
MONDAY, 23 MARCH 2026

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVISIONAL PARLIAMENT

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

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

The House met at 10:00.

The hon Deputy Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

The SPEAKER: Please be seated. Hon members, I need to share some sad news with you. The Speaker's mother, Ms Mitchell, has just passed on earlier this morning and on behalf of the House, we would like to extend our sincere and our deepest condolences on the passing of the mother of the Speaker and as the hon members of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament and the Administration, we extend our heartfelt sympathy to the Mitchell family during this time of profound loss. The passing of a parent is a deeply personal sorrow, and our thoughts are with the Speaker and his family as they grieve and reflect on her life and legacy.

We trust that they will find comfort in the treasured memories that they have shared with their mother and that they will have strength and support during this particular time. On behalf of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, to the Mitchell family, we wish for solace and comfort during this difficult period of bereavement. I trust that hon members will adhere to the following request of if we can have a moment of silence as we offer our thoughts and personal prayers to the Mitchell family during this difficult time.

Thank you, hon members. To the guests in the gallery, please feel welcome. To all Western Cape and South Africans that are tuned in online, welcome to this Sitting. Hon members, before we proceed, today's Sittings shall be governed by the Standing Rules, and in an instance where the Rules cannot be applied, the ruling by the Presiding Officer will be final. We will now proceed with the business of the House, and I will note the Secretary to read the first order of the day.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

1. *Consideration of Report of the Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters on the Public Service Commission Bill [B 30B-2023]*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, the House received the report of the

Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters on the Public Service Commission Bill. I am conferring authority on the Western Cape delegation in the NCOP to not support this Bill. This mandate will be sent to the NCOP. I will now afford political parties an opportunity to make a declaration if they so wish, and I recognise the ANC.

Mr M K SAYED (ANC): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, and allow me as we start to also echo and express condolences on behalf of the African National Congress to our dear friend and brother, the hon Speaker of the House, Daylin Mitchell, and to his family on the passing away of his mother. Your pain is our pain, and we are with you, hon Speaker.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the African National Congress wishes to place on record that we support the Public Service Commission Bill. The Bill is an important step towards strengthening the role and independence of the Public Service Commission as an independent institution tasked with promoting accountability, professionalism and ethical conduct within the public service. These are principles that we firmly support. And I say this knowing full well that the process around the appointment even of the Public Service Commissioner goes through the Legislature. There is a committee that recommends and the Premier does the appointment, and we have participated in that particular process.

However, hon Deputy Speaker, we must also note that the mandate adopted by our Standing Committee does not reflect the ANC's position. The Standing

Committee Chair knows that. While the DA has opted to oppose the Bill in its current form for frivolous reasons, the ANC believes the legislation advances the broader objective of building a capable, ethical and developmental state. We cannot fall into the trap of Western Cape exceptionalism and shielding our Executive from accountability. And we are not surprised by the DA's opposition, because for much of the six administrations, they sought to undermine the provincial office of the Public Service Commissioner, who found the Executive wanting on many occasions on matters of clean governance, especially in the Department of Education.

Hence, the then Commissioner was not reappointed. In fact, they vehemently opposed his reappointment. For this reason, the ANC cannot support the negotiating mandate adopted by the committee. Instead, we place on record that the ANC supports the Public Service Commission Bill in its entirety and the strengthening of oversight and integrity within the public service. I so thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Sayed. I recognise the PA. Is there a declaration from the PA?

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Thank you, Deputy Chair. I just want to share our condolences to the Mitchell family. And I know that my member was supposed to take part, but for various reasons, he is not here today. So we are not going to say anything. Thank you, Chair.

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

Ms T LITHAKONG (EFF): It has been long since I have been in this House. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. We would like to echo the previous speakers on sending our deepest condolences to the Speaker and his family. And as the EFF, we will not be saying anything on this matter. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Lithakong. I recognise the NCC.

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): *Hon* Speaker, ons wil net van ons kant af ons *condolences* vir die Mitchell-familie uitspreek en mag God met hulle wees gedurende hierdie moeilike tyd. Ek dink dood sal nooit as iets normaal beskou word nie. En mag God die familie deur hierdie moeilike tyd dra. Op hierdie stadium het ek niks om te sê op dit nie, dankie *hon* Speaker.

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Hon Speaker, from our side we just want to express our condolences to the Mitchell family and may God be with them during this difficult time. I think death will never be regarded as something normal. And may God support the family through this difficult time. At this stage I have nothing to say on that, thank you, hon Speaker.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon Michels. I recognise the Freedom Front Plus.

Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): Good morning, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I would

also like to take the opportunity to convey my condolences and on behalf of the party to the Speaker of this House. Hon Speaker, on this particular Bill, the Freedom Front Plus supports the strengthening of the Public Service Commission and this Bill will result in a more professional, merit-based and independent public service. It might not be perfect, but, hon Speaker, it is a step in the right direction. Further to this, hon Speaker, it is important to note that the Bill establishes an independent Public Service Commission with its own secretariat, reducing political interference, which is what we want to achieve and so that is the position of the Freedom Front Plus. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon Marais. I recognise Al-Jama-Ah. I recognise the ACDP.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS (ACDP): Good morning, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, also from the ACDP's side, our condolences to the Speaker and his family. I pray that God will comfort them and be with them in this time of mourning. Hon Speaker, after saying that, the ACDP has got no declaration. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Christians. I recognise the Good Party.

Mr B N HERRON (GOOD): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, I also extend my condolences to the Speaker and his family. Hon Speaker, we support the Public Service Commission Bill and do not support the

Report from the Standing Committee. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Herron. I recognise the DA.

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, a comment was made in the declarations that this Bill is a step in the right direction. It suggests that we are in a flawed environment that is dominated by bad practices, and we must make incremental, slow changes in the right direction. South Africa has changed. South Africa is now in a GNU. We can actually take bold steps. We can actually expect more from this Bill than what was offered.

The Democratic Alliance does not support the Public Service Commission Bill in its current form, as it fails to provide a truly robust, fit-for-purpose framework necessary to protect our constitutional democracy from further subversion. The Bill lacks explicit, proactive measures to prevent the appointment of Government officials through political influence. The DA insists on clauses that specifically outlaw cadre employment to ensure that appointments remain merit-based and legal.

Clauses 9 and 10 grant the Commission too much discretion regarding which departments to inspect or which grievances to investigate. The DA proposes mandatory reporting and official records for all enquiries, including reasons why specific investigations did not occur. This is to prevent political bias or selective oversight. The Bill fails to define basic investigation and inspection processes. In fact, the response is pass it off to policy, rules and regulations.

Without these definitions, the legislation is vulnerable to expensive court challenges and implementation, bottlenecks that waste taxpayer money.

Furthermore, the DA believes the Bill lacks teeth regarding integrity. We propose inserting minimum criminal penalties for commission hon members or employees who abuse the office. Ultimately, partial reform is easily swallowed by an anti-constitutional ecosystem. The DA maintains that this Bill must be constitutionally tested alongside the Public Service Amendment and Public Administration Management Bills to ensure a truly capable, independent and professional state.

Chair, some barbs were thrown at the DA during the declarations. I am just going to give you another reason why we should oppose this or this Bill. The words, the ANC believes it advances ethical government. That alone should be a reason not to support this. Thanks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Walters. [Interjection] Order, hon members! Hon members, I am able to announce that there are currently 33 hon members present and entitled to vote and the House is therefore quorate. The question put before the House, that the Report of the Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters on the Public Service Commission Bill conferring authority on the Western Cape Delegation in the NCOP to not support this Bill be adopted. Are there any objections?

There are no objections, agreed to. The Report of the Standing Committee on

the Premier and Constitutional Matters on the Public Service Bill has therefore been adopted. The Secretary will now read the second Order of the Day.

2. *Debate on Vote 1: Premier – Western Cape Appropriation Bill.*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise the hon Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, Cabinet colleagues, hon members of this Legislature, the Leader of the Opposition, special guests, the DG, my office, and of course, the residents of this province. The foundation of this Budget remains our enduring commitment to fiscal responsibility, which drives our apex priorities, that of growth and jobs, of course, safety, water, energy. We have got to make sure that we are creating the ecosystem and the environment for that apex of growth and jobs.

In my State of the Province Address, I emphasised the need for getting things done and that is exactly what we need to do this year and that is exactly what happens when you go through a budget process. You put the funding towards getting things done. I also said we need to have a layer of kindness about us in this province because you can feel sometimes how people behave on social media platforms, how people behave towards each other. And while we are getting things done, we also need to make sure there is kindness. There is that personal touch with people in our province, that empathy.

And with that, may I also then, like the other speakers in the previous discussion around legislative changes, also join on behalf of our Cabinet and on behalf of our administration, our condolences to the Speaker and his family at this time of loss. Hon Speaker or Hon Deputy Speaker, can I also say that reflecting on this last year, 2025 and thinking about our apex priorities, I must reflect on how the Province has managed now to get to an unemployment rate of 18 percent or 18.1 percent.

This is our apex priority and shows that when you measure things, you need to measure to be able to manage and that the continued pressure to say, how do we get our unemployment rate below 20 percent and now sitting at 18? We need to consistently make sure that we keep pushing that down even further. Of course, that comes on the back of the last five years, 404,712 jobs in South Africa, of which 90 percent or 360,347 of those jobs came from this province and that in itself is a real distinctive showcase of the difference between the Western Cape and other parts of our country.

And of course, in those sectors that get that unemployment, and I am sure that Minister Meyer will talk much about this in his Budget Vote, but 7 out of the 10 sectors added jobs year on year with trade at 48,000 jobs more, agriculture 22,000 jobs more and construction, 22,000 jobs more in this province. That drives that growth that we are looking for and brings about the dignity, food on the table and of course, lowers crime levels. The province also maintained the highest labour force participation rate, our job absorption rate. So all of those indicators showing that we are going in the right direction.

I think reflecting also on the last year and looking forward to this year, it is an important year for our province because we also have an election this year and that election is where people need to make choices. We have been basing our apex priority on the foundation of good governance and good governance is that foundation and we need to make sure that we get good governance across our province. We can see in municipalities where that has faltered. It then starts to put our residents under pressure because they are not getting the service delivery levels that they deserve.

We can see it when water is not delivered. We can see it when potholes and roads are not fixed sufficiently. We can see it that that impacts our citizens and our residents negatively. And so it is a very clear indication in my State of the Province and again, I reiterated that we would really like to see good governance across this whole province and we need citizens to think about that as they go and cast their vote.

We also at the same time, I said, focussing on water, on crime, on energy and I am sure that Minister Marais will also be talking much about our law enforcement plan, our LEAP Safety Plan, how we are working this out across the province to our various municipalities where we actually see where these interventions take place, that we can see a reduction in crime and that starts to change the debate at a national level and I welcome that debate as we move forward to different ways of policing in our region.

At the same time, it is also perhaps just the last point and that is where I take responsibility and this Department takes responsibility as we hold things and pull them together. So whether it is chairing the Safety Council or when we move into energy and water, chairing the Energy and Water Council, so that we understand that this is a whole-of-government approach where we are pulling together these specific focus areas and the Department of the Premier and thank you, DG, for making sure that we pull those together so that we are across all departments achieving our goals. When we talk about energy and pulling together, it is how we collaborate and invest on our side, the 284 million rand that goes into unlocking billions of rands worth of investment across the energy systems in our municipalities.

And, of course, that alongside water, making sure that those services, basic services are made available. I think this year, specifically in this financial year, a real game changer is the switching on of the power system in the Riversdale area of the Hessequa Municipality. That is going to be that energy game changer that that municipality then starts to enable a better pricing model, a resilient model and a sustainable energy model going into the future and this is not a big municipality, this is a small municipality and that was the whole point of the enablement.

Mr Hon Deputy Speaker, this budget is a 2,178 billion rand budget, and this is a below inflation rate increase, a 2.8 percent increase, which I think also bodes well. However, I must say that when the budgets were put together, we were doing these numbers over the end of last year and the beginning of this year.

It was actually prior to the war that we are seeing now in the Middle East and the consequences of specifically energy costs, which are going to rise substantially as a result of that.

That then means food pricing is going to go up. That means then that inflation is going to be under pressure once again and that again means the rand/dollar is going to be under pressure once again. Just a few weeks ago, I was really excited about the strengthening rand, seeing the economy in South Africa starting to really recover now and rise and suddenly this now has a negative impact on going forward. We always feel it in our budgets, especially around ICT licencing and suddenly we are probably going to not have sufficient money again if the rand dollar starts to change exponentially from where it was at the start of this Budget process.

But perhaps also just to say that in this process, this is where 82 Western Cape Government e-Centres provide services to our residents. But in this Budget announcing that we are going to move this to 86 over this medium term period, we have also put R15.5 million aside for those mobile e-Centres and those of you that were in George and got to see the mobile e-Centre in operation, that is where it was launched. But, of course, it spends its time travelling across our province and we are going to be adding two more.

It was so interesting to see the queues of people using this facility, enabling them to print their CVs, enabling them to go online. Most of them that I spoke to were looking at job applications using this platform for really finding

opportunities for themselves and so really a useful and a valuable budget item that we are putting on the table here today. Also, the 1,600 free Wi-Fi hotspots providing six gigabytes of data per user per month. This is a huge enabler for the residents of our province. Broadband 2.0 is now well underway and it is foreseen that connected sites will total 2,250 by the end of the MTEF period.

The focus on this provision of robust connectivity, infrastructure and solutions allowing more people to participate in the digital economy and access essential services online, especially in rural areas. And, of course, that links through to the whole-of-government, every single one of our departments utilising these platforms and this connectivity to offer better services to our citizens. At the same time, also offering our citizens that equaliser, offering our citizens that free access to tech, that free access to opportunity and that really brings a difference for our citizens.

We are also putting more money into making sure that we are protecting that system through cyber security systems, R54 million this current year, making sure that we are strengthening our firewalls. But also, as I said earlier, the licencing of all of our software programmes. In addition, R40 million has been available over the period for the reconfiguration of our PTI or Provincial Training Institute. This is also how we enable our staff in the Government to have a training institute to get better at what we do in offering services to our citizens.

And, of course, I do believe that we have got to keep constantly learning as an

organisation and perhaps this is where I must also use the opportunity to say to those Ministers who got their recognition of AI through the Stellenbosch University programme that we put in place and getting your or passing your exams and getting your certificate the other day, as well as DG, those senior officials that also took part in making sure that as a government, we are understanding Artificial Intelligence. We are embedding it in our systems. I spoke about some of the systems that use AI to really make a much bigger impact to our residents here in the province.

Also, an additional R10 million per annum was availed for polling research. This is making sure, this is our customer satisfaction survey, understanding where that impact is and where we are falling short so that we can correct those things and make sure that our citizens are receiving the services that they deserve. Earmarked funding is available for the Provincial Energy Resilience Programme. I have already spoken about the difference it is going to make in the Hessequa Municipality, but all of our municipalities are making sure that while the lights are on, we must not slow down with our plans of the 5,700 megawatts, because that brings about sustainability and energy supply into the future.

And when we have that kind of supply across all of our municipalities over the next few years, we will then have the resilience and the pricing competitiveness that will make us an investment destination better than it is even now. That will then, of course, continually reduce the unemployment rate, increase those investments, and change people's lives across our province. R19 million has

been injected into staffing of our People Management Units.

A further R10 million allocated to the Graduate and Pay Intern Programme, enabling young people who perhaps are not able to take advantage of that lower unemployment rate, they have finished school, they have not got a university or a college that they are going to, they have not found a job yet and enabling through those programmes. In some of the other depends, but also in our specific department, that is the Graduate and Pay Intern Programme.

R15.6 million has been allocated for the purposes of early retirement. We know that some of our senior officials have made use of this capability. I have been raising it. This is for 28 officials exiting the Department between March and May 2026. Obviously, what we also have to do, and links back to the PTI, are we enabling the next cohort of management as people are retiring earlier? Are we building up that capability so that the province keeps on pushing boundaries in excellence and in service delivery?

And so with that, I have already raised the issue around the rand/dollar exchange rate and the risk that that brings. With that, Mr Hon Deputy Speaker, I table the budget here today. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Premier. I recognise the hon Syed.

Mr M K SAYED (ANC): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, hon members, people of the Western Cape. The Premier's Department is the apex

of Provincial Government in the Western Cape. Its service delivery role is to provide all of Provincial Government leadership, coordination and direction, ensuring provincial departments and entities work uniformly to implement the provincial strategic plan to uplift all people of the Western Cape.

It exists to ensure harmonious intergovernmental relations within national and provincial spheres in matters of concurrent and differentiated responsibilities affecting our province. The Premier's Department must exemplify the highest standards of ethical leadership, transparency and accountability in the Provincial Government and public life in our province. Therefore, the conduct, integrity and credibility of the incumbent Premier matters deeply in this debate.

The Department's strategic documents outline the building of, and I quote, a government that people trust. Trust is not manifested, nor is it manufactured through slogans. It is intentionally cultivated to aspire to and give practical effect to our democratic public service principles of Batho Pele, people first. Contradicting these violate not only these values, but tramples on democracy itself. The Conduct Committee of this Legislature has found hon Alan Winde in breach of the Members Code of Conduct by failing to declare sponsored international travel, a committee that is dominated by members of his own political party, the Democratic Alliance.

You cannot build a government that people trust when the leadership of the department at the apex of government faces misconduct. A government that asks the public to trust it must first demonstrate that it can be trusted and

therefore, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, to the Premier, hon Winde, I ask, how does he expect public servants in this province to uphold the values of integrity, transparency and accountability when the head of Provincial Government is rotting at the head? This pays lip service to the essence of public service and the immense privilege and responsibility afforded to holding public office.

The Premier and the Cabinet are quick to beat their own drum with comparative provincial performance of the Western Cape versus other provinces in South Africa. What they do not tell the Western Cape public is that the Premier is currently the only sitting Premier in South Africa who has been found by Provincial Legislature's Conduct or Ethics Committee to have breached the Members Code of Conduct. Even more appalling is the retaliatory stance of the DA once Premier Winde became indefensible.

When the Premier could no longer stand the heat in the kitchen of both his Government and his own political party, the DA, on the 12th of March 2026, members of the Opposition, political parties on this side of the House, were bizarrely informed by the Registrar of Members Interests that the DA Chief of Staff in this Legislature had requested our public disclosure forms for the last three years. This desperate and devious move by the DA reeks of the Premier's same lack of accountability.

Instead of dealing with their Premier, the DA starts looking for ghosts in other political parties and we have got nothing to hide. Hon Speaker, how can the

public expect the DA to save South Africa, let alone our province, when they cannot even put out fires in their own party and the Premier's Department in the Western Cape? Hon Deputy Speaker, the R49 million policy and strategy function under the Provincial Strategic Management Programme is meant to ensure that Government policies work and that departments respond to community needs.

Residents, especially the poorest communities, cannot drink theoretical research papers, eat monitoring reports and earn an income on technical evaluations. They need Government programmes that translate policy into service delivery execution, functional infrastructure, backlog elimination, resource sustainability and actionable outcomes. They do not need the rhetoric of delivery, they need delivery in action. This is the central challenge that strategic policy coordination should address.

Endlessly spending money to study problems without allocating resources, skills and capability necessary to solve them merely intellectualises the problem away. Energy security is critical for businesses, workers and communities in our province. When we examine the approximately 16.12 million allocated for energy initiatives to coordinate the Western Cape Energy Resilience Programme, once again, we see performance indicators measured through reports and technical processes, not actual delivery of electricity, even though this is not a direct provincial competence.

The people and the economy of the Western Cape cannot switch on reports when

the power goes out. Therefore, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, to the hon Wendy, can the Premier inform this House how many additional megawatts of electricity this programme will deliver in accordance with which timeframes, milestones and energy mix? As much as the DA portrays the Western Cape Province as an island unto itself, it is not. Disruptions caused by global geo-economic and geopolitical developments affects livelihoods and businesses in our province.

This is due to our integration with global energy markets, supply chains, trade, shipping, exports, aviation and tourism. The continued unprovoked US/Israeli war on Iran and the effects of consequential Iranian retaliation for their sovereignty on a wider Middle East and Arabian Gulf, threatens the Western Cape economy. Global energy and chemicals commodity price volatility increases demand for alternative fuels, while fertiliser and food supply disruptions push up agricultural and food prices.

Rising oil and fuel prices increase logistics costs, public transport and essential goods. Farmers and farm workers, small businesses, poor and working-class households across the Western Cape feel these consequences most acutely. This also creates new future proof and economic resilience opportunities for global positioning. Amongst others, there are three that stand out, which I will briefly mention for the purposes of today's debate.

Capturing long-term rerouted trade flows through the Port of Cape Town. Not just temporarily for this shock, higher global food and commodity prices creates

improved export margins if we have developed the ability to redirect exports from disrupted Middle East routes to Europe, Asia and the United States. Agritech and value addition policies that reposition the Western Cape as a premium, reliable food exporter in a volatile global market, thereby meeting the demand for food security solutions in Africa and globally.

In conjunction with National Government, this includes regulatory frameworks enabling new breeding technologies, which enhance crop protection, improve yield resilience and open up multi-market trade channels, whilst empowering our small-scale farmers and contributing to sustainable and inclusive farming practices. Our major trading partners, like the EU, are already adapting their regulatory standards to embrace this shift. We must not risk Western Cape agriculture being left behind.

The conflict is destabilising traditional tourism hubs in the Middle East, with aviation disruptions and infrastructure damage disrupting Gulf tourism markets and shifting global travel patterns due to risk perceptions. If approached correctly, the Western Cape can seize gaining market share, even in a shrinking global tourism market, by capturing diverted long-haul tourists seeking safe destinations and premium experiences. The DA-led Provincial Government prides itself on the trade ties with the US. We must know, how is it mitigating the adverse impact of the unprovoked US/Israeli attack against Iran on our provincial economy?

The Premier recently met with a US ambassador designate to South Africa.

International relations matter, and at times like these, they must be leveraged for maximum good. Through you, hon Deputy Speaker, to the Premier, how will he use his engagements with international partners and the US Government to call for peace and an end to the war in the Middle East? This includes the cessation of US/Israeli provocation to prevent rising global tensions from further driving up the cost of living for the people of our province, the profitability of business, and the competitiveness of the provincial economy.

The over 1.436 billion to the Centre of e-innovation is the largest portion of the Department's budget, more than 525 million of which is allocated to the broadband ecosystem. These investments are meant to support digital Government services, digital public infrastructure, and connectivity across the province. Digital transformation must reach the digital divide, greatest disconnected and poor disadvantaged schools and communities, not the most convenient. Recently, Sentinel Primary School in Imizamo Yethu was without internet connectivity for more than a month.

It was only after we wrote to the Department of Education that connectivity was restored. It is unjustifiable spending 1.4 billion on digital government while learners sit in the classrooms without internet. Digital transformation cannot exist in strategy documents only, and for the already connected, it must close the digital divide. The most critical challenge facing the Western Cape is youth unemployment. Nearly one in three young people cannot find work, yet the Provincial Government relies on a more than decades-old outdated 2013 Youth Development Strategy.

The economy, technology, labour markets, and the future of work has changed. So has the realities facing young people. The failure by the Premier and the DA Government to update a living provincial youth policy framework, reflects a lack of political policy willpower to mainstream the interests of young people at the apex of Provincial Government. Hon Deputy Speaker, leadership is measured by experiential change and the quality of life of our people, their human dignity, their ability to do meaningful work, their access to inclusive opportunities, and their safety and security.

Leadership is also measured by accountability standards expected of those who occupy positions of public authority. For the reasons outlined in this debate, the failure of leadership, the gap between policy and delivery, the growing pressures facing residents in this province, the ANC cannot support the Department of the Premier's budget. Hon Winde should embrace his suffix and do the honourable thing and resign with immediate effect. If he refuses to do so, the responsibility falls on his party.

Before he exits as the party leader, hon Steenhuisen must demonstrate that the DA truly believes in accountability and before she exits as the Federal Chair, hon Zille must demonstrate that the standards of the DA, that the standards which the DA claims to uphold nationwide, apply equally to the Western Cape ...[intervenes]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Sayed, your time has expired.

Mr M K SAYED (ANC): ...Government and Premier can deliver to them, I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time has expired. Hon members, I am able to announce that the following speaker is delivering his maiden speech in the WCPP. Utilising the hybrid system, I recognise the hon Adams.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): [No audible answer]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise the hon Adams.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): [No audible answer]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Adams, are you able to unmute?

Mr B ADAMS (PA): [No audible answer]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a maiden speech. I will get direction from the Table Staff. Hon members, seeing that this is a maiden speech, I will give the member one final opportunity before he forfeits his speaking time. Hon Adams?

Mr B ADAMS (PA): [No audible answer]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Adams?

Mr B ADAMS (PA): [No audible answer]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, I can confirm that the member has since exited the online platform. I would assume that he logged out in order to log in again. Within 20 seconds, we will then promptly commence.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Hon Speaker, Speaker, apologies.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon Adams.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Hon Speaker, I seem to have...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The WCPP, hon Adams, the WCPP is not only agile in our approach, but we want to confirm that this is your maiden speech. Convention will apply and your time will commence on your first word. You may proceed, hon Adams.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Hon Speaker, am I audible?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, you are.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Hon Speaker, at this stage, I will not make any speech. I will in due time make a speech. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Duly noted, hon Adams. We proceed and I recognise the hon Walters.

Mr T WALTERS (DA): Hon Speaker, there seems to be an expectation of a good speech here, so I hope I meet the expectation. But it is actually more of a reflective speech. And Hon Speaker, let me first start by indicating the support of the Democratic Alliance for this Budget Vote. Hon Speaker, it is important to reflect on the recent past to contextualise why we support this Budget. When the DA won the elections in the Western Cape in 2009, it was not merely a transition of power from one party to another or simply doing the same things we inherited better.

Rather, it was viewed as an opportunity to define the very meaning of government differently and in the process create a demonstration effect of what is possible in our diverse nation with its wonderful people, but with a troubled past. It was an important moment for the DA because it was an opportunity to breathe life into the underlying intention of our Constitution that provinces should be entities where best practice could be tested, compared and expanded.

This is part of our contribution towards creating a new, successful and confident nation and it is a task that we took very seriously, it is something that is more important than any individual interest or political party. It was the beginning of a purposeful endeavour to reshape government from a faltering and wobbly bureaucratic behemoth, essentially organised mentally and administratively in

the same manner government has, frankly, to be honest, administratively organised itself since 1910. It is a hundred years of habit that we were dealing with.

This enterprise was aimed at creating a nimble 21st century responsive government, intimately aligned to a dynamic social environment, rapid technological change, and an increasingly complex national and international setting. Of course, administrative and mental silos had to be opened up to effectively and transversely respond to the challenges of both the present and the future, often in a state structure not predisposed to change without us having all the levers to change it immediately available.

In short, government itself had to change its very DNA, sometimes not fast enough for us enthusiasts, but in this process, the whole-of-government approach was born. The continuous seeding of a different way of thinking, until today, transversal cooperation seems second nature. It was hopefully the beginning of the end of government organising people according to how it suited government. It was therefore also an opportunity in 2009 to start to change our residents' fortunes from subjects owing loyalty to a party or state to that of empowered independent citizens actively contributing their talents and helping to shape a nimble government aligned to society's plurality of needs.

To embed this vision, the whole-of-society approach was born to drive that change and to shape what government's role must be, a concept that needed to

be seeded and nurtured continuously. Hon Speaker, that brings us to the moment we are in today, considering one of the building blocks of this process that I outlined. Without sustainable finances, nothing we do presently or want to do in the future is possible. This budget, we can see all the threads of the whole-of-society approach and the whole-of-government approach being so seeded and nurtured.

Yet these seeds that we are growing face a scarcity of resources, and it requires enormous discipline, competence, and the judicious use of finances for this vision to sustainably move forward. It is essentially to emphatically move this province forward and also to inspire the rest of South Africa to do the same, that we support this budget. [Drinking water] This is why we need a water resilient province. This budget also needs to go beyond fiscal discipline. For this vision to succeed, problems have to be seen as opportunities.

For example, relentless technological change could either become a problem we are struggling with or an opportunity to flourish. Even the problems in the rest of the country impacting on the Western Cape had to be treated as opportunities to attract people, investment, and jobs to the Western Cape by being more attractive as a destination. †Agbare Speaker, dit is juis omdat ons sien hoe hierdie take wat ons vir onself gestel het, ingemessel word in die tekstuur van die Wes-Kaap, dat ons hierdie begroting steun. Dit is juis omdat die fiskale dissipline wat nodig is om hierdie visie volhoubaar te maak, dat ons dit sien in die begroting en dat ons dit steun.

Hierdie fiskale dissipline word vanjaar, soos elke jaar, onderstreep deur skoon oudits wat nie net in hierdie Departement nie, maar oor al ons departemente nie net 'n prestasie geword het nie, maar 'n gewoonte. Ons sien verder in ons jaar- en kwartaalverslae hoe die hulpbronne wat so versigtig gekoester word, ook daadwerklik aangewend word, soos wat daar beplan is om dit aan te wend. Dit is verder juis omdat ons sien hoe die probleme van die toekoms aangegryp word as geleentheid om selfs beter te funksioneer, dat ons hierdie begroting steun.

Die Wes-Kaap het die onafwendbare veranderinge in tegnologie, wat geen land kan stop nie, omskep in 'n geleentheid om 'n beter regering, 'n beter diensleweraar en 'n beter beleggingsbestemming te word. Soos ek laas week gesê het, is die Wes-Kaap tans nie net die leier in Suid-Afrika met digitale konnektiwiteit nie, dit is ook 'n internasionale bloudruk van hoe daar aangepas kan word met die ekonomie van die toekoms. Maar meer belangrik, gaan al die voordele wat met digitale konnektiwiteit saamgaan, juis na die historiese taak om die talente van die armes in te skakel by so 'n toekoms en al ons inwoners, waar hulle ook al vandaan kom, te laat floreer.

In hierdie verband, bou die Wes-Kaapse Regering verder, onder die leiding van die objektief gesproke, die beste Premier in die land, die digitale infrastruktuur wat ons al ons inwoners in die toekoms ingaan, lei. Ons sien hoe die 82 e-Sentrums verder uitgebrei word in hierdie begroting en verder aangevul word met e-Kiosk, om sistemies of sistematies vir die mees vergete, geïsoleerde inwoners van onder andere ons platteland, 'n nuwe wêreld van geleentheid oop te maak.

[Hon Speaker, it is because we see how these tasks that we had set for ourselves, are bedded into the texture of the Western Cape that we support this Budget. It is exactly because of the fiscal discipline that is necessary to make this vision viable, that we see it in the Budget and that we support it.

This year, this fiscal discipline, as every year, is underlined by clean audits that not only in this Department, but across all our departments not only became an achievement, but a habit. We see further in our annual and quarterly reports how the resources are being cautiously cherished, also being applied purposefully, as was planned to be applied. Further it is exactly because we see how the problems of the future are grasped as opportunities to function even better, that we support this Budget.

The Western Cape has converted the inevitable changes in technology, that no country can stop, into an opportunity to become a better government, a better service provider and a better investment destination. As I said last week, the Western Cape is not only currently the leader in South Africa in digital connectivity, it is also an international blueprint as to how to adapt to the economy of the future. But more importantly, all the advantages that go with digital connectivity include the historical task to include the talents of the poor in such a future and let all our citizens, wherever they come from, flourish.

In this regard the Western Cape Government builds further, under the leadership of objectively spoken, the best Premier in the country, the digital infrastructure to lead all our citizens facing the future. We see how the 82 e-Centres are

further expanded in this Budget and are further supplemented with e-Kiosk, to systemically or systematically open a new world of opportunities for the most forgotten, isolated citizens of amongst others of the platteland.]

Hon Speaker, we further see how this inherent process of mass inclusion is reflected in the anticipated cyclone activity progress of Broadband 2.0 to more than 2,000 sites. It serves both to create better responsiveness by Government, and transversal alignment across Government, and ultimately will save money through time and efficiency gains. The judicious planning to ensure success is reflected in the forward-looking investment in AI and cyber security measures.

So many good intentions are part of the rubble of failed service delivery because of poor risk management and short-term thinking, and this Budget does not fall into that particular pothole. This ongoing investment in real change supports the Western Cape Government's quest for service delivery and governance intervention guided by empirical data, interpreting it, and better directing scarce resources. It will save money through exponentially faster and more effective decision-making.

And saving money means that there is more money available to deal with the crucial problems of poverty and unemployment. Hon Speaker, we had the opportunity in this Committee to visit two control centres that actually allowed us to see and experience truly transversal responsive systems. These investments are game-changers happening right in front of us. We see how the whole-of-government approach is directly transforming outdated bureaucratic

models. We can, for example, see the success in the Western Cape Superior Disaster Management Capacity, just to use one example.

We saw in our oversight how it cross-pollinates within the province, and hopefully soon in the rest of South Africa. We can confidently state that because of this mind-set, this Government is the leader in service delivery and the leader in all good governance indicators, especially for those who need it most. Speaking of the poor and excluded, this Budget is also laying the groundwork for the key ingredient for economic growth – energy.

Hon Speaker, the energy resilience plans of the province directly turn another problem into an opportunity and again, provide us with another reason to support this Budget. South Africa, not too long ago, was in a full-blown energy crisis, the end of which is not certain. South Africa, even if all workable economic policies, investment levels and up-skilling and training of workers are in place, simply lacks the electricity to economically grow beyond two to three percentage points.

In addition, electricity prices have grown manifold since the 1990s, both curbing economic growth. We have seen the steel industry and huge swathes of the mining industry collapse due to the cost and unavailability of electricity and also in terms of its direct impact on poor households. This means more poverty and it also adds to the cruelty of poverty. The Western Cape's transversal approach specifically cross-pollinates its whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach by directly engaging municipalities to develop the

mind-set and capacity to take advantage of the recent liberalisation in the electricity market, coupled with the emphasis of clean energy in the energy mix.

Municipalities are traditionally resistant to this type of change, both because of a 100-year institutional history of State monopoly in the energy market that stunted local innovation, and because they depend in many cases on the reselling of electricity for their revenue. This Government approach of assisting municipalities to build both the institutional capacity in the world to change their revenue models again turns a problem into an opportunity by producing and selling electricity into the grid.

It does so by involving the private sector, actively facilitating investment, providing capacity, and also using the untapped capital of Western Cape Government sites. This approach, as I indicated last week, may very well make the Western Cape load-shedding free and a net exporter of electricity by 2032, if the current investment in site expansion trajectory holds. No economy can create jobs or include the poor without energy, and this model is a game-changer in the lives of the poor, opening up opportunities that are unheard of in other provinces.

It lessens the compounded costs for the poor through ultimately lowering electricity costs, draws investment to the Western Cape, and above all, generates jobs that unlock the poverty trap that is at the root of so many of our problems. Another reason why we are supporting this Budget is that this Government is investing in its long-term capabilities and is actively creating a

governmental organisation that is benchmarked with the private sector as a desirable place to work, and also in terms of efficiency and results.

This is necessary to retain the intellectual capital that will be needed to sustain our vision. In this regard, the up-skilling of employees through the Provincial Training Institute, a wonderful blueprint in itself for other provinces, is an investment that needs our support. The transversal nature of government, the true transformative rule of government, gets stronger and stronger, and more and more people are drawn into this whole-of-society ecosystem.

Lastly, the DA must welcome, as part of our own hard-wiring, the strengthening of the Provincial Forensic Services and the way this Government is directly enlisting the help of the public through its public anti-fraud and corruption engagements. Hon Speaker, to conclude, I have demonstrated how this Budget speaks to a long-standing vision of government and an achievable ideal of a positive self-shaping of society. I have spoken to how we deeply believe in this process.

Now, we often heckle and fight with one another as political parties, but I genuinely believe that this Budget is part of a puzzle of a picture of the future that can inspire us all. I know that there are parties that do not support this budget, and that is of course their right to do so. If I can reflect on the hon Sayed's speech, he was referring to the importance of job creation, the importance of energy, the importance of many of the things that we see as reasons to support this budget.

I think it is actually something where we can align. You do not necessarily have to support the vision or the Budget, but I think we can align to a particular vision. In this regard, I actually want to commend member Windvogel of the ANC, who as we know is, she is unfortunately not here, but as we know, is not yet politically persuaded, but for a willingness to brainstorm ideas about how we can make energy resilience work better for the poor. I had a very good engagement with her during one of our oversight visits, and I certainly intend to continue with that conversation.

I do believe, however, that if you dish it out, you must be willing to take it. Hon member Sayed, I think you will appreciate this, through you, hon Deputy Speaker. The Hon Sayed did reflect what the Conduct Committee actually described as administrative errors, as a massive ethical failure of groundbreaking proportions and it is still actually in a process of appeal, but yet at another point in his speech, he actually appeals to the Premier to solve the world's problems, international dynamics.

So clearly, he does support the Premier as a world leader with the international impact, but he does not support him in the Conduct Committee. But having said that, I do think he supports the hon Wendy for his international impact, and I think he also acknowledged in his speech that the Western Cape is superior to other provinces. Having said that, I will certainly convey his message to our former Premier, Helen Zille, while she is fixing the mess that the ANC left in Johannesburg. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Walters. [Interjection] Order, members. I recognise the hon Premier.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, and thank you very much to the Leader of the Opposition and the Chair of the Committee for your inputs. I am going to start off with a reply to the Chair. First of all, thank you for your role as the Chair. You mentioned a few things that I thought I would just reiterate or reflect upon. I think the systems of government, the whole-of-government approach or the whole-of-society approach, but I think it drills down even deeper than that.

It is about how we respond to whether it be the world, as this last bit of banter has spoken about, or whether it be our systems of government, whether it be the responsibility that we take and the value of responsiveness and making sure that good governance is embedded in every single thing that we do, and then it is links back to the systems. It links back to the PCF. The Chair spoke about the municipalities and how we come together in the regular Premier's consultative forum spaces.

But right now, we are dealing with a few issues that our residents face, be it water, be it foot and mouth, or now be it perceived fuel shortages. That meeting takes place every single week with all of the districts, the Mayors, the municipal managers, and, of course, the whole of government. It is about good governance and how we enable our good governance as a habit. We focused on it. Now, it

must become a habit because now the good governance is the foundation, and that leads you to then enable each department, each space, each project, each manager.

It is a habit of good governance. Now, the focus is delivery to the residents of our province. It is about fiscal discipline. I remember the engagement that we had with the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and the Premier brought his top management, brought his Ministers, and we sat in the convention centre, and we started to speak about good governance and fiscal discipline. It was pointed out how we make sure that there are no accruals in our Government, and they almost stopped the meeting to say, hang on a second, you mean you have got no accruals?

We explained how we manage those last few weeks or months of the Budget and how we make sure that the transfer of just what you have allocated you need to spend is sent through to you so you do not have accruals, where they in their province are sitting with R7 billion worth of accruals. That sets your next year's budget at a massive disadvantage when you have got to still pay back for over-expenditure or accruals from the previous year.

It is about the system of reporting, whether it is the Annual Reports to this House, or our record of delivery that we report on to the citizens, or even our open government, where we regularly have our first Thursdays, where it is first come, first serve, and you can engage with our Government. Whether it is our call centre operators who answer calls from the residents, from the citizens, or

whether it links through to our broadband platform, and how the broadband platform is about accessibility, the broadband platform is about enabling, the broadband platform is about making sure that there is fairness in the system across our province.

So, you could be in the most rural part of our province, and you still get connectivity and connected to jobs, education, whatever it is that you are looking for. The dignity that comes with that, that is what this Government is all about and so, thank you very much, Chair. Thank you for those inputs.

Now, to the hon Leader of the Opposition, thank you very much for your inputs. I will just say quickly in the issue that you keep raising, number one, that, of course, you do know that we are in an appeal process, so we must allow that process to take place. But number two, you spoke about trust. Now, our trust that you did read the Annual Report, because it was reported in the Annual Report, there is the first item of trust. This was an amount that was saving taxpayers money and a refund that went to ...[intervenes]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Premier, are you able to take your seat? Hon Sayed is at the point of order.

