
THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2024

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 18:00.

The Speaker took the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Before we proceed, I will allow an opportunity for the rendering of the National Anthem of the Republic of South Africa. The Anthem will be sung by Paarl locals, Ms Chelsea Caesar (?) Mr Xolani Booyesen, Ms Joy Hendricks and Mr Keenin von Wielligh.

[Rendering of the National Anthem of the Republic of South Africa.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Masithandaze.

The Speaker read the prayer.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER: Please be seated. Order! I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our esteemed guests to the State of the Province Address in the Huguenot Community Hall in Paarl. Please note that for this Sitting the Standing Rules of the House will apply and further in compliance with the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act of 2004, this entire hall, including all visitor seating, the passage and ablution facilities will be regarded as the precinct of the Provincial Parliament.

Before we proceed I would like to remind members about some of the logistical arrangements. Today we will be using a hybrid model for the Sitting of the House. We have hon members present here in this hall with the Presiding Officer and the Table staff and as well hon members participating in this Sitting of the House via Microsoft Teams. This hall and the Chamber have therefore been connected to the Microsoft Teams.

Hon members, I trust that everybody has been connected to participate in this Sitting, in terms of Rule 1A of the Standing Rules with all our members in remote attendance by electronic means. The Secretary and his Administration will ensure dedicated technical support at all times during this Sitting.

The Quorum requirements for this Sitting of the House are as provided for in

the Constitution and the Standing Rules. Hon members, unless there is an indication of unanimous concurrence, voting will be confined to members present in the House and entitled to cast their vote as per our Standing Rules.

Members who are present in this Hall and via Microsoft Teams have all the privileges and immunities imparted by law. Members who are considered to be out of order by the Presiding Officer will have their microphones muted and will be called to order.

The Serjeant-at-Arms will be recording members' attendance and members in today's Sitting, the Sitting shall be governed by the Standing Rules, and in an instance, hon members, where the Rules cannot be applied the Ruling by the Presiding Officer is final.

When an hon member present in the House wishes to raise a point of order, such an hon member may address the Presiding Officer, as normal, but must mute their microphones when they have completed speaking.

Hon members, the Media and members of the public have also been granted access via Microsoft Teams. I just wish to remind the hon members of the Media that they may not switch on their microphones or cameras during the Sitting.

Hon members, I wish to remind you that no interjections are permitted during this Sitting and to this end I draw the hon members' attention to Rule 40 our

Standing Rules.

Hon members, I have to announce that in terms of Rule 14 of the Standing Rules today, 19 February 2024 at 18:00 has been determined as the date and time for the Premier's State of the Province Address. This Sitting is meant specifically for the purpose of affording the Premier of the Western Cape an opportunity to deliver the State of the Province Address. On this occasion no business other than the address by the Premier is entertained.

I also wish to take this opportunity to remind members that the debate on the address will take place tomorrow, 20 February 2024, where members will have an opportunity to fully engage and debate the Premier's address and the Premier will reply to the debate thereafter.

Hon members, it is my privilege to now afford the hon Premier of the Western Cape an opportunity to address the House.

Premier's State of the Province Address

The PREMIER: We are a province that is working and striving for better, every single day. Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, hon members of the Provincial Cabinet, hon Leader of the Opposition, members of this Parliament, members of the Diplomatic Corps, Consular Corps, Mayors. I have seen many Mayors here today, Councillors, business leaders and entrepreneurs, the people of our beautiful province and this great City of

Paarl, members of the media, distinguished guests. Good evening.

Goeienaand.

Molweni.

Speaker, what an honour this is for me to deliver my last SOPA of this term. This gives me the opportunity to reflect on the last five years, the ups and downs, the difficulties if you think back to fighting COVID-19, a province that is the choice of so many South Africans to move here, a province of jobs and opportunities, the fastest growing population of any province in South Africa, and of course, Speaker, how wonderful is it to be in this City of Paarl in Drakenstein.

I had an opportunity this morning to have an early morning cycle with a number of your citizens out to Wellington and back. What an amazing city you have.

I also had an opportunity today before opening or making this speech to visit Vlakkeland, where some homes were delivered and Minister, thank you very much and Mayor, thank you very much, you can see how policy ends up enabling citizens with service delivery. A policy change here which changed our lists a few years ago to say the list must not only incorporate the current list but we need to add rural people from farms onto that list and we need to add people with disabilities onto that list, and today I witnessed tears and

emotions as our Minister and the Mayor made available homes to people who had been waiting a long time, people in wheelchairs, who had specialist homes built with switches for lights lower than usual, special taps, baths, wider doors, ramps to get into their home. These are the differences that we make to citizens in this province.

I also must say, Speaker, that I had a lump in my throat when I saw the march past this building just a little while ago. Our LEAP officers, our fire-fighters, our firemen and women, Neighbourhood Watches, even the flyover of those helicopter pilots and spotter planes. I could not help thinking when you hear those choppers coming what it is like when you have a life-threatening fire bearing down on you in this fire season and you hear that sound coming. It is a life saver.

But Speaker, I deliver this speech in a very important year 2024. This year more than 70 countries around the world will go to the polls. Citizens in those countries will vote for new governments. Billions of residents on this planet make choices of future governments this year but it is also happening here in our province and in our country. Our voters get an opportunity to make a choice once again, 30 years into our democracy.

Speaker, in the Western Cape we have a diverse population, a population made up of various religions, races, cultures. We are a melting pot with an unbelievable history, and Mr Speaker, many Western Cape residents and citizens across the world understandably are rightfully deeply affected and

concerned about the unfolding crisis in the Middle East.

Speaker, my heart in particular breaks for the children. It breaks for the vulnerable and innocent citizens whose lives have been taken in this conflict and war; the hostages, the citizens displaced; the violence again against our children is totally unacceptable, in any context and whether they are in the Middle East, Mr Speaker, whether they are in Ukraine, whether they are in Syria, or more importantly whether they are right here in this province.

[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: When they are right here in this province, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: These children and these innocent citizens must be protected at all costs. [Interjections.]

Speaker, here in the Western Cape we must create space for diverse views and shared expression. We must create a space that enables citizens to have their say but we must also make sure that the rule of law is always adhered to. That was the reason why it was so easy to walk out here today to the protest action outside and receive documents from members of the public who wants to raise issues and we will go through those documents and revert to

those citizens because we listen, and we revert. We tolerate. That is this Western Cape that we need to build for the future, every single one of us have a responsibility in doing so.

Hon Speaker, we have a Western Cape that is for you, the citizens and the first recognition that I want to give is for the 90 000 civil servants that work day and night in service of all of you, the citizens of our province. I want to honour you. [Applause.] I want to honour you and thank you for what you do, led by the Director General and the HODs, you make me, this Cabinet and I am pretty certain everyone here today, very proud. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, our Government has for a while been on a culture journey. Now a culture journey is how we deal with the culture of the organisation, the 90 000 public servants in service of these citizens. How do we build a culture of service? How do we go on this journey so that when [Interjections.] – so that when the frontline service, wherever you are, how the attitude is of how we serve our citizens and our customers, and that is why I am honouring you here today, but we have also gone further than just a culture journey.

Not so long ago I spoke to the DG and the team and said what we need to do is enter this Government into the best place to work in the world competition. We have now done so, last year and again this year. We are now measured as an employer of choice in 122 countries, amongst 2 200 businesses. Our staff

are measured alongside companies like Mercedes-Benz or Google or DHL or Coca-Cola.

