new curriculum framework, and supporting its infrastructure.

We will strengthen future thinking and evidence-based decision-making by expanding integrated data systems, performance dashboards, evidence tools and responsible data and AI governance to guide planning and budgeting. Together with the Department of the Premier and the Provincial Treasury, we will improve integration of financial and non-financial data through better monitoring, data warehousing and business-intelligence platforms. This will enable earlier risk detection and more responsive, transparent and efficient budgeting.

We will invest R112,236 million over the MTEF to strengthen supply-chain and asset-management practices. By upgrading our systems through the e-Procurement platform, the Supplier Evidence Bank and the Procurement Planning toolkit, we improve real-time visibility, automate low-value transactions and strengthen audit trails and value-for-money outcomes.

Hon Speaker, in order to build human resources capacity and efficiency within the Western Cape Government's internal systems, the Corporate Service Centre housed in the Department of the Premier, will receive R5,670 billion over the 2026 MTEF. This will fund core security, network infrastructure and licensing requirements. And as we bring new capacity into the system, we must also say goodbye to dedicated public servants who have chosen to exit through the Voluntary Exit Programme.

A total of 568 applications have been approved across departments, supported by R309,6 million in additional funding from National Treasury, and resulting in an estimated net saving of R367,7 million in 2026.

We honour the contribution these officials have made. Many have served for decades and helped shape the Western Cape Government into the best-run provincial administration in our country. Their departure will leave a real gap in institutional knowledge and technical expertise. We accept these exits with a deep appreciation for their service.

Hon Speaker, the viticulturist does not measure success just by the size of the

vine in spring. He measures it by the quality of the harvest that endures. He knows that unchecked growth is wasteful, that neglected roots invite decline, and that a healthy vineyard demands judgment, patience, restraint, and care.

That is the choice before any government with serious intentions. To spend without discipline is to weaken the vine. To cut without care is to wound the roots. We have chosen a better path. We have chosen to prune where waste has taken hold. We have chosen to protect what gives life. We have chosen to back the systems that allow this province to stand, to work, to heal, to learn, and to grow.

†Agb Speaker, Johannes 15:2 verklaar:

"Elke loot aan My wat nie vrugte dra nie, sny Hy af; maar elkeen wat vrugte dra, snoei Hy reg, sodat dit nog meer vrugte kan dra."

[Hon Speaker, John 15:2 states:

"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful".]

When this House considers the Budget tabled today, let it be clear what is being placed before it. This is a Budget that backs our economy without abandoning the vulnerable and protects dignity without surrendering discipline. †Ons sal nie moeg word nie. Nie in die snoei nie. Nie in die sorg nie. Nie in die bou van 'n sterker, veiliger en meer waardige Wes-Kaap nie. [We will not become

tired. Not in the pruning. Not in the care. Not in building a stronger, safer and more dignified Western Cape.]

Hon Speaker, this budget is a testament to the professionalism, dedication and excellence of every Western Cape Government official. They are the very best this country has to offer.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our Head of Treasury, Julinda Gantana, along with our senior management team Isac Smith, Victor Senna, Analiese Pick, Taryn van de Rheede, Paul Pienaar, Michelle Nicholas, Ziyaad Majiet, Malcolm Booysen, Steven Kenyon, Isaac Tsie and Elizabeth Wenn, and every member of your respective teams. Your discipline means the people of the Western Cape never have to settle for the bare minimum. They can rely on a government that delivers services with excellence, dignity and real care.

I wish to thank the hon Premier, my hon Cabinet colleagues, the Director General of our Province, Dr Harry Malila, all our Heads of Department, and all of our Western Cape Government officials for making sure every Rand spent on behalf of the people of our province is done in a disciplined and caring manner.

To my team in the Finance Ministry, Marshalle Frederiks and Lenku-Vince Oosthuizen: thank you for your technical support and strategic guidance. To Xanthia Lawson, Sandra Francisco, Gaynor Lucas, Igshaan Davids, and Edwina Herman: thank you for ensuring the seamless administration and operations that make our office tick. Your collective efforts are the backbone of our work.