Mr M K SAYED (ANC): Yes, first point of order, the Premier should speak through you. I spoke through you when I addressed him. Number two, just as a correction, I read the Annual Report, and it is because I read the Annual Report that we lodged the complaint, actually. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Said, hon members and the hon Premier, I trust that you will speak through the Chair. On the latter point, that is not a point of order. We will proceed.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. I am excited that the hon member did read the Annual Report. He also pointed out that is exactly where he found the declaration. It was Government declaring a refund to Government and that is exactly where it was reported. So exactly where he read it was in the right place and so I am very glad that he read it there. Then ...[intervenes]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Premier, the member has highlighted that he is wanting the attention of the Chair. So I recognise ...[intervenes]

Mr M K SAYED (ANC): Is the Premier willing to answer a simple question? Just a simple question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: First take your seat. Premier, are you willing to take a question? The Premier is willing to take a question.

Mr M K SAYED (ANC): Is the Premier a member of the Legislature? Can he answer whether he is a member of this House or not?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Premier, over to you.

The PREMIER: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Sometimes they can, and I could probably go on to if you ask a stupid question, but I will not go there. The hon member knows that I am a member of this Legislature, yes. Secondly, can I get on to the issues that the hon member did raise? And he raised issues about policy. He raised issues about policy and it was quite interesting because he raised issues in such a way that said, why are we spending this money on policy? Why do we need this Policy Unit?

Well, let me actually say to him that this is actually probably the biggest downfall of the ANC in South Africa over the last 30 years, is they have not been agile with their policy. They have not reviewed their policies. They have not gone and had a look at where policies are not working. So that is the biggest difference here and he raises issues about a Policy Unit. He should actually go back and say, we need to analyse the economic policy of the ANC, because quite frankly, it is not delivering the economy that the people deserve in South Africa.

He should go and analyse the safety policy in our country, because quite frankly, under the ANC leadership of the last 30 years, that policy has not built safer societies, has not reduced murder rates, has not made it more safe for citizens and residents of South Africa. That is a massive policy failure. He should go and have a look at the transport policy, the ports policy, the SOEs and how SOEs are managed, because they are total failures in our country and that policy needs review.

I sincerely hope that the GNU is now putting enough pressure so policy reviews are taking place. You can see policy review happening when it comes to Home Affairs, because there is a DA Minister in the GNU and he is looking at those policies, changing how we are delivering services to our residents, getting IDs online, allowing private sector to play a role in delivering Government services. That is how you change policy and how you effect change to delivery to residents in our country. It all is based on policy and policy principles.

Then, of course, he asks a second question. He asks the second question about can the Premier tell us how many megawatts? Well, yes, I can. So the hon member knows that we have a 5,700 megawatt plan for delivery. We also know, and I am sure the hon member has read, just like he read the Annual Report, and through you I wonder whether he has read this report, the Overview of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure and on page 117, the hon member will have a look at the energy and water allocations in our province and you will have a look at exactly each department, where each of those energy plans are, how many megawatts are going to be delivered by each of those departments across this province.

But at a higher level, we know that just short of a thousand megawatts delivered a year and a half ago, right now a thousand megawatts in development, 535 megawatts of rooftop, 112 megawatts of wheeling power. Then, of course, there is the energy systems that are on our schools, the energy systems that are on our hospitals. These are rooftop with batteries and relieving pressure of the

account system of an ever-increasing burden on an electricity bill, where NERSA keeps on giving electricity increases way in excess of inflation and perhaps that is another area that the ANC needs to go and review policy on, so that we can actually deliver more effective, cost-effective services to the residents of our province and of our country.

Then the hon member raises the issue of ports and trade and again, I have already said there is a problem with failure there, a policy position and failure. Our ports do not deliver at all. They are rated in the world as some of the worst in the world when it comes to efficiencies and effectiveness of our ports. But the hon member goes on to talk about meeting with the Ambassador of the USA, or perhaps it is the EU that I meet with. Perhaps it is China. It is all of our trading partners. We have a very effective, in this Department, international relations team.

Last year, you would have seen how the regional leaders were put together. That then transformed into our Investment Conference and that is how you grow the economy and create jobs. You look for new markets. When we saw a disruption in the US because of tariffs, we immediately, through the Minister of the Economy and Agriculture, looked at new markets. So suddenly, wine into Canada makes real good sense to us. We looked at how we could move into these new markets and that is why out of all of our provinces, nine provinces, there is one province through you, Mr hon Deputy Speaker, there is one province that exports 58 percent of South Africa's agricultural goods.

It is this province because of exactly that and I did meet with the US ambassador and we spoke about how do we grow investment and how do we grow trade? That is what it is about. And whomever I meet with from an international market point of view, it is about those items of growing investment, growing trade, growing tourism. Why? Because we are obsessed with making sure that we give more and more opportunity to our residents for getting a job, for leading a life of dignity, for through that job, enabling them to do what they would like to do with their lives, enabling them to look after their families, put food on the table, put their kids through university and find a future of hope here in our country.

I also wanted to say that when he spoke about the digital services, let me see where I put that piece of paper. When he spoke about the digital services to a school that had lost connectivity. Thank you very much for reporting it and I trust that that is now connected again. Obviously, things can go wrong. Cables can be stolen or dug up or broken or whatever the reason is. We need to be responsive and we need to get in there and repair it again to the nearly 2,000 sites now that are available, these are the free Wi-Fi hotspots available to our residents.

It is about getting it fixed. Unlike, for example, water in Johannesburg that year after year, no water is delivered. You complain about it. You look, you contact your municipality. It does not get fixed. Here, when they are raised, we fix them. Make sure we repair it. He also spoke youth unemployment in our province, in our country and I absolutely agree through you, Mr hon Deputy

Speaker, with the Leader of the Opposition. I agree. Youth unemployment is a major issue. But it is interesting, in this province, youth unemployment dropped in the last quarter report by 6.6 percent.

This is actually as a result of policy, as a result of intervention, as a result of enabling, as a result of making sure that we put our citizens and residents first and what happens over time? You get more investment. You grow trade. You grow your economy and more and more young people get jobs and opportunities and that is how we can say that our youth unemployment rate is dropping. Policy difference – that is what voters have to utilise in making their decision when they go to the polls, whose policies work and whose policies do not work.

And then perhaps just as a last point, it was raised by the Chair, it is also raised by the hon Leader of the Opposition, the impact of what is happening in the Middle East. And I think of late, you would have seen both National Government and Provincial Government as part of that meeting that I say takes place every week dealing with our disasters. Water in our towns like in Knysna, which, again, got the wrong policies and the wrong leadership, water cannot be delivered properly and we also deal with the foot and mouth and, Minister, thank you very much.

Through you, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Disaster Management, Minister Bredell and Minister Meyer, you can see the urgency. You can see the response. You can see how we are making sure that vaccines are going to where they are needed and you can reduce that risk. That is what this bringing

together on a weekly basis. And now we have added fuel, the fuel pricing, the consequence of that fuel pricing. It is going to affect inflation. It is going to affect food prices. It is going to affect, at the moment, the availability.

And what we are seeing, it looks to me as if we are seeing people hoarding fuel, whether they are down at the filling station level or in the supply level. Now, that is unacceptable. You cannot hoard fuel to buy it at the cheaper price, to sell it at the more expensive price at the cost of our economy and our residents being able to live and go about their daily lives. So we will be getting reports today and tomorrow. We will then gather as that emergency meeting or that disaster management meeting to have a look at what are those other levers that we can pull.

In actual fact, on Friday, I also wrote to the President informing him of this, of what is happening with the fuel hoarding. That is unacceptable. I will reiterate it is unacceptable to punish our residents while there is no need. We are not in the position where we have to ration or hoard or look after this resource. We have enough supply and with that, thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, that concludes the debate on Vote 1. The office of the Premier and the Department will now vacate the bay. Minister Meyer, I trust that there are guests. We will allow for guests representing the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. We will also ensure that the Minister receives the podium at this time. Welcome to the HOD and senior management of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. I now

recognise the Minister. Minister, before I recognise the Minister. I will note the Secretary to read the third Order of the Day.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 12: Economic Development and Tourism – Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation Bill [B 1-2026].

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

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, hon Premier, hon members of the Cabinet, legislators, leaders of business, civil society and people of the Western Cape, and those of our colleagues who are online.

It is my privilege to table Vote 12: Economic Development and Tourism, for the year 2026/2027 financial year today in this House.

Our theme is simple and powerful. Hon Deputy Speaker, our purpose, our theme is “Delivering for impact and with kindness”. Hon Deputy Speaker, this theme had a pretext. The pretext was provided by the Western Cape Minister of Finance, Ms Deidre Baartman, when she tabled the Provincial Budget on 12 March 2026 in this House.

Her theme was, and I quote:

“A budget that delivers growth with discipline and care.”

I want to thank her for that theme because I am building on that theme, but we understand that our theme “Impact with kindness”, kindness is not soft, kindness is discipline, as she pointed out, clarity and the intentional building of confidence. It is the difference between a government that obstructs growth and one that enables growth.

If you listened very carefully to what the hon Premier said in the previous speech, it is a government that enables growth. It is a leadership imperative and a powerful economic catalyst. Hon members of this House know that I have one single laser sharp focus, as given by the hon Premier, and that is to focus on Growth for Jobs, and this is a province that is moving forward.

Hon Deputy Speaker, our Growth for Jobs strategy is a shared commitment. So every rand, every policy, every programme must contribute to faster growing, more competitive and more inclusive Western Cape.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I listened very attentively to the hon Minister of Finance and what a brilliant speech, because her speech was exclusively focussing on growth. She mentioned quite a lot of agriculture, but that is a discussion between the two of us over a cup of tea. I want to say that this commitment is still the commitment, because we believe in a competitive, more inclusive Western Cape.

The results speak for itself. In 2025 the Western Cape achieved 1,4% economic

growth, double of that of 2024. Unemployment dropped from 20,7% to 19,6%, but by direction of the hon Premier, 19,6% is nothing to boast about, but the trend is that we decline in terms of unemployment and this Government and this House must work with us together to significantly reduce the number of unemployed.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is no coincidence that the hon Minister of Finance referred to agriculture, because agriculture grew by 16,2%, that is R3,7 billion then. Finance and business services added another R3,9 billion, with our province now hosting two-thirds of all the national BPO jobs. Thank you, Nezaam, to you and your team. Tourism, thank you, Ilse, because it reached a record of 1,12 million international arrivals. Thank you to Wesgro, our CEO, excellent work being done by Ronel and her team. This, hon Deputy Speaker, is what happens when a province governs with clarity, with partnership and with kindness.

We, as the hon Premier and the hon Leader of the Official Opposition mentioned, we are facing a global risk. The hon Minister of Finance has referred to the global risk. Our colleagues in the audience are familiar with this global risk. However, hon Deputy Speaker, delivering with kindness also requires vigilance.

The Middle East conflict continues to affect global trade, as being said by our predecessors. Hon Deputy Speaker, tomorrow night at 17:00 until 18:00 the hon Premier and hon Minister Bredell will convene a meeting with all 30

Mayors and 30 municipalities and additional people, to look at the impact of the crisis in the Middle East on the Western Cape economy. The Director-General has already commissioned the Bureau for Economic Research. My own team, under the leadership of Jo-Ann, has done an outstanding economic analysis of the impact of that.

The Middle East conflict continues to affect global trade. Shipping delays of 10 to 14 days; rising insurance, as the hon Premier mentioned, and fuel costs and market exposure in the UAE and Iraq are placing pressure on our agricultural exports, especially perishables. Higher oil prices are also affecting household budgets.

To address these challenges, hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Government will continue with a plan and data and act with agility and invest in long-term competitiveness. To the countries and the Consul-Generals in the audience, we are looking forward to constructive engagements, mutually beneficial to both of us.

Hon Deputy Speaker, 2026/2027 Vote 12 receives R596,7 million. This Budget invests in enabling growth, as the hon Premier mentioned, supporting investors, creating jobs and strengthening the tourism and trade ecosystems with our colleagues in the audience as well. We continue to support institutions that convey that strategy into action, into jobs through public entities and those are public entities of this Government that are both functional, efficient and effective. Wesgro, Saldanha Bay IDZ and Atlantis SEZ. These partners are

the engines of economic growth, industrialisation, tourism development and regulatory stability.

Hon Deputy Speaker, one such partner is Wesgro. Wesgro delivered in 2025/2026 performance, driving growth across air access, cruise tourism, business events, leisure tourism, adventure tourism, investment promotion, trade, film, highlighted by a record airport access and cargo volumes of 1,79 billion. GDPR cruise contribution over R750 million in secured conference bids.

Hon Deputy Speaker, every week my staff come to my office and say, “Minister, please sign these bids.” These are people around the world that want to come and invest in their conferences, their meetings, incentives, conferences and events, and I want to thank Wesgro for driving that economic growth strategy, because this is the headquarters of global events.

Every week I sign numerous of such commitments and so we will reach out to India, China, R14,6 billion in facilitated investment with major green economy projects, over R5,38 billion in trade declarations and more than R1 billion in projected film export value, collectively strengthening jobs in this province, strengthening exports and the Western Cape global competitiveness.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we have a strategic focus in this Budget. We also want to strengthen governance, digital transformation and clean audits, because a well-run department is an act of respect towards taxpayers' money. I want to

repeat this, because in South Africa, we have a problem. We continue to strengthen governance, digital transformation and clean audits, because a well-run department is an act of respect towards taxpayers' money.

Economic planning and development, hon Deputy Speaker, a kinder State is a State that removes obstacles, not creates them. For that reason we focus on red tape reduction, ease of doing business, evidence planning, township and rural economic upliftment, but we are also involved in the trade sector development.

Hon Deputy Speaker, our trade and sector development initiatives drive export competitiveness, market access, investment promotion, sectors scaling in green economy, manufacturing and advanced services, but, Hon Deputy Speaker, you know in politics you do not waste a good crisis. There is a crisis in the Middle East, this is now the time to upscale our energy transformation, this is an opportunity to upscale our green hydrogen, this is a time to upscale the effectiveness of our harbour, this is the time to upscale our exports, this is a time not to compete but to out-compete other regions in this area, and so this is exactly what we are doing.

We have recently learned from one exporter that a crisis in the Middle East means 15 days longer at sea, but apples from this region, in Grabouw, pears in Grabouw, one week you are in Egypt, into Saudi Arabia, into Jeddah. We have a competitive edge. While other people take three weeks, we can now turn this into about a week. Each export job strengthens a family and stabilises communities. I am determined to triple my economic diplomacy initiatives of

the previous year because of this crisis.

Business regulation and governance, hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Government regulates firmly, fairly and with humanity, and ensuring compliance while enabling economic activity in consumer protection. Our economic empowerment and transformation initiatives include SMME development, youth entrepreneurship, informal sector development and supplier development. This is how we expand opportunity where it was previously denied.

Tourism, arts and entertainment. Tourism is an economy built on welcoming people. We prioritise destination marketing, air and cruise access, visitor safety, community-based tourism events, culture and heritage development. Tourism is not just beautiful places, it is also about beautiful people, as the hon Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport often reminds us.

Hon Deputy Speaker, what is this Budget buying and what is the focus of this Budget? Hon Deputy Speaker, the progress we have made in 2025 is grounded not only in policy and investment, but in the live, work of the people. They are helping us to build confidence, competitiveness in the Western Cape.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I wish to acknowledge several beneficiaries whose contributions are strengthening our economy, deepening inclusion and expanding opportunity, and some of them are in this House today. Investment promotion, business invest when they have confidence in the region and we

have very confident businesses.

Mr Deon Cloete and Mr Nick Ferguson of Cape Winelands Airport are unlocking a catalytic aviation platform that will strengthen our agri-logistics, boost regional tourism and position the Winelands as a future hub of high-value investment, and to capitalise on this business confidence we hosted the inaugural Western Cape Investment Summit to enable deal-making and to say we are organised, we have a plan and we are open for engagement, but with discipline and care, and so we organised, we planned and we are open to engagement, and there are real opportunities.

Ms Mmakoma Komape of Earth Waste Africa, whose project is on our deal book, is advancing green industrialisation, driving by expanding electronic waste recycling, building a circular economy, ecosystem that creates jobs and mitigates environmental risk.

Thank you to the team led by Jo-Anne and Ilse, because we had a successful inauguration of our Investment Summit. Together with Wesgro, all our entities and all the Government departments reflected here, assisted us.

Our Tourism Growth Fund supports visitor infrastructure and development. One of our beneficiaries, Mr Matthew Fletcher of Bike and Hike, is expanding authentic township and winelands e-bike experiences that create local jobs, empower guides and diversify our value-added tourism offering.

The hon Premier has already spoken about the energy transition. The Just Energy Transition Investment Plan provides a framework to guide provinces' transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and inclusive economy.

One of the province's key green economy advocates, Mr Lungelo Terence Matiwane of Millennium Green Chart, is pioneering the roll-out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and catalysing green manufacturing opportunities at Atlantis Special Economic Zone. We are not talking, this is delivering in action.

The Department, in partnership with the International Trade Institute of Southern Africa, developed also an export online training platform. Emerging exporters such as Ms Tokozile Entsenga, Mr Lizo Liyaba, Ms Alida Somdaka and Ms Chiniqwa Pretorius of Unitrans, have fully participated in the training opportunities that are provided by this platform. They are building our next generation of globally competitive businesses, they are building our next generation of globally competitive firms, expanding our readiness and strengthening our future trade. As Mogale always reminds me, agriculture is trade. The hon Premier has referred to that as well during his speech.

With regard to the Transporter Representative Organisation, we have resolved to support legitimate initiatives taken by the transporters to organise themselves into structures that can represent them with a broader Port of Cape Town logistics ecosystem. Industry leaders like Mr Ismail Moosa – can he please stand? Thank you, sir, for your great work in this business. Mr Nazir

Veldsman, thank you, sir. This Parliament, through the hon Deputy Speaker, this House recognises the work that you do. We are proud.

Ms Kim Maneveldt, Q Peters Transport, Mr Derrick Garnsey, thank you, thank you very much for your contribution. For the record of this Parliament your name will be forever written in the Hansard. Your grandchildren will be able to see what we have done here. Thank you very much for that.

Mr Basil Honiball, Mr Basil – thank you for the great work that you are doing. For the record, your grandchildren will know that this House, through the hon Deputy Speaker, will recognise your work, because your work is now in the records of this Parliament and this is a major achievement, but for us the fact, the work that you are doing in the export, and thank you for inviting me recently to your symposium, I really appreciate that.

So these are people that have worked tirelessly to professionalise and stabilise and strengthen the logistics ecosystem that underpin our export. It is not easy business to export. We have the people, we have the skills and we have a capable State. So I want to thank them for their work.

Our Economic and Township Development Strategy is nearing an important milestone towards completion. It aims, among other things, to recognise the role of ecosystem stakeholders committed to helping entrepreneurs to reach their potential. Here I would like to acknowledge ecosystem builders, Mr Luvuyo Rani, Mr Marlon Parker who continue to expand entrepreneurial

opportunity, digital inclusion and youth-driven innovation across the townships.

Our Red Tape Reduction Unit, through hon Deputy Speaker, hon member Marais, we have a Red Tape Reduction Unit. Anybody wants to start a business and you come across red tape, please send it to me. We have capable people, because, as the hon Premier said, from the red tape to the red carpet, and so we are rolling out the red carpet for all our international guests, business people, because we do not tolerate red tape.

I want to thank the hon colleagues from the Consulate, because their work is to promote trade, investment and cooperation and friendship.

Hon Deputy Speaker, allow me now to reflect on the progress, because we believe in investment. Our 2025 showcased R400 billion in opportunities. 40% of businesses are now in commercial engagement in terms of energy. The green hydrogen strategy is advancing major investors and R13,5 million has been secured for implementation readiness. Red Tape, our business helpline, achieved a 98% case resolution rate.

Tourism Growth Fund leverage R4,2 million in co-funding for new investor experiences. Township economy foundational work for the new SMME and township strategies has been completed.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Government – I have noted that the hon Minister of

Finance, when she tabled her budget on 12 March, she also tabled a very important and significant budget, and this is the provincial and municipal infrastructure. Infrastructure is important for growth.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we continue to back catalytic projects that will define our economic horizon. These include a R8,5 billion investment in the Cape Winelands Airport; Granger Bay V&A Waterfront expansion of R24 billion investment, projecting almost 50 000 jobs in the Western Cape. Belcon Logistics Park, an R850 million cold chain and logistic asset, enabling export growth. These are long-term engines of prosperity.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are delivering with kindness and it is also practical. It is helping SMMEs to navigate red tape, support informal traders, creating a digital opportunity for young people, welcoming investors with competence and warmth, ensuring every tourist feels safe and valued.

Hon Deputy Speaker, kindness also builds trust, trust builds collaboration, collaboration builds confidence and competitiveness, and competitiveness are creating jobs.

Hon Deputy Speaker, accountability in this Government matters, because we see so little in the rest of the country that we value accountability in this province. No other province in this country can match the accountability that they see in this Government, and so we are committed to transparent procurement, strong internal rigorous monitoring, evidence-based disciplined

expenditure. Under the leadership of the hon Minister of Finance we have absolute expenditure discipline. Money will not disappear like in the police. We are not reported by the Auditor-General, in fact the Auditor-General says other provinces must step up in terms of our expenditure discipline. Every rand must work, every programme must deliver a confident, competitive and a kind Western Cape.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape is building an economy of confidence. Confidence not born out of ignorance or arrogance, but from partnership, compassion and results. Today's Budget that I am tabling in this House is a budget for jobs, it is a budget for innovation, it is a budget for tourism, for enterprise, dignity and opportunity. This is the perfect opportunity with war in the Middle East, instability in North America, this is the perfect place to have your tourism.

So the gates are open, we are happy to receive them. We will grow with purpose, we will grow with courage and we will grow with kindness.

Hon Deputy Speaker, let me conclude because I have 10 major announcements.

1. We will position the Western Cape as Africa's foremost centre of technological advancement by investing in innovation networks, attracting strategic investment and enabling growth of up to 600 tech start-ups or scale-ups annually.

2. Export Accelerator Support Programme to deepen our Province global economic footprint. We will expand access to priority international markets and support high potential industries to increase export volumes and diversify our trade opportunities.
3. Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme. This programme, hon Deputy Speaker, will provide targeted support, technical assistance, certification and product development to prepare local firms for global markets, strengthen the capacity to compete internationally.

I was very excited when Ilse showed me the great products from the Western Cape that was exhibited two months ago, in January, in Dubai at Gulfood. There were 202 countries, 855 exhibitions, 1,5 million products in a region that is about 700 million people. That is the space we are interested in. So thank you, Ilse, for showcasing international trade at a major, major significant platform.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is another major announcement: Drones Regulatory Sandbox. The Western Cape will host South Africa's first drone regulatory sandbox, establishing a safe and enabling testing environment, training technological innovation within the fast evolving drone economy. This is going to happen in the West Coast in Saldanha and I am looking forward to our team to showcase this great work.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we know about the developments in the Port of Cape Town, and that is why the maritime logistics strategy is to take decisive action

to improve operational efficiency at the Port of Cape Town due to our digital logistic planning, decongestant intervention, expand their repair capabilities and strengthen our relationship with Transnet, but this is an interim measure. This Government, this hon Premier, the hon Mayor of Cape Town, and I personally believe the ultimate final solution for a Cape Town Port terminal is full privatisation and I hope I have the support in this House for that. Thank you.

I will report tonight to my colleagues that this House is in full support of full scale privatisation. Thank you for your support.

Also Financial Literacy Programme, a comprehensive provincial programme will enhance financial awareness across communities. We are using digital platforms, theatre and educational outreach to empower people in terms of financial literacy, but also, hon Deputy Speaker, ease of doing business. We will continue with our work to reduce red tape and ensure administrative efficiency by developing a performance barometer to improve business environment.

Hon Deputy Speaker, to unlock the full potential of townships and small enterprises we will launch the final strategies to expand access to finance, ease regulatory burdens and strengthen entrepreneurial support systems. Support Navigator, a centralised digital platform, will connect small businesses with accelerators, incubators, start-ups, training institutions and Government programmes, to ensure that entrepreneurs can access the right support at the

right time.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in terms of your body language you want me to wrap up. I am doing exactly that. The smile on your face saying, “Minister, please conclude,” and since I read your body language absolutely perfectly I will conclude.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I hereby now table Vote 12: Economic Development and Tourism, totalling R596,7 million, for the approval of this Legislature.

Thank you for this opportunity and thank you for monitoring my time very strict on the screen. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

†Die ADJUNKSPEAKER: Baie dankie. [The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.] Thank you so much, hon Minister. As the podium is being transported to the next speaker on the speakers list, I have welcomed the HOD and senior management. I trust that those in the gallery that have since joined, which include counsellors, business leaders, industry experts, the diplomatic and the consular quatres, that you are all welcomed here already.

We will promptly proceed and I recognise the hon member Nkondlo.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, as we engage the R596,3 million Budget Vote for Economic Development and Tourism, we must begin by acknowledging a persistent and troubling contradiction.

On paper the Province continues to present ambitious plans, bold strategies and increasing allocations. G4J needs to be an inclusive economic growth approach and instil an inclusive economic growth behaviour, and inclusive economic growth decision-making and resource allocation across.

Which is why, hon Minister, smiling, you shall not get our support for full privatisation, especially given the history of this country, highly unequal, that we can actually put the future of our generations into private hands.

The full industrialisation agenda of the provincial economy must be clear and bold, understood by all social partners to mobilise their support and contribution to that dream. Being told of a trillion rand economy by 2030 is just not enough, especially under the extreme global economic environments that erode the very grand ideas. We live in turbulent times of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. This period requires a certain type of leadership, especially of the economy.

No longer can we afford boutique programmes here and there that seek to keep traditional markets safe, as such safety is no longer guaranteed. We need leaders in public sector that understand its economic role as enabling economic growth and doing so in a fair manner, but also entrepreneurial in nature.

Acts of kindness from a history of a brutal system that forcefully structure each South African's way of life, a history that in this House the colleagues in front

of me likes to call this history and weaponise it for point scoring. This is a history that you refuse to confront in this province, but you are ready, as the hon Premier has done here, you are ready to call on the effects of this history in all the other eight provinces, whilst you keep blind and deaf to the effects of this history here in your province, that you are leading a province where the lives of children and young people are shortened by guns right in your province.

So with everything well that you are doing you have not been able to resolve the problem of the Cape Flats. †Indlu ye [indistinct] imnyama, iyanetha. [The house of the [indistinct] is dark, it's raining.]

The agricultural sector continues to be challenged, even against its resilience, with the domestic industry having serious internal inefficiencies in its old model and design of production, labour practices and heavily reliant on export markets. Agri-processing has become more urgent than just a buzzword and broadening production with localised value chains and production models beyond just food gardens are needed.

What does the G4J have in almost R2 billion allocated to the Budget to ramp up this processing potential and reduce food waste, directing surplus food to respond to food hunger of the very farm workers who are the backbone of this industry? How is this Department responding to the flooding of applications that are directing or redirecting the land use away from agriculture? Is there a response of this Department beyond just the input you make to municipalities? How much of a threat to the agricultural land this move has to our food

security?

As we speak of ramping our industrial capacity, this Department is a show holder department to Wesgro, Freeport Saldanha and Atlantis SEZ. One must ask if there is clear coordinated focus on how these entities and funding thereof are driven to realise their joint and separate mandates, both in the provincial and national projects like the green hydrogen. Have we prepared this project with related green hydrogen related skills from the immediate communities of Atlantis and Saldanha? Also are we tying in the municipal initiatives like the waste recycling plant opened by the City of Cape Town? How is the 8,51% increase to the collective budget of R202,2 million to these entities sufficient? With Wesgro getting only a 4,3% whilst it must carry the investment and growth mandate of this provincial economy and it must do that with speed.

We ask these questions, concerned about how resources in this province are allocated. As we sit here and we heard in the Standing Committee that indeed these budgets, whilst we understand that we do not have the luxury of overflowing fiscus, but with the limited resources we need to put money where we are going to be able to realise significant impact, not only for those that are already properly cushioned in the safe mainstream economy, but also open up the economy to those that are on the periphery.

This period once again forces us as the public representatives and generation of leaders of this time. If this Department beyond studies and comments to municipalities, whether they are focussing and advising on the cost of living

challenges of this economy.

The MERO of 2026 shows a marginal decrease in income inequality in most municipalities just as a percentage points, with the overall of the Western Cape at 0,59 to 0,625%, which is closer to one and that is high inequality. With a population of 7,4 million, where income patterns still show a dominance of low-wage earners. Read, hon Premier, this MERO presented by the MEC, actually it speaks about this. In page 2025 it actually underscores – I am using just the Municipality in Witzenberg where I am a constituency head there. It says:

“Still the dominance of low-wage earners underscores the need for inclusive economic growth strategies.”

And we agree, because you cannot have an economy that is only happy with those that are high up there, but it is not moving up those that are earning at a low level.

Where is this kindness beyond the theatre and speeches, hon Premier? How are these huge numbers of low-income earners to afford services pitched at the level of high-income earners? Especially the wealthy, the rich with dollars, with euros, with pounds and other strong currencies, because they influence the rate and system, and rates and services of this province and its municipalities.

We recognise the need for investment in our economy and we appreciate the

work done to drive this area through the numbers shown from Wesgro investment and trade efforts. What would be a grave indictment is when what is done on one hand does not speak to the other hand, as we drive our economy to a point where the very citizens cannot afford rates and taxes, and will then lose their hard-earned properties or go to bed hungry and are forced to join the line for social grants, and if you do not know that, it is happening here in the province that you are leading, hon Premier. People are losing their properties. Middle-income earners are losing their properties because they cannot afford rates. So do not speak to a citizen in Limpopo, leave the citizen in Eastern Cape, just focus on the citizens that are here in your province.

Jobs drive must not only be about numbers, but quality thereof, as that is when and only the economic justice, dignity and much-needed growth kick in. What is the point of driving a jobs growth that delivers job seekers to modern day slavery, where EPWP, a landing for unskilled, is made a permanent feature and dominant in the very critical sectors.

We were joined by officials of this Department, hon Minister Meyer, in engaging emerging contractors in George, where allegations of gross violations of regulation by big companies contracted in our infrastructure projects are exploiting sub-contracting, telling them they are not willing to pay the regulated rates. Experienced contractors are left to stay at Grade 1 as the value of work given to them is very low and use of undocumented foreign nationals is rampant in construction sites. How are we to realise this growth if we look the other way to these illicit trade methods that turn a leak to our overall

economy and further deprive these sub-contractors and local economies their earnings? Will DEDAT and Department of Infrastructure take up this matter that could potentially lead us not achieving the trillion rand economy?

The quality of these jobs, if those jobs are temporary, insecure and poorly paid, then we are not building an inclusive economy, we are merely managing poverty. If workers remain trapped in cycles of short-term contracts and wages that do not meet the cost of living, then the promise of dignity through work remains unfulfilled. It is not enough, hon Premier, for people to just have a job, the job must be quality so that people can be able also to move themselves into generational wealth. Economic growth that does not translate into stable, decent livelihoods, is growth that excludes.

This Department in page 633 just referenced national priorities with Strategy 2 to reduce poverty and tackle high cost of living, whilst there is no significant response to the plight of those in the periphery of the economy. Clearly the R1 million to the township economy is a joke.

On page 643, this is a clear representation that this Government is far from the task of delivering an inclusive economy. Actually it is an insult to those that are in the township economy. That year in and year out this Government when we ask about township economy, small and rural towns, we are told of some study that you are busy with and you put in a meagre R1 million. This is an insult. Why close out millions of those that are in the informal sector? An already trillion rand economy as researched and confirmed by studies of many,

like *Kasinomics* by GG Alcock. Indeed you could have saved the R1 million for a study because here are studies for you to read, of people that have actually made and taken the time to study the informal sector.

So this R1 million is actually a wasteful expenditure, because it is not like there is not enough studies to understand the informal economy and township economy in particular.

If you talk about efforts to reduce red tape, hon Minister, those are welcome, but they must be judged by results, not rhetoric. For small businesses, entrepreneurs and informal traders, regulatory barriers are hindering their growth. Unless reforms are felt at the ground level they remain incomplete. Those in the informal spaces do not even have a chance to interact with your red Tape Reduction Unit as at first there remains little to no services, no attention directed at them.

LED Units in municipalities remains the biggest hurdle and barrier to the informal sector, and when your Department with Local Government hopefully, hon Minister Bredell, sort out this problem, we will see a sign of kindness you boastfully show, and a zeal to commercial businesses. We shall see that you are at least putting your money where your mouth is.

At the heart of Growth for Job Strategy must be a simple but critical principle that is value for money. Every rand spent must translate into meaningful economic outcomes. Without a clear link between expenditure and job creation

we risk investing heavily without achieving the structural change our economy requires. The promise of economic growth and job creation cannot remain a pipe dream. It must be reflected in decent work, in reduced inequality and in opportunities that reach those who have been historically excluded.

Until we confront the structural challenges of weak implementation, persistent unfilled vacancies and uneven economic inclusion, even the most ambitious strategies will fall short. As the ANC we do not support this Vote. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Nkondlo. Via the hybrid system I recognise hon member Adams.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Thank you, thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I hope I am audible.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You ...[Interjections.]

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Hon Deputy Speaker, apologies to our – yes, hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I apologise to our people. I was a bit speechless earlier with the news that trickled down that another by-election is happening in George, but, hon Deputy Speaker, let me begin by thanking the hon Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, the hon Gayton McKenzie, for the success of a live golf event that was held this weekend in Steyn City golf course in

Johannesburg, which attracted over 100 000 spectators, hon Deputy Speaker.

It shows the power that major events have to stimulate tourism and economic activities. Yet, hon Deputy Speaker, in the Western Cape the Democratic Alliance continues to fail local businesses and communities. Tourism remains concentrated in traditional destinations like Cape Town and Cape Winelands and the Garden Route, as the hon Minister has so boldly declared in his speech about Stellenbosch, while townships and community tourism are neglected. The small benefits that do trickle down †*is maar baie min om van te praat*, [are very few to speak about,] especially when many workers live far from tourist hubs and the Western Cape remains one of the most expensive provinces to live in.

There is no clear strategy to bring tourists closer to the communities or to develop new tourism areas. Instead the Provincial Government focusses mainly on maintaining already established destinations, like Stellenbosch and Cape Town, which excludes communities that were historically neglected under apartheid, like Khayelitsha, like Thembalethu, like other areas in George and Oudtshoorn as well, and, hon Deputy Speaker, the DA cannot claim that they are fighting unemployment by pointing to the number of jobs in the EPWP Programme. These are temporary low-pay jobs that cannot be presented as a real solution to unemployment.

We must therefore ask whether the Premier, hon Alan Winde, lacks the vision and/or the will to drive the inclusive tourism economy of our people that needs

it. Hon Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Adams. I have consulted and can confirm that the record will reflect that that was your maiden speech. I now recognise the hon member Michels.

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Agb Adjunkspeaker, die NCC kan nie hierdie Begroting *Vote support* nie. Onder die Begroting: Ekonomiese Geleenthede en Toerisme word klomp miljoene gerig op groei, belegging en toerisme, maar die vraag bly, groei vir wie? Nie vir die jong man op die Kaapse Vlakte wat werk soek nie, nie vir die enkelma in die Overberg wat sukkel om haar kinders te voed nie, nie vir die klein entrepreneur in die *township* wat geen toegang tot kapitaal het nie. Hierdie Begroting bevoordeel groot besighede, beleggers en gevestigde ekonomiese magte, terwyl werkersgemeenskappe aan die agterkant van die ekonomie bly.

Agb Adjunkspeaker:

1. Hoe regverdig die Departement die voortgesette prioritisering van toerisme en beleggers-gedrewe groeistrategieë terwyl werkloosheid en armoede steeds diep gewortel is in die werkersklas, Bruin gemeenskappe reg oor die Kaapse Vlakte en landelike distrikte?
2. Kan die agb Minister konkrete bewyse lewer dat publieke, privaat-
[Onhoorbaar 2:18:45] vennootskappe en beleggerskonferensie direkte

meetbare ekonomiese insluiting by historiese gemarginaliseerde gemeenskappe gelewer het, eerder as om gevestigde korporatiewe belange te bevoordeel?

3. Watter persentasie van toerisme en ekonomiese ontwikkelingsfondse word geoormerk vir *township* en landelike ondernemings-ontwikkeling, en waarom is dit nie aansienlik hoër, gegewe historiese uitsluiting nie?
4. Hoe versoen die Departement sy Growth for Jobs narratief met die werklikheid dat die ekonomiese groei in die provinsie gekonsentreer is in sektore wat nie lae-geskoolde arbeid absorbeer nie?
5. Watter doelgerigte programme bestaan binne hierdie Begroting om die ekonomiese marginalisering van Bruin gemeenskappe reg te stel, en waarom word dit nie eksplisiet as 'n kernbegrotingsprioriteit weerspieël nie?

Dankie, agb Adjunkspeaker.

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Hon Deputy Speaker, the NCC cannot support this Budget Vote. Under the Budget: Economic Opportunities and Tourism many millions are directed on growth, investment and tourism, but the question remains, growth for whom? Not for the young man on the Cape Flats looking for work, not for the single mother in the Overberg who is struggling to feed her children, not for the small entrepreneur in the township who has no access to capital. This Budget benefits large businesses, investors and established economic forces, the workers communities remain at the back of the economy.

Hon Deputy Seaker:

1. How Does the Department justify the continued prioritizing of tourism and investors driven growth strategies while unemployment and poverty are still deeply rooted in the workers class, Brown communities right across the Cape Flats and rural districts?
2. Can the hon Minister deliver concrete proof that public, private partnership and investors conference delivered direct measurable economic inclusivity with historically marginalized communities, rather than favouring established corporate interests?
3. What percentage of tourism and economic development funds are earmarked for township and rural enterprises' development, and why is it not considerably higher given historic exclusion?
4. How does the Department reconcile its Growth for Jobs narrative with the reality that the economic growth in the province is concentrated in sectors that do not absorb low-skilled labour?
5. What purposeful programmes exist within this Budget to rectify the economic marginalization of Brown communities, and why is it not explicitly reflected as a core Budget priority?

Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.]

†Die ADJUNKSPEAKER: Baie dankie, agb lid Michels. [The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Michels.] I recognise the hon member Marais.

Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Freedom Front Plus notes the importance of achieving breakthrough economic growth and the efforts being made by the Department to achieve this. We note the investment projects with the projected 11 000 new jobs, but there is no timeline given there. We recognise the work of Wesgro and it is an important component of building a successful Western Cape.

However, hon Deputy Speaker, the Freedom Front Plus would like to see an inclusive economy. An inclusive economy that caters both for formal and informal businesses to flourish in.

Now the City of Cape Town Mayor seems to be counterproductive to what the Western Cape Government wants to achieve, with the Trafalgar flower growers that must now be subjected to limited hours in order to operate, where they have been fourth-generation flower growers and sellers in the City of Cape Town. How can we allow this to continue, hon Minister?

Hon Minister, I would like to see the expansion of our special economic zones. When are we going to have added special economic zones to the ones we already

have?

In terms of ecotourism we would like to know will there be a value proposition to include the indigenous and local communities to benefit from eco-tourism? That has not been mentioned anywhere.

In terms of your red tape, thank you for the invitation to highlight red tape reduction possibilities. I have mentioned it to the hon Premier before, aquaculture must be investigated and the economy must be expanded to include locals who want to get the permit to participate in that sector. It is a very good sector to get involved in, one of the fastest growing at the moment ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you ...[Interjections.]

Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): ...and I ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: ...so much ...[Interjections.]

Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): ...I want to end there, thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: ...hon member Marais. I recognise the hon member Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AJA): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU) inspired hope to position the country's economic and tourism sectors as significant contributors of economic growth and job creation.