We are the first regional government in the world to enter this competition, and through this competition and our culture journey, we will go through a process of making sure that it is exciting to wake up in the morning and work for this Government. It is exciting in the morning to get up in service of the citizens of this Government, and that is why we are doing it. We want better service delivery ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: ...and better service delivery for the citizens, better service delivery for you.

In conjunction with the culture journey, what I also do is I go on unannounced visits. We also encourage that through our Cabinet members doing the same thing, but even the DG does that through top managers. Just go on an unannounced visit to any place that delivers service to our citizens.

The other day I went to the Cape Contact Centre. At this centre we have citizens who are in service of you, who answer the phones. They answer the social media queries, they answer the emails. These citizens are one of the frontline services. These citizens in your service received in the last five years 1,4 million phone calls. They registered more than 1 million tickets or

job cards from those phone calls or contacts, and 96% of those job cards reached resolution. Citizen had a problem, made the call, problem was addressed, solution was found. That is a responsive government. [Applause.]

I also go to hospitals, to clinics, to schools. In hospitals I go and sit in queues with citizens [Interjections.] seeing how long they have to wait, finding out ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon members, hon Premier ...[Interjections.]

The PREMIER: ...what it is like ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please ...[Interjections.]

The PREMIER: ...to be the customer ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier – order, hon members. Hon members, the Premier is on the floor. When I started this Sitting I said no interjections are allowed as per the Rules. You can rise on a point of order. Interjections during hybrid Sittings are not allowed. You will have an opportunity to debate the Premier's input tomorrow.

Please afford the Premier the opportunity to make his submission to the House and presentation to the citizens of the province. Hon Premier, my apologies, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. These unannounced visits are specifically so because I do not want coffee and muffins and make sure it has all being cleaned up. We must arrive as if we are a customer and we must experience what it is like to be a customer, because through those mechanisms we can improve and get better.

I am super proud of the service that we deliver to our citizens, but there is always room for improvement, we can always get better and as a management team we will continue to do so.

I also visit SASSA officers, not only provincial service centres, I visit SASSA offices where National Government delivers services to our citizens. I visit police stations where National Government delivers services to our citizens, doing exactly the same thing, because that enables us to fight for you, the citizen.

But, hon Speaker, in another area that we have to fight for you, the citizen, is about making sure that as a capable government we take on more power where citizens are failed from other spheres of government, and in this case specifically where our citizens are failed by National Government.

We are in the process of putting a Powers Bill through this very Legislature to do exactly that. To put systems in place of when services are not delivered to our citizens, that this Parliament ends up in a process alongside

this Government in making sure, through the NCOP and the National Assembly, and even if we have to get to the Constitutional Court, that we will force change and make sure that where services from National Government are failing the citizens of this province, we will do what is necessary to make sure that you, the citizens, get those services, [Applause.] and you know what, hon Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. Order, hon members. [Interjections.] Hon member Kama, please take your seat. [Interjections.] Order, hon members. Hon members [Interjections.], hon members [Interjections.], hon member Nkondlo, I am on the floor.

Hon members, can you please remind you that no interjections are permitted during hybrid Sittings. This is the second time I am asking this. Allow the Premier to make his submission. If you want to debate the Premier's input, please ensure that your relevant Chief Whips and political parties put you on the debate list for tomorrow in order for you to have an opportunity to rebut the input.

Can I also use this opportunity to remind members in the gallery, our guests, that you may not participate in the proceedings of the House, and that includes clapping. So please do not participate in the Sitting.

Hon Premier – hon member Kama, was that a point of order?

Mr M KAMA: No, no, thank you very much, hon Speaker, but I think on the last part you have covered what I wanted to raise. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. You could hear the energy in the room when we started speaking about the Powers Bill [Interjections.] and it is quite interesting [Interjections.] – it is quite interesting, hon Speaker, that I am pretty certain those people who come to agitate at the public hearings, if you had to ask them are they happy ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, my apologies. Hon members on my left-hand side – hon member Bakubaku-Vos, I am on the floor. Hon members on my left-hand side, this is now the third request to please, your running commentary is drowning out the speaker on the floor. I am asking you for your indulgence to allow the Premier to make his submission. You will be able to get your opportunity tomorrow.

Hon member Bakubaku-Vos and hon member Bans, I am on the floor. I will – hon member Bans and Bakubaku-Vos, I am asking you to please work with me. If you want to debate the SOPA, you are more than welcome to use the time allotted to you tomorrow.

Hon members, this is my last request to all members of this House to allow

the Premier to make his submission without any interjections in terms of the Rules. Hon Premier, once again my apologies, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. As I was saying, if you ask the agitators, the people who come to these public hearings ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: What?

The PREMIER: ...if they are happy with the police services in this province and the levels of crime in this province, they would say no. If you asked them if they were happy with the Central Line and whether rail services are given to citizens adequately in this province, they would say no. If you ask them if the Port was efficient and enabling SMMEs and agricultural products to get into the market, they would say no. That is a responsible government, hon Speaker. That is what we need to do. We need to take power where services are not ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon Chief Whip, is that a point of order?

The CHIEF WHIP [DA]: It is indeed a point of order, Chief Whip?

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

The CHIEF WHIP [DA]: Speaker, I rise on Rule 40. I think you have constantly asked this House, that is in session, to abide to Rule 40. Hon Speaker, I want to ask you to give consideration to Rule 46(1). Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I am listening very carefully, hon members. Hon members! Hon members, I am on the floor. There has been a point of order. Hon Chief Whip, I note your point of order. Hon members, this is now the fourth time I am asking you to please adhere to the Rules. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I would like to move on to looking after our most vulnerable citizens. Hon Speaker, Gender-based Violence is a massive issue facing so many people in our country and in our province. In this province, we have a 365-day approach to addressing GBV. We have eight Thuthuzela Centres ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon Deputy Chief Whip of the Opposition, is that a point of order? Press the button at the bottom. There we go.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): Hon Speaker, just on a point of order and it was when the speaker, when the hon Premier raised his point about the public hearings on the Powers Bill. There was noise and you, but I wanted to raise my point of order that the hon Premier is misleading the House.

[Interjections.] He is misleading the House. He cannot speak on behalf of people who attend ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...the Powers Bill hearing. ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): The Bill was rejected ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Honourable ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): ...by people who are ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Chief Whip of the Opposition, please take your seat.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): He is saying something that was not said in the hearings ...[Interjection.]

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

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): You must not listen ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Chief Whip, please take your seat. Hon Chief Whip, is that a new point of order because you cannot rise on a point of order, on a point of order? Thank you very much, honourable. Firstly, just for the record, hon Deputy Chief Whip, hon Nkondlo I am on the floor, hon Deputy Chief Whip that is not a point of order, that is a point for debate. If you have any objections to the content of the hon Premier's speech, you have an opportunity tomorrow to rebut that. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, talking about some of the most vulnerable citizens in our province, those that suffer GBV. We have eight Thuthuzela Centres across the province with a centre that has been expanded at Victoria Hospital and we are busy expanding another centre in Stellenbosch. We have 26 GBV shelters across this province, the 27th in planning in the Overberg region. We have GBV ambassadors in every single one of our departments.

And Hon Speaker, over 18 000 citizens have received psychosocial support from Thuthuzela Care Centres and DSD-supported GBV shelters in the last five years. And we have again been busy expanding our social worker workforce. We are adding as we speak, another 247 special service social workers to continue with this work. We need to make sure that child protection and the protection of our most vulnerable is front and centre. And these social workers are really special people.