To the national Minister of Finance, Minister Enoch Godongwana and in absentia, the SARS Commissioner, Mr Kieswetter: I thank you guys for supporting the people of the Western Cape. You and your teams are our partners in finance and we look forward to our continued collaboration with your institutions.

†Aan my vriende en familie, dankie vir jul opofferings, die verstaan wanneer ek aandetes mis en die naweke wat verlore gaan in werk. Dankie vir jul geduld en begrip sodat ek die mense van ons provinsie kan dien.

Agb Speaker, vir oorweging en beraadslaging vandag voor die Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement, lê ek ter tafel:

die Wes-Kaapse Begrotingswetsontwerp [Wet 1–2026]; die 2026 Oorsig van Provinsiale Inkomste en Uitgawes; die 2026 Oorsig van Provinsiale en Munisipale Infrastruktuur beleggings; die 2026 Beramings van Provinsiale Inkomste en Uitgawes; die 2026 *Provinsiale Staatskoerant*: Munisipale Toekennings, en my 2026 Begrotingsrede. Ek dank u. ...[Applous.]

[To my friends and family, thank you for all your sacrifices, the understanding when I miss dinners and the weekends lost in doing work. Thank you for all your patience and understanding so that I can serve the people of our province.

Hon Speaker, today I table for consideration and deliberation before the Western Cape Provincial Parliament:

the Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1–2026]; the 2026 Overview of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure; the 2026 Overview of Provincial and Municipal Infrastructure Investments; the 2026 Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure; the 2026 *Provincial Government Gazette: Municipal Allocations*, and my 2026 Budget Speech. I thank you. ...[Applause.]]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, hon members. Order, order. Hon members, you will have an opportunity to debate, interrogate and make your contributions once the Budget has been referred to the relevant Standing Committees. This is now not your opportunity to do so.

Thank you very much, to the hon Minister. The Secretary will read the Bill the first time.

The SECRETARY: Western Cape Appropriation Bill.

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Rule 188(1), the Introductory Speech, the Bill and Papers laid upon the table will be referred to the relevant committees for consideration and report. The Secretary will read the second Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Introduction and First Reading - Western Cape Twentieth Gambling and Racing Amendment Bill [B 2–2026].

The SPEAKER: I recognise the hon Minister of Finance, hon Minister Baartman.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: Thank you so much, hon Speaker. The Western Cape Government today introduces the Western Cape Twentieth Gambling and Racing Amendment Bill 2026.

The primary objective of this Bill is to amend the Western Cape Gambling and Racing Act, to divide for economic opportunity tax applicable for casinos. The tax will be payable by the holder of the casino operating licence whose application in terms of Section 41(2) of the Principal Act relating to the relocation of a casino, has been approved by the Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board.

The rationale behind this economic opportunity tax is to compensate for when a casino chooses to relocate. It gains and enhances opportunity to generate gambling revenue which was not reflected in its original bid fee. This tax, therefore, is an extension of the original bid fee and ensures that such additional economic benefits are fairly accounted for. By introducing this measure, we aim to promote fairness and equity within the casino industry, ensuring that all operators contribute proportionally to the opportunities afforded to them.

Hon Speaker, I therefore table the Western Cape Twentieth Gambling and Racing Amendment Bill 2026 for consideration by this House. I thank you.

The SPEAKER: thank you very much, hon Minister. In accordance with Rule 188(1), the Bill will be referred to the relevant committee for consideration and report, after the Secretary has read the Bill for the first time.

The SECRETARY: Western Cape Twentieth Gambling and Racing Amendment Bill.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon members, before we adjourn, I would like to remind the hon members that the Budget Committee will commence at 2 o'clock today.

That concludes the business for the day. Hon members, please be informed that the APP packs are being delivered to your offices as we speak. The Secretary will now end the meeting, and all hon members will be exited from this Sitting. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 11:00.