The Western Cape, which does not have minerals, largely depends on the economic dynamism in this sector. Although tourism in the province is booming it remains a concern that many previously disadvantaged people in the tourism sector continue to experience a slow pace of transformation. Inclusive growth of economic development and tourism in the Western Cape is taking place at a too slow pace.

Al Jama-ah calls on the Province to increase efforts with meaningful assistance to the sector for the previously disadvantaged communities to benefit from the sector's impact on the local economy.

Black tourism industry continues to face many challenges such as unequal and limited access to support programmes and skills training. Awareness programmes fail to reach targets where needed most; lack of Local Government intervention; increasing crime rate in areas they are operating from, townships on the Cape Flats. They continue to be sidelined from the mainstream tourism industry. Poor service delivery in areas where Black businesses are operating from.

Al Jama-ah calls on the Province to encourage policy interventions in

enhancing skills development and employment to invest in human capital by prioritising spending on education and healthcare. Building high walls to hide the Province's state of inequality will not contribute towards a flourishing tourism industry and stable economy.

I thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Brinkhuis. I recognise the hon member Masipa.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): [Inaudible 2:24:29] Jo-Ann Johnston; CEO of Wesgro, Ms Stander; CEO of Freeport Saldanha, *Ntate* Sithole; CEO of Atlantis SEZ, *Ntate* Cullinan; chairpersons and members of the boards, hon members.

We debate this Budget Vote against the backdrop of escalating conflict in the Middle East, with ripple effects driving up global energy prices, disrupting supply chains and eroding investor confidence. Challenges South Africa cannot ignore.

Closer to home the DA governments have long championed the Rainbow Nation ideal, a united South Africa with open opportunity society for all, rooted in freedom, fairness, diversity and opportunity. Yet successive ANC National and Provincial Governments over 30 years have repeatedly undermined these values through a foreign policy riddled with hypocrisy and economic sabotage.

A recent 75-page report from the Middle East Africa Research Institute titled:

“Ties to Teheran.”

South Africa's democracy and its relationship with Iran exposes how post-apartheid South Africa has quietly deepened ties with Iran's brutal regime, a government condemned worldwide for sponsoring terrorism, brutally repressing women and protesters, and committing systemic human rights abuses. The report warns these alignments inflict real damage to our democratic credibility, strategic interests and economic standing. As it bluntly states:

“Iran is no friend to freedom and democracy.”

Economic development cannot flourish on an empty slogans or blind loyalty to brutal dictatorships that oppress women, children and vulnerable people. We have witnessed the ruin wrought by such regimes in Iran, Russia and Zimbabwe, yet the ANC excuses, defends and even idealises them. This is the height of hypocrisy. The same ANC that relentlessly condemns historical apartheid figures like Lucas Mangope and Kaiser Matanzima for dictatorship, turns a blind eye or worse, to far more repressive modern equivalents abroad.

Hon members, that is not principled leadership. That is the work of hypocrites. True economic progress at provincial and local level demands a principled foreign policy, not double standards that alienate democratic partners and deter

investors. It requires international alliances and legal frameworks that foster growth, not endless red tape born of national corruption scandals.

International posture and legal certainty from the bedrock of a thriving economy, they provide the predictability that local and global partners need for long-term investment. Yet under the ANC nationally corruption coupled with an obsession with rigid race-based quotas that echo apartheid era divisions, all while forcing ordinary citizens to foot the bill for ANC mismanagement, delivers neither basic services nor real economic growth. This is not recovery, it is continued decline.

Hon members, this national dysfunction manifests in two specific interventions that directly hamstring economic development in the Western Cape. First, the PFMA Circular 131 bars municipalities from transferring funds to NGOs and external bodies, including those vital for tourism promotion. This blanket restriction arose from abuses in ANC-run municipalities where funds were diverted to soccer clubs while sewage overflowed, water failed and potholes multiplied. We understand curbing misuse, but the ANC's one-size-fits-all punishment stifles well-governed DA municipalities, kills jobs in tourism and rewards mediocrity over excellence.

Second, the shift of cast funding from Schedule 4 to Schedule 5 forces provinces to apply a full year in advance. Bureaucratic delays mean funds arrive too late after planting seasons close, market shifts or outbreaks like foot-and-mouth disease spiral. Farmers face heightened risk, honest administrations

shoulder the blame while ANC corruption at provincial level goes unchecked. Instead of jailing corrupt officials the ANC punishes the real economic contributors.

Hon members, context matters a lot. It is a fact that despite the Zondo Commission and the ongoing Madlanga Commission and the Ad-hoc Committee on Mkhwanazi, South Africa continues to bleed money through corrupt deals. It is estimated that over R700 billion in public funds have been lost to corruption over the last 30 years, hon Deputy Speaker. Much of it through Government procurement linked to BBBEE abuses.

The economic consequences go far beyond lost funds and failed service delivery. In 2023/2024 National Government spending reached R2,4 trillion, yet gross loan debt stood at R5,3 trillion. Debt servicing costs, mainly interest payments, totalled R356 billion or 14,9% of total spending. This exceeded the allocation to Health which was allocated R276 billion or 14% of total spending. The debt servicing bill was the single biggest driver of expenditure growth that year, with net spending rising by R139 billion compared to the previous year.

While national priorities are swallowed by corruption and debt interest, the Western Cape Government does everything in its power to maximise return on every rand received from Treasury, delivering clean, efficient growth despite these constraints. If the ANC in this House truly understood how national corruption holds back our hon Ministers, our hon Premier and the Western Cape economic potential, perhaps their noise and tantrum in the House will turn to

action against the real culprits, which is the ANC. Then provinces like ours might finally receive our fair share without the drag of national failure.

Hon members, the DA rejects this centralised, punitive, corrupt approach where the ANC centralised control diverts funds, pass on unsustainable debt and props up failed ideologies abroad. The DA builds collaboration, unleashes public-private partnerships and delivers dynamic ecosystems that create real job and growth, not top-down dogma.

We therefore welcome the strong investment in the Department of Economic Development and Tourism for 2026/2027, aligned with our Growth for Jobs strategy. This includes key additions such as:

- R17,843 million for the Export Accelerator programme;
- R12,392 million for tourism growth initiatives and support for Wesgro, which received R396,877 million over Medium-Term Expenditure Framework to drive investment, exports and tourism, part of the R36,65 billion committed over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework to bolster agriculture tourism, exports, investment attraction, energy and water resilience and protection against global shocks.

Hon members, allow me to highlight a few programmes that amplify the DA's message. We grow the economy and create jobs through listening, delivery, caring and results, not slogans or corruption.

In Programme 2: Integrated Economic Development Services, the allocation increases from R27,414 million to R33 million in 2026/2027, a 21,70 rise, implementing the Medium, Small and Micro Enterprise and Township Strategy to advance G4J's employability priority. That answers the question of hon member Nkondlo. Where the ANC leaves townships in poverty and unemployment, the DA empowers entrepreneurs and creates pathway out.

In Programme 3 we welcome the jump from R283,396 million to R359,46 million, a 26,85 increase, supporting exports and investment priorities, oversight of public entities, export competitiveness for businesses, district export awareness, Cape Town Port efficiencies, investment activities and industry growth. The ANC hampers export with red tape and failed alliances, the DA accelerates them to put money in pockets. This is where we agree with hon Minister that private sector must get involved at the Port so that we can get the efficiency that we require.

Programme 5: Economic Planning, despite Circular 131 constraints, rises from R28,609 million to R35 million to deliver economic intelligence, G4J collaborations, municipal capability support, district strengthening and priority regional projects. This is a progressive governance. The Western Cape Provincial Treasury successfully petitioned National Treasury to deviate from uniform structures from 2026/2027, realigning all financial information for consistency and better G4J focus.

Reducing programmes from 7 to 6, the ANC clings to outdated bureaucracy, the

DA innovates for results. These programmes deliver us practical solutions through Wesgro, sector coalitions, export accelerators and infrastructure like Freeport Saldanha and Atlantis SEZ, without communist theories or diverting funds to prop up dictatorships abroad. Unlike ANC-led entities plagued with corruption and catered deployment, the DA programmes are clean, transparent and focused on citizens, not insiders.

To the ANC, stop romanticising failed model from Mangope to Matanzima to Teheran and Harare. Your hypocrisy isolates South Africa, scares investors, burdens the poor with debt and wastes billions that could build schools, hospitals, and jobs. Instead, study what actually works here in the Western Cape under the DA governance.

A clean administration that fights corruption, not enables it. Opportunity for all races and classes, not divisive quotas. Real service delivery and job creation, not excuses and bailouts. Become a constructive opposition. Hold us accountable where needed, but prioritise building over obstruction and destruction.

In closing I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the hon Minister, Dr Ivan Meyer; Head of Department, Ms Jo-Ann Isaac – I mean Jo-Ann Johnston, and her exceptional team, as well as all department entities, CEOs, board chairs and staff members. Thank you for consistently placing the interests of the Western Cape residents first. We salute you for your commitment and service. The people of the Western Cape deserve better than ANC failure.

Let us continue delivering discipline, caring growth that puts citizens, economy and the jobs first. The DA supports the Vote. I thank you.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Nkondlo. As the podium is being shifted to the hon Minister, I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon Deputy Speaker, the hon Premier has indicated that I must be short, but ...[Interjections.]

The PREMIER: Give them a lecture.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Oh, a lecture? The House is full.

Hon Deputy Speaker, let me be brief. Firstly, I am standing here in this House to speak about the economy and economic growth, and I can only reflect on the performance of this Government using recent data.

Recent data, Quarter 4, 2025, the Western Cape gained 95 000 jobs year-on-year, while also gaining 93 000 jobs compared with the previous quarter. Real data.

Secondly, hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape unemployment rate declined by 1,5% year-on-year, reaching a five year low of 18,1% percent in Quarter 4 in 2025. Real, hard-core data. Not rhetoric, not macaroni without cheese, the data. This unemployment rate, 18,1%, is substantially lower than the national unemployment rate of 31,4% and we are having it, the lowest in the country.

Hon Deputy Speaker, seven out of the 10 sectors added jobs year-on-year with a trade, 48 000; agriculture, plus 22 000; construction, plus 22 000. Sectors are driving provincial job growth in the 4th Quarter of 2025.

Hon Deputy Speaker, real data, not stories, not emotional speeches. Real data suggests that the growth in the trade employment was supported by the fact that the Western Cape enjoyed strong tourism and I have seen some tourism people here in the audience. I will come to them now. We have seen a 4% increase in international arrivals, Cape Town International Airport. It has is a record of 11,1 million total passengers recorded for 2025. These things do not just happen, it is an environment that we create. Thank you, Wesgro. Thank you, DEDAT. Thank you for the work that you do. Thank you for the Cape Town International Airport, thank you for Cape Town Tourism. These are all the people and the private tourism operators, some of them I have seen, but I will come to that.

Hon Deputy Speaker, there was a reference to hon Minister Bredell in terms of local economic development. I think you would be happy to hear that I was

last week in the town of Malmesbury, where hon Minister Bredell is from, and it is also his constituency. In that town I launched a Local Economic Development Academy in Swartland.

So things are happening. The question is why did I take it there and not to places that fall apart? I decided I will launch a thing at a place that is functional, effective and they deliver their work with kindness.

So this Local Economic Development Academy, it is a free online course, and I want to offer the course to the EFF because you speak about economic development, there is an online course. Through you, PA, there is an online course in economic development. The stuff that you speak about, there is a course. ANC, like us, I will do the course. It is a course, please do it, do not talk macaroni, do the course to drive economic development. Thank you [Inaudible 2:41:58] and thank you to the team, they have done an outstanding job. If I cannot launch this in Knysna – † *hulle steel die hele kursus, dan verkoop hulle dit en dis free of charge* [they steal the whole course and then they sell it and its free of charge.]

I want you to know that I have in the audience the new CEO, Mr Piet de Jager, from the Fresh Produce Export Forum. He is doing outstanding work. Mohale and I met with him in Fruit Attraction in Madrid. I was worried when I saw nothing is happening. They told me, “Minister, do not worry, we are signing contracts and creating more jobs.” Thank you, Wesgro. Thank you, Piet, for the great work that you and your team have done in Madrid in Spain.

Last year – no macaroni. The last five years – this is the data you do not want to hear. The last five years – and to the diplomats in the House, for the last five years, through you to my friend, hon member Marais, more than 90% of all the jobs that were created in South Africa were created in this province. I need an applause.

An HON MEMBER: Hear-hear!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: You ...[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: EPWP [Inaudible].

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: You will get it. No, and this is the beauty, this has nothing to do with EPWP as was mentioned. That hon member is living in another planet, not planet Western Cape.

I want to say we support tourism, we support adventure tourism, we support ecotourism, and one of the greatest entrepreneurs and investors of adventure tourism is in the House. I want him to stand. Mr Clint Lerm. He has built the longest zipline in the world in the Overberg region and I happened to open it, I was there. He told me, “Minister, it is safe.” I went there, opened it and I – Mr Clint, there are people talking about it. Let us invite them to join me next

time. Some of them do not have the heart, some of them do not have the heart and the courage to go over that, because there is a dam and I can swim, but luckily Mr Clint built the best world longest zipline, that is 3,2 kilometres, it is 400 metres longer than the one that had the previous world record. It was previously in Saudi Arabia. He beat it and thousands of people are coming there. It is a 3,2 kilometre, it is called K3, it is right there in Caledon, but that is not all, hon Deputy Speaker, because people spoke about tourism.

I have to come to the team. Mr Clint also built the longest zipline over the sea and some of them are scared, like Mr Michels, over the sea. He built a zipline. You can go over the sea. Since you want to fly, here is your opportunity. The longest zipline over sea is built in Mossel Bay, a functional municipality, and it is 1,1 kilometre, it is not so far, you can join me.

Then, Mr Lerm, thank you, because through your work – he employed 400 people, mainly youth. You have spoken about youth, there is a job entrepreneur that created that job.

I am also very pleased, I saw earlier Mr Adams. He is doing outstanding work. He is from Sun Africa Tours, doing outstanding work.

Hon member Michels, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, you talked about – complain we do nothing for tourism. In your back door last week I opened a R750 000 great tourism infrastructure, and you will benefit from it because your local support base is working there. So do not moan, speak to your people,

and so – you were not there. †Kom pad toe, *because that is where we are*. Ons het so pas, agb Adjunkspeaker, die Grabouw Tourism Info Centre geopen. Wonderlike jongmense werk daar, deel van toerisme. [Come to the road, because there is where we are. Kom pad toe, because that is where we are. We have just, hon Deputy Speaker, opened the Grabouw Tourism Info Centre. Wonderful young people working there, part of tourism.]

Hon member Marais, you were absolutely right, indigenous people are part of our tourism, also part of the ecotourism and we need some further information. We are happy to share that with you.

Also through the Tourism Growth Fund we are driving product development and infrastructure, and we do this in non-metropolitan areas for a reason. †Die City het genoeg geld. [The City has enough money.] So we focus on the infrastructure for tourism in rural areas.

I want to – before I conclude. Sometimes I forget the people. Jo-Ann, thank you, and to my two DDDs, Dr [Inaudible 2:47:48] and Ilse, thank you for the work that you are doing. Also Mr Joe-Mark, my HODs, I see some staff from Atlantis up there. Saldanha IDZ, [Inaudible 2:48:02], wonderful, great work that you are doing. CEO, Ronel Stander, everybody. The head of my office, Marietjie, Charmaine, who is watching online, Nicky that is making tea there online for me, thank you to all my staff. Daniel Johnson who wrote the speech, thank you to all my staff, and all the SMS members, and all the three public entities for great work.

I want to say, hon Deputy Speaker, I do not hear anybody objecting to my Budget and here is the evidence. Everybody is approving my Budget today. I have listened to the ATC. The ATC was here on our Table and the ATC is Announcements, Tabling and Committee Reports. I have studied it for this Vote. So nobody objected to my Vote. It says – let me go to my Vote.

In my report that you received right in front of you, you must read, it says:

“Committee reports of Wednesday, 18 March.”

And this is what it says. It says:

“Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism, Vote 12.”

This Budget that I now table is Vote 12. The report says:

“In the Committee...”

Because before a budget comes here it must go through a committee and the committee took the following decision. It says:

“The Committee, in accordance with Standing Rule 188, reports that it supports the Vote.”

That is what happened in the Committee. The Committee brings it here. I want to thank the Committee because the Committee supported my Budget, and I am so glad that the House will later confirm the adoption of the report. So there can be no excuse, majority rule and the majority in the House ...[Interjections.]

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

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: No, I am done.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have noted there is a point of order. Hon member Nkondlo?

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): In the theatre of the hon Minister, please caution the hon Minister not to mislead the House and chooses to read what he likes in that Report of the Standing Committee, because that is actually a deliberate and intentional way of misleading the House, because that same Standing Committee, there is a Rule 90 which is part of the Rules, where those, like the ANC, have said they do not support the Vote.

So he must not read what he likes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much. I will listen to Hansard and also check the Committee Report. Hon Minister, as you conclude.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: In the Committee there are minorities and there are majorities. The majority supported the Vote and that is what is carried in this House. Thank you to the Committee and the Committee Chairman did an outstanding job to make sure that the Budget that is tabled is supported. I want to thank the Committee for supporting my Budget. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Members, with the comments made now by the hon member Nkondlo, that in a democracy, instead of me making the following decision I am wanting to also take it to the House. Hon members, we are able to proceed at this time or break for lunch. Is everyone satisfied that we proceed? We will proceed. We have six orders remaining.

We will also welcome guests from the Department of Agriculture, as Economic Development and Tourism vacate the official bay. Hon member Nkondlo?

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, can I enquire if these grapes and tins have been declared? I see hon Minister Mackenzie is already indulging. Are they with Adv Burgess? Have they been declared? Especially – hon Premier, you do not want to get yourself in another problem.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will consult in that regard. Thank you, hon members, we will promptly commence. I wish to formally welcome the hon

Minister, as well as the HOD and senior officials from the Department of Agriculture. Like I have indicated we have six additional Orders. I will now recognise the Secretary.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 11 – Agriculture – Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation Bill [B 1-2026].

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon Deputy Speaker, can we give the guests a few seconds to take their seats?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon Deputy Speaker, can we give the guests a few seconds to take their seats?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have additional guests that are making their way into the gallery. Do we need additional seating in the officials' bay? Hon members, thank you for indulging and that we are able to continue at this particular stage. I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon Deputy Speaker, hon Premier, hon members of the Provincial Cabinet, hon members in the Legislature, hon leaders of various political

parties, members of the Diplomatic Corps, distinguished guests, all the people of the Western Cape and our special guests here today in the House.

Hon Deputy Speaker, today, I table a budget of R1,149 million for Vote 11: Western Cape Department of Agriculture for the year 2026/2027 financial year.

It is a budget that is built on the conviction that is prosperous. The Western Cape is one: a budget for every citizen, both urban and rural young and old, and they can all thrive in this province.

But hon Deputy Speaker, this Budget follows on the theme of the hon Provincial Minister of Finance, hon Ms Deidré Baartman, when she tabled her Provincial Budget on 12 March under her theme: a budget that delivers growth through discipline and care. My Budget follows her direction, as the hon Minister of Finance.

[The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER).]

Our agricultural sector is not only the backbone of rural economies. It is a driver of exports, a generator of jobs and a protector of food security. Agriculture is the story of families, agri-workers, scientists, women, entrepreneurs, researchers, and farmers whose relentless work keeps this province fat and competitive.

Despite global turbulence, new climate realities, supply chain disruptions,

biosecurity threats, Western Cape agriculture remains one of the most resilient sectors in our economy, growing at a 27% year-on-year in the Third Quarter of 2025. Truly remarkable!

The Western Cape remains the agricultural powerhouse of South Africa. Agriculture and agri processing, hon Madam Chair, together contribute to 10% of the provincial GDP. This sector supports 267 000 jobs, representing 11% of everybody that works in this province; works in the agricultural sector.

Seven of the ten largest export products from the Western Cape have a deep agricultural foundation: 66% worth a value of agricultural production is exported and more than 54% of South Africa's agricultural exports originate from this province. These are not just economic statistics, they are indicators of hope, †dit is indikatore van hoop, *livelihood, dignity*, waardigheid [it is indicators of hope, livelihood, dignity, self-respect,] and a generational opportunity.

Hon House Chair, agriculture does not operate in isolation. Global events, as we have heard from both sides of the House, global events save our local reality with profound consequences. The conflict in the Middle East, particularly in the Middle East, has amplified volatility across global markets.

This has contributed directly to increased production input costs, disruptions to shipping lanes and supply chains, heightened risks that undermine our diversification strategy. These pressures, hon Madam Chair, translate into

higher costs for diesel for our farmers. Fertiliser costs are increasing, logistical costs will increase, insurance will increase directly affecting the sustainability of our farmers, our producers and our agri-processors, and impact on our agri-workers.

This conflict reminds us that our province must continue to deepen our market diversification on the African continent, build export-ready value chains, strengthen logistic resilience, invest in domestic competitiveness in the face of global uncertainty.

Our sector continues to absorb rising input costs, such as fertilisers, labour and fuel, logistical inefficiencies at ports, roads and rail, increased climate volatility. Many of us have first-hand experience of the last month of extreme heat, including reduced water rainfall. The hon Minister of Local Government continuously reminding our Cabinet that we are in for a long drought season.

We have established, through the leadership of the hon Premier, Water, Drought, Energy, Foot-and-Mouth disease, permanent committees. As a result of the war in the Middle East, under the leadership of the hon Premier, we will meet tomorrow at 5 o'clock until 6 o'clock, all the Mayors in this province, all the municipal managers, will get a briefing on the impact of the war in the Middle East on the economy of the Western Cape because we are responsible.

We want the real data. We want to understand what is happening in the world, †sodat ons kan voorberei en nie sit en slaap op die *job* nie, [so that we can

prepare and not sit and sleep on the job,] and that is our purpose. So, we also look at animal disease threats, including Foot-and-Mouth disease and the persistent non-tariff barriers affecting exports.

Yet, despite these challenges, Agriculture has outperformed the national economy for over a period of two decades. Hon House Chairperson, this is ...[3:00:46 - Audio distorted.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Can I please ask. Apologies, hon Minister. Please take your seat. Can I please ask that ICT assists in muting whoever is online and is currently disturbing. Thank you very much. The Table Staff have confirmed. Please proceed, hon Minister. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon House Chair, this speaks of the character of the Western Cape: resilient, future-focused and anchored in excellence.

Hon House Chair, the Provincial Strategic Plan commits us to break out economic growth, safe and cohesive communities, healthy and empowered citizens, and a capable and innovative state. For Agriculture specifically, our guiding impact statement is clear: grow the number of Western Cape residents who can feed themselves and their families with dignity and sustainability. This Budget advances that vision with confidence and with clarity.

Hon House Chair, we govern through science and evidence. Since 2014, the Department of Agriculture has completed 45 external evaluations covering land reforms, market access, rural safety, research impact, youth development, climate change and food security. So, we do external evaluations to determine †is ons nog op die regte pad. Want slegs wanneer jy eksterne evaluerings doen, kan jy fokus kry op jou doelwitte. [are we still on the right road. Because only when you do external evaluations you can gain focus on your goals.]

This ensures that our decisions are data-rich, credible and strategically aligned. We do not cut research midstream. We uphold scientific protocols, data and evidence. We retain, also, our core veterinary expertise and we protect our water, our soil, and our ecological infrastructure.

Hon House Chair, today I table an allocation of R1,1 billion for the 2026/2027 financial year. This represents an increase of R128,5 million against the baseline of 2025/2026 financial year. Key drivers of this increase are inflationary adjustments, expanded earmarked funding and I want to thank the hon Minister of Finance because we received additional earmarked funding, increased disease control capacity, Growth for Jobs, flagship projects, higher departmental revenue from the College and the Veterinary services. Thank you our CFO for collecting the money and our Head of the College.

Through our earmarked allocation and priority investments, we will invest in ecological infrastructure R44 million, river protection R21 million, mobile abattoirs R5 million, export certification online systems.

Hon member, through the hon House Chair, to hon member Marais. You know that we have an online and electronic system. If you want to export meat, this is the form. Do not knock on the door. Do it right there by your house, online. You can export meat. So, this is the export certification online. Solar PV for agri-workers about R2 million. These investments strengthen resilience from the farms to the export markets.

Hon House Chair, I now turn to the programme priorities for 2026/2027 financial year. Sustainable Resource Use and Management will get R157 million, 20 000 hectares of agricultural land will be rehabilitated, 800 green jobs will be created. We will continue the rehabilitation of the lower Olifants River canal. We will also do full Disaster Risk Reduction campaigns. As we invest in the sustainable resource use, we acknowledge Klein Goederust and his owner, Mr Paul Siguqa. The first 100% Black-owned wine farm and cellar in Franschhoek demonstrating how transformation and land stewardship go hand in hand.

For Agriculture Producer Support, we table a budget today of R333,2 million. What will that do? It will look at 3 800 onsite farm visits. We will visit the farmers. We will do 50 agricultural businesses skills audits. We will do 2 750 household food production initiatives. We will further support and grow the commodity approach to land reform, and I am so happy that earlier saw here, he is in the House, Mr Gerhard. Thank you for being here. Thank you for the work that you and your colleagues are doing at PALS: really outstanding,

fantastic work! A role model of land reform in the country.

In our Producer Support Programme, we recognised the work of SIZA under the leadership of CEO, Ms Retha Louw, whose leadership in ethical and sustainable certification directly strengthens our market access for emerging and commercial farms. Veterinary Services are crucial, as all of you know, in this time. Not only for animal health, but for export credibility, food safety and economic resilience. This programme is therefore allocated a budget of R152 million.

But hon House Chair, we need to strengthen Foot-and-Mouth disease. Hon House Chair, Foot-and-Mouth disease remains one of the greatest threats to our livestock industry. But at the forefront of the fight to wipe out Foot-and-Mouth disease in the Western Cape, our State Veterinarians. So, let me begin by acknowledging our State Vets. Where is Dr Msiza? Dr Msiza, can you please stand? You cannot hide there. I know you are sitting low. †Dr Msiza, die mense wil u sien. Die kameras is aan. [Dr Msiza, the people want to see you. The camera is on.] SABC is live here. Okay: Dr Msiza.

Dr Vujo Magadla. Where is Dr Magadla? Dr Magadla, from the bottom of my heart, on behalf of this Government, the Cabinet, Parliament, the people, 17 000 farmers: I want to express my deep thanks and appreciation for the outstanding work that you have done nonstop around the clock. We salute you for the work that you have led during the early phases of the campaign and now, still, in the middle of the phase. I think she deserves a big round of applause.

...[Applause.]

But, hon House Chair, I also when I heard there was an outbreak in George, I went to visit there. The first law of politics is: be present. So, I went to George to the Vets and I had a meeting with them.

Dr Leana Janse van Rensburg is also in the House. Can she please stand? Thank you for the great work because when I met you, it was the beginning of the phase in George and in Mossel Bay. You have mobilised a meeting with the private Vets, Dr Strydom, Dr Willem Burger and all your teams, and the Veterinary Technicians. Thank you for doing great work. I know that you will be relocated to Malmesbury soon, but I have not yet signed your transfer. ...[Laughter.] Thank you for your work!

Dr Solomon Bandi. He is not here because he has to work. Dr Ansulize Pepler. Where is he? Ah, Dr Bandi, I want to thank you because you have been outstanding during the visit of the hon Premier and the National Minister to Fisantekraal. You demonstrated to us what needs to happen, even if there are no clinical signs of Foot-and-Mouth disease. Thank you for vaccinating more than 400 cattle in Fisantekraal because three kilometres away, there were also big commercial dairy farmers. They have received 4 000 vaccinations because I was there at Eensgezind.

But the work that you have done in the informal settlements is groundbreaking! I salute you for your WhatsApp groups to facilitate communication with the

small-scale farmers. They do that because they trust you and we are here to build a government that people can trust. Thank you very much for your great work.

Dr Chanel Lombard is also here. Thank you because when you have a disease that has been classified as a national disaster, you need all hands-on deck. But not only ordinary hands: capable, competent, effective hands! Thank you for your work in fighting this because I have heard, Dr Mogale and I, we had a meeting this week at MinMac and the work that you have done is of such a high quality that we will soon make a major announcement. Not today.

I would also like to thank our animal health technicians led by Mr Malcolm Cupido. He is also in the House. He must also please stand. Thank you, sir. I remember last year I saw you doing outstanding work on 28 September during International Rabies Day. But it is here where I see your true colours coming alive because of your love for animals, for a love for your work and the love for our farmers. Thank you because through the work of the team, we will soon be allowed to export our products. Thank you for your work and welcome in the best functional Parliament in South Africa. You may take your seat.

But I cannot simply praise my private Vets. Hon sir, we have 29 private Vets that work with our Team. Thank you, Dr Magadla. You have approved the private Vets that are helping us with this disease. While I would have loved the whole team to be here, this is not the time to fill the seats. Some of the teams are out in the field doing the physical vaccinations.

I want to thank Dr Mogale. He called me one evening and he said, 'Minister, we are getting 100 000 vaccines' and he said the vaccines are in Pretoria. †Nou, die Provinsie se naam is 'ons wag vir niemand'. [Now, the Province's name is 'we do not wait for anyone'.] Under his leadership, I want to thank him because he worked with Chris Fourie and the team, and the milk producing organisation. Chris, are you here? He is working. Chris, I want to thank you.

This House must now know, hon Madam Chair, when Dr Mogale facilitated 100 000 vaccines, they were in Pretoria. But because this is a government of urgency, Chris organised with Dr Mogale and with Shoprite. They are in our JOC. They organised a private plane. They flew to Cape Town International Airport. They landed at quarter past nine in the evening. Thank you, Chris. You were there when Dr Mogale and I, and yourself, offloaded it from the plane and put it into the transporter back to our Provincial Laboratory. Now, you can only do that if you have a government that people trust.

So, Chris, thank you for that evening. It was a great evening, late Sunday evening, and in no time the vaccines were delivered and in no time, vaccinations happened the next morning. If we had had to wait for some stuff to come from Pretoria and I asked Chris, 'can we use the plane again so that we are not going to wait again?' Chris said, 'Minister, your wish is my command.' No pressure, Chris!

I also want to acknowledge key stakeholders who alongside us on the Foot-and-

Mouth battlefield, at roadblocks, in the FMD war room and at vaccination sites: Mr Jannie Strydom, Louis Wessels. Could they please stand? †Hulle staan daardie kant. Baie dankie vir julle ondersteuning want ons het 'n Rampbestuursentrum en 'n Bek-en-klouseer-sentrum opgerig. Hulle is deel daarvan. Dr Mogale het hulle deel gemaak [They are standing on that side. Thank you for your support because we have established a Disaster Management Centre and a Foot-and-mouth Centre. They are part thereof. Dr Mogale made them part of it,] because they are the industry. They know the customers, they know the techniques and we are strengthened, together with Chris Fourie because it was discussed in the JOC, FMD JOC, where Jannie is also present and Louis Wessel Junior from the Red Meat Producers Organisation. We get excellent cooperation because there is a government that builds trust and Dr Mogale has excellent relationships. I want to thank all of you for your great support.

Hon House Chair, the Western Cape has responded with urgency and precision to the outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth disease. When this thing happened, hon Marais, through the hon House Chair, the hon Premier immediately, with hon Minister Bredell, activated the Provincial Disaster Management Centre where he immediately put a 21-Point Plan there. They established a dedicated Foot-and-Mouth disease war room under the leadership of Dr Mogale.

We mobilised private veterinarians to bolster vaccination. We strengthened surveillance, epidemiological tracing and movement controls, enhanced inspections at abattoirs and processing facilities, expanded laboratory

diagnostic capacity in chemical residue, reprioritisation of funding to protect export certification.

And because I know the hon members of this House love their Karoo lamb, I must protect it. I know hon Lekker, that Karoo lamb: you love it! So, our jobs and thank you to our Vets because these hon members love their Karoo lamb. Please keep the Karoo FMD-free because of hon member Lekker. She does not want Foot-and-Mouth disease. But even in an area where there is Foot-and-Mouth disease, there is no risk for human consumption. Let me make that clear! So, our response is clear: early detection, rapid containment and uncompromising biosecurity.

Research and Development, R177 million will continue to support investment in climate-smart research, expansion of the 4th Industrial tools strengthening our research partnership with MCAP, which is the Mediterranean Climate Action Partnership. In terms of agricultural economics, Africa market activation is very important, particularly in Eastern-, Western- and Southern Africa. Mobile abattoir rollouts for informal producers; trade promotion in Africa, Asia and North America.

Speaking of agri-processing: we will also allow our horticulturist and wine maker, Mr Sherwin Van Wyk. Is he here? Somewhere? Maybe he took a break. His company, Brothers in Vines, joined the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, Wesgro, 2025 Trade Mission to Canada and following a very competitive process is on the verge of exporting to Canada.

I am so happy, hon Chair. I met the man when they experienced some tariffs from America. I met the Minister of Finance from Canada. His name is François-Philippe Champagne. I said, 'you must drink champagne from the Western Cape.' So, you cannot have such a surname and not drink some of our wine. He was so open to our wine, he said this is the best wine. So, one of our exhibitors is now going to export to Canada.

Hon Chair, I am also pleased to announce that the Citrus Growers Association of South Africa represented by Jana. She is perhaps outside. Jana, thank you very much because as you know, South Africa is the second biggest exporter of citrus fruit in the world. Citrus is very important and that is why Dr Mogale and I, on 12 and 13 March last year, attended your CGA conference in Port Elizabeth. So, we want to thank you because of your market access liaison. You will host its first annual Citrus Day on 10 June 2026 in Citrusdal.

Now, how did this happen, Mr Michels? It does not just happen. I met with her and her team, and I said to her, 'we, South Africa, are the second biggest exporter of citrus fruit, so you cannot not have a Citrus Day.' So, I planted the idea that they must have a Citrus Day in South Africa. I am so glad that she took up the challenge and now we will have the first Citrus Day in South Africa, and I invite you to enjoy the celebration of citrus. It will happen in Citrusdal. You know the directions. I invite you.

We do this to showcase our industry's economic importance and the global

reach. Guests will visit a leading export farm citrus, to see firsthand the skills. The EFF is also happy to come. They must not expropriate land, but otherwise, you are welcome. If it happens without expropriation, you can come.

As one of the country's major agricultural success stories, the citrus industry exported a record of 203,9 million cartons in 2025, driven by dedicated growers and strong partnerships. The event aims to strengthen these relationships, highlight key challenges, opportunities and support continued growth. Thank you for the work of CGA, the Citrus Growers Association!

Hon Chair, we have the oldest agricultural functional training college on the African continent, dating back from 1898. So, for this college and the training we will have R79,3 million to ensure the full alignment with the National Qualifications Framework, Blended Learning Systems, expansion or decentralised training.

We also have rural development, although it is not a mandate of this Government. We put in money for rural development †want ons ag dit belangrik om na die landelike omgewings om te sien. Daarom is hierdie begroting van R23,9 miljoen ‘n fokus op die veiligheid van ons mense in die landelike gebiede, vir die agri-werker ontwikkelingsprogramme, ook, *Gender-based Violence*, *Substance Abuse* en finansiële geletterdheid en ook jeug-bemagtigingsprogramme. [because we regard it as important to look after the rural environments. Therefore, this Budget of R23.9 million is a focus on the safety of our people in the rural areas, for the agri-worker development

programmes, also Gender-based Violence, Substance Abuse and financial literacy and also your empowerment programmes.]

We also want to acknowledge the Western Cape Agri-Worker of the Year. Where is she? Not here now. Perhaps later. But we want to acknowledge every agri-worker of the year. Our rural development programmes also benefit the leadership of women in Agriculture †en daarom, agb [and therefore, hon] House Chair, I have invited Annelie Louw, †die President van die Vroue Landbou Vereniging. [the President of the Vroue Landbou Vereniging.]

Because especially this year, the United Nations have declared the year 2026 as the International Year of Women in Agriculture and †Me Louw is die President en sy is ook vandag hier in die Huis saam met haar Vise-president, Me Rene Nel. Kan u asseblief opstaan. Ons het groot waardering vir die werk wat u doen in die landelike gemeenskappe. Dankbaar vir die werk wat u doen om mense te bemagtig.

Hierdie jaar, 2026, het die Verenigde Nasies, agb *House Chair*, die jaar verklaar as die Internasionale Jaar vir Vroue in Landbou. Baie dankie dat u daardie mandaat van die Verenigde Nasies aangegryp het en prakties daaraan gestalte doen. Ek het groot waardering vir die werk wat u doen en ek sien uit na u kongres in Augustus vanjaar. Baie dankie.

Die President van die Vroue Landbou Vereniging het al die pad gevlieg vanaf Gqeberha. Baie welkom dat u vandag hier saam ons is. En agb Chair, ons

worstel met bek-en-klouseer, maar ek het reeds omvattend daarna verwys. Ons het 'n 21-punt plan geïmplementeer en is nog steeds besig om dit te implementeer om die verspreiding van bek-en-klouseer in die Wes-Kaap te beperk. Die teiken is om teen Desember vanjaar 80% van die provinsiale kudde in te ent en biosekuriteit te versterk deur volgehoue en geteikende monitering, asook verhoogte kapasiteit van veeartsenydienste.

Ons volg ook 'n kommoditeitsbenadering. Die Departement sal voortgaan om die kommoditeitsbenadering te implementeer. Daar is ook implementering van sonkrag en PV vir landbouwerkershuise. Daar is ook bevordering van marktoegang om die waardeketting vir informele produsente te verbeter. Ons gaan ook fokus op voedselsekuriteit. Ons sal ook fokus op voortgesette bou van klimaat, weerbaarheid en landbou.

Ons gaan ook fokus op meer opleiding by Elsenburg Landbou Opleidingskollege by Elsenburg. Daar is nuwe vennootskappe. Ons het onlangs ook 'n vennootskap onderteken met Weihenstephan Universiteit en Elsenburg Landbou Opleidingskollege, deel van die Regional Leaders Summit in die Bavaria-ooreenkoms. Jeugvaardigheidsopleiding: 170 jongmense sal bevoordeel word en daarna streef om loopbane in landbou te bou.

Ons het ook die Wes-Kaapse landelike ontwikkelingsraamwerk wat gefinaliseer is. Ons kyk na langtermyn landelike ontwikkeling, voerondersteuning. Die Departement sal twee maande se voerondersteuning gee aan veeboere in die Sentraal-Karoo en sekere dele van die Tuinroete te voorsien om hulle teelkudde

te help onderhou tydens hierdie seisoen.

Agb House Chair, ek kan sien u uitdrukking op jou gesig sê agb Minister, maak klaar! Ek doen soos u versoek.

[Ms Louw is the President and she is also here in the House with her Vice-President, Ms Rene Nel. Can you please rise. We have great appreciation for the work that you do in the rural communities. Grateful for the work that you do to empower people.

This year, 2026, the United Nations, hon House Chair, declared the year as the International Year for Women in Agriculture. Thank you for embracing that mandate of the United Nations and practically materializing it. I have great appreciation for the work that you do and I'm looking forward to your congress in August this year. Thank you.

The President of the Vroue Landbou Vereniging flew all the way from Gqeberha. A warm welcome that you are here with us today. And hon Chair, we struggled with foot-and-mouth but I have already referred to that extensively. We have implemented a 21-point plan and are still busy to implement it to limit expansion of foot-and-mouth in the Western Cape. The target is to by December of this year to vaccinate 80% of the provincial stock and strengthen biosecurity through continued and targeted monitoring, as well as increased capacity of veterinary services.

We also follow a commodity approach. The Department wil continue to

implement the commodity approach. There's also implementation of solar energy and PV for agricultural workers' houses. There is also the advancement of market access to improve the value chain for informal producers. We are also going to focus on food security. We will also focus on the continued building of climate, resilience and agriculture.

We are also going to focus on more training at Elsenburg Agricultural Training College at Elsenburg. There are new partnerships. We recently also signed a partnership with Weihenstephan University and Elsenburg Agricultural College, part of the Regional Leaders Summit in the Bavaria Agreement. Youth skills training. 170 young people will benefit and strive towards building careers in agriculture.