But today or this evening, I would like to pay homage to all of them, but today, Katlego Phiri and Jade America-Damonse, both social workers, are here tonight. I am not sure where you are. There we go! [Applause] You represent amazing people on the frontline in this province doing really tough work and we acknowledge you and we thank you. [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, we also have many vulnerable citizens ...[Audio distorted.] under the impact of loadshedding, the impact of the pandemic. The unemployment rate in our country is ...[Audio distorted.]. In this ...[Audio distorted.] 29%, we have provided for 1,1-million cooked meals, 102 community nutrition centres and another 358 soup kitchens across the province. There, too, I want to thank those volunteers in our soup kitchens, those people that are out there caring for our citizens that really need our care. Thank you very much.

I also want to say, hon Speaker, ...[Audio distorted.] School Nutrition Programme for the ...[Audio distorted.] in the Western Cape ...[Audio distorted.] that delivers even when National Government wants to close us down. We all saw the outcome of that court case. So, well done to everybody involved in those feeding ...[Audio distorted.].

I also want to say that while reflecting on the last five years, I also need to reflect on the last two weeks. In the last two weeks, the Karoo has had a major blackout. Some of the councillors from the Karoo are here today and I want to thank you for what you did, stepping up again like those citizens in

our NGOs, you were stepping up to help our citizens in need. We delivered [Applause.] We delivered through DSD 5 000 food parcels to indigent households. DHL, Gift of the Givers and other NGOs helped us to do this, and we thank them too. We continue to feed in our schools there even during the blackout and the Education Department is busy with another 3 000 food parcels to continue to go out to those families. Because when the power went out, everything in your fridge was lost. It was just after month end and you had bought the groceries, and you had gone back from a town to perhaps, a small village where you live, and all of those groceries perished. Citizens were at their most vulnerable and we stepped up and made sure that we got the job done. Thank you very much to all of you involved. In actual fact, yesterday there was a roadblock at the tunnel, and it was amazing to come across citizens who had come to Cape Town for the weekend, but come from the Karoo, and they were full of praise across all of those towns in the Karoo for everybody's involvement. The involvement of private sector, of agriculture donating diesel, businesses stepping up and of course, unbelievable citizens that we have in our province.

Hon Speaker, I would like to move on to the economy, to jobs. We have a plan in this province called Growth for Jobs. It is a revamp of plans that have been delivering on jobs over time. This current plan is going to deliver a R1-trillion jobs-rich economy over the next few years, bringing us 4% to 6% growth. Now, hon Speaker, I hear some of the comments, but it is very interesting. In the last five years, 240 000 more people have jobs in this province between 2019 and now. [Applause.] But you know what, hon

members? Do you know what, hon members, that in actual fact those 240 000 citizens who now put food on the table, who now have dignity and jobs, 64,9% of all jobs created in South Africa over the last five years, were in this one province. [Applause.] Can I say that again: 64%, nearly two thirds of all jobs in our country come out of this province. That is ...[Interjection.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat.

The PREMIER: ...unbelievable!

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon Windvogel, this is the last time I am asking you to not interject. You have this running commentary. Every time the hon Premier speaks, you are engaging back. Can I please ask for your indulgence and let the hon Premier deliver his speech. You are able to do so tomorrow. Interjections are not allowed. It is not allowed in terms of the Rules. Hon Kama, is that a point of order?

Mr M KAMA (ANC): Thank you very much, hon Speaker. I am very much intimidated now. Hon Speaker, I just want to check because I have been noticing that you are starting to address us as a group and now, I want to check whether heckling is not allowed. Because every time we heckle, it seems like it bothers the hon Speaker to such an extent that it is strange that Rule 46 was even highlighted here because I do not see that there is a need for anyone to be taken out or then, I feel like, hon Speaker, this was discussed somewhere because it just playing out now without anything

happening, you know.

The SPEAKER: I take your point, hon Kama. It was discussed nowhere. I am referring, I am reminding hon members in terms of Rule 40 that no interjections are allowed; running commentary even more so, is not allowed because you are drowning out the speaker. So, if I can hear the conversation that is happening, then it is drowning out the speaker on the floor. Hon Deputy Chief Whip, is that a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): No, it is not a point of order. I am just getting some messages, hon Speaker, from members of the public and members of the media indicating that there is a problem with the sound. If the technical team can just have a look at that, thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, for highlighting that. Can I please ask that the Table staff please address that.

Hon Leader of the Opposition, is that a point of order?

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: No thank you, just on a point of order, Speaker. I think all of us have an interest in hearing what the Premier has to say, but along with member Kama I am almost of the view that the way you are in fact – I think the Premier is able to continue and he does not appear to be phased, but when one or two people say something and it is a matter of interpretation, when you interrupt, I think you actually disturb the

flow. So I do not think anyone is stopping the Premier from continuing with his speech and we want to take your guidance on this, but I actually think your intervention, Speaker is actually resulting in the delays. We want this, we want this to continue, the Premier does not seem to be phased, so I was even at the State of the Nation and when the President spoke, there were some people who said something here or there but he just continued. He was not disturbed to the extent... [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Alright, thank you very much. Hon Dugmore, that is not a point of order. Hon members, and I do not think I need to educate you on my role. My role is to ensure that the speaker on the floor is provided with an opportunity to make his or her input and I will do so for whoever is on the podium or on the floor at any given point, so I am asking you to please allow the Premier to make his input. You can have an opportunity tomorrow, but also hon members, there are other members that also want to hear the Premier and the constant commentary affects them also.

Hon Marais, is that a point of order?

Mr P J MARAIS: Yes, sir. I am asking that members must keep in mind we invited the public. The public there wants to hear the Premier, not only the members of this House, otherwise you must go back to Wale Street and exclude the public. I think, Speaker, you have warned enough. [Interjections.] You have warned members enough. This is disrespect. I think it is time you start naming people who do not obey the Rules. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Marais. That is a comment and not a point of order. Hon Premier, you may continue.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, Speaker. Speaker, as I was saying, two-thirds or just about two-thirds of all jobs in South Africa in the last four to five years come from this very province.

Speaker, we are open for business. We are engaging with business, we make the ecosystem work. We have red-tape reduction; making it easier for businesses to do what they need to do, understanding what are blocking them and getting in the way. In the last five years, the Red Tape Reduction Unit or Ease of Doing Business Unit has saved business R2,4 billion.

Since 2019, the SMME Booster Fund has assisted over 860 SMMEs, sustaining 4 977 jobs. The Booster Fund has helped these SMMEs grow and create an additional 651 jobs.

The Business Support Help Line, Speaker, is a similar product that helps businesses understand the blockages, gets back to us and enables us to let the ecosystem evolve. That ecosystem makes it easier to do business, and when that happens, more jobs are created. It is not very difficult, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I also want to recognise the work that Wesgro does, and of course our departments around supporting events. We have amazing events.

I think back in the last term, the Formula E and the impact that that had on our region. I think about the World Cup Netball that we hosted here in this province. I am not sure if you know, but we hosted the World Championship Ice Hockey in this province; cricket hosting, the Sevens. I also think about this very municipality, Mr Mayor, polo hosted just down the road or the inter-schools in this region is unbelievable as an event. People travel here from around the country to come to an inter-school sporting event in this very town, or for example, the Cape Epic, a globally known cycle race that again comes right through this town and the Winelands. These events are supported by this Government and the entities in this Government. But it is not only these events, it is meetings and conferences in our Conference Centre at the CTICC or at the Century City Convention Centre or even your Convention Centres and Conference Centres here in the Winelands, in this great city, and in all of our municipalities across this province.

We host mining indabas. We host art fairs. We host energy conferences. We host hydrogen conferences. We host export conferences and foreign direct investors. In this region just two weeks ago 30 companies out of Germany in the tech industry held a conference right here because of the ecosystem that has been built over time. Tech entrepreneurs find traction in this region of Africa. Speaker, we also had a very clear response on AGOA and you know this morning when I went for my bike ride out with a couple of locals to Wellington, I rode past a wine farm called Diemersfontein, and you know that Denise Stubbs at Diemersfontein gets the ability to buy more and more shares in that business and she is almost 100% shareholder of Diemersfontein Wine

Farm and she gets access because of agreements like AGOA.

AGOA gives you market access. Market access enables your business to grow. It enables you to build profits and grow your business shareholding. This is just simple business, but we have to enable it wherever possible, we must not close it down.

Speaker, we invest and create opportunities for small business and for large business. These businesses then flourish. I saw tonight we have Jacobs Jam in the room. We have recognised them before and I heard that they have got huge traction selling their jams now through Shoprite Checkers. Amazing!
[Applause.]

I cannot wait, I cannot until you are exporting our products through our port. Hopefully we have taken power by then, but exporting your products through our ports. [Interjections.]

You know, Speaker, I need to tell you a story of two tech engineers in America, and they go to their boss in 2004. This is quite a long time ago. They go to their boss in 2004 and they say "Can we go and remote work in the Western Cape?" And their boss says "Yes."

Now you know if they had gone to Ebrahim Patel and said, can these two individuals come and work here in the Western Cape, he would have said "No, we are not going to give them a visa because they are going to take two

people's jobs."

Do you know that these two individuals started working on cloud computing here in the Western Cape, and they developed cloud computing that we all need today. They developed this cloud computing for a company called Amazon. Jeff Bezos was the CEO that they went to go and say: "Can we go and remote work in Africa," and he said "Yes."

Just because of those two individuals coming here, Amazon is now responsible for 7 000 jobs here in the Western Cape and their investment is now R42 billion. [Applause.]

We need to make sure that we fix the visa problem, because the visa problem is stopping people coming here to invest and create more jobs. The other day, not only going to Amazon in the US, I also went to Hisense in China, because ten years ago Hisense came here and invested in Atlantis. They came here as a small refrigerator and a small television set manufacturing organisation or business, but they had a strategy and they had a vision, and that strategy was to become the biggest production of TV's and fridges for Africa out of this province, and so they set about their task, they very soon became the biggest producer of TVs and fridges in South Africa, and now they produce up into the continent of Africa.

What happens when you invest here, you find a friendly government and enabling government, an ecosystem that enables your businesses to grow.

I went back to go and see them and I look forward to their next investment, to the next plan that they are going to bring here to this region that is going to create again thousands of jobs. That is what the economy is about. It needs a government and an ecosystem that supports investment, economic growth, just like we do here in the Western Cape.

Another sector that has just been doing unbelievably well, the Tourism Sector. We have just had a bumper tourism season.

30 000 tourists international arriving per day into our airport in Cape Town. [Applause.] 215 direct flights per week from destinations around Africa and the world. In actual fact this summer season we broke the record and 1 million tourism mark of visitors coming in to this region, 1 million visitors. Unbelievable.

We also grew in the last year by 48% to 2,8 million visitors. The last time we were anywhere near this was in 2019 and we have broken those records by another 200 000 visitors. Unbelievable partnership that we have built in 2015, Air Access, continue to build it over time and that project has now delivered thousand and thousands of tourism jobs, and that is why we can say 64% of jobs in South Africa come out of this province, and not only the Cape Town International Airport, but George Airport too. George Airport in the last year have seen a 31% increase in travellers through that airport.

Thousands of local visitors, South Africans, also take time to come to this

province and you know when you interact with those citizens, how often –
[Interjections.] hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

Ms N D NKONDLO: They are called *kaffirs* in Gordon's Bay.

The PREMIER: ...how often ...[Incomplete.]

Ms N D NKONDLO: They are called *kaffirs* in Gordon's Bay.
[Interjections.]

The PREMIER: Hon Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

The PREMIER: ...thousands of South Africans come here from across our
country and the most interesting thing is when they come here
...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Hon Premier, please take your seat. Hon Deputy Chief
Whip, is that a point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP [DA]: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker,
hon member Nkondlo used a very unparliamentary word, starting with the
letter "K" and I really do not wish to repeat it ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Ja. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP [DA]: ...but I would like you as Speaker ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP [DA]: ...to revise the Hansard and to make a ruling on unparliamentary language by hon member Nkondlo. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: I will – hon members, I am going to consult Hansard, look at the context and the input, and then revert back to the House. On Chief Whip of the Opposition, is that a point of order?

The CHIEF WHIP [ANC]: Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I think we have been sitting here for a while and I find it very strange that you would allow a frivolous point of order like that one that came from the Deputy Chief Deputy Chief. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon Chief Whip of the Opposition. I note your point. Hon Premier, you may continue. I have already ruled. I will revert to the House.

The PREMIER: Thank you, thank you very much, hon Speaker. I have just said that George Airport saw a 31% year-on-year growth and that is

unbelievable. Thousands of South Africans coming from across our country also to our towns, our villages and our city for tourism. It has been a real bumper season.

The one thing that stands out for me though, hon Speaker, is when you engage with those citizens, those South Africans who come here, they all marvel at the roads. They all marvel at the place. They all say to me, "Wow, this feels like another country, like a different country," and you know, hon Speaker, I have the same comment back to them every single time: this could be like our whole country. [Interjections.] Voters need to decide in two months' time, or in three months' time. [Interjections.]

Hon Speaker, entrepreneurs are job creators. I have just mentioned the Jacobs' and their jam company [Interjections.]. I think about Marlon Parker and RLabs in Mitchells Plain. World renowned, coming back to Mitchells Plain, building his head office there. An unbelievable entrepreneur helping other entrepreneurs create jobs. I think of Luvuyo Rani, I think of Silulo and what he has achieved with his brother. Unbelievable what they have achieved in helping and creating more and more entrepreneurs right in the middle of Khayelitsha. Thinking about Khayelitsha, I think of Ciki and the last time I was there at Ciki's Coffee. I think about those entrepreneurs that I met there that really make me excited about the future of this province. I cannot wait for our jobs numbers again because we continually see jobs growth because of our entrepreneurs and we thank them.

Hon Speaker, entrepreneurs, businesses, citizens, need infrastructure and infrastructure, as I have said so many times before, is a big failure in our country. Energy infrastructure, water infrastructure, rail infrastructure, port infrastructure, it is a massive issue that faces our citizens every single day, and so you all know that we have set up an Infrastructure Department and they are well on their way to setting a future vision that when a dam cannot be built, that we need to step in and build that dam. [Interjections.] When a Parliament cannot be rebuilt we should be stepping in and rebuilding that Parliament. We need to fix infrastructure because infrastructure enables economic growth [Interjections.], but, hon Speaker, I want to also commend this Department of Infrastructure.

You all know that in this last year we suffered tremendously because of floods, specifically those floods that took place on Heritage Day long weekend, where 154 roads in our province were washed away and closed. People did not have access. It really was a major disaster, but this Department, not only building roads and infrastructure, stepping in when we have major crises like floods and within days roads were being opened.