We also have the Western Cape Rural Development Framework that has been finalised. We look at long term rural development, before support. The Department will provide two months pre-support to livestock farmers in the Central Karoo and certain parts of the Garden Route to help support their breeding stock during this season.

Hon House Chair, I can see the expression on your face says hon Minister, finish! I do as you ask.]

Hon House Chair, this Budget ensures that Agriculture remains globally competitive. It creates jobs at the scale, strengthens food security. It advances land reform, secures rural economies, boasts dignity for every citizen.

I want to also thank Mr Rico Basson from the wine industry, because we are having a tough time in terms of our current exports. But through resilience, through building strategic partnerships and relationships, thank you Rico for the work that you are doing because you are not selling wine. You are producing a Western Cape story in the bottle, and we are selling 1 million bottles of wine around the world per day. I want to thank you for the massive contribution in growing our economy.

Therefore, hon House Chair, it is my honour to table Vote 11 the 2026/2027 Budget of R1,1 billion for the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. I thank you. ...[Applause.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you very much, hon Minister Meyer. I just also need to kindly remind our guests that in accordance with the Rules of the House, guests are not allowed to clap. I know you do want to acknowledge, but those are the House Rules.

Thank you very much, hon Minister. I do acknowledge the hon member Nkondlo.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): Thank you, hon House Chair. Hon House Chair, we have repeatedly called for this province to have a strategy to deal with inequality and in the budget context, the unequal and uneven distribution of the public resources to this province, it is a shame that this call falls on deaf ears.

This Budget stands testimony to that.

With the thriving agriculture, recording exports of almost R15,1 billion and growth in employment that has also grown, with the Western Cape accounting for about 25,5% of agricultural employment nationally, we recognise and acknowledge these impressive figures and success. Yet, the dark side this province refuses to confront as an uncomfortable truth is that growth is not being shared. There is nothing that is a joke there, hon Minister Meyer.

I think all we are calling for is for these, both of these stories to coexist. In your conversation, in your acknowledgement and when you call to people in the gallery, also call those who are negatively affected by agriculture because it is not fair for you to stand here and continuously make claims about some facts, whilst you silence other facts. Prosperity is not being felt by many who are on the periphery of the economy and the question is who is this provincial economy that you boast about, working for?

The majority of citizens in the Western Cape do not own land, with many staying in informal houses, either Government sponsored RDP houses or social housing, bonded houses, but many are in informal settlements that are increasing. What is to happen to these households and their livelihoods as many need land to fend for themselves. The answer would be that is a mandate of the National Department. That is something that we know that you, as this Government, you are very good at.

The City of Cape Town was selling public land to the highest bidder, here, and this particular Provincial Government was very silent to the extent of which such parcels of land could have actually enable urban farming and urban agriculture. We did not hear your voice with your fellow DA leaders in the City of Cape Town.

Yet, whilst trade and foreign policy is a national competence, there is nothing that stopped you and the hon Premier, to force your noses to the business of Transnet to fight for commercial farmers when they cried to you about port challenges that are costing them millions due to the delays in the ports and also, the threat of AGOA. We saw your crisscrossing, going to other countries. Even found, you know, making statements that are actually in conflict with diplomacy. We saw the hon Premier choosing a path to disrespect his oath to protect the Constitution of this country under a unitary state.

Yet, you are silent about the cries of farmworkers and Black farmers suffering under the hatred and racism of some in the thriving agricultural industry. You choose to look the other way, and you choose to reduce our inputs here as jokes, you know, and rather you reduce us as personalities. Because when your ego and that other truth are placed here, instead of engaging you chose to silence the voices that are not making you comfortable. And we shall speak even when you are not comfortable.

Why are you not intervening in Cape Agulhas? Why are you not intervening in George under the DA where the animal health is being weaponised by

municipalities to lay off livestock of informal farmers without due process. What are you going to do with Mr Fezile Farmer and I want Mr Fezile Farmer to stand. He is here in the House today. Fortunately, I showed you and I went to town the other day to tell you about his situation and his animals that have died here in Klipheuwel. Here, he stands today and I hope you are going to give him an answer rather than being dismissive to his cry.

His economic rights have been openly disrespected by the DA through the City of Cape Town, by selling the land that he has been occupying for years, without due process. Because he is a Black farmer under the DA rule, he did not receive any procedural fairness. To date, from the 400 livestock that he had, 100 of his livestock he had to bury and I raised this here in this House.

Food insecurity remains a lived reality across our province, yet rural development which carries the burden of addressing this crisis is allocated a mere R23,9 million out of R1,149 billion Budget. Farmworker support receives only R12,4 million. Again, a situation of farmworkers.

In Witzenberg, in De Doorns, these are two areas here led by the DA that are hotspots of evictions in the country declared by the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. This is in the Cape Winelands, the second largest, biggest economy of this region. It is once again the clear choice and exposure of the loyalties of this Government regarding their standing with farmworkers. They are double standards, hon Minister.

Because as you boast about the other time here, we asked about this situation of farmworkers, and you told us of a protocol against evictions for those that do not follow ESTA. Yes, when we enquired about this protocol, we were sent a Blue Book which is a guideline for farmers on how to employ foreign nationals. So, you put extra resources to enable displacement of local citizens. Our low-skilled citizens that rely on this industry for jobs, given they are protected by also labour legislation of this country. So, you enable modern day slavery and exploitation of the gullible, illegal migrants to this country as cheap labour to this sector.

The National Department of Land Reform has initiated an Evictions Forum, and we are calling on you and your Department to send officials of the sub-programme on farmworker support, to attend the Evictions Forum. We also encourage your industry to be part of stakeholders that are finding solutions to identify and isolate the delinquents in the industry that continue to evict farmworkers in the most inhumane way, right here in this province. We are not talking about Gauteng or any other province because the last time we checked, you are a Provincial Government in the Western Cape.

But every time when you are given an opportunity to talk about your own woes here in the province you choose to fly, as you were showing us, to zipline, you know, to the other provinces. I am sure that is what you were celebrating with the business person in the House who has provided you with a zipline to go to all the other provinces, instead of confronting your responsibility and your oath of office of attending also to the social and economic challenges of

farmworkers who are part of the industry that you are celebrating.

We need more than agri awards and can the billion Rand that the industry received through exports only afford a million Rand towards the recognition of farmworkers. As we are told in the Committee, the Department received a donation of R1 million towards the agri awards. Is that the only thing that could actually happen from the industry?

This is not just inadequate. It is a political choice. A choice that tells us exactly who this Government prioritises and who it does not. It is clear that it does not support Black farmers, farmworkers, all those that are vulnerable in the economy. These are the issues, hon Minister, we are raising with you, and we are asking you not to silence those issues. Please attend to the plight of other people that you chose. You know, they may not necessarily be privileged like the ones that you are able to go and even open programmes in the municipality of hon Bredell. There are others that also require your intervention.

We are in the midst of a deepening drought. We have been here before. Before 2015 and 2018, this province faced the Day Zero crisis, a moment that exposed the fragility of our water systems, our governance failures and environmental sustenance of our province. That crisis was meant to be a wake-up call. But what do we see today? Karl Marx told us:

"History repeats itself. First, as a tragedy and secondly, as a farce."

Surely, to be falling and having to declare drought a crisis in this province can be equated to a farce, as we learn from history. That which we refuse and ignore from history.

Why are dams across the province running dry? In Stellenbosch, the Idas Valley Dam sits at 30%. In Beaufort West the Gamkapoort Dam is a devastating 14%, in Knysna the Akkerkloof Dam has dropped to 19%. These are not just numbers. These are collapsing livelihoods. These are farms at risk. These are workers facing unemployment and hunger, and yet, where is the plan? Where is the investment in climate resilience? Where is the long-term strategy to protect this sector from recurring disasters. Instead, we are told that provisions exist for unforeseen expenditures.

Drought in the Western Cape is not unforeseen. It is predictable. It is recurring. Consult the South African Weather Services. Consult geographers, climate specialists. They will tell you as they would have been telling us for years about the issue of climate change. Failure to plan is to plan to fail, and nothing short of negligence and the deliberate abandonment of the most vulnerable Black farmers and rural communities. A lesson we learned about kindness from Nelson Mandela.

The informal farmers were informed of the R20 million available for the Feeder Support, and I want to thank the HOD for allowing Jerry Aris to join us in the Human Rights Programme in Knysna and George, and he was able to share

applications which are due by the end of this month.

The competition for feed remains high, given the drought we experience. We must appreciate that unequal levels of capability mean most of the informal farmers may just struggle, just to access the web-based forms for this support, let alone, travelling to the local or district offices to access them.

Securing letters of permission to farm as one of the requirements, HOD, from the very municipalities that have refused them allocated space for them to farm. This was one of the issues that Jerry would have told you that he heard from the informal farmers that yes, they need the feed support, but they are not sure whether they are going to get the letters of permission to farm, which is a requirement. So, how are those informal farmers meant to cross these manmade barriers and red tape towards access to that available support?

At the same time, global instability including conflict in the Middle East, threatens rising fuel prices potentially reaching \$200 per barrel. This has devastating consequences for farmers, increasing production and transport costs. What protective measures and dedicated support is available to these farmers?

Rural development is not just about food gardens. It is about dignity, land and food security. It is about ensuring that farmworkers are not evicted and discarded as though they are invisible.

Even in the face of the animal health crisis, such as Food-and-Mouth disease, the Department admits it has only eight State Veterinarians supported by 26 private Veterinarians. We also join in applauding Dr Magadla on the work that she is doing in leading the whole Foot-and-Mouth disease campaign in the province. The informal and small-scale will only be attended under Phase 3, as we heard from Jerry and the team of Veterinarians, of the vaccination programme.

As they lie panicking, these informal farmers, hon Minister, lie panicking for their livestock that is at most risk to the disease, let alone of being chased and impounded by municipalities at a cost of R6,000 to R8,000 per animal if found wondering due to not having land to farm, nor allocated grazing land. We cannot support a budget that ignores such suffering. A budget that prioritises ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Please conclude, hon member.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): For these reasons, we firmly reject this Budget and ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you very much, hon member Nkondlo.

Ms N D NKONDLO (ANC): ...this committee. Thank you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): I recognise the hon member Adams on the online platform.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Hon House Chair, I do not want the hon Minister to stand up and speak again about macaroni and cheese, and fly like he is flying somewhere on the zipline. But hon House Chair, agriculture remains one of the most vital sectors in the Western Cape. Not only as a driver of economic growth, but as a cornerstone of food security, rural development and job creation.

Budget 11 therefore carries significant responsibility ensuring that the sector is both protected and strengthened. However, while the intentions of this Budget are acknowledged, there are several key concerns that must be raised.

Firstly, the increasing pressure on farmers due to rising input costs continues to threaten sustainability. The cost of fuel, fertiliser, electricity and logistics has escalated significantly, placing immense stress on both commercial and emerging farmers. These challenges are further compounded by global instability, including ongoing conflicts that disrupt supply chains and contribute to price volatility. The reality is that when agriculture suffers, food prices rise and it is the poorest households who feel the burden the most, hon House Chair.

Hon House Chair, this reality is particularly evident among small-scale farmers

in the Cape Winelands and the Garden Route, who are increasingly struggling to remain viable. Many of these farmworkers face limited access to funding rising production costs and challenges in accessing reliable markets. With our targeting and sustained interventions, these farmers risk being pushed out of this sector entirely which would have devastating consequences for our local economies and food security.

Secondly, climate change remains one of the greatest threats to agriculture productivity in the province. The Western Cape has experienced reoccurring droughts, unpredictable weather patterns and water scarcity. While there are allocations aimed at climate resilience, there is a lack of clarity on whether these interventions are sufficiently coordinated and accessible, particularly for small-scale and emerging farmers who are often the most vulnerable.

Another pressure issue is the limited support for emerging farmers like in George and other areas: land reform beneficiaries. While transformation remains a stated priority, many new entrants into the agriculture sector remain struggling to access to finance, training infrastructure and markets. Without meaningful and sustained support, the goal of building an inclusive ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Please conclude, hon member. Your time is up.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Thank you, hon House Chair. These are ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you very much, hon member.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Okay, thank you. Bye-bye.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you. I acknowledge the hon ...[Interjections.] Order, hon members. I acknowledge the hon member Lithakong.

Ms T LITHAKONG (EFF): Thank you very much, hon House Chair. Your podium is broken in the corner. Greetings to the House and the community of the Western Cape.

The Economic Freedom Fighters will not be supporting the Budget due to the following reasons. It makes no sense, hon House Chair, as to why more than R1 billion should be spent on a commercial-based agricultural sector which is predominantly in the hands of few, and specifically the White people.

Hon House Chair, the majority of African and Coloured population in the Western Cape is predominantly excluded from participating in this sector, with the famous excuse, being used by the hon Minister of Agriculture in the province, that he does not have the powers to redistribute land so that African and Coloured people can also become agricultural producers.

†Somlomo, [Speaker] to achieve redistribution and equal agricultural opportunities across the board, there is nothing stopping this Provincial Government to use its available agricultural land and acquire more for purposes of making such land available to aspirant and emerging African and Coloured farmers. Hon House Chair, one does not always have to own land in order to become a farmer or to meaningfully participate in farming activities.

All that is needed, hon House Chair, to create equal opportunities in this commercial sector, also involves leasing Provincial Government agricultural land to African and Coloured people so that they can also become active participants in this sector.

Hon House Chair, what we are being told here is that more than R1 billion will be made available to support the few Whites who happen to control the agricultural sector of the province, in order to make sure that they export more and millions of Rands for themselves at the expense of the people of this province and the taxpayers.

We are being told that the success of this sector is also important for the purpose of generating employment opportunities, however farmworkers are still exposed to the modern-day slavery practice and exploitation. Hon House Chair, the so-called Western Cape Farm Equity Scheme which was intended to benefit farmworkers has now proven to be an entrenched mechanism of modern-day slavery. The schemes which were introduced to promote inclusive economic growth, encourage rural development and help address the economic

inequalities in land ownership have now turned out to be a sham as a result of the White minority farmers who refuse to share ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Lithakong, your time has expired.

Ms T LITHAKONG (EFF): ...everything for the ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you very much, hon member.

Ms T LITHAKONG (EFF): ...and greed. Thank you very much.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you, hon member. I recognise the hon Michels.

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): *Hon Chair*, dankie. Die NCC *support* ook nie hierdie begroting nie. Onder die begroting Landbou, sien ons hoe groot agri-besighede floreer terwyl opkomende boere sukkel om te oorleef. Waar is die daadwerklike ondersteuning vir kleinboere? Waar is die grondhervorming wat werklik ekonomiese deelname moontlik maak? Hierdie Begroting beskerm die status quo. Dit breek dit nie af nie.

Agb House Chair, een. Hoe regverdig die Departement besnoeiings en beperkinge in Landbou-ondersteuningsprogramme terwyl opkomende en

kleinskaalse boere groter ondersteuning benodig om tot die mark toe te tree.

Twee. Watter gedeelte van die Landboubegroting word gerig op grondhervormingsbegunstigdes en kleinskaalse boere, veral uit gemeganiseerde gemeenskappe.

Drie. Hoe verseker die Departement dat landbougroei nie voortgaan om ongelykheid in die grondbesit en agri-besigheiddominasie te verstewig nie.

Vier. Watter konkrete ondersteuningsmeganisme bestaan vir landelike Bruin gemeenskappe om betekenisvol deel te neem aan die landbouwaardeketting buite bestaansvlak-intervensies.

Vyf. Hoe reageer die Begroting op eksterne skokke soos klimaatverandering en uitvoersteurings terwyl dit steeds die kwesbare plaaslike produsente beskerm. Dankie, agb Voorsitter.

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Hon Chair, thank you. The NCC also does not support this Budget. Under the Vote Agriculture we see how large agri-businesses are flourishing while emerging farmers are struggling to survive. Where is the real support for small farmers? Where is the land reform that actually enables real economic participation? This Budget protects the status quo. It does not break it down.

Hon House Chair, one. How does the Department justify cuts and limitations in Agriculture support programmes while emerging and small scale farmers

require larger support to enter the market?

Two. Which part of the Agriculture Budget is aimed at land reform beneficiaries and small scale farmers, especially from the mechanised communities?

Three. How does the Department ensure that agricultural growth does not continue to strengthen inequality in the land ownership and agri-business dominance?

Four. What concrete support mechanism exists for rural Brown communities to meaningfully participate in the agricultural value chain outside of subsistence level interventions?

Five. How does the Budget react to external shocks such as climate change and export disruptions while it still protects the vulnerable local producers? Thank you, hon Chair.]

†Die TYDELIKE VOORSITTER (Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Baie dankie, agb lid Michels. Ek gee erkenning aan die agb lid Marais.

[The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you, hon member Michels. I see the hon member Marais.]

†Mnr G P MARAIS (FFP): Baie, baie dankie. [Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): Thank you very much.] Thank you, hon Madam Speaker. Hon Madam Speaker, I am

going to get straight to what I want to ask the hon Minister because what has been said has been said. We know what the economic situation is and the geopolitical factors that are affecting our economy.

There is trust land that has been transferred, prime kraal land, that is correct, that has been transferred. There are twelve rural areas, agricultural land. Why has that not been included as part of the way forward to create more inclusive economic opportunities for our people?

Hon Minister, I know that the DA also holds a national position of Minister of Agriculture. So, in terms of cooperative government, did the hon Minister approach the National Minister in terms of this land and any plans to empower previously disadvantaged communities to also participate in this economy?

Then, in terms of the financial support to farmers that have been affected by the Foot-and-Mouth disease. Has funding been set aside by this Province to support Western Cape farmers who have gone through financial difficulty as a result of the FMD? And have there been any farmers that have contacted the Department for that particular assistance?

I know that as the hon Minister of Finance said, we have a world class economy in terms of Agriculture, but I would like to see it become an inclusive agricultural economy, too. Thank you, hon Madam Speaker.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank

you very much, hon member Marais. I acknowledge the hon member Brinkhuis online.

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AL JAMA-AH): Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. Hon Chairperson, the Western Cape DA-run province is a major contributor to South Africa's export to the Zionist Israeli regime. Despite the Zionist regime's illegal occupation of Palestine, its ongoing genocide of Palestinians and the war on the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Province continues to maintain trade links.

It is clear that the province is ignoring calls from Human Rights organisations to stop exporting agricultural goods to the Zionist Israeli regime. This is in conflict with South Africa's commitment and support for the Palestinians and their struggle against occupation. The DA Province is pro-Zionist and has no empathy for the plight of Palestinians.

Furthermore, much is needed to be done to improve the working and living conditions of farmworkers. The province provides substantial support to farmers such as the implementation of, among others, over 7 400 security projects whilst ignoring the plight of farmworkers. They still face the apartheid realities of evictions, job losses and slave wages, and the insecurity of land.

Farmworkers continue to be exposed to the use of dangerous chemicals, especially highly hazardous pesticides which result in health risks and pollution of the environment.

There is also a huge discrepancy in support to Black farmers who face challenges of limited access to funding and markets. Black farmers still face market segregation and bureaucratic red tape when they want to access formal markets.

Al Jama-ah reiterates its call for action to be taken against commercial farmers who claim BEE points in the name of farmworkers who have no clue about the business finances and receive ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Your time has expired. Thank you very much, hon member Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AL JAMA-AH): Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): I recognise the hon member Masipa.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Hon Madam House Chair, hon Premier, hon Minister, hon members, HOD Dr Mogale Sebopesta, Casidra CEO Keith du Plessis, Casidra Board Chairperson, Christo van der Rheede, members of Casidra Board, Western Cape residents.

Booker T Washington once said:

"No country can prosper if it leaves its agriculture in the hands of those who do not respect or understand the land."

These words ring true today as we debate Vote 11. Last week in this House, I spoke of the last 30 brutal, corrupt years under ANC rule. This story is no different in agriculture ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Masipa ...[Interjection.]

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

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): ...can you please take your seat.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): ...community safety.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Michels, is that a point of order? Please take your seat, hon member Masipa.

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Nee, kan ek die agb member 'n vraag vra? [Mr J MICHELS (NCC): No, can I ask the hon member a question?] Can I ask a question?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): I will ask the hon member if he is willing to take a question. Hon Masipa, are you willing to take a question?

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): I am not going to waste my time. Thank you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you very much. Hon member Michels, the hon member is not ...[Interjection.]

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Dankie, dankie.

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Thank you, thank you.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Michels ...[Interjection.]

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Nee, ek ...[Tussenwerpsel.]

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): No, I ...[Interjection.]]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Michels! The hon member is not taking a question. Please turn off your mic. Please proceed, hon member.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Hon Madam House Chair, the story is no different in agriculture, land reform and rural community safety. The same betrayal, same failure. This has left Law Enforcement without resources to deal with crimes

in rural communities. However, we welcome the Department's rural development focus. Let us bring real facts that hon Nkondlo is looking for that fail our people daily.

As we debate Vote 11 today, the 30-year rot of the African National Congress is laid bare in land reform and agricultural infrastructure on land reform farms ...[Interjections.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Order, hon members.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): ...under ANC governance in all provinces. A subject we have ignored in recent time, land reform has been a spectacular failure plagued by corruption, elite capture and a shocking 75% to 90% failure rate.

Hon Madam House Chair, across the country billions spent on ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Masipa, please take your seat.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): ...strategy.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Please take your seat, hon member.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): What is the problem?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon members, we cannot have a situation where you drown out the speaker. We have a very long day ahead of us. Can I please ask for your indulgence in order for us to get through the necessary Votes, and it is also you standing between yourself and lunchtime at this point. So, can I please ask for your indulgence, hon members. Please proceed, hon member.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Across the country, billions spent on proactive land acquisition strategies, farms have yielded almost nothing. Of 529 handpicked farms supported with R3,4 billion in recapitalisation, 75% operate at subsistence level or lie fallow, producing zero commercial output.

Special Investigating Unit probes in 148 projects exposed widespread fraud, farms and grants awarded to ineligible beneficiaries through kickbacks, with officials diverting funds meant for emerging farmers. Hon Nkondlo, I hope you got that one.

Add decades of neglect in agricultural infrastructure: rural roads crumbling, irrational schemes failing, dams and water systems collapsed and unreliable energy supply crippling small-scale and commercial farmers. These failures born of corruption, cadre deployment and a lack of political will by the ANC Government have isolated farmers from market, denied water for irrigation and destroyed livelihoods turning potential success stories into ghost farms and

rural decline.

In stark contrast, the Western Cape under DA governance, stands as a beacon of what works. Our province achieves an 83% success rate in land reform projects receiving post-settlement support. Independent reports confirm that farmers have become sustainable in agri-businesses and not failures. We invest in real infrastructure, reliable rural roads, water resilience, veterinary services and export certifications, maximising every Rand from Treasury to boost production, jobs and food security.

Where the ANC enables corruption and neglects the basics, the DA fights corruption, partners with producers and delivers results for all, regardless of race and background, hon Nkondlo.

Hon members, here in the Western Cape, we translate this commitment into action through Vote 11's programme, aligned with our Growth for Jobs strategy. Programme II delivers tangible sustainable resource use and management. Subprogrammes, such as agricultural engineering services, land care, land use management and disaster risk management receive focused allocations to sustain our natural agricultural resources.

The Democratic Alliance welcomes the R157 million allocated to provide agricultural support to land users, ensuring sustainable development. We also, hon Madam Chair, welcome the rollover and continued work from the R270 million received during the Adjustment Budget from the National Conditional

Grant, Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme for infrastructure, reconstruction and rehabilitation following disasters between December 2023 and July 2024.

Hon House Chair, I just want to correct something that hon Nkondlo made mention of, about this Province ignoring the emerging farmers. Programme III receives R333 million from the R1,13 billion allocation to support mainly emerging producers through agricultural development programmes, transforming this sector to drive economic growth, fight hunger, improve inclusion and equality, and create jobs. Hon Nkondlo should not read the Budget selectively. This is dedicated to Black emerging farmers.

Key subprogrammes in this regard are Casidra Food Security, extension and advisory services and producer support system. Casidra and Food Security programmes ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Order, hon members.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): ...collectively receive over R250 million, sufficient when augmented by unforeseen and unavoidable events funding to scale disaster response and strengthen provincial resilience.

Hon Minister, you addressed FMD extensively. The Democratic Alliance welcomes the decisive injection of R138,7 million from the R949,8 million

Unforeseen and Unavoidable Reserve Fund, to combat the Foot-and-Mouth disease outbreak and safeguard our livestock industry, farmers, jobs and food security. Unlike under the ANC Government, this money will be well spent, swiftly, transparently and effectively.

Programme IV, Veterinary Services, receives R152 million, a 20% increase to ensure sustainable agricultural production. Subprogrammes cover animal health, veterinary international trade facilitation, veterinary public health, diagnostic services and technical support. Medium Term earmarked funding includes R12 million ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Order, hon members.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): ...over three years for the Export Certification online system. Programme V, Research and Technology Development Services, stands out as the best in the country, providing expert problem-focused, client-centric research, technology development and transfer tailored to export-orientated economy.

Unlike other provinces who are reliant on ARC agenda, our provincially funded, managed research delivers targeted impact. We support the R177 million allocation and the increase of 8,8%.

Programme VI, Agricultural Economic Services, receives R58,684 million to

support economics, marketing, agro-processing and macro-economic initiatives. We welcome the earmarked R16,5 million for Africa Market activations crucial for AFCTA opportunities and geopolitical disruptions from the Middle East war, opening new markets for our farmers.

Programme VII and VIII, Agricultural Extension and Training and Rural Development, receive R79 million and R23 million respectively. We welcome efforts to retain the College under the Department of Agriculture, avoiding the national failures that have seen institutions like the College of Cape Town fall under administration due to, again, ANC corruption and mismanagement.

For over 30 years, the failed, corrupt ANC-led system has dominated our politics and national governance, delivering collapse, mismanagement and betrayal. Billions looted through cadre deployment and State capture leading to commission after commission, Ministerial task after Ministerial task, with no one jailed, and come in this House to pretend to be on the side of the poor people. Shame on you!

Essential infrastructure including animal health, vaccine production at Onderstepoort, biological product and FMD vaccine production at ARC to water systems were deliberately neglected, corrupted and left to rot. On Human Rights Day, the ANC marched not against people having no water, but against its confused international relations politics that are destroying businesses, farming and our rural economy, leaving rural communities with ghost towns. No need to march. The era of deflection must come to an end.

Hon members, the DA does not condone a failed system or hide in excuses. We lead with integrity, accountability and real delivery, turning taxpayers' monies into tangible value that protects economies, communities and futures.

Just last week, I reminded the farmers of the Western Cape and South Africa at large, and I repeat: it was the ANC that inherited functioning institutions like OBP and the ARC. Then, systematically broke them over 30 years. Billions siphoned off through corruption, capacity guarded infrastructure left to rot. When relief funds arrived, the ANC stole those, too, then complained about the wreckage they created. This is not governance. This is betrayal.

Let me remind our hon colleagues and hon Nkondlo, who are the people harming our economy. One of them is the former ANC Youth League leader, Collen Maine, presently declared he wanted the Rand to fall, and the Rand will fall, but when it rises, they will be in charge of the economy in South Africa and went on to welcome the junk status. Such reckless attitudes welcomed economic pain for ordinary South African farmers hit hardest by currency volatility, higher input costs and instability, while the DA fights for stability and growth. When defending corruption, former Minister of Water and Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane said:

"The attack is not on Zuma, but it is on ANC. Re tlo thiba ka dibono ..."

[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Order, hon members!

Mr N P MASIPA (DA):

"[We will defend with our buttocks]."

While she and others shielded corruption, doors were flung wide open for water mafias to loot. Agriculture is water, hon members. Without essential water infrastructure, we cannot farm successfully. This Budget supports the Western Cape Cabinet's efforts to ensure water and energy resilience because we prioritise action over defence of failure.

As I conclude, let me repeat my favourite warning from Rholihlahla Nelson Mandela:

"Success will require an acceptance that in many respects, we are a sick society." ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Thank you, *baas*.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): The ANC has made us that sick society. We even see now the SACP distancing itself from the ANC. We see hon Ngqentsu is not even in the House because he is now making a way away from the ANC. ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Masipa ...[Interjection.]

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Let me take the opportunity to thank ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Masipa ...[Interjection.]

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): ...Dr Mogale, Dr Magatla, Dr Msiza ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member, please take your seat.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): ...and the rest of the Department officials.

An HON MEMBER: Even in this debate they do not clap for you. ...[Laughter.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): My apologies once again, hon member Masipa. Hon Minister, is that a point of order?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: Yes, hon Madam Chairperson. I think this is probably going to be the first time I ever rise on this particular subsection. I will be rising on Section 59(1)(c) of the Western Cape Parliamentary Rules that

the heckling of the Opposition is now actually verbally abusing another hon member. That is that particular section.

The hon member from the EFF ...[Interjections.] specifically was heckling about the hon member being a farm manager. The other hon members of the Opposition were heckling about tea boys and garden boys ...[Interjections.] and not only ...[Interjections.] Not only is that disrespectful to the people in those occupations, it is actually bordering upon verbal abuse ...[Interjections.] of the hon member and racism.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you very much, hon Minister. Order, hon members. [Interjections.] Order, hon members! [Interjections.] Are you concluding any time soon, hon members? [Interjections.] Hon member Lithakong! [Interjections.] Hon members. Thank you very much, hon Minister for your point of order. We will revert to Hansard and come back with a ruling. [Interjections.]

Hon members, there is nothing, absolutely nothing that you can add or retract to any hon member's speech today. You are having the opportunity. Please pass a note to your hon member on the floor if you wish him or her to address something, but can we please maintain order and continue with the business. Thank you very much. I recognise the hon Masipa. And the hon member has the full, in excess of 16 minutes left. Please, hon members.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Hon Madam Chair, can I have 30 minutes?

[Interjections.] I need ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Please proceed, hon member.

Mr N P MASIPA (DA): Hon House Chair, as I conclude, let me repeat my favourite warning from Rholihlahla Nelson Mandela who said:

"Success will require an acceptance that in many respects, we are a sick society."

The ANC has made us that sick society. We even see now the SACP distancing itself from the ANC. Hon Ngqentsu is not here. He decided to stay away.

As I conclude, let me take the opportunity to thank Dr Mogale, Dr Magatla, Dr Msiza for really helping this province to fight Foot-and-Mouth disease, and the rest of the Department officials for their support. We support this R1,14 billion Budget because it is solid, built on science and data. I urge my hon colleagues, hon ANC colleagues, to support it to put farmers, jobs and food security first. I thank you, hon Madam Chair.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you very much, hon member Masipa. I recognise the hon Minister Meyer. Hon Minister? He is waiting on the podium.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: Hon House Chair, I will not be so long. I would very much like to firstly thank the hon members that took part in the debate. This is a Budget debate, and it is a debate of growth. We have focused, also in our debate, on the power of this agricultural sector to facilitate export-led growth.

Last week, I visited Brenda of Rio Largo farm in Worcester. Brenda, can you please stand? Thank you very much for the work that you and your husband Nicholas are doing because that job creates work. Your products are getting exported. We really appreciate that you take this passion of olive oil, world class olive oil which won many multiple prizes overseas.

I had the pleasure of meeting her and her husband, of Rio Largo, in Dubai where she was exhibiting her products from the Western Cape for the international global markets, because of a 5% growth in agriculture is translated into 22 900 new jobs in this province. So, thank you for what you are doing for the workers for the Western Cape, for the world and your export. I know that you told me that you will soon travel abroad again to promote your products and be a great ambassador for South Africa and the Western Cape. I thank you and warm greetings to your husband and your staff.

†Agb *House Chair*, Brenda hulle lewer ook wyndruiwe vir De Doorns Kelders en ek weet dat die agb lede aan hierdie kant hou van De Doorns se wynkelders. ...[Gelag.] So, volgende keer as jy so 'n slukkie vat, dink aan Brenda en Nicholas Wilkinson want dit is kwaliteitdruie. Kwaliteit sal u daar kry.

Hon member het niks eintlik bygedra tot hierdie debat nie, so ek gaan u *skip*.
 ...[Gelag.] Agb lede, ek wil graag hê dat ons kennis moet neem dat
 landboukoue 'n baie belangrike rol speel in die plaaslike ekonomie van die
 Wes-Kaap. ...[Tussenwerpsel.]

[Hon House Chair, Brenda also delivers wine grapes for the De Doorns Cellars
 and I know that the hon members on this side like De Doorns's wine cellars
 ...[Laughter.] So, next time you take a sip, think of Brenda and Nicholas
 Wilkinson because it is quality grapes. Quality you will find there.]

Hon member has actually contributed nothing to this debate, so I'm going to
 skip you ...[Laughter.] Hon members, I would like you to take note that
 agricultural shows play a very important role in the local economy of the
 Western Cape [Interjection.]

†Die TYDELIKE VOORSITTER (Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Agb
 Minister, as u asseblief die sitplek kan inneem. Agb lid Michels, is dit 'n punt
 van orde?

[The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon
 Minister, if you can please take your seat. Hon member Michels, is it a point
 of order?]

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Agb *Chairperson*...

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Hon *Chairperson*.]

†Die TYDELIKE VOORSITTER (Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Nee, is dit n punt van orde?

[The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): No, is it a point of order?]

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Ja, dit is n punt van orde want ek ...[Tussenwerpsel.]

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Yes, it is a point of order because I ...[Interjection.]]

†Die TYDELIKE VOORSITTER (Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Wat is die punt van orde?

[The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): What is the point of order?]

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Dat ek, by implikasie het die agb Minister gesê ons diekant hou van drink. Ek wil net ...[Tussenwerpsel.]

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): That I, by implication the hon Minister said that we on this side like drinking. I just want to ...[Interjections.]]

†Die TYDELIKE VOORSITTER (Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Nee. Wat is die punt van orde? Agb lid Michels?

[The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): No. What is the point of order? Hon member Michels?]

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Ja, die agb Minister het by implikasie, het hy gesê ons is wynkoppe hierdie kant.

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Yes, the hon Minister by implication, he said by implication we on this side are *wynkoppe* [wineheads].]

†Die TYDELIKE VOORSITTER (Me W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Agb lid Michels, dit is nie 'n punt van orde nie. Gaan asseblief voort, agb Minister.

[The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon Michels, that is not a point of order. Please continue, hon Minister.]

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: House Chair, I would like to conclude. †Landbouskoue speel 'n baie belangrike rol in die Wes-Kaap. Dit is deel van ons plaaslike ekonomie en ek wil graag my opregte dank en waardering ook uitspreek aan Sandra en Pieter van Wyk.

Hulle het 'n fantastiese landbouskou gelewer. Ek was self by die skou in Riversdal. Die skou was gereël tydens bek-en-klouseer. Absoluut top-kwaliteit biosekuriteit. Geen gesplete hoefdiere was daar toegelaat nie. Uitnemende skou waar kinders wel diere gesien het in terme van kunswerke wat daar uitgestal was, maar nie biosekuriteit wat daar onder die bus gegooi is by Riversdal nie. Ek vra graag dat beide Sandra en Pieter van Wyk van Riversdal opstaan. Fantasties! Pieter en Sandra, die reëlings wat julle daar gedoen het, die plaaslike ekonomie ondersteun het en saam met die munisipaliteite gewerk het. Dankie Breyton Milford wat ook aktief werk met landbouskoue. Maar Riversdal, Pieter, sal ek nou gebruik as die *benchmark* van enige landbouskou wat ek bywoon want julle het gewys hoe die landbouskou inklusief is, almal

werk daar en van die plaaslike gemeenskappe wat inkomste verdien en die ander is ook daar wat vrywillig is. Groot dank en waardering namens die Wes-Kaapse Regering want julle het 'n topklas kwaliteit skou aangebied en dankie ook aan u seun wat my daar rondgeneem het. Hy kan maar instaan in die pos waarin ek sit. Sê vir hom ek sê so. Ek dank u.

Agb Adjunk-voorsitter, agb Marais het ook 'n baie geldige vraag gevra ten opsigte van die trustgrond. [Agricultural shows play a very important role in the Western Cape. It is part of our local economies and I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Sandra and Pieter van Wyk.

They delivered a fantastic agricultural show. I was at the show in Riversdal myself. The show was organized during foot-and-mouth. Absolutely top quality biosecurity. No split hooves animals were allowed there. Excellent show where children did see animals in terms of artworks that were exhibited there, but no biosecurity that were thrown under the bus at Riversdal. I would like to ask both Sandra and Pieter van Wyk of Riversdal to stand up. Fantastic! Pieter and Sandra, the arrangements that you made there, the support of the local economy and working along with the municipalities. Thank you, Breyton Milford who was also working actively with agricultural shows. But Riversdal, Pieter, I will now use as the benchmark of any agricultural show that I attend because you have shown an agricultural show is inclusive, everyone works there and the local communities earning an income, and the others who are there voluntarily. Great thanks and appreciation on behalf of the Western Cape Government because you presented a top-class quality show and thank you also to your son

who showed me around. He can stand in in the post that I am occupying. Tell him I say so. I thank you.

Hon Deputy Chair, hon Marais also asked a very legitimate question with regard to trust land.] We support all those people, Suurbraak, Ebenhaezer, Wupperthal. We support them with food security, extension advisory services and training. If there are any further people that you think need support, please make contact with us. *Sommer* right now when you have lunch, talk to Dr Mogale. Do not write an email. Take it up right now.

Also, I want to express also my deep thanks and appreciation for my Department, for the hon Premier, for the industry, the local farmers because all of you know that there was a lot of panic for the Ashton Canning business. They were on the verge of being closed down in Ashton. There was a lot of activity happening. They came to see me. They came to see the hon Premier. They came to see Jo-Ann. They came to see Wesgro. They came to see Dr Mogale. We had multiple levels of engagement with that.

So, luckily, and we also want to thank Tiger Brands after many years. They have decided to sell that factory, and it is now known as Langeberg Foods in Ashton. †Daar woon 13 000 mense in die dorp van Ashton. As daardie fabriek toegemaak het, het ons met grootskaal se armoede gesit. [There are 13 000 people living in the town of Ashton. If that factory had closed, we have been faced with large-scale poverty.]

Of a community of 13 000, 4 000 people are working in that factory. It was a joyous occasion when I went there to see for myself what is happening. Workers are there †en vir hierdie jaar, het hulle ook 'n oesjaar verklaar. Agb lede, daar op U tafel het U die ingemaakte perskes. Dit is 'n oesjaar van 2026 van Langeberg Foods. Die gemiddelde ouderdom van die bestuur is so 40 jaar oud. Jong bloed, nuwe dinamiese mense en hierdie besigheid gaan groei van sterk tot sterkte en 80% van hulle produkte word uitgevoer.

In hierdie Regering onder my leierskap, gaan hulle verder hulp om nuwe markte te ontvind want ons glo aan die kwaliteit van hierdie produkte: 80% is vir die uitvoermark. [And for this year, they also declared a harvest year. Hon members, there on your desk are the canned peaches. It is a harvest year of 2026 of Langeberg Foods. The average age of the management is about 40 years. Young blood, new dynamic people and this business is going to grow from strength to strength and 80% of their products are exported.]

†In hierdie Regering onder my leierskap, gaan hulle verder hulp kry om nuwe markte te ontgin want ons glo aan die kwaliteit van hierdie produkte: 80% is vir die uitvoermark. [In this Government under my leadership, they are going to receive further support to explore new markets because we believe in the quality of these products: 80% is for the export market.] And we will support them because they own another growth trajectory. This is what this Government is doing because there are 4 000 people working in that factory and we take those jobs very seriously, growing the economy and getting people into jobs.

There was mention of a name, Fezile Farmer. Well, we have no knowledge of this person, but we would gladly like to assist, and we would like to get the details.