I think about those major roads like McGregor and Robertson being totally cut off, a bridge washed away. We did not have to wait for tenders, we did not have to wait for processes. The Department stepped in with their yellow fleet and within days gave citizens access from a washed away road. It happened there, it happened in Hemel en Aarde, it happened on – and still washed away roads like the roads going out to, or the road behind

Franschhoek going out in the Franschhoek Pass. It has a stop and go. The road is open. It is going to take months' worth of fixing, but the road is open. The economy can work. This Department stepped up. Clarence Drive, exactly the same thing, and I want to say, hon Minister, through you and to the Department, I saw the HOD here, thank you very much because that is the epitome of service to our citizens. How we step up when there is a crisis, we make a difference, we get these things open and that is why we can have the jobs numbers we can have because we step in and fix things. Thank you very much. You make us very proud, but not only that, it is your normal work as well.

Later this month I will be joining the Minister to the N7 Refinery Interchange Project, that upgrade. That is a R248 million project, 500 direct jobs, 50 SMMEs supported, but once that upgrade is in place, that is an infrastructure conduit for jobs in the economy way into the future. That is what we talk about infrastructure investment.

Building new hospitals, building schools, housing developments. I was out today in Vlakkeland. Sewage plants and infrastructure, that is the need because that is how we create an ecosystem for economic growth.

Hon Speaker, what is also critical is making sure that we have an educated workforce for the future, and there I must say to the Department and the Minister, the programmes that you have come up with in the last years are outstanding. The Rapid School Build launched in 2022. We have built

25 schools, 16 replacement schools, 1 200 classrooms and we are building schools for 500 learners in just 65 days. That is unbelievable. Not one school, many schools that can be built in those times, and if you were in the Standing Committee and visiting those sites, you would have seen for yourself instead of sitting at home doing nothing. [Interjections.] [Applause.]

Hon Speaker, I must reflect ...[Interjections.]

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

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP [ANC]: Yes, it is a point of order.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP [ANC]: The Premier is implying ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP [ANC]: ...that members of this House are sitting at home doing nothing. [Laughter.] He is undermining the oversight of this House.

The SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Chief Whip, please take your seat. That is not ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): And he is failing to place learners in schools. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order, hon members! [Interjections.] Hon Deputy Chief Whip, please take your ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP (ANC): He must focus on ...[Incomplete.] [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members! That is not a point of order. [Interjections.] Hon Premier, you may continue. [Interjections.]

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. I am certain that I did not single out any specific individual hon member, but if the shoe fits ...[Laughter.] Hon Speaker ...[Applause.] hon Speaker, the Matric class of 2023 has made us all super proud, increasing the pass rate to 81,54%, our Grade 12s achieved the top Mathematics pass rate at 75,4%, Physical Science pass rate at 82,2%.

We also have had the top student in South Africa, six out of seven years. We also have a retention rate Grade 10 to 12 of 69,3% and if you go and do your homework you will see that is an exact inversion of what happens across other provinces in South Africa.

But hon Speaker, the top matriculant in South Africa, Melissa Muller, I had the opportunity to give her a call to congratulate her after she received that accolade, but then I had a further opportunity to talk to her when she came to Leeuwenhof with the recognition awards of all of our top learners. And unbelievable seeing schools across our province really pushing boundaries, pushing boundaries that you have never seen before. The most amazing thing is to see Spine Road now in the top twenty schools in our province, really doing amazing things.

But Melissa: I said to her, ‘What are you going to study?’ And the interesting thing is most often when you say to top matriculants, ‘What are you going to study’, they tell you they are going to study medicine and they are going to become doctors, Hon Minister Mbombo. They are going to become doctors, but not Melissa. She said to me, ‘I am going to study mechatronics.’ I thought that was quite interesting: mechatronics. So, I said to her why mechatronics and in actual fact, her friend that was with her came in at number three in South Africa, and she said, ‘I am also going to study mechatronics.’

So, I said, ‘Why mechatronics?’ And she said, ‘Well, I am interested in medical surgical robotics. That is what I am interested in, but we do not have proper courses yet in our universities, so I am going to get ahead of the curve, I am going to study mechatronics and when I have finished mechatronics, I am going to go and study medicine and I am going to bring those two together because I am really thinking about the future.’

That makes me excited about our future when we have young people that think ahead like that. They are going to change the way our universities give skills to young people into the future. I have no doubt that very soon, medical mechatronics will be a course at one of our universities.

Hon Speaker, I also want to say that we have many learners with special needs and we also, just as importantly, must make sure we nurture their skills, and we nurture them in reaching their top possibility in life. And today or tonight, Nizibone Mapolisa is here with us. I want to say congratulations. You came into the top three in South Africa of special needs in your matric qualification ...[Applause.] Congratulations, well done! Leading by example! Unbelievable. You have a bright future, and you also make me super excited about our future here in the Western Cape.

Hon Speaker, it is our teachers that enable these kinds of outcomes, and we say thank you to every single one of our teachers across this province. And tonight, we have a teacher, Dr Mariette Wheeler, who is here with us. There she is. Dr Mariette Wheeler is one of our teachers from Protea Heights High

School who was nominated for the global prize in the top ten teachers in the world! [Applause.] Congratulations and thank you very much. You stand here representing every single one of our amazing teachers in this province. Thank you!

Hon Speaker, education goes way further than that. We have invested R1,2-billion in the #BackOnTrack programme and that programme sees thousands of learners in our schools on Saturdays. It also sees thousands of our amazing teachers in our schools on Saturdays, making a difference in the lives of our learners. You know that in South Africa, we must be hugely ashamed that we have a reading with meaning measurement, where we are one of the worst in the world. You know in 2016, we got that measurement: seven out of ten Grade 4 learners in South Africa could not read with meaning. What did we do as a country? Nothing!

Then, along came the next results: eight out of ten learners in South Africa in Grade 4 cannot read with meaning. But not in this province! Not in this province. Our hon Minister in our Education Department put the #BackOnTrack programme in place. We have got primary school learners in schools on Saturdays, learning to read. We are going to make a difference and that difference is going to be felt into the future, in future jobs, future growth because we are forward thinking as a province.

I also think about the private sector in education. This province, in Wesgro, it has an education investment facilitation unit so that investment into the

education sector, a very important sector in our economy, is enabled and supported. And I think of those amazing schools from the private sector in our province. We have spoken in the past about the Curro School in Delft and the difference that that is making to learners in Delft. We think about those amazing schools in the Winelands, whether they be the Green School just down the road here or whether it be our schools in Bonnievale, in Struisbaai that partner with our Government to build private sector government partnerships that enable better education outcomes for our learners. It makes me super proud to see these kinds of investments into the future of our economy.

Hon Speaker, another part of our part of our economy and jobs is agriculture. Right here in this very region and the Western Cape is South Africa's export specialist. Our logistics companies, our agricultural sector continues to push boundaries and we export more than half of South Africa's agricultural exports out of this province. Again, 50%. In actual fact, in excess of 50% of the exports that go into international markets of our agricultural products, come from this province. Thank you, hon Minister. Thank you to the Department. We keep on focusing on growing agriculture.

Right now, we have had a great rainy season last year. We know about the floods, but those floods also brought lots of rain for our agricultural sector. We have a 20% increase in yield in the agricultural products being produced. We cannot get them to market because of the slowing down of the Port. That excess or growth has a potential of another 20 000 jobs in our economy and

R22-billion added to our GDP. But guess what? The Achilles heel again, is National Government failing us in our port.

Our Department does not just take that sitting down. We engage with the Port. Business and the Department put together a dashboard so that we can measure how long it takes for a truck to get into the Port, how long a truck takes in queuing and getting a turnaround. How long a vessel queues outside and how long a vessel sits alongside. How long it takes to load a container and how fast we are loading those containers.

But you know the sad part, hon Speaker and hon members, targets are set, meetings are had, the season is coming. We agree to those targets and then, the season comes and that was all talk. None of those targets were reached. Product was piling up in the Port and it is not only our exports of products. If Jacobs Jams was sending products overseas, they, too, would be in trouble because their products would be sitting in the Port and cannot get out.

But if they were looking for some specific product to add to theirs, like the other day when I was at Huguenot Chocolates and asking them about a certain sugar-free chocolate, they said to me, 'We cannot manufacture it at the moment because we have been waiting for weeks because our product that we need imported, is stuck in the Port.' It fails businesses all the time and that is why we have to make sure that through the Powers Bill, if not any other mechanism, we make sure that we deliver on these blockages that are holding back our economy.

I want to say one other thing about agriculture, hon Speaker. Do you know that when it comes to land reform, when it comes to land reform the Department of Land Reform makes land available for new farmers. There is a survey done on those new farmers, from the National Department, and 90% of those farmers that were enabled by the Department of Land Reform across South Africa, failed. It has got a 90% failure rate.

In this province, I used to hold that job at one stage, and I was very proud because when I took over that job, it was a 60% success rate, independently measured. And we took that to 70%. Hon Minister, I am super proud of you guys in the Department because you have taken that now to 83% of those emerging farmers are helped by this Department to become successful farmers. But.....

Guess what, the Port is going to fail those farmers, unless we get that fixed.

Mr Speaker, I must get on to safety in our province. You all know that safety is a big issue for me. Our war on crime in this province involves data, evidence and innovation. The LEAP officers have made such an impact to crime fighting and murder rates in this province, it is unbelievable, and I would like to recognise Donna-Lee Lombard.

I believe Donna-Lee Lombard is here, but Donna-Lee Lombard is a LEAP officer. She represents the 1 300 LEAP officers in the City, and she

represents the 350 LEAP officers that deployed across rural parts of our province. It is these LEAP officers that have made a difference and you know, the Institute for Security Studies has just completed a study on the four provinces in South Africa that have the highest murder rate, the highest per capita murder rate and the study looked at the last five years but it also looked at the previous term, the previous five years, so it measured five years and five years and if you look at the graph in that study, it will show you that in three provinces in South Africa, five years to the next five years, which is the current term, the murder rate went up in Gauteng, in KwaZulu Natal and in the Eastern Cape. Murders per hundred, murders per capita went up. There is only one province in South Africa where murders in those hotspots came down, and it has actually got a negative decline and we actually need to show those numbers at the end of this term as to how many thousands of citizens are alive today because of those LEAP officers, because when you bring the murder rate down, it makes a difference. Dads come home from work. Sons are not shot in gang warfare. This makes a difference, and it is how we use innovation and these are not innovations that we just suck out of our thumb. This is innovations that we go to our partners in other provinces around the world.

I must recognise here the Bavarian State. They have been unbelievable in helping us with our systems and with our technologies and our choices in the Safety Plan, We thank them, because it is through those programmes that we make a massive difference, but I also must recognise, Mr Speaker, I must recognise the Neighbourhood Watches and the roles that they play. These are

volunteers. These are citizens who give of their time and we have 14 632 citizens in this province who walked the streets at night, keeping their communities safe. This happens in 477 registered Neighbourhood Watch Units. Thank you to our Neighbourhood Watches and Aylmer Manko, I believe that you are here. I had the pleasure of walking with you and a number of the volunteers here in this region last night in Chicago, and it was really great speaking to you, understanding the issues that citizens face every single day, because that is how we start to make it safer.

I must also recognize the K-9 units, the three K-9 Units that are deployed in Swartland, Overberg and the Garden Route. These are the mechanisms of how we make differences and, Speaker, I want to end off by again talking about devolution of policing powers and how the National Government is actually short-changing the citizens of this province.

Five years ago there were 19 000 police officers in this province. Our population is growing today. There are 17 500 police officers in this province and you know that the deployment of these police officers are not deployed to where the crimes are. In Nyanga, in Philippi, they have 800 citizens to one police officer, but in other areas of this province they have 400 and 500 citizens per police officer. They cannot even change that basic management change and that is why we have to have devolution of police power. That is why federal police powers make a difference because then provinces will be competing with each other to make sure that it becomes safer. But it is not only about policing, it is also about violence prevention.

Last year we set up the Violence Prevention Unit and that is so that we can get ahead of the crime. We cannot police our way out of this thing totally. We have to get to those young boys before they become gangsters. We have to intervene so that we make the difference beforehand. We keep them in school and we give them opportunities of playing a role in the future.

We do that at Chrysalis. We do that through our Year Beyond Programme and I must say the Year Beyond Programme, 10 000 young people have now gone through that programme and there is a Yebonaire, We call our young people going through these programmes Yebonaires.

Luchulumano Ndzuzu (?), I believe you are here, thank you very much. You are a stand-out person who shows that these programmes work. It gives you the opportunity to find better traction. When you are engaging young people in these programmes they tell you after the programme they want to go and study further. They are enthused by the Department that they get to work for and that they want to continue in that Department. It is really great to see.

Just this last year, another 3 000 Yebonaires have been enrolled in the programme and of course, what we also did last year is we won the Social Justice Bridge Builder Award for the Yebonaire Programme.

In Chrysalis again young men and women at risk get taken through this programme and again play a meaningful role in society once they have gone

through this Chrysalis Programme. Since 2019, 1 522 young people have graduated from Chrysalis and we thank every single person in that programme on the difference that they make in our young people's lives.

Thando Stimela, who is here, I saw him earlier. I am not sure exactly where he is, there is Thando. Thando, thank you. Welcome. Thando Stimela a few years ago had the opportunity of going to Chrysalis. I met him last year. Thando went on to get involved in security, but after that he went on and started his own business, an unbelievable business, and you know, when municipalities or businesses have sewerage issues, his business steps in and fixes the problem. [Applause.] When people have an issue of refrigeration his business steps in and solves the refrigeration problems.

Thando, congratulations to you and your company, you are doing amazing stuff and you make us very proud, and it shows you that Chrysalis gives you an opportunity into the future. [Applause.]

Speaker, I must also speak about Mobility, and you know mobility is critical. If we are going to be 10 million citizens by 2040, we cannot build more freeways, we have got to find public transport solutions. We have got to make sure we have commuter solutions, and this is what Mobility is doing. But I also want to say to the Mobility Department and Minister, your launching last week of the jobseekers voucher was unbelievable. That was so exciting, engaging with young citizens who can get a voucher when they need to go to an interview. You know if you live in a poor area and you get an

opportunity for an interview, you have got to borrow money to get to that interview. This voucher system enables you to go and get your voucher and not get one trip but get 12 trips to go and look for a job. You can use those trips when you first get your job, because when you first get your job you have not got a salary yet. You still have to borrow more money to get to work every day, but now you have got a voucher system, you can get to work, you do not have to borrow money from granny or mom and you can become a proud upstanding citizen in our region. Well done, Minister. [Applause.]

I also want to say that the work that we are doing around GoGeorge, the work that we are doing about trying to get the Central Line and rail sorted out in this region, your work is cut out for you. But I also want to say to you that your work is cut out with the minibus taxi industry.