Farm evictions: well, ESTA is a national mandate. I ...[Interjections.] no, well[Interjection.] No, wait, wait, wait, wait. [Interjections.] No, no, no, no. [Interjections.] Well, we can give you the further detail. The person is here. The person must contact ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Order, hon member.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: You must invite the person. [Interjections.] No, no, no. No, no. I do not know this person. I have not received any information ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon members. Hon Minister, can you please take your seat. Hon Minister, can you please take your seat. Hon members, you cannot engage in a dialogue with the hon Minister. Can we please maintain order. Thank you, hon Minister, please proceed.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: I am going to believe in the rule of law and people that come to this House must read their Constitution and they must know where there a

debate is, because some people are bringing issues here to this House that belong to the National Parliament and they do absolutely nothing there. Now, you bring it here! I think the rule of law must apply and I will implement the rule of law ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Order, hon members.

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU, EKONOMIESE ONTWIKKELING EN TOERISME: So, agb lede ...[Tussenwerpsel.] [The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: So, hon members...[Interjection.]]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Hon member Michels.

†Die MINISTER VAN LANDBOU, EKONOMIESE ONTWIKKELING EN TOERISME: Daar is werk. [The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: There is work.] This province is the only province that has a Farmworker Programme. No other province has such things. You can make a noise. I make an impact. So, you can make a noise, I will continue to make an impact.

Also, I think that it is very important that we understand that the work is happening and what the type of work we are doing in this province. I would

very much like to refer back to the Provincial Parliament. There was an ATC in this Parliament. I hear people object to this Budget that I table of R1 billion. Well, let me refer you to the ATC of 18 March.

Then, the Committee Reports were tabled in this Parliament, and I will read what you have resolved: Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. I get the report from the Standing Committee, and the Standing Committee said the following, hon House Chair, that in terms of the Committee on Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism, Vote 11 that we are debating now, under the Chairmanship, excellent Chairmanship of Mr Noko Masipa, it says: the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism.

They have considered my proposals for Vote 11 in the Schedule of the Western Cape Appropriation Bill referred to the Committee in accordance with Standing Rule 188, reports that it supports my Budget. And therefore, I want to thank the Committee, the majority view, by the way. There was a minority view, but that is not my point. My point is that majority rules. And the Committee have adopted my report. I want to thank the capable leadership of the Committee to support my Budget.

I want to conclude. I want to thank the hon members of the House that took part in the debate. I want to thank the HOD, Dr Mogale. His senior management team. Our DDG. Thank you for our CFO, our senior managers who are doing an outstanding job. I want to thank my Head of the Office, Marietjie van Jaarsveld, Daniel Johnson, my private secretary Charmaine de

Vos and all my staff. So, I want to thank them all, but I am very happy that the Budget Committee, or rather, the Standing Committee has approved my Report.

Lastly, hon House Chair, I want to thank my wife. I want to apologise for the behaviour, but I cannot do anything. But thank you very much. My wife is in the House, and my wife will ask me tonight why did they behave like this? I will give her the factual answer, but I want to thank her for what she is doing ...[Interjection.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Order!

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM: ...for me. Thank you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER): Thank you very much, hon Minister. Order, hon members. Hon members, that brings us to the close of Vote 11. Hon members, we will now suspend proceedings and return at 14:30. Thank you, hon members. What did I say? 15. Apologies hon members, 3 o'clock. Otherwise, you would have quite a few minutes. 3 o'clock, thank you.

[House suspended at 14:23.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Colleagues, please be seated. We will promptly commence. I can confirm that we are now recorded and we will continue and I

will now recognise the Secretary.

5. *Debate on Vote 9: Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Western Cape Appropriation Bill.*

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

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Premier, hon Ministers, hon members of the Provincial Legislature. Hon Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to present the budget for the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and the entity CapeNature for 26/27 today. This budget is framed within the context of unprecedented pressure on our natural environment in an increasing polarised world. The environment is under pressure in the Western Cape, in South Africa and in the entire world.

We are experiencing this as droughts, floods, wildfires and an increased intensity of these events when they occur. Hon Speaker, these global environmental challenges are currently being drafted by powerful nations that have returned to military power and aggressive trade tactics to shape a new world order that is unfolding as we speak. What this political and economic reality will look like is anyone's guess. But what is very clear is the fact that our environmental challenges will not disappear.

This is reflected in the World Economic Forum's 2026 Global Risk Report,

which finds that the number one short-term risk we face now is geo-economic confrontation and state-based armed conflict. But the longer-term risk, the global risk, remains environmental in nature. Number one is extreme weather events. Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, number two. Number three is critical change in earth systems. Number six is natural resource shortages. And number ten is pollution.

This is the background against which our environmental and development planning and priorities must deliver for the residents of the Western Cape. My ministerial priorities for this term are growing our economy through spatial transformation and development facilitation. We want to create well-planned, inclusive urban and rural areas that attract investment, stimulate job creation and drive economic growth, ensuring accountable Local Government that delivers the services our residents deserve.

I am working very hard to see that we strengthen municipal governance, improving service delivery and building sustainable infrastructure, future-proofing our province through improved disaster and climate change resilience. We must mitigate the impact of climate change, extreme weather events and environmental degradation. I want to thank HOD Gerber and his entire team for the hard work that has gone into the alignment within programmes and projects to achieve a strategic position where the Department's mandates and the administration's priorities are streamlined and coordinated.

Hon Speaker, the Department's budget for 2026/2027 is R746.2 million. Over

the medium term, we are budgeting R769.1 million for 2027/2028 and R798.2 million for 2028/2029. This Budget also funds our conservation entity CapeNature as follows. CapeNature received R357.8 million this year, R374.6 million in 2027/2028 and R391.9 million in 2028/2029. Hon Speaker, our commitment to our strategic goals is reflected in the following earmarked allocations for this financial year.

Our regional socio-economic RCEP received R18.4 million. The RCEP programme continues to deliver practical support to municipalities with facilities for poor communities and helping them to plan for socio-economic challenges. Highlights of the current financial year is the work in Riversdal, Swellendam and Velddrif on safe pedestrian walkways, recreation facilities and LED units. For the new financial year, we have 17 projects approved across the province, including several local area planning works, such as a plan for the Main Street in Laingsburg where the N1 goes through, to improve the look and feel and unlock economic opportunities.

In Witzenberg, we are assisting the municipality to plan for informal settlements. We also have a project scheduled to explore the possibilities offered by the latest technology to identify and quantify the growth patterns of our towns and informal settlements on a regular basis, utilising satellite images. This technology can then be transferred to smaller municipalities that do not have the capacity to acquire it themselves. We will invest R1.1 million in additional housing market studies.

The Department has allocated R3.5 million for high efficiency in environmental impact assessment. The Department is allocated R5.2 million towards supporting the green economy ecosystem businesses and facilitates the uptake of green technology. The focus will be on energy and water in this regard. We will invest R13.6 million to our air quality monitoring stations. R1 million will go towards the implementation of natural base solutions for water quality improvement.

Additionally, another R1 million will go towards the joint project with the Department of Local Government to develop municipal ecological infrastructure investment plans. R2.7 million will be invested in the development of township economic growth strategies, action plans and frameworks. The Department together with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership are working together to pilot two township action plans in this province.

The pilot aims to develop an approach that will promote long-term systemic change and deliver more vibrant and resilient township economies. Mossel Bay Municipality was invited to partner in the development and the first step in Kwanokuthula was selected as a pilot. Hon Speaker, CapeNature plays a central role in safeguarding the Western Cape ecological infrastructure. The CapeNature, the Cape region is one of 36 global biodiversity hotspots. These hotspots are regions that have high levels of biodiversity, but that are also the most threatened reservoirs of plant and animal life on earth.

Healthy and resilient ecosystems are essential to sustainable life and economic growth and must be actively protected, managed and restored. When considering the importance of biodiversity, it is all the more impressive to note that CapeNature is the custodian of a conservation estate of more than 1 million hectares in the Western Cape. I am pleased to see that CapeNature again aims to add another 5,000 hectares to our conservation estate this year. Hon Speaker, the following earmarked allocations for CapeNature demonstrate the focus area.

CapeNature received R43.9 million for infrastructure upgrades and scheduled maintenance. The 26/27 financial year will also see the commencement of several strategic infrastructure projects, including solar installation, refurbishment of overnight facilities, upgrade to visitors' amenities, restoration of water and sanitation systems, and the construction of a new boardwalk in Stony Point. These investments are designed to support conservation and economic outcomes simultaneously, while strengthening the entity's operational and financial sustainability over the medium term.

CapeNature received R30.4 million for disaster prevention measures, such as wildfire management and flood management. CapeNature will also invest R32 million in its extended public works programme this year. CapeNature has shown how to use the EPWP and to make a real difference in the lives of people. CapeNature offers a three-year contract instead of a one-year contract, and it goes hand in hand with training and opportunities to climb the ladder of employment. Elizabeth Muggert used this opportunity to complete high school.

Tambisa Mokena has already completed his third degree.

Hon Chairperson, I want to thank CapeNature's Board, as well as the CEO, Dr Ashley Naidoo, and his entire team for the excellent work they do. CapeNature is one of the best examples in South Africa of the value a state-owned entity can unlock, but only if it is managed with skills and integrity. Hon Speaker, during this year ahead, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning will also continue with the leading work it does on several key strategies and policy frameworks that are essential to deliver on our vision for the Western Cape Province.

The Western Cape Climate Resilience Strategy Vision 2050. This is the Provincial Government's overarching policy framework to guide how the province mitigates and adapts to climate change. Its central vision is a net zero emission climate resilience Western Cape by 2050, supported by an inclusive and sustainable economic economy and society. The Western Cape Infrastructure Strategy 2050 is the Provincial Government's long-term plan to guide how infrastructure is planned, financed, and delivered in the Western Cape up to 2050.

Hon Speaker, this Department will play a dedicated role in ensuring we address spatial inequalities by using infrastructure plans to reverse historically spatial injustices and improve access to opportunities for the poor communities. Build resilience and sustain infrastructure through infrastructure design that can withstand climate change impacts and support environmental sustainability.

During this year, the Department will also complete the new Western Cape Spatial Development Framework as a key enabler of improved planning and improved delivery, complemented by a programme to improve our development facilitation and municipal support for accelerated infrastructure development and service delivery. As part of the One Health approach, we will look after the health of the residents, the health of the environment, and the health of our economy, ensuring that all citizens have access to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment, with the focus on ecological infrastructure, water resilience, air quality management, and pollution control and waste management.

Hon Speaker, progress on these and many other policies, strategies, and local frameworks, are only possible if we have a dedicated and professional staff component, as such cost of employment is budgeted at 297.1 million and 26/27... [Unrelated audio recorded – 0:13:46] ...and their respective management team. Hon Speaker, in short, the 2026, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, together with our entity CapeNature, will be working in the engine room to grow our economy, to empower our people, and to safeguard our environment. And with that, I table the 2026/2027 Budget. I thank you.

†Die ADJUNKSPEAKER: Baie dankie, agbare Minister. [The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister.] I recognise the hon Stoffel.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. As we rise to debate the Budget Vote for Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, we must begin to accept a simple truth. The climate crisis is no longer a distant threat. It is present reality, shaping how we plan, how we build, and how we sustain livelihoods across the province. Unfortunately, the truth has not sunk into the DA officials. The Department acknowledges that climate resilience is now a key driver of demand.

Municipalities and economic sectors increasingly require technical and advisory support to integrate climate risk information into infrastructure planning, land use management, and development decisions. This is a welcome recognition. However, acknowledgement without institutional strengthening is insufficient. At a time when climate governance is becoming more complex and urgent, the Province have yet to fully institutionalise independent environmental oversight.

The absence of a dedicated Environmental Commissioner reflects a gap between policy ambition and governance capacity. If we are serious about embedding climate resilience across all sectors, then we must also be serious about strengthening accountability, coordination, and oversight. Turning to the Budget itself, we note that nearly 48 percent of the Department allocation is directed to CapeNature. Increasingly from 357 million to over 391 million over the MTEF.

Whilst biodiversity protection is critical, such as insufficient concentration of

resources demands demonstrable returns. Conservation cannot be measured only in hectares protected. It must also be reflected in expanded access, community benefits, and climate resilience outcomes. Too often, conservation funding is becoming disconnected from the lives and realities of communities, particularly those next to protected areas. If this investment does not translate into jobs, skills development, and local economic opportunities, then it reinforces exclusion rather than advancing shared environmental stewardship.

Equally concerning is the structure of the Department's expenditure. Compensation of Employees accounts for approximately 76.5 percent of the total allocation. This is an extraordinarily high ratio, especially in a context where service delivery pressure continues to grow. A budget so heavily weighted towards personnel must demonstrate clear improvement in delivery capacity, yet we continue to see gaps in implementation and of coordination. This Budget also does not make provision in terms of the same employees of CapeNature when they got injured on duty.

Take note, Mr Bredell. This raises deeper concerns about workforce planning. Persistent vacancies alongside historical un-spending and compensation of employees suggest that the issue is not simply the size of the budget, but how effectively is it managed when posts remain unfilled and funds are reallocated? The result has weakened the State, once that is less able to respond to environmental risk and less capable of supporting municipalities.

Water security remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the province.

Ensuring that water is available, accessible, and sustainable is fundamental, not only to human well-being, but to economic stability. Yet, many municipalities continue to raise drought conditions with limited technical and financial capacity. In this context, the Department must play a fair, more effective and coordinated role in supporting Local Government.

Without this, our commitment and resilient risk remain talking points. We also noted that the allocation linked to the early retirement and voluntary exit programme. While this may provide short-term fiscal relief, it must be accompanied by a clear strategy to retain critical skills and ensure institutional continuity. A reduction in personnel costs cannot come at the expense of institutional memory and technical expertise.

In the increase of nearly 25 percent in Programme 1, Administration, further highlighted the need for balance. Administrative growth must not outpace service delivery impact. At a time when communities face the direct consequences of climate change, resources must be prioritised towards programmes that deliver tangible environmental and developmental outcomes. The green economy must become a vehicle for inclusive growth, supporting small enterprises, creating jobs, and strengthening water and energy resilience, particularly in vulnerable municipalities.

Similarly Programme 4, which focusses on environmental quality management, plays a critical role in regulating pollution, managing waste and protecting air quality. However, without sufficient staffing and enforcement capacity, even

the strongest policy will fail to achieve their intent to outcome. In the Programme 5, where biodiversity and conservation management dominate, the reliance on nature once again underscores the importance of robust oversight. Public funds must translate into biodiversity outcomes, but also into expanded opportunities for communities to participate in and benefit from conservation efforts.

Yet, perhaps the most telling allocation in this Budget is also the smallest environmental education, community awareness, and public employment programmes receive less than 2 million. This is deeply concerning, because without public participation, without community ownership, and without environmental awareness, our climate response will remain incomplete. This Budget failed to meet the challenges faced by the province. It reveals critical imbalances between administration and implementation, between conservation and inclusion, and between ambition and exclusion.

If we are to build a climate resilient province, we must move beyond plans and allocations. We must build a capable department, strengthen our capabilities, ensure that every cent spent delivers real environmental and social value. Unfortunately, this Budget does not give us confidence in delivering a climate resilient province. Ultimately, this Budget reflects a pattern we have seen repeatedly under the Democratic Alliance administration in the Western Cape, a preference from form over substance and for compliance over transformation.

It does not sufficiently respond to the scale of the climate crisis, nor does it

place communities, especially the most vulnerable, at the centre of the environmental planning and development. Instead, it trends existing inequalities by failing to link environmental protection with inclusive and economic opportunities, job creation, and meaningful support to municipalities that are in the front line of the climate impacts. We reject this Budget because it does not build the capable, responsive, and developmental department required to confront the realities of the climate change.

We reject it because it falls short in advancing environmental justice and inclusive growth. And we reject it because the people of this province deserve a budget that is bold, balanced, and truly transformative. Until such a budget is presented, one that aligns resources with the urgency of our challenges, we will continue to stand firm in opposition. For those reasons, the African National Congress does not support this budget, it rejects it. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Stoffel. I recognise on the hybrid system, hon Adams.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker, for the recognition. Hon Deputy Speaker, this Budget fails the people of the Western Cape. Climate change, illegal dumping, and reckless development continues unchecked. The most vulnerable, both in informal settlements and rural areas, are left to suffer while Government differs. Development is still skewed toward the privileged. Ordinary residents are ignored, infrastructure is lacking, and

sustainability is an afterthought.

Efforts on paper mean nothing if communities remain exposed to environmental harm. This Budget, hon Deputy Speaker, shows no urgency, no clear plan, and no real protection for the people or the environment. We need people first. Responsible planning, not empty promises that the DA makes every time. That puts people at risk. I thank you, hon Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Adams. I recognise the hon G Marais.

Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, we welcome the focus on wildfire management and the additional funding that has gone into that. We also welcome the additional funds for more boots on the grounds, Minister, and we trust that that will make a difference to the enforcement of and protection for the environment. However, environmental legislation is still weak against the PIE Act, and I hope that with all that is being done and all that money that is being spent, that there will be progress made in protecting the environment, despite weak legislation that is protecting the environment.

Now, the Minister insists that we do not need an Environmental Commissioner. It will cost too much to have one. But how valuable is the environment to us? We eat from it, we survive from it, and we need to be ahead of any developments that are taking place. Now, informal settlements are going into our wetland

areas, our estuaries are being polluted, and there is no protection. And so, even today, the Western Cape High Court has a matter that environmentalists and those who are affected, those small scale fishermen that are being affected, that they have to go to Court in order to protect themselves, their interests, and to protect the environment.

So, I wonder, Minister, with all that is being done, will we achieve what our Constitution expects of us to preserve our environment for the future? Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Marais. I recognise the hon Bryant.

Mr D W BRYANT (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, this DA-led Western Cape Government has proven that environmental protection is a key driver of economic growth. In many parts of the world, environmental protection is still seen as a constraint on development, something that slows investment, adds costs, and complicates growth. But here in the Western Cape, we have taken a different approach.

We have demonstrated that when environmental governance is done properly, it becomes a catalyst for economic growth, rather than a barrier to it. One of the clearest examples of this is the province's leadership in managing environmental impact assessments, or EIAs. While delays and backlogs are common elsewhere, the Western Cape has prioritised efficiency without weakening our environmental standards.

This means that developers and investors have clarity, our timelines are predictable, and the very important projects being led by this DA Government can move forward with confidence. At the same time, environmental risks are properly assessed and managed. This balance is critical because it supports growth while safeguarding the resources that growth depends on.

This approach is underpinned by a broader philosophy known as One Health, which recognises a simple but powerful reality. A healthy environment supports healthy communities, and both are essential for a strong economy. By embedding this principle into governance, the DA has ensured that environmental policy is no longer treated as a separate or secondary concern. It has become part of how we plan, how we invest, and how we grow.

This is also evident in the province's approach to climate leadership. The development of a Western Cape Greenhouse Gas Inventory is a significant step forward. It will provide a clear evidence-based understanding of emissions across the province, enabling better planning and more targeted interventions. Just as importantly, it aligns the Western Cape with global standards of transparency and accountability, something that investors increasingly expect.

In a world where climate risk is an economic risk, this kind of forward planning is essential for long-term competitiveness and I am sure member Stoffel will be happy to hear that. At the same time, green economy initiatives are being actively developed and implemented. Through programmes aligned with the

Growth for Jobs Strategy, the province is supporting industries that contribute to energy security, create employment, and reduce environmental impact.

These reinforce one another. Expanding renewable energy, for example, not only reduces emissions, but it also stabilises energy supply and opens up new areas of economic activity. Effective environmental governance also depends on credible enforcement. In the Western Cape, a 48-hour response time to serious environmental offences sends a clear signal that non-compliance will not be tolerated. This is supported by the Green Scorpions, whose work strengthens enforcement across municipalities.

Consistent enforcement protects communities, maintains fair competition, and ensures that responsible businesses are not undermined by those who ignore the rules. Another important factor in driving growth is regulatory certainty. The Western Cape has worked to create a predictable and efficient system for processing environmental applications, with a strong focus on meeting performance targets. Environmental protection is also being used to unlock new economic opportunities.

Waste, for example, is increasingly being treated not as a burden, but as a resource. By supporting recycling, reuse, and waste-to-value initiatives, the Province is helping to grow small businesses, stimulate innovation, and create jobs. This is a practical example of how environmental challenges can be turned into economic opportunities. We are seeing this translate into real action in our DA-led municipalities as well. In Cape Town, a quiet revolution is

happening in backyards across the city.

Through our Home Composting Programme, tens of thousands of households have received free composting containers and training, transforming kitchen scraps and garden waste into rich soil right at home. I have one of them at home, and I hope that everyone else living in Cape Town has one too. And if you do not, you can contact your local ward councillor and ask for one. Hon Deputy Speaker, at the same time, targeted interventions such as pesticide monitoring and key water catchments play a critical role in protecting both public health and agricultural productivity.

Agriculture remains one of the Western Cape's most important sectors, and it depends directly on the quality of natural resources. Protecting water systems and soil health is therefore not just an environmental priority, it is an economic necessity. The Province is also investing in the management of key natural assets, including estuaries and biosphere reserves. These areas support tourism, sustain biodiversity, and contribute to local economies. By maintaining and protecting them, the Western Cape ensures that these benefits continue over the long term.

Importantly, hon Deputy Speaker, this approach to growth is inclusive. Programmes that support women and small enterprises in the green economy are helping to expand participation and ensure that opportunities are more widely shared. Economic growth is strongest when it is broad-based, and environmental sectors offer significant potential in this regard. Finally, the

Western Cape is strengthening its resilience to climate change through integrated environmental management.

Initiatives such as the Catchment to Coast approach focus on maintaining the health of entire ecosystems. This includes clearing invasive species, maintaining ecological infrastructure, and enforcing environmental regulations. These actions protect water security, reduce disaster risks such as fires and floods, and preserve the biodiversity that underpin key industries. All of these examples point to a single conclusion. Environmental protection, when approached strategically, is not a cost to the economy, it is an investment in the economy, and it lays the foundation for sustainable long-term growth.

The DA-led Western Cape Government has recognised this reality and acted on it. By aligning environmental stewardship with economic strategy, this Government has built a model of governance that is both practical and forward-looking. It is a model that proves that growth and sustainability are not in conflict, but are in fact mutually reinforcing. The DA supports Vote 9, and thanks Minister Bredell and his team for all their fantastic work. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, and thank you to the members that participate in this debate. Just very quickly, in this Department we only got officials, professional officials. We employ them on dignity and for their skill set and not on a political ticket. Secondly, to the hon Stoffels, the compensation percentage will always be high because we do not

have machines that can do EIAs, et cetera. It is the nature of this Department, it is professional people, it is people with a certain skill set.

Obviously, it is important that the workforce, their protective clothing, et cetera. So, if you have got something that people do not have the right clothing or they do not get the right treatment, please let me know. It is something that we are very serious about. The water is fundamental, and you are quite correct and we are very strict and work with our municipalities, but we must be clear on something, hon Deputy Speaker, and that is that municipalities are a financial entity and they should stand on their own legs.

Municipalities cannot, through bad management, destroy the infrastructure and then expect the Province to fix it. So, yes, we work very closely with municipalities, but we are not there to do the work on their behalf. They must step up and they must do what they must do to serve their communities. Hon Marais, I think our environmental legislation is very strong, to be quite honest with you. I think it is very strict, it is very strong, and the whole court case scenario today, it is because of mining licence, and that is a National competency.

It is not our competency, it is National that needs to say yes or no, and if they just want to destroy it, then we will need to take them to court, but it is a National competency. To the hon Chairperson, Dave Bryant, thank you very much. Thank you for the oversight role. Thank you for the hard work. Thank you for the drive within the Committee. It is really a pleasure and an honour

to work with you and the Committee members.

We all love the environment, we all understand the importance of the environment for future generations, and we never see these things as personal, but we do push ourselves to be better at what we do, and we really respect that and appreciate that. And if you look at the speech, the 2050 Climate Change Plan, and we will come and present it to the Standing Committee, because again, we do not know it all. To get your inputs will be valuable, but also invite CapeNature to come and explain the EPWP programme, because I really think it is a great game changer.

They have changed that from a one-year to a three-year contract, and you can just see how people bloom. I mentioned two examples, you get goose bumps if you stand there and you see there is literally 50, 60 people who changed their lives just through this programme. So with that, we table the Budget. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. That concludes the debate on the Vote. We proceed now, and I recognise the Secretary.

6. *Debate on Vote 14: Local Government, Western Cape Appropriation Bill.*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I again recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon Premier, hon Cabinet members, members of this House, hon Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to present the 26/27 Budget for the Department of Local Government today. Local Government across South Africa are in very serious trouble. 257 municipalities with only 41 clean audits, 20 of which is in the Western Cape. 162 in a state of distress. These municipalities have persistent cash flow shortages, poor revenue collection, unfunded budgets, rising debt and Eskom and Water Boards that do not get paid, and backlogs in maintenance of infrastructure, et cetera.

113 municipalities adopted unfunded budget. 19 municipalities received qualified opinions from the Auditor General. 17 municipalities received the worst possible outcome of a disclaimer of opinion. 39 are under administration. We still believe it should be 40, but with the ignorance and sheer lack of understanding driven by the NCOP and SALGA, has denied us from rescuing Knysna in this regard. Hon Speaker, as I stand here today, I have been working in Local Government space for 30 years.

I have been a councillor, I have been a Mayor, and currently, since 2009, being the MEC for Local Government in this province, I have seen and experienced many things in Local Government. So when I make the following statement, it comes from a place of experience and deep concern. Hon Speaker, several seemingly unrelated developments are coming together, and it can create a perfect storm for those who are not seeing the danger. I am referring to climate

change, fiscal constraints, and chaotic coalitions.

Hon House Chair, I am referring to the common sense fact that those people living in 162 distressed municipalities are not happy. They are not getting basic services, and they are seeing their towns crumbling and falling apart. They do not see a future there for themselves and their children. Those people are all dreaming of living in functional municipalities. There are currently far too few functioning municipalities for all of South Africa's residents to live in.

Hon House Chair, this is the background against which I now present the Department of Local Government 2026 Medium Term Budget, R449.696 million for the 26/27 financial year, R429.872 million for the 27/28, and R424.732 million for 28/29. Hon Speaker, climate change is making the Western Cape hotter, drier, and increasing the intensity of droughts and floods. Our current fire season is already extending beyond the end of February. More than 100,000 hectares of land have burnt, stretching our fire-fighting men and women to the limit.

The fact that we have been spared human casualties is a testament of the dedication, bravery, and commitment of the more than 1,600 municipal fire-fighters and the 1,000 working-on-fire fire-fighters that are doing the dangerous work so that the rest of us can be safe. We are budgeting R22.2 million for the next fire season for integrated fire management and aerial support. I want to thank Minister Baartman for the allocation of R100 million over the medium term in her provincial budget address for disaster management because we

absolutely need this money for our disaster risk management programmes to protect our residents during fires, floods, and whatever disaster may come our way.

Hon Speaker, if we look at the earmarked funding in the 26 Budget, R64 million is allocated towards water security, energy security, and rescue capacity. Water resilience activities are funded with R42 million in 26/27, R46.5 million in 27/28, and R38.9 million in 28/29. The CDEF project received R3.3 million for project management support. The Western Cape energy response initiative received R11.5 million this year. Enhanced disaster preparedness and response capabilities are funded with R5.3 million in this Budget. Anticipatory disaster management received R2.9 million.

This includes funding for alien plant identification and satellite technology, flash floods and wildfire risk modelling, and the development of a priority hazard model, capacity building, and technical communication infrastructure. Hon House Chair, because we know it is getting hotter and drier, and because we know more people are coming to our province, and because we know that we need water security and economic growth, we have developed a plan. The Western Cape water resilience 2025 to 2035 set several quantifiable targets to ensure long-term water security for households, agriculture, business, and ecosystems in the province.

The main targets of this strategy are increased water supply by securing an additional 310 million cubic metres of water per year through new sources such

as groundwater, water reuse, desalination, and ecological restoration. Reduce water demand by saving 40 million cubic metres of water annually through water conservation and demand management measures such as efficiency improvements, leak reductions, and behaviour change. Diversify municipal water sources by ensuring all municipalities develop diversified water supply and maintain updated water master plans to reduce reliance on single sources such as rainfall-fed dams.

Reduce water losses by bringing non-revenue water losses below 25 percent across municipalities by improving maintenance, leak detection, and system management. Improve water and sanitation quality by achieving blue drop and green drop scores of 95 percent in at least 80 percent of our municipalities. Guarantee safely managed water access for every urban resident in this province. Hon House Chair, our National Minister of Water and Sanitation recently admitted that all municipalities in South Africa need support with water security, but that government simply does not have the necessary funds.

We need investment in catalytic water and wastewater infrastructure to secure water for the future, especially in a growing population and the impact of climate change. The answer lies in stable and accountable local governments cooperating with the private sector. Our sustainable infrastructure development and finance facilitation CDAF programme developed an innovative blended funding mechanism that can pull projects together and offer a basket of investment opportunities to investors locally as well as internationally.

I must also thank our colleague Minister Baartman and her team for assisting and helping us with this. I recently met with representative of SICO, the Swiss Government agency responsible for economic cooperation and development, and IFDK, the international fund of Danish knowledge that supports partnerships between Danish institutions and partners in developing countries. We discussed progress with this novel approach, which both these organisations are co-funding.

I can report that the following projects are currently being taken from feasibility to bankability in municipalities of Saldanha Bay, Overstrand and Swartland. In Swartland, increased treatment capacity in the wastewater treatment in foreplay, R305 million. Pipeline between Malmesbury and Darling, R200 million. Overstrand, the upgrade and extend the sewerage work in Gansbaai, Kleinmond and Solishwe [?], R45 million. Replacement of the bulk reticulation water system, R135 million. Refurbishment of the Vredenburg wastewater treatment, R41 million. Upgrade supply line in Langebaan, R88 million. And local storage reservoir, R35 million.

Hon Speaker, the municipalities involved have all signed a memorandum of understanding, which commits them to work together. They have also committed to financing projects over the five-year political cycle. There are also another R3 billion worth of water and energy projects identified across the province, which can be developed as public-private partnerships. Hon House Chair, but here is my warning. Only municipalities with sound financial management will be able to grasp these opportunities. Please let us pause a

second and let this sink in.

I have seen it, hon Chairperson, that municipalities will tell oversight committees that they are going to fix their problems with BFI funding. If their finances are not sound, they will not get funding. Only municipalities with sound financial management will be able to attract private sector partners. This has nothing to do with politics and has everything to do with ethical management. This is an opportunity of a lifetime to grab. But it is also a warning to the municipalities that do not think financial management is important.

You will enter a downward spiral that cannot be stopped. We are currently in the review process of the White Paper on Local Government. I welcome this initiative, but must admit, I am not happy with the direction it is going. New legislation or new established committees cannot correct the fundamental problem of unethical leadership. We cannot ignore the fact that many municipalities are flourishing under the current White Paper. Changing the White Paper while ignoring the fundamental problem of unethical leadership will achieve nothing.

Hon Chair, speaking of the ballot box, 2026 is an election year. As part of the Department's policy priorities, an amount of R7.5 million is budgeted for pre- and post-election support to municipalities to ensure basic service delivery continues during this time of political transition. The Department will also invest R3.4 million in municipal capacity building and support. Allow me to

thank HOD Paulsen and his entire team for the hard work they do.

We have 30 municipalities to support, and there is always more work than hands on deck. Also, our Disaster Risk Management Centre often works after hours and over weekends due to the nature of their work. These men and women also have families and lives outside of the work. So, I want to thank them for their commitment and their work. Compensation to Employees is budgeted as follows. R246.2 million for 26/27, R264.2 million for 27/28, and R272.5 million for 28/29.

Hon Speaker, I want to conclude with the following. Everyone wants to live in a community that is clean, safe, and with reliable basic services such as water and electricity. As the Western Cape Government, we also want to offer this to each and every resident in our province. We are currently investigating the minimum prescribed basic services indigent households are entitled to. I call this the dignity basket.

I believe that the current allocation of water and electricity in this dignity basket is not in step with the reality, and we will have to do more to offer people a dignified life in this province. We also need to understand the benefits that come with access to basic services such as water and regular removal of waste. A community with streetlights is safe and there is less crime. In homes with electricity, children can do homework and study at night. This improves education outcomes and strengthens the workplace.

Access to clean and safe tap water improves health outcomes and reduces the burden on our healthcare facilities. The same argument holds for a clean environment where refuse is effectively managed. Hon House Chair, this is not a debate on rates and taxes and affordability. It is a moral and ethical debate on whether we as a country can afford not to invest in the dignity of our people. Hon House Chair, the Department of Local Government is ready to work as a partner within the Western Cape Government to serve the people of our province. I table the Department of Local Government's Budget for 2026/27. I thank you.

[The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON (Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER) takes the Chair.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, hon Minister. I now invite hon member Stoffels.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, as we approach Local Government elections later this year, we do so at a time of a deep winding crisis in our municipalities. The province is facing a declared national disaster of droughts. Municipalities such as Beaufort West, Knysna are battling failing in outdated bulk water infrastructure. Many municipalities are in financial distress, struggling to meet even their basic obligations. Yet this Budget, a typical DA alliance passion created the illusion of intervention without addressing the scale of the crisis.

The ANC rejects the budget because the budget is not judged by how it reads. It is judged by how it reaches. And this one does not reach our people, nor does it speak to the challenges. It speaks of resilience, but our municipalities are collapsing. It speaks of response, but our communities are left to fend for themselves. It speaks to capacity, but that capacity is absent where it is needed most.

We see millions allocated to drought response, water resilience strategies, disaster modelling, and energy planning, yet water allocation is declining, raising serious concern about sustainability. This means that just as the crisis deepens, the support of municipalities weakens. The burden is quietly shifted into already struggling municipalities with no clarity of which support functions will be cut and scaled down.

The so-called Western Cape Water Resilience Strategy fails to confront the life reality of communities, farmers, and businesses. It does not adequately address the crisis of ageing, damage, and collapsing infrastructure in municipalities. Once again, Beaufort West, like Knysna and so forth. Water resilience cannot exist where infrastructure is failing. Hon Speaker, the reality is that water crisis in the Western Cape is not only about drought. It is about a systematic failure.

It is about a systematic failure in managing and maintaining water resources. Evidence shows that land water resources across the province, which are critical for drinking water, agriculture, and ecosystem sustainability, are in decline.

The province continues to face a persistent water deficit driven not only by climate pressure, but by weak regulations, poor compliance, and inadequate long-term planning. What does that tell us? It is simple.

The crisis is not natural. It is governance related. Municipalities are failing to maintain infrastructure to protect water resources and to enforce regulations and to ensure sustainability. Ageing system infrastructure collapse and lack of investment in inland water resource management are compounding the problem. So when this Government speaks about resilience, it avoids confronting its own failure to fix the fundamentals.

Equally concerning is disaster management, where we are already witnessing the growing impact of climate change through increasing droughts, fires, and extreme weather events. Yet smaller municipalities remain under-resourced, under-staffed, and under-prepared. Vacancies in disaster management structures persist, weakening reports capacity on the ground. Instead of building real capacity, the budget leans heavily on technical language, modelling, and satellite frameworks.

But when shacks fires tear through informal settlements in Imizamo Yethu, in Hout Bay, or Philippi, destroying homes overnight and leaving families with nothing, this Government is nowhere to be found. There is no urgency in the matter. Hon Speaker, I think it was the MEC of Treasury, MEC Deidre Baartman, who said at some stage that a budget is the best way to see if a government cares. As if it requires them to put money where their mouth is.

Unfortunately, this Budget shows how little the DA cares. They, in the first place, they choose the Metros. They choose political convenience areas. They choose visibility over vulnerability. In doing so, they abandoned rural municipalities and choose and chose in distress. This is not care. This is political allocation. It reflects a government that continues to serve in a minority while neglecting the Black and Coloured majority.

The Department speaks of supporting good governance, yet there are no meaningful incentives for municipalities that perform well. No adequate consequences for those that fail. At the same time, there is little assurance that infrastructure grants are used effectively despite widespread challenges of mismanagement and decay. Hon Speaker, this Budget has rising allocations in Compensation of Employees without clarity on whether this reflects actual capacity improvement or simply wage adjustment.

Vacancies persist while funds are relocated, pointing to weak planning and poor institutional management. As of 1st of March 2025, this Department has 42 unfilled vacancies. Hon Speaker, 42. So, where is the efficiency in filling these vacancies? We need to ask these questions because we know how they will twist the narrative. Even where there are increases such as funding linked to Traditional Council or expanded intercept programmes, there is little clarity on impact.

This allocation risk becoming box ticking exercise rather than meaningful

interventions that strengthen governance and build long-term capacity. Training budgets are increasing, and the number of interns is rising significantly. Yet, there is no clear pathway linking these programmes to permanent employment or improved municipal performance. Without measurable outcomes, this initiative remains disconnected from the real challenges faced by Local Government.

Meanwhile, municipalities lack any meaningful response to substance abuse, while communities remain trapped in a cycle of crime and violence, with hundreds of murders recorded in a single month. This is in the live reality of our people. So, we must ask again, who is this Budget for? Because it is not for those in informal settlements. It is not for the rural communities, and it is certainly not for the municipalities that are struggling to stay afloat. This Budget is not for all.

It is a political choice, a choice to prioritise the privileged and to invest in presentation rather than people and to maintain inequality instead of confronting it. It creates the illusion of progress, while the conditions of the ground continue to deteriorate. This shows the priorities of the Democratic Alliance, not the interest of the people of the province, and we refuse to endorse a budget that turns it back to those who need the state the most.

We reject it because our people deserve a government that intervenes when municipalities collapse, that rebuilds failing infrastructure, that confronts crime and decays with urgency, and that allocates resources based on the need,

not political convenience. They deserve a government that is present, capable, and accountable. This budget falls short of that responsibility, and therefore, for that reason, the African National Congress rejects its budget. Thank you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: I now recognise member Adams.

Mr B ADAMS (PA): [No audible answer]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: Member Adams?

Mr B ADAMS (PA): Thank you, hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, Local Government is meant to deliver basic services, clean water, functional sanitation, waste removal, safe roads, and responsive leadership. Yet, under the DA, communities across the Western Cape continue to suffer daily failures. Burst pipes remain unfixed, sewage spills flow through our streets. Refuse collection is irregular, and infrastructure crumbles. Knysna is a stark example.

Under the DA leadership from 2006 to 2021, critical infrastructure failed catastrophically, leaving residents stranded, properties destroyed, and recovery slow and poorly managed. Residents are frustrated and ignored. Complaints go unanswered. Promises go unfulfilled. The DA speaks of good governance, but we see poor planning, weak financial management, lack of accountability. Inequality is well-known.

Wealthy areas get proper maintenance, while townships and rural communities

are left to deteriorate. Water outages, slow leak repairs, and rising tariffs without improved services show that under the DA, service delivery is a privilege, not a right. Hon speaker, in this challenging economic environment, this Budget must also prove, provide more support for indigenous households to ensure access to basic services for those who can least afford failures.

Municipalities need proper resourcing, oversight, and accountability. Until the DA stops neglecting communities, residents will continue to bear the cost of failed leadership. †En ons gaan hulle grond toe bring, uit die pad uit, salute, ons biza nie. [And we are going to bring them down, out of the way, salute, we do not biza.] Thank you, hon Speaker.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I now recognise hon Bryant.

Mr D W BRYANT (DA): Thank you, hon House Chair. Hon House Chair, the message is clear. Municipalities in the Western Cape run by the DA grow and thrive, while those led by self-serving coalitions under the ANC and the PA collapse and fail. Hon House Chair, the performance of these two parties has been disappointing, inconsistent, and in some cases deeply frustrating for the very people they are meant to serve. Let us start with the ANC. This is a party that has had decades in government, and yet we continue to see the same patterns play out at a local level.

There are always shiny plans, big announcements, lots of ribbon-cutting, sometimes accompanied by a free loaf of bread from a Deputy Minister. But

when it comes to follow-through, when it comes to the hard, sometimes boring work of making things actually happen, that is where things start to unravel. That is where you see leaders so out of touch with the people on the ground that they boast about being able to shower in hotels while residents go without water for months.