We know that we had devastating strikes last year. We had the loss of life and that is unacceptable. We have to make sure that we find solutions and all strength in working with the taxi industry to find those solutions. You know, I always think that the taxi industry, and every time I engage with them, they need to understand that they must be one of the partners in getting our mobility system into the future working. We are not going to get the trains working without the taxi industry. They have to be a partner in getting trains going again. They have got to be the feeder system into it and I look forward, Minister, to the work that you and your team are going to do on getting mobility to a different level. It happens in cities around the world every single day, safely, efficiently, effectively, and we want to do that here

as well.

Speaker, I also want to talk about power to the people, energy, electricity. Last year our citizens saw the worst loadshedding in the last 15 years. Over 300 days last year out of 365, we had loadshedding. The President had not even announced the solutions, and we were back at Level 6. We have got a major problem and it is not a quick fix, but in this province, as you all know, we took a decision a year ago that we are going to put 5 700 megawatts of private sector invested energy into our local authorities across this province. We only use 4 000 at peak, we are going to have more than enough electricity for the future economy, but also to end loadshedding. Loadshedding is estimated to have cost this province R48,6 billion to R61,2 billion over the last years.

R48,6 billion to R61,2 billion in the last years, that is what loadshedding has cost this province. Last year alone, at Level 4 R43 million per day, I will give you that again just in case you did not hear it, at Level 4, R43 million per day is what loadshedding costs the economy of this country. It costs billions over the years. But Speaker, we have that Energy Plan. The Energy Plan delivers every single day. We have 2 000 megawatts in the pipeline at municipal level in tender processors right now as we speak.

We gave R80 million last year to our Local Governments and you can see it when Level 6 happens, we do not have the water system crashes that we used to have. Right here in this municipality, I have been on site to where those

generators were put in to make sure the water flows when there is no electricity, to make sure that the sewerage is pumped when there is no electricity. That is intervention in mitigating risk. I also want to say that in this province between the Province and our municipalities, we have budgeted R7 billion for the next three years to enable these 5 700 megawatts, and in that it is about partnership with the private sector. We have got hectares of solar panels going up all over the place. We have got private sector homes and businesses putting inverters and solar panels on their roofs. We have got municipalities now paying you cash for the excess power that you put back into the grid. There is a clear plan and a direction. I also want to say that the private sector not only in current green economies like solar and wind, into the future green economy, the green economy, the green hydrogen economy, and you have seen the Northern Cape, the Eastern Cape, the Western Cape have a combined strategy. Namibia joined into that strategy. We know that the world needs lots of green hydrogen, and tonight Rikus Roos is here from Phelan, a company who has invested into Saldana Bay, I am not sure exactly where he is. There he is, a R42 billion investment into Saldana Bay. Thank you very much. That is a major investment into the future energy economy. [Applause.]

But we as a government are also investing into our energy future. 193 of our health facilities have generator capacity. Nine of our clinics have completed their solar panel and inverter installations, and ten of our hospitals are exempted from stage 6 loadshedding.

These are investments into making sure that our citizens continue to get the services they deserve.

In Hessequa Municipality they have now got our partnership a R210 million Rand project of renewable energy to become the first small town in our province that is going to be loadshedding free. That will change the lives of the 22 000 people that live there.

Now the reason that we have got a small town in this project, because bigger municipalities have the engineering capabilities and the capacity to go out to these big tenders and bring in these thousands of megawatts. In a small municipality it is much more difficult and this project is going to help other municipalities see that it can be done, and so thank you to the team at Hessequa and our team in the province for enabling this project. It is going to make small towns also want to compete and also make a difference in their towns.

Cities like Cape Town, Mossel Bay, George, Saldanha, are all busy with projects to get power into the grids. In this municipality a really exciting project on making sure that their traffic lights work during loadshedding and that is a partnership between the municipality's engineers and our universities, and that development of those traffic light USB systems, is now being sold to other municipalities across South Africa. Well done to Drakenstein. [Applause.]

But, hon Speaker, I spoke earlier about no energy in the Karoo for two weeks. How we stepped in, the whole-of-government and the whole-of-society. Eskom was not just left alone to fix the problem, our departments got stuck in. We made sure that we helped those citizens as best we can, while those seven pylons were rebuilt, and I want to thank Mr Yedwa and Ms Trish da Silva, they are both here from Eskom. Thank you for working together with us for getting the power up in the Karoo again. It is devastating when days go by without power and that community taught us a lot.

We have learned a lot within our system of disaster management, which has helped us further with planning in case we have future blackouts. We have also handed out loadshedding packs to our indigent citizens at our old age homes. We have handed out packs that are batteries with a little solar power, three lights, able to charge your phone. That is about stepping in to vulnerable citizens during this absolute nightmare of loadshedding that we all have to face.

At those community care centres that care for our citizens, there is one that I visited the other day called Nonceba Community Care Centre, and Nozuko Conjwa is here tonight. Thank you very much. I am not sure exactly where you are, but you offer such amazing service to the most vulnerable citizens in need. Thank you. Also thank you for my beaded bracelet, it is amazing. I wear it as often as possible.

Hon Speaker, I need to talk about the Government's or the fiscal crisis that we face. It is a catastrophic cut in our budgets going forward. We have heard about the population explosion in this province. More and more citizens moving here from other failed provinces. Coming here for their services. That puts extra pressure on our system. We step up, we make sure that we deliver, but health, education and social services face the brunt of it.

I spoke about the call centres and those frontline services, but think about the frontline in our schools, those teachers, who have more and more learners in their classrooms. Think about those nurses and doctors. You all saw that letter that was written publicly to myself, to the Minister, to the National Minister of Finance.

Those are the real heroes who face those lengthening queues and have to make tougher and tougher decisions as we give services to our citizens and so on behalf of the nurses, Elanza Williams and Farida Cloete are here, and Maudrene Zwaan is here from our emergency services. I want to say to you and through you, thank you so much. Yes, you can stand up. Thank you so much for what you do. [Applause.] You represent so many of our frontline workers and we thank you every day. It gets tougher and tougher. We will fight, we will fight for that extra budget. We have declared an intergovernmental dispute and we will go and fight for that R1,1 billion so that we can bolster your work that you do.

Hon Speaker, I also want to recognise Chef Lungelo Masiza – I heard – there

we go, thank you very much, Chef. I call you chef, but you are not a chef, you are an entrepreneur because you have two businesses at the moment and you showed me plans for your third one, and we were talking about management of those businesses earlier, and if I can help in any way further, good luck, but, you know, it is businesses like your business, or Denver Windvogel and Denver Adonis that I spoke about in the National Assembly the other day. That Chocolate Factory, the Huguenot Chocolate Factory. It is your businesses that suffer when ports do not operate. It is your businesses that suffer when you have loadshedding, and I want to thank you for fighting to keep your businesses open. We will help you where we can just as – just as – and the hon member Dugmore obviously did not listen to that speech – just as we helped you with refrigeration in your business, just as we helped you with inverter systems in your business, so that while the ANC fails you with loadshedding, we can help you to keep your business running. [Applause.] Your business now employs 27 people in Franschoek. That is amazing, and that *chutzpah* is unbelievable and must be celebrated in this province over and over again. Thank you.