In municipalities where the ANC has held influence, you see delays in infrastructure, you see service delivery collapsing, you see administrative instability creeping in. And it is not because of the challenges that are unique or impossible, it is because the discipline of delivery just is not there. Now, hon Deputy Speaker, the PA often presents itself as something different, as a party that shakes things up, that challenges the status quo.

And yes, sometimes politics needs energy, that needs disruption, but disruption only works if it actually leads somewhere. All the PA provides, unfortunately, is disruption without direction, accompanied by a growing list of very serious allegations against some of its members. Coalition governments in places like Kannaland has gone hand in hand with instability, with alliances shifting, leadership changing, and decisions being contested instead of implemented.

At the height of Kannaland's water crisis, that municipality saw it fit to use precious municipal drinking water to fill up a massive old leaky swimming pool. The finances of Kannaland are also in a terrible state under a Mayor who has been recently accused of allegedly extorting money from his own staff. Hon House Chair, the only thing keeping Kannaland's finances together is the

financial recovery plan being led and implemented by Minister Baartman and her team.

But sometimes, hon Deputy Speaker, this Government's good faith offers of assistance are rejected for no valid reason, which brings me to Knysna. The ANC was so blinded by their own growing political paranoia that they actually used the majority in the NCOP to block an intervention led by Minister Bredell, which would have placed the municipality under administration and brought with it huge amounts of direct investment to fix the problems.

Instead, they have chosen to rather limp along with the current failing leadership in place, while local residents continue to go without water and sewage runs down the streets. And yes, member Maynier, dead bodies float in drinking water tanks. But hon Deputy Speaker or hon House Chair, let us look at the other side of the picture, because it is important not just to point out what is going wrong, but to understand what is working and why.

Cape Town is a city facing the same national challenges as everyone else, economic pressures, environmental risks, and growing demand for services and jobs. But instead of running away from these challenges, the Mayor, Geordin Hill-Lewis, faces them head on. Budgets are planned and executed with a degree of consistency. Infrastructure programmes move forward. There is a visible effort to invest in energy resilience to keep the city functioning despite the pressures.

Or, hon House Chair, we can look at Overstrand, where we see what steady, stable governance looks like. Careful financial management, attention to infrastructure, a focus on maintaining what exists while planning for what comes next. Now, hon House Chair, obviously these municipalities are not perfect. Every government anywhere in the world has challenges. But there is a massive difference in how those challenges are handled in governments where the DA is in charge.

DA-led governments focus relentlessly on getting the basics right. And maybe most importantly, there is a clear sense of who is responsible for what, and real accountability if our leaders do not deliver. Hon Deputy Speakers, one of the reasons that the GNU has been so well-received, sorry, hon House Chair, is because most people want a government that does the job. A government that shows up, that follows through. They want a government that gets things done.

Hon Deputy Speaker, where coalitions are consistently shifting and where priorities are unclear, where every week there seems to be a new Mayor or a new municipal manager, that basic expectation becomes harder to meet. The ANC and the PA have both had ample opportunities to demonstrate competence and Local Government in this province. And over and over and over, they have failed to do so. These parties would do well to stop living in an anachronistic political fantasy land and get in touch with people on the ground, just like Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis does.

This is what is called working-class liberalism. Hon Deputy Speaker, this

Budget provides consistency where it is most needed, and it provides the tools that are required for municipalities to thrive. And most of our municipalities in the Western Cape are indeed thriving. We now need to fix the rest of them, and that will begin at the ballot box in November. The DA supports Vote 14 and thanks Minister Anton Bredell for his stable and consistent leadership, which helps to keep our municipalities on track. Thank you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: I will recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Thank you, hon House Chair. Hon House Chair, thank you for the input from the members. To member Stoffels, when she mentioned that our municipalities fall apart, she means the ANC municipalities fall apart. †Die waterverliese van 50 tot 70 persent in ANC-bestuurde munisipaliteite is een van daardie voorbeelde wat hulle wanneer hulle in beheer is, dink hulle kan stemme koop met mense en dan weet hulle nie dat in die langtermyn, die water gaan opdroog en eintlik gaan dit teen hulle tel nie.

Agbare *House Chair*, die Beaufort-Wes verwysing, en die ANC moet baie pasop waarna hulle verwys, want in hierdie Huis sal ek baie vêr wegbly van die woord Knysna, ek sal baie vêr wegbly van Beaufort-Wes, [The water losses of 50 to 70 per cent in ANC-managed municipalities are one of those examples that when they are in charge, they think they can buy votes with people, and then they don't know that in the long term, the water is going to dry up and actually will count against them.

Hon House Chair, the Beaufort-West reference, and the ANC must be very wary as to what they refer to, because in this House I will stay very far away from the word Knysna, and I will stay very far away from Beaufort-West,] because we took over Beaufort West from the ANC, a total collapsed municipality that you need to rebuild out of the ground. It is a low-capacity municipality, so it will take time. It is going to take time. And if you look at, and really, I am a bit, ja, I cannot believe they even mentioned the name Knysna because they reject the 139 intervention.

Six months later, their Mayor phoned me and asked me, please come and help because this place falls apart. † En was dit nie vir ons nie, hierdie provinsie nie, wat Desember gewerk het toe hulle met vakansie gegaan het, nadat hulle plek uitmekaar geval het nie, was Knysna uit water uit. Die.. nee, dit is nie ons verantwoordelikheid om water in die krane van 'n huis te kry nie, dis 'n munisipale verantwoordelikheid, agbare Speaker. [And had it not been for us, this province, who worked in December when they went on holiday, after their place was falling apart, Knysna would have been without water. The... no, it is not our responsibility to get water in the taps of a house, it is a municipal responsibility, hon Speaker.]

And that is why the ANC cannot govern. They do not even understand their own functions. †Maar die agbare Adams behoort van beter te weet, want toe die DA Knysna regeer het, het ons die rioolplaas gebou, ek het hom geknip, ek het die lint geknip. Toe die DA hom regeer het, het ons die stortingsterrein

gebou. Toe die DA regeer het, het ons die Charlesford pompstasie gebou. Toe kom die ANC, die PA, die EFF en KIM, hulle koalisievennoot KIM, kom toe na die tafel toe en vat toe oor vir nege jaar.

[But the hon Adams should know better, because when the DA governed Knysna, we built the sewerage plant, I cut it, I cut the ribbon. When the DA governed we built the Charlesford pump station. Then the ANC came, the PA, the EFF and KIM, their coalition partner, came to the table and took over for nine years.]

For 9 years, they did not invest a cent in infrastructure. Then, †toe so twee jaar gelede, toe skrik die PA, toe hardloop hulle weg, nou sit hulle buite, maar hulle het infrastruktuur bestuur, die PA was in beheer van infrastruktuur in Knysna.

[some two years ago, the PA had a fright, then they ran away, now they are sitting outside, but they managed infrastructure, the PA was in charge of infrastructure in Knysna.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: Hon Minister, can I plead with both sides of the House to allow the Minister to speak?

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: Hon House Chair, thank you. Hon House Chair, so I will stay far away if I am in the ANC, the PA and EFF from the word Knysna. Because it is a complete failure. Our Department is there today to try and save Knysna. And it is going to take hard work and it is going to be a long road to recovery. But hon Chair, let us not waste time. Thank you to the hon

Chairperson of the Standing Committee. Again, your oversight role, our interaction, the questions you ask, it all helps us.

Yes, sometimes we get a bit irritated because it is a lot of work. But that is your role, that is your function and we respect that. We are very grateful for that. You keep us all sharp. †Aan my kantoorhoof, Marius du Randt, baie, baie dankie vir jou leiding en bystand en ook aan Magdaleen met haar aftrede, mag die Here jou seën. Dankie. [To my office head, Marius du Randt, thank you very, very much for your leadership and support and also to Magdaleen on her retirement, may the Lord bless you. Thank you.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: That concludes the debate on this Vote. We will now ask the Secretary to introduce the next Order of the Day.

7. *Debate on Vote 4: Police Oversight and Community Safety, Western Cape Appropriation Bill.*

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: Hon Speaker, members of the Western Cape Provincial Legislature, the Provincial Police Commissioner, Heads of Department, distinguished guests, fellow citizens of the Western Cape. Hon House Chair, I rise today to table the Budget for the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety for the 2026/2027 financial year and the Medium Expenditure Framework period. This Budget is a commitment to every resident in our province that we will continue to support crime-fighting efforts, strengthen community resilience and create

safer spaces.

We must begin by acknowledging the harsh and painful reality confronting far too many of our communities. The challenges facing our youth remain deeply concerning, as far too many young people across our province and country continue to experience a sense of desperation. Persistently high youth unemployment, coupled with alarming school dropout rates, has created a growing cohort of disengaged young individuals who are neither in education, employment nor training.

This environment is further exacerbated by the increasing prevalence of substance abuse which erodes social cohesion and undermines the prospects of an already vulnerable population. The cumulative effect is a pervasive sense of hopelessness and exclusion which, if left unaddressed, creates fertile ground for criminality and the entrenchment of gangsterism. Indeed, it is within this context that many of our young people are drawn into cycles of violence and organised crime, not out of choice but out of a perceived lack of viable alternatives.

Addressing these interconnected challenges must therefore remain central to our efforts to build safer communities and secure a more hopeful future for the next generation. Communities continue to face significant challenges characterised by weakened social cohesion and the absence of consistent, well-coordinated programmes aimed at supporting and developing our youth. In too many areas, fragmented initiatives and short-term interventions fail to provide

opportunities for young people to build resilience, skills and a sense of belonging, but also undermines collective community capacity to respond effectively to social ills.

Where community structures are fragile and cohesion is low, it becomes increasingly difficult to mobilise partnerships, foster accountability and implement integrated solutions. As a result, our broader efforts to address crime, violence and social instability are weakened, highlighting the urgent need for structured, long-term and collaborative approaches that place communities and their youth at the centre of sustainable change. These persistent safety challenges require a whole of society and a whole-of-government response that transcends each government institution mandate, fragmented programmes and promotes integrated planning, coordination and delivery of safety and development interventions.

The Western Cape continues to experience high levels of violent crime with gang-related killings, remaining one of the most significant contributors to murder in our province. Nowhere is this more evident than on the Cape Flats, specifically in communities such as Mfuleni, Kraaifontein, Mitchells Plain, Nyanga, Delft, Gugulethu, Khayelitsha and Philippi East, where residents are too often caught in a crossfire of gang conflict. Communities are living in constant fear. Gang violence continues to be driven by turf wars, the proliferation of illegal firearms, drug trafficking and intense socio-economic challenges.

Young people, in particular, remain vulnerable and are continually drawn into cycles of violence, substance abuse and criminality. At the same time, we are seeing increasing levels of organised crime, extortion and community-level conflict, placing further strain on already-stretched policing resources. Despite these challenges, we are pushing forward. Through targeted interventions, strong partnerships and strategic investment, we are making a difference.

Hon House Chair, the reality is clear. The scale and complexity of crime in our province requires a coordinated, data-driven, whole-of-government and whole-of-society response. And that is exactly what this budget seeks to enable. This budget strengthens our ability to address the root causes of violence, empower communities to take ownership of their safety, enhance law enforcement capacity, improve coordination across government and civil society.

Hon House Chair, we are steadily strengthening our existing programmes and piloting new ones towards implementing the safety priority focus areas as outlined in the Provincial Strategic Plan. We understand that our role is more than just police oversight. Our Department is therefore actively partnering with our sister departments, partners and local communities to roll out early intervention and prevention programmes. Through our community-level safety and development programme, we will be piloting new and innovative projects aimed at empowering youth and strengthening families in targeted communities through trauma-informed interventions that address the root causes of violence.

It supports parenting programmes and family-based support while prioritising

youth development through after-school activities, mentorship and positive peer networks that divert young people from gangs and substance abuse. Some of the key interventions include rolling out the Street Coach Programme in high-risk locations, designed to mentor youth and children, mitigate conflict, identify early risk factors and promote positive pathways. Delivery of structured trauma-informed youth holiday programmes. This intervention targeted at 5 to 15-year-old children provides structured supervised alternatives that directly address these inherent social risk factors, establishing a team of youth social media safety ambassadors to engage their peers via social media platforms towards effecting social behaviour change.

We will also be working closely with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism toward delivering youth economic empowerment opportunities through skills development and entrepreneurship development interventions. The Chrysalis Academy continues to provide our youth with pathways away from crime and gangsterism, equipping them to make a meaningful and positive contribution to society. And I am particularly proud that in collaboration with the South African Police Service, 10 Chrysalis graduates have been placed at a SAPS garage as part of the EPWP contracts following graduation.

These young people have since been skilled in vehicle wrapping and the application of decals on police vehicles. I was truly impressed by the quality of the craftsmanship. This led us to engage the Western Cape Department of Economic Development to support these graduates in transforming their skills into income generating opportunities. Thank you, Major General Voskuil and

your team for this outstanding initiative. Through it, these young people are firmly on the path to becoming entrepreneurs. I now ask the following graduates present to please rise: Siyabulela, Vuyolwethu, Siphesile, Siza, and Saake.

Hon House Chair, no amount of policing alone can solve the deeply entrenched crime situation in our province and South Africa. We need all Government departments at all levels of government to consistently show up and get it done. More importantly, we depend heavily on our community volunteers who offer up their free time and at great risk to their personal safety, while serving on Neighbourhood Watches, Farm Watches and Community Policing Forums.

Ms Fransina Lucas, as Chairperson of the Provincial Community Policing Forum Board, you will agree that we must therefore continue to build trust between communities and law enforcement, encourage active citizen participation in safety. And our Department will continue to support these structures financially and operationally when needed. Ms Lucas, on behalf of our communities, please convey my sincere gratitude to the team of volunteers that you are leading.

Hon House Chair, a safe government is essential to continuity of public services. Our Department will continue to strengthen our institutional resilience by implementing policies, systems and structures towards ensuring safe and secure access to Government services by our residents and a safe and healthy working environment for all Western Cape Government employees. I

have highlighted some of the primary societal challenges we are experiencing in our communities and we realise that this Department needs to play a stronger coordinating role within our communities to make them safer and more resilient.

We have therefore implemented the Western Cape Community Level Safety and Development Programme, which seeks to address the challenges of siloed planning, duplication of effort and by promoting stronger integration and collaboration across government. This is about shifting from Government-led safety to community-driven safety and development supported by Government. This intervention recognises that prevention starts at street level. We are proud to be piloting this model in Mitchell's Plain that empowers communities to identify their own safety priorities, develop locally relevant safety and development plans, coordinate interventions across all spheres of government and build resilience from within.

Should this pilot prove successful, we will expand the footprint of the programme to three more communities in the coming financial year. Some of the key initiatives identified by this Mitchell's Plain community include establishment of five safe zones, geographic areas identified to serve as community safety nodes and multi-purpose activity spaces. Painting and beautification of our four strategically identified community sites to enhance safety perception and promote community pride.

Training and development of members of community safety structures such as

Neighbourhood Watches, Community in Blue and Community Policing Forum structures. Upgrading of police station environments to enhance functionality, dignity and quality of service delivery. And rolling out a statement-taking project at the Mitchell's Plain SAPS station to improve the probability of successful convictions. Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the Executive Committee of the Mitchell's Plain Safety and Development Forum. I kindly request AB Isaacs, Pastor Mark Blumstein, Oleander Oates, Tyron Fox, Bronwyn February, Wendy Abrams, Michael Jacobs and Ashwin Johnson to rise for this House to recognise you, thank you so much.

These ordinary citizens are stepping forward voluntarily to make sure that all interventions aimed at making Mitchell's Plain safer and more resilient are done in an organised manner, bringing government, business and civil society organisations together to make sure programmes having the most impact are strengthened and supported. Thank you again. Your commitment, leadership and willingness to be part of the solution embodies the very spirit of the whole-of-society approach.

Law enforcement in the Western Cape continues to face notable challenges, particularly in relation to resource constraints, limited intelligence sharing and strained community trust. While ongoing efforts have been made to strengthen policing, high levels of crime persist, especially in areas where law enforcement capacity and visibility remain inadequate. The Province and the City will therefore continue to push for targeted expansion of investigative powers rather than a full institutional devolution.

This proposal is framed as a performance-driven enhancement within existing constitutional parameters designed to strengthen law enforcement outcomes in high-burden areas. This approach builds on substantial growth and professionalization of the city of Cape Town's enforcement capacity, focusses on clearly defined categories of crime where investigative backlogs and resource constraints undermine public safety and directly complements national crime reduction objectives by increasing operational throughput and detection capacity.

Better data leads to better planning, better decisions, better interventions and, ultimately, safer communities. To keep on improving the capacity and capabilities of our policing and law enforcement agencies in the province, we will continue to fund critical programmes that strengthen visible policing and law enforcement capacity across the province. The LEAP programme, Canine Units in the municipalities of Overstrand, Mossel Bay, Swartland and Stellenbosch, our rural LEAP and peace officer training.

During the period April 2025 to December 2025, the impact of LEAP has resulted in homicides decrease of 0.91 percent in our LEAP deployment areas. Hon House Chair, whilst these are the existing initiatives, we continually have to explore new interventions to tackle the scores of violent crime. We will therefore, together with our safety partners, be embarking on the following new initiative.

We will establish an anti-gang hub as a critical intervention to coordinate the anti-gang implementation plan, align efforts across Government and civil society, strengthen monitoring and accountability and improve the integration of data and interventions. This programme will be supplemented by the Organised Crime Observatory of the Global Initiative Against National Organised Crime, which is a data-driven approach to understanding gang activity and organised crime. Using community-based researches, it will gather information on gang activity, inform strategic decisions, provide early warning on gang patterns and activity in the province.

Due to the lack of use of modern technologies by our SAPS Detective Services, we will pilot the SAPS Detective Services Technology Modernisation Project, aimed at enhancing investigative capacity by providing digital skills training to a selected number of detectives at four metro and one rural SAPS station, providing critical digital technology tools and resources, and exploring innovative software solutions that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our detectives.

Hon House Chair, I would also like to specifically acknowledge members of the South African Police Service in the province who displayed service excellence in the past year. These men and women in blue went above and beyond the ordinary call of duty and standing out head and shoulders above their peers. I proudly request Warrant Officer Wendy Lee from Herald Satellite Police Station to rise. She was crowned the SAPS Woman of the Year at the 2026 SAPS National Excellence Awards.

This was in honour of her exceptional commitment to community service for being the driving force behind initiatives focusing on GBV and community upliftment. Thank you so much. I also wish to request Constable Manjebisi from Delft SAPS to rise. Thank you. He was honoured as the SAPS National Man of the Year for his exceptional efforts in driving initiatives aimed at empowering young leaders, creating safe learning environments, and fostering partnerships that promote crime prevention and community cohesion.

One of his initiatives having a great impact, was the introduction of a database of young men between the ages of 16 and 40 who have shown willingness to turn their lives around, including those battling with substance abuse and individuals recently released from prison. Thank you so much. I also want to acknowledge the team from Stilbaai SAPS who were the winners of the Catch of the Year award. This was for a major drug bust involving cocaine with an estimated street value of more than R250 million.

I now proudly request the SAPS members to rise. Captain van Tonder, Warrant Officer De Emilio, Warrant Officer Schnetler, Warrant Officer Tarentaal, Sergeant Hermanus, Sergeant Johnson, Sergeant Raal, Sergeant Stevens, Sergeant Jantjies, Sergeant De Manz, Constable Swiegelaar, and the Reservist Constable Sambo. Congratulations and thank you. And last but not least, I want to acknowledge the team who investigated the Jocelyn Smith case, securing convictions under very difficult circumstances.

I request the following SAPS members to rise. Brigadier Hanana, Lieutenant Colonel Lombard, Warrant Officer Fortuin, Warrant Officer van der Walt, Sergeant Johnson, Sergeant Zankotsi, and Admin Clerk James. Thank you so much and I know it was very difficult. We thank you for going the extra mile and getting it done when it is required. This is an example of what can be achieved when we consistently do the right thing. That is exactly what our criminal justice system needs if we want to shift the dial with reducing violent crime.

At this juncture, I wish to convey that Lieutenant General Patekile's term ends in July 2026. General, thank you for the collegial relationship, for being in the hot seat, taking the punches, answering my calls day and night, dealing with the good, the bad, and the ugly. Policing is not an easy task and the Western Cape is definitely not the easiest place to police considering its history of gangsterism and organised crime. I wish you the best for the remainder of your tenure and a peaceful, happy retirement.

Hon House Chair, I wish to emphasise that safety is a shared responsibility. We cannot do this work alone. That is why I am pleased to announce that we have now successfully engaged and consulted for communities and stakeholders across all six districts of the province to inform and finalise the Western Cape Safety Plan 2025-2030. This extensive consultative process has ensured that the plan reflects the lived realities, priorities, and insights of those on the grant and all our stakeholders.

With the completion of the Safety Plan, our focus will shift to strengthen the enabling legislative framework by pursuing amendments to the Western Cape Community Safety Act and the Western Cape Liquor Act. These amendments will seek to address existing cumbersome provisions while introducing new provisions that will allow us to fully implement and give effect to objectives of the Safety Plan. Importantly, our citizens will once again be extensively consulted throughout this legislative process to ensure transparency, inclusivity, and accountability.

The Provincial Safety Council, established under the Chairpersonship of Premier Alan Winde, now serves as a central forum, bringing together key strategic partners to strengthen and coordinate interventions aimed at enhancing public safety across the Western Cape. Convening on a quarterly basis, the council enables a collective assessment of emerging trends, the effectiveness of ongoing programmes, and the refinement of shared priorities, ensuring a more integrated, responsive, and evidence-based approach to building safer communities.

We have now established the Provincial Safety Coordination Centre, which will serve as a central hub for coordinating, monitoring, and reporting on all safety initiatives across the province, integrating multiple safety-related data sets into a single platform. By December 2025, the Department had incorporated key data sets into the PECC, including incidents of stabbing, gunshots, and assaults, as well as the location of liquor outlets, churches, schools, and malls. The availability of this integrated data significantly enhances our ability to

undertake evidence-based planning, enabling all government departments to identify trends, allocate resources more effectively, and implement targeted interventions that address safety challenges with greater precision and impact.

To support our efforts in facilitating a safer, more resilient Western Cape, our Department has been allocated a budget of 806.9 million for 2026/27, 827.9 million for 2027/28, and 853.5 million for the 2028/29 financial year. I want to thank my colleague, Minister Deirdre Baartman, for these allocations. The Department's budget allocation increases in the 2026/27 financial year by 36.2 million, or 4.7 percent, primarily driven by additional funding for the key safety interventions mentioned above.

Importantly, additional funding has been allocated to the Western Cape Liquor Authority for ICT upgrades, strengthening its regulatory and oversight capabilities. The key budget items for the 2026/27 financial year are as follows.

- Compensation of Employees, 188 million.
- Our LEAP programme, 365 million.
- Our Peace Officer training, 2 million.
- Strengthening SAPS Detective Services, 1.8 million.
- Organised Crime Observatory, 400,000.
- Our Chrysalis programme, 24.9 million.
- Our Neighbourhood and Farm Watches, 5.7 million.
- Community Police Forum, 824,000.
- Canine Units, 14.1 million.

- Our EPWP programme, 30.6 million.
- Our Rural Lib, 10.4 million.
- The Western Cape Liquor Authority, 65.1 million.
- The Western Cape Police Ombudsman, 9.4 million.
- Our Community Level Safety and Resilience programmes, 6 million.
- And our Street Coaches programmes, 4.9 million.

This Budget reflects a deliberate shift towards integrated community-based safety interventions, supported by stronger law enforcement coordination and improved data systems.

I want to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr Hilton Arendse, our Acting Head of Department, for his remarkable leadership over the past two years. His steady hand and principled approach have guided this Department through both challenges and progress with distinction. I have come to deeply admire his inclusive leadership style, one that actively brings the entire staff contingent into the process of shaping the Department's thinking and direction.

Mr Arendse has demonstrated the rare ability to engage meaningfully with communities at street level, ensuring that our work remains grounded in the lived realities of the people we serve. Equally commendable is the calm and measured manner when confronted with tension, consistently diffusing difficult situations with professionalism and composure. His efforts have not gone unnoticed, and they are both acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Mr Richard Bosman as he steps into this important role. Mr Bosman brings with him extensive experience and a deep understanding of this environment, which will undoubtedly serve the Department well. I am confident that his leadership will be instrumental in strengthening and advancing our partnerships, particularly at Local Government level, as we continue to build safer communities together.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the Western Cape Provincial Safety Advisory Committee for their valuable insights and guidance. Your independent perspective strengthens our work, and we are grateful to have you as an integral part of our collective efforts to enhance safety across the province. Lastly, I wish to thank the dedicated staff of the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety for their continued commitment and support. Your work remains the backbone of our efforts to improve safety across this province.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to my Ministry staff, whose loyalty and tireless support enable us to meet the demands of this important work every day. In conclusion, I want to reiterate that Government cannot do this alone. We need every resident, every organisation and every sector of society to play their part. Together we can break the cycle of violence, restore hope in our communities and create a society where families feel safe and which enables business to grow and create jobs, and for our residents to get those jobs.

A safer Western Cape is not just a goal, it is a necessity for growth, dignity and opportunity. Let us stand together, work together and build that future together. True strength lies not in a ruthless action, but in the ability to fight crime with precision and get the job done with integrity and compassion. Thank you so much.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: I now recognise member Lekker.

Ms P Z LEKKER (ANC): Good afternoon hon House Chairperson and the hon members. I wish to take this opportunity and acknowledge the presence of the South African Police Service in the province. As I rise on behalf of the African National Congress to participate in this debate on Budget Vote 4, which is the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety, let me state it clearly and without hesitation that the ANC will not support this Budget.

We reject this Budget because it does not meet the moment we are living in. It does not respond to the fear in our communities. It does not respond to the violence that has become a daily reality. Most importantly, it does not respond to the cries of our people who are demanding safety, dignity and justice. Hon House Chairperson, the Department presents a mission that speaks about safety, resilience and community empowerment. It sounds good and it reads well. But the people of the Western Cape are not living in documents.

They are living in communities where gunshots are a daily occurrence, where children cannot play outside and where families go to sleep not knowing if they

will wake up to tragedy. In just one month, 345 people were killed in this province. In the face of this reality, we must ask difficult questions, which are also necessary. Why do we still have a Premier and the MEC responsible for police oversight and community safety in office? At what point does leadership take responsibility and step down?

We know the response we will hear. The blame will be shifted to the SAPS. National Government will be blamed. But hon House Chair, the people of this province are not interested in political games. They want accountability. We are even shocked that today the presence of the South African Police Service is applauded when many times they are regarded as people who do not work, as people who do not do their job properly.

We know that the fight against crime is not a responsibility of SAPS alone. Provincial and Local Government have a direct and undeniable role to play in creating safe communities. It is therefore wrong to place the entire burden of this crisis on the SAPS while the Province and the City avoid their own responsibilities. Accountability must be shared. And it must begin here. Hon House Chair, we must go further. The scale and intensity of violent crime in this province now demand extraordinary action.

We reiterate our call that violent crime in the Western Cape must be formally declared a disaster. This is not about symbolism. It is about action such as a declaration that would allow for a coordinated leadership across the spheres of government. It would unlock resources and ensure that every department plays

its part from education, social development to human settlement and economic development. Because the reality is that crime cannot be defeated by boots on the ground alone.

Hon House Chair, beyond the numbers lies an even more painful truth. We are now dealing with a generation of children who are being recruited into gangs as hitmen. Boys as young as 13 are being given guns and sent to kill. This is not just crime. It is a breakdown of society. Just last month, a young and innocent man, Litha Kovhusa, was brutally gunned down in Driftsands in Mfuleni in a senseless act of violence that has shaken the entire community. Litha was not involved in crime. He was a young man with dreams, committed to his studies and determined to build a better future.

On the night of the incident, he was inside a spaza shop with a friend when armed men arrived and opened fire. He was shot multiple times, including in the hand, in the head, in what is believed to have been a gang initiation. One of the attackers was even seen recording the incident and urging the gunman on. Communities in Driftsands, Mfuleni, Khayelitsha, Philippi are crying out for justice. Their pain and their anger must not be ignored in this house.

Hon House Chair, our longstanding position is that when children become killers, it means the system has failed them long before they picked up a weapon. It means we have failed in education, we have failed in social development, and we have failed in creating opportunities. Hon House Chair, we also note with serious concern reports of 11 Early Childhood Development

Centres in Philippi in my constituency being forced to close down due to increasing extortion by criminal groups.

According to the South African Education Project, protection fees of up to R10,000 are being demanded, with payments determined based on each centre's size and resources. Principals who refuse to pay are threatened, robbed, and continuously intimidated. Some educators have already left their jobs out of fear. These closures have left many children without access to safe learning environments and meals, while remaining centres are overcrowded and under severe strain.

We make an urgent call to the Premier, the MEC for Police Oversight and Community Safety, as well as the MEC for Social Development to fulfil their responsibility and intervene decisively. And I mean decisively. It is not enough to point fingers at the police. Government must lead. To the Provincial Commissioner, we say act decisively. We cannot allow lawlessness, extortionists to gamble with the future of our children. We condemn these actions in the strongest possible terms and demand immediate and decisive action.

Hon House Chair, crime in this province is random. It is rooted in deep structural problems. Poverty, unemployment, special inequality, school dropout, and the rapid growth of informal settlement have created the conditions in which crime thrives. Let us be honest about where this violence is happening. In places like Driftsands, parts of Khayelitsha, Delft, and

Lingeletu West, Manenberg, Hanover Park, Bishop Lavis, in overcrowded conditions with poor lighting, limited access to roads, weak policing presence, and very few economic opportunities.

In these spaces, the State is often absent, and criminal networks fill the gap. Violence in these communities is not accidental. It is built into the conditions people are forced to live in. Underdevelopment creates the condition for crime, and crime in turn deepens underdevelopment. Communities become trapped in a cycle of fear, poverty, and exclusion. After COVID-19, we have seen rapid expansion in informal settlement across the Cape Flats. Many of these areas lack basic services and infrastructure. In such conditions, crime becomes entrenched.

It is therefore not surprising that in areas like Lingeletu West are now among the top murder precincts in the country. Hon House Chair, we are told that the Safety Plan is working, and that we are now moving to Safety Plan 2.0. But a simple question must be asked. Where is the assessment of Safety Plan 1.0? We cannot govern through slogans or rebranding. We must govern through evidence. We therefore call for an independent impact assessment of Safety Plan 1.0 before any new plan is implemented.

Hon House Chair, we also note the continued allocation of significant funds to the law enforcement advancement plan. While we acknowledge the intention, we must interrogate the impact. We are told that there are slight decreases in some areas, but communities tell a different story. They speak of daily gunfire,

they speak of ongoing violence, they speak of fear. People are tired of statistics. They do not reflect their lived reality. Hon House Chair, budget reflects priorities.

Under Programme 3, the Department transfers over 434 million to Cape Metro. Meanwhile, the West Coast receives just over 30 million. The Cape Winelands, about 2.5 million, and the Garden Route, under 8 million, and the Central Karoo, just over 2 million. This is not balance. This is inequality. Rural communities are clearly not a priority, yet we are told through LEAP that programme cannot succeed with such limited funding. Hon House Chair, this Budget entrenches inequality instead of correcting it.

At the same time, we are seeing a shrinking of state capacity. Staff numbers have dropped significantly in the recent years, and funding for employees has been cut. And the DA hypocrisy knows no bounds, because while the capacity in the SAPS is shrinking because staff members are no longer working, it has made an issue, and yet they are very quiet when they do the same thing. While crime is rising, the capacity of State is being reduced. While people need jobs, the employment is being cut. While communities are crying out for safety, the state is retreating.

This is not efficiency. It is a failure of government. Hon House Chair, we must address the call for the devolution of policing powers. The ANC does not support this position. You can ask for more powers when you have not used the powers you already have. You cannot ignore the root causes of crime and

then claim that the solution lies in shifting authority. Crime is not only a policing issue, it is a social, economic, and developmental matter. Fragmenting policing will not solve this crisis. It will make it worse.

Hon Speaker, we note the planned deployment of the army. We welcome it as a temporary measure to stabilise communities, but it cannot be a long-term solution. The need for such intervention is itself a sign of failure. What we need are sustainable solutions that address both crime and its causes. We must also raise a concern about crime intelligence. Without strong intelligence, we cannot dismantle organised crime, hon Commissioner, organised crime or stop the flow of illegal firearms, which Prinsloo stole and his friends.

We call for the urgent appointment of a Head of Crime Intelligence in the Western Cape. Hon Speaker, this Budget presents plans, but it does not present impact. It does not show the communities are safer. It does not show that crime is under control. It does not show that Government is winning the fight against violence. Instead, we see communities living in fear, young people being thrown into crime, and violence continuing unchecked. This is not acceptable. Leadership is about taking responsibility, hon Premier.

Today, we say this Government has failed to do so. It has failed 345 people who lost their lives in one month. It has failed the children who are being thrown into crime. It has failed the communities that are living under siege, like Nyanga East and Philippi. The Budget does not offer hope. It offers more of the same. The people of the Western Cape deserve better. The people of the

Cape Flats and the township deserve better. They deserve safety, dignity, and a government that puts their lives first.

For all these reasons, hon House Chair, the African National Congress rejects this Budget, and I thank you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: I now recognise hon Stephens.

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Thank you, hon House Chair. Hon House Chair, Ministers, hon members, and distinguished guests. I greet you all in the wonderful name of our Lord and Saviour. The Patriotic Alliance supports the Budget allocated to Police Oversight and Community Safety. However, our support must be matched with meaningful visible action on the ground. Communities across the Western Cape continue to live under the daily threat of crime and gang violence. Areas such as Kraaifontein, Bishop Lavis, Elsiesrivier, Malmesbury, Manenberg, the Fisantekraal, Nyanga, Gugulethu, and Khayelitsha and Delft remain heavily affected and in urgent need of targeted intervention.

We strongly believe that greater investment must be directed towards the expansion of CCTV camera infrastructure in these gang-affected areas. Surveillance technology is a critical tool in both crime prevention and prosecution, and its presence can act as a powerful deterrent. In addition, the deployment of mobile satellite units should be prioritised to enhance visibility and improve rapid response capabilities in high-risk communities.

We also note the statement made by the Premier regarding the return of law enforcement in Kraaifontein. Unfortunately, residents on the ground have yet to see any tangible evidence of this commitment. Promises made in this House must translate into real, measurable change in our communities. Our people deserve safety, dignity, and the assurance that government is actively working to protect them. It is not enough to allocate funds. We must ensure those funds are used effectively to restore safety where it is needed most. Thank you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I now recognise hon Cassiem on the virtual platform.

Ms A CASSIEM (EFF): Thank you. Hon Chairperson, with all the money being pumped into this province, it still lacks sufficient focus on the underlying social causes of crime, indicating that this DA-run Provincial Government has continuously failed to prioritise the fundamentals that actually shape people's lives in this province. This is why the EFF cannot support a budget allocation of those who fail to protect those that they govern.

When we look at the Budget allocation over the medium term, it will not be enough to assist this province in its fight against crime and the ever-increasing murder rate in the Western Cape. The fact that the military will be deployed once again in this province is testament that the police services as well as law enforcement deployed by this province under the so-called Safety Plan have failed. Every year, millions of rands are being allocated for the provision of

safety in this province, with little to no results shown for such an expenditure.

We have even reached a point where the Premier is even too shy to speak about his unsuccessful Safety Plan project, which once again has not yet yielded any results to date, as the Province is too busy putting blame on National as well as SAPS, despite this DA having the big responsibility to ensure the safety of all in this province. Hon Speaker, to show that the plan has failed, one does not have to look too far. Just last week alone, 80 people have reportedly been killed in the Western Cape with 65 attempted murder reported cases.

Previous weeks have been the same, packed with horror for many communities across the province. So why exactly do we still have the Premier sitting with this big responsibility if he has failed since they want to protect his people in this province? In the EFF, we believe in the principle that one life lost is one life too many. And if so, we cannot have a province that allows so many people losing their lives in such a short period, as this clearly shows that the law enforcement in this province is non-existent.

Military being deployed in the province to fight crime is a sign that those running the province have now failed and need external help. The downside about deploying the military to fight crime on behalf of policing services and law enforcement is that crime will temporarily decline only to return once the military has left. Sorry, only for the stats to return once the military has left. Such solutions are temporarily in nature and provides no benefit for the purpose of long-term goals.

In conclusion, the EFF will not support the Budget allocation for those who fail to protect those they govern in this province.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I now recognise hon Herron, also in the virtual platform.

Mr B N HERRON (GOOD): Thank you, hon House Chair. Hon House Chair, the state of safety in the Western Cape is nothing short of a crisis. Over 90 percent of gang-related murders in South Africa occur in this province, concentrated largely in just 10 police stations across the Cape Flats. This is not a dispersed problem. It is deeply historical, deeply spatial, deeply unequal, and deeply entrenched, and the trajectory is worsening. There are currently 1,002 murders away from eclipsing last year's total, with an entire quarter still remaining.

Given the average of 1,155 murders per quarter, we are on track to exceed last year's figures. Hon House Chair, I have said time and time before that these are not just statistics. These are communities living under conditions of sustained violence, conditions that increasingly resemble a form of protracted conflict. And yet, in response to this crisis, we are allocating 58 percent of the safety budget to the provincial policing function, not just this year, but over the next three years. This raises a critical question. What exactly are we funding?

Because this allocation is presented as comprehensive as addressing safety in all its dimensions. But if that were truly the case, we would not be standing here year after year with escalating murder rates and entrenched gang violence. We are directing funds to a Safety Plan that is now entering its 2.0 phase, without meaningfully addressing the shortcomings of the first one. We are scaling up expenditure without interrogating whether the model itself is working. Hon House Chair, this is not just inefficient, it is misguided. Because crime in the Western Cape is not simply a policing problem, it is the outcome of spatial injustice, poverty, and systemic neglect.

Yet instead of investing in the development of overcrowded, unsafe environments, environments that are drivers of crime and violence, strengthening the departments that address those root causes of crime, we are putting resources away from them to sustain an ever-expanding police budget. But let us be clear, an increasing safety budget is not a sign of success. It is a sign that we are failing to prevent crime in the first place.

Let us shift from a model that chases crime to one that prevents it. Let us fund the foundations of safety, not just its enforcement. Because real safety is not measured by how much we spend, but whether people can live without fear. Thank you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, hon member. I now recognise the hon Van Minnen.

Ms B M VAN MINNEN (DA): Hon House Chair, we stand here today to not only debate numbers on a page, but to confront a reality that is lived daily by the people of the Western Cape. A reality of fear, resilience, and importantly, of a province and a city that are working. While the ANC-led National Government appears content to watch from the side-lines, if they are not distracted by the soap opera of the Madlanga Inquiry, which not only highlights their failures, and I also want to note that the Opposition is terribly quiet on calling on suspended Minister Mchunu to resign.

The 26/27 Budget for the Western Cape Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety reflects an increase of over R36 million, bringing the total to over 806 million. On paper, that is progress. In practice, it is the Western Cape Government doing what it has always done, stretching every rand to protect its residents in the absence of adequate national support. Because let us understand this clearly. Oversight is not a ceremonial function. It is not some flunky filming a clip on a cell phone. It is not a query-less argument with an official at an oversight visit. And it is not ticking a box for a performance assessment.

Oversight is accountability. Oversight is pressure. Oversight is what ensures that when systems fail, like SAPS, someone answers. It is doing the hard yards on behalf of the people of the Western Cape. And right now, oversight is more important than ever. Because the cracks in national policing are no longer small. It is a shattered organisation. And leadership has failed the hardworking officers on the ground. Very much a case of lions led by lambs. The South

African National Defence Force itself has effectively confirmed what communities already know.

SAPS is failing. This has been comprehensively confirmed by the hearings of the National Assembly. But what is the response from the ANC who hangs on to nationalised policing like it is a get out of jail free card? Which to be fair, it probably is. Not reform, not capacitation, not urgency. Instead, deployment. Soldiers in the streets. A temporary show of force. A headline.