Climate change, hon Speaker, is something else that hits us every single day. I have spoken about the massive flooding, the massive fires that we have fought and we are still fighting. We are in the middle of the fire season and here I would like to recognise our firefighters Calvin Denyssen and Anda Tiko, you are here today. Thank you very much for being here. I also want to thank Trevor Abrahams, MD of Working on Fire, and Antoinette Jini, the general manager, thank you very much. You guys rock. You are amazing in

getting out there. [Applause.] You are welcome to stand and be recognised by this crowd. Thank you so much for what you do in fighting fires during this climate change. [Applause.] We really do appreciate you, but I want to say to the Provincial Disaster Management Team, you really make me proud. It shows me that the investments that we have made over time – and, hon Minister, I know that every time you come to budgets you fight for disaster management, and it is so difficult to make those decisions because we do not know whether that disaster is going to happen or not, but you have fought for it for years and you have built expertise that does not only just help the citizens of this province, we very quickly help other provinces when they hit disasters as well, and our whole disaster management team, I want to say thank you. How you pull together departments, national, provincial, local. How you pull together private sector. How you pull together NGOs and we take these disasters head-on every single time. Thank you very much for everything that you and the teams do.

I had the opportunity to visit – yes, you are welcome to give them another round of applause. [Applause.] And it is not only at provincial level, it is Local Government level as well, across all of our municipalities.

I was in Langeberg the other day. They also had to make a tough decision. They spent R17 million on a new fire station and a new disaster management centre. Why? Because they are going to get to people quicker. They are going to get to save lives quicker and those investments are tough and we recognise every single one of our local authorities when they make those

investments into making sure that we are better prepared for the future.

We also have a 15-year Integrated Drought and Water Response Plan. That is a critical document to make sure that we mitigate day zero. We had huge lessons where we had the last drought. The one-in-a-100-year drought, but climate change is telling us it is coming again and we have got to make sure that we are resilient and responsive, and thinking back on the last five years in fighting floods, in fighting power outages, fires, this Government steps up every single time.

I think back to COVID-19 and how this Government stepped up and built the biggest field hospital in just six weeks. How our Health Department developed a dashboard. A dashboard that won the Africa Tech Award for the Best Technology in Public Sector in 2020. A dashboard that had 3 million views in 167 countries around the world. A department that delivered medicines to people's homes through partnerships. These are the actions of an innovative, forward thinking and responsive government, and that is why when I started off I thanked every single public servant who works in this Government. You make those differences.

But you know we cannot do those things if we have corruption. We cannot do those things if we have bad governance. So here I must recognise every single one of you in the 2022/23 year, all 14 of our Western Cape departments and their entities received unqualified audits, the best in South Africa. Well done and thank you very much for helping us [Applause.]

because if we can make good governance a habit, it is just what we do, we can then focus on being responsive. We can focus on delivering more and better services to our citizens.

I also want to say a few words on the Local Government, and local governments are where our citizens actually get basic services. I want to thank the team at Local Government for what you do, but, you know, the other day I referenced my own hometown, Knysna, and how disastrous it is in that town. Those citizens are not getting the basic services. Dead bodies in their water systems, sewage pumps running sewage all over the place and creating massive health problems. [Interjections.] No water in Hornlee for days. No water actually in most of the town for days. [Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: This Department and this Government has put in millions already [Interjections.] and local governments in the surrounding ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: ...towns have gone in there with their vehicles to remove the mountains of rubbish and rat infested refuse systems, have gone in there with water tankers to help get water to citizens ...[Interjections.]

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members!

The PREMIER: ...but it is that government, that government that is failing the citizens and we will do what is necessary. We will go through processes. We have offered help. They need to accept that help or otherwise have further consequences.

Hon Speaker, where there is dysfunction we must, as a province and a Provincial Government, intervene. At the same time we must respect that this is an independent sphere of government that was elected by those residents who must ultimately hold those municipalities to account.

Hon Speaker, I have mentioned innovation and I must bring this speech to a close, but I want to recognise the PERO and the MERO and how that has evolved, and it is an innovative document that enables not only governments to plan and make decisions, but the private sector too. So businesses get hold of those documents, it will help you on where you invest into the future, which towns you choose, because you will see growth potential, you will see investment potential and you will see where those infrastructure investments have taken place.

Our healthcare system: I have spoken about the innovations during the pandemic, but right now there are only three public hospitals on the African continent, that offer robot surgeries. Only three public hospitals on the African continent that happen to be in the Western Cape. Hon Minister,

thank you very much. They are found in George, in Groote Schuur and in Tygerberg. Citizens of this province can get robotic surgery. Technology innovation. [Applause.] It happens in our Government every single day.

That same Department is busy with TeleICU, so specialists can sit in the Groote Schuur Hospital and advise ICU specialists in George and visa versa. These are amazing technologies. Keep it going! Thank you very much! And you know, all of these, the DG reminded me, are all enabled by broadband. The broadband investment that we put in place: 1 GIG per second, 1 900 sites, 1 366 public free Wi-Fi sites with 6 GIGs of free power, 77 Western Cape eCentres.

Hon Speaker, the late Emeritus Desmond Tutu once said,

“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness.”

This ‘light’, hon Speaker, shines here in the Western Cape.

Uncertain times; uncertain times. But here in the Western Cape, we do everything possible to create certainty, building hope, bolster our collective resilience and effect change for you, our citizens.

So much threatens to divide us. We cannot let this happen. We must all continuously ask: what unites us? What brings us together? For me, it is our shared vision of a prosperous Western Cape where there are jobs in every

household; where people feel safe; where businesses can thrive; where we all feel a sense of dignity and worth which we can all be proud of.

A prosperous Western Cape helps make a stronger South Africa.

Everything we do in this province, we do for the citizens of this province, but we also do it for this great country, South Africa. Too many of our citizens are suffering. They look to us for help; and we will step up, we will always step in to offer them hope, dignity and worth. We are demonstrating to the rest of the country and the world that what is possible when a government such as ours does not take its residents for granted. That is when the difference happens. We take these challenges head-on.

Hon Speaker, I deliver my State of the Province Address at a critical time in our province and country's history: 30 years into democracy. Hon Speaker, this year we will return to the polls. Our citizens will exercise their sacrosanct and hard-fought right to vote. But as important, hon Speaker, that as the right to vote is, it is critical that we carefully consider the consequences of how we vote. Those citizens in Knysna need to consider the consequences of how they vote.

Hon Speaker, before I finish, I must take this opportunity to thank at the end of this five-year term, my wife, Tracy.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members.

The PREMIER: I must thank Tracy and my two children. I know that it has been tough. I know that I am not there very often but thank you for all of the support. I must thank my Office ...[Applause.] I must thank my Office. I must be careful because if I start singling out those sitting in the front row there, I could be in big trouble. But I want to thank every single person in my Office. Thank you for backing me up, for supporting me and enabling me in what I do every single day.

I want to thank every one of these hon Ministers for what they do every single day and what they have done every day in the last five years, to make a difference for the citizens. I want to thank this Caucus. I actually want to thank this whole Parliament. I do want to thank you for some of those constructive criticisms and some of those inputs. I want to thank the HODs, the DG and every single one of our officials because it is through you that we can actually offer the service that we do to every one of our citizens.

I want to thank our citizens for being part of this massively successful province. I thank you. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Order. Thank you very much, hon Premier. Hon members, in terms of Rule 15 of the Standing Rules, the hon Premier's Address will be placed on the Order Paper for debate. Hon members and guests are requested to remain standing in their places while the procession leaves the Chamber. And hon members, please note that on Tuesday, 20

February 2024, that is tomorrow, the proceedings will commence at 09:30 AM.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite the hon members and guests to congregate outside the entrance to the hall on their way out, for a short audio-visual presentation.

Hon members and guests, that concludes the business for the day. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 19:55.