And the public will not be fooled by this pantomime. Support for SAPS among the South African population has slumped to 22 percent. Although that remains significantly higher than support for the ANC in the Western Cape.

And why do I say this? A SANDF deployment is not a silver bullet. It is a plaster on a bullet wound. And generally, those bullet wounds are the result of a theft and sale of thousands of Z88s and rifles from SAPS stores between 2010 and 2015 by certain SAPS members, who, incidentally, only served about six years in prison before being released. These guns, most of which are still out there, have been directly linked to the surge in gun crime since 2012 in the Cape Flats.

Soldiers cannot investigate cases. Soldiers cannot build docket. Soldiers cannot dismantle criminal networks. Without detectives, without crime intelligence, without permanent police resources, this deployment is nothing more than an illusion. A mocking bone being thrown to the people of the Western Cape. As you are aware, hon House Chair, National Government is

also prepared to spend approximately 823 million every year on these SANDF deployments. 823 million.

Now, that is almost a billion rand. That is also almost double the 574 million allocated to SAPS visible policing in the Western Cape. Imagine that. The cost of one year of soldiers could nearly double visible policing in this province. Or better yet, employ over 10,000 permanent police officers. 10,000 jobs. That is 20,000 boots on the ground. 10,000 opportunities to build safer communities and fight unemployment. But instead, National Government chooses optics over outcomes.

Now, contrast that with what is happening here in the Western Cape. The Department uses an approach that is practical, accountable, and rooted in partnership. The Department's area-based approach reflects exactly that. Working hand-in-hand with municipalities, community police forums, Neighbourhood Watches, Community Safety Forums, NGOs, and businesses to deliver real results on the ground. This is the kind of government we believe in. One that does not stand on the side-lines shouting, but one that steps in, listens, and acts decisively.

This is why we welcome a budget that prioritises delivery where it matters most – at community level. Because safety is not built in boardrooms. It is built in neighbourhoods. We strongly support the allocation of over 169 million over the MTEF to Neighbourhood Watches and Community Safety Forums. These are the boots on the ground, the ears and the eyes in our communities and they

are making safety everyone's responsibility.

We further welcome the allocation for the Street Coaches Programme and the Safety Observatory. Data-driven policing is a necessity if we are serious about getting ahead of crime. The additional allocation of over 18 million for the Community Resilience Programme speaks directly to our belief that stronger communities are safer communities. But we also recognise that enforcement remains critical.

The DA fully supports the investment into LEAP over the 2026 MTEF and its expansion to 25 municipalities, not just the Metro. LEAP has proven that when you put trained officers where they are needed most, you save lives. More visibility means more deterrence and more protection for our residents. Hon House Chair, when it comes to gangs and organised crime, we must be unapologetically tough. The allocations to the anti-gang hub alongside the SAPS detective capacity pilot is a necessary step in strengthening investigations, improving case outcomes, and ensuring that criminals are brought to book.

The K9 Units are being supported in Mossel Bay, Overstrand, and Swartland. The Peace Officer Programme is creating jobs while increasing visibility in our communities. The Chrysalis Academy is redirecting lives, turning vulnerability into opportunity, and feeding directly into employment pathways. This is what responsible government looks like. Targeted investment, strong partnership, and a relentless focus on results. That is what real crime prevention looks like.

And at a city level, the results speak for themselves. In a single day, Cape Town's neighbourhood safety officers removed illegal firearms and nearly 800 units of narcotics from our streets in Kensington, West Bank, and Hanover Park. That is action. That is impact. That is commitment. While National Government debates and has hearings, the City and the Province act. But even these successes come despite limitations imposed by national legislation. Because here is the fundamental question.

If Metro Police and municipal officers are already doing the work, why are they not given the powers to do more? Why introduce soldiers when the solution is right in front of us? Expand the investigative mandate to capable local law enforcement. The crisis becomes even clearer when we examine detective capacity. In terms of many studies and modelling, the one commonality across all jurisdictions that prevents crime and recidivism is the consistency of convictions. And for that, you need strong detection, capacitated detectives, and proper support for those detectives.

There are over 290,000 active criminal cases in the Western Cape, and only 2,739 detectives. In Sea Point, a detective carries 273 cases, with a detection rate of just 28 percent. This means only 28 percent of the reported criminal cases the police actually are able to solve. And that is not the same as conviction rates. And this crisis is not confined to the so-called crime hotspots on the Cape Flats, or to use the deeply dubious term used by a member of Opposition this morning, the Cape Flats problem.

Now, that description really illustrates the ANC's approach to the people of the Cape Flats. It sees them as a problem, not human beings deserving safety. Move up the coast to Saldanha, 113 cases per detective, with a detection rate of 22 percent. In Piketberg, it gets worse, 171 cases per detective. In Pacaltsdorp, the system is completely overwhelmed, 439 cases per detective. At that point, we must stop pretending. No human being can deliver justice under that weight.

Yes, there are pockets of resilience. De Doorns at 60 percent, Ashton at 67, prove that when the system works, it can deliver. But these are the exceptions fighting against a collapsing SAPS system's failure, and which proves the point that more detectives result in more successes. So let us stop the narrative that this is a so-called Cape Flats problem. It is not. It is a provincial crisis in safety. It is a systematic failure of the ANC centralisation of SAPS, and it is everywhere.

And that is why this Budget includes monies to assist in capacitating the safety ecosystem to assist SAPS to do their jobs. But the Province cannot carry that burden in the absence of a national fiscus to fund what is needed across SAPS in the Western Cape. It risks becoming utterly incapable of fulfilling its constitutional mandate. Now imagine what that 823 million could fund in extra detectives, who can actually solve crimes, not just march around being a spectacle, wasting over R370 million in a National Armed Forces Day that should really be called a National Disgrace Day.

Think what those extra detectives could do with building successful dockets. And how do you explain that to a grieving mother, a shattered community, a broken family? This is why initiatives like the Mitchell's Plan Project are so critical. They show that focused intervention, proper resourcing and collaboration worth over R9 million can turn the tide. But these initiatives cannot remain isolated successes. They must become the standard.

Through you, hon Deputy Speaker, to the hon Herron, do we continue chasing headlines, or do we commit to building real long-term safety for the people of the Western Cape? Do we continue with the Disney World view of defunding the police and removing the right to self-protection and then expect some magic spell to make everyone live happily ever after? That is just irresponsible and disrespects the most core value of our Constitution, the right to dignity.

Through you, hon Deputy Speaker, to the hon Sayed, do we keep deploying soldiers for show, or do we invest in a police service that can investigate, prosecute and win against crime? Surely that is what your neighbourhood wants, real progress, rather than Instagram moments with troop carriers. What is it the Freedom Charter said about the police? The police force and the army should be open to all on an equal basis and should be the helpers and protectors of the people.

How is that going? Through you, hon Deputy Speaker, to the hon Lekker, do we cling to a centralised system that is clearly buckling under its own weight,

or do we have the courage to empower provinces and cities that are already proving they can deliver to genuinely reform policing to serve the workers and the commuters, the people of the Western Cape? Expanding powers is not fragmentation. It is genuine cooperation to have the ability to respond to communities directly.

And how do we address the tech gap? Why is SAPS stuck in the 1980s, while the City and other district municipalities are embracing the 21st century? The Leader of the Opposition this morning spoke about the digital divide. Has he actually been to a SAPS charge office recently? Seen how multiple detectives have one laptop? SAPS cannot get its head around the centralised dispatch, and some do not even have the capacity to Photostat forms. And yet they refuse to work with local law enforcement and their high-tech jocks.

Despite the ongoing SAPS record of failure, the Western Cape is not waiting. This Province is governing. This Province is partnering. This Province is holding the line through oversight that asks the hard questions, through partnerships that get boots on the ground, and through relentless pressure that refuses to accept the national failure as the norm. But this is not how it should be. The Western Cape cannot be expected to outwork a National Government that controls 95 percent of policing resources.

A city cannot be expected to compensate for a collapsing policing system. And communities cannot be expected to live indefinitely in a state of permanent danger while solutions are delayed, diluted, or denied due to political posturing

and infighting. So, yes, we will continue to lead. We will continue to act. We will continue to push. And we will continue to hold SAPS accountable through legislation and support the residents of the Western Cape in their struggle for appropriate policing.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister, Minister Marais, her staff, and the Standing Committee, as well as everyone in the Department who works so hard, as well as my first-class researcher and media officer, Cassidy Lapperts. And I finally want to conclude by saying the DA supports Vote Budget 4. I thank you.

[The Deputy Speaker takes the Chair.]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON: Thank you so much. I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY:
Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I want to reiterate, this Budget is a commitment to every resident in our province, that we will continue to support ground-fighting efforts, strengthen community resilience, and create safer spaces. And hon Lekker, at first I thought you did not listen well, but you said that it requires a whole-of-society approach. And for that, I thank you. Not policing alone can help us in the fight against crime, specifically extortion and gang violence. That is why it is a whole-of-society approach.

And then I want to say, yes, it is true that regularly I meet mothers and fathers and children who lost brothers and sisters and their children. The mothers lost their child. And my heart bleeds for that. And that is what we must curb. We cannot live in a society where children are killed. So that is what we are going to do and that is what we are doing in our communities. Then at our recent MINMEC meeting, we had a frank discussion with Professor Cachalia, the Acting Minister of Police.

And we will keep our door open, because we need to strengthen the arms of the police in our province, and specifically our detectives. And the Province and City will therefore continue to push for targeted expansion of investigative powers rather than full institutional devolution. And as I mentioned, this proposal is framed as a performance-driven enhancement within existing constitutional parameters designed to strengthen law enforcement outcomes and high-burden areas. And we keep that open, and we do have frank discussions about that.

Then I want to mention, lastly, during my visits to SAPS stations right across the province, I meet responsible police officers, Neighbourhood Watches, and CPF members. And, you know, we still have decent working and capable SAPS officers in our province. And for them, we fight for them to strengthen their arm, to have a resilient and safe Western Cape. Thank you so much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. Once again, on behalf of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, thank you to Brigadier Hanana and the

entire team, the provincial team of the Serious and Violent Crimes Unit. I see the Mitchell's Plain Safety and Development Forum under the Chairpersonship of Mr Isaacs. Thank you so much, Chief Hamilton and members of the City of Cape Town. Chief Hamilton, together with all of the recipients of the Excellence Awards, PC, together with Deputy Commissioners, once again, thank you for your presence here today. Acting HOD, together with senior management and incoming HOD, Mr Bosman, thank you for your attendance.

Hon members, we will proceed and I will now recognise the Secretary. The Department and officials will vacate the officials bay. I have noted officials from the Department of Health and Wellness. Colleagues, hon members, we will give them a minute to enter the officials bay. Hon members, we are right on track to end at 7.30 approximately. We will commence in exactly 20 seconds. Allow me to welcome HOD Dr Cloete and the senior management team of the Department of Health and Wellness. I now note the Secretary.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 6: Health and Wellness – Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation Bill [B 1-2026].

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, hon members of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, guests and most importantly residents of the Western Cape, good afternoon. It is a privilege to table the Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness's

R34,47 billion budget for the 26/27 financial year.

Since becoming Minister I have witnessed both the hidden and frontline challenges created by the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, fiscal austerity, national policies that restricted workforce growth and the withdrawal of donor funding. Despite these obstacles our more than 33 000 dedicated staff delivered more than 20 million patient contacts last year, holding the line with extraordinary resilience and commitment, but, hon Deputy Speaker, since the Main Appropriation Budget last year we have started to see genuine green shoots of recovery.

Like the rooibos plant that thrives in our province, our system has adapted, endured and is now regenerating. Through disciplined financial management, a culture of innovation and a shared commitment to compassionate care, we are shifting from crisis response to long-term building. This Budget balances immediate relief for our staff and patients with strategic investments that will strengthen healthcare in the Western Cape for the next decade and beyond.

At its core this Budget is about stabilising the system today while driving reforms that will secure a stronger, more sustainable healthcare future for all our residents. The Western Cape Government has set its vision for the province over the next five years through the Provincial Strategic Plan. It is about enabling every resident to access opportunities and to live a life that they value. We recognise that the lived experience of our residents is shaped by many interconnected factors and that Government plays a role across every aspect of

daily life.

For the Department of Health and Wellness our five-year strategic plan aligns directly with this vision. At its core is a simple but powerful commitment, to walk the life journey with each resident of the Western Cape.

This means ensuring that our children start well, that our communities are supported to live well and that our residents are able to age well with dignity and care. This life course approach reflects our understanding that a person's health and wellness is not defined by a single moment, but built over time. It requires targeted interventions at every stage of life, supported by a well-run system that is responsive, integrated and sustainable. This Budget gives effect to our plans. It translates vision into services, strategy into delivery and commitment into real outcomes for residents.

Over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework we are investing more than R106 billion to achieve a healthier Western Cape and a healthcare system that works better for everyone everywhere.

For the 26/27 financial year the Department's budget is R34,47 billion. This increases to R35,65 billion in 17/18 and R36,73 billion in the outer year of 28/29.

The 26/27 Budget represents a 7,6% increase on the 25/26 Main Appropriation. This is a meaningful allocation above inflation, giving the Department the

resources needed to respond to immediate pressures, while also investing in the long-term sustainability of the healthcare system. It enables us to continue investing in critical infrastructure while also addressing persistent pressures within our Goods and Services Budget, which increases by 5,76% compared to last year's adjusted appropriation.

These investments support the full continuum of care, from prevention and health promotion, to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care, delivered across more than 550 service points in the province.

It allows the Department to stabilise specific service points that have experienced the most pressures over the last two to three years, like emergency centres. I would like to take a moment to recognise the work of our Chief Financial Officer and DDG, Mr Simon Kaye. Over the past few years he has had to navigate an exceptionally constrained and complex fiscal environment, making difficult decisions to ensure that every rand is used responsibly and where it is needed the most. In moments of crisis Simon has been a steady, disciplined and deeply trusted hand, providing guidance and insight that have added value to every decision and to every cent spent. He has embodied a selfless style of leadership that has rippled across our Department and our Government.

Mr Kaye, Rhodes University's gain is certainly our loss. Thank you for your service, your wisdom, humanity and of course every brightly coloured shirt. On behalf of the people of this province we say thank you.

Hon Deputy Speaker, a critical part of strengthening our system is investing in our people. I am therefore pleased to announce that the Budget for Compensation of Employees has increased by 5,54%, including an additional R105 million to expand our workforce. This will enable the Department to appoint up to 825 additional staff members across service points in the province, strengthening capacity across the system. These appointments include:

- 316 nurses;
- 124 doctors;
- 38 allied health professionals, including occupational therapists, dietitians and physiotherapists;
- 80 emergency medical services personnel;
- 278 support, administrative and management staff, who play a vital role in enabling our clinical teams to focus on patient care.

And while, hon Deputy Speaker, it will certainly take time to fill these posts, it will mean more care for our patients and greater support for our existing staff.

Let me now turn to programme level allocations in greater detail. Programme 1 Administration sees an increase of 11,62%. A significant portion of this investment is directed towards information and communication technology. The Western Cape is on a deliberate journey to digitise the health system,

improving patient experience, supporting clinical decision-making and ensuring that our system operates more efficiently.

A key priority in the coming year is making our systems work better for both patients and clinicians. We are advancing the rollout of a single sign-on functionality, which will allow clinicians to access multiple clinical systems through one platform. This will improve efficiency and allow more time to focus on patient care.

At the same time we are piloting the first phase of a patient-facing digital platform. This will allow patients to view aspects of their health information and begin to interact more directly with the health system, strengthening their ability to manage their own care journey.

We are also upgrading our core patient administration systems to enable more efficient appointment scheduling, with the future ability for patients to book, change or cancel appointments electronically. This will reduce congestion at facilities and improve the overall patient experience. In partnership with the Gates Foundation we have secured additional resources to pilot AI-enabled solutions that reduce the administrative burden on clinical staff in primary care facilities, allowing them to spend more time where it matters most, with patients.

In Programme 2 District Health Services continues to receive focused investment as part of our deliberate shift from a predominantly curative system

to one that places far greater emphasis on prevention. Clinics and community health centres will see increases of 7,97% and 7,63% respectively, strengthening primary health care as the very foundation of our health system. This includes shifting appropriate resources closer to where care is delivered, enabling local stewardship and allowing delivery systems to respond to context-specific needs while remaining aligned to our broader strategic priorities.

Through our Medicine Delivery Programme eligible patients are now able to receive their medication directly at home. In the past 12 months alone more than 87 000 medication parcels have been delivered. That is a grandmother who no longer needs to travel long distances to collect her diabetes medication, or a resident with mobility challenges that simply takes their blood pressure medication without worrying about how they will collect it. It is practical, everyday relief that makes it easier for people to take control of their health.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are steadily making progress towards achieving our 95-95-95 HIV targets. That is 95% of people living with HIV know their status, 95% of those who know their status are on treatment and 95% of those on treatment are virally suppressed. To enable this work the Department has allocated R2 billion to HIV programmes. Tools such as PrEP and PEP continue to play a critical role, particularly for young people and those at higher risk. At the same time, by integrating HIV and TB services at every point of care, we are strengthening our ability to respond to one of the most significant health challenges facing our country.

Looking ahead we are preparing for an important advancement in HIV prevention. In the coming months, we expect the introduction of Lenacapavir, a long-acting HIV prevention option, to transform how we prevent new infections. A twice-yearly injection offers a powerful alternative to daily medication which supports adherence and reduces stigma, but none of this progress happens in isolation. It is made possible through strong partnerships with civil society and communities across the province. The Provincial Council on AIDS and TB continues to play a vital role in bringing these partners together, enabling a coordinated and collaborative response to HIV and TB. [Interjections.]

I want to thank all those who continue to stand with us [Interjections.] ... I want to thank all those who continue to stand with us in this work, driven by a shared commitment to reducing infections and building a healthier Western Cape.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in the 26/27 financial year a total of R5,18 billion has been allocated to our district hospitals, such as Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain. One of our busiest hospitals in the province, Mitchells Plain, and its staff consistently manage high patient volumes and run at a 97% occupation rate.

We recently received an email from a patient who came to the Mitchells Plain Emergency Centre needing hospitalisation a few days before Christmas. She shared her experience and said:

“From the security at the entrance to the security at the emergency and the ward floors, I was met with a helpful greeting. Admin staff, nurses and cleaners were courteous and friendly, making one feel so much better. The above would sound like I was at a private facility, maybe even alone in a ward. Instead, I was part of a full emergency ward, following every needed process, from bloods to examination to X-ray. I was a patient who met each person with respect for the role they play in the hospital system and I was met with the same.”

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is the standard of care we strive for across every facility in our province. Care that sees the person not just the patient, even under the greatest pressure.

Before I move on, I would like to acknowledge the late Dr Pio Gerez, the former head of Metro Health Services, who passed away last week. He was a dedicated leader who played a critical role in strengthening primary health care and ensuring that services reached communities where they were needed the most, but more than that he was deeply loved by the people who knew him. He leaves behind a legacy of service, compassion and leadership that continues to shape the work that we do today. We honour Dr Perez for a contribution that words cannot fully capture and we extend our sincere condolences to his family, his colleagues and his loved ones.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in Programme 3 Emergency Medical Services is allocated

a total of R1,53 billion for the 26/27 financial year. This represents 4,4% of the Department's total budget. With R1,4 billion allocated to pre-hospital support and emergency transport and R132 million to planned patient transport, also known as HealthNet.

Our EMS services continue to operate under significant pressure. They are impacted by a complex set of challenges, including safety risks, long distances in rural areas and the unfortunate inappropriate use of EMS services. These pressures contribute to longer waiting times and place those with genuine emergencies at risk.

That is why I am particularly pleased to announce that 30 additional emergency care officers will be deployed from April in rural areas where the need is the greatest. With an investment of just over R11,17 million these officers will focus specifically on inter-facility transfers.

This intervention will ensure in areas such as Ceres, Bredasdorp, Knysna, Oudtshoorn, Gansbaai and Beaufort West, there are dedicated teams to manage these transfers, keeping more ambulances available for critical cases. In the Metro, the West Coast and the Garden Route, the Department has also partnered with the private sector to support low acuity inter-facility transfers. By improving patient flow into, out of and between facilities we can free up beds sooner, reduce waiting times and improve overall efficiency. Since its inception a few months ago in December this partnership has already enabled more than 2 400 patient transfers.

Hon Deputy Speaker, within Programme 4: Provincial and Specialised Hospital Services, 15,85% of the total departmental budget has been allocated to provide care facilities such as George Hospital, Brooklyn Chest Hospital and Alexandra. A total of R5,46 billion has been allocated to this programme, including a notable 5% increase for psychiatric and rehabilitation services.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic demand for mental health services has increased significantly. Mental health is now one of the fastest growing pressures on our healthcare system. We are responding by strengthening acute psychiatric services. This includes a R24 million investment to upgrade 72-hour observation facilities at Stikland. Additionally, three acute psychiatric units at Eerste River, Khayelitsha and New Somerset Hospitals will be opened and operationalised at a cost of R36,25 million, adding 90 new psychiatric beds, but while these facilities are essential for those requiring intensive care, our broader goal is to make mental health support more accessible and earlier.

That is why we are launching a new pilot initiative, the Tele-Mental Health Centre. Mental health needs are widespread, but specialists are limited and often concentrated in urban areas. Tele-health gives us a way to bridge that gap. By using our existing digital platforms, we will enable virtual support between specialists and frontline clinicians and, where needed, direct patient consultations. This pilot centre, with an investment of R4 million over the MTEF, will operate as a small, dedicated team focused on testing and refining new models of care, identifying what works and tackling practical challenges

needed for future scale.

For our most specialised services in Programme 5, caring for the most complex cases, are our central and tertiary hospitals, Tygerberg and Groote Schuur, as well as Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. They will receive R9,26 billion. Out of millions of patient interactions across our system each year it is these three hospitals that carry the most complex, high-risk and specialised care. This allocation includes a 6,31% increase in the budget for the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is often said that children are our future, but they are also a reflection of our society and our values. We are currently seeing isolated outbreaks of measles and diphtheria in the Western Cape, both preventable diseases for which safe and effective vaccines exist. These are serious illnesses and they remind us that prevention must remain at the centre of our health system. Vaccines are the most impactful, cost-effective and life-saving innovations in human history. They quietly protect families and communities every day. Our immunisation programme focusses on improving access, strengthening routine coverage and addressing vaccine hesitancy through targeted, community-based interventions.

We are also strengthening our communication efforts using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, to encourage parents and caregivers to vaccinate while actively addressing misinformation. At the same time our surveillance systems continue to monitor vaccine-preventable diseases closely,

enabling early detection and rapid response.

Looking ahead, we will participate in Africa Vaccination Week in April, with a focus on reaching un- and under-immunised children in priority districts, supported by partnerships across the public and private sectors.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the HPV vaccination campaign remains a cornerstone of our prevention efforts. In the past financial year, we visited all public and special schools. Of the 50 474 eligible learners, 36 900 girls were vaccinated, achieving 73% coverage. While this is encouraging progress we know that more work needs to be done, and of course it is not work that Government can do alone. I would like to call on all hon members of this House to support our efforts to build trust in vaccines within our communities, to use your voices, your platforms and your leadership to encourage parents and caregivers to protect your children, because trust is the foundation of any successful immunisation programme.

Through this Budget we are investing in prevention to not only save lives today, but to reduce pressure on our health system in the future. This is what it means to deliver growth with discipline and care, investing early, acting responsibly and ensuring that every child has a fair chance at a healthy future.

In Programme 6: Health Sciences and Training, this programme will receive R465 million to train and prepare the next generation of healthcare workers in the Western Cape. These institutions are centres of excellence and set national

benchmarks in health education. The College of Emergency Care in 2022 became the first college in the country to be accredited to offer an NQF Level 6 diploma in emergency care, and it is now progressing towards accreditation for a Bachelor's Degree.

Last year at the Western Cape College of Nursing, the first cohort of postgraduate diploma students graduated as specialist nurses in areas such as critical care, emergency nursing, mental health, midwifery and primary care, but training does not only happen in lecture halls.

Across the Department we are investing a further R47,5 million to upskill staff within our services, ensuring continuous learning and development. In total 1 500 bursaries will be awarded, strengthening our pipeline of skilled healthcare professionals for the future.

Hon Deputy Speaker in Programme 7 Healthcare Support Services increases by 6% to a total allocation of R744,9 million. These are the essential services behind the scenes that keep our health system running, from engineering to laundry services to medical depots, orthotic and prosthetic services and forensic pathology. An additional R27,21 million has been allocated to strengthen this capability, including investments that will make forensic investigations faster, more accurate and more effective.

Our forensic toxicology unit has recently achieved a major milestone. It is now the first provincial public forensic toxicology laboratory in South Africa to be

accredited for advanced drug testing methods, which means that the results produced by this unit meet international standards for accuracy, reliability and credibility, and that matters deeply, because every forensic case is a family seeking answers, a justice system that rely on credible evidence. By strengthening our forensic services, we are supporting the work of law enforcement and the courts, ensuring that investigations are backed by high quality, science-based evidence.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is also what care looks like. Care is not only what happens at the bedside, it is ensuring that every life is treated with dignity, that every case is handled with integrity and that every family can trust the system to find answers. In this way, even beyond our hospitals and clinics, this Budget reflects our commitment to deliver growth with discipline and care.

In Programme 8, hon Deputy Speaker, Health Facilities Management reflects an increase of 22% to a total budget of R1,72 billion. This increase is largely driven by budget facility for infrastructure, or BFI funding, which supports several of the province's major healthcare infrastructure projects. While much of this work happens behind the scenes it is critical in laying the foundation for the next generation of health facilities in the Western Cape.

The design and planning for the redevelopment of Tygerberg Hospital and the new Metro East and Metro West Regional Hospitals are underway. These are once in a generation facilities that require deeply technical planning and engineering. Behind the scenes preparation taking place to make these possible

and change the health landscape in the Western Cape.

Hon Deputy Speaker, while this work is ongoing our investment in healthcare facilities continues. In the 26/27 financial year we will have 22 projects in planning, 57 in design or tender phase and 42 projects either under construction or being handed over to our clinical teams to begin serving patients. These include refurbishments at Amalienstein and Calitzdorp Clinics, new and replacement clinics in Diazville, Mossel Bay, Hanover Park and Weltevreden, and major rehabilitation projects at Montague Hospital, Paarl, which was recently damaged by fire, Alexandra Hospital and New Somerset Hospital. We will also open the doors of the new Ravensmead Community Day Centre, Hornlee Clinic and the upgraded Emergency Centre at Groote Schuur Hospital in this new financial year.

Hon Deputy Speaker, infrastructure is not only about buildings, it is also about creating environments that support better care. That is why over the next three financial years the Department will invest R57,54 million in photovoltaic systems across our facilities to improve energy resilience, reduce costs over time and help ensure that our services can continue uninterrupted.

Hon Deputy Speaker, together each programme forms a public healthcare system that is far greater than the sum of its parts, and these are only some of the ways in which this Budget will be put to work. Other initiatives such as Khulisa Care and Planet Youth will continue this year, gathering the evidence, building partnerships and doing the hard work needed to shift the needle on

stunting, violence prevention and the well-being of our most vulnerable residents.

Hon Deputy Speaker, underpinning every programme and every budget line are thousands of dedicated public servants. I would like to take a moment to recognise our senior management team in the officials bay. Under the stewardship of Dr Keith Cloete, thank you for your leadership, your discipline and unwavering commitment to create those conditions that enable the system to function, to grow and support our patients and our staff. Thank you for your dedication and passion. Thank you for your professionalism and care, which are changing lives every day.

I would also like to thank my excellent team in the Ministry who work so incredibly hard every day to make a difference, I am enormously grateful.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we have committed to walking a lifelong journey with our residents. From the moment a child is born to the care we provide in times of illness, to the dignity we uphold at the most vulnerable moments of life. Like the rooibos plant that grows in the soil of this province our health system has endured difficult conditions. It has been tested by crisis, shaped by constraint and strengthened through resilience.

Today we are building a system that is more responsive, more sustainable and better able to meet the needs of the people we serve, not only today, but for generations to come. This Budget allows us to provide targeted, non-recurrent

seed funding to test and scale innovative interventions, developing new models of care and redesigning existing services to improve how we deliver care to our residents.

This Budget reflects our commitment to invest with discipline, to grow responsibly and to place care at the centre of everything that we do. A strong health system is built not only through budgets and policies, but through partnership, trust and shared responsibility, and it requires all of us to recognise that health is not something we deliver, it is something that we build together. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. I recognise the hon member Windvogel.

†Me R WINDVOGEL (ANC): Agb Adjunkspeaker, die mense van die Wes-Kaap, agb lede. Ons staan vandag hier om deel te neem aan hierdie debat oor Begrotingspos 6, die Begroting van die Departement Gesondheid en Welsyn.

Laat ek van die begin af dit duidelik stel, dat die African National Congress nie hierdie Begroting gaan ondersteun nie. Ons doen dit nie uit gewoonte nie, ook nie bloot om teen te staan vir die onthalwe daarvan nie, maar omdat hierdie Begroting die mense van die Wes-Kaap in die steek laat. Dit laat die werkersklas in die steek, dit laat die armes in die steek en dit laat die 75% van inwoners in die steek wat afhanklik is van die openbare gesondheidsorgstelsel

vir hul oorlewing.

Agb Adjunkspeaker, die Departement stel hierdie R34,5 miljard Begroting voor as 'n keerpunt, 'n oomblik van herstel, 'n oomblik van herbelegging. Ons word vertel dat die stelsel besig is om uit die finansiële druk te kom, maar die vraag wat ons moet vra is eenvoudig: vir wie is hierdie herstel? Want vir die mense op die grond is daar geen herstel nie. Daar is steeds pasiënte wat op die vloere van ons hospitale slaap, daar is steeds gemeenskappe wat ure en soms dae wag in die son en in die reën vir nooddienste. Daar is steeds moeders wat nie betyds sorg vir hul kinders kan kry nie.

Hierdie Begroting praat die taal van vooruitgang, maar die werklikheid wat ons mense elke dag ervaar vertel 'n heel ander storie.

Die Wes-Kaap het 'n bevolking van meer as 7,7 miljoen mense, waarvan ongeveer 75% op die openbare gesondheidsorgstelsel staatmaak. Tog bly die infrastruktuur, personeel en diensvermoë van hierdie stelsel heeltemal onvoldoende.

[Ms R WINDVOGEL (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, the people of the Western Cape, hon members. We are standing here today to participate in this debate on Budget Vote 6, the Budget of the Department of Health and Wellness.

Let me put it clearly from the outset, that the African National Congress is not going to support this Budget. We do not do it out of habit, also not to oppose for the sake of it, but because this Budget fails the people of the Western Cape.

It fails the workers class, it fails the poor and it fails 75% of the citizens that are dependent on the public health system for their survival.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Department portrays this R34,5 billion Budget as a turning point, a moment of recovery, a moment of reinvestment. We are told that the system is rising from financial pressure, but the question we have to ask is simple: for whom is this recovery? Because for the people on the ground there is no recovery. There are still patients who sleep on the floors of our hospitals, there are still communities who wait hours and sometimes days in the sun and in the rain for emergency services. There are still mothers who cannot get care for their children in time.

This Budget speaks the language of progress, but the reality that our people experience every day tells a totally different story.

The Western Cape has a population of more than 7,7 million people, of which 75 depend on the public healthcare system. Yet the infrastructure, staff and service capacity of this system remain totally inadequate.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, we recently engaged with communities and hospital management in George. What we heard there is not theory, it is life experience. The George Regional Hospital, a 266-bed facility, we were told is the only regional hospital serving the entire Garden Route and Central Karoo District. It is expected to carry the burden of emergency care, surgery, oncology and more for the entire region. The absence of another regional hospital in the

region has placed enormous pressure on George Regional Hospital. Communities in Bitou and surrounding areas have made a consistent and reasonable demand for the establishment of a 24-hour facility closer to where they live. Instead, they are forced to travel long distances, often without reliable transport, while ambulances are in short supply.

Hon Deputy Speaker, these are not abstract complaints, these are structural failures that cost lives and this Budget is silent on them.

Across the Garden Route District there are severe shortages of ambulances. Communities have raised concerns about delay emergency response times, especially after hours. People are dying while waiting for ambulances. The budget allocation at just R1,5 billion for emergency medical services is not enough to adequately respond to these urgent needs.

Hon Deputy Speaker, one of the most alarming indicators in this Budget is the collapse of preventative health care. The Department itself admits that the percentage of children not fully immunised has increased dramatically from 14% to 29% in recent years. This means that more children are at risk of preventable diseases. It means that the system is becoming reactive rather than preventative. It means that we are storing up a public health crisis for the future, and yet, despite this, the Department continues to speak of success. We must ask how can there be success when basic child health indicators are worsening?

Hon Deputy Speaker, in this context we must address the publicised Khulisa Care Programme which the Department presents as its flagship response to child malnutrition and stunting. Khulisa Care is a noble and necessary initiative aimed at addressing child stunting and improving early childhood outcomes, and we support its intent. This programme is a collaborative effort led in large part by the DG [Inaudible 3:05:47], whose contribution into Early Childhood Development must be recognised. The real issue, however, is scale and urgency. Khulisa Care must be expanded, fully funded and integrated into the health system to reach all who need it, not just a selected few.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Department speaks of a positive net fill rate and claims to have reversed a negative growth trend in staffing, but what does this mean in practice? Because across our facilities the reality is clear, there is a staffing crisis. Nurses are overworked, doctors are over stretched, support staff are insufficient, rural clinics are without permanent doctors.

During the 2025 Budget Adjustment the Department's Budget for Compensation of Employees was reduced by R52,3 million. Therefore, we must interrogate whether this so-called positive net fill rate is simply the result of keeping funded posts unfilled and calling it what it is, because for the patients waiting in a queue, for the nurse working in a double shift, these technical terms mean nothing.

†Agb Adjunkspeaker, ons verwelkom die toekenning vir die herbou van die Klipfontein Streekshospitaal, maar ons moet eerlik wees met die mense

daarbuite. Dit is nie die eerste keer dat so 'n begroting toegeken word nie. Keer op keer is fondse onbestee teruggestuur na Tesourie, keer op keer is beloftes gemaak en gebreek. Die mense van die Klipfonteingebed wag al meer as 'n dekade sedert die sluiting van GF Jooste Hospitaal. Nou word hulle gesê om te wag tot 2033, of selfs langer. Dit is onaanvaarbaar. Die mense wil nie hoor van professionele dienste, hulle wil stootskrapers op die grond sien, hulle wil sien dat bouwerk begin.

Ons eis daarom duidelik waarborge dat hierdie Begroting bestee sal word en dat konstruksie sonder verdere vertraging sal begin.

Intussen herhaal ons ons beroep dat die Departement Khayelitsha Distrikhospitaal, Mitchells Plain Distrikhospitaal, opgradeer na 'n streekstatus. Die mense kan nie nog 'n dekade wag nie.

Agb Adjunkspeaker, daar is tans groot ontsteltenis uit gemeenskappe oor die toestand by Mitchells Plain Distrikhospitaal. Ons hoor van pasiënte wat op die vloere slaap, ons hoor van mense wat dae lank wag vir hulp, ons hoor dat mense beseer word as gevolg van nalatigheid. As lede van hierdie Huis het ons 'n grondwetlike plig om toesig te hou. Ons sal nie versuim om ons plig na te kom nie.

[Hon Deputy Speaker, we welcome the allocation for the rebuilding of the Klipfontein District Hospital but we must be honest with the people out there. It is not the first time that such a budget is allocated. Time after time funds were returned unspent to Treasury, time after time promises were made and

broken. The people of the Klipfontein area have been waiting for more than a decade since the closure of the GF Jooste Hospital. Now they are told to wait until 2033, or even longer. It is unacceptable. The people don't want to hear about professional services, they want to see bulldozers on the ground, they want to see that building commences.

We therefore demand clear guarantees that this Budget will be spent and that construction will start without further delay.

In the meantime, we repeat our call that the Department upgrades the Khayelitsha District Hospital, Mitchells Plain District Hospital to regional status. The people cannot wait for another decade.

Hon Deputy Speaker, there is currently great concern amongst communities about the condition at the Mitchells Plain District Hospital. We hear about patients sleeping on the floors, we hear about people waiting for days for help, we hear that people are getting injured as a result of negligence. As members of this House we have a constitutional obligation to exercise oversight. We will not forsake our duty.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, as we approach World TB Day on 23 and 24 March, we must reflect on the Province's commitment to combating HI As members of this house we have a constitutional obligation to conduct oversight. We will not forsake our duty.V, AIDS and TB. The facts are deeply concerning. The Western Cape province has the highest TB rate in the country, and the hon

Premier of the Western Cape has never attended a single SANEC plenary where Premiers are required to account for their provincial response to HIV and AIDS and TB. The hon Premier had to be compelled to chair the Provincial AIDS Council, a responsibility he initially delegated to his MEC. Even now the Province is not fully complying with national expectations.

At the same time we see dangerous misinformation spreading in our communities, such as substances like [Inaudible 3:09:21] being sold as cure for HIV and AIDS. Where is the leadership? Where is the public education campaign? We welcome, however, that the National Government has allocated R1,9 billion for the comprehensive HIV and AIDS component.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we must also raise the issue of access to treatment for inmates at Pollsmoor Prison. Awaiting trial prisoners are meant to access healthcare service, including TB and HIV treatment. Yet since COVID-19 this has not been happening consistently in the Western Cape. This is a violation of basic human rights. Healthcare is not a privilege, it is a constitutional right. This is another metaphor we consider taking to the Health Ombudsman and Human Rights Commission.

Hon Deputy Speaker, several clinics, including Luvuyo and Matthew Goniwe, have been penalised by the Department of Labour for poor infection control. Kuyasa Clinic faces serious infrastructure challenges, including inadequate filing facilities. These are indicators of systematic neglect. The Department is aware of these issues and yet this Budget is silent on these matters. Silence,

hon Deputy Speaker, is not an acceptable response.

Hon Deputy Speaker, teenage pregnancy remains a crisis in the province. In 2024 alone over 10 000 [3:10:47] births were recorded amongst girls aged 10 to 19, including nearly 300 cases involving girls between 10 and 14 years old. We must ask difficult but necessary questions: who are the perpetrators? What investigations have been conducted? What action has been taken? Because it is highly unlikely that these girls as young as 10 are being impregnated by boys over 18. This points to deeper issues of statutory rape and gender-based violence in the province. We call on the Department to provide updated data and to account for the action taken in response to these cases.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Department is said to spend R609 million on machinery and equipment. We must interrogate the relationship between the public and private healthcare sector. The MEC confirmed that the same medical equipment costing the public hundreds of millions every year, is made available to private hospitals at no cost. Yet there is no shared arrangement to ensure that public patients can access private beds when needed. We reiterate the call that for every equipment used there must be free beds for the uninsured patients in the private hospital.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Budget asks us to believe in a story of recovery, but the evidence tells a different story of system and strain, preventative care in decline, infrastructure delay, staff overstretched, governance failing and communities left behind. This Budget does not rise to the scale of the

challenges we face, it does not reflect the urgency required, it does not prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable and for that reason, hon Deputy Speaker, the African National Court rejects this Budget. We reject on behalf of the patients sleeping on the hospital floors in hospitals, we reject on behalf of the children who are not immunised.

†Mnr Kaye, ek wens jou alles wat mooi is met jou nuwe *journey* na die Oos-Kaap, jy is 'n Oos-Kaapse kind, jy gaan terug waarvandaan jy kom. Gaan doen wat jy weet die beste is.

Dr Kariem en die HOD, Dr Cloete, dankie vir julle *responsiveness, regardless of the political landscape we find ourselves in.*

Agb lid Booysen, ek hoop jy gaan vandag praat van die Wes-Kaap *Parliament* en jou verantwoordelikheid, en nie die Oos-Kaap nie. Jy is nou in die Wes-Kaap, ons is hier, praat oor die Wes-Kaap. Baie dankie.

[Mr Kaye, I wish you all the best on your new journey to the Eastern Cape, you are an Eastern Cape child, you are going back to where you come from. Go and do what you know is best.

Dr Kariem and the HOD, Dr Cloete, thank you for your responsiveness, regardless of the political landscape we find ourselves in.

Hon member Booysen, I hope you are going to talk today about the Western Cape Parliament and your responsibility and not the Eastern Cape. You are now

in the Western Cape, we are here, talk about the Western Cape. Thank you.]

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

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Hon Deputy Speaker ...[Interjections.]

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

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Hon Deputy Speaker, just a concern for those of us who want to monitor time. I see it is not – and even for speakers to time themselves when they are speaking. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can confirm that the clock is on. We will attempt to get it in the front and centre. The Table Staff has taken note. I recognise the hon member Walters.

Mr T C R WALTERS (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, I am willing to assist with the timekeeping.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon member Walters. Hon colleagues, we will attempt – hon members, we will attempt to get it front and centre on the home screen. I can see it my side. Hon member Stephens, please continue.

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, hon members and distinguished guests. The Patriotic Alliance supports the Budget allocated to Health and Wellness. However, our support must be accompanied by urgent improvements in the delivery of services on the ground.

Day hospitals across the Western Cape, particularly in Kraaifontein, Caledon, Eerste River, Mitchells Plain, Conville in George, and so many more that are not mentioned here today, are facing serious operational challenges. These facilities are often the first point of care for many residents, yet they are failing to provide a dignified and efficient service.

One of the most concerning issues is the current practice of patients being forced to stand outside healthcare facilities for hours, in both extreme heat and cold, while waiting to be attended to. This is unacceptable, especially when many of these facilities have sufficient space inside to accommodate patients in a humane and orderly manner. Policies that undermine the dignity of our people must be urgently reviewed and corrected.

Equally troubling is the conduct of some security personnel who are increasingly overstepping their roles and acting as though they are in charge of facility operations. Security is there to ensure safety not to control or intimidate patients. Clear boundaries and proper oversight must be enforced.

We must also address the ongoing challenges related to staffing shortages

which continue to place immense strain on healthcare workers and compromise the quality of care provided to our communities.

Furthermore, emergency medical services remain under pressure, with delays in limited availability continuing to put lives at risk. Strengthening the EMS capacity must be a priority if we are serious about saving lives.

Supporting this Budget means holding the Department accountable to ensure that resources translate into real tangible improvements. Our communities deserve accessible, respectful and efficient healthcare services. Thank you.

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

Ms T LITHAKONG (EFF): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. The Economic Freedom Fighters does not support the Budget because Western Cape needs efficiency in the health sector.

It cannot be that each year a budget is passed, but our people continue to be subjected to long queues in hospitals and clinics, with some people ending up having to return home without receiving any medical assistance.

Infrastructure is the main obstacle in the province when it comes to access to proper healthcare. Today residents in Klipfontein sub-district do not have a hospital, following the decommissioning of Jooste Hospital in the area, which

was servicing a lot of communities in the area. It cannot be that one hospital is decommissioned with no tangible plans with regards to when the replacement hospitals will be completed.

The fact that it is not clear when the new hospital in the area will be completed is a disaster for people in the Klipfontein area who are in need of healthcare services provided by the State. The right to access to healthcare can only be achieved if healthcare facilities are also closer to our people.

Lastly, the majority of people who use public service healthcare systems are mostly not well-off. Most of them are unemployed and cannot afford to constantly pay transport costs in order to access these healthcare facilities.

For these reasons, hon Deputy Speaker, the EFF will not support the Budget. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much. I recognise the hon member Michels.

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Elke dag is nie Krismis nie. Agb Adjunkspeaker, onder die Begroting Gesondheid en Welsyn sien ons 'n regering wat praat van doeltreffendheid en dissipline, maar stilbly oor die werklikheid in ons klinieke en hospitale.

Oorvol wagkamers, onderbemande fasiliteite, gemeenskappe wat ure moet wag

vir basiese sorg, en tog neem die befondsing per persoon af. Dis nie sorg nie, dis 'n stille vorm van ontmensliking van die armes.

Agb Adjunkspeaker:

1. Gegewe dat per kapita provinsiale finansiering afneem, hoe beplan die Departement om billike toegang tot gesondheidsdiens in oorvol en onderbefondste gemeenskappe te handhaaf?
2. Waarom prioritiseer die begroting fiskale dissipline bo die dringende behoefte om gesondheidsinfrastruktuur in onderbediende gebiede, soos die Kaapse Vlakte en landelike dorpe, uit te brei?

Kan die Departement verduidelik hoe verhoogde personeelgetalle sal lei tot verbeterde diensleweringssuitkomste terwyl sistematiese onderbefondsing steeds druk op voorlyndienste plaas? Hoe spreek hierdie Begroting die groeiende geestesgesondheidskrisis, dwelmmisbruik en geweldsverwante trauma in gemarginaliseerde gemeenskappe aan? Dankie, agb Adjunkspeaker.

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Every day is not Christmas. Hon Deputy Speaker, under the Budget Health and Wellness we see a government that speaks about effectiveness and discipline, but stays quiet about the reality in our clinics and hospitals.

Overcrowded waiting rooms, understaffed facilities, communities that have to wait for hours for basic care and yet the funding per person is decreasing. That

is not care, it is a silent form of the dehumanization of the poor.

Hon Deputy Speaker:

1. Given that per capita provincial financing is decreasing, how does the Department plan to maintain fair access to healthcare services in overcrowded and underfunded communities?

2. Why does the Budget prioritize fiscal discipline above the urgent need to expand health infrastructure in under-serviced areas such as the Cape Flats and rural towns?

Can the Department explain how increased staff numbers will lead to improved service delivery outcomes while systematic underfunding still places pressure on frontline services?

How does this Budget address the growing mental health crisis, drug abuse and violence-related trauma in marginalized communities? Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Michels. I recognise hon member Booysen.

Mr M BOOYSEN (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, there are moments in governance where numbers stop being numbers and start becoming a mirror. A mirror that

reflects not just what we spend, but what we are, what we value and what kind of a future we are building. This is one of those moments.

A total allocation of over R34 billion, with an increase of over R1,8 billion, is not accidental, it is deliberate, it is targeted and most importantly it is value-driven. Because budgets, hon Deputy Speaker, are moral documents they tell you exactly what a government chooses to prioritise, and this Budget makes one thing very clear. In the Western Cape we choose dignity, we choose access, we choose quality healthcare.

Now let us be honest about the choice before us, because South Africans know this choice all too well. Do we want more of Tembisa Hospital or do we want more of Groote Schuur Hospital? A symbol of excellence where innovation thrives, where professionals are supported and where lives are saved with world-class care. That is the line, hon Deputy Speaker, and this Budget draws it clearly, because what we see here is not reckless spending, it is strategic investment.

Programme 2 expands frontline healthcare with an additional R588 million. The Budget goes directly to primary healthcare services, not administration, not bureaucracy, but clinics, nurses and communities. That is what a pro-poor approach looks like. It says to the mother in a rural town, to an elderly patient in a township, to a child in a vulnerable community, “You will not be left behind.”

Then, hon Deputy Speaker, we go deeper. Violence prevention is no longer treated as an afterthought. With over R106 million committed over the medium-term this Government recognises a simple truth: Violence is a public health crisis. One that fills our trauma wards, stretches our emergency services and places an immense and preventable burden on our healthcare system. Every stab wound, every gunshot, every act of violence ends up in our hospitals.

So if you are serious about fixing healthcare you must be serious about preventing trauma before it even reaches the emergency rooms. This is exactly what this Budget does.

Programme 4 strengthens the backbone of specialised care; our regional hospitals, our psychiatric services and our rehabilitation centres, because healthcare does not end where the patient survives, it continues through recovery, through mental health support and through rebuilding lives.

Hon Deputy Speaker, an increase in psychiatric funding sends a powerful message: Mental health is not a secondary, it is essential. The over R73 million increases in rehabilitation funding affirms that recovery, dignity and the full restoration of patients' lives are central to our healthcare system. Hon Deputy Speaker, if you want excellence, you must invest in people.

Programme 6 grows training and development, ensuring a pipeline of skilled, homegrown healthcare professionals, because a world-class hospital is nothing without the doctors, nothing without the nurses and specialists who bring it to

life.

Let us turn to infrastructure and here the ambition becomes undeniable. Clinics are being built, upgraded and replaced. District Hospitals are being modernised. Major investments are flowing into the Tygerberg Hospital and Groote Schuur Hospital, not just to maintain them, hon Deputy Speaker, but to future-proof them. This is how you build a system that lasts. Even in crisis, hon Deputy Speaker, this Government responds with urgency. When fire damaged Paarl Regional Hospital, R67 million was immediately allocated for repairs and equipment. That is what responsiveness looks like, that is what a capable State does, and while others talk about resilience this Budget builds it. Through energy investments, solar infrastructure and backup systems to ensure that hospitals do not go dark when the grid does.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, let us return to the central question: Do we want a healthcare system that lunges from crisis to crisis, where mismanagement becomes the norm, or do we want a system that plans, that invests and that delivers?

Through you, hon Deputy Speaker, to hon member Windvogel, do we want more of a Tembisa or more of Groote Schuur? This Budget makes the choice. This Budget makes the choice. It chooses stability over chaos, it chooses investment over neglect, it chooses a future where healthcare is not a privilege but a guarantee, and that is why this Budget stands as a clear, deliberate choice. One that advances dignity, strengthens care and delivers the kind of healthcare

systems our people deserve.

Hon Deputy Speaker, through you to Mr Kaye, we are going to see your footprints after you have long left the Western Cape. We wish you all the best.

The DA supports this Budget in its fullest, thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member Booyesen. I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, and thanks to the hon members that participated in the debate. I will just respond to a few issues.

First on Khulisa Care. It is a partnership and it is a pilot, and we are in partnership with the DG Murray Trust, as well as Shoprite, Grow Great and many others. It is a whole-of-society programme to address stunting in small children. It is a pilot study and as we are a data-led and evidence-based government we have to wait for the pilot to provide the results to see if this type of intervention has the type of results and success that would make it possible to roll out.

So we have to wait to see what the results are and if this is the intervention, and then we can determine if we will scale. So we need a little bit of patience to make sure that we get all the information in and to see that it can deliver

what we hope it will deliver.

Then, hon members, we are coming out of a very difficult time, but we have learnt from the way our staff have responded to these very difficult challenges and the immense pressure that they have had to face.

So now we are writing a new chapter that is focused on stability and on reform, and I look forward to working with the hon members of this House on this journey.

I would like to thank the parties that are supporting this Budget and we have taken note of the concerns you have raised, and we will work towards improving these. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. Once again thank you to the HOD, Dr Cloete, to the COO, Dr Kariem. It will be remiss of me to not say on behalf of the Institution to Mr Kaye that we wish you all of the best and thank you for your service in the Western Cape, together with the entire senior management, thank you for your attendance here today. You are free to leave the officials bay at this particular time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. Once again, thank you to the HOD Dr Cloete, to the COO, Dr Carriem. It will be remiss of me to not say on behalf of the Institution to Mr Kaye, that we wish you all of the best and thank you for your service in the Western Cape, together with the entire Senior

Management. Thank you for your attendance here today. You are free to leave the officials bay at this particular time.

Before I recognise the Secretary to read the Ninth and final Order of the Day, I have noted the HOD on the platform. So, hon Minister, I will recognise you to proceed. Wait, wait, wait! It has been a long day. I need to recognise the Secretary to read the Ninth and final Order of the Day. I was just checking if everyone is awake.

The SECRETARY: Debate on Vote 5: Education – Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 1–2026].

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you to the Table Staff. I recognise the hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Last, but not least, Vote 5 Education.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we have a vision of delivering quality education for every learner in every classroom in every school in the Western Cape. Delivering quality education means setting high standards and pushing harder to meet them because quality education means economic growth and more economic growth means more jobs, and more jobs means a better future for our children, and we are getting it done.

We will spend R35,1 billion on Education in the 2026/2027 financial year which is the largest departmental budget in the Western Cape. To deliver quality education, we are strengthening Early Learning, improving learning outcomes, expanding access to education, supporting learners with special education needs and building partnerships with the private sector.

This year, we will spend R102,9 million on strengthening Early Learning so that our learners will have a strong foundation which gives them a better chance of succeeding in higher grades and in their post-school careers.

Last month, we announced that our Grade 3 learners had achieved their highest annual systemic test scores ever. Since 2021, our Grade 3 learners' mathematics pass rate has increased by 17,7 percentage points from 44,3% to 62%. The Grade 3 language pass rate has increased by 14,3 percentage points from 36,9% to 51,2%.

But we need to do more. So, we have introduced new measures to support Foundation Phase teachers and learners this year. We had introduced baseline assessments of literacy and numeracy skills for all Foundation Phase learners at the beginning of the school year, to help teachers identify gaps in learning early and to tailor our interventions to support them.

We have implemented reading fluency benchmarks in the Foundation Phase which serves as clear, measurable goals that guide teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school year. We have launched a structured

numeracy intervention for teachers and learners in the Foundation Phase, following the success of our Early Grade Reading Intervention for these grades.

The intervention includes teacher training, teacher guides, learner books and of course, maths resource kits to support the new teaching skills. We have just launched our Western Cape Reading and Literacy Strategy with a clear and ambitious goal. Every learner must be able to read for meaning by the age of 10. We are getting it done!

Hon Deputy Speaker, this year we will spend R191,1 million on improving learning outcomes in Grades 4 through 12, so that learners are supported throughout their school careers. Our successful #BackOnTrack programme will continue to support across grades in the coming years, with 34 200 learners in Grades 4, 7, 10, 11 and 12 receiving extra classes.

We will offer additional training to 1 530 teachers in Grades 4, 8, 9, 10, and 11, as well as an open Just in Time online training programme for 3 100 teachers in Grades 11 and 12. We are also refining our programme to ensure that it aligns with our Department's key priorities. We need to have more learners taking maths, more learners passing maths and more learners passing maths well with a score of 60% or more.

So, a key amendment to the #BackOnTrack programme this year, is a focus on improving mathematics participation and outcomes in Grades 10, 11 and 12. This will include extra classes for 4 000 learners in Grade 10 and another 4 000

learners in Grade 11, so that we can retain these learners in mathematics throughout the phase.

Technical education also has the potential to be a key driver of economic growth, but our technical schools are not currently reaching their full potential to develop, I beg your pardon, the future engineers, technicians and technologists our economy needs. So, we will invest in revitalising our technical schools, including upgrading workshops, modernising equipment and supporting teachers in technical subjects so that these schools deliver learners with the skills to take up and create jobs in these fields.

We are also refining our teacher training across grades, to more closely align to our priorities to improve learning outcomes. This includes closer monitoring and evaluation of our training, to ensure that every hour a teacher spends in training has a measurable impact in the classroom. We are getting it done!

Hon Deputy Speaker, this year, we will spend R2,7 billion on infrastructure to expand access to quality education. Our Rapid School Build Programme continues to grow from strength to strength and the pace at which we are building it, is a game changer for Education. This year, we aim to deliver 280 classrooms in new and existing schools across the province, and we aim to have 10 new schools ready to open at the start of the 2027 school year.

Our new schools incorporate green energy systems to reduce our demand on the grid and contribute to our province's vision of energy security. We will

continue to strengthen our partnerships with Local Governments across the province to coordinate and speed up planning and development of new schools. We will also invest in maintaining and upgrading our existing schools so that even as we add additional capacity to meet demand, our existing schools remain fit for purpose. We are getting it done!

Hon Deputy Speaker, this year, we will spend R2 billion to support learners with special education needs so that they are able to learn and thrive in a specialised environment. One of the new schools being completed with the support of our sister department, the Department of Infrastructure, is the Manenberg School of Skills which will offer practical, vocational education to learners who thrive on this curriculum.

We are allocating additional budget from our provincial funds to expand support for learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder at R78,3 million and learners with Profound and Intellectual Disabilities at R77,2 million.

Our special needs teachers are the guardian angels of our learners with special education needs and carry a heavy burden with care and kindness. With an increasing demand for placement our most vulnerable learners, we need to ensure our special needs programme is fully capacitated.

So, we have allocated funding for up to 101 additional special needs teachers, to increase support for learners requiring specialised support. Hon Deputy Speaker, we are getting it done!

This year, we will spend R5 million supporting the Edu Invest initiative at Wesgro, to drive private and donor investment in education in the Western Cape. The return on investment in Edu Invest, I think, is impressive. For the 2025/2026 financial year, the team facilitated R320 million in new independent school projects, mainly in low-fee and no-fee schools. These schools make high-quality education accessible to learners in low-income communities, and the difference they are making in the lives of our children is astounding.

One of these education providers, recently shared a groundbreaking commitment to build 10 schools in 10 years, serving 10 000 learners from low-income communities. They are changing the narrative on what independent education looks like, and who it benefits, and we will continue to support their vision of low-cost high-quality education. Hon Deputy Speaker, we are getting it done!

Now, hon Deputy Speaker, executing these priorities in a system under pressure will require additional capacity. Teachers are the backbone of our education system, and of our society. Without teachers, delivering quality education is impossible.

This year, we have allocated funding for up to 701 additional teachers in our schools. This includes up to 600 teachers in public ordinary schools, and up to 101 teachers in special needs schools, and filling some of these posts is already underway.

We will also need to make our classrooms safer environments that better support teaching and learning, and so this year we will spend R72,7 million improving safety in schools. We will also be increasing our focus on improving school attendance, ensuring time on task, and improving discipline in our schools this year.

Nevertheless, our Department remains under severe fiscal pressure, and we face a serious risk, including significant admissions pressure, overcrowded classrooms, aging school infrastructure, unfunded mandates, and the winding down of our additional Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI) funding. But we will continue to do everything we can to carefully manage these risks and maintain stability in our system, with the support of our officials, and our principals, and our teachers and our school staff.

But despite the risks, and the very real challenges that face our education system, it is a system that works. Over 1,2 million children go to school in the Western Cape each weekday, and by and large they do so safely, they have access to school meals and learner transport programmes, they receive extra academic support where needed, and benefit from the support of great teachers. The system works because of our staff, who remain our Department's greatest asset.

So, thank you to all of our Western Cape Education Department staff, under the leadership of our Superintendent-General, Mr Brent Walters, our Head Office,

our district offices, our principals, and of course, our school management teams. And to our teachers across the province, from the Cape Town Metro to the far reaches of our rural districts: you are our agents of hope, and you get it done. So, thank you for your care, for your dedication, and for your love for the children of the Western Cape. Thank you.

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

The LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION: Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker and hon members. Let me firstly start before he leaves and thank the hon Walters for agreeing to convey our message to Helen Zille, the former Premier, regarding the recall of hon Premier Winde. So, thank you very much hon Walters for you ...[Interjections.] Thanks for your assistance. I think let us give him a round of applause. Thank you, and he waited for that. Thank you very much.

Education remains the most powerful instrument available to any society to defeat poverty, expand opportunity and build a just future. For this reason, it is appropriate that Education receives the largest share of the Provincial Budget. We welcome Education MEC, hon David Maynier's willingness to support the ANC's initiative as well, to avail our provincial constituency officers to assist parents and communities who are struggling with the 2027 learner placement registration process and even provide guidance in that regard.

For the 2026/2027 financial year, this House is asked to approve R35,1 billion for the Western Cape Education Department, rising to R36,7 billion over the Medium-Term. But the real measure of a budget is not its size. The real measure is whether it improves the lived realities of learners, teachers, and parents.

When we examine those lived realities across the Western Cape, it becomes clear that this Budget fails to adequately respond to the crisis facing our education system. For that reason, the ANC cannot support Budget Vote 5. I know that the hon MEC tried, wanted sufficient budget, but the leadership of this Province and Government refuses to do so.

The Western Cape education system now serves more than 1,23 million learners with over 139 000 additional learners entering the system between 2019 and 2025. This growth was predictable. Population trends were known. Migration patterns were known.

Yet, year after year we see the same crisis unfold. Parents queuing outside schools, learners without placement and classrooms overcrowded to the point where meaningful teaching and learning becomes increasingly difficult. Even the Department acknowledges that the system faces deteriorating learner/teacher ratios and growing pressure on infrastructure and we welcome that acknowledgement.

In other words, the crisis we speak about today is not an exaggeration by the

hon Opposition. It is contained in the Department's own documents. The crisis of placement is not abstract, hon Deputy Speaker, it is being felt in communities across the province: rural and urban communities. In Atlantis, community leaders have raised a deeply troubling situation. There are reports that in the Protea Technical High, there are classrooms available, but no teachers allocated to those classes.

This raises a serious question: how can the Department claim that there is no space for learners when physical classrooms exist, but remain unstaffed? At the same time, Atlantis currently has approximately 15 primary schools feeding into only four high schools. Every year this creates a bottleneck when learners transition from primary school to high school. This is not a new problem. The pressure has been building for years.

Community members have further indicated that land in Robinvale was already zoned for the construction of a high school and that the site was reportedly serviced. If that is the case, then the question to hon MEC Maynier, through you, hon Deputy Speaker, is simple: why has construction not begun?

This Government cannot continue to tell communities that there is no money, while the number of learners grows and the infrastructure gap widens. Education infrastructure is not optional. It is a Constitutional obligation. The people of Atlantis deserve clear answers and a clear timeline for the construction of a new high school.

Hon Deputy Speaker, if we truly want to understand the state of education in our province, we must look beyond the spreadsheets and examine what is happening in our schools. Let me raise the case of Nduli Primary School in the hon Nkondlo's constituency, which she consistently raises yet again in this House.

This school was declared unsafe years ago. Learners had to be relocated following our intervention as the ANC because the building was deemed unsafe for teaching and learning. Yet, the community is still waiting for implementation of a permanent solution. Parents have raised concerns. The broader community has spoken out. The ANC caucus has raised this matter, but still, the situation drags on.

When a school is declared unsafe, governments should act with urgency. Instead, what we see in the case of Nduli Primary is delay after delay after delay. Similar to Solomon Mahlangu in Kraaifontein. That is not governance. That is neglect. For the learners of Nduli this failure sends a painful message that their education is not being treated with the urgency it deserves.

Under the leadership, and it is a pity he has left us, under the leadership of hon Alan Winde's Government and him in particular, the Western Cape Education Department has spent over R20 million on legal services between 2022 and 2023, and the 2024/2025 financial years. This amount is set to increase more than R27 million over the Medium Term.

The recent High Court judgment, and this is not unique to Education. That is why I say the rot is on top. I am not blaming the hon MEC necessarily. The recent High Court judgment in the case brought by Equal Education and the Equal Education Law Centre reaffirmed that Provincial Government has a constitutional duty to ensure that learners are placed in schools and that infrastructure planning supports the right to basic education.

Now, instead of embracing that judgment as an opportunity to strengthen infrastructure planning, hon Premier Winde's Government has chosen to appeal the ruling. This raises a fundamental question: why would a government spend public money fighting a judgment that seeks to ensure that learners have access to school? Surely, those resources would be better spent building classrooms and employing teachers. But this is not the only example of public funds being diverted into litigation.

The Department has also reportedly spent over R4 million in one legal battle involving Wesley Neumann, the former principal of Heathfield High. At a time when schools across the Western Cape are grappling with overcrowded classrooms, infrastructure backlogs and shortages of teachers, the public must ask whether this level of legal expenditure reflects the correct priorities because every Rand spent on prolonged legal disputes is a Rand that is not spent on improving the learning environment of our children.

That is the real issue before this House today, whether this Budget places learners first or whether it continues a pattern of spending that prioritises

litigation over education delivery.

Another serious concern is the continued presence of asbestos structures in schools across the province. Asbestos is dangerous. Hon MEC Wenger will tell us that. It poses serious health risks to learners and teachers. Yet, under the leadership of hon Premier Alan Winde, now in his second term, schools in this province still contain this hazardous material. It was there during MEC Schäfer's time, it is there now. It speaks to leadership on the top.

Hon Deputy Speaker, hon Deputy Speaker, learners should not have to choose between their education and their health. Removing asbestos from schools should not be negotiable. It should be urgent.

Access to education is also about whether learners can actually reach their schools. Across the province, many learners rely on the Learner Transport Scheme, yet communities continue to report challenges with access and reliability. The Wellington issue was raised in SOPA. It is still not resolved. For many families in rural communities, transport determines whether a learner attends school or stays at home. In a modern education system, hon Deputy Speaker, digital infrastructure is essential.

Schools rely on internet connectivity for teaching, administration and admissions. Yes, as I said this morning, Sentinel Primary School in Hout Bay recently experienced internet connectivity failures for more than a month. It required the ANC's intervention before connectivity was restored and we thank

Mr Meyer, Alan Meyer in the Department, for being responsive and for engaging and ensuring that it happened. But it required the Opposition to raise it. It was not working in the first place.

When a school's connectivity fails for a month, it disrupts learning, administration and access to education. It highlights the gap between the hon Premier's digital ambitions and the realities in our schools. Hon Deputy Speaker, hon Winde often describes the Western Cape as a model of governance, but a government cannot claim excellence while parents are queuing outside schools and learners remain unplaced. Leadership is not about slogans. It is about ensuring that every child has a desk in a classroom, and a teacher who cares.

Instead of fixing the infrastructure crisis, hon Premier Winde's Government is now appealing a court judgment that seeks to protect those very learners. One must ask why this Government is fighting the courts as it did with the Tafelberg land issue and access to social housing, instead of fighting for the children of this province.

And, hon Deputy Speaker, the truth is uncomfortable for the Democratic Alliance benches. Hence, some like hon member Masipa will heckle, and they will say the hon Premier is not responsible for Education. Whist he is the hon Premier of the entire Government and Province of the Western Cape and Education and Health get the highest budgets in this province. I think a workshop is essential yet again. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Hon Deputy Speaker, the Patriotic Alliance supports the Budget allocated to Education. However, this support must be accompanied by urgent and practical interventions to address the real challenges faced by our communities.

Our education system is in disarray. Firstly, school admissions remain a serious concern. Every year, parents are left frustrated and anxious as they struggle to secure placement for their children. This ongoing issue requires better planning, transparency and accountability from the Department.

Secondly, overcrowded classrooms continue to undermine the quality of education. Learners cannot thrive in environments where teachers are overstressed and individual attention is limited. This is not conducive to affective teaching and learning.

Thirdly, there is growing concern from communities regarding school placements, particularly where undocumented children are perceived to be prioritised over South African learners. While every child has the right to basic education, the system must ensure fairness and that the needs of local communities are not overlooked.

We must also address the alarming number of school dropouts. There appears

to be little to no consistent follow-up from either the Department or school when learners fall out of the system. This lack of intervention places vulnerable children at a greater risk and limits their future opportunities.

Lastly, the closure of farm schools continues to have a devastating impact on rural communities. In many cases, these closures happen without accessible, alternative schools nearby leaving children with long travel distances or worse, no schooling at all.

Supporting this Budget means ensuring that these issues are not ignored. We need decisive action to create an education system that is fair, inclusive and capable of providing quality learning for all. Our children deserve nothing less. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon Stephens. I recognise the hon Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM (EFF): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, when it comes to Education in the province, we need to start from the basics and get things right. At outset, we need to resolve issues related to infrastructure. The Western Cape need more classrooms made of brick. The province needs to build more schools in order to absorb the ever-increasing number of learners in our province who seek learning opportunities.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it should serve as a constant reminder to those who run

Government, that education is a right and not a privilege. Once we have proper schools and enough classrooms, we then need enough teachers who are permanently employed so that we can have a reasonable learner to teacher ratio in each classroom in this province.

Hon Deputy Speaker, studies have proven that congested classrooms are not a conducive environment for learning as they are mostly destructive for both learners and teachers alike.

The Western Cape currently has a learner placement crisis which still subsists. The Department has responded to this crisis by placing a plaster on top of a deep wound which is beginning to rot. Hon Deputy Speaker, overcrowding township schools as a mechanism to respond to the learner placement crisis is not the right way to go.

When Quintile 4 and 5 schools told the Department that the classrooms have subscribed, the Department is quick to listen, and they refrain from sending more learners to those schools.

However, if the same messages come from township schools in Quintile 1 and 2, the message is simply ignored, and the Department continues to send more learners resulting in classrooms being overcrowded in the province.

Hon Deputy Speaker, another issue that the Department needs to fix and which this Budget needs to speak to is the issue of scholar transport. Our learners

need government-sponsored scholar transport that is reliable and safe.

In conclusion, hon Deputy Speaker, until all these objectives are met, the EFF will not be supporting this Vote. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Cassiem. I recognise the hon Michels.

†Mnr J MICHELS (NCC): Dankie, agb *Deputy Speaker*. Onder die Begroting Onderwys word ons vertel van poste vir opvoeders, maar wat help 'n ekstra onderwyser in 'n klaskamer wat reeds oorvol is. Wat help dit wanneer skole steeds gebuk gaan onder infrastruktuur-agterstande, geweld en sosiale verval. Hierdie Begroting spreek nie die werklike krisis in ons onderwys stelsel aan nie, veral nie in die werkersklas en Bruin gemeenskappe nie.

Agb *Deputy Speaker*, nommer een. Hoe regverdig die Departement 'n begroting wat nie voldoende reageer op oorvol klaskamers en infrastruktuur-agterstande in werkersklas-skole nie?

Watter presentasie van die Onderwys Begroting word spesifiek aan histories benadeelde skole toegeken en hoe spreek dit sistematiese ongelykheid aan?

Agb *Deputy Speaker*, punt drie. Waarom weerspieël die Begroting nie werklike ingryping in skoolverlating, bendegeweld en sosiale uitdagings wat leerders in kwesbare gemeenskappe raak en aanspreek nie?

Agb *Deputy Speaker*, punt vier. Hoe sal die toevoeging van opvoeders alleen strukturele probleme oplos wanneer per leerder-befondsing in reële terme afneem?

Punt vyf. Watter doelgerigte intervensies bestaan om te verseker dat Bruin leerders, veral in landelike en township-gebiede, nie agtergelaat word in die digitale- en vaardigheidseconomie nie?

Die NCC kan ongelukkig nie hierdie Begroting *support* nie. Dankie, agb *Deputy Speaker*.

[Mr J MICHELS (NCC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Under the Budget Education we are told about posts for educators but what does an extra teacher help in a classroom that is already overcrowded. What does it help when schools are still suffering from infrastructure backlogs, violence and social decay. This Budget does not address the real crisis in our education system especially not in the workers class and Brown communities.

Hon Deputy Speaker, number one. How does the Department justify a budget that does not sufficiently react to overcrowded classrooms and infrastructure backlogs in workers class schools?

What percentage of the Education Budget is allocated to specifically disadvantaged schools and how does it address systematic inequality?

Hon Deputy Speaker, point three. Why does the Budget not reflect real intervention in school-leavers, gang violence and social challenges that affect learners in vulnerable communities?

Hon Deputy Speaker, point four. How will the addition of educators alone solve structural problems when per learner funding decreases in real terms?

Point five. What purposeful interventions exist to ensure that Brown learners, especially in rural and township areas, are not left behind in the digital and skills economy?

The NCC can unfortunately not support this Budget. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, hon Michels. I see, I recognise the hon Christians.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS (ACDP): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, Nelson Mandela said:

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

He further said that:

"Education is a tool for personal development, empowerment and social transformation."

Hon Deputy Speaker, although the ACDP does support the Budget, I want to reiterate again the concern that we have when it comes to drugs in our schools. You can have all the beautiful systems, all the school resource offices, but if you do not address the fundamental problem that we have at some of our schools, where learners, I heard from the Education Department seven-, eight-year-olds being on drugs, we are not going to get anywhere.

There is urgent intervention needed in some of our schools, and I would like the hon Minister to tell us, because there is nothing. The interventions of safe schools and school resource officers are not going to solve that problem. We need intervention. Now, I know that schools represent communities, but while they are at school, can we please get something in place to address this urgent need. We do, we do know it is a budget that needs to cover many aspects and we thank the hon Minister and the Department for the Budget.

But, hon Deputy Speaker, as I say again. There are certain schools that have tremendous problems and there are no answers. I am asking the hon Minister please to look at social workers at certain schools where there is a major problem of drug addiction. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Christians. I recognise the hon Johnson.

Mr P JOHNSON (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, today we debate Vote 5, the single largest investment this Province makes in the future of its people. This is because education, for the DA, is not just another budget line. It is the difference between opportunity and exclusion, between dependence and independence, between hope and stagnation. That is why the Western Cape continues to make Education its top priority.

Hon Deputy Speaker, Education spending increases from R32,738 billion in 2025/2026 to R35,108 billion in 2026/2027, growing steadily over the MTEF. This reflects something very simple, but something very important. A continued investment in education because an educated society creates a thriving economy.

Hon Deputy Speaker, what stands out in this Budget is not just the size of the allocations. It is the discipline behind it. We are strengthening our systems by funding 701 new educators' posts in 2026/2027 amounting to R799 million. We are investing R330 in infrastructure to replace and refurbish schools built with inappropriate or hazardous materials. The full infrastructure allocation, including the Rapid School Build programme, totals R6,437 billion over the MTEF.

This strategic allocation addresses the twin pressures facing our system. Firstly, the need for space and secondly, the need for quality teaching. By building schools, adding classrooms and upgrading infrastructure, the Western

Cape is tackling learner placement and overcrowding head on. That is what responsible government looks like. Not reckless promises, not unfunded demands, not ideological experiments, but the careful stewardship of public money.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the ANC, the PA and particularly the EFF will once again push the tired narrative that the DA only delivers for the affluent. However, the facts tell a very different story. The Western Cape Education Department will spend R1,771 billion over the MTEF providing daily nutritious meals to learners, with an additional R219 to address food inflation through the National Schools Nutrition Programme.

Currently, 1 069 schools and more than 540 000 learners benefit from this programme. These are not wealthy communities. These are vulnerable learners. These are families who depend on a government that works. In addition, over 91 000 learners attend our no fee schools. More than 84 000 learners benefit from fee exemption. Over 17 000 vulnerable learners at independent schools receive subsidies. Nearly 69 000 learners benefit from learner transport, with the Cape Winelands District having the highest numbers.

This is not a government that governs for only a few. This is a government that delivers for everyone. That is what hon members should be telling their constituencies, instead of recycling political talking points.

However, hon Deputy Speaker, it is always interesting to hear the ANC lecture

in this House about service delivery. This is from a party that has governed nationally for three decades. If their own governance model worked, South Africa would not be facing infrastructure collapse, South Africa would not be facing administrative decay and South Africa would not be facing institutional failure.

The ANC does not suffer from a resource problem. It suffers from a governance problem. The ANC failure is caused by a lack of money, and the DA knows failure is caused by a lack of management.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the difference between governments is not who claims to care. Everyone claims to care. The real difference is who delivers and this Budget shows delivery. If we look at outcomes in this province, we see the highest learner retention rate in the country, record Grade 3 literacy and mathematic results through systematic testing. The highest Matric pass rate in provincial history at 88,2%. More bachelor passes. The highest mathematics pass rate nationally and the top Matric learner in South Africa coming from a public school in George.

These outcomes do not happen by accident. They happen through investment, through planning, through governance, through accountability. While we prepare learners for university, it is unfortunately national failures at institutions like NSFAS and parts of the post school system that threaten those opportunities caused by the very ANC. But our responsibility is clear: to ensure learners are prepared to succeed and we are doing exactly that.

Hon Deputy Speaker, learner safety remains a priority and WCED funds 54 school resource officers at 27 schools and co-fund additional officers at high-risk schools. Again, not in affluent communities as some would suggest, but where support is most needed.

Hon Deputy Speaker, history teachers are something important. Radical slogans do not build capable states. Disciplined governance does. Revolutionary rhetoric has never fixed a balance sheet. The real divide in this House is not ideological, it is behavioural. Between those who believe in governments that must be run professionally and those who believe in governments that must be run politically. Between those who believe that institutions must be protected and those who believe that institutions must be captured. Between those who measure outcomes and those who measure noise.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Government chooses professionalism. This Government chooses evidence. This Government chooses planning. While others focus on political positioning, the DA focuses on institutional performance. While others focus on headlines, we focus on the outcomes. While other focus on blame, we focus on management. Because serious governments do not chase applause. They build capability.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the choice before this House is simple: performance or populism, management or messaging, delivery or drama. The DA chooses performance. The DA chooses management and the DA chooses to deliver, and

that is why we support Vote 5. I thank you.

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

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. We are, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, getting it done to deliver quality education that drives economic growth.

To recap, we are strengthening Early Learning so that our learners will have a strong foundation for their education. We are improving learning outcomes in Grades 4 through 12 so that learners are supported throughout their school careers. We are expanding access to quality education by building more schools faster through our Rapid School Build programme. We are supporting learners with special education needs so that they are able to learn and thrive in a specialised environment. And we are building partnerships with the private sector to increase investment in independent low fee and no fee schools.

Let me then turn to dealing with some of the points raised during the debate. On the whole question of admission pressure. Our response is decisive and it is called the Rapid School Build Programme and the programme is going from strength to strength, at a pace which I believe, is a game changer for education. I remind hon members that we aim to have 10 new schools ready to open for the start of the 2027 school year. We are building more schools faster than any other province in South Africa.

On the whole question of the Equal Education Law Centre judgment. We are, of course, appealing the ruling because we have serious concerns about the process and, of course, the findings of the Court. The judgment, as hon members well know, is suspended pending an appeal.

I think it is important for hon members to understand that the judgment was not unanimous. The dissenting judgment states that the main judgment is flawed and that the admissions policy does not discriminate, let alone unfairly so on the basis of race, poverty, place of birth and social origin. That, hon members, should be enough to appeal.

We have, as the hon member knows, made extensive support available to parents for extremely late applications, to communicate essential information and to assist parents applying for places in schools. We specifically, as hon members know, target our infrastructure investments to areas where increased demand is predicted. We do everything we can to place extremely late applicants as quickly as possible, despite these applications sometimes arriving eight months late.

When it comes to vulnerable learners and I think this is important to point out to hon members and I thank the hon members for raising this point. While other provinces are cutting back on their funding for vulnerable learners, we are, in fact, increasing allocations to vulnerable learners.

We will spend R649 million providing school meals to over 540 000 learners. Hon members should take note that the Conditional Grant from National Government does not cover the full cost of school meals. So, we use provincial funds to top up this funding by about R70,3 million this year.

We will spend R698,3 million transporting over 71 000 learners to and from school. We will spend R95,8 million on fee exemptions for parents who have experienced a loss of income affecting their ability to pay school fees. We will spend R546,1 million operating select Quintile 4 and 5 schools as no fee schools because they serve poor communities.

On the whole question of safety. We will, as I mentioned, spend R72,7 million on improving safety in our schools, which includes 82 school resource officers deployed at our schools in partnership with the City of Cape Town. While our school resource officers may not solve the drug problem, they will go a long way in supporting schools to deal with the problem.

We also, of course, subsidise security, as hon members know, at 400 schools. We operate a Safe Schools call centre where teachers and learners report or seek help regarding crime, abuse and of course, a variety of other issues. We have Safe School officers in the field providing support to schools and we do have district support teams who provide psychological support following an incident.

Of course, we make training available to teachers who help them manage

classrooms affected by the socio-economic challenges their school community faces.

I think another issue which is important when it comes to improving attendance and improving discipline at our schools and indeed, improving safety in our schools is offering opportunities for safe, positive after school environments.

As hon members are aware, and we are certain to hear more about this tomorrow in the debate on the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, we have allocated about R130 million to promoting school sport in our province. Of course, our goal is not just to ensure that learners have access to school sport, but also to nurture our talented, young sport starts who have the potential of a future career in sport.

So, hon Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, we as I have said, have a vision of delivering quality education for every learner in every classroom in every school in the Western Cape because ultimately, quality education means more economic growth and more economic growth means more jobs and more jobs means a better future for our children. We are getting it done here in the Western Cape! I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, that concludes the debate on the Vote as well as the business of the day. The Secretary will now end the meeting and hon members will be exited from this Sitting. The House is adjourned.

[House adjourned at 19:23.]